

22 January 2004

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women**Forty-eighth session**

1-12 March 2004

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for
the twenty-first century”****Note by the Secretariat on the comprehensive review and appraisal
of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the special session
of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality,
development and peace for the twenty-first century” in 2005**

1. The Commission on the Status of Women has a central role in the monitoring of implementation of the Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. In paragraph 21 of its resolution 50/203, the General Assembly decided that the Commission on the Status of Women, together with the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, would constitute a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism to play the primary role in the overall policy-making and follow-up, and in coordinating the implementation and monitoring of, the Platform for Action, reaffirming the need for a coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the results of major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields. Since 2000, the Commission has also monitored the implementation of the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled: “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”.

2. In the Political Declaration of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, adopted in 2000, the Assembly agreed to assess regularly further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action with a view to bringing together all parties involved in 2005 to assess progress and consider new initiatives, as appropriate, 10 years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action and 20 years after the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (para. 9).

3. A review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

(2000), is mandated in the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women for its forty-ninth session, in March 2005. The Commission will consider two themes: "Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly" and "Current challenges and forward-looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls".

4. In its resolution 57/270 B, the General Assembly emphasized the importance of integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, bearing in mind the need to respect the thematic unity of each of the conferences and the interlinkages between them.

5. In accordance with the emphasis on integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up, the Commission may wish to consider developing ways to ensure a close linkage between the review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the review of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals through a major event in 2005 (see para. 75 of resolution 57/270 B). The Commission could also consider ways to ensure that the outcome of the review and appraisal at its forty-ninth session is incorporated into that major event to ensure full integration of gender perspectives.

6. In paragraph 71 of its resolution 57/270 B, the General Assembly highlighted that reviews and appraisals of the major United Nations conferences and summits should assess the progress made in the implementation of commitments and provide the occasion to reaffirm the goals and objectives agreed upon at those conferences and summits, share best practices and lessons learned, and identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives to overcome them and important measures for the further implementation of their programmes of action as well as new challenges and emerging issues.

7. The United Nations world conferences on women have been important for Governments, non-governmental organizations and women's groups and networks in many countries in promoting a high-level focus and visibility to the promotion of gender equality, as well as providing the opportunity to place national efforts in a global context. It will therefore be important to find ways and means to give sufficient visibility to the 10-year review and appraisal process. At its forty-ninth session, the Commission will commemorate not only the 10-year anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action but also the 30-year anniversary of the First World Conference on Women, held in Mexico in 1975. One means of ensuring a high-level focus to the review and appraisal would be a high-level opening session of the Commission.

8. The review and appraisal at the forty-ninth session should also provide an opportunity for member States to reaffirm their commitment to the goal of gender equality, the strategies of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, and the policy recommendations contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The Commission could consider ways and means to further develop the general debate as an important dynamic forum for elaborating specific

Government commitments to address gaps identified in the context of the review and appraisal process.

9. The Commission could consider the development of a declaration of commitment to gender equality, similar to the Beijing Declaration (1995) and the Political Declaration adopted at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, as the outcome to be adopted at a high-level conclusion of its forty-ninth session.

10. In the context of the focus on progress made in implementation of commitments in General Assembly resolution 57/270 B and in keeping with the increased focus in the Commission on the implementation and impact of policy recommendations at the national level, the Commission could consider innovative ways and means of emphasizing the achievements made, the need for increased sharing of experience and exchange of good practice examples, and development of more effective approaches for addressing the remaining gaps and challenges during the review and appraisal process at its forty-ninth session, in 2005. Building on the recent efforts to stimulate interactive dialogue in the Commission, through the expert panels and the high-level round tables, the Commission may wish to focus the activities at its forty-ninth session on national-level implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, by providing a range of opportunities for high-level interactive exchange, complemented with further interactive dialogue with other key groups of stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, private sector and youth. The outcome of the high-level events and panels would be short Chairperson's summaries.

11. High profile should be given to the commemoration of International Women's Day during the forty-ninth session of the Commission. The theme could be "Thirty years of United Nations efforts to promote gender equality", to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the First World Conference on Women, held in Mexico in 1975. Panellists could include persons present at each of the world conferences held in Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing, and teleconferencing could be utilized to ensure direct involvement of women from all regions.

12. In accordance with paragraph 52 of its resolution 57/270 B, in which it invited the regional commissions, in collaboration with other regional and subregional organizations and processes, as appropriate, to contribute, within their mandates, to the review of progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, the Commission may wish to consider ways and means of increasing the contributions of the regional commissions in the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly during its forty-ninth session. One meeting could be set aside for presentation of the review and appraisal processes at the regional level, followed by interactive dialogue.

13. The Commission may wish to consider ways and means to fully utilize the two flagship reports to be published by the United Nations in 2004: *The World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* (which will be focused on migration) and *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics* (in accordance with paras. 29-34 and 50 of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B).

14. The Commission may consider innovative means of disseminating information on the process and the outcome of the review and appraisal. A dissemination strategy should be developed, involving support of the substantive secretariat of the Commission — the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Department of Public Information, and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.
