



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN 9-10 SEPTEMBER, 1995

Delegates met throughout the weekend to consider bracketed portions of the draft Platform for Action and Declaration. Working Group I began work on Section L (girl child). The Contact Group of Working Group I continued to discuss Section C (health). Working Group II considered Sections F (economic structures), H (mechanisms), K (environment) and B (education). The Contact Group of Working Group II continued consideration of the Beijing Declaration.

### WORKING GROUP I

The Working Group, chaired by Nana Amma Yeboaa (Ghana), met Saturday afternoon to discuss the recommendations of informal groups and the section on the girl child. The reference to South Africa in **17** (democratization) was retained. A proposed text for **30** (women and family) notes that women play a critical role in the family and that women's contribution to the family and to society is not fully recognized. A proposed text for **31** (religion, spirituality and belief) (which will become 25bis) notes that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is inalienable and that religion and belief may, and can, contribute to fulfilling moral and ethical needs and to realizing one's full potential. Delegates added "consistent with freedom of expression" to **244(b)** (codes of conduct for violent, degrading media materials).

SECTION L (girl child): In **263** (education of girls), the EU proposed adding gender inequalities in society and families as reasons for girls not attending school. Algeria objected to the reference to discrimination in the family.

### CONTACT GROUP OF WORKING GROUP I

The Contact Group met Saturday morning and Sunday evening, chaired by Mervat Tallawy (Egypt). In **95** (discrimination in access to services), both "unprotected and premature" were adopted. Some delegations reserved. In **(105)** (statistical data), the bracketed terms "race and ethnicity" were replaced by a reference to established demographic criteria to support sub-groups, especially the marginalized. In **110 (a)** (train researchers) and **111 (d)** (goals and time-frames), "race and ethnicity" were replaced by "other established demographic criteria." In **107(a)** (implementation of international agreements), the bracketed language was replaced by "support and implement

the commitments contained in the Programme of Action of the ICPD as established in the report of that conference." A new reference to CEDAW was also introduced. In **107 (g)** (codes of ethics), the second bracketed phrase was replaced by a call to "encourage the development, implementation and dissemination of codes of ethics guided by existing international codes." The bracketed language on conscience has been deleted. In **109 (I)** (programmes for boys), a compromise text was adopted, calling for programmes that provide information on safe and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour, including through abstinence and condom use. One delegation reserved. In **110 (I)** (genome research), the bracketed text was reformulated to call for monitoring of human genome and related genetic research and dissemination of results. In **111 (a)** (primary health resources), the term "where necessary" was deleted.

During a Saturday afternoon progress report to Working Group I, Chair Tallawy noted that most of the bracketed portions of Section C (health) had been resolved. Outstanding issues for informal negotiations over the weekend were: references to parental responsibility; a proposed reference to paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3 of ICPD; sexual rights; and the adoption of language from ICPD in a Platform paragraph on illegal abortion. The Contact Group reconvened Sunday evening.

### WORKING GROUP II

Working Group II, chaired by Irene Freudenschuss (Austria), met for three sessions on Saturday and two on Sunday, during which it addressed sections F (economic structures), H (mechanisms), K (environment) and B (education).

SECTION F (economic structures): In **156** (migrant workers), delegates agreed to a US redraft, amended by Sri Lanka, the G77/China and Norway, noting the contribution of women migrant workers, especially domestic workers, and referencing unemployment among migrant women workers. All paragraphs dealing with unremunerated work were sent to an informal contact group. In **159** (impact of globalization), New Zealand added a reference to pressures on women's employment and deleted a sentence on the gender-based division of labour. Delegates retained the language in **163** (obstacles to achieving potential). In **168(b)** (State employment), the reference to "equitable" was deleted. Reservations were noted.

In **171(a)** (remote areas), the G77/China deleted the bracketed reference to pressure to act against religious and ethical values. In **171(c)** (micro-enterprise), an EU reference to enhancing women's opportunities was accepted. A G77/China reference to alleviation of multilateral debt was bracketed. In **177(c)**

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(self-help groups and workers' organizations), the EU added reference to an enabling environment. Canada added references to freedom of association and the right to organize. In **177(e)** (research to promote gender equality), a G77/China reformulation with added references to women's studies and gender research (EU) and all scientific fields (Syria) was accepted. Brackets were removed from **177(g)** (labor laws and social security for domestics).

In **180(a)** (labour standards), the EU proposed a reference to ILO Convention No. 100. In **180(b)** (measures to prohibit discrimination), all text but an EU redraft noting that there should be no discrimination on grounds of sex, "including by reference to marital or family status or [sexual orientation]" was agreed. In **180(c)** (discrimination), delegates agreed on a reference to "older women workers." Brackets were lifted in **180(g)** (occupational segregation), **180(j)** (women with disabilities) and **180(m)** (child labour). Brackets were lifted from **181(b)** (equal access to work and social security). In **181(c)** (parental benefits), delegates combined alternatives regarding legislation and incentives for "job protected parental leave" and benefits and the promotion of "equal sharing" of family responsibilities. A final decision was deferred for consideration of a Norwegian proposal to facilitate breast-feeding at work.

SECTION H (mechanisms): Paragraph **201** (regional bodies for advancement of women), was lifted from brackets, subject to consideration of a G77/China amendment identifying limited resources as an impediment to implementation. Brackets were removed from **204** (visible mainstreaming policy) and **207(a)** (analyze impact of policies). In **208(e)** (women in development), the EU agreed to lift the brackets with a rewording of the reference to improving quality of life for all. In **209(b)** (disaggregated data), the G77/China deleted a reference to problems and questions related to women and men in society. Brackets were removed from appropriate indicators in **209(c)** (research methodologies). The Group reconvened Saturday evening on Sections H (mechanisms) and K (environment).

SECTION B (education): Delegates agreed in **71** (right and access to education) that education is a human right. The G77/China, supported by the Holy See and Iran, proposed lifting brackets from **74** (educational and social environment). Australia, supported by New Zealand, proposed replacing "moral and spiritual" with "ethical." The EU retained brackets around the paragraph. In **76** (gender-biased education), delegates retained the reference to lack of sexual and reproductive education. A Canadian proposal regarding impact on adolescents was bracketed. In **78** (limited participation of girls), delegates agreed to a redraft noting that access and retention of girls and women is a factor in their progress in professional activities.

In **82(a)** (anti-discrimination), the G77/China proposed lifting the brackets, the US proposed a reformulation, the EU proposed adding "as appropriate consider establishing procedures to address grievances," the Holy See proposed adding references to language and religion, and Syria proposed reference to approval of legislation to prevent discrimination in education. The paragraph remains bracketed. In **82(f)** (increase enrollment), delegates agreed on the references to facilitating parents' ability to choose and repealing discriminatory laws, but kept the reference to freedom of religion in educational institutions in brackets. In **83(f)** (expand definition of literacy), the G77/China supported including scientific and technological knowledge in the definition, but the EU, US and others opposed. Delegates continued to work on this section Sunday evening.

### **CONTACT GROUP OF WORKING GROUP II**

The Contact Group for Working Group II, chaired by Olga Pellicer (Mexico), completed its first reading of the draft Beijing

Declaration on Saturday. Delegates amended and adopted a paragraph on participation as fundamental, adding empowerment and "on the basis of equality." Several delegations objected to "women's rights are human rights." The language was bracketed after "and human rights are women's rights" was added. A paragraph on equal rights and the family was bracketed.

Delegates agreed to wait for Working Group I's decision before acting on women's right to control their own health and fertility. Paragraphs on the relationship of women's advancement to peace and to conflict resolution were merged.

A paragraph on the participation of civil society and other groups was adopted. Delegates accepted language on intensifying efforts to implement the Nairobi Strategies. A bracketed paragraph ensuring all human rights and fundamental freedoms including "sexual and reproductive rights" was added. Delegates adopted a paragraph on measures to eliminate discrimination against the girl child.

Language to achieve people-centered sustainable development through education, training and health care was adopted, with an added reference to literacy. A paragraph on eradicating poverty was adopted, including references to rural women and women's economic independence. Delegates added a paragraph on men's participation.

Delegates deferred discussion on a call to eliminate nuclear weapons. A paragraph was added and bracketed on health care and sexual and reproductive health. Language on promotion and protection of human rights was adopted. A paragraph was added on barriers to enjoyment of human rights, with specified barriers in brackets. Language on respect for international law was adopted with minor amendments. Delegates adopted the paragraph on girls' and women's full potential. Paragraphs on access to technology, information and markets and on ensuring mobilization of funds were bracketed.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Delegates and NGOs working on the health section of the Platform have begun to assess the outcome, based on the Contact Group's report to Working Group I. A senior delegate associated with the ICPD paid tribute to the role of women's NGOs in the FWCW process. Delegates said that the health section had begun to elaborate a number of the issues addressed in Cairo, including violence against women, HIV/AIDS and STDs, pre-natal and primary health services.

### **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

**PLENARY:** The Plenary will continue to hear statements under Agenda Item 8, General Exchange of Views, in Hall No. 1. Morning, afternoon and evening sessions are expected.

**MAIN COMMITTEE:** The Main Committee is expected to meet during an afternoon session in Hall No. 16 to consider reports on agreed text from the Working Groups.

**WORKING GROUP I:** The Group will meet during a morning session, after the Main Committee breaks in the afternoon, and in the evening in Hall No. 16.

**WORKING GROUP II:** The Group will meet during morning and evening sessions in Hall No. 15.

**CONTACT GROUP OF WORKING GROUP II:** The Group is expected to meet during morning, afternoon and evening sessions in Hall No. 10.

**YOUTH DAY:** Events have been scheduled all day in the Commodities Exchange Building focusing on the role of youth in implementation of the Platform.