

Agreed conclusions 1997/1

Women and the environment

1. The recently held United Nations conferences and summits, particularly the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, have underlined that the contribution of women to economic development, social development and environmental protection, which are mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, should be recognized and supported, and that there is need for a clear gender perspective in environmental management. Moreover, unless the contribution of women is recognized and supported, sustainable development will be an elusive goal.

2. In the five-year review and assessment of the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, moving beyond the concept of women as a major group, a major focus should be the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the development and implementation of all legislation, policies and programmes, with a view to achieving gender equality, taking into account the Beijing Platform for Action and the results of other global conferences.

3. In designing and implementing environmental programmes and policies, including those related to the implementation of Agenda 21,¹⁰ and the Beijing Platform for Action at the national and local levels, all responsible actors should ensure that a gender perspective is fully integrated into them, through the development and application of analytical tools and methodologies for gender-based analysis. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms should be in place to assess gender mainstreaming and its impact.

4. The Commission on Sustainable Development should mainstream a gender perspective into its future work, ensuring that differential impacts on women and men of policies and programmes for sustainable development are well understood and effectively addressed.

5. All responsible actors are requested to adopt a holistic, coordinated and collaborative approach to integrating a gender perspective into sustainable development, between governmental ministries and departments and, at the

¹⁰ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

international level, between United Nations agencies, funds and bodies and other international entities.

6. All responsible actors should support the active participation of women on an equal footing with men in sustainable development at all levels, including participation in financial and technical decision-making through appropriate legislation and/or administrative regulations.

7. Governments should ensure that policies for the liberalization of trade and investment are complemented by effective social and environmental policies into which a gender perspective is fully integrated, so as to ensure that the benefits of growth are fully shared by all sectors of society and to avoid deterioration of the environment.

8. As consumers, both women and men should be more aware of their ability to behave in an environmentally friendly manner through measures such as eco-labelling that is understood by consumers regardless of age or level of literacy, and local recycling schemes.

9. Gender-sensitive research on the impact of environmental pollutants and other harmful substances, including the impact on the reproductive health of men and women, should be intensified and linked with the incidence of female cancers. The findings should be widely disseminated, taking into account the results of research on the implementation of national policies and programmes. However, lack of full scientific data should not be a reason for postponing measures that can prevent harm to human health.

10. The active involvement of women at the national and international levels is essential for the development and implementation of policies aimed at promoting and protecting the environmental aspects of human health, in particular, in setting standards for drinking water, since everyone has a right to access to drinking water in quantity and quality equal to his or her basic needs. A gender perspective should be included in water resource management which, *inter alia*, values and reinforces the important role that women play in acquiring, conserving and using water. Women should be included in decision-making related to waste disposal, improving water and sanitation systems and industrial, agricultural and land-use projects that affect water quality and quantity. Women should have access to clean, affordable water for their human and economic needs. A prerequisite is the assurance of universal access to safe drinking water and to sanitation, and to that end, cooperation at both the national and international levels should be encouraged.

11. Governments should combat the illegal export of banned and hazardous chemicals, including agro-chemicals, in accordance with relevant international and regional agreements. Governments should support the negotiation of a legally binding international instrument for the application of prior informed consent procedures for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade.

12. Governments, the international community and international organizations should ensure a participatory approach to environmental protection and conservation at all levels and, in elaborating policies and programmes, should recognize that sustainable development is a shared responsibility of men and women and should take into account both men's and women's productive and reproductive roles.

13. All Governments should implement their commitments made in Agenda 21 and the Beijing Platform for Action, including those in the area of financial and technical assistance and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to the developing countries, and should ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed into all such assistance and transfers.

14. The international community and United Nations agencies should continue to assist developing countries in developing the capacity to carry out gender impact assessments and in devising analytical tools and gender-sensitive guidelines. A gender perspective should be mainstreamed into all environmental impact assessments. Governments, the private sector and international financial institutions should accelerate efforts to carry out gender impact assessments of investment decisions.

15. Governments, civil society, United Nations agencies and bodies, and other international organizations should collect, analyse and disseminate data disaggregated by sex and information related to women and the environment so as to ensure the integration of gender considerations into the development and implementation of sustainable development policies and programmes.

16. Actors such as the United Nations, international financial institutions, Governments and civil society should apply a gender perspective in all funding programmes for sustainable development, while acknowledging the importance of continuing programming targeted at women. Funds should be shared across sectors.

17. Multilateral and bilateral donors, Governments and the private sector should increase support to non-governmental organizations, particularly to

women's organizations, in playing an active role in advocacy for the implementation of Agenda 21 at the international and national levels, particularly in supporting national policies and programmes for sustainable development in the developing countries.

18. Such assistance should also be rendered to the countries with economies in transition at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

19. Governments, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, should work in collaboration to provide information on sound environmental practices, support gender-sensitive education and develop specific gender-sensitive training programmes in this area.

20. All relevant actors should be encouraged to work in partnership with adolescent girls and boys, utilizing both formal and non-formal educational training activities, *inter alia*, through sustainable consumption patterns and responsible use of natural resources.

21. Political parties should be encouraged to incorporate environmental goals with a gender dimension into their party platforms.

22. Governments, in partnership with the private sector and other actors of civil society, should strive to eradicate poverty, especially the feminization of poverty, to change production and consumption patterns and to create sound, well-functioning local economies as the basis for sustainable development, *inter alia*, by empowering the local population, especially women. It is also important for women to be involved in urban planning, in the provision of basic facilities and communication and transport networks, and in policies concerned with safety. International cooperation should be strengthened to achieve this end.

23. Women have an essential role to play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns and approaches to natural resource management. The knowledge and expertise of women, especially of rural women and indigenous women, in the use and the protection of natural resources should be recognized, consolidated, protected and fully used in the design and implementation of policies and programmes for the management of the environment.

24. Laws should be designed and revised to ensure that women have equal access to and control over land, unmediated by male relatives, in order to end land rights discrimination. Women should be accorded secure use rights and

should be fully represented in the decision-making bodies that allocate land and other forms of property, credit, information and new technologies. In the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, women should be accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property *inter alia* through inheritance. Land reform programmes should begin by acknowledging the equality of women's rights to land and take other measures to increase land availability to poor women and men.

25. Governments should promote the development of ecological tourism initiatives in order to promote and facilitate women's entrepreneurial activities in this field.

26. Education and training of young people on the human rights of women should be ensured, and traditional and customary practices that are harmful to and discriminate against women should be eliminated.

27. Governments, research institutions and the private sector should support the role of women in developing environmentally sound technologies, such as solar energy, and in influencing the development of new and appropriate technologies by ensuring education and training in science and technology.

28. Governments, the private sector and the international community are called upon to give priority attention to the links between security, armed conflict and the environment, and their impact on the civilian population, in particular women and children.

29. Recognizing that gender equality is essential to the achievement of sustainable development, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women should bring to the attention of the Chairpersons of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session, and to the General Assembly at its special session to review the implementation of Agenda 21, the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on women and the environment.

Agreed conclusions 1997/2

Women in power and decision-making

1. Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action¹¹ should be accelerated to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels.
2. Achieving the goal of equal participation of men and women in decision-making and ensuring equal political, economic and social participation of women in all spheres would provide the balance that is needed to strengthen democracy.
3. Governments and bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as other international organizations, social partners and non-governmental organizations, should collectively and individually accelerate the implementation of strategies that promote gender balance in political decision-making, including in conflict prevention and resolution. They should mainstream a gender perspective, including the use of gender-impact assessments, in all stages of policy formulation and decision-making. They should take into account diverse decision-making styles and organizational practices and take the necessary steps to ensure a gender-sensitive workplace, including a workplace free of sexual harassment and noted for its ability to recruit, promote and retain female staff. Decision-making structures and processes should be improved to encourage the participation of women, including women at the grass-roots level.
4. Research, including a gender-impact assessment of electoral systems to identify measures that would counter the under-representation of women in decision-making and reverse the downward trend of women in parliaments worldwide, should be supported.
5. Political parties are urged to remove discriminatory practices, incorporate gender perspectives into party platforms, and ensure women's access to executive bodies on an equal basis with men, including access to leadership positions as well as to appointed positions and electoral nominating processes.

¹¹ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women...*

6. Positive action, including such mechanisms as establishing a minimum percentage of representation for both sexes and/or gender-sensitive measures and processes, is needed to speed the achievement of gender equality and can be an effective policy instrument to improve women's position in sectors and levels where they are under-represented. All responsible actors in government, the private sector, political parties and non-governmental organizations should review the criteria and processes used in recruitment and appointment to advisory and decision-making bodies, including leadership structures, so as to ensure a comprehensive strategy to achieve gender equality.
7. Governments should commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in decision-making, in administration and public appointments at all levels and in the diplomatic services, *inter alia*, by establishing specific time-bound targets.
8. Governments and civil society should promote awareness of gender issues and call for their consistent mainstreaming in legislation and public policies.
9. Governments should examine their own communications and policies to ensure the projection of positive images of women in politics and public life.
10. Use of the media both as an image-setting instrument and as a tool to be more effectively used by women candidates should be further explored.
11. Governments, the private sector, political parties, social partners and non-governmental organizations should review the criteria and processes for recruitment and appointment to advisory and decision-making bodies so as to establish the goal of gender balance. At the same time, the business sector should take the challenge to optimize business by promoting a gender balance in the workforce at all levels and to facilitate the reconciliation of work and personal life.
12. Political parties should be encouraged to fund training programmes in conducting campaigns, fund-raising and parliamentary procedures to enable women successfully to run for, be elected to, and serve in public office and parliament. In order to promote reconciliation of work and personal life for women and men, structural changes are needed in the work environment, including flexible working times and meeting arrangements.

13. Governments and the international community should ensure the economic empowerment, education and training of women to enable them to participate in power and decision-making.

14. Governments should promote educational programmes in which the girl child will be prepared to participate in decision-making within the community as a way to promote her future decision-making capacity in all spheres of life.

15. Governments and the United Nations system should promote women's active and equal participation as governmental and non-governmental representatives, special rapporteurs and envoys in all of the initiatives and activities of the system, including as mediators for peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

16. Governments and bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as other international organizations, should actively encourage the sustained participation and equal representation of women and civic movements in all areas, including decision-making processes related to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and rehabilitation, with a view to creating an enabling environment for peace, reconciliation and reconstruction of their communities.

17. Governments and political parties should actively encourage the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in politics and power structures through increasing women's representation in decision-making to a critical mass in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Alternative approaches and changes in institutional structures and practices can contribute significantly to mainstreaming a gender perspective.

18. Governments, political parties and bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as other international organizations and non-governmental organizations, should continue to collect and disseminate data and sex-disaggregated statistics to monitor the representation of women in government at all levels, in political parties, among social partners, in the private sector and in non-governmental organizations at all levels, as well as the participation of women in peace and security.

19. The Secretary-General should ensure full and urgent implementation of the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) so as to achieve overall gender equality, in particular at the Professional level and above, by the year 2000. The

Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions) (CCAQ/PER) should continue to monitor and make concrete recommendations regarding steps being taken in the United Nations Secretariat to achieve the target of 50 per cent women in managerial and decision-making positions by the year 2000, as well as steps to achieve gender balance in the United Nations system as a whole. Consistent with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Secretary-General is urged to increase the number of women employed in the Secretariat from countries that are unrepresented or under-represented. The Secretary-General should be encouraged to appoint a woman to the proposed new position of Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations as a step in mainstreaming women in decision-making positions throughout the United Nations system.

20. International and multilateral agencies should consider ways to communicate and exchange information throughout the United Nations system, *inter alia*, through the convening of workshops and seminars, including at the managerial level, on best practices and lessons learned for achieving gender balance in institutions, including accountability mechanisms and incentives, and mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, including bilateral and multilateral assistance.

21. Member States are also encouraged to include women in their delegations to all United Nations and other conferences, including those dealing with security, political, economic, trade, human rights and legal issues, as well as to ensure their representation in all organs of the United Nations and other bodies such as the international financial institutions, where women's participation is negligible.

22. Member States are urged to promote gender balance at all levels in their diplomatic service, including at the ambassadorial level.

23. Representation of women from other under-represented or disadvantaged groups should be promoted by Governments and by bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as other international organizations and non-governmental organizations in decision-making positions and forums.

24. The attention of Governments is drawn to the general recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on articles 7 and 8 concerning women in public life and decision-

making, to be included in the report of the Committee on its seventeenth session.

Agreed conclusions 1997/3

Women and the economy

Governments, international organizations and the private sector should recognize the contributions women make to economic growth through their paid and unpaid work and as employers, employees and entrepreneurs. They should adopt the following:

1. Governments, international organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, social partners (employers' organizations and labour unions) should adopt a systematic and multifaceted approach to accelerating women's full participation in economic decision-making at all levels and ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of economic policies, including economic development policies and poverty eradication programmes. To this end, Governments are urged 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. Governments are encouraged to conduct a gender analysis of policies and programmes that incorporates information on the full range of women's and men's paid and unpaid economic activity. Governments, international organizations, particularly the International Labour Organization (ILO), the private sector and non-governmental organizations, should develop and share case studies and best practices of gender analysis in policy areas that affect the economic situation of women.
2. In order to ensure women's empowerment in the economy and their economic advancement, adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels, as well as new and additional resources to the developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources, for the advancement of women, will also be required.
3. Governments should 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.

4. Economic policies and structural adjustment programmes, including liberalization policies, should include privatization, financial and trade policies, should be formulated and monitored in a gender-sensitive way, with inputs from the women most impacted by these policies, in order to generate positive results for women and men, drawing on research on the gender impact of macroeconomic and micro-economic policies. Governments should ensure, inter alia, that macroeconomic policies, including financial and public sector reforms, and employment generation, are gender-sensitive and friendly to small-scale and medium-sized enterprises. Local-level regulations and administrative arrangements should be conducive to women entrepreneurs. It is the responsibility of Governments to ensure that women are not discriminated against in times of structural change and economic recession.

5. Governments should ensure that women's rights, particularly those of rural women and women living in poverty, are being promoted and implemented through their equal access to economic resources, including land, property rights, right to inheritance, credit and traditional savings schemes, such as women's banks and cooperatives.

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

7. Microcredit schemes should be supported and monitored in order to evaluate their efficiency in terms of their impact on increasing women's economic empowerment and well-being, income-earning capacity and integration into the economy.

8. Governments, the private sector and those organizations in civil society that provide training services that promote a gender balance in terms of education and participation in economic activity, should focus on institutional capacity-building and consciousness-raising as well as on improving and upgrading technical skills, including business and management skills and the use of new technologies. Local and traditional technologies and products based on women's knowledge should also be supported and promoted.

9. Non-governmental organizations and women's organizations should develop incentives for outstanding women entrepreneurs. 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.

10. 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 the private sector should comply with these laws and introduce changes to corporate structures. Positive or 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.

11. Social partners (labour unions and employers' organizations) and non-governmental organizations should 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.

12. Governments should intensify their efforts to implement the actions identified in the Beijing Platform for Action¹² for the elimination of occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination. In that regard, the security of women's employment and the conditions for their reintegration into the labour market need to be the subject of special attention. Due consideration should also be given to women in the informal sector and atypical jobs.

¹² *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women...*

13. Governments, labour unions and the private sector should 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:

- (a) Use of analytical tools;
- (b) Effective legislation;
- (c) Transparency of women's and men's wages;
- (d) Changing the gender-based division of labour and the stereotyped choices of men and women;
- (e) Effective guidance for employers.

14. Governments are encouraged to develop strategies to increase the well-being of low-waged workers, including enforcement of existing laws in particular in those industries where the most vulnerable workers, predominantly women, are found.

15. 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. To this end, better sharing of paid and unpaid work between women and men is required. Governments should 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.

16. Governments should consider ratifying the new ILO Convention on home-based workers.

17. Governments and employers should ensure the protection of the rights of migrant women workers, by creating better educational and employment opportunities, preventing and combating trafficking in women and children,

and eliminating discrimination against women in the labour market.

18. Governments should 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.

19. Women and men should identify and support women-friendly corporations and socially responsible businesses through investments and the use of their services or products.

20. The unpaid work of women, such as work in agriculture, food production, voluntary work, work in family business, and work in natural resource management and in the household, is a considerable contribution to the economy. Unpaid work should be measured and valued through existing and improved mechanisms, including by:

- (a) 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;
- (b) Conducting regular time-use studies to measure, in quantitative terms, unremunerated work;
- (c) Providing resources and technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in valuing and making visible women's unpaid work.

21. The international community, in particular the creditor countries and international financial institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions, should further pursue effective, equitable, development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of the developing countries on the basis of existing debt relief and reduction mechanisms, including debt reduction, grants and concessional financial flows, in particular for the least developed countries, taking into account the negative effect of these issues on women and women's programmes.

22. The funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and the World Trade Organization, within their respective mandates, should improve coordination and dialogue at all levels, including the field level, in order to ensure the effectiveness of their programmes and policies to support gender

the effectiveness of their programmes and policies to support gender equality.

23. Development policies should focus on the economic empowerment of women. The interlinkage between national policies at the macro-level and economic and social gender roles and relations at the micro-level should be clear in order to make the policies more effective. The impact on women of liberalization policies, which include privatization, financial and trade policies, should be assessed.

24. Governments should commit themselves to the goal of gender balance, with special emphasis on reaching a critical mass of women, as soon as possible, when nominating representatives to serve on governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental bodies dealing with policy-making in the areas of finance, economic development, trade and commerce (for example, the Fifth Committee and Second Committee of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Trade and Development Board, the Industrial Development Board and the General Council of the World Trade Organization).

25. The production and use of disaggregated statistics by sex should be promoted as a fundamental tool for monitoring the gender division of the labour market and the participation of women in high-level management positions, including economic decision-making, showing the advantages of women's participation in top management and conversely the costs of their exclusion. With regard to the United Nations system, a special data section on women managers should be part of the 1998 synthesis report and the report on the status of the world's women. This could serve as a special mechanism for monitoring how gender-balance goals are being achieved.

26. Issues such as the impact on women of structural adjustment and liberalization policies, which include privatization, financial and trade policies, should be further examined and could be taken up in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on the effective mobilization and integration of women in development, to be considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

27. The international community, while strengthening international cooperation, should emphasize the importance of an open, rule-based, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable multilateral trading system that will also ensure the equal access of women to markets and

technologies and resources at both the national and international levels.

Agreed conclusions 1997/4

Education and training of women

1. There is wide consensus that education and training for girls and women, in particular, provides high social and economic returns and is a precondition for the empowerment of women. Education should be aimed at raising and promoting awareness of the rights of women as human rights. Governments, national, regional and international bodies, bilateral and multi-lateral donors and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, should continue to make special efforts to reduce the female illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on rural, migrant and refugee women, internally displaced women and women with disabilities, in keeping with the Beijing Platform for Action.¹³

2. Governments and all other actors should make special efforts to achieve the benchmarks set in the Platform for Action of universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children by the year 2000; close the gender gap in primary- and secondary-school education by the year 2005; provide universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015; and consider providing multilateral and bilateral assistance.

3. Governments that have not yet done so should formulate national strategies and action plans for implementation of the Platform for Action that indicate how relevant institutions coordinate action to meet the goals and targets for education. The strategies should be comprehensive, have time-bound targets and benchmarks for monitoring, and include proposals for allocating or reallocating resources for implementation. Mobilization of additional funds from all sources to enable girls and women, as well as boys and men, on an equal basis, to complete their education, may also be necessary.

4. Donor Governments should strive to meet the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for overall official development assistance as

¹³ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women...*

soon as possible; and interested developed and developing country partners, having agreed on a mutual commitment to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget to basic social programmes, should take into account a gender perspective.

5. Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, addressing, inter alia, unequal access to educational opportunities and inadequate educational opportunities, and taking into account girls and women in especially difficult circumstances. The education, training and lifelong learning of women should be mainstreamed in policies at all levels, in equal opportunity policies and in national human development plans, where they exist. National machinery for the advancement of women and policy makers in Government, employers' organizations, labour unions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector should collaborate to ensure that all policies are responsive to gender concerns and that women and their organizations participate in the policy-making process.

6. Integrated policy-making must 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.

7. Consciousness should be raised about the need for a new allocation of responsibilities within the family, in order to alleviate the extra burden on women.

8. National statistical offices, responsible governmental ministries, research institutions, women's groups, employers and workers' organizations should provide women, government, policy makers and training providers with the best available labour market information. A redesigned, relevant and up-to-date system of labour market information should provide data disaggregated by sex on training, including employer-sponsored training, present employment trends, income and future employment opportunities.

9. Adult education and training programmes should be developed with a wide focus, incorporating not only literacy and numeracy but also lifelong

learning skills and improved capabilities for generating income. Measures should be taken to remove barriers to the participation of women in adult education programmes, such as setting up care structures for children and other dependants.

10. Women who wish to start or improve a microenterprise or small business should have access, not only to financial support services, but also to skills-based training to assist them in the successful management of their business.

11. Governments should meet their responsibilities for providing education and training. Government policies should ensure that different actors in the field of education and training provide and promote equal opportunities for women and men. Governments should promote cooperation among the public and private sectors, including non-governmental organizations, labour unions, employers' organizations and cooperatives, to make the process of training relevant, efficient and effective. Citizens should help to mobilize governmental and non-governmental efforts, benefiting from the important role that the media can play, to achieve gender equality in education, training and employment. Employers' and workers' organizations should play a critical role in the provision of professional training at the national and local levels. Governments should be ultimately responsible for developing strategies that ensure women's participation in the provision of education and training, especially for women in remote areas or with social, economic, cultural and physical constraints.

12. Educational planners and policy makers, Governments and other actors should develop programmes in education, technical training and lifelong learning that recognize these components as integral parts on a continuum. This implies that knowledge and skills acquired in formal as well as non-formal, out-of-school education, community activities and traditional knowledge are valued and recognized. The programmes should take a holistic approach, ensuring that women enjoy equality throughout the process in a new learning culture involving individuals, enterprises, organizations and society at large.

13. Educational planners and policy makers should give renewed importance to education in mathematics, science and technology for girls and women. In order to develop the skills required, women need to have full access to education in science and technology at all levels, including the use of modern technologies such as information technology, to vocational train-

ing and to lifelong learning. Using a wide range of strategies and modalities, efforts should be made - for instance, through the development of information services and professional guidance for girls and women - to promote girls' and women's participation in fields where they are under-represented, such as science, engineering and technology, and to encourage them to participate actively in the development of new technologies, from design to application, monitoring and evaluation.

14. The development of gender-sensitive teaching materials, classroom practices and curricula and of awareness-raising and regular gender training for teachers is a prerequisite for breaking down gender stereotypes and developing non-discriminatory education and training aimed at the physical and intellectual development of girls and boys. Teacher training is an essential component in the transmittal of gender-sensitive programmes for eliminating the differential behavioural expectations of girls and boys that reinforce the division of labour by gender. Techniques for improving teachers' capabilities to deliver gender-sensitive instruction need to be researched and widely disseminated in order to support the development of multicultural, gender-sensitive curricula in all areas of instruction.

15. The recruitment, training, working conditions and the status of teachers, in particular, of women teachers, must be improved, and gender-sensitive training for teachers, teacher trainers, school administrators and planners must be developed. Positive action programmes should be stimulated in order to overcome the under-representation of women in educational management.

16. The use of instruments available to ensure equality in education and training should be promoted - instruments such as research, information campaigns, refresher courses for teachers, development of gender-sensitive teaching materials, positive action measures and gender-impact assessments. They focus on a variety of actors: girls and boys, parents, teachers, school administrators and policy makers.

17. Governments should provide increased access to non-discriminatory education and training and create safe, enabling environments in order to retain girls and women in schools and eliminate gender disparities in school attendance at all levels of education, including the higher levels. Safety in schools and during extracurricular activities should be promoted by school authorities, parents and administrative personnel. All actors should join efforts by providing school feeding programmes, transport and boarding

schools, when necessary. The contribution of non-governmental organizations to all fields of education and, in particular, to lifelong learning is of importance.

18. Governments and all actors should recognize the need for and provide gender-sensitive early childhood education, especially to those groups under difficult circumstances, and should assure the lifelong learning of quality education for the girl child.

19. Governments and all social actors should promote non-formal education programmes and information campaigns to encourage adult women's lifelong learning.

20. The bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, within their existing mandates, should compile and disseminate information on best practices or strategies for retaining women and girls at all levels of education.

21. Women's studies should be supported and their curricula and research should be shared among educational institutions and women's organizations to provide role models, publicize women's contributions to their societies' advancement, and develop a foundation for gender-equality education and training.

22. The Secretary-General, taking into account his overall responsibility for mainstreaming a gender perspective, should continue to analyse and widely disseminate to Governments and non-governmental organizations, through Women 2000 and other publications in the official United Nations languages, information on the education and training of women and girls as part of the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.