



CSW-44 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2000

On Tuesday, delegates met in Working Group I in the morning and evening to continue discussion of Section II (achievements and obstacles). Working Group II convened in the morning to continue negotiation of Section IV (actions and initiatives).

WORKING GROUP I

On paragraph 8 (achievements in the critical area of women and health), references to sexual and reproductive health and sexual and reproductive rights were supported by TURKEY, PERU, JAMAICA, COSTA RICA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, NAMIBIA, COLOMBIA, SWAZILAND, CHILE, GHANA, VENEZUELA, MALAWI, BOLIVIA, CUBA and BRAZIL. MEXICO noted that sexual and reproductive rights are broadly defined in the Beijing PFA. SOUTH AFRICA supported retaining reference to reproductive rights.

The HOLY SEE, supported by SYRIA and IRAN, stated that the PFA has clear reference to reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health, but does not mention sexual rights. He stated that delegates were not at the PrepCom to negotiate text but to assess progress since the Beijing Conference. NICARAGUA, POLAND, ALGERIA, and HONDURAS opposed reference to sexual rights. SUDAN and MOROCCO also opposed language on sexual rights, and referred to reservations stated in the ICPD Report. The G-77/CHINA noted it had no common position on paragraph 8. The EU supported reference to breast-feeding, provided wording was aligned with that of the Secretary-General's review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing PFA (E/CN.6/2000/PC/2), and the reference was placed later in the paragraph.

Regarding language referring to increased knowledge and use of family planning and contraceptive methods, the HOLY SEE, supported by HONDURAS and NICARAGUA, stated that family planning includes contraception, and said they could only agree to the original wording if language on parental guidance were added. MEXICO suggested text referring to various contraceptive methods. BRAZIL supported referring to family planning and contraceptive methods. The text remains bracketed.

The EU, supported by TURKEY and BRAZIL, suggested placing a reference to cancer prevention in the paragraph on obstacles to women and health. MEXICO suggested its deletion, delegates agreed and the reference was removed.

On increased awareness among men of their responsibility with regard to contraception and family planning, SUDAN emphasized the role of the family in accessing contraception. JUSCANZ supported the original wording. The text remains bracketed.

Delegates agreed to include references to: increased attention to sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS; introduction of a gender perspective in health and health-related education and physical activities, and gender-specific prevention and rehabilitation programmes on substance abuse; increased attention to women's mental health; and increased attention to health conditions at work.

On a proposal referring to greater recognition of women's role as essential primary health-care providers within their families and increased participation of women as workers in the health-care system, the EU said it could support the language if reference to men and details on the type of health-care work were added. The text remains bracketed.



On paragraph 16 (achievements on women in power and decision-making), delegates supported a compilation proposal acknowledging growing acceptance of the importance of women's full participation in decision-making and power at all levels and in all fora, including inter-governmental, governmental, and non-governmental sectors. Delegates also agreed to text proposed by JUSCANZ on increased awareness of the systemic changes needed to create gender balance.

On a reference to reconciling family and employment responsibilities of women and men, the EU preferred, and delegates supported, language on work responsibilities in order to include self-employed women. The G-77/CHINA suggested referring to affirmative action policies, while JUSCANZ called for language on positive action policies. Delegates agreed on affirmative and positive action policies. The EU proposed inclusion of language on voluntary agreements. The G-77/CHINA opposed and suggested specifying voluntary agreements in some countries. Delegates agreed to text referring to the establishment, upgrading and strengthening of national mechanisms and machineries for the advancement of women as well as national and international networks of women politicians, parliamentarians, activists and professionals in various fields. With all these changes, the paragraph was adopted.

On paragraph 17 (obstacles to women in power and decision-making), the G-77/CHINA proposed, and delegates accepted, reference to the persistence of the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality of women despite general acceptance of the need for gender balance. JUSCANZ proposed, and all agreed, replacing representation at the highest levels with participation at the highest levels. The G-77/CHINA preferred deleting a JUSCANZ reference to the need for gender balance in decision-making bodies at all levels, but supported text noting that women continue to be underrepresented at legislative, ministerial, sub-ministerial levels, and at all socio-economic levels. JUSCANZ proposed, and delegates accepted, alternative language referring to the highest levels of the corporate sector and other social and economic institutions. The EU suggested additional reference to: clear and transparent appointment and selection criteria; balanced participation in decision-making; willingness to share power; sufficient dialogue and cooperation; and adaptation of political structures. This last reference remains bracketed.

WORKING GROUP II

On paragraph 53 (programme support to meet the specific needs of women for capacity building and to enhance gender mainstreaming activities), a group of countries submitted text referring to the expansion of new areas of programming to advance gender equality in response to current challenges, and suggested deleting reference to

encouraging women's participation in, and contribution to, programmes designed to bring about peace. The paragraph was adopted.

Delegates agreed to merge paragraph 44 *bis* (factors to take into account when designing policies and programmes addressing the needs of women and girls) and paragraph 53 *bis* (girls and women of all ages with any form of disability). On the merged text, a group of countries highlighted that their proposal incorporates language contained in the PFA. A regional group lamented that the proposed paragraph: omits definition of the life cycle and childhood; replaces the issue of diversity of women with reference to elements of discrimination; and emphasizes categories of women with disabilities and infectious diseases over other groups. Several delegations proposed including reference to sexual orientation, others opposed, and the paragraph remains bracketed.

IN THE CORRIDORS

One negotiating bloc is reportedly no longer willing to talk seriously about implementation of the PFA without financial concessions from other delegations. NGOs from some of these countries are still hoping to obtain a workable document to assist their efforts back home.

Meanwhile, delegates are upping the negotiating ante. Some are calling for reference to poverty in the widely bracketed chapeau to Section IV, and are unlikely to sign off. Others are proposing references to sexual orientation – one of the most hotly disputed subjects in Beijing. Are these latter delegates speaking on behalf of what some say is a growing lobbying force in their countries – including the lesbian caucus meeting during the PrepCom? Or is this a chance to set the bar high enough to force concession on other issues? Some delegates claim it would be premature to say; other participants expect sexual orientation to be folded into its usual place under “other status.”

Discussions are brewing about some forms of lobbying on the floor, including an impromptu prayer service in one case. Some NGOs maintain that access to the talks must remain democratic, even as they sniff out signs that there may be actors here attempting to fine-tune their strategies to stall the process.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUPS: Working Group I will reconvene at 3:00 pm and from 8:00 to 11:00 pm in the ECOSOC Council Chamber to continue discussion of Sections II and to begin discussion of Section III. Working Group II is expected to meet at 10:00 am and 3:00 pm in Conference Room 1 to continue work on Section IV.

CONTACT GROUP: The contact group on Section I will meet at 4:00 pm in Conference Room A.