

**Draft policy messages from ECOSOC Special Event on Engaging Philanthropy to Promote Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**

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President Ali, Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to address you today to present the key policy outcomes of the Council's Special Event on Engaging Philanthropy to Promote Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women held in New York on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February. This Special Event was co-organized by the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, the UN Office for Partnerships, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and in collaboration with the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy.

On behalf of the organizers, I am pleased to use this occasion to launch the Final Report of the Meeting. The report reflects the main elements of the discussions held on the two priority themes of ending violence against women and girls and promoting economic empowerment of women, and puts forward important recommendations for action. Copies of this publication were made available earlier today and additional copies are available here in the room.

The Special Event brought together over 500 representatives from the private sector, philanthropic institutions, NGOs and academia, who participated in discussions with Member States and experts from the United Nations system on ending violence against women and girls and promoting the economic empowerment of women through innovative partnerships.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon observed in his remarks at the Special Event, "Women are the weavers of society—they are the breadwinners, they are the caretakers, the peacemakers.....realizing the Millennium Development Goals depend fundamentally on the empowerment of women".

Distinguished delegates,

We all agreed at the meeting that it is critical to engage all sides and work hand-in-hand with Governments, the United Nations, Philanthropies, the Private Sector, leading individuals and members of other civil society groups, if we are to make progress in ending violence against women and girls and promoting their economic empowerment.

We agreed that strong leadership was indispensable in both the public and private sectors. CEOs should promote and inculcate a culture of respect for women and girls and encourage their leadership potential.

Governments and international institutions should put in place and implement legally binding legislation to protect, prevent and prosecute those guilty of violence against women and girls.

We also agreed that there has to be additional human and financial resources in support of good practices that work. It was also agreed that documenting these practices and sharing them through different platforms would be highly beneficial.

One of these good practices is “multifunctional centres” for women and girls which we felt should be scaled up in and across countries. Hasbro’s multiservice centres in Afghanistan and Sudan, which are being run in partnership with NGOs, were cited as specific examples of providing a range of services that help women and girls cope with violence while at the same time creating opportunities in the local economy.

Investing in girls and empowering them as agents of change was also considered to be crucial for ending violence against women and girls and promoting their economic empowerment over the long-term.

We also underlined the importance of making long-term commitments to women and girls by giving more, and doing so through the multi-year funding of programmes. We felt that this approach would make those programmes that have demonstrated results more sustainable and provide opportunities for scaling them up in other communities, countries and regions.

In both dialogues, we agreed that the involvement of men and boys in campaigns to end violence against women and in changing attitudes towards women’s traditional roles in the household and the economy at large is a “game-changer”. The White Ribbon Campaign, which has become the world’s single largest effort of men and boys working to end violence against women in over sixty countries, was cited as an excellent example of a successful civil society initiative. Similarly,

the recently formed Network of Men Leaders under the leadership of the Secretary-General is another solid example on which to build.

On the issue of women's economic empowerment, we stressed the importance of enhancing their access to property and economic assets, including agricultural inputs, finance and markets, while initiating legal reform to protect their property and land rights. We urged that these opportunities be supported by local governments.

It was also recognized that education and training for women and girls is indispensable for making these opportunities viable. We also underlined that as more women are integrated into the work force, increased efforts to implement decent working conditions, such as labor standards and freedom from harassment would be critical for success.

One example is "Business for Social Responsibility" (BSR), which provides advice to companies in developing countries on how to organize health awareness training in their factories. These companies have found results that help their bottom-line as the rate of absenteeism among women declines significantly and production targets can be more easily met.

I had the honor of delivering the closing address at this very important meeting, and I would like to take the opportunity to again thank the President of ECOSOC for inviting me to do so. As the founder of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, I discussed how stark gender inequality and disempowering female images in television and movies aimed at children are a powerful force in shaping how women and girls are viewed in the world; and how improving gender representation can be a critical component of influencing and changing attitudes toward women and girls, especially in media aimed at young children, who are just developing a sense of their role in society.

This is a brief and incomplete summary of the very rich discussions at the Special Event.

Thank you for your kind attention.