

2004/11

**Agreed conclusions of the
Commission on the Status of Women on
the role of men and boys in achieving
gender equality**

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 the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality:

1. The Commission on the Status of Women recalls and reiterates that the Beijing Declaration⁷⁵ and Platform for Action⁷⁶ encouraged men to participate fully in all actions towards gender equality and urged the establishment of the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men at home, in the community, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities. The Commission also recalls and reiterates the outcome document⁷⁷ adopted at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century”, which emphasized that men must take joint responsibility with women for the promotion of gender equality.
2. The Commission recognizes that while men and boys sometimes face discriminatory barriers and practices, they can and do make contributions to gender equality in many capacities, including as individuals and as members of families, social groups and communities, in all spheres of society.
3. The Commission recognizes that gender inequalities still exist and are reflected in imbalances of power between women and men in all spheres of society. The Commission further recognizes that everyone benefits from

⁷⁵ *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.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, annex II.

⁷⁷ General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex.

gender equality and that the negative impacts of gender inequality are borne by society as a whole and emphasizes, therefore, that men and boys, through taking responsibility themselves and working jointly in partnership with women and girls, are essential to the achievement of the goals of gender equality, development and peace. The Commission recognizes the capacity of men and boys to bring about change in attitudes, relationships and access to resources and decision-making, which are critical for the promotion of gender equality and the full enjoyment of all human rights by women.

4. The Commission acknowledges and encourages men and boys to continue to take positive initiatives to eliminate gender stereotypes and promote gender equality, including combating violence against women, through networks, peer programmes, information campaigns and training programmes. The Commission acknowledges the critical role of gender-sensitive education and training in achieving gender equality.

5. The Commission also recognizes that the participation of men and boys in achieving gender equality must be consistent with the empowerment of women and girls, and acknowledges that efforts must be made to address the undervaluation of many types of work, abilities and roles associated with women. In this regard, it is important that resources for gender equality initiatives for men and boys do not compromise equal opportunities and resources for women and girls.

6. The Commission urges Governments and, as appropriate, the relevant funds, programmes and organizations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, civil society, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to take the following actions:

- (a) Encourage and support the capacity of men and boys to foster gender equality, including by acting in partnership with women and girls as agents for change and providing positive leadership, in particular where men are still key decision makers, responsible for policies, programmes and legislation, as well as holders of economic and organizational power and public resources;
- (b) Promote understanding of the importance of fathers, mothers, legal guardians and other caregivers for the well-being of children and the promotion of gender equality, and the need to develop policies, programmes and school curricula that encourage and maximize their posi-

tive involvement in achieving gender equality and positive results for children, families and communities;

- (c) Create and improve training and education programmes to enhance awareness and knowledge among men and women of their roles as parents, legal guardians and caregivers and the importance of sharing family responsibilities, and include fathers as well as mothers in programmes that teach infant childcare and development;
- (d) Develop and include in education programmes for parents, legal guardians and other caregivers information on ways and means to increase the capacity of men to raise children in a manner oriented towards gender equality;
- (e) Encourage men and boys to work with women and girls in the design of policies and programmes for men and boys aimed at gender equality, and foster the involvement of men and boys in gender mainstreaming efforts in order to ensure improved design of all policies and programmes;
- (f) Encourage the design and implementation of programmes at all levels to accelerate a sociocultural change towards gender equality, especially through the upbringing and educational process and by changing harmful traditional perceptions of and attitudes regarding male and female roles in order to achieve the full and equal participation of women and men in society;
- (g) Develop and implement programmes for pre-schools, schools, community centres, youth organizations, sport clubs and centres and other groups dealing with children and youth, including training for teachers, social workers and other professionals who deal with children, in order to foster positive attitudes and behaviour with regard to gender equality;
- (h) Promote critical reviews of school curricula, textbooks and other information, education and communication materials at all levels in order to recommend ways to strengthen the promotion of gender equality that involves the engagement of boys as well as girls;
- (i) Develop and implement strategies to educate boys and girls and men and women about tolerance, mutual respect for all individuals and the promotion of all human rights;

- (j) Develop and utilize a variety of methods in public information campaigns on the role of men and boys in promoting gender equality, including through approaches specifically targeting boys and young men;
- (k) Engage media, advertising and other related professionals, through the development of training and other programmes, on the importance of promoting gender equality, the non-stereotypical portrayal of women and girls and men and boys and on the harm caused by portraying women and girls in a demeaning or exploitative manner, as well as on the enhanced participation of women and girls in the media;
- (l) Take effective measures, to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, to combat the growing sexualization of, and use of pornography in, media content and in the rapid development of information and communications technology, encourage men in the media to refrain from presenting women as inferior beings and exploiting them as sexual objects and commodities, combat information and communications technology- and media-based violence against women, including criminal misuse of information and communications technology for sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and trafficking in women and girls, and support the development and use of such technology as a resource for the empowerment of women and girls, including those affected by violence, abuse and other forms of sexual exploitation;
- (m) Adopt and implement legislation and/or policies to close the gap between women's and men's pay, and promote reconciliation of occupational and family responsibilities, including through the reduction of occupational segregation, the introduction or expansion of parental leave, and flexible working arrangements, such as voluntary part-time work, teleworking and other home-based work;
- (n) Encourage men, through training and education, to participate fully in the care and support of others, including older persons, persons with disabilities and sick persons, in particular children and other dependants;
- (o) Encourage the active involvement of men and boys, through education projects and peer-based programmes, in eliminating gender stereotypes as well as gender inequality, in particular in relation to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, as well as their full participation

in prevention, advocacy, care, treatment, support and impact evaluation programmes;

- (p) Ensure men's access to and utilization of reproductive and sexual health services and programmes, including HIV/AIDS-related programmes and services, and encourage men to participate with women in programmes designed to prevent the transmission and treat all forms of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections;
- (q) Design and implement programmes to encourage and enable men to adopt safe and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour and to use effectively methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS;
- (r) Encourage and support men and boys to take an active part in the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence, especially gender-based violence, including in the context of HIV/AIDS, and increase awareness of men's and boys' responsibility in ending the cycle of violence, inter alia through the promotion of attitudinal and behavioural change, integrated education and training prioritizing the safety of women and children, the prosecution and rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence and support for survivors, recognizing that men and boys also experience violence;
- (s) Encourage increased understanding among men of how violence, including trafficking for the purposes of commercialized sexual exploitation, forced marriage and forced labour, harms women, men and children and undermines gender equality, and consider measures aimed at eliminating the demand for trafficked women and children;
- (t) Encourage and support both women and men in leadership positions, including political leaders, traditional leaders, business leaders, community and religious leaders, musicians, artists and athletes, to provide positive role models of gender equality;
- (u) Encourage men in leadership positions to ensure equal access for women to education, property rights and inheritance rights and to promote equal access to information technology and business and economic opportunities, including in international trade, in order to provide women with the tools to enable them to take part fully and equally in economic and political decision-making processes at all levels;

- (v) Identify and fully utilize all contexts in which a large number of men can be reached, particularly in male-dominated institutions, industries and associations, in order to sensitize men on their roles and responsibilities in the promotion of gender equality and the full enjoyment of all human rights by women, including in relation to HIV/AIDS and violence against women;
 - (w) Develop and use statistics to support and/or carry out research, inter alia, on the cultural, social and economic conditions that influence the attitudes and behaviour of men and boys towards women and girls, their awareness of gender inequalities and their involvement in promoting gender equality;
 - (x) Carry out research on the views of men and boys on gender equality and their perceptions of their roles, through which further programmes and policies can be developed, identify and widely disseminate good practices, and assess the impact of efforts undertaken to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality;
 - (y) Promote and encourage the representation of men in institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women;
 - (z) Encourage men and boys to support the equal participation of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peace-building;
7. The Commission urges all entities within the United Nations system to take into account the recommendations contained in the present agreed conclusions and to disseminate the agreed conclusions widely.

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 Declaration⁷⁸ and Platform for Action,⁷⁹ the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",⁸⁰ 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,⁸¹ 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

⁷⁸ *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.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, annex II.

⁸⁰ General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex.

⁸¹ General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

Conventions of 1949,⁸² 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 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

⁸² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

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 fulfill 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 implemen-

tation 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.⁸³

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

⁸³ E/CN.6/2004/10.

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.