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Commission on the Status of Women

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Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda

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”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Note by the Secretariat: Outcomes of regional reviews

Summary

In resolution 2006/9, the Economic and Social Council invited the regional commissions to continue to contribute to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women. In March 2010, at its fifty-fourth session, the Commission on the Status of Women will hold a 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. In preparation for this review, the United Nations regional commissions implemented regional review processes. Four regional review meetings were held in October/November 2009, ie, by ESCWA, ECE, ESCAP and ECA. The outcomes of these meetings are contained in the present document. ECLAC’s review meeting will take place in July 2010.



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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN ON ITS FOURTH SESSION

Beirut, 21–23 October 2009

**A resolution on the Follow-up to implementation of the
Beijing Platform for Action in the Arab States after
fifteen years: Beijing + 15**

The Committee on Women in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly Resolutions 60/140 of 16 December 2005, 61/145 of 19 December 2006 and 62/136 of 18 December 2007,

Recalling also the Economic and Social Council Resolution 2005/48 of 27 July 2005, on the Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits,

Cognizant of the reports on the status of Arab women and the appraisal of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: + 15 in Arab countries, particularly the Consolidated Arab Report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the League of Arab States,

Noting with appreciation the progress made by the region towards the implementation of obligations under Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, particularly in health and education, as demonstrated in their responses to the questionnaire addressed by the Secretariat of the United Nations to Governments in this regard,

Expressing satisfaction with the achievements made in recent years in the empowerment of women in the Arab region, which included new legislations to the benefit of women and the ratification of nineteen States of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the withdrawal of some states of their reservations on some provisions of the Convention,

Expressing grave concern with regard to the deteriorating security situation and continuing wars and armed conflicts, which adversely affect the status of women in general and empowerment and sustainable human development in particular,

Expressing grave concern also at the continuing low participation of women in the economic and political fields and the continuing challenges hindering empowerment of women, such as the prevalence of illiteracy, high dropout rates of girls from school, poverty, unemployment, violence against women, and discrimination against women in legislations, in addition to some negative cultural traditions and social customs,

Recognizing the need to intensify efforts to promote empowerment of women and gender equality at the level of Governments, civil society, and United Nations organizations,

1. *Adopts* the Consolidated Arab Report on the Progress Achieved in Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: + 15 of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the League of Arab States, submitted to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York at its fifty-fourth session in March 2010,

2. *Calls on* member countries to:

(a) Emphasise the importance of political will in supporting and promoting gender equality, equity and justice, mainstreaming gender perspectives in policies, strategies and development programmes, and considering advancement of women to be a priority at both national and regional levels;

(b) Increase financial and human resources allocated to policies, programmes and national mechanisms for women, and link the budgets for these to the overall budget;

(c) Promote administrative reform and good governance in both public and private sectors, ensuring employment and job promotion of women;

(d) Coordinate among foreign financing entities to ensure a fair distribution of financing and resolve the various problems facing women of all strata;

(e) Build capacity of the national mechanisms for mainstreaming gender in national policies and engage men and train them in mainstreaming gender in development policies, as well as in women's rights in general;

(f) Network with parliament and enhance participation of women associations and the civil society in addressing problems facing women;

(g) Provide an enabling environment for the application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, raise awareness to women's legal rights, and invite member countries to consider the possibility of acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(h) Continue to review and reform national legislations that discriminate against women, work towards enforcing existing laws, and train people working in legislative and law-enforcement bodies related to women's legal rights;

(i) Establish an information-and-data base disaggregated by gender, analyse and process indicators to identify gender gaps in various sectors, with the aim of making specific policies and strategies for advancing women;

(j) Examine the possibility of establishment of observatories and early-warning systems at the national level to track and analyse social phenomena relating to the status of women, so that societal problems may be remedied before they escalate;

(k) Enhance participation of women in post-conflict development, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and exercise due care towards psychological treatment, rehabilitation and inclusion of women victims of violence in Iraq, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen, through adoption of local action plans to implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000);

(l) Encourage women to enter applied sciences and link their education to market needs, and update curricula and revise textbooks to remove images and ideas that discriminate against women and perpetuate a negative stereotypical image of women;

(m) Enact legislations to raise marriage age, tackle problems that cause girls to drop out of school in order to alleviate female illiteracy and poverty, develop literacy programmes, and enhance qualification and vocational training of women, particularly in rural areas;

(n) Raise the proportion of individuals using computers through promoting programmes aimed at teaching girls to use computers and the internet and develop their computer skills;

(o) Increase the rate of participation of women in the public sector and in administrative and official positions, qualify and train women to assume leadership positions, and enhance their performance;

(p) Increase rate of participation of women in decision-making positions by various means, including through quotas, training women to run for elections, and working towards increasing the number of women ministers;

(q) Provide and develop microfinance and soft loans for women to enable them to support themselves and their families, insure financial risks in order to encourage women to start small projects, provide markets for them, and build their project-management capacities;

(r) Develop health-awareness programmes and health and social insurance schemes for poor women, strengthen and develop social safety nets, and expand provision of protection and rehabilitation services for battered women.

3. *Requests* from ESCWA secretariat the following:

(a) Support the Centre for Women with additional human and financial resources, in order to upgrade it to the level of a division, alongside other divisions of ESCWA, with the aim of doubling efforts to assist member countries with empowerment of women;

(b) Strengthen the capacity of national mechanisms for mainstreaming the gender perspective in policies, plans and programmes, through capacity-building, training, technical assistance and consultation, preparation of studies, and provision of possibilities for inter-communication, and exchange of experiences and lessons of successful experiences;

(c) Strengthen capacity of member countries to implement and monitor the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, through capacity-building of national mechanisms, members of parliament, judicial institutions, civil society and the media, help States to withdraw their reservations on the Convention, and continue to raise awareness of decision makers of the Convention;

(d) Cooperate with the Arab Women Organization to implement a regional strategic plan for advancement of women, and promote the need for reviewing and amending laws to comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(e) Support application of ESCWA guidelines, developed in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, on protection of rights of women living in conflict areas;

(f) Study feasibility of developing an index of gender and development specific to the Arab region, to identify and analyse the nature of the gender gap, with the aim of making specific policies and strategies for advancement of women;

(g) Study feasibility of establishing an observatory and a regional early-warning system, based on a recent information-and-data base disaggregated by gender, to track and analyse social phenomena relating to the status of women, so that societal problems may be remedied before they escalate.



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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

BEIJING +15 REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING

Geneva, 2-3 November 2009

Chairperson's Conclusions

On the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and as part of the Beijing +15 review, ECE member States renew their commitment to the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women and girls that restrict their full participation in development processes. Member States emphasize that the achievement of gender equality is an essential condition for sustainable economic growth, and reaffirm the centrality of gender equality for the universal achievement of all Millennium Development Goals. In this context, member States welcome the forthcoming United Nations gender entity and call for its prompt establishment including at country level.

1. As regards the ECE region, priority fields for action in the past five years have been:
 - (a) legislation to address gender-based violence, including domestic violence and trafficking;
 - (b) women in the economy, mainly through narrowing the gap between female and male employment rates and adopting specific measures to combat women's poverty; and
 - (c) the development and strengthening of national mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. Notable progress has been achieved in most countries regarding:
 - (a) women's participation in the labour market;
 - (b) women's political participation at local levels;
 - (c) new and/or strengthened legislation on gender-based violence, including domestic violence;
 - (d) institutional mechanisms on gender equality and women's empowerment.
3. The challenges most frequently mentioned included:
 - (a) the gap between legislation and implementation;
 - (b) decent work for women and measures to counteract labour market segregation;
 - (c) the gender pay gap;
 - (d) the situation of migrant women and women belonging to minority groups, who suffer multiple forms of discrimination;
 - (e) the persistence of gender stereotypes, especially in the media and in education;
 - (f) the lack of sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data, and the lack of gender-sensitive indicators;
 - (g) the role of men in advancing gender equality, for example through increased sharing of family responsibilities.

4. The following recommendations were highlighted :

(a) Address specific vulnerabilities through:

- (i) enforcing new legislation against gender-based violence, including domestic violence, violence in conflicts and trafficking, and developing prevention, protection and assistance measures for victims, as well as sanctions against perpetrators;
- (ii) combating poverty of women in certain rural areas, including through facilitating ownership of land and productive assets;
- (iii) defending the rights of women migrant workers and those working in the informal sector, especially in terms of personal safety, and working and social rights.

(b) Engender national policies through:

- (i) expanding the breadth and depth of gender-responsive budgeting as one of the main tools for implementing effective gender-sensitive policies;
- (ii) fostering a mix of policies combining mandatory measures, incentives and awareness-building to accelerate the pace towards parity in economic and political decision-making positions;
- (iii) engaging a wide range of actors, including NGOs and the private sector, as a means of implementing and monitoring progress on gender equality. This requires the collection of systematic and reliable sex-disaggregated data and statistics, as well as gender-sensitive indicators;

Dialogue and multi-stakeholder partnerships have an essential role in ensuring that gender equality remains high on the agenda, and Official Development Assistance is a key element in this respect.

(c) Strengthen the situation of women at work through:

- (i) ensuring that employment and social protection policies and practices take into account women's underemployment and the predominance of women in the informal sector, in precarious jobs, in part-time work and in lower paid work;
- (ii) developing a policy mix of encouraging, enabling and obliging measures to advance gender equality in the corporate sector, including gender equality in corporate social responsibility agendas, capacity building and legal frameworks (e. g. quotas, targets, objectives, sanctions and other measures);
- (iii) reconciling work with family responsibilities through legal entitlements such as paid leave for both parents, policy measures to encourage men to meet their family responsibilities, available and affordable quality care for children and dependant adults, and affordable training schemes to facilitate reintegration in the labour market;

- (d) Mitigate the impact of the crisis on women through promoting gender-sensitive analysis of the impact of the crisis and developing countercyclical policies that place priority on job creation and retention, on social sectors such as education, childcare and health, and on protection schemes which benefit the whole population.

The financial crisis can thus be used as an opportunity to design gender-sensitive stimulus packages and social safety nets that involve affordable, quality childcare, parental-leave reform and efforts to close the gender pay gap.



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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

**HIGH-LEVEL INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING TO REVIEW REGIONAL
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND ITS
REGIONAL AND GLOBAL OUTCOMES**

Bangkok, 16-18 November 2009

**Bangkok Declaration on
Beijing +15**

We, the Representatives of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, meeting in Bangkok from 16 to 18 November 2009 for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Its Regional and Global Outcomes, organized as part of the Asia-Pacific regional preparatory process, adopt the following declaration:

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,¹ adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,² and deeply convinced that the Beijing Declaration is an important contribution to the advancement of women worldwide in the achievement of gender equality which must be translated into effective actions by all States, the United Nations system and other relevant organizations,

Affirming that gender equality and the promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all are essential to advance development, peace and security,

Acknowledging the call for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, as set forth in the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,³

Also recalling Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, 1820 (2008) of 19 June 2008, 1888 (2009) of 30 September 2009, and 1889 (2009) of 5 October 2009 on women, peace and security and other relevant United Nations resolutions,

Also recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁴ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,⁵ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁶ the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination,⁷ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,⁸ the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁹ and other relevant human rights instruments,

Noting the participation of civil society organizations in the preparations for the Asia-Pacific Review of Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;

Commending the Executive Secretary of ESCAP for re-establishing the Regional Coordination Mechanism's Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, which has contributed to enhanced coordination and coherence among regional United Nations partners in the advancement of women and gender equality as a means to promote sustainable and inclusive development in the region;

¹ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Special Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/S-23/13)*.

³ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

⁵ See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

⁶ See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

⁷ See General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of 21 December 1965.

⁸ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

Welcoming the proposed changes in the United Nations gender architecture to support progress on gender equality and women's empowerment at the global level, and noting the need for the new global entity to cooperate closely with ESCAP at the regional level, through, among other things, the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism;

Expressing concern that:

(a) While the region has established itself as an economic powerhouse and experienced rapid economic growth, inequalities have grown in many countries and women have disproportionate representation among the poor, and this has been exacerbated during the recent financial crisis;

(b) While women make strong economic contributions, they also comprise the majority of temporary, low paid, and low-skilled workers in the region, often working without any form of social protection, which increases their vulnerability to discrimination;

(c) Women continue to bear the major responsibility for unpaid work, particularly care giving work, and this contributes to weaker labour market attachment for women, weaker access to social security benefits and less time for education/training, leisure and self-care and political activities;

(d) While gender parity has been achieved by some countries in girls and women's education, there is still a substantial need for progress in large parts of the region;

(e) Improvements in girls and women's education have not been systematically translated into greater economic opportunities for many women in the region, and women on average are paid considerably less than men and underemployed;

(f) Factors such as culturally ingrained son preference, sex-selective abortion, female infanticide, the disproportionate impact of malnutrition on girls, early marriage, child prostitution and the commercial sexual exploitation of children continue to undermine the rights of girls and limit their potential;

(g) While there has been some welcomed progress in increasing women's representation in politics, through, among other things, quotas or reserved seats for women in a number of countries, there continue to be low levels of women's representation in politics, and few countries in the region have reached the 30 per cent target representation level established by the Economic and Social Council;

(h) Some parts of the region have unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality, and there has been a lack of progress in the region on women's reproductive health and rights;

(i) There has been an alarming rise in new HIV infections among women from spouses and intimate partners in the region, and that the regional coverage of anti-retroviral drugs and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV treatment for both men and women remain below the global average;

(j) Despite strong progress by some countries in the region in combating trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, trafficking continues to be prevalent in the region;

(k) Not all countries in the region are parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(l) Discriminatory practices, violations of women's and girl's rights and impunity – especially with regard to violence – persist in countries of the region, and enactment and implementation of domestic laws to address discrimination and violence against women should remain a priority;

(m) While information and communication technologies (ICTs) have brought considerable benefits to women in the region, women still lack equal access, and these technologies have also aided the proliferation of pornography and sexualized, disparaging and violent imagery of women on the Internet, and are creating new forms of exploitation of women, including its use in facilitating and organizing the trafficking of women and children;

(n) While women are largely responsible for natural resource management in the household, they have been excluded from developing, planning and implementing environmental policies when women are, in fact, together with children and the elderly, among the most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change;

(o) While women living in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations have special needs and play an important role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, they are still underrepresented in decision-making in conflict and post-conflict situations;

1. We, the Representatives of the members and associate members of ESCAP, reaffirm our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

2. In making this reaffirmation, we commit to the following concerted actions:

(a) To intensify efforts towards the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and to overcome obstacles encountered in their implementation;

(b) To promote active mainstreaming of a gender perspective, among other things, in the design, implementation and evaluation of regional, national and local policies and programmes, including the development of gender analysis tools for the effective monitoring and assessment of gender gains and gaps;

(c) To strengthen the role of national machineries and other institutional mechanisms that work towards the advancement of women and gender equality, through, among other things, definite commitment of financial and other appropriate assistance, and ensuring adequate and appropriate staff and resources;

(d) To take effective action towards the creation of an enabling environment at the national level by ensuring the participation of women on an equal basis with men at all levels of decision-making necessary to ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of life;

(e) To undertake full and effective action for the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, recognizing that gender equality is a goal in its own right and is central to all other goals;

(f) To promote joint responsibility of men and boys with women and girls in the promotion of gender equality, including in areas such as domestic and care-giving work and responsibilities, and addressing stereotypical attitudes and behaviour;

(g) To implement economic policies that are designed and monitored with the full and equal participation of women within the overall framework of achieving sustainable development and ensure poverty eradication programmes, especially for women, in particular during periods of economic hardship;

(h) To strengthen or establish accountability mechanisms that promote gender responsiveness in national policymaking, planning and public expenditure management through financial allocations and public spending which effectively advance women's economic, social, political and cultural rights;

(i) To intensify support for statistical capacity-building efforts on the generation of gender statistics and to provide timely, reliable and disaggregated data by sex, ethnicity, age and location and the development of methodologies for the collection and processing of these gender statistics; and to ensure that gender statistics inform policy and programme decisions and effectively monitor and assess gender gains and gaps;

(j) To contribute to collaborative approaches and strategies aimed at protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of women workers, in particular women in the informal sector, rural women, and migrant workers;

(k) To address the persistent discrimination and serious human rights violations against female migrants;

(l) To strengthen the provision of and ensure equal access to adequate, affordable and accessible public and social services, including education and training at all levels, as well as to all types of permanent and sustainable social protection/social security systems for women throughout their life cycle, and supporting national efforts in this regard;

(m) To enhance women's entrepreneurial potential by providing them with access to and control over resources, including knowledge and skills training, trade opportunities and technologies;

(n) To review and, as appropriate, revise national policies, programmes and legislation to ensure high-quality, affordable and accessible health care and services for all women, taking into account the diverse needs of women, and to undertake key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,¹⁰ paying particular attention to achieving the specific benchmarks to reduce maternal mortality, to increase the proportion of births assisted by skilled attendants, to provide the widest achievable range of safe and effective family planning and contraceptive methods and to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS;

¹⁰ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

- (o) To intensify efforts to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls, provide protection to the survivors, investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls, and engage men and boys, as well as community and faith-based organizations, in eliminating violence against women;
- (p) To elaborate and ensure that capacities and resources are available to implement multisectoral national strategies to eliminate violence against women, including measures to combat all forms of trafficking in women and girls;
- (q) To address and develop measures to combat ICT-related violence and exploitation of women;
- (r) To include a gender perspective and harness the active participation of women in the development of ICTs;
- (s) To ensure the protection of women and girls, in particular against sexual violence, during and after armed conflicts, in accordance with the obligation of States under international humanitarian law and international human rights law;
- (t) To ensure the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution;
- (u) To mainstream a gender perspective in environmental, disaster management and climate change adaptation programmes;
- (v) To ensure that women's needs and knowledge of natural systems are used in the development, planning and implementation of environmental policies, including adaptation strategies;
- (w) To strengthen agricultural policies and mechanisms to incorporate a gender perspective, and in cooperation with civil society, support farmers, particularly rural women, with education and training programmes, as well as to strengthen the dissemination of information to them that would enable them to access services and resources for improving productivity;
- (x) To consider ratifying or acceding to, as a particular matter of priority, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol,¹¹ limit the extent of any reservations, and withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention or otherwise incompatible with the relevant treaty;
- (y) To promote, protect and respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, through, among other things, the full implementation of obligations under all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- (z) To continue efforts to repeal laws and eradicate policies and practices that discriminate against women and girls, and to adopt laws and promote practices that protect their rights and promote gender equality;

¹¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2131, No. 20378.

(aa) To increase partnerships with civil society and the private sector for the promotion of gender equality, and to support the role and contribution of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations and women's organizations, in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly;

(bb) To review regularly the further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and, in 2015, to bring together all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to assess progress and challenges, specify targets and consider new initiatives as appropriate twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action;

(cc) To strengthen regional and subregional dialogue and cooperation among members and associate members of the Commission as well as other relevant stakeholders on policy options and issues crucial to the region and for conveying the regional voice of Asia and the Pacific in global processes;

3. Request the Executive Secretary of ESCAP making effective use of the existing resources and mobilizing additional voluntary resources as necessary to:

(a) Strengthen the role of ESCAP in supporting members and associate members in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and the recommendations of the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Its Regional and Global Outcomes;

(b) Mainstream gender dimensions into all subprogrammes under the ESCAP programme of work;

(c) Provide members and associate members, upon request, with technical assistance to build national capacity to mainstream a gender perspective and a rights-based approach in all programmes, through, among other things, mechanisms and processes, such as gender budgeting, gender auditing, sex-disaggregated data and monitoring and performance indicators;

(d) Support members and associate members in ratification/acceding to and/or implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(e) Mobilize the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism to further develop mechanisms and plans to promote action to combat violence against women and trafficking in women and children, including a coordinated regional response and follow-up activities on the Secretary-General's Campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women;

(f) Strengthen the coordination role of ESCAP as the Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism in serving to achieve further synergies on the advancement of women and gender equality among United Nations entities in the region;

(g) Submit the present outcome document to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-fourth session and to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for consideration at its sixty-sixth session.



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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

EIGHTH AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN (BEIJING + 15)

Banjul, The Gambia, 19 – 20 November 2009

**Banjul Declaration on the Strategies for Accelerating
the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms
for Action**

From Commitment to Action

We, African Ministers Responsible for Gender and Women’s Affairs, meeting in Banjul (Gambia) from 19 to 20 November 2009 for the fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action under the overall theme “From Commitment to Action”;

Building on the 1999 and 2004 reviews of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action which led to the adoption of subregional and national action plans to redress gender imbalances, and which emphasized the need for gender-sensitive, participatory and inclusive poverty reduction strategies and the promotion and protection of the human rights of women, with emphasis on the definition, development and implementation of legal and policy frameworks;

Acknowledging the progress that has been achieved, in particular in women’s representation in decision-making, and gender parity in education;

Endorsing the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action made by the expert session held from 16 to 18 November 2009 in Banjul, The Gambia during the Eighth Africa Regional Conference on Women (Beijing + 15), which confirm that progress in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern has been uneven;

Inspired by international, regional and subregional declarations, protocols and conventions, including the 2000 Millennium Declaration, which aim to promote and strengthen women’s empowerment and accelerate the attainment of gender equity and equality as part of overall human rights;

Recognizing the interrelationships among gender equality, women’s empowerment, human rights, economic growth and sustainable development;

Further recognize the Meeting of the African Union experts responsible for gender and women’s affairs and take note of outcomes of the African Women’s NGOs Consultative Meeting held on the margins of the Eighth African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing + 15);

Concerned that new challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation; food and energy crises; financial and economic crises; and the feminization of trafficking and migration can negatively affect the progress made;

Recognizing that progress towards gender equality, gender equity and women’s empowerment can be achieved by addressing the structural and root causes of gender inequality through the enactment and enforcement of constitutional and legal instruments, taking into account the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other international, regional and subregional instruments such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development;

Convinced of the need to establish and strengthen institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and budgeting in all policies and programmes, rooted in a human-centred vision of development and the promotion and protection of women’s human rights;

Affirming the critical importance of the principles, objectives and goals of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action for women’s advancement, gender equality, gender equity,

sustainable development and poverty eradication in Africa, which will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

Stressing the importance of committed and effective leadership at all levels and the role of women and men in promoting the required changes in attitudes, behaviours and practices that limit women's and girls' rights, capabilities and access to opportunities;

Encouraging the regional economic communities and other subregional statutory organs to be fully engaged in the implementation and monitoring of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action;

Appreciating the importance of establishing partnerships with all stakeholders, including ministries of finance and economic planning and other line ministries, civil society, the private sector, workers' organizations, community and religious leaders, research and academic institutions, local governments, the media, the international community, and men and boys, and calling upon them to further support national efforts to address the critical areas of concern of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and to consider women as a strategic driving force;

1. *Emphasize* our commitment to fully implement international, regional and subregional agreements and initiatives whose objectives are in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and the Millennium Development Goals;

2. *Are committed* to renewing and intensifying our resource mobilization efforts, improving national strategies, and enhancing institutional, financial and human resources in order to accelerate the achievement of the goals of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action as well as the Millennium Development Goals between now and 2015;

3. *Are committed* to focusing our actions on the following strategic areas:

1. Economic empowerment of women through poverty reduction, employment creation, social protection and use of information and communications technology:

1.1 Promote the sustainable economic empowerment of women by ensuring and reinforcing their right and access to timely and relevant information, training, ownership and control of productive resources; promoting entrepreneurship; creating employment opportunities for women through skills and business development and enhanced employability; and improving the agricultural productivity of rural women by providing them with advanced and appropriate technologies.

1.2 Nurture the economic independence of women from an early age by adopting a holistic approach and ensuring that young women, in particular those with disabilities, have access to secondary and tertiary education and professional training, including access to information and communications technology, and science and technology; using incentives and social protection measures to reduce the dropout rate among girls, particularly poor girls and pregnant adolescents; and protecting the girl-child from violence and early and forced marriage.

1.3 Develop and strengthen monitoring, evaluation and information systems, as well

as capacities for analysing linkages between gender and economic development by focusing on sex-disaggregated data collection, production, analysis and dissemination; and undertaking studies on the formal, informal and agricultural sectors.

2. Peace, security and development

- 2.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive action plan that will include domestication of relevant international and regional resolutions and protocols, including United Nations Security Council resolutions S/RES/1325 (2000), S/RES/1820 (2008), S/RES/1888 (2009), and S/RES/1889 (2009) on women, peace and security; advocacy for change using the media and traditional communication channels; reform of legal and judicial systems and security institutions; research; and adoption of an early warning system;
- 2.2 Promote capacity-building and peer-learning in conflict prevention and resolution, and in human rights protection and promotion for government officials, parliamentarians, women, men, youth, media, security services, the judiciary, and community leaders;
- 2.3 Adopt measures such as the provision of psychological support and the creation of reparation and compensation funds to secure the full reintegration and rehabilitation of victims; promote the effective reintegration of ex-combatants; strengthen protection and assistance to women refugees, internally displaced women and children, and female returnees; and protect girls and women from trafficking.

3. Violence against women

Adopt and implement a multi-sectoral plan to address gender-based violence, within the framework of the United Nations Secretary-General's "UNite to End Violence against Women and Girls" campaign, with particular emphasis on its Africa component, and underpinned by the following actions:

- (i) Enactment and strengthening of laws to address violence against women; social mobilization, including the launching of zero-tolerance campaigns; literacy, including legal and functional literacy for women and men, as well as education for girls and women; partnership with civil society; provision of social support and compensation to victims of violence; creation and/or strengthening of networks of women lawyers; provision of psychological support to women affected by violence; and targeted actions for men and boys to act as agents and partners of change.
- (ii) Capacity-building, including the training of law enforcement agents and health services personnel for the effective application and enforcement of relevant laws and policies; provision of adequate support to social welfare institutions, the police and the judiciary; enhanced outreach services, especially at the community level; and sensitization of parliamentarians.
- (iii) Integration of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms into subregional and national action plans based on in-depth studies of the structural causes of

violence against women. Development of relevant indicators and set baseline as well as undertake national prevalence surveys to assist in measuring progress and ensuring accountability.

4. Representation and participation of women in all areas of decision-making

- 4.1 Adopt and implement affirmative action measures, notably quotas for gender parity, and set up institutional mechanisms supported by adequate resources to increase women's representation in decision-making bodies, as provided for in international, regional and subregional instruments, and underpinned by constitutional guarantees and legislative provisions on gender parity.
- 4.2 Reform the electoral systems and internal leadership selection procedures of the public sector and political parties/organizations, in order to increase women's participation; encourage private sector institutions to become more gender-responsive, and promote gender parity in leadership and decision-making.
- 4.3 Develop capacity enhancement programmes to transform negative socio-cultural attitudes and perceptions towards female leadership; strengthen networking and collaboration among women's groups; and enhance inter-generational communication.
- 4.4 Ensure responsibility and accountability at the highest level of leadership, in both the public and the private sectors, using monitoring and evaluation systems such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, when applicable, and involving the media and civil society.
- 4.5 Foster and enhance solidarity among women to support women running for office at local, national, regional and global levels.

5. Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS

- 5.1 Strengthen health systems with measures and incentives to retain medical personnel; avoid the brain drain; train middle-level health providers; facilitate their presence in rural areas; promote sexual and reproductive health services in order to better address the consequences of unsafe abortions; and provide sex education and services for the sexual and reproductive health of the youth;
- 5.2 Reduce maternal mortality by two thirds by 2015 through effective and coordinated community management of pregnancy-related interventions and increased availability of emergency obstetric care services and skilled attendance during pregnancy, delivery, and post-delivery, as underscored by the 2009 African Union Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA);
- 5.3 Reposition reproductive health including family planning as a development priority in order to increase access to family planning, especially in rural areas, based on culturally sensitive approaches, community mobilization and men's engagement; and ensure that adequate budgets are available to sustain and expand maternal and child health and family planning services, as well as the prevention

of obstetric fistula and early detection of reproductive cancers at all levels of health-care delivery systems;

- 5.4 Mainstream gender into integrated maternal and child health services, including sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS programmes, to address the vulnerability of women and girls, ensure their access to prevention, treatment and care, and facilitate access to and use of female and male condoms.

6. Climate change and food security

- 6.1 Develop gender-responsive policies on climate change which focus on agriculture, water resource management, energy, forest use and management, as well as transportation and technology transfer for improved food security.
- 6.2 Develop agricultural policies and programmes that address the differentiated impacts of climate change, in particular the impact on women.
- 6.3 Support the integration of gender into existing and upcoming scientific research on climate change with a particular focus on the collection and use of sex- and gender-disaggregated data, and the development of knowledge-sharing and peer-learning networks at subregional and regional levels.
- 6.4 Call on the upcoming Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change to take full account of gender dimensions and come up with gender-responsive measures.

7. Financing for gender equality

- 7.1 Institutionalize gender-responsive budgeting aligned with national development priorities and poverty reduction programmes, to support the financing of gender equality at subnational and national levels.
- 7.2 Develop financing mechanisms, including alternative sources of funding, and ensure the allocation of funds at subnational and national levels; establish a stimulus package that targets women; and monitor the effective utilization and impact of financing on gender equality.
- 7.3 Develop capacity-building programmes for the training and mentoring of parliamentary and government authorities on gender-responsive budgeting.
- 7.4 Strengthen national gender mechanisms by transforming gender focal points into gender teams that perform planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring functions for the mainstreaming of gender equality into all activities of ministries at subnational and national levels.

In undertaking the above actions:

- (i) We call on our Governments to allocate adequate resources to accelerate the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action.
- (ii) We call on our international partners, both bilateral and multilateral, including organizations of the United Nations system, to provide adequate technical and

financial support for our development efforts and to move swiftly to implement their commitments from the Accra Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness.

- (iii) We call on the African Union Commission, the United Nations system, the African Development Bank and the Regional Economic Communities to strengthen their coordination and harmonization processes with regard to the implementation of the priorities identified in this Ministerial Declaration, including that of facilitating South-South collaboration and exchange of experiences and best practices.
- (iv) We further call on the African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to annually monitor and report on progress made in implementing the relevant development programmes and plans, and to ensure that the follow-up to the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action is included in the work plan of the Committee on Women and Development of the Economic Commission for Africa.
- (v) We call on the United Nations Secretary-General to swiftly implement General Assembly resolution A/RES/63/311 related to the establishment of a new gender entity through the consolidation of four entities, namely the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), to enable countries to receive the necessary technical and financial support to achieve gender equality.

In preparation for the 20th anniversary of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, we will assess the implementation of these two instruments, taking into account any relevant procedures that will be established.

We pledge to implement these commitments in order to achieve our development goals within the next five years.