

Agreed conclusions on eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle, in a globalizing world

1. The Commission on the Status of Women recalls and reiterates the strategic objectives and actions of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document adopted at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century”,¹ which emphasized the multidimensional nature of poverty and identified gender equality and the empowerment of women as critical factors in the eradication of poverty. It also recalls the United Nations Millennium Declaration² and the development goals contained therein, as well as the resolve 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.
2. The Commission on the Status of Women recognizes that, while it is the primary responsibility of States to attain economic and social development and to achieve the development and poverty eradication goals as set out in the Millennium Declaration, the international community should support the efforts of the developing countries to eradicate poverty and ensure basic social protection and to promote an enabling international environment.
3. While globalization has brought greater economic opportunities and autonomy to some women, many others, owing to the deepening inequalities among and within countries, have been marginalized and deprived of the benefits of this process. Globalization should be fully inclusive and equitable. To that end, there is a strong need for policies and measures at the national and international levels, formulated and implemented with the full and effective participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to help them respond effectively to those challenges and opportunities. Further efforts at the national and international levels should be made to eliminate the obstacles facing the integration of developing countries in the global economy.
4. The empowerment of women is the process by which women take control over their lives, acquiring the ability to make strategic choices. Empowerment is an important strategy to eradicate poverty. Special attention must be given to the situation of women and children, who often bear the greatest burden of extreme poverty.
5. The Commission urges Governments and, as appropriate, the relevant funds and programmes, organizations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, civil society, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders, to take the following actions to accelerate implementation of these strategic objectives to address the needs of all women:

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Special Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/S-23/13)*, resolution S-23/3, annex.

² General Assembly resolution 55/2.

- (a) Ensure that all actions to achieve the poverty eradication goals established in the Millennium Declaration include the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle;
- (b) Ensure that, in order to eradicate poverty and promote gender equality and democracy and strengthen the rule of law, both women and men are involved in decision-making, political agenda-setting and allocation of resources;
- (c) Ensure that women and men have equal access to full and effective participation in all processes and that a gender perspective is mainstreamed in development, trade and financial institutions;
- (d) Create an enabling environment and design and implement policies that promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the right to development — and fundamental freedoms, as part of the efforts to achieve gender equality, development and peace;
- (e) Evaluate the relationship between the empowerment of women and poverty eradication in different stages of women's life cycle and analyse the intersection of gender and other factors, reflect the implications for policies and programmes and compile and widely disseminate good practices and lessons learned;
- (f) Strengthen efforts to mainstream gender perspectives and the empowerment of women through the whole policy process, from the identification to the formulation, implementation, evaluation and follow-up of macroeconomic policies, as well as economic and social policy formulation and implementation and poverty eradication policies, programmes, development frameworks and strategies;
- (g) Establish or improve gender-specific analysis of poverty and strengthen institutional capacities at all levels, including relevant national machineries, in order to undertake gender analysis in poverty eradication initiatives by, inter alia, the allocation of sufficient resources;
- (h) Improve the collection, compilation and dissemination of timely, reliable, comparable data disaggregated by sex and age and further develop quantitative and qualitative indicators, including social indicators, by national and international statistical organizations so as to increase capacity to measure, assess and analyse poverty among women and men, including at the household level, and make progress in the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle;
- (i) Encourage the inclusion of data on women's equal access to land and other property in United Nations reports;
- (j) Identify and take all appropriate measures to address obstacles to the empowerment of women and to their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the life cycle with the view to eradicate poverty;
- (k) Take the strongest measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls;

(l) Incorporate a gender perspective into the design, development, adoption and execution of all budgetary processes, as well as economic and financial policies, in a transparent manner so as to ensure, where appropriate, that national budget policies and priorities as well as resource allocations support the eradication of poverty, the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality goals, and ensure women's full participation in all such processes;

(m) Review and reform, where appropriate, fiscal policies, particularly taxation policies, to ensure equality between women and men in this regard;

(n) Strengthen the provision of and ensure access to adequate, affordable and accessible public and social services to meet the needs of all women, in particular women living in poverty;

(o) Design, implement and promote family friendly policies and services, including affordable, accessible and quality care services for children and other dependants, parental and other leave schemes and campaigns to sensitize public opinion and other relevant actors on equal sharing of employment and family responsibilities between women and men;

(p) Improve and develop physical and mental health programmes and services, including preventive health care, for women, particularly women living in poverty;

(q) Strengthen policies and programmes at the national level to provide equal access to health care services for all women and girls, particularly for those living in poverty;

(r) Create and ensure equal access to all types of permanent and sustainable social protection/social security systems at all stages throughout women's life cycle, taking into account the specific needs of all women living in poverty;

(s) Ensure full and equal access at all levels to formal and non-formal education and training for women and girls, including pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers, as key to their empowerment by, inter alia, the reallocation of resources, as necessary;

(t) Take urgent and effective measures in accordance with international law with a view to alleviating negative impact of economic sanctions on women and children;

(u) 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;

(v) Undertake socio-economic policies that promote sustainable development and support and ensure poverty eradication programmes, especially for women, by, inter alia, providing skills training, equal access to and control over resources, finance, credit, including microcredit, information and technology and equal access to markets to benefit women of all ages, in particular those living in poverty and marginalized women, including rural women, indigenous women and female-headed households;

(w) Take measures to develop and implement gender-sensitive programmes aimed at stimulating women's entrepreneurship and private initiative and assist women-owned business in participating in and benefiting from, inter alia, international trade, technological innovation and investment;

(x) Develop 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;

(y) Facilitate the transfer to developing countries and countries with economies in transition of appropriate technology, particularly new and modern technology, and encourage efforts by the international community to eliminate restrictions on such transfers as an effective means of complementing national efforts for further acceleration in achieving the goals of gender equality, development and peace;

(z) Promote and facilitate the equal access of women and girls, including those living in rural areas, to information and communication technologies, including newly developed technologies, and promote women's and girls' access to education and training in their use, access to, investment and use of these technologies for, inter alia, networking, advocacy, exchange of information, business, education, media consultation and e-commerce initiatives;

(aa) Ensure that national legislative and administrative reform processes, including those linked to land reform, decentralization and reorientation of the economy, promote women's rights, particularly those of rural women and women living in poverty, and take measures to promote and implement those rights through women's equal access to and control over economic resources, including land, property rights, right to inheritance, credit and traditional saving schemes, such as women's banks and cooperatives;

(bb) Ensure that clean water is available and accessible to all, particularly to women living in poverty;

(cc) Provide additional international financing and assistance to developing countries in support of their efforts to empower women and eradicate poverty and mainstream gender perspectives in the official development assistance process, including specific provisions for meeting the needs of women living in poverty in areas such as education, training, employment and health, as well as in social and economic policies, including macroeconomic policies, with a view of achieving sustainable development, and urge developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNP of developed countries to least developed countries, as reconfirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, and

encourage developing countries to build on progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets;

(dd) Promote, in the spirit of solidarity, international cooperation, including through voluntary contributions, in order to undertake actions in the field of poverty eradication, particularly among women and girls;

(ee) Ensure that women, especially poor women in developing countries, benefit from the pursuit of effective, equitable, development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries, including the option of official development assistance debt cancellation, and call for continued international cooperation;

(ff) Forge constructive partnerships among Governments, NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in poverty eradication efforts and to further support and encourage women and men, girls and boys, to form new advocacy networks and alliances.

6. The Commission on the Status of Women welcomes the convening of the International Conference on Financing for Development³ and underlines the importance of its objectives in relation to gender equality, the empowerment of women and poverty eradication.

7. The Commission on the Status of Women also welcomes the convening of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, and stresses the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into the preparations, work and outcome, including the Political Declaration and International Plan of Action of the Assembly,⁴ welcomes the involvement of all women in its work, and encourages the inclusion of women in delegations to the Assembly. Recognition should be given to the contribution of older women and special attention paid to their empowerment and well-being.

8. The Commission on the Status of Women further welcomes the convening of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, stresses the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective and of the involvement of women in the preparations, work and outcome of the World Summit, and encourages the inclusion of women in delegations to the Summit.

³ See A/CONF.198/11.

⁴ A/CONF.197/9.