

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-first session, 26 February – 9 March 2007

Draft Agreed Conclusions

Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the declaration adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.
2. The Commission also reaffirms the outcome document of the World Summit on Children as well as the outcomes of all other relevant major United Nations conferences and summits.
3. The Commission also reaffirms the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol (CSW Agreed conclusions on Decision-making, E/2006/27, PP 5) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and recognizes that these, as well as other conventions and treaties, provide the legal framework for the protection and promotion of the human rights of girls and prescribe a comprehensive set of measures to ensure the elimination of discrimination against the girl child. (SG report on the girl child, E.CN.6/2007/2, para 12)
4. The Commission further reaffirms its previous set of agreed conclusions on the girl child and all relevant resolutions on the girl child.
5. The Commission welcomes the 2005 World Summit, which reaffirmed the commitment to eliminate gender inequality and imbalance and to renew efforts to improve girls' education, and resolved to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and the girl child, including by ending impunity and by ensuring the protection of civilians, in particular women and the girl child, during and after armed conflicts in accordance with the obligations of States under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. (WSO OPs 44 and 58(f))
6. The Commission reaffirms the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit to the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000. (based on A/RES/61/145 OP18)
7. The Commission is profoundly concerned that despite progress in addressing discrimination and violence against girls and recognition of their rights, violations of their human rights still persist (SG report, E.CN.6/2007/2, para 13 and 14) and that previous goals, targets and commitments made with regard to the girl child have been missed or remain unfulfilled.

8. The Commission recognizes that the empowerment of girls is key to breaking the cycle of discrimination and violence and to protecting and promoting their human rights. (SG report, E/CN.6/2007/2, para 33) It also recognizes that empowering girls requires the active support and engagement of boys, as well as the wider community. (SG report, E/CN.6/2007/2, para 46)

9. The Commission further recognizes that the difficult socio-economic conditions that exist in many developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, have resulted in the acceleration of the feminization of poverty and that in situations of poverty girl children are among those most affected (based on A/RES/60/210 PP7/A/RES/60/141 PP11). The Commission also recognizes that, as part of urgent national and international action required to eradicate poverty, investing in the development of girls has a multiplier effect, in particular on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth. (A/RES/60/210, PP 5)

10. The Commission expresses concern that the girl child does not receive sufficiently explicit attention in policy and programme development and resource allocation. It is also concerned that the lack of data disaggregated by sex and age remains a serious constraint in formulating and implementing effective, targeted policies and programmes and monitoring progress in eliminating discrimination and violence. (SG Report, E.CN.6/2007/2, para 48).

11. The Commission urges Governments to take the following actions:

Norms and policies

a. Ratify without reservations the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and their respective Optional Protocols, (SG report girl child OP 51 a) and ensure that they are incorporated into national law and become fully applicable in domestic legal systems; (SG report girl child OP 51 c)

b. Ratify, bring national legislation into conformity with, and fully implement, ILO Conventions 138 and 182 on, respectively, the minimum age for employment, and combating the worst forms of child labour (including commercial sexual exploitation, slave-like practices, forced and bonded labour, trafficking, and hazardous forms of child labour) to eliminate the child labour of girls, (SG report girl child OP 51 b) and establish appropriate penalties and sanctions to ensure effective enforcement; (SG report girl child OP 51 f)

c. Enact and/or strengthen legislation on eliminating discrimination and violence against girls, develop policies that ensure their effective implementation, and put in place adequate accountability mechanisms at national and local levels to monitor adherence to, and compliance with these mechanisms; (SG report girl child OP 51 g)

- d. Exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish the perpetrators of violence against girls and provide protection to the victims; (based on A/RES/61/143, op. 7)
- e. Create and maintain, where not currently in place, birth, death and marriage data registries with full national coverage; (SG report girl child OP 51 i)
- f. Review, enact and strictly enforce laws and regulations concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage, raising the minimum age for marriage where necessary, and generate social support for the enforcement of these laws, inter alia, through increasing educational opportunities for girls (SG report girl child OP 51 e) and advocating the benefits of keeping girls in schools;
- g. Incorporate attention to the needs of children, giving explicit attention to girls, in budget processes at all levels, including resource allocation and expenditure reviews to ensure adequate resources for the elimination of discrimination and violence against girls; (SG report girl child OP 51 j)

12. The Commission urges Governments to take and/or, as appropriate, the relevant entities of the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations, including the international financial institutions, civil society, including the private sector, trade unions, academia, the media, NGOs, and other actors, to take the following actions:

Education

- a. Redouble their efforts to meet the target of eliminating gender inequalities in primary and secondary education by the earliest possible date and at all educational levels by 2015; (based on WSO OP 58 a)
- b. Identify constraints and gaps and develop strategies to ensure accelerated achievement of equality in enrolment and completion of schooling at the primary and secondary levels for all girls, including pregnant girls and young mothers (SG report girl child OP 52 x) and promote gender-sensitive, empowering educational processes, by reviewing and revising as necessary, school curricula, formal and non-formal educational materials and teacher-training programmes, and encourage and support girls' interest and involvement in fields and occupations traditionally dominated by men; (SG report girl child OP 52 y and aa)
- c. Ensure safe school environments for girls by implementing measures such as increased recruitment of women teachers, policies of zero tolerance for violence against girls, provision of appropriate sanitation and recreational facilities, and securing of safe routes to and from school; (SG report girl child OP 52 z)
- d. Develop well-resourced educational and livelihood skills programmes to reach girls who are not enrolled in formal education programmes due to specific life

circumstances, inter alia, extreme poverty, child labour, abuse or exploitation, trafficking, conflict and displacement, migration, early marriage, pregnancy and motherhood; (SG report girl child OP 52 dd)

e. Ensure girls' access to training that enables them to develop their skills, capacities and expertise to exercise leadership, including tools, training and special programmes necessary to become actors in public life, including at the highest levels, recognizing existing power differentials in society and the need to respect different positive models of leadership; (based on AC Decision-making 2006 OP 17 l)

f. Invest in public infrastructure projects, such as transport, water, sanitation and energy, to reduce the amount of time girls must spend on everyday routine household maintenance tasks, thereby increasing their ability to attend school; (based on Strategic Priority 3 of the Millennium Project Task Force Report on Gender Equality, page 7 Executive Summary)

g. Promote and support increased access of girls to ICT, particularly girls in rural areas and other disadvantaged situations; (SG report girl child OP 52 bb)

h. Provide technical assistance upon request to developing countries to strengthen the capacity to provide equal access to education and to monitor progress in closing the gap between girls and boys, in education, training and research, and in levels of achievement in all fields (Beijing 86(a))

Gender stereotypes

i. Develop appropriately funded programmes to address stereotypical attitudes and behaviours that contribute to discrimination and violence against girls, working specifically with men and boys and other critical actors, such as media professionals (SG report girl child OP 53 d), and encourage male decision makers at all levels, with responsibilities for policies, legislation, programmes and allocation of public resources, to play leadership roles in the elimination of discrimination and violence against girls and the promotion of girls' empowerment; (SG report girl child OP 53 e)

Health

j. Increase resources in all sectors to enable girls to access their right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health and to affordable and adequate health-care services and information and incorporate girls' specific needs and priorities in all health sector policies and programmes; (based on SG report OP52 j)

k. Make widely available comprehensive information and counselling to girls and boys, including in school curricula, on human relationships, sexual and reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and the prevention of early pregnancy, that are confidential and easily accessible and emphasize the equal responsibility of girls and boys; (based on SG report OP52 j and AC girl child 1998 C)

l. Develop national prevention and treatment strategies to effectively address the condition of obstetric fistula and to further develop a multisectoral, comprehensive and integrated approach to bring about lasting solutions and a meaningful response to the problem of obstetric fistula and related morbidities, (A/RES/61/146, Rights of the Child, 52 (d)) including through ensuring access to quality maternal health care services, skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care;

HIV/AIDS

m. Ensure that in all policies and programmes designed to prevent and address HIV/AIDS particular attention and support is given to the girl child infected with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS, including young mothers; (A/RES/60/141 OP23)

n. Take appropriate measures to provide a supportive environment for girls infected with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS, including by providing appropriate counselling and psychosocial support, ensuring their enrolment in school and equal access to shelter, nutrition, health and social services, as well as to protect them from all forms of stigma, discrimination, violence, exploitation and abuse; (SG report girl child OP 52 m)

o. Identify and address the needs of girls heading households, including in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, for, inter alia, protection, access to financial resources, access to health care and support services, and opportunities to continue their education; (SG report girl child OP 52 n)

Child labour

p. Ensure that girls who meet the minimum age requirement for employment have equal access to decent work conditions, are protected from economic exploitation, sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace, and have access to education and vocational training; (SG report girl child OP 52 o)

q. Raise government and public awareness as to the nature and scope of the special needs of girls employed as domestic workers and of those performing excessive domestic chores in their own households, and develop measures to prevent their economic exploitation and sexual abuse, (AC girl child 1998 F) and ensure that they have access to education and vocational training, health services, food, shelter and recreation; (SG report girl child OP 52 o)

Conflict

r. Protect the girl child in situations of armed conflict against participation in armed conflicts, recruitment, rape and sexual exploitation, (AC girl child 1998/IV D) and prosecute all perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence against girls in situations of armed conflict, including United Nations international and national personnel; (SG report girl child OP 52 s)

s. Take measures to ensure that the specific needs of girls affected by armed conflict are taken into account in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including in refugee camps, and in reconstruction efforts and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes; (SG report girl child OP 52 t)

Violence

t. Provide age-appropriate and gender-sensitive services to girl victims/survivors of all forms of gender-based violence, including comprehensive programmes for the physical, psychological and social recovery such as health, counselling and legal services, hotlines/helplines and shelters, and ensure adequate human and financial resources for these services; (A/RES/61/413 OP6 and SG report girl child OP 52 h)

u. Strengthen advocacy and awareness-raising programmes on all forms of violence against girls engaging community, traditional and religious leaders, educational institutions, and families, and provide increased financial support to efforts at both national and subnational levels to change behaviour and end such violence; (based on SG report girl child OP 52 q)

v. Create community-based networks to advocate against violence against girls, develop programmes to sensitize health workers to the issue and integrate comprehensive measures and incentives that promote the equal value of the girl child into national development strategies;

w. Ensure that follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations contained in the United Nations study on violence against children and the in-depth study on all forms of violence against women and related resolutions of the General Assembly, includes explicit attention to girls at all levels; (SG report girl child OP 52 g)

Vulnerable girls

x. Actively support, through the allocation of appropriate financial resources, targeted, innovative programmes that address the needs and priorities of girls in high-risk situations who have difficulties accessing services and programmes, such as married girls, young mothers, child labourers, girls affected by HIV/AIDS, girls with disabilities, victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, and girls affected by conflict; (SG report girl child OP 52 l)

Investing in girls' development

y. 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 and girls' groups and networks, including through the use of ICT, as appropriate; (based on AC Decision-making 2006 17 v)

z. Provide education and training on the rights of girls to families, community leaders, and all professions relevant to the protection and empowerment of girls, such as social workers, police officers, judges and prosecutors, to increase awareness and commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of girls and appropriate responses to rights violations; (SG report girl child OP 53 a)

Gender mainstreaming

aa. Mainstream attention to the girl child into all policies and programmes aimed at promoting gender equality, the empowerment of women and the elimination of discrimination and violence against children, and systematically document and disseminate lessons learned and good practices; (SG report on gender mainstreaming, E/CN.6/2007/3, para 60 (b))

bb. Strengthen national monitoring and evaluation of efforts to mainstream attention to the girl child in all sectors, and compile and disseminate lessons learned and good practices, as well as identify gaps, and challenges and strategies to address them; (SG report on progress in gender mainstreaming, E/CN.6/2007/3, para 60 (e))

cc. Utilize gender impact assessments as part of national monitoring and evaluation to assess the extent to which policies and programmes actively promote and protect the rights of girls and address discrimination and violence against girls; (SG report on progress in gender mainstreaming, E/CN.6/2007/3, para 60 (f))

Data collection

dd. Strengthen national research, monitoring and evaluation of the progress in eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, in particular in areas where there is 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, age and other relevant factors; and disseminate lessons learned and good practices; (based on AC Decision-making 2006 OP 17 ii)

ee. Conduct surveys of the situation of girls at national and subnational levels to identify groups at high risk of discrimination and violence, ensuring that all data is disaggregated by age, education, marital status, geographical location, ethnicity, and income; (SG report girl child OP 52 a)

ff. Collect data and systematically report on internationally agreed indicators related to the girl child, (SG report girl child OP 52(e) and develop additional indicators, as appropriate, to more systematically and effectively measure national progress in eliminating discrimination and violence against the girl child. (SG report girl child OP 52(f))

Treaty bodies

13. The Commission encourages the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to invite States parties to ensure that their reports explicitly address the situation of the girl child; (SG report girl child OP 54 (a)) and increase direct collaboration between the Committees, including through the adoption of a joint general recommendation on the girl child (SG report girl child OP (d)).

Implementation of commitments

14. The Commission calls on Member States and international and non-governmental organisations to mobilise all necessary resources, support and efforts, including at the international level, to realize the goals, strategic objectives and actions set out in the Beijing Platform for Action with regard to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child and the further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (based on A/RES/60/141 OP 19).

Support to the UN system

15. The Commission urges all Member States, as well as multilateral, financial and development institutions to support the entities of the United Nations system, especially its funds and programmes, to increase their efforts, including through the UN Country Teams, to strengthen their country-level advocacy and their technical capacities to address all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

Participation of girls in decision-making

16. The Commission reiterates that girls must be enabled to exercise their right to express their views freely, according to their evolving capacity, and build self-esteem and acquire knowledge and skills and urges all Member States to respect and promote this right and to take the views of girls, in accordance with their age and maturity, into account in all matters affecting them (based on WFfC para. 32).