



CSW-44 HIGHLIGHTS: FRIDAY, 3 MARCH 2000

On the first day of CSW-44 acting as the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Beijing +5 Special Session, delegates met in an opening Plenary session to address organizational matters and to hear opening remarks from key speakers and delegations.

OPENING PLENARY

PrepCom Chair Rose Odera (Kenya) opened the third session of the CSW acting as the PrepCom and welcomed all participants. Delegates adopted the agenda and the proposed organization of work (E/CN.6/2000/PC/1.)

Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette noting the concern of many delegations that the Platform for Action (PFA) had received limited implementation, called for further work toward global gender equality on the basis of new proposals formulated by regional commissions. She said the Beijing Conference was a milestone and had launched an important process requiring continuous updating to include new issues and obstacles. She welcomed the participation of NGOs and recognized the need for political will and commitment to make a difference in the lives of girls and women everywhere.

Nitin Desai, Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, highlighted the importance of mainstreaming the work of the PrepCom in the broader context of all UN entities. Angela King, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, declared that the greatest peaceful revolution of the 20th century had been the transformation of the status of women. She stated that no country has yet fully implemented the PFA and that in some cases, the situation of women has worsened. She called for clear and pragmatic strategies to ensure all women benefit from globalization and sustained efforts to combat, *inter alia*, the marginalization of women and girls.

Aida Gonzalez-Martinez, CEDAW Chair, welcomed increasing linkages between the PFA's political framework and CEDAW's legal obligations. She called for systematic analysis of PFA implementation by the CSW. Yakin Ertürk, DAW Director, introduced key documents for the upcoming work of the PrepCom: Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing PFA (E/CN.6/2000/PC.2); Emerging issues containing additional material for further actions and initiatives for the preparation of the outlook beyond the year 2000 (E/CN.6/2000/PC.4); and a summary of on-line conferences on progress made in the implementation of the PFA (E/CN.6/2000/PC/CRP.1).

PORTUGAL, on behalf of the EU, noted the need for: political commitment; involvement of men; and mainstreaming of gender into policies and programmes. He stressed linkages between gender equality and development, environment, population and human rights issues. NAMIBIA called for consideration of emerging issues, including HIV/AIDS. She said international efforts and resources should target the community level in lieu of high-level meetings on gender equality. CÔTE D'IVOIRE noted the situation of women in developing countries has stagnated or worsened due to globalization and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. She emphasized regional cooperation in West Africa and the importance of resolving the international debt issue to liberate resources for the advancement of women.

LUXEMBOURG highlighted national action for the advancement of women, including on institutional and labor issues. She noted the recent meeting of francophone countries, which adopted a declaration calling for a culture of peace in gender relations. DENMARK noted cultural, political, structural and historical obstacles to women's equality and said gender equality requires redefining the rights and responsibilities of women and men in the family, workplace and society as a whole. CHINA, highlighting the growing gap between developing and developed countries as a major obstacle to PFA implementation, called for increased international financial assistance and fundamental changes leading to a just economic and political order.

CUBA recognized the role of NGOs in PFA implementation, but said governments remain the main actors in the follow-up to agreements. She noted that any new action must accelerate existing commitments and concluded that full implementation is impossible without fairer distribution of resources. BOTSWANA identified national accomplishments, including ratification of CEDAW and closer cooperation with NGOs. He said obstacles to progress include traditional attitudes, financial constraints, HIV/AIDS and the lack of male involvement. ZAMBIA outlined impediments to PFA implementation, particularly the impacts on women of poverty, foreign debt and HIV/AIDS, and stressed that without increased international support, gains made in recent years might be lost. She suggested a debt swap for HIV/AIDS and poverty programmes, and maintained that a permanent solution lies in an equitable economic order. SWAZILAND identified national actions taken since Beijing on: women and health, power-sharing and decision-making, education and the girl-child, violence against women, and employment and women's economic empowerment.

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THAILAND identified further actions and initiatives needed for PFA implementation, including increased public awareness of gender equality, reviews of gender mainstreaming and enhancement of cooperation with civil society. JUSCANNZ noted the importance of gender mainstreaming, the necessity of active participation of men and the need to ensure that benefits of globalization are equally shared. ALGERIA stated that developing countries, in spite of adequate political will, experience a lack of financial resources. He said benefits derived from trade have accrued to developed countries, and called for increased ODA. MOROCCO identified national efforts toward PFA implementation, including: creation of a high-level mechanism to manage resources; creation of a state secretary for social protection, family and childhood; development of health indicators for women; increased involvement of women in economic and political spheres; creation of a national campaign denouncing violence against women; and establishment of a center for research on the status of women and the image of women in the media.

VENEZUELA outlined their new constitution, which recognizes, *inter alia*, equal rights and duty in marriage and gender equality in work, remuneration, and recruitment and grants special protection to reproductive health. He said further work was needed to ensure women's participation in decision-making. The US gave organizational details on preparations for Beijing +5, including special events and a satellite conference connection to allow women around the world to follow the Special Session. To accelerate PFA implementation, the PHILIPPINES proposed: promoting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes; establishing a trust fund supported by financial institutions and interested donors; and creating a South-South cooperation scheme aimed at capacity-building, including arrangements for knowledge-sharing. Highlighting obstacles to national PFA implementation, MADAGASCAR identified: the lack of financial resources and sufficient access to health and education services; poor knowledge of human rights; feminization of poverty resulting from globalization; and women's difficulties in accessing credit due to unemployment and reduced budgetary allocations to social services.

INDONESIA called for consideration during Beijing +5 of the impact of globalization on women, and said international development agencies should work with governments to address the causes of structural poverty and gender inequality. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for the negotiation of an action-oriented, holistic plan with references to: the increasing prevalence of regional and national armed conflicts that affect civilian and refugee women; the effects of globalization; and gender-specific aspects of HIV/AIDS. VIETNAM underscored the importance of regional cooperative efforts, and suggested the outcome of the Asia-Pacific regional conference be recognized at Beijing +5. The SOLOMON ISLANDS, on behalf of members of the Pacific Islands Group of Countries, expressed concern about the lack of attention to critical issues relevant to small islands States. He urged ratification of international agreements on these issues, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT highlighted its 2000-2005 plan of action, expressing hope that it will strengthen the global agenda for equality. She said the plan prioritizes four issues: gender mainstreaming; integrating gender in national budgets, macroeconomic policies and globalization processes; promoting women's human rights; and increasing gender equality in political processes, including in conflict resolution.

The FAO, on behalf of the ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, said human rights instruments and international commitments, including the FWCW, provide a global framework for gender equality. Acknowledging concerns from some delegations about slow PFA implementation, she emphasized the Inter-Agency's commitment to working with member states and civil

society partners to achieve PFA objectives. The INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION requested adequate reference in CSW documents to parliaments and identified areas of parliamentary involvement in national plans, including: education, health, family law, maternity protection, professional equality, action against domestic violence, children's rights, and the environment. Identifying achievements in favor of the advancement of women, the WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME specified four areas of action: poverty, education, health and women in conflict. She noted a dramatic increase in the number of women acting as heads of households in emergency situations, and called for the incorporation of a gender perspective in the development of humanitarian assistance, disaster mitigation and recovery strategies.

IRAN noted: sharing best practices would facilitate pragmatic approaches; the need to reaffirm commitment to the PFA; the role of diversity at all levels; and the need for increased resources for effective implementation. ECUADOR highlighted cooperative efforts between state agencies in charge of women's affairs and women's movements. She noted the link between feminization of poverty and trade liberalization, especially in cases of heavy debt repayment schemes, and appealed for international collective action to guarantee economic and social rights for women and girls. GHANA stressed the need for Beijing +5 to recognize the complementary nature of CEDAW and the PFA, and urged all states to withdraw reservations to the PFA. PAKISTAN suggested, *inter alia*: mandatory inclusion of gender concerns at all major UN conferences; establishment of horizontal linkages between external assistance and advice offered to national governments; and coordination of UNDP governance programmes with national implementation of other UN programmes. SUDAN called for mobilization of resources and special budgets to support rural women, and to help women cope with the effects of globalization, and emphasized the need for North-South cooperation. KENYA said gender aspects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic need to be examined along with dissemination of information. She said HIV/AIDS is a common responsibility, as are the adverse impacts of globalization on women and youth in developing countries. ZIMBABWE called on the international community to commit additional resources to accelerate PFA implementation.

Delegates concluded the session by adopting two draft resolutions on the participation and accreditation of NGOs at the UN Special Session (E/CN.6/2000/PC/L.3, L.4*).

IN THE CORRIDORS

Warmed up by CSW-44, delegates are geared up to tackle the vast expanse of bracketed text in the proposed outcome document and major players were already scheduled to spend the weekend in consultations. However, given the number of sticking points, no one predicts this will lighten the load of the coming week. NGOs are also off to a running start, with their own text suggestions summarized in a document that is sparking much interest on the floor.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY:

PLENARY: Delegates will reconvene at 10:00 am in Conference Room 1 to hear a panel presentation on gender equality, development and peace beyond the year 2000.

WORKING GROUPS: Working Group 1, chaired by Kristen Mlacak (Canada), will meet at 3:00 pm in Conference Room 1 to discuss bracketed text on achievements and obstacles in the implementation of the 12 areas of concern and current challenges affecting the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the PFA. Working Group 2, chaired by A.K. Bhattacharjee (India), will also meet at 3:00 pm, in Conference Room 6, to consider actions and initiatives to overcome obstacles to the full implementation of the PFA.