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Creating an environment at the national and international levels, conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The Economic and Social Council, in its agreed conclusions 2002/1 of 26 July 2002, invited its functional commissions to provide inputs to the overall theme of the Council's coordination and high-level segments as they relate to their area of work. The present note has been prepared to assist the Commission on the Status of Women should it consider providing an input to the high level segment of the 2006 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on the theme *Creating an environment at the national and international levels, conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development*. The note provides examples of recommendations for action on full employment and decent work for women in the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women and other relevant outcomes of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in particular highlighting the linkages between an enabling environment, gender equality, employment and sustainable development.

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I. Background

1. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in its agreed conclusions 2002/1 of 26 July 2002, invited its functional commissions to provide inputs to the overall theme of the Council's coordination and high-level segments as they relate to their area of work. In accordance with its oral decision of 21 October 2005, the Economic and Social Council will consider at the high-level segment of its 2006 substantive session the theme *Creating an environment at the national and international levels, conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development*.

2. The present note has been prepared by the Secretariat to assist the Commission on the Status of Women should it consider providing an input to the high-level segment of the 2006 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

3. The note highlights recommendations for action to promote women's full employment and access to decent work contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women since 1996, relevant resolutions of the General Assembly as well as provisions in the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

II. Gender equality and employment

4. In the Beijing Declaration, Governments expressed their determination to, inter alia, "promote women's economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes of poverty through changes in economic structures [...]".¹

5. The Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that women are key contributors to the economy and to combating poverty through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and the workplace, and that growing numbers of women have achieved economic independence through gainful employment. The Platform for Action highlighted that female-maintained households are very often among the poorest because of wage-discrimination, occupational segregation patterns in the labour market and other gender-based barriers.²

6. The Beijing Platform for Action also called for the development and promotion of employment programmes and services for women entering and/or re-entering the labour market, especially poor urban, rural and young women, the self-employed and those negatively affected by structural adjustment; and the implementation and monitoring of positive public- and private-sector employment, equity and positive action programmes to address systemic discrimination against women in the labour force, in particular women with disabilities and women belonging to other disadvantaged groups, with respect to hiring, retention and promotion, and vocational training of women in all sectors. It also called the need to ensure access to and develop special programmes to enable women with disabilities to obtain and retain employment, and ensure access to education and training at all proper levels, in accordance with the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities; adjust working conditions, to the extent possible, in order to suit the needs of women with disabilities, who should be assured legal protection against unfounded job loss on account of their disabilities.³

7. The Platform called on Governments to introduce measures to integrate or reintegrate women living in poverty and socially marginalized women into productive employment and the economic mainstream; and ensure that internally displaced women have full access to economic

opportunities and that the qualifications and skills of immigrant and refugee women are recognized.⁴

8. In the Platform Governments were called upon to ensure the full realization of the human rights of all women migrants, including women migrant workers, and their protection against violence and exploitation; introduce measures for the empowerment of documented women migrants, including women migrant workers; facilitate the productive employment of documented migrant women through greater recognition of their skills, foreign education and credentials, and facilitate their full integration into the labour force.⁵

9. The Platform further called for the promotion and support of women's self-employment and the development of small enterprises, and the strengthening of women's access to credit and capital on appropriate terms equal to those of men through the scaling-up of institutions dedicated to promoting women's entrepreneurship, including, as appropriate, non-traditional and mutual credit schemes, as well as innovative linkages with financial institutions. It also called upon governments to safeguard and promote respect for basic workers' rights, [...] in order to achieve truly sustained economic growth and sustainable development.⁶

10. The outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly called on Governments to facilitate employment for women through, inter alia, promotion of adequate social protection, simplification of administrative procedures, removal of fiscal obstacles, where appropriate, and other measures, such as access to risk capital, credit schemes, microcredit and other funding, facilitating the establishment of microenterprise and small and medium-sized enterprises. Governments, regional and international organizations, including the United Nations system, and international financial institutions and other actors, as appropriate, were called upon to adopt measures to ensure that the work of rural women, who continue to play a vital role in

providing food security and nutrition and are engaged in agricultural production and enterprises related to farming, fishing and resource management and home-based work, especially in the informal sector, is recognized and valued in order to enhance their economic security, their access to and control over resources and credit schemes, services and benefits, and their empowerment.⁷

11. In 2004, the General Assembly, in its resolution on the role of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty, recognized the need to create inclusive financial sectors in order to facilitate access for people living in poverty, especially women, to microcredit and microfinance so as to enable them to undertake microenterprises to generate employment and contribute to achieving self-empowerment, and to enhance their ability to increase income, build assets and mitigate vulnerability in times of hardship.⁸

12. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its agreed conclusions 1997/3 on women and the economy, urged Government to enhance the capacity of women to influence and make economic decisions as paid workers, managers, employers, elected officials, members of non-governmental organizations and unions, producers, household managers and consumers. To secure a critical mass of women's participation in top decision-making positions, Governments should implement and monitor anti-discriminatory laws. The public administration and private sector should comply with these laws and introduce changes to corporate structures. Positive and affirmative action can be an effective policy instrument for improving the position of women in sectors and levels of the economy where they are under-represented. Governments should stimulate employers to introduce objective and transparent procedures for recruitment, gender-sensitive career planning, and monitoring and accountability systems.⁹

13. The Commission also emphasized that the security of women's employment and the conditions for their reintegration into the labour market needed to be the subject of special attention. Due consideration was also to be given to women in the informal sector and atypical jobs. Full integration of women into the formal economy and, 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. Governments were called upon to consider ratifying the ILO Convention on home-based workers. Governments were also called upon to monitor and enforce equal opportunity policies and labour laws pertaining to the practices of all of the national and transnational corporations operating in their countries. Women and men should identify and support women-friendly corporations and socially responsible businesses through investments and the use of their services and products.¹⁰

14. The Commission on the Status of Women further emphasized that it is important that Governments, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society, women's organizations and other relevant actors promote women's entrepreneurial and self-employed activities through technical assistance services or programmes; information on markets; training; the creation of networks, including those at the regional and international levels; and adequate financial support; and where appropriate, by developing incentives. In order to strengthen the link between sustainable development and poverty eradication, such encouragement and support should extend to businesses owned by women in environmental, resource-based and export-oriented industries.¹¹

15. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its agreed conclusions on women and health in 1999, called for the protection of the health of women workers in all sectors, including agricultural and domestic household workers, through effective environmental and occupational

health policies for gender-sensitive work environments, free from sexual harassment and discrimination, which are safe and ergonomically designed to prevent occupational hazards. It further called for specific measures to protect the health of women workers who are pregnant or have recently given birth or are breastfeeding from harmful environmental and occupational hazards, and the development of strategies designed to seek to reduce occupational concentration by gender to eliminate gender-based pay inequality, to ensure high-quality working conditions in the health work force, and to provide appropriate skills training and development.¹²

16. In 2003, the Commission on the Status of Women, adopted agreed conclusions on eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world, which urged Governments and other actors to promote income generating activities and employment opportunities, including through the provision of microcredit and other financial instruments, ensure equal access to resources, in particular land and property ownership, including housing, and take measures to empower women as producers and consumers, in order to enhance the capacity of women to respond to disasters. The Commission also urged Governments and other actors to enhance market access for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular for those sectors that provide greater employment opportunities for women, and expand access for women entrepreneurs to trade opportunities. The Commission also called for the development of strategies to increase employment of women and to ensure that women, including women living in poverty, are protected by law against discriminatory terms and conditions of employment and any form of exploitation, that they benefit fully from job creation through a balanced representation of women and men in all sectors and occupations and that women receive equal pay for equal work or work of equal value to diminish differentials in incomes between women and men.¹³

17. The Millennium Declaration, adopted at the Millennium Summit in 2000, resolved to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable.¹⁴ One of the indicators to monitor progress made towards the Millennium Development Goal 3 on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is the “share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector”. This indicator measures the degree to which labour markets are open to women in industry and service sectors, which affects not only equal opportunity for women but also economic efficiency through flexibility of the labour market and the economy’s ability to adapt to change.¹⁵

18. The 2005 World Summit resolved to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive gender discrimination by, inter alia, promoting women’s equal access to labour markets, sustainable employment and adequate labour protection. The Summit strongly supported fair globalization and resolved to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of relevant national and international policies as well as national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, and forced labour. The Summit also resolved to ensure full respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work.¹⁶

III. Creating a conducive environment for women’s access to employment and decent work

19. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, agreed conclusions of the Commission on the

Status of Women since 1996, and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly addressed the issue of a conducive environment for women's access to employment and decent work.

20. The chapter on an enabling environment in the Programme of Action of the World Summit on Social Development emphasized, *inter alia*, that gender equality and equity and the full participation of women in all economic, social and political activities are essential, and that the obstacles that have limited the access of women to [...] productive employment must be eliminated and an equitable partnership between men and women established, involving men's full responsibility in family life.¹⁷

21. The General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/55/182 on international trade and development, emphasized that a favourable and conducive international economic and financial environment and a positive investment climate are necessary for the growth of the world economy, including the creation of employment with equal opportunities for women and men, in particular for the growth and development of developing countries, and emphasized also that each country is responsible for its own economic policies for sustainable development (preamble para. 5).

22. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 49/8 on economic advancement for women, recognized that women should have equal opportunities to achieve economic independence, as discrimination against women and lack of equal access to education, training, financial resources, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities and other economic resources, property and inheritance rights, and other legal protections, pose a major obstacle to sustainable economic growth, sustainable development and the sustainable economic advancement of women (preamble para. 11).

23. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 49/8 on economic advancement for women, called 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 (para. 15).

24. The General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/60/210 on women in development, expressed awareness that, while globalization and liberalization processes have created employment opportunities for women in many countries, they have also made women, especially in developing countries and in particular in the least developed countries, more vulnerable to problems caused by increased economic volatility, including in the agricultural sector, and that special support, particularly for women who are small-scale farmers, and empowerment are necessary to enable them to take advantage of the opportunities of agricultural market liberalization (preamble para. 12).

25. The present note identifies a number of crucial factors for creating an enabling environment for women's access to full employment and decent work. These include gender-sensitive economic policies; protection of women workers and elimination of discrimination; access to information and communication technologies (ICT); access to education and training; opportunities to reconcile work and family responsibilities and collection and utilization of data disaggregated by sex for monitoring and reporting on women's access to productive employment and decent work.

A. Gender-sensitive economic policies

26. The importance of gender-sensitive economic policies is emphasized, inter alia, in strategic objective A.1 and H.2 of the Beijing Platform for Action, which call for action to

review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty; and integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects. Actions proposed in the Beijing Platform for Action and other outcomes of intergovernmental processes include:

- Analyze, from a gender perspective, policies and programmes – including those related to [...] employment, markets and all relevant sectors of the economy – with respect to their impact on poverty, on inequality and particularly on women; assess their impact on family well-being and conditions and adjust them, as appropriate, to promote more equitable distribution of productive assets, wealth, opportunities, income and services (Beijing Platform for Action, 58(b));
- Generate economic policies that have a positive impact on the employment and income of women workers in both the formal and informal sectors and adopt specific measures to address women's unemployment, in particular their long-term unemployment (Beijing Platform for Action, 58(h));
- Regularly review national policies, programmes and projects, as well as their implementation, evaluating the impact of employment and income policies in order to guarantee that women are direct beneficiaries of development and that their full contribution to development, both remunerated and unremunerated, is considered in economic policy and planning (Beijing Platform for Action, para 204 (b));
- Analyze and respond, as necessary, to the major reasons why men and women may be affected differently by the process of job creation and retrenchment associated with economic

transition and structural transformation of the economy, including globalization (A/RES/S-23/3, para 82(l));

- Provide policy advice, technical assistance and financial support to member countries [...] to minimize the negative impacts of the adjustment programmes on the vulnerable segments of society, while taking into account the importance of gender-sensitive employment and poverty eradication policies and strategies (A/RES/59/222, para 17);
- 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 macro-economic framework; accountable systems for managing public resources; 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 (CSW resolution 49/8, para 5).

B. Protection of women workers and elimination of discrimination

27. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on employment calls upon States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular: (i) the right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings; (ii) the right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment; (iii) the right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including

apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training; (iv) the right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave; and (v) the right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction (Article 11).

28. The Convention also emphasized that in order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures: (i) to prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status; (ii) to introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances; (iii) to encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities; and (iv) to provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them (Article 11).

29. The protection of women workers is, inter alia, addressed in strategic objectives F.1 and F.5 of the Beijing Platform for Action, which call for action to promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources; and eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination. Actions proposed in the Beijing Platform for Action and other outcomes of intergovernmental processes include:

- Reform laws or enact national policies that support the establishment of labour laws to ensure the protection of all women workers, including safe work practices, the right to organize and access to justice (Beijing Platform for Action, para 165(r));
- Enact and enforce laws and develop workplace policies against gender discrimination in the labour market, especially considering older women workers, in hiring and promotion, and in the extension of employment benefits and social security, as well as regarding discriminatory working conditions and sexual harassment; mechanisms should be developed for the regular review and monitoring of such laws (Beijing Platform for Action, para 178(c));
- Eliminate discriminatory practices by employers on the basis of women's reproductive roles and functions, including refusal of employment and dismissal of women due to pregnancy and breast-feeding responsibilities (Beijing Platform for Action, para 178(d));
- Consider monitoring and publicizing the enterprises and organizations that take initiatives for the advancement of women and publicizing information on the companies that violate anti-discrimination laws (CSW agreed conclusions 1997/3, para 11);
- Promote and protect the rights of women workers and take action to remove structural and legal barriers as well as stereotypical attitudes to gender equality at work, addressing, inter alia, gender bias in recruitment; working conditions; occupational segregation and harassment; discrimination in social protection benefits; women's occupational health and safety; unequal career opportunities and inadequate sharing, by men, of family responsibilities (A/RES/S-23/3, para 82(a));
- Create and ensure access to social protection systems, taking into account the specific needs of all women living in poverty, demographic changes and changes in society, to provide

safeguards against the uncertainties and changes in conditions of work associated with globalization, and strive to ensure that new, flexible and emerging forms of work are adequately covered by social protection (A/RES/S-23/3, para 74(b));

- Eliminate discrimination against women in labour markets, employment practices, and the workplace, providing equal access for women to occupational categories and sectors where they are underrepresented, equal opportunities with respect to the right to organize and participate in labour unions and collective bargaining, including on employment conditions, career development opportunities and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, to take action to remove structural and legal barriers, as well as stereotypical attitudes to gender in work and training [...] (CSW resolution 49/8, para 11);
- Respect, promote and realize the principles contained in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its follow-up, and to consider ratification and full implementation of the conventions of the International Labour Organization that are particularly relevant to ensuring women's rights at work (CSW resolution 49/8, para 12);
- Adopt temporary special measures, where needed, aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women in all economic and employment sectors and occupational categories, to recognize the need for special supports for women to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by international trade and, where necessary, to introduce preventive policy measures to avoid further marginalization of women (CSW resolution 49/8, para 13);
- Promote, by means appropriate to the methods in operation for determining rates of remuneration, and, in so far as is consistent with such methods, ensure the application to all workers of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal

value. This principle may be applied by means of: (i) national laws or regulations; (ii) legally established or recognized machinery for wage determination; (iii) collective agreements between employers and workers; or (iv) a combination of these various means (ILO Convention on Equal Pay and Worker's Rights);¹⁸

- Implement and enforce laws and regulations and encourage voluntary codes of conduct that ensure that international labour standards, such as International Labour Organization Convention No. 100 on equal pay and workers' rights, apply equally to female and male workers (Beijing Platform for Action, para 178(a));
- Increase efforts to close the gap between women's and men's pay, take steps to implement the principle of equal remuneration for equal work of equal value by strengthening legislation, including compliance with international labour laws and standards, and encourage job evaluation schemes with gender-neutral criteria (Beijing Platform for Action, para 178(k));
- Develop and use analytical tools to compare wages in female and male-dominated occupations, including measures and tools to better reflect the real value of the skills, knowledge and experience of women developed through waged and unwaged work, as well as the full range of the requirements and conditions of waged work, with the aim of achieving equal pay for work of equal value, with a particular focus on minimum wages and low-wage industries. Gender-sensitive monitoring is crucial in enforcing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. Comprehensive policy-making in this field should include: (i) use of analytical tools; (ii) effective legislation; (iii) transparency of women's and men's wages; (iv) changing the gender-based division of labour and the stereotyped choices of men and women; and (v) effective guidance for employers (CSW agreed conclusions 1997/3, para 13);

- Initiate positive steps to promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value and to diminish differentials in incomes between women and men (A/RES/S-23/3, para 82(h));
- Eliminate pay differences based on gender through a multifaceted approach addressing underlying factors, including sectoral and occupational segregation, education and training, job classification and payment systems (CSW resolution 49/8, para 11).

C. Access to information and communication technologies (ICT)

30. The Beijing Platform for Action addressed information and communication technologies in strategic objectives B.3, B.5 and J.1, which call for action to improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing learning; allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms; and increase the participation and access to women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication. Actions proposed in the Beijing Platform for Action and other outcomes of intergovernmental processes include:

- Train women to make greater use of information technology for communication and the media, including at the international level (Beijing Platform for Action, para 242(b));
- Develop policies and programmes to enhance the employability of women and their access to quality jobs, through improving access to formal, nonformal and vocational training, lifelong learning and retraining, long-distance education, including in information and communications technology and entrepreneurial skills, particularly in developing countries, to support women's empowerment in the different stages of their lives (A/RES/S-23/3, para 82(e));
- Enable equal access for women to ICT-based economic activities, such as small business and home-based employment, to information systems and improved technologies, and to new

employment opportunities in this area, and consider developing telecentres, information centres, community access points and business incubators (CSW agreed conclusions 2003, para 4(k));

- Ensure equal opportunities for women, and monitor gender representation, in different categories and levels of work, education and training in the media and ICT areas, with a view to increasing women's participation in decision-making at all levels of ICT and the media (CSW agreed conclusions 2003, para 4(m));
- Work on removing the gender barriers to ICT education and training and promoting equal training opportunities in ICT-related fields for women and girls. Early intervention programmes in science and technology should target young girls with the aim of increasing the number of women in ICT careers. Promote the exchange of best practices on the integration of gender perspectives in ICT education (World Summit on the Information Society, Plan of Action, 2003, para 11(g));¹⁹
- Encourage the development of best practices for e-workers and e-employers built, at the national level, on principles of fairness and gender equality, respecting all relevant international norms (World Summit on the Information Society, Plan of Action, 2003, para 19(a));
- Promote teleworking to allow citizens, particularly in the developing countries, LDCs, and small economies, to live in their societies and work anywhere, and to increase employment opportunities for women, and for those with disabilities (World Summit on the Information Society, Plan of Action, 2003, para 19(c));
- Implement effective training and education, particularly in ICT science and technology, that motivates and promotes participation and active involvement of girls and women in the

decision-making process of building the Information Society (World Summit on the Information Society, Tunis Agenda, 2005, para 90(d)).²⁰

D. Education and training

31. Women's access to education and training is addressed, inter alia, in strategic objectives B.3 and F.2 of the Beijing Platform for Action, which call for action to improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education; and facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade. Actions proposed in the Beijing Platform for Action and other outcomes of intergovernmental processes include:

- Develop and implement education, training and retraining policies for women, especially young women and women re-entering the labour market, to provide skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context for improving their employment opportunities (Beijing Platform for Action, para 82(a));
- Ensure equal access for women to effective job training, retraining, counseling and placement services that are not limited to traditional employment areas (Beijing Platform for Action, para 166 (j));
- Highlight the interlinkage between education and training policies, on the one hand, and labour market policies, on the other hand, with an emphasis on the employment and employability of women. In order to enhance the employability of women, basic education and vocational qualifications, in particular in the fields of science and technology, are of great importance. In view of the high presence of women in flexible work-time schemes and atypical work, it is particularly important to facilitate women's participation in "on-the-job training" so

that they can secure their jobs and promote their careers (CSW agreed conclusions 1997/4, para 6);

- Promote and support the elimination of biases in the educational system so as to counteract the gender segregation of the labour market, enhance the employability of women, and effectively improve women's skills and broaden women's access to career choices, in particular in science, new technologies and other potential and innovative areas of expansion in terms of employment (CSW agreed conclusions 1997/3, para 3);
- Develop policies and programmes to enhance the employability of women and their access to quality jobs, through improving access to formal, non-formal and vocational training, lifelong learning and retraining, long-distance education, including in information and communications technology and entrepreneurial skills, particularly in developing countries, to support women's empowerment in the different stages of their lives (A/RES/S-23/3, para 82 (e));
- Take action to increase women's participation and to bring about a balanced representation of women and men in all sectors and occupations in the labour market, inter alia, by encouraging the creation or expansion of institutional networks to support the career development and promotion of women (A/RES/S-23/3, para 82(f));
- Encourage and support the education of girls in science, mathematics, new technologies, including information technologies, and technical subjects, and encourage women, including through career advising, to seek employment in high-growth and high-wage sectors and jobs (A/RES/S-23/3, para 82(i));
- Eliminate discrimination, ensure equal rights and access and actively enable participation by women and girls in education and training at all levels, including by developing programmes

with the aim of equipping women with business, trade, information and communication technology and entrepreneurship skills (CSW resolution 49/8, para 4).

E. Reconciliation of work and family responsibilities

32. The reconciliation of work and family responsibilities is addressed in strategic objectives F.1 and F.6 of the Beijing Platform for Action, which call for action to promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources; and promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men. Actions proposed in the Beijing Platform for Action and other outcomes of intergovernmental processes include:

- Adjust employment policies to facilitate the restructuring of work patterns in order to promote the sharing of family responsibilities (Beijing Platform for Action, para 165(m));
- Ensure that full and part-time work can be freely chosen by women and men on an equal basis, and consider appropriate protection for atypical workers in terms of access to employment, working conditions and social security (Beijing Platform for Action, para 179(b));
- Improve the development of, and access to, technologies that facilitate occupational as well as domestic work, encourage self-support, generate income, transform gender-prescribed roles within the productive process and enable women to move out of low-paying jobs (Beijing Platform for Action, para 179 (e));
- Promote legislative measures, incentives and/or measures of encouragement that would enable men and women to take parental leave and receive social security benefits. Such measures should protect working men and women against dismissal and guarantee their right to re-enter employment in an equivalent post (CSW agreed conclusions 1996/3, para 12(c));

- Take into account the growing need for financing to establish day-care nurseries, particularly in areas where there is a greater concentration of poverty, in order to facilitate the training of mothers or their entry into paid employment (CSW agreed conclusions 1996/3, para 15);
- Take or 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 flexible working schemes for men and women and, where appropriate, shorter working hours (CSW agreed conclusions 1997/3, para 15);
- Promote programmes to enable women and men to reconcile their work and family responsibilities and to encourage men to share equally with women household and child-care responsibilities (A/RES/S-23/3, para 82(b));
- Promote reconciliation of occupational and family responsibilities, including through reduction of occupational segregation, introduction or expansion of parental leave, flexible working arrangements, such as voluntary part-time work, teleworking, and other home-based work (CSW agreed conclusions 2004/I, para 6 (m));
- Recognize, develop and promote policies, including workplace policies and other supports such as maternity and parental benefits and leave, childcare and care for other dependents, that facilitate the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities and recognize the importance of the value of non-market contributions that individuals and families make to society and the economy, ensuring the right for women and men to decide freely and responsibly on the number, timing and spacing of their children, encouraging men to share

equally with women household, childcare and other care-giving responsibilities and also ensuring that women have equal rights to social security and other entitlements (CSW resolution 49/8, para 14).

F. Sex disaggregated data and indicators

33. In addition to the Millennium Development Goal 3 indicator on “share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector”, which measures the degree to which labour markets are open to women in industry and service sectors, commitments have been made in the Fourth World Conference on Women and in the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women on the collection of data and development of indicators in the area of women’s access to employment and decent work. Actions proposed in the Beijing Platform for Action and other outcomes of intergovernmental processes include:

- Improve data collection on the unremunerated work which is already included in the United Nations System of National Accounts, such as in agriculture, particularly subsistence agriculture, and other types of non-market production activities (Beijing Platform for Action, para 206 (f)(i));
- Improve measurements that at present underestimate women’s unemployment and underemployment in the labour market (Beijing Platform for Action, para 206 (f)(ii));
- Develop methods, in the appropriate forums, for assessing the value, in quantitative terms, of unremunerated work that is outside national accounts, such as caring for dependants and preparing food, for possible reflection in satellite or other official accounts that may be produced separately from but are consistent with core national accounts, with a view to recognizing the

economic contribution of women and making visible the unequal distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work between women and men (Beijing Platform for Action, para 206(f) (iii));

- Measure and value unpaid work through existing and improved mechanisms, including by: (i) measuring, in quantitative terms, unremunerated work that is outside national accounts, working to improve methods to assess its value, and accurately reflecting its value in satellite or other official accounts that are separate from but consistent with core national accounts; (ii) conducting regular time-use studies to measure, in quantitative terms, unremunerated work; and (iii) Providing resources and technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in valuing and making visible women's unpaid work (CSW agreed conclusions 1997/3, para 20);
- Provide data disaggregated by sex on training, including employer-sponsored training, present employment trends, income and future employment opportunities (CSW agreed conclusions 1997/4, para 8);
- Support gender-specific research on the short- and long-term effects of the occupational and environmental health risks of work, including work in the formal and informal sector, performed by both women and men, and take effective legal and other measures to reduce these risks, including risks in the workplace, in the environment and from harmful chemicals, including pesticides, radiation, toxic waste and other such hazards that affect women's health (CSW agreed conclusions 1999/I, para 5 (a));
- Develop and improve mechanisms, for example time-use studies, to measure in quantitative terms unremunerated work in order to: (i) make visible the unequal distribution between women and men of remunerated and unremunerated work in order to promote changes;

and (ii) assess the real value of unremunerated work and accurately reflect it in satellite or other official accounts that are separate from but consistent with core national accounts (CSW agreed conclusions 1999/II, para 1(o));

- Increase efforts to compile, and disaggregate by sex and age, statistics on ICT use, to develop gender-specific indicators on ICT use and needs, and to collect gender-specific data on employment and education patterns in media and ICT professions (CSW agreed conclusions 2003, para 4(t)).

¹ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 26.

² *Ibid*, annex II, para. 21 and 22.

³ *Ibid*, para. 178(e), (f) and (j).

⁴ *Ibid*, para. 58(j) and (l).

⁵ *Ibid*, para. 58(k).

⁶ *Ibid*, para. 166(a) and (l).

⁷ General Assembly, A/RES/S-23/3, para. 75 and 94(e).

⁸ General Assembly, A/RES/59/246, preambular para. 5.

⁹ Report of the 41st session of the Commission on the Status of Women, E/1997/27, Agreed conclusions on women and the economy, para. 1 and 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, para. 12, 15, 16, 18 and 19.

¹¹ *Ibid*, para 9.

¹² Report of the 43rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, E/1999/27, Agreed conclusions on women and health, para 5 (b), 5(c) and 7 (c).

¹³ Report of the 46th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, E/2002/27, agreed conclusions on eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world, para. 5(k), (u) and (x).

¹⁴ General Assembly, A/RES/55/2, para. 20.

¹⁵ United Nations, 2003, Indicators for Monitoring the Millennium Development Goals, Definitions, Rationale, Concepts and Sources, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/95, New York.

¹⁶ General Assembly, A/RES/60/1, para. 47 and 58(d).

¹⁷ Report of the World Summit on Social Development, 19 April 1995, A/CONF.166/9, para 7.

¹⁸ <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>

¹⁹ World Summit on the Information Society, Plan of Action, WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/5-E.

²⁰ World Summit on the Information Society, Tunis Agenda, WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev.1)-E.