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57th Session of the General Assembly

Items 102 &103

Briefing for Delegates

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Division for the Advancement of Women

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Distinguished delegates of the Third Committee,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the informal briefing, which the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women traditionally hold in advance of the consideration of relevant items by the Third Committee. As the Special Adviser is at present absent from the Office, I will cover all the reports of the Secretary-General prepared by the two offices, that are before the Committee under items 102 and 103.

This year, the Third Committee will, as usual, consider jointly the two items dealing with the advancement of women (item 102), and the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (item 103), from 9 to 11 October 2002.

I would like to start with the reports of the Secretary-General prepared under item 102. These are:

- **Report of the Secretary-General on the elimination of all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (document A/57/171);**
- **Report of the Secretary-General on working towards the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour (document A/57/169);**
- **Report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in women and girls (document A/57/170);**
- **Report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/57/406).**

Before turning to each of these reports, I should like to draw your attention to the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/57/38), which is also before the Committee under this agenda item. As distinguished delegates will recall, the Committee held three sessions in the course of 2002, its two regular annual sessions in January and in June, and an exceptional session granted by the General Assembly last year (GA res. 56/229) in order to allow the Committee to reduce the backlog of reports awaiting consideration. In holding these three sessions, the Committee considered the reports of 25 States parties, thereby achieving the goal of reducing the number of reports awaiting consideration. As the exceptional session concluded on 23 August, the annual report of the Committee may be issued somewhat later in the session of the Assembly. Part I of the Committee's report covering the January session is available (A/57/38, Part I).

I will now review the four reports just mentioned.

Report of the Secretary-General on the elimination of all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/57/171).

This report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 55/68 of 4 December 2000, is based, *inter alia*, on information contained in the replies received from Member States and organizations of the United Nations system. It is complemented by the reports of the Secretary-General on working towards the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour (A/57/169) and on trafficking in women and girls (A/51/170), submitted in accordance with, respectively, General Assembly resolutions 55/66 and 55/67 of 4 December 2000.

- The report describes recent activities undertaken by Member States, including legislation, policy-making, and activities to build capacity at the national level and provide support to victims.
- It reviews the measures taken with regard to violence against women within the United Nations system within the past two years by the General Assembly, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights, the human rights treaty bodies and other entities.
- The report also looks at other supportive activities and projects of the organizations of the United Nations system that include training activities for police and other groups, technical assistance and advisory services, awareness-raising campaigns and studies.

The report concludes that:

- Although numerous measures to eliminate violence against women have been introduced and reported, including specific legislation, action plans, provision of support to victims, educating relevant professionals, and rehabilitating offenders, priority attention and dedicated action continues to be needed in the following areas:
 - evaluation of existing legislation and its impact from a gender-sensitive perspective;
 - collection of data disaggregated by sex and age on all forms of violence against women and girls;
 - assessment of policies and programmes and research activities;
 - establishment or strengthening of monitoring and implementation mechanisms;
 - development and implementation of measurable action plans for the short, medium and long term; and
 - making a coordinated analysis of all aspects of the issue, including the positive developments and remaining obstacles.
- Furthermore, given the growing number of actors working to eliminate all forms of violence against women within and outside the United Nations system at all levels, ways to facilitate a useful exchange of emerging results, recommendations and experiences in the field are required.

Let me now turn to the report of the Secretary-General on **working towards the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour (document A/57/169)**

This report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 55/66 of 4 December 2000, is based on information provided by Member States and United Nations entities.

- It describes measures taken by Member States and activities within the United Nations system on working towards the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour, and identifies areas in which further efforts are needed.
- Measures taken include legal and policy responses, programmes to combat all forms of violence against women, including honour crimes, and to support victims, and educational and awareness-raising measures involving, inter alia, the media and non-governmental organizations.

The report concludes that, although attention has been drawn to the issue of crimes against women committed in the name of honour at the international and national levels, the issue has been addressed by intergovernmental and expert bodies within the United Nations system, and some measures have been taken by Member States, the elimination of those acts requires greater efforts, in particular:

- All forms of violence against women and girls committed in the name of honour should be criminalized and all reports of violence against women committed in the name of honour should be promptly, impartially and thoroughly investigated, documented and effectively prosecuted.
- Special training and resources should be provided to law enforcement and other relevant personnel, including judges and legal personnel, in order to impartially and effectively address complaints of violence against women generally and those committed in the name of honour in particular, and to protect women and girls in danger of such violence while respecting their human rights.
- Support to victims and potential victims should be increased, and awareness-raising, information and education campaigns, involving, inter alia, religious and community leaders and the media, directed at change in stereotypical societal attitudes of the behaviour of women and men, are also crucial. Support to non-governmental organizations and other groups working to eliminate violence against women and girls committed in the name of honour should also be intensified.

Thirdly, I turn to the **report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in women and girls (A/57/170)**. Resolution 55/67 adopted by the General Assembly on 4 December 2000, on trafficking in women and girls, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the subject at its fifty-seventh session. The report is based on information provided by Member States, the United Nations entities, and other intergovernmental

organizations, including the International Organization for Migration. It notes the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocols to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Person, Especially Women and Children; and its Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air which were adopted by General Assembly in its resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000 and opened for signature, accession and ratification on 12 December 2000. It also notes the adoption and entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

- The report describes measures taken at the national, regional and international levels to combat trafficking in women and children, including legislation, education policies, and programmes.
- It highlights activities of the United Nations system, as well as efforts to combat trafficking in women and children undertaken by other international bodies, including the International Organization for Migration; the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe; the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women of the Council of Europe and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
- The report describes the activities of intergovernmental bodies in the area of trafficking. It draws attention to measures recommended by the Declaration, Plan of Action and Programme of Action adopted by the special sessions of the General Assembly on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and on children; and of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

The report recommends further actions be taken, including:

- the adoption and enforcement of legal strategies;
- the introduction of training for relevant sectors and supportive measures to ensure adequate support, protection and assistance to victims of trafficking;
- in particular, the report recommends the adoption of bilateral, and multilateral agreements to ensure and facilitate the prosecution of offenders, irrespective of nationality and location.

Lastly, the **report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention**

This report, which is submitted annually to the General Assembly, provides information on a number of aspects concerning the Convention, its Optional Protocol, and the work of the Committee. Specifically, it:

- summarizes the status of the Convention and its Optional Protocol in terms of signatures, ratifications, accessions. It also summarizes changes in the status of reservations during the reporting period;
- reviews the status of reporting, and consideration of reports by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;
- summarizes recent decisions and suggestions of the Committee concerning its working methods; and

- gives an overview of activities to encourage ratification, of technical assistance provided to States parties, and of steps taken to disseminate information about the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

Distinguished delegates,

I now turn to two documents submitted under item 102 that have been prepared by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. These are:

- **Report of the Secretary-General on International Training and Research Institute for the Advancement of Women;**
- **Report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system.**

First of all, allow me to introduce Ms. Savitri Butchey, new Interim Manager/Director of INSTRAW. She is a seasoned manager/practitioner with Headquarters and field experience in development, management and peacekeeping from UNDP and DPKO. Her managerial skills will be critical for the implementation of recommendations of the Working Group.

The report by the Secretary-General on INSTRAW updates information contained in the previous note of the Secretary-General on the situation of INSTRAW (A/57/129-E-2002/77), particularly with regard to the findings and recommendations of the intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Operations of INSTRAW established under General Assembly resolution 56/125, contained in document A/57/330.

The findings of the Working Group, composed of 11 Member States, included in particular that:

- the current situation of INSTRAW is unsustainable and the option of the continuation of the *status quo* not viable;
- INSTRAW be linked to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA);
- the autonomous status of the Institute be abolished;
- the INSTRAW Board of Trustees be replaced with an advisory board; and
- an allocation be made of US\$500,000 from the regular budget for its core activities.

Having noted the recommendations, the Secretary-General is of the view that the most crucial issue for INSTRAW is not its institutional linkage, but its lack of financial resources. It is, therefore, critical that secure and predictable funding is guaranteed if INSTRAW is to continue its operations.

The note also provides a few specific comments on the Working Group's report, including in relation to:

- the status of implementation of the Institute's work programme

- the continuous managerial support and guidance provided to the Institute by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women during the absence of a Director; and
- the Institute's financial situation which continues to worsen.

I now turn to the **Report of the Secretary-General on the status of women in the UN system.**

The report shows that steady, albeit slow progress continues to be made in improving women's representation. In the restricted category of professional staff on geographical appointments, women account for 41 per cent, an increase of 0.8 per cent over last year.

More specifically, in the larger population of staff with appointments of one year or more, women now account for 35 per cent, an increase of 0.4 per cent since the last reporting period. At the D-1 level and above, cumulatively the proportion of women stood at 24.7 per cent, the same as last year. With respect to increases within the Professional levels at the D-2 level, there was appreciable increase of 4.4 per cent. At the USG level the proportion of women has declined by 1.3 per cent (4 women of 38, i.e. 10.5 per cent), whilst a marginal increase of 0.6 per cent (5 women out of 40, i.e. 12.5 per cent) was registered at the ASG level.

The report reviews the percentage of women in peace operations. It notes that while there was an increase in the total number of professional staff with appointments of one year or more assigned to peace operations, the percentage of women decreased by 0.7 per cent (from 24.7 to 24 per cent). At the D1 level and above, women in peace operations constitute only 4.2 per cent (4 out of 92 staff at this level). Moreover, of the 28 peace operations, 24 have no women at these levels.

In terms of achieving 50 per cent gender balance overall, the report notes that this goal has been achieved and exceeded in four departments and offices, while in four others, women account for less than 30 per cent of staff. The former are: OHRM (55.7 per cent); Department of Management (DM) (54.1 per cent); Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts (OPPBA) (52.3 per cent); and Department of Public Information (DPI) (50.4 per cent). The latter are: Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (28.3 per cent), Office of Central Support Services (OCSS) (24.8 per cent), DPKO/FALD (24 per cent) and United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) (17.6 per cent).

With regard to appointments of women against professional and higher level posts, the report shows a decline by 7.5 per cent over the current reporting period from 40.7 per cent in 2001 to 33.2 per cent of all appointments. In terms of promotions, women constituted 44.1 per cent of all promotions during the period, a decline of 3 per cent since last year. Only at the P-2 level was the goal of 50 per cent promotions achieved.

Turning to the status of women in the entities of the UN system, the report shows that within the 28 organizations of the system as a whole, steady but modest progress has been made at the Professional and higher-level category in the period 31 December 1999 and 31 December 2000 (latest data available). An over-all increase of 0.4 per cent has been registered during this period. 15 organizations have registered gains ranging from 0.8 per cent to 16.9 per cent. At the D-1 level and above, nine organizations have shown gains ranging from 0.6 per cent to 11.1 per cent.

The report also discusses the new human resources management system in the Secretariat. Progress towards the attainment of departmental targets set in departmental human resources planning documents will be monitored and evaluated, and performance will be reflected in future reports of the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and to the General Assembly.

I now turn to **item 103, Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**.

The report (A/57/286) before the Committee under this item was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 56/132. It should be noted that under this, and relevant previous resolutions, three reports are prepared annually to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council, and the General Assembly, respectively.

Each of the reports has a specific substantive focus. This focus has gradually changed over the years, in response to intergovernmental mandates and actions, such as resolutions of the General Assembly, ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming, the review of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2000, and more recently, the establishment of a new agenda item in the substantive session of ECOSOC on gender mainstreaming (Council resolution 2001/41).

At present, the report to the Commission on the Status of Women covers activities of the entities of the UN system to mainstream gender perspectives in their work. The report to the ECOSOC assesses the reflection of gender perspectives in the work of the Council and its functional commissions.

This year's report to the General Assembly focuses on the following four areas:

- Attention to gender equality issues in the outcomes of major events during the past year, namely the International Conference on Financing for Development; the Second World Assembly on Ageing; and the special session of the General Assembly on Children. Attention is also paid to gender equality in relation to the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration. (The report was finalized prior to the convening of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.)
- Steps taken by the General Assembly and its main committees during the 56th session in promoting gender equality, as reflected in resolutions.

- Steps taken by the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session of 2002, including work under the new sub-item on gender mainstreaming.
- Discussion of the catalytic role of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in support of gender mainstreaming.

Based on this analysis, the report's recommendations focus on:

- the need to integrate gender perspectives in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, and of follow-up processes to United Nations Conferences and special sessions;
- opportunities for the Assembly to achieve more consistent attention to gender perspectives in all areas of its work; and
- the need to integrate gender perspectives in reporting to the General Assembly in order to support gender-sensitive policy formulation.

I look forward to the consideration, by the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly of these reports, and to the guidance the Member States will be providing under these items.

Thank you.