

**Sixty-second Session of the General Assembly
Third Committee
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**Introductory Statement
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Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues and Friends,

It is an honor to address the Third Committee today to present the reports of the Secretary-General on Item 63 (a): Advancement of Women, and (b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairperson, on your election as chair of this Committee and convey my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

Under the agenda item 63 (a) Advancement of Women, the Committee has before it two reports relating to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Report on the Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (document A/62/290) was prepared in response to resolution 60/230. Covering a two-year period, it gives an overview of the status of the Convention, ratification of which has increased 5 per cent since July 2005 to 185 States parties; and the status of the Optional Protocol, which now has 88 States parties, representing an increase of 17 per cent. Acceptances of the amendment to article 20.1 stand at 49, a 4 per cent increase. The report also provides information on reservations, withdrawals of reservations, as well as objections to reservations. In addition, the report provides information about the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, including capacity to fulfill its mandate, working methods, efforts taken to encourage universal ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol, as well as acceptance of the amendment of article 20.1. The report summarizes the Committee’s decisions 39/I and 39/II, on extension of its meeting time, and recommends that the Assembly approve the Committee’s request for extension of its meeting time for 2008 and beyond.

The Division for the Advancement of Women continues to provide technical assistance to States parties of the Convention, upon request. The report draws attention to two sub-regional and one national workshop on follow up to concluding comments, as well as support provided to

countries emerging from conflict, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Haiti, to strengthen capacity for implementation of the Convention and preparation of initial reports.

The Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, thirty-seventh, thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions (A/62/38) will be made available in the room later today. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reports to the General Assembly on its activities in 2007, covering the Committee's thirty-seventh, thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions. Over the last two years, the Committee held constructive dialogues with 69 States parties. This increase was due to the extension of meeting time – including some sessions in parallel chambers – by the General Assembly in 2005. The Assembly is urged to approve the Committee's request for the extension of its meeting time so that it can continue to maximize its impact on the lives of women world wide.

The Committee recently commemorated 25 years of dedicated work. During this period the Committee has examined 401 reports of 154 States parties on their implementation of the Convention in its 39 sessions. It has also developed 25 general recommendations to help guide the understanding of the Convention's provisions, and their implementation. The Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Dubravka Simonovic will provide further information on the work of the CEDAW in her statement.

In the context of the transfer of servicing of the Committee to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, I would like to take the opportunity to express appreciation of the DAW for the opportunity to service the Committee for the past 25 years. The Division for the Advancement of Women has benefited greatly from the depth of the expertise, experience and wisdom the experts on the Committee have brought to the work of the United Nations on gender equality in New York. The important synergies between the work of the Committee and the Commission on the Status of Women were recognized in the Declaration adopted by the Commission at the ten year review of the Platform for Action in 2005. The Division will continue to support the work of the Committee and the full implementation of the Convention in every way possible.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

The Committee has before it the report of the Secretary-General on Future operations of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (A/62/173). The report was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 60/229 and 61/273. The report provides information on the activities of the Executive Board. It outlines the work of INSTRAW in developing its strategic framework for 2008-2011, under the guidance of its Executive Board. It outlines activities undertaken by INSTRAW in the period 2006-2007, including in the areas of migration and development, women's political participation and governance, and women, peace and security. The report highlights ways in which INSTRAW has collaborated with other entities in the United Nations system. The Director of INSTRAW, Ms Carmen Moreno, will address the Committee later this morning and provide further information on the work of the Institute.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

The Third Committee has regularly focused on the elimination of violence against women as a pervasive violation of women's human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality. It has systematically worked to enhance efforts at national, regional and international level to promote and protect the human rights of women. This year, the Committee will consider the report of the Secretary-General on Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (A/62/201), which was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/143. (Resolution 61/143 also requested that a report be submitted to the General Assembly at its 63rd session containing information provided by Member States on their follow-up activities to implement the resolution.)

The report highlights the Secretary-General's commitment to a stronger and more visible role for the United Nations in efforts to eliminate violence against women. It summarizes the current and future activities of entities of the United Nations system on violence against women and follow-up activities initiated to date to implement the resolution. It provides information on steps taken to widely disseminate the in-depth study and the General Assembly resolution; discusses efforts of the entities of the UN system to achieve greater coordination and collaboration in their work on violence against women, including through the establishment or strengthening of several system-wide initiatives on violence against women; and reviews some of the recent initiatives of UN system entities on violence against women in support of national efforts. The report concludes that, *inter alia*, entities of the United Nations system have stepped up their efforts at addressing violence against women in accordance with their mandates and have developed, or are in the process of developing, a range of initiatives aimed at preventing and eliminating such violence. Entities are strengthening cooperation and collaboration and efforts are also under way to increase the resources available for work on violence against women.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

The biennial report on Violence against women migrant workers (A/62/177), prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/139, analyzes recent activities of Member States, including research, legal measures, policy and programme measures such as development of national strategies and action plans, and prevention and support measures. It notes efforts to ensure the safe repatriation of migrants and to regulate the employment and migration of workers. Activities undertaken by entities of the United Nations system are also reported, including data collection, preparation of studies and publications, implementation of awareness raising campaigns and capacity building initiatives, training activities for migrant women, and women's empowerment programmes. The measures taken over the past two years by intergovernmental bodies, specifically by the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as those of several Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights/Human Rights Council, and of the human rights treaty bodies, are also reviewed.

The report concludes that violence against women migrant workers remains an issue of concern. The need for gender-sensitive international migration policies that support the empowerment of female migrants is noted, including efforts to provide female migrants with independent residency permits, and further assessment of the effectiveness of general legislative

and policy measures in the prevention and elimination of violence against women migrant workers. The report also highlights the need for Member States to ratify international instruments, particularly the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two Protocols, and all relevant ILO Conventions.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

The report on the Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/62/202) is prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/138. Rural women play a critical role in enhancing rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty but are underrepresented in decision-making processes. The report highlights the efforts to incorporate attention to rural women in gender equality policies and strategies as well as in rural development plans and programmes. Little information was, however, provided on efforts to involve rural women in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes.

A number of initiatives to improve the situation of rural women were reported. Efforts have been made to ensure that rural women benefit from social welfare programmes, including public insurance schemes and pensions. Capacity building has been provided to support rural women's entrepreneurship and efforts have been made to increase rural women's access to rural infrastructure, labour-saving devices, training and extension services. A number of promising practices were identified in increasing rural women's access to ICT, including training, improved access to communal ICT facilities or the establishment of specific facilities for women, and support for rural women's use of ICT for income generation and employment creation. Inputs received from UNFPA, not included in the report, highlighted the efforts to address the reproductive health needs of rural women.

Recommendations proposed include ensuring systematic attention to rural women in gender equality policies and action plans, and in rural development policies and programmes, poverty reduction strategies and macroeconomic policies; promoting consultation with and participation of rural women, including indigenous women in the development and implementation of rural development interventions; increasing attention to rural women's employment needs, including the need to expand non-agricultural employment opportunities, in development strategies and poverty eradication strategies; and accelerating the availability and use of infrastructure, such as energy, transport, water and sanitation, and services such as education and health care.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

The report before you under agenda item 63(b), Measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/62/178), was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 61/145. In addition to examining the extent to which intergovernmental bodies have paid attention to gender perspectives in their work, the report also

assesses the impact of the input of the Commission on the Status of Women to discussions within the United Nations system, in response to ECOSOC resolution 2006/9.

At its 61st session, the General Assembly continued to significantly advance the global policy agenda on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls, in particular in relation to violence against women, and advanced the gender mainstreaming strategy in a number of areas. Gender perspectives were more systematically integrated in the outcomes of the Assembly dealing with social development and human rights, but were less prominent in outcomes relating to economic and political issues.

The Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions continued efforts to integrate gender perspectives into their work, within their respective mandates. There is a need, however for more systematic attention to gender perspectives by functional commissions, including through increased consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Commission on the Status of Women continued to play a catalytic role in advancing gender mainstreaming at the national level, in the United Nations system and in intergovernmental processes. The agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission at its 50th session in 2006 provided impetus to the work of the United Nations in a number of ways, for example, by influencing substantive activities at both the policy and operational level; increasing advocacy and awareness-raising activities, and enhancing efforts to improve the representation of women.

Two of the recommendations provided in the report for consideration could be highlighted. First, reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly should facilitate gender-sensitive policy development by more systematically including qualitative gender analysis, quantitative data and concrete recommendations for further action. Second, gender perspectives should be explicitly incorporated in the implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in particular the follow-up to the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on children in 2007, the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development in Qatar in 2008, and the third High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Ghana in 2008.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

The assessment in the Secretary-General's report on incorporation of gender perspectives in intergovernmental processes indicated that the work of this Committee reflected the strongest outcomes on gender equality. It is my hope that your important work on gender equality and the empowerment of women in all agenda items of the Committee will continue to serve as an example for the work of other Committees in the Assembly and other intergovernmental and expert bodies.

In closing, Mr. Chairperson, I wish you and the Committee a productive outcome of your deliberations. I pledge my full support, and that of the Division for the Advancement of Women, for the work of the Committee during this session in moving towards achievement of gender equality as an integral part of the United Nations development agenda.

Thank you.
