

Contribution to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, 2020

*“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action
And delivery for sustainable development”*

Commission on the Status of Women

The sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women was scheduled to take place from 9 – 20 March 2020, to conduct a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of its adoption, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and to contribute towards the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Given the rapidly evolving situation of the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its implications for intergovernmental meetings at United Nations Headquarters, Member States resolved to hold a scaled down and shortened session. Consequently, the Commission held a meeting on 9 March, consisting of opening and introductory statements, followed by the adoption of the **Political Declaration on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women**. The Commission did not hold a general discussion, and the ministerial round tables and interactive dialogues planned for the session could not take place. All side events planned by Member States and United Nations entities in conjunction with the session were cancelled, and capital-based Government representatives, civil society and other stakeholders refrained from traveling to UNHQ.

As part of the Beijing+25 review and appraisal process, launched by the Economic and Social Council in 2018 (E/RES/2018/8), many countries undertook comprehensive and participatory national reviews, and 171 Governments submitted national reports (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020/preparations#national-level-reviews>). The five regional commissions held regional reviews, as encouraged by the Council (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020/preparations#regional-review-processes>). Civil society representatives and youth contributed extensively to national and regional reviews processes.

The present input to the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development is based on the Political Declaration ([E/CN.6/2020/L.1](https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020/preparations#political-declaration)), adopted by the Commission on 9 March 2020.

1. Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

a. Critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda within the area of responsibility of CSW (bearing in mind interrelations with other goals and targets)

From the perspective of the CSW, progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls has not been fast or deep enough and in some areas, has been uneven. Obstacles persist and major gaps remain. No country has fully achieved gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and many women and girls experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, vulnerability and marginalization throughout their life course. These may include, inter alia, women of African descent, women with HIV and AIDS, rural women, indigenous women, women with disabilities, migrant women and older women.

The Commission recognizes existing and new challenges and commits to tackling remaining implementation gaps in all 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, namely, women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, and the girl child.

The Commission also recognizes poverty, global economic inequality and the lack of equitable distribution of development gains within and among countries as fundamental challenges to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

The Commission further recognizes that these new challenges require intensified efforts for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and its 12 critical areas of concern, including by:¹

- a) Strengthening efforts to realize the right to education for all women and girls, in particular science, technology, engineering and mathematics;
- b) Ensuring women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making, leadership and representation, and a safe and enabling environment for them;
- c) Ensuring women’s economic empowerment by, inter alia, enhancing women’s full access to and equal opportunities in the labour market and decent work, promoting equal pay for work of equal value, providing social security, and access to finance;
- d) Reducing and redistributing the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work of women and girls and promoting equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within the household;
- e) Strengthening social protection systems to support and empower women and girls;
- f) Addressing the disproportionate effect of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls and strengthening their resilience and adaptive capacities to respond;
- g) Ending all forms of violence against all women and girls, ensuring access to justice, and provision of support services, to all women victims of violence;

¹ For complete version, see [E/CN.6/2020/L.1](#), para 11.

- h) Strengthening the protection of women and girls in armed conflict and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes and mediation;
- i) Strengthening efforts to realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for women and girls and promoting the achievement of universal health coverage;
- j) Addressing hunger and malnutrition among women and girls by paying attention to their diverse nutritional needs at all stages of life.

2. Contribution of CSW to accelerated action and transformative pathways and realizing the decade of action and delivery for achieving the 2030 Agenda within its area of responsibility (including its cooperation with ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies)

The 25-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action also contributes towards the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Commission emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the relevant major United Nations conferences and summits and their outcomes and follow-up. It also emphasizes that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

The Commission on the Status of Women, through its Chairperson, continues to cooperate with other intergovernmental bodies. The Chairs of several functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC had been scheduled to participate in the 64th session of CSW. In turn, plans for the participation of the Chair of CSW in several functional commissions had to be reconsidered in the light of current circumstances. The President of the Economic and Social Council participated in the meeting of the Commission on 9 March.

3. Selected recommendations for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action, for possible use in drafting the HLPF declaration

In the Political Declaration, Ministers and representatives of Governments pledged to take further concrete action to ensure the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including by:

- a) Eliminating all discriminatory laws and ensuring that laws, policies and programmes benefit all women and girls and that they are fully and effectively implemented that they do not create and reinforce inequalities and marginalization;
- b) Eliminating structural barriers, discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes, and promoting social norms and practices that empower all women and girls;
- c) Strengthening the effectiveness and accountability of institutions at all levels to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as ensuring equal access to justice and public services;

- d) Mainstreaming a gender perspective across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, for the realization of the human rights of all and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;
- e) Matching commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls with adequate financing through the mobilization of financial resources;
- f) Strengthening accountability for the implementation of commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;
- g) Harnessing the potential of technology and innovation to improve women's and girls' lives and to close the development divide and the digital divide;
- h) Closing data and evidence gaps through improved regular collection, analysis and use of gender statistics, to strengthen the implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes;
- i) Strengthening international cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as public-private partnerships, to implement commitments to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.