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Commission on the Status of Women**Fifty-sixth session**

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Agenda item 3 (a) (ii)

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: review theme: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women**Progress in financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women from the perspective of international organizations and multilateral development partners****Moderator’s summary**

1. On 1 March 2012, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive dialogue to discuss experiences in implementing the agreed conclusions on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, adopted by the Commission at its fifty-second session in 2008 (E/2008/27-E/CN.6/2008/11, chap. I, sect. A). The interactive dialogue was organized in the form of two panel discussions: the first panel discussion focused on national experiences in implementing the agreed conclusions. The second panel discussion, which is the focus of the present report, addressed the experiences of international organizations and multilateral development partners in implementing the agreed conclusions.
2. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Irina Velichko (Belarus). Panellists included Ms. Lydia Alpizar Durán, Executive Director, Association for Women’s Rights in Development; Ms. Jeni Klugman, Director of Gender and Development, World Bank; Ms. Saraswathi Menon, Director of the Policy Division, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); Ms. Liane Schalatek, Associate Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation, North America; and Ms. Patti O’Neill, Coordinator of the Network on Gender Equality of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee.
3. The call for increasing investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women, as contained in the 2008 agreed conclusions on financing for gender

equality and the empowerment of women, has resulted in a range of responses from international and multilateral organizations to expand resources committed to gender equality, increase capacity to track such resources and strengthen the impact of such financing, as well as to strengthen the scope of policy and advocacy, and partnerships among a range of stakeholders. The following summary highlights key advances, points to remaining challenges and outlines recommendations for accelerating the implementation of the 2008 agreed conclusions by international organizations and multilateral development partners.

Progress made in implementation

4. During the discussion, recent progress by multilateral institutions to position gender equality as an institutional priority and increase investment in gender equality and the empowerment of women was recognized. For example, the World Bank has made demonstrable progress since the Fourth World Conference on Women in implementing policy, institutional and financial measures needed to address structural gender inequalities.

5. Significant progress has been made in tracking resources for gender equality and in the availability of information on aid flows. The introduction by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development of the gender equality marker in 1991 has resulted in an increase in the amount of bilateral aid focused on gender equality, which reached 31 per cent of sector allocable aid in 2011. The ongoing efforts to develop a United Nations system-wide gender equality marker that builds on the existing experiences of a number of United Nations funds and programmes holds the potential for strengthening the institutional commitment and accountability for financing for gender equality.

6. There is also a growing body of experience in setting up mechanisms and processes to improve the quality of aid aimed at the promotion of gender equality, such as the inclusion of gender equality measures and standards in aid management policies and systems.

7. Much progress has also been made in expanding support for gender-responsive planning, budgeting processes and tracking at the country level by several entities of the United Nations system, in particular by UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme. These efforts are generally recognized as a way to facilitate increased financing for gender equality, and ultimately to deliver results for women and girls, including the transformation of deep-seated structural inequalities.

8. Efforts of gender equality advocates have resulted in the widespread recognition of the need to address gender-differentiated impacts through gender-responsive measures in the area of climate financing. Entry points have been created for a potential systematic inclusion of a gender perspective in the guidelines and performance indicators of climate financing mechanisms, in particular in the new Green Climate Fund. This fund could establish a model for the future by integrating a gender perspective into its terms of reference and operating procedures from the very outset.

9. The combined efforts of bilateral and multilateral donors, grant-making international non-governmental organizations, foundations, corporations, women's

funds and individual philanthropists are contributing to an increase in available funding streams for gender equality and the empowerment of women. These resources benefit Governments as well as women's organizations. Innovative partnerships have been developed that engage Governments, women's non-governmental organizations and new actors, in particular the private sector. These partnerships promise to open up new funding sources.

10. The development and use of tracking systems for financing for gender equality has enhanced and contributed to the availability of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific information. Such data and information are essential for strengthening transparency and accountability for financing for gender equality, and for filling knowledge gaps about what works, the impact of measures taken and the results achieved. Data generated through tracking and monitoring systems increasingly provide the evidence to inform and influence decision-making processes at the strategic and policy levels and shape programmes and projects.

11. The Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2011, and the resulting Busan partnership for effective development cooperation represented a major step forward in strengthening commitments for action to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women through development programmes. The Busan outcome document is expected to result in the strengthened collection, dissemination, harmonization and use of data disaggregated by sex to inform policy decisions and guide investments. The deadline of June 2012 for setting up monitoring arrangements for the outcome document is a major opportunity to further systematize these data-collection and monitoring methods across donors.

Gaps and challenges in implementation

12. Despite progress in the implementation of the 2008 agreed conclusions, the interactive dialogue revealed a number of concerns. The impact of the economic and financial crises, insufficient political will and inadequate prioritization of gender equality goals in global and national development agendas is visible in the actual availability of resources, which does not keep pace with needs. Such lack of funding is also indicated in recent surveys, such as those conducted by the Association for Women's Rights in Development, and practice. For example, over the past four years, access by women's organizations to funding from bilateral and multilateral partners has remained limited. Funding for UN-Women remains significantly below the target, almost two years after its establishment.

13. Existing markers for tracking gender equality funding and gender-responsive financing, while highly useful, cannot yet measure gender equality results or the impacts and outcomes of programmes and projects. Tools that can effectively measure the quality and impact of development assistance, including evaluations, audits and reviews, are lacking. Frameworks and standards established to monitor performance rarely integrate gender-sensitive indicators. Existing gender equality markers also cannot capture the gender equality dimensions of official development assistance that is disbursed as direct budget support, nor of humanitarian and emergency assistance.

14. In addition, reporting, monitoring and tracking systems adopted by bilateral and multilateral donors and by United Nations entities remain largely isolated from national systems, thus increasing the burden on reporting by recipients.

15. Many women's organizations, especially small grass-roots organizations and service providers, lack the technical capacity to comply with the complex requirements for accessing the usually large grants offered by different donors. As many women's organizations, especially in developing countries, still operate with very small budgets, the lack of, or limited availability of, small grants or dedicated women's funds continues to curtail their access to resources.

16. While there have been advances in the inclusion of gender equality advocates in financing decisions, much more needs to be done to meet the recommendations from the agreed conclusions regarding the participation of women in decision-making related to financing.

Recommendations to accelerate implementation

17. On the basis of experience and good practices, participants recommended a range of actions to accelerate implementation of the agreed conclusions:

(a) Critically examine current macroeconomic frameworks and policies and adopt policies that expand fiscal space to ensure adequate financing for gender equality;

(b) Explore innovative approaches to financing for gender equality such as taxation on financial transactions or public-private partnerships that are balanced and centred on gender equality goals;

(c) Increase investment in gender equality and broaden the scope of support to gender equality beyond social sectors to include the economic and productive sectors;

(d) Work to harmonize the existing tracking systems of international organizations and multilateral and bilateral donors to reduce the burden of monitoring and reporting on recipient Governments and civil society organizations;

(e) Strengthen and ensure the analysis and use of data generated through tracking and monitoring systems, and improve their accessibility so as to inform and influence decisions at strategic and policy levels and shape programmes and projects at a practical level;

(f) Ensure that aid management instruments and processes and joint aid coordination mechanisms adequately reflect and address gender equality priorities;

(g) Strengthen the support from the United Nations system and multilateral and other actors for national efforts to implement gender-responsive budgeting approaches, especially in the context of public sector reform;

(h) Set measurable targets for financing for gender equality as a share of official development assistance;

(i) Invest in the development and use of tools to assess the impact and results achieved in gender equality through support provided by United Nations programmes and multilateral support;

(j) Ensure funding for UN-Women to enable it to fulfil its mandate effectively;

(k) Accelerate efforts towards the adoption of a United Nations system-wide marker for tracking budget allocations and expenditures to promote gender equality;

(l) Strengthen and expand support for women's organizations, especially by a commitment to sustainable funding;

(m) Put in place special provisions to ensure that small grass-roots organizations and organizations that work with marginalized groups of women have access to resources, such as small-grants windows, quotas or "re-granting" mechanisms.
