

24 December 2003

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”**

***Preparation of the 2004 World Survey on the Role of Women
in Development***

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 54/210, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to update the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* for the consideration of the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The present note contains information regarding the preparation of the *Survey*.

* E/CN.6/2004/1.

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I. Background

1. In its resolution 35/78 of 5 December 1980, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive detailed outline for a multisectoral and interdisciplinary world survey on the role of women in overall development, taking into account the relevant recommendations of the 1980 World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, held in Copenhagen, as well as results of the relevant United Nations conferences on development issues, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session. In its resolution 36/74 of 4 December 1981, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare the *Survey* in close collaboration with appropriate agencies of the United Nations system and to submit it to the Assembly at its thirty-ninth session in 1984.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 36/127 of 14 December 1981, requested that the Commission on the Status of Women be consulted in the preparation of the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* and recommended in its resolution 37/60 of 3 December 1982 that the *Survey* be submitted to the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in Nairobi. The first *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* was subsequently published in 1986.

3. In its resolution 40/204 of 17 December 1985, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to update the *Survey* on a regular basis, focusing on selected emerging development issues that have an impact on the role of women in the economy at the local, national, regional and international levels. A second *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* was issued in 1989.

4. A third *Survey* was requested by the General Assembly through its resolutions 44/77 of 8 December 1989 and 44/171 of 19 December 1989. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 36/8 of 20 March 1992, decided that the *Survey* would be included in the documentation for the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. In accordance with Assembly resolution 48/108 of 20 December 1993, a preliminary summary of the *Survey* was submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994, through the Commission. The third *Survey* was submitted to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session in 1994 (A/49/378) and published in 1995.

5. A fourth *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* was requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/161 of 23 December 1994. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to examine the impact of current trends and policies on the overall economic and social situation of women, with particular emphasis to be placed on the adverse impact of the difficult economic situation affecting the majority of developing countries, especially on the condition of women. Furthermore, special attention was to be given to the worsening conditions for the incorporation of women into the labour force, as well as the impact of reduced expenditures for social services on opportunities available to women for education, health and child care. The *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Globalization, Gender and Work* was submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session in 1999 (A/54/227) and was subsequently published.

6. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/210 of 22 December 1999, requested the Secretary-General to update the *World Survey on the Role of Women in*

Development for the consideration of the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and, as in the past, to focus on selective emerging development issues that have an impact on the role of women in the economy at the national, regional and international levels.

7. The present Conference Room Paper serves to inform the Commission on the Status of Women, at its forty-eighth session, about the preparation of the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session in 2004.

II. Preparation of the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*

8. In his report on the strengthening of the United Nations (A/57/387), the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of giving more comprehensive attention to migration, with a need to better understand the causes of international flows of people and their complex interrelationship with development. Furthermore, in its resolution 58/208 of 23 December 2003 on international migration and development, the General Assembly called upon all relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, within their continuing mandated activities, to continue to address the issue of international migration and development, with a view to integrating migration issues, including a gender perspective and cultural diversity, in a more coherent way within the broader context of the implementation of agreed economic and social development goals and respect for of all human rights. The *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, to be considered by the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session in 2004, will therefore seek to address the increased movement of people, particularly women, within and across national borders, from a gender perspective.

9. The Division for the Advancement of Women is proceeding with the preparation of the *Survey* through a consultative process with United Nations entities in the context of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and in cooperation with other divisions within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Division for the Advancement of Women organized a consultative meeting on migration and mobility and how this movement affects women, at the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden, from 2 to 4 December 2003, hosted by the Government of Sweden. The meeting provided the opportunity for experts to deliberate on the topic and provide conclusions and recommendations which will serve as a basis for the further elaboration of the *Survey*. It also provided the opportunity for international organizations, such as the International Organization on Migration, non-governmental organizations and academia, to contribute their expertise.

III. Issues to be addressed in the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*

10. International migration has increased significantly during the past decades. The *Survey* will examine a number of factors that contribute to this increase, including: economic globalization and integration, which has linked the economies of source and destination countries; trade agreements that contain provisions for mobility of international personnel, particularly but not exclusively in trade in services; growth of multinational corporations that move their personnel across countries and across the globe; demographic trends, with many developed countries facing population stagnation and ageing, while developing countries continue to grow faster than their job markets can absorb new workers; the transportation and communications revolution that has made migration feasible for millions of would-be migrants; and the growth in transnational communities, including growing numbers of persons with dual and multi-nationality and citizenship, which remain involved in the countries of their birth.

11. About half of the migrants in the world today are women, as has been the case for several decades. They include both international migrants, who move to other countries, as well as internal migrants, who relocate in other parts of their own countries. One of the most significant recent trends in migration has, however, been the entry of women into migration streams that were predominately male. While many women still accompany or join family members, increasing numbers of female migrants migrate on their own. They are the principal wage earners for themselves and their families. Most women move voluntarily, but a significant number are forced migrants who have fled conflict, persecution, environmental degradation, natural disasters and other situations that affect their habitat and livelihood.

12. The mobility of women affects the roles of both female and male migrants, families left behind in the migration process and source and destination communities and countries of migrants. In particular, the migration of women within and from developing countries affects the development process itself in those countries. It also raises a number of challenges to immigration and refugee policies that address such issues as family reunification and formation, labour migration, trafficking and smuggling, and forced migration.

13. The *Survey* will address both the opportunities for empowerment of women and the challenges and vulnerabilities women face in the context of migration and movement. It will analyse the impact of migration from a gender perspective and highlight possible policy recommendations to improve women's situation, utilizing relevant United Nations instruments.

14. The *Survey* will focus in particular on the nexus between migration and development. This nexus incorporates two elements: ways in which women migrants can be a resource for the development of their home communities and ways in which development processes can at first increase, but later reduce, pressures for migration, particularly irregular movements of people. Structural adjustment and other policies often precipitate large-scale movements out of rural areas into towns and cities. As women move from rural to urban areas within their countries, they learn about opportunities for international migration and develop skills that can be used in manufacturing and service jobs in the urban areas of wealthier countries. Over time, as development takes hold and women find adequate economic

opportunities at home, they will generally not be forced to move to support themselves and their families. During what is sometimes referred to as the development-induced “migration hump”, migrant women can contribute to further economic development through their financial resources as well as their skills, entrepreneurial activities and support for democratization and human rights. Women and girls left behind by migrating spouses and fathers are also affected by migration, particularly through the receipt of remittances and the new gender roles they assume in the absence of male family members. Possible negative repercussions from migration, particularly brain drain in developing countries, will also be assessed in the *Survey*.

15. The *Survey* will examine international conventions and protocols relating to the status and rights of women migrants. In addition to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the *Survey* will discuss the impact and potential impact of such instruments as the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of Refugees; the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the 2000 Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, went into force in 2003 and the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air will enter into force in January 2004, making this analysis timely.

16. The *Survey* will examine both the voluntary and forced migration of women. Several distinct categories of women migrate specifically for work purposes, or having migrated to join family members, enter the labour force. They are differentiated by their skills, the permanence of their residence in the host country and their legal status. At the higher end of the skill spectrum, women migrants work in the health professions, run multinational corporations, teach in universities, supply research and development expertise to industry and academia, and design, build and programme computers, to name only a few activities. At the lower end of the skills spectrum, women migrants perform domestic services, pick fruit and vegetables, manufacture garments and other items, process meat and poultry, work as nursing home and hospital aides, clean restaurants and hotels, and provide a myriad of other services. The *Survey* will make recommendations to empower women labourers and reduce their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation.

17. Women who are forced migrants, such as refugees or internally displaced persons, present many challenges to the international community. Foremost are their special needs for legal and physical protection. Gender is not included in the international definition of a refugee, which is a person with a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a social group. Drawing on the experiences of States that recognize the validity of claims based on gender equality, the *Survey* will present recommendations to enhance legal protection as well as the physical safety and security of refugee and displaced women. It will also discuss the participation of refugee and displaced women in decisions regarding assistance and protection. The

role of refugee and displaced women in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction will be a further area of analysis.

18. Human trafficking is a growing problem. A majority of trafficking victims are women, most under the age of 25. The *Survey* will explore the reasons that place women and girls at risk of trafficking for prostitution, forced labour and other exploitive purposes. It will also detail effective efforts to prevent trafficking, hold traffickers accountable for their abuses and protect the victims of trafficking operations from further exploitation.

19. The *Survey* will make recommendations regarding data and research on women and migration. Improvements are needed in the collection of data on both internal and international migration, with particular attention paid to collecting statistics disaggregated by age and sex. The *Survey* will also present an agenda for additional research needed to expand understanding of the causes of female migration and mobility, the impact of migration and mobility on women and the impact of female migration and mobility on source and destination countries.
