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Commission on the Status of Women**Fifty-seventh session**

4-15 March 2013

Agenda item 3 (b)

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men: key gender equality issues to be reflected in the post-2015 development framework

Key gender equality issues to be reflected in the post-2015 development framework**Moderator’s summary**

1. On 7 March 2013, the Commission on the Status of Women convened an interactive panel to examine the emerging issue “Key gender equality issues to be reflected in the post-2015 development framework”. The Vice-Chair of the Commission, Irina Velichko, moderated the discussion. The panellists were: the Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for the Policy and Programme Bureau of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and co-chair of the task force of the United Nations Development Group on the Millennium Development Goals, John Hendra; and Executive Committee Member of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, Anita Nayar. Economist-in-residence at the American University and Senior Gender Adviser at the United States Agency for International Development, Caren Grown, served as discussant.

2. As the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals approaches, a number of processes are under way among Member States, the United Nations system, academia, policymakers and civil society to reflect on the post-2015 development framework. Related to these reflections is work towards the development of sustainable development goals, as called for by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012.



3. At its sixty-seventh session, the General Assembly reiterated that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly are essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, the Assembly called for the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women to feature prominently in the discussions on the post-2015 development framework, bearing in mind the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective. The following summary highlights some of the recommendations made by Member States and representatives of civil society on the fundamental principles that should underpin the post-2015 development framework and ensure the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the new development agenda.

4. Presentations by panellists focused on opportunities for integrating gender equality into the multiple processes surrounding the development of the post-2015 framework and the sustainable development goals; reflections on lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals that need to be taken forward into the post-2015 framework; visions for a post-2015 framework with gender equality at its centre; and perspectives from women's organizations and civil society on the future development agenda.

5. There was strong consensus among participants that gender equality and the empowerment of women must be central in the post-2015 development agenda. The importance of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women as an effective means to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate truly sustainable development was clearly acknowledged in the Millennium Declaration. Participants also called for the post-2015 framework to be based on the principles of human rights, equality and non-discrimination, and for any goals to be both universally applicable to all countries and adaptable to individual country contexts. Other principles that participants identified as important to integrate in the new framework included the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic development, social development and environmental sustainability. Participants proposed a vision for a transformative development framework that, while ensuring continuity with the Millennium Development Goals, would move beyond that framework to be more action-oriented, inclusive and people-centred. There should be coherence between the new development agenda and the sustainable development goals.

6. Several participants stressed the importance of having ambitious, easy to understand and measurable goals in the new framework that would make a real difference in the lives of women and girls. The post-2015 development agenda should be guided by a holistic approach and apply multi-sectoral solutions to effectively address current challenges. Transparency and accountability were also highlighted as vital for the implementation and monitoring of goals and targets. The role of civil society, including women's organizations, was recognized as key to participatory and inclusive processes leading to a post-2015 development agenda.

7. Participants highlighted the shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals in addressing the structural and root causes of poverty and gender inequality, and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination experienced by women and girls around the world. Calls were made to focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the post-2015 framework, including women with

disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations. Participants acknowledged that the denial of women's rights is the most widespread driver of inequality in the world, and that gender inequality and an absence of equal opportunities diminish the potential for development and exacerbate poverty and marginalization.

8. While participants critiqued the narrow scope of Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, the importance of having a stand-alone gender equality goal in the current framework was recognized as having galvanized resources and political will, and having served as an accountability mechanism to monitor progress and the remaining gaps in implementation. In addition to calling for a strong focus on gender equality in the post-2015 agenda, many participants expressed support for a twin-track approach for the incorporation of gender equality in the new framework, which would include both a stand-alone gender equality goal and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective across all other goals.

9. Participants noted the linkages between poverty and gender inequalities, which continue to reinforce each other and create increasing gaps in wealth, power and voice between countries, as well as between women and men. They emphasized that poverty could not be eradicated without long-term transformational changes in women's and men's lives. The post-2015 development framework must address the structural barriers that lead to poverty.

10. Violence against women and girls was one of the priority issues highlighted by participants, who called for the post-2015 framework to focus on concrete actions to address the root causes of violence, and to work towards the prevention and elimination of violence. In addition to violating the rights of women and girls to bodily integrity and security of the person, violence against women and girls is an obstacle to their access to education, training, resources and the labour market. Violence also denies women's and girls' right to health, including sexual and reproductive health, and their reproductive rights. Participants noted the importance of integrating targets on violence against women and girls into the post-2015 development framework.

11. Participants expressed concern about the continuing gaps in progress in many countries towards achieving Goal 5 of the Millennium Development Goals on improving maternal health and called for integration of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in the post-2015 framework. A number of speakers pointed to the positive impact of introducing universal access to safe and affordable health care in reducing maternal deaths and mother-to-child transmission of HIV, as well as decreasing the incidence of HIV among young women. They also noted the contributions of strengthened primary health care to the achievement of gender equality.

12. Participants noted that access to education by itself was not sufficient as long as gender-based discrimination and stereotypes in schools resulted in educational and occupational segregation and hindered the full development of women's and girls' potential. Greater efforts are needed to improve opportunities for post-primary education for girls and to improve outcomes by focusing not only on quantitative issues but also on the quality of education.

13. The equal participation of women in all spheres of political, economic and social life was emphasized in the discussion as necessary for sustainable development and poverty reduction. While some progress had been made in increasing women's political representation, numerous participants acknowledged that concrete actions still needed to be taken to increase women's voice and participation in decision-making processes at all levels, including at the local government level, in households and in communities, in order for women to be able to fully participate in society on equal terms with men, including decision-making on access to and control over resources and assets.

14. Participants recognized that women's economic empowerment was crucial for the achievement of gender equality as it increases women's choices and voice in matters of family and the community. Inclusive and sustainable economic growth based on human rights and the rule of law is necessary for poverty eradication. Changes in macroeconomic policies are required for the achievement of women's economic rights. The new framework should address the barriers to women's full economic participation and access to financial and productive resources, including women's access to land, resources, knowledge and technology, as well as property and inheritance rights. Given the high rates of youth unemployment, participants recognized the importance of including young women in all employment generation initiatives. Participants noted the importance of developing concrete targets to achieve concrete results for women's economic empowerment in the post-2015 framework.

15. Participants called for decent work to be addressed as a core principle of economic empowerment in the post-2015 agenda, as well as the need for a living wage for women in the informal sector, including in domestic work. A number of participants also called for greater recognition and visibility of women's unpaid work in the new framework and in national accounts, to take account of time spent caring for children, the sick and the elderly, and to recognize its contribution to the economy and society more broadly. Good practices include the use of time-use surveys and the integration of women's unpaid care work in satellite accounts. Participants also noted the need to transform gender roles and perceptions of masculinity to promote the role of men as caregivers. Education and employment policies should challenge discriminatory practices and stereotypes to promote work-life balance in order to advance equal opportunities and help redistribute the responsibilities of care work. Infrastructure developments in the areas of transportation, energy, water and sanitation have also been proven to reduce the amount of time women dedicate to unpaid work.

16. Poverty and inequalities, which thrive in countries in armed conflict and in fragile States, exacerbate violations of women's rights and hinder efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. Some participants noted that the post-2015 development framework should address peace and security as well as disaster risk reduction and preparedness. It should also promote measures to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

17. The post-2015 development framework requires commitments to greater financial investments in gender equality. Participants proposed that the post-2015 framework include a financing and investment agenda for Governments to play a central role in funding and accountability. They also suggested that Governments should mobilize resources through fiscal reforms, domestic resource mobilization

and official development assistance. Global partnerships should be based on mutual accountability and trust.

18. Many participants commented on the availability of data that had influenced the selection of targets and indicators in the Millennium Development Goals. The post-2015 framework must include strong and clear targets and indicators in order to measure results for women and girls while being flexible enough to allow for the selection of national indicators. The goal-setting process must not be hindered by a lack of data but should lead to action to gather baseline data. In order to fully integrate a gender perspective into the new framework, participants emphasized the need for countries to collect quantitative and qualitative data disaggregated by sex, age, income, ethnicity/race and other factors on a wide range of issues, including on violence against women, access to and control of assets, political participation at the national and local levels, and allocation of resources for gender equality.
