

## **Agreed conclusions**

### **Enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment**

#### **for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work\***

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,<sup>14</sup> the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”,<sup>16</sup> the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000,<sup>21</sup> the Declaration adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women,<sup>1</sup> the 2005 World Summit,<sup>2</sup> as well as all relevant General Assembly resolutions and outcomes of United Nations conferences; reiterated that women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, were fundamental for the achievement of equality, development, peace and security; and emphasized the need to ensure the full integration and full participation of women as both agents and beneficiaries in the development process and its commitment to strengthening and safeguarding a national and international enabling environment, inter alia, through promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms, mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, and promoting the full participation and empowerment of women and enhanced international cooperation.

2. The Commission reaffirmed also that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women was of fundamental importance in sustainable development, achieving sustained economic growth, eradicating poverty and hunger and combating diseases, and that investing in the development of women and girls had a multiplier effect, in particular on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth, in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas such as agriculture, industry and services.

3. The Commission recalled that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women stressed that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace required the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields.

4. The Commission recognized that all forms of violence against women and girls violated the enjoyment of their human rights and constituted a major impediment to the ability of women and girls to make use of their capabilities, limiting their participation and agency

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<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 27* and corrigendum (E/2005/27 and Corr.1), chap. I.A.

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

in development, including in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

5. The Commission recognized also that the creation of an enabling environment at all levels was necessary to enhance women's participation in and benefit from development processes, and that challenges to the creation of an enabling environment included:

(a) Insufficient coherence and coordination between development policies and gender equality policies and strategies;

(b) Insufficient time-bound targets for implementation of gender equality policies and strategies;

(c) Underrepresentation of women in decision-making;

(d) Insufficient promotion and protection of the full enjoyment by women of all human rights;

(e) Persistent violence and multiple forms of discriminatory practices and attitudes against women;

(f) Insufficient recognition of the contributions of women to the economy and to all areas of public life;

(g) Unequal access to education and training, health care and decent work;

(h) Unequal access to opportunities, and unequal access to and control over resources, such as land, credit, capital, economic assets, and information and communication technologies;

(i) Insufficient political will and resources;

(j) Inadequate implementation of gender mainstreaming;

(k) Insufficient national mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and accountability;

(l) Impact on women of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases;

(m) Armed conflicts, lack of security and natural disasters;

(n) Slow and uneven implementation of commitments to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

(o) Persistence of difficult socio-economic conditions that existed in many developing countries, which had resulted in the acceleration of the feminization of poverty;

(p) Insufficient international cooperation in the area of gender equality and empowerment of women in the context of poverty eradication and health, bearing in mind financing for development;

(q) Prevailing harmful cultural and traditional practices;

(r) Insufficient information and data and statistics disaggregated by sex;

(s) Insufficient progress in the promulgation of gender-responsive laws.

6. The Commission underlined that addressing such challenges at all levels required a systematic, comprehensive, integrated, multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach, with policy, legislative and programmatic interventions.

7. The Commission urged Governments and/or, as appropriate, the relevant entities of the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations, including the international financial institutions, national parliaments, political parties, and civil society, including the private sector, trade unions, academia, the media and non-governmental organizations and other actors, to take the following actions:

(a) Incorporate gender perspectives into all local and national planning, budgetary, monitoring and evaluation and reporting processes, and mechanisms relating to national development strategies, including strategies focused on the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, fully utilizing existing gender equality policies and strategies;

(b) Elaborate and implement comprehensive gender-sensitive poverty eradication strategies that addressed social, structural and macroeconomic issues;

(c) Develop and implement effective national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at all levels to evaluate progress towards gender equality, including through the collection, compilation and analysis and use of data disaggregated by age and by sex and gender statistics, and continue developing and using appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators;

(d) Encourage and promote close cooperation between central authorities and local governments to develop programmes aimed at the achievement of gender equality, thereby granting equal opportunities for women and girls;

(e) Elaborate and implement strategies and policies, including targeted measures in support of their obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls, provide protection to victims and investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators of such violence, and recognize that violence against women and girls was a serious obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace and had a negative impact on the social and economic development of communities and States;

(f) Continue efforts towards full and effective implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/337 of 3 July 2003 on prevention of armed conflict, and its agreed conclusions on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding;<sup>3</sup>

(g) Continue efforts towards the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31

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<sup>3</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/12.

October 2000 on women and peace and security, recognizing the linkages between gender equality, peace, security and development;

(h) Take the necessary measures to ensure that women were accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, including through inheritance;

(i) Take all appropriate measures to enable women to participate fully in decision-making at all levels in all aspects of their daily lives;

(j) Incorporate gender perspectives in all policies and programmes on international migration, promote the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women migrants, combat discrimination, exploitation, ill-treatment, unsafe working conditions and violence, including sexual violence and trafficking, and facilitate family reunification in an expeditious and effective manner, with due regard to applicable laws, as such reunification had a positive effect on the integration of migrants;

(k) Eliminate all forms of discrimination, sexual exploitation and violence against female refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons and promote their active involvement in decisions affecting their lives and communities, while recalling the relevant norms of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law;

(l) Increase understanding of and capacity to implement gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, including by requiring the use of gender analysis as the basis for all policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, in particular in the areas of health, education and employment;

(m) Develop and promote strategies to mainstream a gender perspective into the design and implementation of development and socio-economic policies and budgetary processes, and share best practices and encourage innovations in gender mainstreaming approaches;

(n) Mobilize adequate funding for gender-sensitive development policies and programmes and for national mechanisms for gender equality, through national, regional and international resource mobilization and gender-responsive budget processes in all sector areas, and allocate adequate funding for women-specific measures;

(o) Support women's organizations that strive to empower women and girls and improve their living conditions;

(p) Encourage enhanced coordination and collaboration between all mechanisms for the advancement of women and gender equality at all levels, such as women's ministries, gender equality commissions, relevant parliamentary committees, ombudspersons, gender focal points and working groups in line ministries, as well as with women's groups, associations and networks;

(q) Take effective measures to eliminate discrimination, gender stereotypes and harmful traditional, cultural and customary practices;

(r) Develop and implement strategies to increase the involvement of men and boys in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls through, inter alia, the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, the sharing of household work and family care, and the promotion of a culture of peace and tolerance, and encourage men and women to foster responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour and attitudinal changes to promote the realization of gender equality;

(s) Increase women's and girls' equal and effective access to and use of information and communication technologies, as well as applied technology, including through the transfer of knowledge and technology on concessional, preferential and favourable terms to developing countries, as mutually agreed, provision of training and infrastructure, involvement in the planning, development and production of content, and participation in management, governance and decision-making positions in regulatory or policymaking bodies for information and communication technologies;

(t) Invest in appropriate infrastructure and other projects, and create opportunities for economic empowerment in order to alleviate the burden of time-consuming everyday tasks on women and girls, allowing them, inter alia, to engage in income-generating activities and attend school;

(u) Give special attention to incorporating principles on advancing the equalization of opportunities in programmes, methods and processes to empower and support women and girls with disabilities;

(v) Call upon the international community to make efforts to mitigate the effects of excess volatility and economic disruption, which had a disproportionately negative impact on women, and to enhance trade opportunities for developing countries in order to improve the economic situation of women;

(w) Call upon States Parties to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto; take into consideration the concluding comments, as well as the general recommendations, of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; call upon other States Parties to the Convention that had not yet done so to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to the Optional Protocol thereto; and reinforce, in efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the linkages with the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, as well as with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development<sup>19</sup> and the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action.

8. The Commission underlined the fact that each country had the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and poverty eradication, that the role of national policies and development strategies could not be overemphasized, and that concerted and

concrete measures were required at all levels to enable developing countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

9. The Commission urged Governments to ensure that women, especially poor women in developing countries, benefited from the pursuit of effective, equitable, development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries, including the option of official development assistance and debt cancellation, and called for continued international cooperation.

10. The Commission encouraged the international community, the United Nations system, the relevant regional and international organizations and the private sector and civil society to:

(a) Assist Governments, at their request, in building institutional capacity and developing national action plans or further implementing existing action plans for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;

(b) Provide the necessary financial resources to assist national Governments in their efforts to meet the development targets and benchmarks agreed upon at the major United Nations summits and conferences and their follow-up processes, including the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the twenty-third and twenty-fourth special sessions of the General Assembly;

(c) Give priority to assisting the efforts of developing countries to ensure the full and effective participation of women in deciding and implementing development strategies and integrating gender concerns into national programmes, including by providing adequate resources to operational activities for development in support of the efforts of Governments to ensure full and equal access of women to health care, capital, education, training and technology, as well as full and equal participation in all decision-making.

11. The Commission urged multilateral donors, and invited international financial institutions, within their respective mandates, and regional development banks to review and implement policies to support national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reached women, in particular in rural and remote areas.

12. The Commission underlined the importance of incorporating a gender, human rights and socio-economic perspective in all policies relevant to education, health and work and to creating an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, and called upon Governments to:

(a) Ensure women's and girls' full and equal access to all levels of quality education and training, while ensuring progressively and on the basis of equal opportunities, that primary education was compulsory, accessible and available free to all;

(b) Incorporate gender perspectives and human rights in health-sector policies and programmes, pay attention to women's specific needs and priorities, ensure women's right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health and their access to affordable and adequate health-care services, including sexual, reproductive and maternal health care and life-saving obstetric care, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and recognize that the lack of economic empowerment and independence increased women's vulnerability to a range of negative consequences, involving the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other poverty-related diseases;

(c) Take all appropriate measures to respond to the concern that the HIV/AIDS pandemic reinforced gender inequalities, that women and girls bore a disproportionate share of the burden imposed by the HIV/AIDS crisis, that they were infected more easily, that they played a key role in care and that they had become more vulnerable to poverty as a result of the HIV/AIDS crisis;

(d) Promote respect and realization of the principles contained in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up,<sup>4</sup> consider ratification and full implementation of conventions of the International Labour Organization, design policies and programmes that were particularly relevant to providing equal access for women to productive employment and decent work, remove structural and legal barriers, as well as stereotypical attitudes to gender equality at work, promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, promote the recognition of the value of women's unremunerated work, and develop and promote policies that facilitated the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities and access to work for women with disabilities.

## **Agreed conclusions**

### **Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels\***

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,<sup>14</sup> which emphasized that without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace could not be achieved, and that women's equal participation was a necessary condition for women's and girls' interests to be taken into account and was needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning.

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\* For the discussion, see chap. II, paras. 32-40.

<sup>4</sup> Adopted on 18 June 1998 by the International Labour Conference at its eighty-sixth session.

2. The Commission reaffirmed the outcome document adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session,<sup>5</sup> paragraph 23 of which acknowledged that despite general acceptance of the need for gender balance in decision-making bodies at all levels, a gap between de jure and de facto equality had persisted, and that women continued to be underrepresented at the legislative, ministerial and sub-ministerial levels, as well as at the highest levels of the corporate sector and other economic and social institutions, and drew attention to the obstacles that hindered women's entry into decision-making positions.

3. The Commission reaffirmed also the commitment to the equal participation of women and men in public life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in the Convention on the Political Rights of Women,<sup>6</sup> which stated that women should be on equal terms with men, without any discrimination, entitled to vote in all elections, eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies established by national law, and entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions established by national law.

4. The Commission recalled the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which stated, inter alia, that States Parties should take all appropriate measures, including positive measures and temporary special measures, to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in the political and public life of the country.<sup>7</sup>

5. The Commission urged States parties to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto and to take into consideration the concluding comments, as well as the general recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.<sup>8</sup>

6. The Commission noted that some States parties had modified their reservations, expressed satisfaction that some reservations had been withdrawn and urged States parties to limit the extent of any reservations that they lodged to the Convention, to formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible, to ensure that no reservations were incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention, to review their reservations regularly with a view to withdrawing them and to withdraw reservations that were contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention.<sup>9</sup>

7. The Commission recalled General Assembly resolution 58/142, of 22 December 2003, on women and political participation, in paragraph 1 of which the Assembly urged all stakeholders to develop a comprehensive set of programmes and policies to increase women's participation, especially in political decision-making.

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<sup>5</sup> General Assembly resolution S-23/3 annex.

<sup>6</sup> General Assembly resolutions 217 A (111), and 2200 A (XXI), annex and 640 (VII), annex.

<sup>7</sup> General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

<sup>8</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/230, para. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., para. 6.



8. The Commission also recalled that its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on women in power and decision-making recognized the need to accelerate the implementation of strategies that promoted gender balance in political decision-making and to mainstream a gender perspective in all stages of policy formulation and decision-making.

9. The Commission welcomed the 2005 World Summit, which had reaffirmed that the full and effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and had resolved to promote increased representation of women in Government decision-making bodies, including through ensuring their equal opportunity to participate fully in the political process.<sup>10</sup>

10. The Commission recognized that some progress had been achieved since the Fourth World Conference on Women in women's participation in decision-making at all levels. Introduction of policies and programmes, including positive measures, at the local, national and international levels, had resulted in an increase in women's participation in decision-making processes.

11. The Commission expressed concern at the serious and persistent obstacles, which were many and varied in nature, that still hindered the advancement of women and further affected their participation in decision-making processes, including, *inter alia*, the persistent feminization of poverty, the lack of equal access to health, education, training and employment, armed conflict, the lack of security and natural disasters.

12. The Commission underlined the importance of the empowerment of women and their effective participation in decision-making and policymaking processes as critical tools to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence, and recognized that eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls enabled them to participate equally in decision-making.

13. The Commission expressed concern about the lack, at the local, national, regional and international levels, of sufficient information and data disaggregated by sex on the participation of women and men in decision-making processes in all areas, including the economy, the public and private sectors, the judiciary, international affairs, academia, trade unions, the media, non-governmental organizations and others.

14. The Commission reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and stressed the importance of their full and equal participation in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution and the rebuilding of post-conflict society, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 58.

<sup>11</sup> See General Assembly resolution 58/142, preamble.

15. The Commission recognized that gender equality, development and peace were key issues for the promotion of women, and that new efforts were needed by all actors to create an enabling environment in decision-making.

16. The Commission reaffirmed the urgent goal of achieving 50/50 gender distribution in all categories of posts within the United Nations system, especially at senior and policymaking levels, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and also taking into account the continuing lack of representation or the underrepresentation of women from certain countries, in particular from developing countries, countries with economies in transition, and unrepresented or largely underrepresented Member States.<sup>12</sup>

17. The Commission urged Governments, and/or, as appropriate, the relevant entities of the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations, including the international financial institutions, national parliaments, political parties, civil society, including the private sector, trade unions, academia, the media, non-governmental organizations and other actors, to take the following actions:

(a) Ensure that women had the right to vote and exercise that right without duress, persuasion or coercion;

(b) Review, as appropriate, existing legislation, including electoral law, and remove or modify, as appropriate, provisions that hindered women's equal participation in decision-making, and adopt positive actions and temporary special measures, as appropriate, to enhance women's equal participation in decision-making processes at all levels;

(c) Establish concrete goals, targets and benchmarks for achieving equal participation of women and men in decision-making bodies at all levels and in all areas, especially in areas of macroeconomic policy, trade, labour, budgets, defence and foreign affairs, the media and the judiciary, including through positive actions and temporary special measures, as appropriate;

(d) Develop and fund policies and programmes, including innovative measures, to build a critical mass of women leaders, executives and managers, with the goal of achieving a gender balance at all levels and in all areas, in particular in strategic economic, social and political decision-making positions;

(e) Establish the goal of gender balance in decision-making in administration and public appointments at all levels, develop alternative approaches and changes in institutional structures and practices, including gender action plans, which established concrete strategies and budgets for the achievement of consistent gender mainstreaming as a strategy for promoting gender equality objectives, in legislation and public policies, among others;

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<sup>12</sup> See General Assembly resolution 58/144, para. 3.

(f) Ensure women's full and equal participation and representation at all decision-making levels in all aspects of peace processes and in post-conflict peacebuilding, reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation processes;

(g) Encourage greater involvement of all marginalized women in decision-making at all levels and address and counter the barriers faced by marginalized women in accessing and participating in politics and decision-making;<sup>13</sup>

(h) Ensure that gender perspectives were incorporated in development policies and programmes, and in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, to ensure that women and all other members of society benefited from development and that women were empowered to assume leadership positions;

(i) Promote and strengthen international cooperation to accelerate the development process in which women played a key role and should be equal beneficiaries;

(j) Introduce more effective measures aimed at eradicating poverty of women and improving their living conditions to promote the realization of their full human potential, and enable their advancement and their equal participation in decision-making;

(k) Ensure that women and girls had equal access to education in all forms and that education was gender-sensitive, and promote educational programmes in which women and girls would be equipped with the necessary knowledge and prepared to participate equally in decision-making processes in all spheres of life and at all levels;

(l) Ensure women's and girls' access to training that enabled them to develop their skills, capacities and expertise to exercise leadership, including tools, training and special programmes necessary to enter, inter alia, into politics, including at the highest levels, recognizing existing power differentials in society and the need to respect different positive models of leadership;

(m) Ensure women's equal access to decent work, full and productive employment, productive and financial resources and information, in order to facilitate their full and equal participation in decision-making processes at all levels;

(n) Introduce objective and transparent procedures for recruitment and gender-sensitive career planning to enable women to assume decision-making positions at all levels and in all areas in order to break the glass ceiling;<sup>14</sup>

(o) Eliminate occupational segregation, gender wage gaps, as well as discrimination against women, including marginalized women, in the labour market, through legal and policy measures, including by increasing opportunities for women and girls, as well as men and boys, to work in non-traditional sectors;

(p) Ensure women's access to microcredit and microfinance schemes, which had proven to be effective means to empower women

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<sup>13</sup> General Assembly resolution 58/142, para. 1 (k).

<sup>14</sup> See Commission on the Status of Women, agreed conclusions 1997/3, para. 10.

and could create an enabling environment to facilitate their full and equal participation in the decision-making processes at all levels, particularly at the grass-roots level;

(q) Foster an enabling environment in decision-making processes at all levels, including through measures aimed at reconciling family and employment responsibilities, inter alia, by better sharing of paid and unpaid work between women and men;

(r) Take measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, in order to promote their full and equal participation in public and political life;

(s) Promote women's leadership in all areas and at all levels and remove all barriers that directly or indirectly hindered the participation of women, in order to increase the visibility and influence of women in decision-making processes;

(t) Facilitate networking and mentoring among women leaders and girls, as appropriate, at all levels and in all areas, including in politics, academia, trade unions, the media and civil society organizations, specifically women's groups and networks, including through the use of information and communication technology, as appropriate;

(u) Encourage, particularly among men and women in decision-making positions, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and support women's participation, representation and leadership in decision-making processes at all levels, including the exchange of best practices and awareness-raising;

(v) Develop strategies to increase the involvement of men and boys in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, through, inter alia, encouraging the sharing of household work and care;

(w) Develop strategies to eliminate gender stereotypes in all spheres of life, particularly in the media, and foster the positive portrayal of women and girls as leaders and decision makers on all levels and in all areas;

(x) Recognize the importance of women's participation in decision-making in all areas, including the political process, provide fair and balanced coverage of male and female candidates, cover participation in women's political organizations and ensure coverage of issues that had a particular impact on women;<sup>15</sup>

(y) Adopt clear rules, as necessary, for candidate selection within parties, including, as appropriate, the implementation of concrete goals, targets and benchmarks, including, where appropriate, temporary special measures, such as quotas, for achieving equitable representation of women candidates in elected positions;

(z) Promote women's candidacies in elections, inter alia and as appropriate, through the adoption of specific measures, such as

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<sup>15</sup> General Assembly resolution 58/142, para. 2 (m).

training programmes and recruitment drives and, as a temporary special measure, consider funding for women candidates;

(aa) Make efforts to ensure equal opportunities during election campaigns, including equal access to the media and to financial and other resources, as appropriate;

(bb) Facilitate the inclusion of women in decision-making positions within electoral management bodies and observer commissions and give consideration to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the structure and activities of such bodies;

(cc) Consider establishing parliamentary standing or ad hoc committees or other statutory bodies on gender equality and empowerment of women, with cross-party representation, where appropriate, to monitor and review the implementation of existing laws and constitutional provisions, in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, where applicable, and the commitments to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, as well as taking into account recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, where applicable;

(dd) Consider ratifying and implementing relevant instruments relating to full political, economic, social and cultural rights for women and girls, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

(ee) Reaffirm the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a vital instrument for the advancement of women and, in that regard, take measures to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals;

(ff) Encourage public dissemination of national periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as concluding comments provided by the Committee;

(gg) Promote collaboration among all relevant actors, such as parliaments, national machineries for the advancement of women and other relevant national mechanisms, and women's groups and networks in civil society to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(hh) Support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective at all levels and stages of the budgetary process, including through awareness-raising and training, where appropriate;

(ii) Strengthen research, monitoring and evaluation of the progress of women's participation in decision-making at all levels, in particular in areas where there was a dearth of information, including, as appropriate, through the development of acceptable standardized methodology for systematic collection of gender-specific data and

statistics, disaggregated by sex and other relevant factors, and disseminate lessons learned and good practices;

(jj) Ensure political will to recognize the role of women in development in all spheres of life, to promote gender equality and favour the participation of women in decision-making positions.