



HIGHLIGHTS FROM CSW-44: 28 FEBRUARY – 2 MARCH 2000

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held the first part of its 44th session from 28 February to 2 March 2000 to follow-up on the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) and to review and appraise the implementation of the Platform for Action (PFA). The CSW will continue to meet until 17 March 2000 as a Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the UN General Assembly Special Session on "Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the 21st century."

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BEIJING PROCESS

In 1972, the United Nations General Assembly (GA), in resolution 3010 (XXVII), proclaimed 1975 International Women's Year, to be devoted to intensified action to promote equality between men and women, to ensure full integration of women in the total development effort, and to increase women's contributions to the strengthening of world peace. In resolution 3520 (XXX), the GA proclaimed 1976-1985 the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.

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 PFA. The PFA sets out an agenda for empowering women and accelerating implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategy (NFLS), and aims to achieve significant change by the year 2000.

BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION: The Beijing Declaration aims at accelerating the implementation of the NFLS. It deals with removing the obstacles to women's public participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.

The PFA acknowledges that significant progress will depend on building strategic partnerships and involving all stakeholders in the efforts towards change. The action plan sets time-specific targets, committing nations to carry out concrete actions in areas such as health, education, decision-making and legal reforms with the ultimate goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women in both public and private life. PFA implementation is mainly the responsibility of governments, but it also involves institutions in the public, private and non-governmental sectors at all levels. The PFA identifies 12 areas of concern: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, decision-making, institutional mechanisms human rights, media, environment and the girl-child.

BEIJING +5: In Resolution 52/100, the UN General Assembly 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 is not intended to renegotiate existing arrangements but will assess successes, failures and obstacles to goals set at Nairobi and Beijing. The Special Session is scheduled to take place from 5-9 June 2000 in New York.

In Resolution 52/231, the UN General Assembly designated the CSW to act as the Preparatory Committee 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 to contain suggestions on further actions and initiatives. The Committee was asked to pay particular attention to mainstreaming a gender perspective and common trends and themes across the 12 critical areas of concern set out in the PFA. To enhance participation in the Beijing +5 process, those NGOs that were accredited to the FWCW were invited to attend the 43rd and 44th sessions of the CSW.

REPORT OF CSW-44

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: During its first week, CSW-44 included over 600 participants, including ministers and other high-level government officials, UN agency representatives, international and non-governmental organizations and the media. Over the course of the four-day meeting, participants of CSW-44 met in eight plenary sessions and delegations met twice in a closed Working Group on

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Wendy Jackson <wendy@iisd.org>, Violette Laclache <violette@iisd.org>, Malena Sell <malena.sell@poyry.fi> and Gretchen Sidhu <gsidhu@igc.org>. The Editor is Pamela Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Managing Editor is Langston James "Kimo" Goree <kimo@iisd.org>. Digital editing by Leila Mead <leila@interport.net>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the United States (through USAID), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Commission (DG-ENV.) General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2000 is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Environment (BMU) and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment of Austria, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment of Finland, the Government of Sweden, the Government of Australia, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and BP Amoco. Specific funding for coverage of the Beijing +5 process has been provided by The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Kingdom DFID. The *Bulletin* can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Managing Editor. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>. The satellite image was taken above New York ©2000 The Living Earth, Inc. <http://livingearth.com>. For information on the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, send e-mail to <enb@iisd.org>.



Communications. Delegates addressed: the follow-up to the FWCW, the review and appraisal of the implementation of the PFA, and the follow-up to ECOSOC resolutions and decisions. On Wednesday, 1 March, a panel discussion was held on emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting women or gender equality. On Thursday, 2 March, delegates adopted the provisional agenda for CSW-45 (E/CN.6/2000/L.7, E/CN.6/2000/CRP.3) and the report of CSW-44 (E/CN.6/2000/L.3.)

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS: On Thursday, 2 March, delegates adopted four new resolutions relating to:

- Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts (E/CN.6/2000/L.2);
- Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan (E/CN.6/2000/L.4);
- Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (E/CN.6/2000/L.5); and
- Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS (E/CN.6/2000/L.6).

Release of Women and Children Taken Hostage, Including those Subsequently Imprisoned, in Armed Conflicts: The resolution reaffirms the importance of both international humanitarian law and the implementation of the PFA in the context of women and children in armed conflicts and their release in the case of hostage-taking and imprisonment. Operative paragraphs condemn violent acts against civilian women and children in areas of armed conflict and urge involved parties to respect international humanitarian law and to protect and release women and children taken hostage or imprisoned, and to provide them with humanitarian assistance. The resolution requests the Secretary-General and relevant international organizations to facilitate the release of women and children taken hostage and imprisoned in armed conflict, and to report on the implementation of the resolution at CSW-45.

Situation of Women and Girls in Afghanistan: The resolution condemns the continuing grave violations of women's and girls' human rights in all areas of Afghanistan as well as continued restrictions on women's access to health care, education and employment outside the home. The resolution urges all Afghan parties to take measures to ensure: the repeal of legislation and other measures that discriminate against women and girls; effective participation of women in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life; respect for the equal right of women to work; respect for the equal right of women and girls to education without discrimination; respect for the right of women to security of person; respect for freedom of movement for women; and respect for women's and girls' access to necessary facilities to protect their right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. In addition, the resolution: appeals to all states, the international community and the UN to ensure that all humanitarian assistance to and activities in Afghanistan are based on the principle of non-discrimination; urges states to continue to give special attention to the promotion and protection of women's human rights in Afghanistan; welcomes the establishment of the positions of Gender Advisor and Human Rights Advisor at the UN Office of the Resident Coordinator for Afghanistan; and urges all Afghan factions to ensure the safety and protection of all UN and humanitarian workers in Afghanistan and to allow them to carry out their work unhindered.

With one revision noting the report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, and another requesting the Secretary-General to continue to review and submit a report to the Commission on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, the resolution was adopted.

Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian Women: The resolution: recalls the special situation of Palestinian women in the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration, the PFA, the NFLS, relevant UN resolu-

tions and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women; stresses the need for implementation of existing agreements and a final settlement; and notes the continuing difficult situation of Palestinian women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Operational paragraphs call for a successful peace process with tangible progress for Palestinian women and reaffirm the negative impacts of Israeli occupation. The resolution calls on Israel to comply with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant conventions and facilitate the return of refugees and displaced Palestinian women, and calls for financial and technical assistance from the international community. Final paragraphs request the CSW to continue monitoring aspects of the NFLS and the PFA relevant to Palestinian women, and the Secretary-General to review the situation.

Commenting on the resolution, ISRAEL said the situation of women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was better than that of women in most countries and called for focused attention to urgent women's issues rather than to political ones. SYRIA called for, and LEBANON supported, the right of Palestinian women to self-determination and lamented the absence of reference to Security Council resolutions and to the principle of "Land for Peace" in the text of the resolution. IRAN said a comprehensive and fair solution for peace rests in the restoration of all rights of Palestinian people and the end of the Israeli occupation.

Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS: The resolution recognizes that the proportion of women with HIV is growing in every region, and girls in the 15-24 age bracket are at a higher risk of infection than boys. It notes that the majority of women and girls in developing countries do not enjoy full access to education and health care, and are more vulnerable to infection than men physiologically and because of their subordinate status. Acknowledging that millions of women do not have access to various ways of lowering infection rates, such as drugs and education, the resolution recalls the work of various UN agencies in offering different forms of empowerment and support to women with HIV/AIDS. The text reaffirms the right of women and girls to health, education, and protection from discrimination due to infection. The resolution urges governments to improve women's economic independence and promote their overall advancement so they may better protect themselves, and requests governments and the international community to make HIV/AIDS a development priority, particularly in the worst-hit regions of Africa.

The resolution calls on governments to: provide legal protection for people with HIV/AIDS; support AIDS orphans and women caring for infected patients; adopt integrated AIDS prevention policies tailored to women and girls; support women's groups in changing harmful practices and end all forms of violence against women that aggravate the epidemic; and ensure availability of comprehensive health care. It calls upon UNAIDS to: intensify its efforts to assist governments in determining the best policies and programmes to prevent HIV infection among women and girls; place greater emphasis on the education of men and boys about their roles in preventing transmission; and give priority attention to women and girls in Africa. It calls on relevant UN entities to incorporate HIV/AIDS prevention, especially among women and children, into their activities.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY.

Plenary: The CSW, acting as the PrepCom to the Special Session, will convene at 10:00 am in Conference Room 1 to hear opening statements. Two draft resolutions on the participation and accreditation of NGOs at the UN Special Session will be introduced for adoption by the Plenary in the afternoon session starting at 3:00 pm.