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### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-fourth session

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Agenda item 3 (c)

**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”: gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters**

**Belarus, Chile, Colombia, Norway and Panama: draft resolution**

#### **Women’s economic empowerment**

*The Commission on the Status of Women,*

*Reaffirming* the goals, objectives and commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,<sup>1</sup> entitled Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century,

*Reaffirming* the commitments related to women’s economic empowerment contained in the relevant outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women,

*Recalling* relevant international commitments that contribute to women’s economic and social empowerment, made at the major United Nations Conferences and Summits, including at the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, at the Millennium Summit held in 2000, the 2005 World Summit<sup>2</sup> and at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, held in Doha in 2008,

*Bearing in mind* that women’s economic empowerment is crucial in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals,

*Recalling* the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

*Recalling also* all relevant General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions pertaining to issues related to women’s economic empowerment,

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<sup>1</sup> See resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

<sup>2</sup> See resolution 60/1.

*Reaffirming* the commitment of States to place people at the centre of development and direct our economies to meet human needs more effectively, and to recognize that empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their own capacities is a main objective of development and its principal resource,

*Expressing deep concern* about the increasing feminization of poverty and *emphasizing* that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty and that the implementation of special measures aimed at empowering women can help to achieve this, and *further recognizing* that women's poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources, lack of access to education and support services and their minimal participation in the decision-making process,

*Concerned* that women's economic empowerment is constrained by gender inequalities and disparities in economic power sharing, unequal distribution of unremunerated work between women and men, lack of technological and financial support for women's entrepreneurship, unequal access to, and control over, capital, particularly land and credit and access to labour markets, as well as all harmful traditional and customary practices,

*Noting* that there is increasing recognition that women's economic empowerment is a key factor that contributes to sustainable economic development and to women's full enjoyment of all human rights, including the right to development,

*Recalling* that in the agreed conclusions on "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women" adopted in 2008,<sup>3</sup> and on "Eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle, in a globalizing world" adopted in 2002, the Commission on the Status of Women noted the growing body of evidence demonstrating that investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth and that increasing women's economic empowerment is central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals including to the eradication of poverty,

*Reaffirming* that in order to ensure women's empowerment in the economy and their economic advancement, adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels, as well as new and additional resources to the developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources, for the advancement of women and their economic empowerment, will also be required,

*Expressing deep concern* over the negative impact of the global economic and financial crisis and of the food crisis and ongoing food insecurity which could hamper progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,

*Recalling* the importance that recovery measures should take into account the negative impact of the financial and economic crisis on women and men and integrate gender equality concerns in all response measures,

*Bearing in mind* that in the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development,<sup>4</sup> Heads of State and Government and high representatives recalled, inter alia, that gender equality and empowerment of women are essential for economic growth, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and development effectiveness and reiterated the need for gender mainstreaming into the formulation and implementation of development policies, including financing for development policies, and for dedicated resources,

*Recalling* the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (Convention No. 100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (Convention No. 111) and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (Convention No. 156) of the International Labour Organization,

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<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 7 (E/2008/27)*, chap. I, sect. A.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution 63/239, annex.

*Bearing in mind* that despite the increase of women's access to economic opportunities, hundreds of millions of women are dependent on subsistence and small-holder agriculture and employment in the informal sector, where they are more likely to have low paid jobs, with limited or no social protection and deficient protection of their labour rights,

*Recognizing* that the full integration of women into the formal economy, in particular, into economic decision-making, means changing the current gender-based division of labour into new economic structures where women and men enjoy equal treatment, pay and power, including sharing of paid and unpaid work,

*Remaining* concerned about the lingering negative consequences, including for women's economic empowerment, of some structural adjustment programmes, stemming from inappropriate design and application,

*Recognizing* the crucial role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating poverty, inter alia, adding value to local agricultural produce,

*Underlining* the importance of strengthening domestic financial sectors as a source of capital by making them inclusive to women living in poverty, in particular women living in poverty and women living in rural and/or remote areas, thus expanding their access to financial services,

*Reiterating* that access to microfinance and microcredit and to formal finance services can contribute to the achievement of the goals and targets of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,<sup>5</sup> in particular the goals relating to poverty eradication, gender equality and the empowerment of women,

*Reaffirming* that microfinance, in particular microcredit programmes, has succeeded in generating productive self-employment and has proved to be an effective tool in overcoming poverty, and bearing in mind that microfinance, including microcredit, savings and other financial instruments, have especially benefited women and have contributed in the achievement of their economic empowerment,

*Noting* that the costs of unequal sharing of responsibilities include weaker labour market attachment for women (forgone jobs, shorter working hours, confinement to informal work, and lower wages), weaker access to social security benefits, and less time for education/training, leisure and self-care, and political activities,

*Recognizing* that women's poverty and lack of empowerment, as well as their exclusion from social policies and from the benefits of sustainable development, can place them at increased risk of violence, and that violence against women impedes the social and economic development of societies and States, as well as the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

1. *Calls upon* States to incorporate gender perspectives into social and economic policies, including development and poverty eradication strategies and related actions promoting women's economic rights and independence, and to address the extent to which policies, programmes and activities effectively address the needs, priorities and contributions of women and men, with a view to ensuring that the formulation and implementation of relevant strategies contribute to women's economic empowerment;

2. *Calls upon* States to adopt and apply a systematic approach across all areas and at all levels to accelerate women's full participation in economic decision-making at all levels and ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation and evaluation of economic and development policies, and social safety net and poverty eradication programmes, as well as to promote and reinforce capacity building of States and other stakeholders in gender-responsive public management, including, but not limited to, gender budgeting;

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<sup>5</sup> See resolution 55/2.

3. *Urges* States to develop and implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment, including through enhancing their access to full and productive employment and decent work for all and to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and at supporting women's technical, managerial and entrepreneurial capacities and initiatives, with the aim of ensuring sustainable and adequate income generation and empowering women as equal partners with men in these fields;

4. *Calls upon* States to undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and to ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies;

5. *Calls upon* States to fulfill their commitments to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and to ensure the equal access of women and girls to education for all, basic services, including primary health care, housing, economic opportunities and decision-making at all levels;

6. *Urges* States and/or, as appropriate, the relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, and invites the international financial institutions, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, bearing in mind national priorities, to strengthen education, health, and social services and effectively utilize resources to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and ensure women's and girls' rights to education at all levels and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health, as well as quality, affordable and universally accessible health care and services, in particular primary health care;

7. *Calls upon* States to provide adequate safety nets and strengthen State-based and community-based support systems, as an integral part of social policy, in order to enable women living in poverty to withstand adverse economic environments and preserve their livelihood, assets and revenues in times of crisis;

8. *Calls upon* States to fulfill their obligation to ensure full and equal access to education for girls and women, recognizing that investing in women's education is the key element in achieving social equality, higher productivity and social returns in terms of health, lower infant mortality and the reduced need for high fertility;

9. *Reaffirms* the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All, and commit to ensure, by 2015, access to and completion of free and compulsory primary education of good quality and to achieve gender equality in education by 2015, and decide to strengthen policies aimed at ensuring full and equal access of women and girls to education at all levels through lifelong learning, including adult and long distance education and training as well as to eradicate illiteracy in order to promote women's economic empowerment,

10. *Urges* States to undertake the following actions:

(a) Continue to strengthen policies relevant for women's economic empowerment aimed at: addressing inequality affecting women and girls in access to and achievement in education at all levels, in particular to eliminate inequalities related to age, poverty, geographic location, language, ethnicity, religion and disability; adopting measures to promote non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive education that is free of gender-based stereotypes and offers broader career choices; scaling up strategies to encourage and support girls' participation in science and technology; promoting educational programmes in which girls are prepared to participate in decision-making at all levels, including in the economic field; and implementing initiatives to translate educational achievements of women into employment opportunities;

(b) Enhance the implementation of policies that also impact on women's economic empowerment related to access to education across the life cycle, use of information and communication technologies in programmes for adult education and vocational training, and eradication of illiteracy;

11. *Encourages* efforts to provide education in humanitarian emergency situations, including in order to improve women's empowerment;

12. *Calls upon* States that have not yet done so, to consider ratifying the relevant International Labour Organization conventions;

13. *Calls upon* States to adopt and apply effective measures, including legislative measures, to ensure the application of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for equal work or work of equal value, to promote equality of opportunity and treatment among men and women in respect of employment and occupation, to enable persons with family responsibilities who are engaged or wish to engage in employment to be able to do so;

14. *Urges* States and/or, as appropriate, the relevant entities of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates, as well as civil society, the private sector, employer organizations, trade unions, media and other relevant actors, to take the following actions:

(a) Continue to develop and strengthen policies, strategies and programmes to enhance the employability of women; and ensure their access to full and productive employment and decent work, including through improving access to formal and non-formal education and vocational training, lifelong learning and retraining, long-distance education, including in information and communications technologies and entrepreneurial skills, particularly in developing countries, to support women's economic empowerment in the different stages of their lives;

(b) Promote women's participation in high-level management and in economic decision-making;

(c) Adopt effective measures to promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value;

(d) Adopt and implement effective measures to promote and protect the rights of women workers, eliminate sex-based discrimination in the workplace, and take action to remove structural and legal barriers as well as stereotypic attitudes and behaviours of women and men at work, addressing, inter alia, gender bias in recruitment; working conditions; remuneration; occupational segregation; harassment; discrimination in access to social protection benefits; women's occupational health and safety; the situation of women working in the informal sector and the need to cover this sector in labour regulations and social protection; unequal career opportunities; the situation of domestic female workers, including migrant women; and the inadequate sharing, by men, of family responsibilities;

(e) Develop or strengthen policies and programmes to support the multiple roles of women in society, while acknowledging the social significance of maternity and motherhood, parenting, the role of parents and legal guardians in the upbringing of children and caring for other family members; such policies and programmes should also promote shared responsibility of parents, women and men and society as a whole;

(f) Take and encourage measures, including, where appropriate, the formulation, promotion and implementation of legal and administrative measures to facilitate the reconciliation of work and personal and/or family life, such as child and dependant care, parental leave and maternity leave and other leave schemes and flexible working schemes for men and women and, where appropriate, shorter working hours, and design, implement and promote family-friendly policies and services, including affordable, accessible and quality care services for children and other dependents, parental and other leave schemes and campaigns to sensitize public opinion and other relevant actors on equal sharing of employment and family responsibilities between women and men and emphasize men's equal responsibilities with respect to household work;

(g) Measure in quantitative and qualitative terms, unremunerated work that is outside national accounts in order to better reflect its value;

15. *Calls on* Member States to strengthen the incentive role of the public sector as employer in order to develop an environment that effectively affirms and empowers women;

16. *Acknowledges also* the vital role the private sector can play in generating full and productive employment and decent work for women;

17. *Calls upon* States to ensure and strengthen women's access to social protection schemes and/or insurance schemes, throughout the life cycle, including health insurance and pension schemes, giving particular attention to women living in poverty;

18. Urges States to adopt appropriate measures to overcome negative impacts of the economic and financial crisis, including on women and girls, and integrate a gender perspective into these measures so that they equally benefit women and men;

19. *Urges* States to adopt and implement legislation, policies and/or programmes aimed at eliminating the constraints faced by women in accessing formal financial services, including savings, credit, insurance and money transfer services, using alternative non-traditional security arrangements and giving particular attention to the obstacles faced by poor women living in rural and urban areas in having access to those services, including to affordable microfinancing; *and also* to adopt and implement legislation, policies and/or programmes that support savings, credit and lending mechanisms for women;

20. *Calls on* Member States to undertake legislative, administrative and financial measures to create a strong enabling environment for all women entrepreneurs and women participating in the labour market, including: a sound macroeconomic framework; accountable systems for managing public resources; and a business climate that attracts investment and promotes movement from the informal to the formal sector through, inter alia, competitive markets, enforceable contracts, the absence of corruption, regulatory policies that promote public confidence in the market and reducing barriers to international trade within an appropriate time frame;

21. *Encourages* all relevant economic stakeholders to continue to take gender perspectives into account in the design of loans, grants, projects, programmes and strategies so as to promote women's economic empowerment and equality;

22. Urges the international community to actively support national efforts for the promotion of microfinance and microcredit schemes that ensure women's access to credit, self-employment and integration into the economy;

23. *Calls upon* States, and encourages, as appropriate, relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors, to take measures to develop, finance, implement, monitor and evaluate gender-responsive policies and programmes aimed at promoting women's entrepreneurship, in particular to benefit women living in poverty, including through greater access to formal financial instruments, microfinance, microcredit, cooperatives, technological innovation and transfer of technology, market intelligence, investments, knowledge and skills training, advisory services, access to markets, including through international trade, and facilitation of networking and exchanges;

24. *Expresses its concern on the fact that* women entrepreneurs, especially in the early stages of the businesses they have founded, may find it difficult to sustain their businesses, inter alia, because of a lack of access to markets, and *encourages* all relevant economic stakeholders to strengthen competitiveness of women, to ensure their access to national and international markets, with emphasis on low income women, and to include women entrepreneurs in their supply chains, as a means of channeling continued income to businesses established and operated by women;

25. Calls upon sending, transit and receiving States to incorporate gender perspectives in all policies and programmes on migration, promote the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women migrants, combat discrimination, all forms of exploitation, ill-treatment, unsafe working conditions and violence, including sexual violence and trafficking in women and girls, and facilitate family reunification in an expeditious and effective manner, with due regard to applicable laws, as such reunification has a positive effect on the integration of migrants;

26. Urges Governments and/or, as appropriate, the relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, and invites the international financial

institutions, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to ensure that adequate resources are allocated for activities targeting persistent serious obstacles to the economic empowerment of women in situations of armed conflict;

27. *Invites* States and, as appropriate, international organizations, in partnership with cooperatives and cooperative organizations, inter alia, to promote the growth of agricultural cooperatives through women's access to finance, land and property, adoption of sustainable production techniques, investments in rural infrastructure and irrigation, strengthened marketing mechanisms and support for the participation of women in economic activities;

28. *Recognizes* that global advances in information and communication technologies have created significant potential for facilitating women's economic empowerment, and that realizing this potential requires efforts to improve development of, and equal access to, technologies that facilitate educational and occupational access, and that encourage, support and enhance women's economic empowerment;

29. *Calls upon* States to develop and promote, with the support of, as appropriate, relevant United Nations entities, academic institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other relevant actors, the production and use of sex and age disaggregated statistics and academic research on the economic situation of women, including in the area of employment, in order to effectively inform national policies;

30. *Reaffirms* that the international community, while strengthening international cooperation, should emphasize the importance of an open, rule-based, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable multilateral trading system that will also ensure the equal access of women to market and technologies and resources at both the national and international levels;

31. *Urges* developed countries that have not yet done so, in accordance with their commitments, to make concrete efforts towards meeting the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national product to least developed countries, and encourage developing countries to build on the progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help meet development goals and targets and, inter alia, to assist them in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women;

32. *Emphasizes* the special importance of timely, effective, comprehensive and durable solutions to the external debt problems of developing countries, since debt financing and relief can contribute to economic growth and development and the empowerment of women;

33. *Urges* States and the international community to further promote international cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, for enhancing women's economic empowerment; and to continue to share good practices related to women's economic empowerment;

34. *Reiterates* the importance of strengthening coordination, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency in the United Nations system's capacity to support the efforts of Member States in the implementation of national policies for the achievement of, and to address under-resourcing in, gender equality and the empowerment of women;

35. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-sixth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.