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BEIJING+5 PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 5 JUNE 2000

On Monday, 5 June, the GA opened its Twenty-third Special Session, entitled Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century. The *Ad Hoc* Committee of the Whole (COW) met in the morning. Working Group II met in morning, afternoon and evening sessions. Working Group I met in the afternoon and evening to discuss Sections II and III. A contact group met in morning, afternoon and evening sessions to debate paragraphs on human rights, the girl child and armed conflict.

PLENARY

H.E. Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab (Namibia), President of the Special Session, welcomed participants and, recalling that the 1995 Beijing Conference had been called the conference of commitments, appealed for renewed dedication toward women's equality and empowerment. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomed all participants and highlighted progress since Beijing, including the record number of women leaders and decision-makers in the UN system, greater understanding that women's equality is a prerequisite for development, and an increase in legislation addressing violence against women. He noted that much work remains on issues such as the economic divide between genders and violence against women in new types of armed conflict that target civilian populations. He emphasized the spread of HIV/AIDS and the trafficking of women as challenges that require immediate action. PrepCom Chair Christine Kapalata (Tanzania) called for the full implementation of the PFA, stating that it should be matched with financial resources such as ODA. She highlighted the importance of political will and responsible political decisions as delegations conclude negotiations.

After adopting the report of the PrepCom (A/S-23/2) and the provisional agenda (A/S-23/1), delegates heard opening statements on the review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the PFA's 12 critical areas of concern given by two Vice Presidents, one Head of Government, two Deputy Prime Ministers, 20 Ministers, four Vice Ministers and two Chiefs of Delegations. Plenary statements can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.un.org/ga/webcast/stat.htm>.

AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair Kapalata opened the *Ad Hoc* COW and welcomed delegates. Angela King, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, commended delegates for recent work and forecasted a strong, practical and focused document. Delegates elected the Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur of the Bureau of

the COW and noted the organization of work. The COW then heard a brief general debate to accommodate speakers unable to address the Plenary. Speakers included SADC, UNAIDS, the World Food Programme, the IMF, the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, FAO, the ILO, the Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention, UNESCO, the All India Women's Conference, and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

WORKING GROUP I

SECTION II: ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBSTACLES

Violence: In paragraph 11, on obstacles, LIBYA, with EGYPT and IRAN, suggested, while SOUTH AFRICA, SLAC, SADC, the EU, and JUSCANZ opposed, deleting text stating that domestic violence, including sexual violence in marriage/marital rape, is still treated as a private matter in some countries. Text remains bracketed. References to insufficient awareness, child pornography and lack of prevention strategies were agreed. An EU proposal on trafficking remains bracketed.

Economy: In paragraph 14, on achievements, delegates accepted references to maternity, paternity and parental leave; and to child and family care services and benefits. In paragraph 15, on obstacles, delegates accepted references to: "many" women confronted with a wage gap; equal pay not "fully" realized; and care-giving within families, households and communities. PAKISTAN, with others, opposed reference to "equal" ownership of land, property and inheritance. EGYPT could accept reference to equal rights only if "to inherit" replaced "inheritance." SADC and SOUTH AFRICA opposed, SUDAN supported, and the EU and MEXICO asked for time to consider this proposal, which remains bracketed.

Power and Decision-making: In paragraphs 17 and 19, on obstacles, delegates adopted references to: dialogue and cooperation with NGOs; the media hindering inclusion of gender perspectives in particular spheres of influence; organization and political structures, which enable all women to participate in all spheres of political decision-making; and the lack of disaggregated data and methods of assessing progress. Libya's proposal to eliminate references to selection criteria for decision-making posts was adopted.

Media: In paragraph 23, on obstacles, SADC, JUSCANZ, LIBYA, SLAC, the HOLY SEE and others debated a reference to pornography. Chair Mlacak suggested language on pornography/pornographic and other obscene materials. The reference remains bracketed. Delegates agreed on text referring to: bias against women remaining in the media; and poverty, the lack of access and opportunities, illiteracy, lack of computer literacy and language barriers.

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Environment: In paragraph 24, on achievements, delegates accepted a reference to the traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous women. On text referring to the link between gender equality, poverty eradication, environmental degradation and sustainable development, EGYPT proposed text on differential responsibilities between developed and developing countries. The reference remains bracketed.

Girl child: In paragraph 26, on achievements, SLAC, supported by TURKEY and NIGERIA, suggested text on support mechanisms for pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers, which was agreed in a contact group. SUDAN and EGYPT opposed. The reference remains bracketed.

SECTION III: CURRENT CHALLENGES

Delegates agreed to paragraph 31, on science and technology as fundamental components of development. In paragraph 32, on changing migratory flows of labor, delegates agreed to delete a sentence on the separation of families. References to forms of migration and a list of negative consequences of migration remain bracketed. Delegates agreed to a SLAC reformulation of paragraph 33, on collaboration with civil society.

WORKING GROUP II

SECTION IV: FURTHER ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

International Actions: In a late-night session on 3 June, delegates agreed on 138(a), on healthy active aging, and deleted 138 (b), on malnutrition.

National Actions: On 5 June, in 102(n), on non-discriminatory legislation, IRAN proposed, and all supported, replacing reference to incentive systems with text on taking necessary measures to create an enabling environment. The sub-paragraph was agreed. In 103(a), on protective legislation, delegates discussed a CARICOM reformulation including language on, *inter alia*, reviewing and revising existing legislation, and where appropriate, introducing effective legislation to ensure protection and provide recourse to justice. IRAN suggested placing “where appropriate” after “review and revise.” The EU proposed deleting “existing.” The text was agreed.

In 103(c), on strengthening mechanisms to handle domestic violence, all agreed to delete a reference to family. PAKISTAN suggested, and delegates supported, including reference to “all forms of” domestic violence. PAKISTAN, with others, called for deletion of a reference to marital rape and sexual abuse of women and girls, while SLAC, with others, preferred retention. No consensus was reached, and the reference remains bracketed.

In 103(d), on eradicating harmful customary or traditional practices, NIGERIA added reference to early marriage. The text was agreed. In 103(g), delegates agreed on taking priority steps to address violence against indigenous women. In 103(i), on a holistic approach to address violence, no agreement was reached on references to eliminating all forms of violence and abuse, service and health providers, girls and women with disabilities, vulnerable and marginalized women and images perpetuating attitudes and negative stereotyped roles. In paragraph 104(a), on trafficking, delegates disagreed on language elaborating forms of exploitation.

In 106(b), on agricultural policies, delegates accepted language on water quality and eco-friendly technology. ARGENTINA opposed a reference to organic farming. The EU opposed, and SOUTH AFRICA and others supported, text on women farmers. Both references remain bracketed. Delegates agreed on SLAC’s proposal for 109(b), on social sector investments, with a SLAC amendment replacing “investments” with “financial and other resources.” Delegates also adopted 109(c) *bis*, on women in poverty, with a JUSCANZ amendment to “reduce” instead of “eliminate.”

In 110(a), on social security, delegates worked from an EU/JUSCANZ formulation. They accepted references to: “all” instead of “poor women,” flexible and emerging forms of work, and striving to ensure these forms are adequately covered by social protection.

Delegates agreed to 112(b), on action for continued advancement of women, 112(c), on providing national machineries with resources for gender mainstreaming, 112(f), on ensuring gender sensitivity of government information policies and strategies, and 113(a), on statistical support.

Delegates adopted 114(a), on training and literacy programmes. In 114(b), on collaboration, a reference to collaboration with religious bodies and groups remains bracketed. Delegates adopted 116(a), on tools and indicators for gender mainstreaming. Delegates adopted 117(a) *bis*, on the nomination of women candidates, and agreed to delete 117(b), on women in senior positions.

Delegates agreed to move 118(a) *bis*, on microcredit institutions to 127(e) *bis*. Delegates adopted 118(c), on career development and promotion of women, with minor amendments. Delegates deleted 118(h), on incentives for the private sector, and adopted 118(i), on the education of girls and 118(k), on job creation and retrenchment.

International Actions: No consensus was reached on whether to merge 120(b), on building NGO capacity for PFA implementation, with 136(a). Delegates adopted 120(e), on the role of regional commissions. In 120(e) *bis*, on measures to alleviate the impacts of economic sanctions, the reference to “negative” impacts remains bracketed.

Delegates adopted 121(a), on mainstreaming a gender perspective in the UN, with minor amendments. Delegates retained the SLAC-proposed 121(b), on training of UN personnel on gender mainstreaming, and inserted a reference to gender and human rights impact analysis.

Delegates deleted 121(d), on linkages between the PFA and UN conferences, and adopted 121(e), on the role of the CSW in PFA implementation and 121(g), on assistance to parties in CEDAW implementation. Delegates could not agree whether to include reference to environmental degradation in 122(a), on gender-sensitive responses to humanitarian crisis.

CONTACT GROUPS

Delegates in contact groups reported progress in removing brackets in human rights paragraphs, with agreed language on gender equality in international fora. In negotiations on armed conflict, participants say that the atmosphere of negotiations has become more “constructive.” They also note a lack of consensus on globalization language, with some delegations preferring mention of positive as well as negative impacts.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Having arrived en masse this week, NGO representatives describe a sense of frustration. Public protest could be in the works, with vows that women will move forward if their governments hold back. Some activists are undecided about a petition listing countries they see as stalling the Beijing+5 process, even as the issue starts attracting the curiosity of international media. Others contend some countries are supportive in name only, given the number of issues that have disappeared from the document. Meanwhile, at least one observer thinks that NGOs have spent too much time caucusing among themselves, and not enough time talking to their governments...

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

PLENARY: The Plenary will convene at 10:00 am and 3:00 pm in the General Assembly.

WORKING GROUPS: Working Group I will meet in Conference Room 6 at 10:00 am, 3:00 pm and 8:00 pm. Working Group II will meet in Conference Room 2 at 10:00 am, 3:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

CONTACT GROUPS: The contact group on globalization will meet at 10:00 am in Conference Room 7 and at 3:00 pm in a room to be announced. The contact group on health will meet at 7:00 pm in a room to be announced.