

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February to 11 March 2005

High-level round table on “Innovations in institutional arrangements for promoting gender equality at national level”

Summary submitted by the Chairpersons of the high-level round table

1. At its second meeting, on 28 February, the Commission held a high-level round table in two parallel sessions on innovations in institutional arrangements for promoting gender equality at national level in the context of the 10-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform

new challenges and emerging issues. A discussion guide prepared by the Bureau of the Commission (E./CN.6/2005/CRP.2) provided the framework for the dialogue, and the report of the expert group meeting organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women (28 November to 2 December 2004, Rome, Italy) on “The Role of national mechanisms in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women: achievements, gaps and challenges”¹ also supported the discussions.

2. The high-level round table was organized in two parallel sessions to allow for interaction among the large number of participants. The sessions were chaired, respectively, by the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United

4. Participants discussed recent achievements in strengt

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society on the achievement of gender equality. National machineries should take a lead role in facilitating public dialogues on such difficult issues.

11. Participants recalled that the Beijing Platform for Action called for the promotion of gender equality through the use of a dual strategy – gender mainstreaming complemented by programmes and projects targeted at women to address specific gaps or challenges. While awareness-raising initiatives were needed to increase public support for gender equality, school curricula at all levels should reflect the principle of gender equality so that it could be understood and embraced by young women and men. It was also suggested that the gender mainstreaming strategy should be further explained to the general public.

12. Participants identified new and emerging challenges for enhancing the role of institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as areas requiring increased attention from national machineries. The growing recognition of the link between achieving the goals of gender equality and of social and economic development and democratic governance generally called for enhanced partnerships among all stakeholders and for partnerships with men. Likewise, national mechanisms should further strengthen collaboration with non-governmental organizations and women's groups. Since the particular political, social and cultural context was crucial for the successful functioning of the national machinery, efforts were needed to further empower and support such mechanisms within their particular contexts.

13. Among the measures required to ensure the enhanced promotion of gender equality through national mechanisms, participants called for sufficient authority and human and financial resources, as well as their involvement in policy-making processes. The international community should provide assistance to the institutional mechanisms in developing countries. Emphasis was placed on the need to develop effective and appropriate approaches and mechanisms for dealing with discrimination against women, as distinct from discrimination based on other grounds.

14. In addition to specific expertise on gender equality, national machineries also needed lobbying and negotiations skills to be effective. They should undertake capacity-building and training activities, and develop tools and methodologies for gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation, and for enhancing accountability, including indicators and time-bound targets. Gender impact assessments inv2fecbgislon agaitaricy-m, and0.0003 Tc -0

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in all legislative and policy initiatives.

16. National machineries were encouraged to commission independent assessments of their own effectiveness or conduct self-assessments to enhance accountability. They were also encouraged to intensify their dialogue with human rights bodies, civil society and the private sector, as well as the media and the general public in support of gender equality.