

2004/12

Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peace-building

The Economic and Social Council,

Endorses the following agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session with respect to women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peace-building:

1. The Commission on the Status of Women recalls and reiterates the strategic objectives and actions of the Beijing Declaration¹ and Platform for Action,² the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",³ and its agreed conclusions on women and armed conflict adopted at its forty-second session in 1998. It also recalls the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,⁴ Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolution 58/142 of 22 December 2003 on women and political participation.

2. The Commission calls for the full respect of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the four Geneva Conventions of 1949,⁵ in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

3. The Commission calls for the promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls at all times, including during conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building. It further calls for protection and security for women and girls under threat of violence and their freedom of movement and participation in social, political and economic activities.

4. The Commission recognizes that the root causes of armed conflict are multidimensional in nature and thus require a comprehensive and integrated approach to the prevention of armed conflict.

5. International cooperation based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations enhances women's full and equal participation in conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building and contributes to the promotion of sustainable and durable peace.

6. To achieve sustainable and durable peace, the full and equal participation of women and girls and the integration of gender perspectives in all aspects of

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, annex I.

² Ibid., annex II.

³ General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peace-building is essential. Yet women continue to be underrepresented in the processes, institutions and mechanisms dealing with these areas. Further effort is therefore needed to promote gender equality and ensure women's equal participation at all levels of decision-making in all relevant institutions. Further effort, including consideration of adequate resourcing, is also needed to build and consolidate the capacity of women and women's groups to participate fully in these processes, as well as to promote understanding of the essential role of women. In this regard, the international community should use lessons learned from actual experience to identify and overcome barriers to women's equal participation.

7. The Commission recognizes that while both men and women suffer from the consequences of armed conflict, there is a differential impact on women and girls, who are often subject to, and affected by, particular forms of violence and deprivation. The Commission calls for measures to prevent gender-based violence, including sexual violence against women and girls, as well as trafficking in human beings, especially trafficking in women and girls, arising from armed conflict and in post-conflict situations and to prosecute perpetrators of such crimes.

8. The Commission encourages the collection and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and information for planning, evaluation and analysis in order to promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peace-building.

9. Peace agreements provide a vehicle for the promotion of gender equality and the participation of women in post-conflict situations. Significant opportunities for women's participation arise in the preparatory phase leading up to a peace agreement. The content of a peace agreement likewise offers significant scope for ensuring that the rights, concerns and priorities of women and girls are fully addressed. Finally, once a peace agreement has been concluded, its implementation should be pursued with explicit attention to women's full and equal participation and the goal of gender equality.

10. Women's full and equal participation and the integration of gender perspectives are crucial to democratic electoral processes in post-conflict situations. A gender-sensitive constitutional and legal framework, especially electoral laws and regulations, is necessary to ensure that women can fully participate in such processes. Political parties can play a crucial role in promoting women's equal participation. Steps are also necessary to ensure that women participate fully in, and that a gender perspective is incorporated throughout, the design and implementation of voter and civic education programmes and in election administration and observation.

11. Governments in particular, as well as the United Nations system, especially those United Nations entities having a mandate with regard to peace and security, and other relevant international, regional and national actors, including civil society, have a responsibility for advancing gender equality and ensuring women's full and equal participation in all aspects of peace processes and in post-conflict peace-building, reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation, where they are participants in these processes.

12. In regard to conflict prevention, the Commission on the Status of Women calls on Governments, as well as all other relevant participants in these processes:

(a) To improve the collection, analysis and inclusion of information on women and gender issues as part of conflict prevention and early warning efforts;

(b) To ensure better collaboration and coordination between efforts to promote gender equality and efforts aimed at conflict prevention;

(c) To support capacity-building, especially for civil society, in particular for women's organizations, in order to increase community commitment to conflict prevention;

(d) To continue to make resources available nationally and internationally for the prevention of conflict and ensure women's participation in the elaboration and implementation of strategies for preventing conflict.

13. In regard to peace processes, the Commission on the Status of Women calls on Governments, as well as all other relevant participants in these processes:

(a) To promote women's full, equal and effective participation as actors in all peace processes, in particular negotiation, mediation and facilitation;

(b) To ensure that peace agreements address, from a gender perspective, the full range of security aspects, including legal, political, social, economic and physical, and also address the specific needs and priorities of women and girls;

(c) To ensure, in the implementation phase of a peace agreement, that all provisions concerning gender equality and the participation of women are fully complied with and that all provisions of the peace agreement, including those concerning demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and rehabilitation, are implemented in a manner that promotes gender equality and ensures women's full and equal participation;

(d) To promote women's full and equal access to public information relative to peace processes;

(e) To review, on a regular basis, their contributions to the promotion of gender equality and the full and equal participation of women, and to fulfil their monitoring, accountability and reporting obligations in the implementation of peace agreements;

(f) With regard to gender mainstreaming, to ensure and support the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making and implementation in development activities and peace processes, including conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, peace-making, peacekeeping and peace-building and, in this regard, support the involvement of women's organizations, community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations;

(g) To develop and strengthen the provision of gender advisory capacity and gender sensitive training programmes for all staff in missions relating to armed conflicts.

In this regard, the Commission takes note of the report of the Secretary-General.⁶

14. In regard to post-conflict peace-building, the Commission on the Status of Women calls on Governments, as well as all other relevant participants in these processes,

Concerning elections:

(a) To ensure equal access of women in all stages of the electoral process and to consider the adoption of measures for increasing women's participation in elections through, inter alia, individual voter registration, temporary gender-specific positive actions and access to information, representation on bodies administering elections and as election monitors and observers, as well as encouraging political parties to involve women fully and equally in all aspects of their operations;

(b) To ensure equal access for women to voter and civic education, to provide women candidates with full support, training and financial resources and to eliminate discriminatory practices hampering women's participation either as voters or candidates.

Concerning reconstruction and rehabilitation:

(a) To ensure the full participation of women on an equal basis in the reconstruction and rehabilitation process;

(b) To ensure the equal access of women to social services, in particular in the areas of health and education, and, in this regard, to promote the provision of adequate health care and health services, assistance for women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations and counselling for post-conflict trauma;

(c) To facilitate equal employment opportunities for women to achieve economic empowerment.

15. The realization and the achievement of the goals of gender equality, development and peace need to be supported by the allocation of the necessary human, financial and material resources for specific and targeted activities to ensure gender equality at the local, national, regional and international levels, as well as by enhanced and increased international cooperation.

16. The Commission on the Status of Women requests the Secretary-General to disseminate the present agreed conclusions widely, including to the high-level panel on global security threats and reform of the international system.

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21 July 2004*