



## SUMMARY OF THE 23RD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (BEIJING+5): 5-10 JUNE 2000

The General Assembly held its 23rd Special Session at UN Headquarters in New York from 5-10 June 2000. The Session, entitled "Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the 21st century," was attended by a total of 2,003 government delegates, along with 2,043 NGO representatives from 1,036 organizations.

Delegates negotiated and adopted an outcome document, "Review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action, and Further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action," (A/S-23/2/Add. 2, as amended by A/S-23/AC.1/L.1/Add. 1-42). The Special Session also adopted a Political Declaration (A/S-23/2, paragraph 56), which had been completed during negotiations by the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the PrepCom at its meeting in March.

The Special Session required long and arduous negotiations that ran almost all night during the last three days of the meeting. At times, many participants expressed the concern that the outcome document would not be completed because of widely differing positions on many issues, and because of a climate that swerved unpredictably between the spirit of compromise and openly rancorous debate. By most accounts, the final agreement at least maintains the gains made at Beijing, and in a few cases, such as on historic first references to honor crimes and forced marriages, sets new precedents.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF BEIJING+5

**FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:** The FWCW was held in Beijing, China, from 4-15 September 1995. An estimated 50,000 government delegates, UN representatives, NGOs and members of the media attended the Conference and its parallel NGO Forum at Huairou. The principal themes of the Conference were the advancement and empowerment of women in relation to women's human rights, women and poverty, women and decision-making, the girl-child, violence against women and other areas of concern. At the end of the Conference, delegates adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA). The PFA sets out an agenda for empow-

ering women and accelerating implementation of the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (NFLS), and aims to achieve significant change by the year 2000.

**BEIJING +5:** In Resolution 52/100, the UN General Assembly (GA) decided to convene a Special Session to review and appraise progress in implementing the NFLS and the Beijing PFA to take place five years after the FWCW, and to deliberate on further actions and initiatives. This review was not intended to renegotiate existing arrangements, but would assess successes, failures and obstacles to goals set at Nairobi and Beijing.

In Resolution 52/231, the GA designated the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to act as the PrepCom for the Special Session during its 43rd and 44th sessions in March 1999 and March 2000. The GA invited the Commission to propose the agenda and documentation for the Special Session and to focus in particular on the report requested from the Secretary-General that will contain suggestions on further actions and initiatives. The Committee was asked to pay particular attention to mainstreaming a gender perspective and identifying common trends and themes across the 12 critical areas of concern set out in the PFA.

**CSW-43:** The CSW held its 43rd session at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 1-19 March 1999. The CSW met in two sessions: in the first session (1-12 March), the Commission followed up on the FWCW, and in the second session (15-19 March), the Commission acted as the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) to the Beijing +5 process. The session, which was attended by approxi-

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mately 1000 participants, including ministers and other high-level government officials, UN agency representatives, NGOs and the media, had the following objectives: to follow-up on the FWCW; to initiate a comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the PFA that was adopted at the FWCW by acting as the PrepCom for Beijing+5; and to agree on an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

**CSW-44:** The CSW held its 44th session at UN Headquarters in New York from 28 February to 17 March 2000. The CSW met in two sessions: in the first session (28 February-2 March), the Commission followed up on the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), and in the second session (3-17 March), the Commission acted as the PrepCom for Beijing+5.

Delegates had before them the task of negotiating the proposed outcome document for the Special Session, which includes an introduction and three sections on: achievements and obstacles in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of the Platform for Action (PFA); current challenges affecting the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the PFA; and actions and initiatives to overcome obstacles and to achieve the full and accelerated implementation of the PFA. Delegates also discussed the draft provisional agenda and organizational matters (E/CN.6/2000/PC.8) and the list of speakers (E/CN.6/2000/PC.9) for the Special Session.

After a slow start, delegates negotiated their way through a limited portion of the text during the last week of the PrepCom and only succeeded in lifting brackets from a few paragraphs in each section of the outcome document. As a result, the PrepCom held informal consultations on 8, 9, 11, 15, 16 May and 24 May - 3 June.

## REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

On Monday, 5 June 2000, the UN General Assembly opened its 23rd Special Session. Delegates elected Theo-Ben Gurirab (Namibia) as president of the Special Session. Gurirab 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. Delegates then adopted the report of the PrepCom (A/S-23/2) and the provisional agenda (A/S-23/1). They also elected the other GA officers, elected the members of the credentials committee, took care of other procedural matters, and elected Christine Kapalata as Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of the Whole (COW).

During the rest of the day and through the subsequent four days, delegates heard statements on the review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the PFA's 12 critical areas of concern from: 178 Member States, three Non-member States, 16 observers, four heads of UN and specialized agencies, one UN committee and

five NGOs. Statements from the opening session and the nine plenary sessions that followed can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.un.org/ga/webcast/stat.htm>.

## AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

On Monday, 5 June, Chair Kapalata opened the *Ad Hoc* Committee of the Whole 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, by acclamation, the Vice Chairs and the Rapporteur of the Bureau of the COW. The Vice Chairs included Aicha Afifi (Morocco), Asith Kumar Bhattacharjee (India), Patricia Flor (Germany), Misako Kaji (Japan), Sonia R. Leonce-Carryl (St. Lucia), Monica Martínez (Ecuador), Kirsten Mlacak (Canada), Rasa Ostrauskaite (Lithuania) and Dubravka Simonovic (Croatia). Vice Chair Martínez was elected as Rapporteur.

Chair Kapalata informed the COW that its work would be divided into two parallel Working Groups: Working Group I, chaired by Kirsten Mlacak, and Working Group II, chaired by Asith Bhattacharjee. Working Group I focused on the first three sections of the outcome document, Introduction, Achievements and Obstacles in the Implementation of the 12 Critical Areas of the PFA, and Current Challenges Affecting the Full Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and PFA. Working Group II debated the fourth section, Actions and Initiatives to Overcome Obstacles and to Achieve the Full and Accelerated Implementation of the Beijing PFA. Contact groups, chaired by Patricia Flor, Misako Kaji, Rasa Ostrauskaite and Monica Martínez, met throughout the week on issues including armed conflict, globalization, health, family, diversity, the girl child and human rights.

Delegates then heard a brief general debate to accommodate speakers unable to address the Plenary. Speakers included the Southern African Development Community (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.

The COW reconvened on Friday, 9 June, to hear additional speakers, including the World Health Organization, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Economic Commission for Europe on behalf of the five Regional Commissions, the World Bank, IFAD, and a series of NGOs, including: Caucus on Violence Against Women; Uprooted Women's Caucus; Asia Pacific Women Watch; Agencia Latinoamericana de Información; Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Mental Health; International Network of Girls and World Vision; Agence de recherches d'information et de formation pour les femmes; International Self-reliance Agency for Women; Soroptimist International; World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters; and African Women's Development Network.

## SUMMARY OF OUTCOME DOCUMENTS

The following is a summary of the outcome documents, as contained in A/S-23/2, paragraph 56, and A/S-23/2/Add. 2, as amended by A/S-23/AC.1/L.1/Add. 1-42, and adopted by the Plenary of the 23rd Special Session of the GA on Saturday, 10 June 2000. Paragraph numbers follow the 10 June unedited final outcome document.

*Editor's note: Respecting the confidential nature of some of the negotiations, the Earth Negotiations Bulletin does not use names of countries and/or groups in parts of this summary.*



## POLITICAL DECLARATION

The Political Declaration states that the Governments participating in the Special Session of the GA reaffirm their commitments and recognize their primary responsibility toward implementation of the PFA, the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the 12 critical areas of concern. In response to some delegates' proposal for reference to access to productive resources and economic independence, the text further calls for continued international cooperation, including to attain the internationally agreed target of 0.7% of GNP of developed countries for overall ODA as soon as possible. Delegates who initially opposed this language agreed on it once consensus was also reached on a reference to CEDAW. The Declaration reaffirms the commitment to accelerate the achievement of universal ratification of CEDAW and urges continued efforts for the full implementation of the PFA.

The Declaration asserts that Governments reiterate their commitment to overcome obstacles encountered in PFA implementation and to strengthening and safeguarding a national and international enabling environment, including through the protection of human rights. They agree to regularly assess PFA implementation, with a view to meeting in 2005 to consider new initiatives.

## REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF PROGRESS AND FURTHER ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

### SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

The introduction reaffirms governments' commitment to the goals and objectives contained in the Beijing Declaration and PFA, and notes the goals and commitments made in the PFA have not been fully implemented. It also identifies the 12 critical areas for priority action contained in the PFA and recognizes that these actions form the basis for further progress and accountability to the world's women and toward achievement of gender equality, development and peace.

A reference to the report of the Beijing Conference, which lists national reservations to the PFA, was retained in paragraph 1, on the condition that all other references in the outcome document would be deleted. Delegates also accepted text in paragraph 2 stating that: the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms is essential to the empowerment of women; national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind; States have a duty to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms; and States bear the sovereign responsibility for PFA implementation.

Paragraph 2 *bis* (amended former paragraph 44 *bis*), states that, *inter alia*, the PFA: respects and values the full diversity of women's situations and conditions; and recognizes that women face barriers to full equality and advancement because such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability, because they are indigenous women or because of other status. This language was agreed following consultations in a contact group chaired by Vice Chair Patricia Flor. Delegates debated different cultural values, particularly in discussing a reference to sexual orientation. Proponents said excluding this reference would be backtracking on advances made in women's empowerment in their regions. Others suggested references to "the full diversity and situation of women" instead, noting that sexual orientation could include pedophiles. Delegates agreed to instead use the term "other status."

### SECTION II: ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBSTACLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWELVE CRITICAL AREAS OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The chapeau to this section notes that the summary of achievements and of persistent or new obstacles below constitutes a global

framework for the identification of further actions and initiatives to overcome obstacles and to achieve the full and accelerated implementation of the PFA at all levels and in all areas.

**A. Women and poverty:** Under achievements, the final text highlights increased attention to incorporating a gender perspective in policies and programmes and recognizes progress in promoting income-generating activities and financial instruments such as micro-credit combined with provision of access to basic social services. Under obstacles, delegates debated factors that constrain national efforts to combat poverty, and agreed to include G-77/China-proposed references to: excessive military spending inconsistent with national security requirements; unilateral coercive measures not in accordance with international law and the UN Charter; armed conflicts; foreign occupation; terrorism; and, after extensive discussion in a contact group, the yet-to-be-attained internationally agreed target of 0.7% of developed country GNP for ODA. Proposed references to national and ethnic conflicts and sanctions were omitted. A G-77/China formulation on constraints to women's economic empowerment was accepted, including references to: gender inequalities and disparities in economic power-sharing; unequal distribution of unremunerated work between women and men; unequal access to and control over capital and resources, particularly land and credit; and all harmful traditional and customary practices. The final text, with these amendments, outlines the many obstacles to women's economic empowerment.

**B. Education and training of women:** Under achievements, the final text in this section notes increased awareness that education is one of the most valuable means of achieving gender equality. Under obstacles, extensive debate ensued regarding language on lack of resources and insufficient political will and commitment to improve educational infrastructure and undertake educational reforms. Many delegates did not support additional reference to political will in other paragraphs, and, after considering the references, agreed to retain the language in this sub-section. A reference to inappropriate application of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) was amended to include text on inappropriate design, and on the context of their particularly severe impact on the education sector, since they have resulted in declining investment in education infrastructure in a number of countries. The final text highlights illiteracy, lack of access to education, low enrollment rates, and gender discrimination as barriers to education and training for women.

**C. Women and health:** The issue of sexual and reproductive rights was debated at length. Under achievements, a reference to sexual and reproductive rights of women, as adopted in the report of the ICPD, was replaced with language on "sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights of women as contained in paragraphs 94 and 95 of the PFA, as well as in some countries increased emphasis on implementing paragraph 96 of the PFA." The final text cites increased knowledge, awareness, and attention to a variety of health-related issues as a step forward for women. Under obstacles, text on family planning and contraceptive methods was accepted, and compromise was reached on the issue of health care/services by incorporating both terms and adopting references to health care, health services, and health care services throughout the paragraph. Language on abortion laws and provision of abortion services was opposed by the Holy See, and the final text notes that while some measures have been taken in some countries, the actions contained in paragraph 106(j) and 106(k) of the PFA regarding the health impact of unsafe abortion and the need to reduce the recourse to abortion have not yet been fully implemented. The text also emphasizes that the absence of a holistic approach to health care and a lack of information and resources have constrained progress in this area.



**D. Violence against women:** Under achievements, delegates were divided on whether to delete language acknowledging that violence against women where perpetrated or condoned by the State or its agents is a human rights violation, and obligating States to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish such acts. They ultimately agreed to its inclusion. The final text recognizes improved legislation, policy reform, increased attention to services and education addressing violence, successful cooperation between NGOs and governments, and support for the eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM) as areas of progress.

Under obstacles, a list of forms of violence, including FGM but excluding so-called honor crimes, was agreed after much debate, and while a reference to marital rape was included, its appearance in a later sentence on domestic violence being treated as a private matter in some countries presented a problem for some delegations. They agreed on an alternative reference to sexual violence. Language stating a multidisciplinary approach to responding to violence, which includes the health system, work places, the media, the education system, and the justice system being limited in “many” countries, was agreed. EU-proposed text noted that in some countries problems have arisen from the use of new information and communications technologies for trafficking in women and children for the purposes of all forms of economic and sexual exploitation was also added. The final text states that inadequate understanding of root causes of violence and lack of accurate data and programmes to address the issue remain obstacles to eliminating violence against women.

**E. Women and armed conflict:** Under achievements, agreement was reached on the historical significance of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which provides that “rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and other forms of sexual violence are war crimes when committed in the context of armed conflict, and also, under defined circumstances, crimes against humanity.” Delegates deleted reference to internally displaced persons, and agreed to specify international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The final text reflects a wider recognition of women’s contribution to peace-building, peacekeeping and conflict resolution, and a need to integrate a gender perspective into humanitarian relief efforts. Under obstacles, references to child soldiers and abduction of girls were deleted. References to nuclear arsenals and anti-personnel land mines, proposed by the EU, were debated but eventually excluded. The final text notes, *inter alia*, that: peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men and development; armed conflicts have had a particular adverse impact on gender equality and women’s rights; women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making; and international assistance has not met the needs of women refugees.

**F. Women and the economy:** Under achievements, discussion focused on the addition of references to the increased awareness of the positive effects of measures such as “maternity and paternity leave and also parental leave.” The final text identifies increased participation of women in the labor market and highlights new measures to address women’s economic and social rights and improve conditions in the workplace. Under obstacles, lengthy deliberations took place on the issue of women’s equal access and rights to ownership of and control over land and other forms of property and to inheritance being unrecognized by national legislation in some countries. Delegates agreed to language on women’s full and equal rights to own land and other property, including through the right to inheritance. The final text recalls that inequalities still exist in the form of wage gaps, discrimination, stereotypes, and disproportionate burdens for women.

**G. Women in power and decision-making:** Under achievements, the growing acceptance of women’s leadership and increased affirmative and positive action policies are emphasized. Under obstacles, delegates agreed to retain the original PFA language on the gross under-representation of women in decision-making bodies in all areas, including, *inter alia*, politics, conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, the economy, the environment and the media. A reference to clear and transparent appointment and selection criteria for decision-making posts was omitted. Delegates accepted a merged formulation of text proposed by the G-77/China and JUSCANZ on sufficient dialogue and cooperation with women’s NGOs, along with organizational and political structures, which enable all women to participate in all spheres of political decision-making. The final text includes these references and notes a lack of progress in this area since Beijing.

**H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women:** Under achievements, debate focused on a reference to instituting national machineries to monitor CEDAW implementation. Delegates agreed to modify the reference by stating that national machineries have been instituted to monitor the implementation of the PFA and “in many instances” of the CEDAW. Final text notes the strengthening of these machineries and their positive impact on strategies and policies to promote gender equality. Under obstacles, a reference to inadequate financial and human resources and a lack of political will in many countries was resolved by the group, with division over whether to refer to “many,” “some” or “a number of” countries. The latter reference was accepted, and the final text notes that in a number of countries, inadequate financial and human resources and a lack of political will and commitment are the main obstacles confronting national machineries. Language on lack of data disaggregated by sex and age in many areas was transferred from the sub-section on Women and Poverty, and reference to insufficiently applied methods for assessing progress was added from paragraph 28 in Section III. The final text also identifies competing governments priorities and, in some cases, unclear mandates, as obstacles.

**I. Human rights of women:** A contact group was created to address contentious issues in the area of human rights. Under achievements, language on legal measures in a growing number of countries to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was opposed by some delegates, and deleted. Reference to the Optional Protocol of CEDAW was included, along with reference to the Rome Statute of the ICC. The final text highlights, *inter alia*, legal reforms, an enabling environment, and NGO contributions to increasing awareness and support for human rights of women.

Under obstacles, delegates agreed to include language on, *inter alia*: gender discrimination and all other forms of discrimination; intolerance; armed conflict, foreign occupation and ethnic cleansing; failure to achieve ratification of CEDAW by the year 2000 and lack of implementation; the persistence of discriminatory legislation, harmful traditional and customary practices, and negative stereotyping; legislative and regulatory gaps; and the introduction in some cases of new laws discriminating against women. Text was included on “insufficient recognition of women’s and girls’ reproductive rights, as well as barriers to their full enjoyment of those rights, which embrace certain human rights as defined in the Beijing PFA, paragraph 95.” Recognition of barriers to justice included a list of factors such as, *inter alia*, race, culture and religion. Final text lists these amendments among the obstacles women encounter to human rights.

**J. Women and the media:** Under achievements, the text includes reference to, *inter alia*, women’s media networks and improved communication opportunities. Under obstacles, delegates debated



whether to include a PFA reference to pornographic materials. Some delegates argued that the materials themselves do not degrade women, and only reference to pornography was kept. Final text also includes references to, *inter alia*, poverty, lack of computer literacy and access, and bias against women.

**K. Women and the environment:** Under achievements, text on recognition of the link between gender equality, poverty eradication, sustainable development and environmental protection in development strategies was accepted. Text also highlights projects that have been launched to preserve and utilize the traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous women in the management of natural resources and preservation of biodiversity. Under obstacles, delegates agreed to text stating that women's limited access to technical skills, resources and information, in particular in developing countries, have impeded women's effective participation in decision-making, including at the international level. References to environmental degradation and foreign occupation were also added to this paragraph, which focuses on the need for increased awareness, resources, information, research, real solutions to environmental problems, and the lack of a gender perspective in environmental policies and programmes.

**L. The girl-child:** Under achievements, text on progress in support mechanisms for pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers and increased attention to the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents was agreed. The text includes references to, *inter alia*: a more gender-sensitive school environment; increased educational opportunities; legislation addressing FGM, trafficking, and exploitation, and "the adoption of Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography."

Under obstacles, a contact group negotiated numerous proposals, and accepted language on, *inter alia*: negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls as well as negative stereotyping of girls and boys which limit girls' potential; child labor and the heavy burden of domestic responsibilities on girls; and lack of information and education, resulting in many cases in unwanted pregnancies and transmission of HIV. References to harmful traditional practices, including early sex outside marriage, multiple partners and forced marriage were deleted. G-77/China language on increased awareness of sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents and lack of sufficient provision of necessary information and services was included, along with text proposed by the Holy See on enabling adolescents to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality. The final text also emphasized poverty, inadequate nutrition and access to health services, and insufficient coordination among responsible institutions as obstacles affecting the girl child.

### SECTION III: CURRENT CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Some language in Section III was quickly agreed, such as that on economies in transition (paragraph 30 *quinter*), science and technology (paragraph 31), collaboration with civil society (paragraph 33), demographic trends (paragraph 36), substance abuse (paragraph 37 *bis*), and natural disasters (paragraph 38). Other issues inspired protracted debate. Deliberation on political will and commitment, sexual and reproductive rights, reference to CEDAW, globalization, sanctions and human rights, which took place largely in the contact groups, continued until the final hours of negotiation.

In paragraph 28, which introduces the section, delegates debated a reference to insufficient political commitment to gender equality hampering progress in implementing the PFA. Many delegations

opposed language on political will, which was under discussion in other paragraphs, and called for its deletion. Delegates agreed to language on continued political commitment for the full implementation of the PFA.

Text on sexual and reproductive rights, in paragraph 37 on the HIV/AIDS pandemic and in paragraph 41 on the changing context of gender relations, was also highly contentious. Alternative text proposals included "sexual and reproductive health" and "productive and reproductive roles." After lengthy deliberations, adopted language in paragraph 37 refers to empowering women to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, while the reference in paragraph 41 was deleted. In paragraph 37, a reference to safe sex was amended to Holy See-proposed "curbing high risk behavior," while text on abortion was deleted. A reference to CEDAW in paragraph 41 was deleted.

Several paragraphs on globalization (paragraphs 29, 30, 30 *bis*, and 30 *ter*), trade, SAPs and debt, were highly contentious, in particular the link between globalization and SAPS, and whether SAPs had a negative impact, which could impact on future ODA. The references were wholly debated in a contact group chaired by Misako Kaji. The link was retained and some negative impacts are acknowledged. Delegates agreed to delete reference to labor standards, as there are none that are universally agreed, and adopted text on, *inter alia*: the negative consequences of SAPs, stemming from inappropriate design and application; the impact of globalization, high costs of external debt servicing arising from SAPs, and declining terms of international trade worsening the existing obstacles to development; and WSSD+5 language on the debt burden and debt servicing.

Deliberation on text regarding unilateral coercive measures (G-77/China-proposed paragraph 30 *quater*) and economic sanctions (Iraq-proposed paragraph 30 *quater bis*) continued until the last night of negotiations. The paragraphs were deleted, with language on unilateral measures moved to paragraph 125E and on economic sanctions moved to paragraph 125E *bis*, and both references integrated into paragraph 13, under the sub-section on Women and Armed Conflict.

In paragraph 32, on migratory flows of labor, lengthy debate took place regarding references to the entertainment industry, forced prostitution, economic and social exploitation, the causes of migration, and human rights. Text on forced prostitution and economic and social exploitation was retained, and delegates agreed to language on some forms of entertainment work. Egypt, the EU and JUSCANZ maintained that risks and abuses faced by migrant women "impair their enjoyment of their human rights." CARICOM, Cuba, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, SADC and Syria pointed out that these risks and abuses "constitute violations of human rights." Delegates adopted text stating "impair the enjoyment of human rights, and in some cases, constitute violations of human rights."

### SECTION IV: ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND TO ACHIEVE THE FULL AND ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

**Preamble:** Regarding the preambular text (paragraphs 42 – 55 *bis*), delegates quickly agreed on

- the role of NGOs in implementing the PFA (43 *bis*);
- ensuring women's participation in development (46);
- recognition of women's knowledge of resource conservation and management (47);
- recognition of women's customary knowledge, management and sustainable use of biodiversity (47 *bis*);
- the need for strong national machineries for the advancement of



- women (52);
- the need for effective and coordinated plans and programmes for the implementation of the PFA (54); and
- the need for allocation of human and financial resources for activities to realize the goals of gender equality, development and peace (55).

Paragraphs referencing the endorsement of the PFA (45), the maintenance of international peace and security (48), a gender-sensitive constitutional and legislative framework (50), and armed conflict and emergency situations (51 *bis*) were deleted.

Lengthy debate took place on references to the report of the Beijing Conference, good governance, sexual orientation, health care and services, implementation of the PFA and diversity, and violence against women. Most of these issues were discussed in contact groups. In paragraph 42, on government recommitment to the Beijing Declaration and PFA, delegates agreed to delete a reference to the Beijing Conference report because of an earlier agreement to retain the phrase in paragraph 1. Language referring to the right to development was included in paragraph 42, and deleted from paragraph 46, on a common development agenda.

Inclusion of a reference to “good” governance in paragraph 43 *ter*, on renewed relations among stakeholders to achieve the goal of gender equality, and in paragraph 48, on maintenance of international peace and security, was debated at length. The reference in paragraph 43 *ter* was removed, and paragraph 48 was deleted entirely.

Extensive deliberation also ensued over a reference to “national and international monitoring,” in paragraph 44, on redressing inequalities between women and men and girls and boys. Some Latin American Countries (SLAC), with others, proposed deleting “international.” JUSCANZ and the EU suggested deleting “national and international.” Delegates agreed on text stating “national monitoring, and follow-up and evaluation, including at the international level.”

Reference to sexual orientation was deleted from paragraph 44 *bis*, on the PFA and barriers faced by women, and the remainder of the paragraph was amended and moved to Section I. In paragraph 46 *bis*, on women’s and girls’ rights to education and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and well-being, the Holy See and Syria advocated deletion of text on health care “and services.” Egypt, with Nigeria and SLAC, suggested “health care services.” The paragraph went to a contact group, and delegates eventually adopted language on health care and services.

In paragraph 51, on violence against women and girls, delegates agreed to discuss two formulations: one by the G-77/China, listing forms of violence resulting from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, pornography, ethnic cleansing and foreign occupation, and an EU proposal simply stating “all forms of violence.” After lengthy deliberation, delegates agreed to the G-77/China formulation.

The subsequent sub-sections address national actions, international actions, and national and international actions. The placement of a number of paragraphs was disputed and, as a result, these paragraphs were moved from one sub-section to another. These included the following: paragraph 120(b) *bis*, on reporting mechanisms, was moved from the international level to the national level; and paragraph 122(a) *bis*, on refugees, was moved from the international level to the national and international level.

The following paragraphs were moved from the national and international level to the national level:

- macroeconomic policies and programmes (125I);
- crime statistics (125(g));
- gender education for men and boys (128(b), as 118(i) *bis*);

- gender-awareness campaigns (128(e));
- disabled women and girls (128(o));
- consultative processes and mechanisms (129(b));
- prosecuting perpetrators of violence (130(e) as 103(a) *bis*);
- gender-sensitive training for judiciary (130(f) *bis*);
- cooperation for non-discriminatory legislation (132(d));
- older women (132(i)); and
- the Rome Statute of the ICC (133(f)).

Paragraphs 125(b), on compiling statistics; and 130(f), on gender-sensitive training for peacekeeping actors, were moved from the national and international level to the international level.

**National Actions: Governments:** Delegates considered key policy and/or programme interventions by governments in this sub-section, and elaborated various measures to be undertaken, some of which are time bound. They include:

- setting targets and goals to promote equal participation of women in policy and decision-making positions, political parties and government ministries (100(a));
  - accelerating action and strengthening political commitment to close the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 (101(d));
  - withdrawing reservations to CEDAW that are contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention (102(d));
  - treating all forms of violence against women as a criminal offense (103(b));
  - developing measures to eliminate customary and traditional practices that violate women’s rights such as female genital mutilation (FGM), honor crimes, forced marriages and race-motivated crimes (103(d));
  - strengthening measures to eliminate trafficking of women (104(b));
  - reducing unsafe abortion (107(i)) and substance abuse (107(j) *bis*); and
  - making women’s empowerment a central strategy for addressing development and poverty eradication (109(b)).
- Delegates adopted new proposals providing for:
- measures to meet the gaps in good quality family planning services and in contraception services, supplies and uses (107(a) *ter*);
  - reproductive health and health-care (107(g) *ter*);
  - safe working conditions for health care workers (107(d) *bis*);
  - elimination of discrimination against women and girls in accessing knowledge on health, health care and health services (107(g) *bis*); and
  - measures to review laws, with a view to prohibit coercive medical interventions on women (107(g) *quinter*).

Four proposals were deleted on actions relating to: eliminating discrimination based on sexual orientation (102(j)); conducting research on the effects of contraceptive drugs (107(c)); prioritizing implementation of key future actions of the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+5) (107(e)); and adopting policies to ensure provision of primary health care and reproductive health services, particularly to meet contraceptive needs and promote safe motherhood (107(f)).

Health issues were hotly contested, particularly a reference to unsafe abortion in 107(i). Although delegates agreed on the need to ensure victims receive appropriate post-abortion counseling and other support, some stressed that, for potential abortion providers, “the right to conscience,” as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should not be violated. One delegate reported that following



legalization of abortion in her country a year ago, abortion cases fell from 114,000 to 215. Failing consensus, delegates considered three options in regard to the use of agreed language from other UN conferences: PFA paragraphs 63(i) and (ii), paragraph 106(k) of ICPD+5 or both. Some delegates objected to the use of ICPD+5 or a mix with the PFA, arguing that where previously agreed language is contested, PFA language prevails. Proponents of ICPD+5 language said it reflected a post-Beijing gain, noting that Beijing had advanced its positions from the Cairo ICPD, and stressed that the purpose of Beijing+5 is not to “make a second edition of the PFA.” The COW decided to use language from the ICPD+5 paragraph.

The sub-paragraph now reads: In the light of paragraph 8.25 of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, (the text of the paragraph is repeated here), governments should consider reviewing laws containing punitive measures against women who have undergone illegal abortions.

**National Actions: Governments, the Private Sector, NGOs and Other Civil Society Actors:** Actions in this sub-section address issues such as education, human rights, health, gender mainstreaming, participation, the family and labor. On collaboration among levels of governments, NGOs, grassroots organizations, traditional and community leaders for the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (sub-paragraph 114(b)), a reference to religious leaders introduced by the Holy See was opposed by many delegations, including Turkey, and was left out of the final document.

On health issues, particularly women’s physical and mental health throughout their life cycle (sub-paragraph 115(a)), delegates adopted amended text to include references to training of health workers, promoting gender balance in the health care system and reflecting women’s rights to privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary and informed consent. References to disease prevention and to behavioral, social and economic determinants of health were deleted.

Several drafts were brought forward to tackle the impact of health sector reforms on women’s health and human rights, in particular women in poverty (sub-paragraph 115(d)). JUSCANZ offered language on the responsiveness of health systems to the diversity of women’s needs, and the use of communication technologies to reach women. The EU suggested text on monitoring, and reproductive and sexual health. Delegates agreed to retain references to health care and services for all women and the diverse needs of women.

In JUSCANZ-proposed text on women’s health needs, including reproductive health (sub-paragraph 115(h)), the Holy See asked for deletion of references to, *inter alia*, contraceptive methods, microbicides and sexually transmitted diseases. The final text addresses women’s health needs, including family planning and contraceptive methods, for both women and men. Sub-paragraphs were added on: universal access to primary health care, including sexual and reproductive health care (115(a) *bis*); implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (115(a) *ter*); and adolescents’ reproductive and sexual health, including HIV/AIDS and sexual violence and abuse, in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and CEDAW (115(f) *bis*).

A sub-paragraph was also added to address the roles of women in contributing to the welfare of the family in its various forms and acknowledging, *inter alia*, the social significance of maternity and motherhood (118(b) *ter*).

**International Actions: The UN and International and Regional Organizations:** Actions in this sub-section focus on issues such as PFA implementation, political empowerment, regional programmes, gender mainstreaming, access to information, and diverse aspects of

armed conflicts. Disagreement arose on mainstreaming a gender perspective in the UN system (sub-paragraph 121(a)). Reference to monitoring the work of UN agencies with the full participation of women within the UN system was replaced with reference to the full range of expertise available within the UN system. Mention of women’s right to development was deleted from text on training of UN personnel and officials (sub-paragraph 121(b)).

Paragraphs on armed conflicts were among the most controversial. In sub-paragraph 122(a), on developing gender-sensitive strategies for assistance in humanitarian crises resulting from armed conflicts and natural disasters, a reference to environmental degradation was deleted. On provision by the UNHCR and other relevant institutions of support to countries hosting refugees and displaced persons, paying particular attention to the needs of displaced women and children (sub-paragraph 122(a) *bis*), several texts were put forward and had to be merged in sub-paragraph 122(b) to address participation of women in decision-making and implementation in development activities and peace processes, including conflict prevention and resolution. Text on gender-balanced participation and marginalized women was replaced by reference to involvement of women’s organizations. Text was added on peoples’ right to self-determination. Sub-paragraphs on the work of the international criminal tribunals and the ICC, and on strengthening participatory poverty eradication strategies to reduce the feminization of poverty, were deleted. Controversial references to sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, non-intervention and the domestic jurisdiction of States were maintained in paragraph 125B.

**National and International Actions: Governments and Regional and International Organizations:** Actions in this sub-section embrace issues related to, *inter alia*, economic and social development, human rights, law enforcement, data collection, clinical and social research, indigenous women, labor, micro-credit, ecology and food security.

Text on commercial, financial and economic multilateral coercive measures and their effect on economic and social development (sub-paragraph 125E) was heavily negotiated. References supported by Cuba, Libya and others, and contested by several delegations, were added on alleviating the negative impacts of economic sanctions on women and children (125E *bis*). On the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age and other appropriate factors (125(i)), several delegations opposed a reference to information on the impact of HIV/AIDS on women, which was deleted.

A JUSCANZ proposal on eliminating gender biases in bio-medical, clinical and social research was supplemented with references to voluntary clinical trials on women and gender-specific information about dosage, side-effects and effectiveness of drugs, including contraceptives and methods that protect against sexually transmitted infections (sub-paragraph 125(i) *bis*).

In the area of labor and women (sub-paragraph 127(b)), text recognizing the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and other ILO conventions particularly relevant to ensure women’s rights at work received broad consensus and was welcomed by many as a step forward.

Regarding food security (sub-paragraph 127(h)), the original text on re-orienting agricultural extension services, including credit, was modified to address rural women, nutrition, enterprises related to farming, fishing and resource management, home-based work and the informal sector, and access to resources.



Several issues that could not be resolved and were consequently deleted include: solutions to external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries, including debt relief; integration of developing countries in globalization and poverty eradication; feminization of poverty; and irregular forms of work, including non-standard work.

Debating education (paragraph 128 and sub-paragraph 129(d)), delegates agreed on promoting curriculum changes in public official training, programmes to support youth dialogue and young women's youth participation, and formal and non-formal education and mentoring programmes to build women's knowledge, self-esteem and skills. Other agreed actions are providing skills training for women and girls at all levels to eradicate poverty; implementing participatory and respectful indigenous women's educational and training programmes to ensure their education access; and promoting adult literacy programmes with international cooperation to achieve a 50% adult literacy improvement by 2015 and equitable adult education access. Delegates also agreed on examining and eliminating root causes of enrollment rate declines and drop-out rate increases of girls and boys, ensuring women and girls' equal opportunities in cultural, recreational and sports activities, and giving women equal access to capacity building and training programmes to enhance their participation in decision making.

Regarding violence against women and girls (paragraph 130), actions are directed at increasing cooperation and protective and preventative measures aimed at its elimination. Language in sub-paragraph 130(a) enumerates forms of violence to be eliminated and includes an amended reference to all forms of commercial sexual exploitation, called for by Iran. Other actions are: to increase knowledge of the Rome Statute of the ICC regarding forms of sexual violence and war crimes in order to prevent, prosecute and redress such crimes; to support NGOs in addressing race- and ethnic-based and other violence; and to promote public awareness campaigns regarding the unacceptability and social cost of violence.

Regarding trafficking (paragraph 131), delegates agreed to:

- intensify cooperation between States of origin, transit and destination to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking;
- support ongoing negotiations on a draft protocol toward this end;
- pursue strategies to reduce the risk to women and girls;
- strengthen national legislation;
- prosecute perpetrators;
- enact policies and programmes to prevent and combat trafficking; and
- provide support measures for trafficked persons.

Debating human rights-related paragraphs 132 and 133, delegates agreed on improving awareness of remedies for women's human rights violations; protecting human rights of all migrant women; and implementing policies to address specific needs of documented migrant women. In protracted debates on sub-paragraph 132(c), the Holy See proposed respecting and promoting the right of women to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and recognizing the central role that religion, spirituality and belief play in the lives of women. After debating "promote," "central," "may" and "millions of," delegates reverted to PFA language on promoting respect for the right of women and men to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and recognizing the central role that religion, spirituality and belief play in the lives of millions of women and men.

Further agreements were to encourage a high awareness of harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices affecting women's health, protect promoters of women's rights, encourage State parties to include a gender perspective in their treaty body reports and support

older women regarding combating poverty. Following contact group discussions, delegates reached agreement on language on promoting respect for cultural diversity and dialogue among and within civilizations. Other agreements include promoting comprehensive human rights programmes; taking measures to eliminate impunity and violations of international law and the UN Charter; and addressing the root causes of and differences in the impact of armed conflict.

Related agreements included ensuring full and equal participation of women in the promotion of peace; supporting women as family stabilizers in conflict and post-conflict situations; protecting refugees; and promoting disarmament and reduction of excessive expenditure to free up funds for social and economic development.

Actions relating to information technology (paragraph 134) include cooperating and working with private sector partners and media networks to promote equal access for women and men as producers and consumers including through encouraging adoption of, *inter alia*, codes of conduct, to remove gender stereotypes. Other such agreed actions are developing programmes that support women's networking and, in sub-paragraph 134(h), capitalizing on the new information technologies to globally share information relating to women's experiences.

A number of actions on globalization (paragraph 135) were considered in a contact group chaired by Misako Kaji. Developing countries called for language on poverty eradication, developing country participation in international economic policy and the globalizing world economy, debt cancellation, and negative impacts of globalization. Developed countries proposing language on the positive effects of globalization and the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt initiative. Delegates finally reached consensus on:

- measures to address the challenges of globalization, including through developing country participation in the international economic policy decision-making process;
- measures, with women's participation, to ensure new approaches to international development cooperation;
- poverty eradication strategies with women's participation to meet globalization's negative impacts;
- intensifying efforts to implement poverty eradication programmes and evaluate their impact on women in poverty;
- implementing poverty eradication strategies, recognizing links between gender equality and poverty eradication;
- accessible financial services;
- quality skills training to achieve agreed poverty eradication targets;
- social development funds, where appropriate, to alleviate the negative effects of SAPs and trade liberalization;
- debt solutions through debt relief, including the option of ODA debt cancellation; and
- supporting the Cologne initiative for debt reduction, in particular through speedy implementation of the enhanced HIPC initiative.

Delegates also included language on:

- implementing the 20/20 initiative;
- striving to fulfill the yet-to-be-attained internationally agreed target of 0.7% of the GNP of developed countries for ODA; and
- "appropriate" technology transfer.

On the role of NGOs (paragraph 136), delegates agreed on strengthening this to support capacity of women's NGOs to mobilize resources, with China qualifying this to be in accordance with national laws. Delegates deleted sub-paragraph 136(b), on partnerships and gender equality, but agreed on establishing and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships with civil society, and on encouraging part-



nerships and cooperation to support women's poverty eradication among governments, international and multilateral organizations, private sector institutions and civil society. Other agreements were reached on facilitating disadvantaged women's access to sustainable means of livelihood and recognizing women's role in implementing Agenda 21. Further agreement was reached on:

- promoting programmes for healthy, active aging (138(a));
- intensifying measures to protect women of all ages from sexually transmitted infections (138(c));
- providing care and other services for those infected (138(d));
- mobilizing international and national public opinion concerning effects of the world drug problem (138(e) *bis*); and
- encouraging government/NGO partnerships in the implementation of commitments made in Beijing and at other UNworld conferences and summits in order to promote gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century (139).

## CLOSING SESSIONS

### AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

On Saturday, 10 June, Chair Christine Kapalata opened the final meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Committee of the Whole at 3:00 pm. The COW adopted its draft report, "Review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action, and Further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action" (A/S-23/2/Add. 2, as amended by A/S-23/AC.1/L.1/Add. 1-42).

Syria noted issues with the translation of the term "gender" into Arabic. Honduras expressed reservations related to abortion. Colombia, speaking on behalf of SLAC, without Argentina, highlighted a regional consensus on making women's human rights a reality and emphasized, in particular, the rights to health and to development. Gabon said the consensus document should not undermine the sovereignty of any country. Cuba stated satisfaction with the document, while noting that the language in some elements should not be viewed as a precedent. Mauritania pledged to implement the document in ways that do not contradict its national laws.

Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the G-77/China, said the document was an affirmation of the world's commitment to gender equality, development and peace. Libya confirmed it would implement the document in accordance with its national laws and the tenets of Islam. Nicaragua underscored that UN consensus is not politically binding, and specified that gender is the biological sexuality of men and women and that life starts at conception. Sudan affirmed its commitment to the document with respect for national sovereignty, and noted the provisions of paragraph 2 *bis*. Kuwait pledged to implement the commitments in ways that do not contradict Islamic law, the Kuwaiti Constitution or Islamic Arab customs and habits.

The United Arab Emirates said it would put into effect all measures within the tenets of the noble Islamic religion and its rich tradition. Canada, on behalf of JUSCANZ, highlighted the unflinching dedication of NGOs, noting that without them, the final product would have fallen short of the mark. Argentina supported SLAC's statement. Iraq said he would make a reservation on provisions running counter to Islam. Bangladesh expressed full commitment. Portugal, speaking on behalf of the EU, recognized the contributions of NGOs. Syria expressed gratitude in response to the large number of condolences on the death of President Hafez al-Assad.

Delegates agreed to entrust Vice Chair and Rapporteur Monica Martínez with submission of the COW's report and the text of the Political Declaration (A/S-23/2, paragraph 56) to the Plenary of the

Special Session. Chair Kapalata noted a sense of pride and satisfaction, and said Beijing+5 sent a strong message that the women's agenda was still on the table. She acknowledged NGOs, saying their hard work demonstrated their commitment to the world's women. Angela King, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, called Beijing+5 another milestone in the long road to women's empowerment. She said the outcome document goes beyond Beijing, and noted the Secretary-General had expressed satisfaction with the work of the Special Session. At 5:00 pm, Chair Kapalata gavelled the meeting to a close, and delegates proceeded to the General Assembly for the closing Plenary session.

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY

President Theo-Ben Gurirab opened the closing Plenary session at 5:15 pm. He called for a moment of silence in honor of the late President of Syria, and then invited Vice Chair Martínez to present the report of the COW. Martínez noted that the Committee, in carrying out its mandate, conducted several rounds of informal consultations. She highlighted information contained in draft report (document A/S-23/AC.1/L.1), including a list of the international organizations and NGOs that delivered statements.

President Gurirab noted Rule 66 of the GA Rules of Procedure, and delegates agreed to discuss the report without objection. He then invited delegates to speak for no more than 10 minutes.

Honduras expressed concern about newly introduced concepts that are undefined within the UN, adding that its acceptance of the concepts of family planning, reproductive health, regulation of fertility and reproductive and sexual rights was premised on the understanding that they do not constitute abortion, or measures to regulate fertility or population control.

Qatar noted it would implement the document in accordance with its constitution and national legislation. Poland noted GA and ECOSOC resolutions not to reopen negotiations from Beijing, and registered reservations, including on the right to conscience for health care and abortion services providers and parents' rights to educate their children.

South Africa said she had hoped the Special Session would advance the PFA on the issues of sexual orientation and the empowerment of girls, but noted some regression from the PFA. She welcomed the developments on globalization that would enable States to deal with the negative impacts on women, and said South Africa is prepared to endorse those areas that challenge its own national laws.

Suriname, on behalf CARICOM, outlined regional priority actions and stressed constraints to PFA implementation arising from SAPs, globalization and debt, and expressed concern at the enormous burden on women arising from the loss of the general system of preferences.

Nicaragua registered 11 reservations, including the non-binding nature of the outcomes of UN conferences and, thus, on sexual rights and sexual orientation. On behalf of the G-77 and China, Nigeria noted new initiatives and called for the support and involvement of multilateral institutions in resource provision.

Malta placed reservations on the concepts of reproductive rights, health care services, and circumstances relating to induced abortion. Rwanda noted a reservation on paragraph 51, which fails to recognize the crime of genocide and other crimes against humanity.

The United States registered 11 reservations and noted the non-binding nature of the commitments, adding that omissions of sexual orientation do not indicate the US' unwillingness to implement such provisions. She dissociated the US with the references to globaliza-



tion, which she said does not affect the advancement of women, and with disarmament, because of its pre-determination of the reallocation of funds, which is the prerogative of States.

Gabon called for resources from its partners in development. Senegal called for international cooperation to produce innovative solutions to challenges ahead. SLAC, with Argentina, noted progress in the region and reaffirmed commitment to making a fuller life for women possible. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Libya, Bahrain and Sudan stressed their commitment would be consistent with national and Islamic law.

El Salvador underscored the national illegality of abortion and noted its reservation concerning references to abortion and derivative issues. Kenya highlighted the special importance it attaches to the family and noted national illegality of abortion. Indonesia stressed its commitment. Cuba underscored its flexibility in reaching consensus and stressed this was not a precedent.

The Special Assembly then adopted Draft Resolution I, the Political Declaration (document A/S-23/2, paragraph 56) and Draft Resolution II, Review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action, and Further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (A/S-23/2/Add. 2, as amended by A/S-23/AC.1/L.1/Add. 1-42).

Algeria, on behalf of the Arab Group, underscored confidence that the document will empower women. Morocco and Tunisia stressed constructive dialogue had enabled a fruitful outcome and confirmed their commitment consistent with national laws. Noting commitment consistent with national laws, Egypt underscored that paragraphs on resources are too weak and called for international efforts to increase financial resources needed to empower women. The Philippines hoped implementation will be enhanced through South-South partnership.

The EU stressed that the PFA and CEDAW remain the cornerstone of efforts to pursue gender equality. Highlighting outcomes, including the clear call that men and women should share the tasks of unpaid work, he lamented lack of references to sexual rights of women and to discrimination on the basis of sexuality. Canada lauded reaffirmation of women's rights as human rights and supporting NGO programmes on race and ethnically-based violence. Noting the absence of a reference to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, she said such discrimination is a violation of human rights and interpreted reference to "other status" in paragraph 2 *bis* as encompassing sexual orientation. She added her puzzlement over the absence of a reference to landmines in a document meant to protect women and children. New Zealand expressed the same interpretation of "other status" and noted national illegality of such discrimination.

Oman and Mauritania said they would implement the outcome of the document in accordance with their constitutions and national legislation. Iraq would, in addition, apply Sharia law. Norway said it would have preferred the outcome document to reflect elements of sexual orientation, sexual rights of women, secure and safe abortion and steps to be taken on the use of landmines. Iran disassociated itself with provisions that condone or encourage sexual relations outside marriage and the family, and noted it would interpret new concepts within Islamic law and its constitution. Jordan also specified implementation in accordance with its constitution. Syria appreciated the condolences extended to it, and said it would implement the outcomes in conformity with its cultural, spiritual and traditional beliefs, national legislation and constitution, and paragraph 2 of the outcome document. The Russian Federation called for making the outcome document a reality.

The Holy See praised the steps made to advance women's condition, in particular condemning violence against women, and upholding women's rights, elimination of poverty and provision of access to basic social services. Noting the failure to comply with the GA resolution not to renegotiate existing agreements, and the persistent attempts to introduce new and undefined terms, including sexual rights and orientation, she registered seven reservations that are inconsistent with the Holy See's ethics.

In his closing remarks, President Gurirab said the outcome document moved the global agenda on women's advancement beyond the PFA, particularly on issues relating to violence, trafficking, poverty, education, debt relief, globalization, inheritance rights, political participation and decision-making and health, including the right to sexual and reproductive health. He noted that 77% of the Plenary statements were made by women, and gavelled the Assembly to a close at 8:15 pm, with a call for a forward march to WSSD+5 in Geneva.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

After a total of five and a half weeks of negotiations, most delegates were relieved when the Special Session finally came to an end, if for no other reason than it meant they could finally go home and sleep. One exhausted but upbeat delegate who had barely slept two hours over the final 48 of the Session quipped that the Session was contributing to "family disintegration and violating her rights," which she was desperate to reclaim.

Beijing+5 may prove to have been one of the most difficult UN negotiating sessions in recent years. The process was marked in numerous places by a climate of hostility, fueled by dissatisfaction over organizational arrangements and the quality of the draft text of the outcome document, prepared by the Secretariat. The widening rift between some members of the developing world and industrial countries, which was clearly demonstrated during the Seattle WTO meeting, held up many points of the negotiations. It reached a low in one contact group when a donor country, dissatisfied with the course of the debate, threatened to slash its ODA contributions.

## GAINS AND LOSSES

With long arguments over peripheral political issues, such as the impact of economic sanctions and the direction of military spending, rumors at times swept the floor that the Special Session would be unable to complete its work. Yet by Saturday afternoon, after three all-night sessions, delegates voiced satisfaction. They described, in some cases, achievements that exceeded their expectations, particularly in the areas of health, violence, globalization, the economy, human rights and political empowerment. The document marks the first time that the international community has agreed to refer to honor crimes and forced marriage. It calls on governments to take stronger actions to combat marital rape and dowry-related violence, and recognizes the principle of asylum on the grounds of gender-based persecution.

Developing country delegates and NGOs applauded some of the strongest language yet on globalization. CARICOM, Pakistan, South Africa and others fought hard for text linking globalization, SAPs, trade liberalization and debt. There was also strong language on the feminization of poverty and the need to assess the links between macro-economic policy and gender. In its final speech, the US disassociated itself with some of these provisions, remarking that it does not perceive that globalization hinders women's advancement. Yet, developing countries were disappointed at the lack of agreement on opening markets for women and increasing or providing predictable resources through international cooperation.



Delegates on all sides, and for various reasons, resisted references to concrete benchmarks, numerical goals, time-bound targets and indicators. Activists had hoped that Beijing+5 would inspire progress in these areas, because the PFA itself contains few numbers. Developing countries were reluctant to commit to measures to value and reflect women's contributions in national accounts, despite the fact that such measures are already legislated in some nations. Pakistan fought a reference to ending all discriminatory laws by 2015, against SADC's insistence that it be maintained. Talks on decreasing illiteracy by 2015 and the provision of other kinds of social services stumbled over the issue of who would provide the resources.

As could have been predicted from Beijing and the ICPD, a large number of countries ended up placing reservations on issues related to reproductive health. A battle during the final night over language from PFA paragraph 96, which recognizes women's right to have control over matters related to reproduction and sexuality, and is viewed as a veiled reference to abortion, resulted in victory for proponents of reproductive rights. Language was also included to affirm the agreements reached at ICPD+5, which in general were seen as an improvement on Beijing.

JUSCANZ and the EU, who pushed a reference to sexual orientation until the last moment, expressed disappointment that it didn't make the final cut. Some noted that the UN, a multicultural institution that recognizes diversity in its Charter, was failing to recognize women's diversity. Other delegates were frustrated about the amount of time spent on sexual orientation, saying it was an issue that is far from the basic rights and concerns of most of the world's women. Several observers advocated greater emphasis on women's economic empowerment, which would be the first step toward changing the laws that deny women their reproductive and other rights.

### **NEGOTIATION DYNAMICS**

A small number of countries dominated much of the intersessional and Special Session negotiations. In addition to JUSCANZ and the EU, these included Pakistan, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Iran, Syria and Libya. While the G-77/China started the Beijing review process as a bloc, tensions over the poor organization of the group's work and wide differences on issues led regional groups to splinter away toward the end of the intersessionals. The group, which in Beijing negotiated separately only on health issues, made almost no collective statements once the Special Session began, leading some commentators to wonder if this was an indication of the future of multilateral negotiations. One observer commented that the splintering of the G-77 could make reaching consensus in UN negotiations increasingly difficult.

SADC, SLAC and CARICOM took the floor frequently, with positions that supported economic development, but also stood behind the human rights positions of the EU and JUSCANZ. Delegates from one regional group said that they wanted a stronger political agenda for women in their region, and noted that negotiations within the G-77/China had prevented this point of view from coming forward. A delegate from one of the more conservative countries said the break was welcome, because it allowed clear positions for everyone. Other delegates worried that the split allowed a few "rogue" States to dominate the process.

The usual rumors about a conspiracy to defeat Beijing+5 were afloat, with some analysts maintaining that the collapse of the process would be perceived as a giant step back for what conservatives see as a radical feminist agenda. The ambassador of one of the nations alleg-

edly behind this collaboration admitted that some forces had been at work to hinder the production of the outcome document. However, other observers noted that the Holy See, often accused of being part of this group, had received far less support from Latin American and African countries than in Beijing. Argentina, despite its conservative approach to reproductive health, waffled in and out of the more progressive SLAC throughout the negotiations.

A few commentators also noted that while the EU and JUSCANZ appeared to follow a progressive line on human rights issues, they did little to support the root causes of women's lack of equality, such as poor access to economic and political power. EU delegates expressed surprise at the position of Poland, which has reversed course to strongly oppose abortion references since the regional preparatory meeting last January in Geneva.

### **IT'S NOT EASY BEING AN NGO**

NGOs, who played such a major role in the Beijing process, battled their own set of issues at Beijing+5. Some complained about the strict security and their lack of access to delegates, and pointed out that the length and the erratic pace of the negotiations, including the constant shifting of text between sections, made it difficult for them to follow the work and influence the process. Differences broke when activists from the South complained of the heavy emphasis on reproductive health by influential American advocates, who seemed unwilling to pay attention to other basic issues faced by women in the developing world.

Some delegates reported they missed the energy and activism of NGOs. One went so far as to describe the process as "unjust and top-down." Others said the restrictions on NGO access denied governments alternative points of view through exposure to practical realities on the ground, resulting in a focus on "commas, full-stops and brackets." It also made the process non-transparent, as it eliminated the NGO "watch-dog" role.

NGOs, despite expressing a commitment to the Beijing review, also described a sense of disassociation with the process. While most expressed relief that Beijing+5 had at least held the line established in the PFA, they also noted that much of the progress toward women's equality happens locally and nationally, and highlighted agreements made in the regional preparatory meetings as important to their work.

### **IMPLEMENTATION REMAINS THE CHALLENGE**

In the end, the real question relates to implementation. While lofty promises were made in Beijing, and some achievements have been made since then, women worldwide continue to lag behind in almost all areas. During Beijing+5, the UN Division for the Advancement of Women released its latest compilation of statistics on women, which shows, among other things, that women still earn as little as half of men's wages, women and children make up to 80% of refugees fleeing from conflict, and two-thirds of the world's illiterates are female. High obstacles stand in the way of solving these problems, from discriminatory attitudes to lack of resources to unjust laws. The Beijing+5 outcome document has moved forward in once again acknowledging these on paper, and providing directions to address them. The rest is up to governments, NGOs and members of the international community who are truly concerned about women's advancement toward equality. Implementation on any level, however, won't start until participants wake from their much-needed and well-earned sleep.



## THINGS TO LOOK FOR

**23RD SESSION OF CEDAW:** The 23rd session of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) will take place from 12-30 June 2000, at UN Headquarters in New York. Other CEDAW meetings are also planned, including a Pre-Session Working Group to prepare for the 24th Session of CEDAW (3-7 July 2000); the 11th Meeting of the State Parties to CEDAW (tentatively scheduled for 31 August 2000); the 24th Session of CEDAW (15 January – 2 February 2001); a Pre-Session Working Group to prepare for the 25th Session of CEDAW (4-22 June 2001); and a Pre-Session Working Group to prepare for the 26th Session of CEDAW (25-29 June 2001). All meetings will take place at UN Headquarters in New York. For more information, contact: Women's Rights Unit, DAW, Room DC2-1226, UN, New York, NY 10017, USA; e-mail: connorsj@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/> or Office of UNHCHR-UNOG, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; tel: +41-22-917-9000; fax: +41-22-917-9016; Internet: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/cedw.htm>

**UN SPECIAL SESSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT – “COPENHAGEN+5”:** The Special Session on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) and Further Initiatives will be held from 26-30 June 2000, in Geneva. For more information, contact: Gloria Kan, Chief, Intergovernmental Policy Branch, Division for Social Policy Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Room DC2-1362, UN, New York, NY 10017, USA; tel: +1-212-963-5873; e-mail: kan@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/geneva2000/>

**GENEVA 2000 FORUM:** This meeting will be held in conjunction with the Copenhagen+5 Special Session in Geneva, Switzerland, from 26-30 June 2000. Its aim is to enable representatives of non-governmental organizations, parliaments, trade unions, business and industry, professional associations, academic institutions, governmental and intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the media to join in the debate on social development. For more information, contact: Geneva 2000 Secretariat, c/o Ambassador Daniel Stauffacher, Delegate of the Swiss Government for the Follow-up Conference of the WSSD, Geneva 2000, Rue de Varembe 9-11, P.O. Box 125, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland; tel: +41-22-749-2570; fax: +41-22-749-2589; Internet: <http://www.geneva2000.org>

**CONFERENCE ON GENDERING ETHICS/THE ETHICS OF GENDER:** This international interdisciplinary conference will be held from 23-25 June 2000, in Leeds, UK. For more information, contact: Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK; e-mail: gender-studies@leeds.ac.uk; Internet: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/gender-studies/events/conf1.htm>

**NINTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS – CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AT THE DAWN OF THE 21ST CENTURY:** This meeting, hosted by the World Federation of Public Health Associations, will be held from 2-6 September 2000, in

Beijing. Issues for discussion include: family planning, education, telecommunications, urban migration, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. For more information, contact: APHA, 1015 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 3000, Washington, DC 20005 USA; tel: +1-202-789-5696; fax: +1-202-789-5661; e-mail: allen.jones@apha.organization; Internet: <http://www.wfpfa.org/>

**55TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS – THE MILLENNIUM ASSEMBLY:** The 55th Session of the UN General Assembly – designated the “Millennium Assembly” – will open on 5 September 2000, at UN Headquarters in New York. It is expected that the meeting will be attended by a large number of world leaders and provide an opportunity to articulate and affirm an animating vision of the UN in meeting the challenges of the 21st century. The role of the UN in promoting peace and sustainable development in the era of globalization has been identified as one of the key themes for the session. For more information, visit: <http://www.un.org/millennium/>

**UNHCHR WORKING GROUP ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT:** Operating under the auspices of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, this working group will meet from 18-22 September 2000, in Geneva. For more information, contact: OHCHR-UNOG, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; tel: +41-22-917-9000; fax: +44-22-917-9016; Internet: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/10/e/wgrtd.htm>

**10TH SESSION OF THE FAO ECA WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN AND THE AGRICULTURAL FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT:** This meeting of the FAO European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) will take place from 4-7 October 2000, in Austria. For more information, contact: Tomasz Lonc, ECA Secretary, FAO Regional Office for Europe, Rome; tel: +39-06-570-52898 or 570-55631; e-mail: Tomasz.Lonc@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/regional/europe/eca.htm>

**FACING THE NEW MILLENNIUM: GENDER IN AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA – RETROSPECTION AND PROSPECTS:** The Third International Conference on Women and Africa and the African Diaspora (WAAD III) will be held from 6-13 October 2000, in Antananarivo, Madagascar. For more information, contact: the Convenor, Third WAAD Conference, Women's Studies Programme, Cavanaugh Hall Room 001C, Indiana University, 425 University Boulevard, Indianapolis, IN 46202 USA; tel: +1-317-278-2038 or +1-317-274-0062; fax: +1-317-274-2347; Internet: <http://www.iupui.edu/~aaws/waad/home.html>

**45TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN:** The 45th session of the CSW will be held from 5-16 March 2001, at UN Headquarters in New York. For more information contact: DAW, Room DC2-1250, UN, New York, NY 10017, USA; fax: +1-212-963-3463; e-mail: erturk@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/>