





Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

Summary

At its forty-third session, the Commission on the Status of Women recommended one draft resolution to be recommended by the Economic and Social Council for adoption by the General Assembly, and four draft resolutions and three draft decisions for adoption by the Economic and Social Council. In addition, it adopted three resolutions and one decision to be brought to the attention of the Council.

Draft resolution to be recommended by the Economic And Social Council for adoption by the General Assembly

In the draft resolution on an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the General Assembly would adopt and open for signature, ratification and accession the optional protocol to the Convention, the text of which is annexed to the resolution. The Assembly would request the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to hold meetings to exercise its functions under the protocol after its entry into force, in addition to its meetings held under article 20 of the Convention. It would request the Secretary-General to provide the staff and facilities necessary for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the Protocol, and to include information on the status of the Protocol in her or his regular reports to the General Assembly on the status of the Convention.

Draft resolutions and decisions recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

In draft resolution I on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, the Council would urge all Afghan parties, in particular the Taliban, to bring to an end without delay all human rights violations against women and girls. It would urge the Secretary-General to ensure that all United Nations activities in Afghanistan are carried out according to the principle of non-discrimination against women and girls, and that a gender perspective and special attention to the human rights of women and girls are fully incorporated into the work of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan.

In draft resolution II on Palestinian women, the Council would request the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to monitor and take action with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women, and the Beijing Platform for Action. It would request the Secretary-General to continue to review the situation and to assist Palestinian women, and to submit a report to the Commission at its forty-fourth session.

In draft resolution III on the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002–2005, the Council would invite the Secretary-General to formulate the plan for 2002–2005 in two phases. The Council would decide that the first phase, containing an assessment, would be submitted to it through the Commission on the Status of Women in the year 2000, and the new plan for 2002–2005 would be submitted to the Council through the Commission in 2001.

In draft resolution IV on agreed conclusions of the Commission on critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, the Council would endorse the agreed

Resolutions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women

In its resolution 43/1 on the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts, the Commission condemned violent acts in contravention of international humanitarian law against civilian women and children, strongly urged all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully those norms, and requested the Secretary-General and all relevant international organizations to pursue the release of those women and children. It also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its forty-fourth session.

In its resolution 43/2 on women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), the Commission urged Governments to create a supportive environment for those infected with HIV, protect the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and enable those who are vulnerable to have access to appropriate counselling services; to take care of and support children orphaned by AIDS; and to adopt a long-term AIDS prevention policy tailored to the needs of women and girls. The Commission urged the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to assist Governments in determining best policies and programmes to prevent women and young girls from becoming infected with HIV/AIDS, and to give priority attention to the situation of women and girls in Africa. It invited the Secretary-General to report to it at its forty-fourth session on the implementation of the resolution.

In its resolution 43/3 on women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups, the Commission invited the World Health Organization, in partnership with other relevant United Nations bodies and agencies and through extrabudgetary resources, to develop and disseminate a training manual on women and girls' mental disorders resulting from trauma, all forms of discrimination, exploitation, abuse and oppression. It urged the Secretary-General, in collaboration with relevant United Nations bodies, to organize, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, regional expert group meetings for developing gender- and age-disaggregated and gender-sensitive psychosocial and mental health situation analyses and indicators for women's mental health. It requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of relevant bodies of the United Nations, and invited States members and United Nations agencies concerned to make available relevant information for consideration by the Commission at its forty-fourth session.

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution to be recommended by the Council for adoption by the General Assembly

1. The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the approval of the following draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly:

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*

The Economic and Social Council

Recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

“The General Assembly,

* For the discussion, see chap. V.

¹ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

² See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

³ General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

reviewed by a meeting of the States Parties to the Protocol, subject to the approval of the General Assembly;

“6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the staff and facilities necessary for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the Protocol after

⁴ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

⁵ General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

“Article 3

“Communications shall be in writing and shall not be anonymous. No communication shall be received by the Committee if it concerns a State Party to the Convention that is not a party to this Protocol.

“Article 4

“1. The Committee shall not consider a communication unless it has ascertained that

- “2. The Committee shall hold closed meetings when examining communications under this Protocol.
- “3. After examining a communication, the Committee shall transmit its views on the

“2. Any State Party having made a declaration in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article may, at any time, withdraw this declaration by notification to the Secretary-General.

“Article 11

“A State Party shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that individuals under its jurisdiction are not subjected to ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of communicating with the Committee pursuant to this Protocol.

“Article 12

“The Committee shall include in its annual report under article 21 of the Convention a summary of its activities under this Protocol.

“Article 13

“Each State Party undertakes to make widely known and to give publicity to the Convention and this Protocol and to facilitate access to information about the views

“1. Any State Party may propose an amendment to this Protocol and file it with the

Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan*

The Economic and Social Council,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁶ the International Covenants on Human Rights,⁷ the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,⁸ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,⁹ the Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹⁰ the Beijing Declaration¹¹ and Platform for Action¹² adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and other instruments of human rights and international humanitarian law,

Recalling that Afghanistan is a party to the Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide,¹³ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁷ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,⁷ the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,¹⁴ and that it has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,¹⁵

Deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, in particular in all areas under the control of the Taliban movement, as documented by the continued and substantiated reports of grave violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, such as denial of access to health care, to all levels and types of education, to employment outside the home and, in repeated instances, to humanitarian aid, as well as restrictions upon their freedom of movement,

Welcoming the ongoing work of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, in particular his special focus on

* For the discussion, see chap. II.

⁶ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

⁷ General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

⁸ General Assembly resolution 39/46, annex.

⁹ General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

¹⁰ General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

¹¹ See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ General Assembly resolution 260 A (III).

¹⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

¹⁵ General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

protest violations of their human rights, and encouraging women and men worldwide to continue efforts to draw attention to their situation and to promote the immediate restoration of their ability to enjoy their human rights,

1. *Condemns* the continuing grave violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination and violence against them, in all areas of Afghanistan, particularly in areas under the control of the Taliban;

2.

concerns into all United Nations programmes within Afghanistan, taking into account the

* For the discussion, see chap. II.

¹⁶ E/CN.6/1999/2, sect. IV.A.

¹⁷ *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15–26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

¹⁸ General Assembly resolution 48/104.

¹⁹ See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899*

* For the discussion, see chap. II.

²⁰ See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

²¹ See *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18)

²² General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

belief, economic or social condition; and that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest cooperation of individuals and States;

3. *Requests* States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to consider, when preparing their initial and periodic reports under the Convention, including on article 12, general recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;

4. *Acknowledges* that the realization by women of their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is an integral part of the full realization by them of all human rights, and that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights;

5. *Acknowledges* the link between women's physical and mental health throughout the life cycle and the level of national development, including the availability of basic social services such as health services, women's status and degree of empowerment in society, employment and work, poverty, illiteracy, ageing, race and ethnicity, and violence in all its forms, in particular harmful attitudes and traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women, as well as the importance of investing in women's health for the well-being of women themselves and for the development of society as a whole;

6. *Recognizes* that lack of development is a major obstacle for women in many countries and that the international economic environment, through its impact on national economies, affects the capacity of many countries to provide and expand quality health services to women; further significant obstacles include competing governmental priorities and inadequate resources;

7. *Proposes*, in order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic objectives of chapter IV.C of the Beijing Platform for Action, that the following actions be taken:

**Actions to be taken by Governments, the United Nations system
and civil society, as appropriate**

(e) Design and implement programmes, with the full involvement of young people, to educate and inform them on sexual and reproductive health issues, taking into account the rights of the child to access to information, privacy, confidentiality, respect and informed consent, and the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents and legal guardians;

(f) Allocate and reallocate, where appropriate, adequate resources to put in place the necessary measures which ensure that quality health services are accessible to those women throughout their life cycle who are living in poverty, are disadvantaged or socially excluded;

(g) Increase efforts directed towards poverty eradication, by assessing the impact of broader macroeconomic policies on the feminization of poverty and on women's health; and address the health needs of those vulnerable, throughout their life span;

(h) Adopt preventive and promotional health policies at an early stage where possible in order to prevent health problems and dependence of older women and enable them to lead independent and healthy lives;

(i) Ensure that special attention is given to supporting women with disabilities, and empower them to lead independent and healthy lives;

(j) Address the need for appropriate screening services for women, within the context of national health priorities;

(k) Encourage women to practise regular sport and recreational activities which have a positive impact on women's health, well-being and fitness throughout the whole life cycle, and ensure that women enjoy equal opportunities to practise sport, use sport facilities and take part in competitions.

2. Sexual and reproductive health

(a) Accelerate efforts for the implementation of the targets established in the Beijing Platform for Action with regard to universal access to quality and affordable health services, including reproductive and sexual health, reduction of persistently high maternal mortality and infant and child mortality²⁰ and reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition and iron deficiency anaemia,²³ as well as to provide maternal and essential obstetric care, including emergency care, and implement existing and develop new strategies to prevent maternal deaths, caused by, *inter alia*, infections, malnutrition, hypertension during pregnancy, unsafe abortion²⁴ and post-partum haemorrhage, and child deaths, taking into account the Safe Motherhood Initiative;

(b) Promote and support breastfeeding unless it is medically contra-indicated, as well as implement the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative;

(c) Support scientific research into and the development of safe, affordable, effective and easily accessible female-controlled methods of family planning, including dual methods such as microbicides and female condoms that protect against both sexually transmitted diseases and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and prevent pregnancy, taking into account paragraph 96 of the report of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

²³ See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women ...*, para. 106 (w).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 106 (k).

(d) Support the development and widespread use of male contraceptive methods;

(e) Educate women and men, particularly young people, with a view to encouraging men to accept their responsibilities in matters related to sexuality, reproduction and child-rearing and to promoting equal relationships between women and men;

(f) Enhance women's ability and knowledge, and empower them to make informed choices, to prevent unwanted pregnancies;

(g) Work with the media and other sectors to encourage the development of positive attitudes about major transitions in women's and girls' reproductive lives, such as the onset of menstruation and menopause, and provide appropriate support, where needed, for women undergoing these transitions;

(h) Eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation, and other harmful traditional and customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, since such practices constitute a definite form of violence against women and girls and a serious form of violation of their human rights, including through development of appropriate policies and enactment and/or reinforcement of legislation, and ensure development

(e) Increase the preventative, as well as the therapeutic, measures against tuberculosis and malaria, and accelerate the research into the development of a vaccine against malaria, which has a harmful effect especially on pregnant women in most parts of the world, particularly in Africa;

(f) Educate, counsel and encourage men and women infected with HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases to inform their partners to help protect them from infection, and ensure that the spread of these diseases is curtailed.

4. Mental health and substance abuse

(a) Make available gender-sensitive and age-sensitive mental health services and counselling, as necessary, with particular attention to the treatment of psychiatric illness and trauma throughout the life cycle, *inter alia*, by integrating them into primary health-care systems and through appropriate referral support;

(b) Develop effective preventive and remedial health services to provide appropriate counselling and treatment for mental disorders related to stress, depression, powerlessness, marginalization and trauma since women and girls may suffer more from these ailments resulting from various forms of discrimination, violence and sexual exploitation, particularly in situations of armed conflict and displacement;

(c) Support research and dissemination of information on gender differences in the causes and effects of the use and abuse of substances, including narcotic drugs and alcohol, and develop effective gender-sensitive approaches to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, including those specifically designed for pregnant women;

(d) Design, implement and strengthen prevention programmes aimed at reducing tobacco use by women and girls; investigate the exploitation and targeting of young women by the tobacco industry; support action to prohibit tobacco advertising and access by minors to tobacco products; and support smoke-free spaces, gender-sensitive cessation programmes, and product labelling to warn of the dangers of tobacco use, noting the Tobacco Free Initiative proposed by the World Health Organization in July 1998;

(e) Promote equitable sharing of household and family responsibilities between women and men, and provide social support systems, where appropriate, to help women who, as a result of their multiple roles in the family, often may suffer from fatigue and stress;

(f) Support research on the relationship between women's and girls' physical and mental health, self-esteem and the extent to which women of all ages are valued in their societies to address issues such as substance abuse and eating disorders.

5. Occupational and environmental health

(a) Support for gender-specific research on the short- and long-term effects of the occupational and environmental health risks of work, including work in the formal and informal sector, performed by both women and men, and take effective legal and other measures to reduce these risks, including risks in the workplace, in the environment and from harmful chemicals, including pesticides, radiation, toxic waste and other such hazards that affect women's health;

(b) Protect the health of women workers in all sectors, including agricultural and domestic household workers, through effective environmental and occupational health policies for gender-sensitive work environments, free from sexual harassment

and discrimination, which are safe and ergonomically designed to prevent occupational hazards;

(c) Take specific measures to protect the health of women workers who are pregnant or have recently given birth or are breastfeeding from harmful environmental and occupational hazards, and their children;

(d) Provide full and accurate information about environmental health risks to the public, in particular to women, and take steps to ensure access to clean water, adequate sanitation and clean air.

6. Policy development, research, training and evaluation

(a) Advance a comprehensive interdisciplinary and collaborative research agenda on women's health which encompasses the entire life span of all women, including women from special and diverse groups within populations;

(b) Establish concrete accountability mechanisms at the national level for reporting on the implementation of the health and other related critical areas of the Platform for Action;

(c) Improve the collection, use and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex and age, and research findings, and develop collection methodologies that capture the differences between women's and men's life experiences, including through the use and, where necessary, further coordinated development of gender-specific qualitative and quantitative health indicators that go beyond morbidity, mortality and social indicators, capturing quality of life, social as well as mental well-being of women and girls;

(d) Promote research on the interrelationship between poverty, ageing and gender;

(e) Ensure participation of women at all levels in the planning, implementation and evaluation of health programmes; ensure also a gender perspective in the health sector at all levels, including through the elaboration of gender- and age-sensitive health policies and budgets, and the creation of an enabling environment supported by a legislative framework and monitoring, follow-up and evaluation mechanisms within individual countries;

(f) Mainstream a gender perspective into the curricula as well as the training of all health-care and service providers in order to ensure high-quality health services for women that can help eliminate discriminatory attitudes and practices by certain health professionals which impede women's access to health services; and ensure that a gender perspective is developed and applied to treatment and prevention practice in the health sector;

(g) In order to ensure that women's rights are addressed, the curricula of health-care providers should include relevant human rights topics to strengthen medical ethics and ensure that girls and women are treated with respect and dignity;

(h) Increase education and research among health service providers and users to address the unnecessary medicalization of women's health conditions;

(i) Ensure, where indicated, that clinical trials of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and other medical products include women with their full knowledge and consent and ensure that the resulting data is analysed for sex and gender differences;

- (j) Collect data concerning scientific and legal developments on human genome

²⁵ See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality

1. Actions to be taken by Governments

(a) Provide continued strong political commitment to supporting the strengthening of national machineries and the advancement of women;

assessment, based on established benchmarks, and other performance indicators and regular public reporting, including under international agreements;

(1) Provide assistance, as appropriate, to agencies including those outside government in formulating gender-sensitive performance indicators, necessary to

(w) Initiate, where necessary, gender equality legislation and create or strengthen, where appropriate, independent bodies, such as the ombudsperson and equal opportunity commission, with responsibility and authority for *inter alia*, promoting and ensuring compliance with gender equality legislation;

(x) Involve parliaments and, wherever appropriate, the judiciary in monitoring progress in gender mainstreaming and strengthening gender-related aspects of all government reporting, and ensure transparency through open and participatory dialogue and the promotion of balanced participation of women and men in all areas and at all levels of decision-making.

2. Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms

(a) Design, promote the implementation of, execute, monitor, evaluate and mobilize support for policies that promote the advancement of women and advocate gender equality and promote public debate;

(b) Act as catalysts for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes and not necessarily as agents for policy implementation. However, national machineries are partners in policy formulation and may also choose to implement and coordinate specific projects;

(c) Assist other parts of Government in taking specific actions in the gathering and disaggregation of data and the development of statistics and indicators in all critical areas of the Platform for Action for use in analysis, policy development, planning and programming;

(d) Promote research and dissemination of research findings and information on women and gender equality, including disparities of income and workload between women and men and, where appropriate, among women;

(e) Take specific actions, *inter alia*, the establishment of documentation centres, to disseminate gender-relevant data and other information, including on the important contribution of women to society and research results in easily accessible formats and places in order to promote more informed public dialogue, including through the media, on gender equality and issues pertinent to the advancement of women;

(f) Ensure the ongoing training on gender issues, at all levels, of the personnel of the national machineries to promote programme and policy sustainability;

(g) Develop, as appropriate, policies to recruit technical staff with expertise in gender equality issues;

(h) Create or strengthen collaborative links with other agencies at local, regional, national and international levels;

(i) Recognize civil society as an important source of support and legitimacy and therefore create and strengthen the relationship with civil society through regular

developed on the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data measurement

* For the discussion, see chap. VIII, paras. 9–11.

** For the discussion, see chap. VI.

3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women:
 - (a) Review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and in mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001

- (b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men;

Documentation

Report containing additional material on further actions and initiatives for the preparation of the outlook beyond the year 2000 (General Assembly resolution 52/231, para. 11)

- (c) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern.
4. Comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, on the basis of national reports, taking into account the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6, sect. III, para. 5 (f))

Comparative report on how different categories of projects and programmes of United Nations organizations are including women's interests and gender mainstreaming issues and on resources allocated in this regard (General Assembly resolution 52/231, para. 14)

5. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions.
6. Communications concerning the status of women.

Documentation

Lists of confidential and non-confidential communications concerning the status of women

7. Provisional agenda for the forty-fifth session of the Commission.
8. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-fourth session.

Draft decision III

Extraordinary meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women*

The Economic and Social Council decides:

- (a) That the Commission on the Status of Women shall resume its forty-third session, subject to the availability of services, for one day, on an exceptional basis, in order to complete

* For the discussion, see chap. VIII, para. 12.

its work;

(b) In this respect, the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 1798 (XVII) of 11 December 1962, 2128 (XX) of 20 December 1965 and 2245 (XXI) of 20 December 1966 regarding travel entitlements will be waived.

** For the discussion, see chap. II.

²⁸ See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

²⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970–973.

5. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to prepare, taking into account the information provided by States and relevant international organizations, a report on the implementation of the present resolution, for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session.

Resolution 43/2. Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recognizing that women play a vital role in the social and economic development of their countries and therefore profoundly concerned by the fact that out of 33.4 million people living with human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) today, women now represent 43 per cent of all people over the age of 15 living with HIV and AIDS,

Noting with great concern that the proportion of women becoming infected with HIV is growing in every region, that in sub-Saharan Africa there are already 6 women with HIV for every 5 men, and that in the younger age brackets (15–24 years), the HIV risk for African girls is even more disproportionate,

Recognizing that gender inequalities begin early in life and can render women and the girl child unable to protect their sexual and reproductive health, thus increasing their risk and vulnerability to HIV infection,

Mindful that the majority of women and the girl child in most developing countries do not have access to education, health care, social security and other basic services to enable them to enjoy full social and economic rights, and therefore suffer disproportionately from the consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly in the economic and social spheres,

Recognizing that women who constitute the majority of the poor are especially vulnerable to HIV infection because of their subordinate status in society, in the households and communities and because of their restricted access to education, gainful employment and health and information services,

Also recognizing that women and, in particular, young girls, are physiologically and biologically more vulnerable than men to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and yet receive minimal health care and support when infected,

Noting with concern that approximately 80 per cent of the infected women have been infected through unprotected sex with an infected male partner, and acknowledging therefore that men have a shared responsibility towards protecting their own and women's sexual health,

Acknowledging that millions of women do not have access to means that have proved effective in preventing and lowering infection rates, such as male and female condoms, anti-retroviral drugs, relevant preventive education, acceptable counselling and testing services,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and its co-sponsoring organizations, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Bank, to empower women through capacity development programmes, as well as programmes that provide women with access to development

* For the discussion, see chap. II.

resources and strengthen their networks which offer care and support to women affected by HIV/AIDS,

1. *Reaffirms* the rights of women and the girl child infected and affected by HIV/AIDS to have equal access to health, education and social services and to be protected from all forms of discrimination, stigma, abuse and neglect;

2. *Also reaffirms* the human rights of girls and women to have equal access to education, skills training and employment opportunities as a means to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection;

3. *Urges* Governments to take all necessary measures to strengthen women's economic independence, to protect and promote their human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to allow them to better protect themselves from HIV infection;

4. *Emphasizes* that the advancement and empowerment of women is critical to increasing the ability of women and young girls to protect themselves from HIV infection;

5. *Stresses* that every effort should be made by Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively, to place combating HIV/AIDS as a priority on the development agenda and to implement effective prevention strategies and programmes, especially for the most vulnerable populations, including women and young girls;

6. *Calls upon* the international community, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their

12. *Requests* Governments to ensure that condoms and care for sexually transmitted diseases are available in places accessible and affordable to women while ensuring their privacy;

13. *Welcomes*

³⁰ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 89.

violence, lack of appropriate physical and mental health care, nutrition and education or access to them, high rates of illiteracy, and the stress of multiple and conflicting roles,

Acknowledging that special attention must be given to the mental health needs of women, including those who are marginalized because of, *inter alia*, race, ethnicity, religion, age, social and economic status, physical and/or mental disability, exploitative commercial sex, displacement, migration and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS),

1. *Calls* for the urgent implementation of the health objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and other relevant international agreements with the integration of mental health as a priority issue;

2. *Requests* Governments to include in their national policies and/or plans of action for women specific measures that would address the mental health needs of women and girls, especially the need for psychosocial care and counselling services;

3. *Calls upon* Governments to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in mental health care, where it exists, and to provide access to appropriate treatment that is responsive to women's mental health needs at all ages;

4. *Invites*

and primary health care staff and to provide appropriate interventions for stress-related disorders to girls and women in crisis;

11. *Decides* to include in the framework of the review process for the special session of the General Assembly to appraise and assess progress achieved in implementation of the Beijing Programme for Action the emerging issue of the mental health of girls and women, so that further initiatives and action can be undertaken;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring this resolution to the attention of the relevant bodies of the United Nations;

13. *Invites*

³¹ E/CN.6/1999/2 and Add.1.

³² E/CN.6/1999/3.

³³ E/CN.6/1999/4.

³⁴ E/CN.6/1999/5.

Chapter II

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

1. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 1st to 8th, 10th, 13th, 14th and 17th meetings, from 1 to 4 and on 8, 11 and 12 March and 1 April 1999. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/CN.6/1999/2 and Add.1);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Gender and ageing: problems, perceptions and policies (E/CN.6/1999/3);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the thematic issues before the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/1999/4);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (E/CN.6/1999/5);

(e) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a report by the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/166 (E/CN.6/1999/6);

(f) Letter dated 16 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations transmitting two documents concerning the work of the Council of Europe in the fields of equality between women and men and gender mainstreaming (E/CN.6/1999/7);

(g) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the results of the twentieth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (E/CN.6/1999/CRP.1);

(h) Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work in the field

(p) Statement submitted by the Global Alliance for Women's Health, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Council (E/CN.6/1999/NGO/7).

2. At its 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Commission heard an introductory statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

3. At the same meeting, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women made a statement.

4. Also at the same meeting, the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women made a statement.

15. Also at the same meeting, the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women made a statement.

16. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the representatives of the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic

³⁵ In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan

35. At the 13th meeting, on 11 March, the representative of the United States of America, on behalf of Argentina,³⁵ Australia,³⁵ Austria,³⁵ Belgium, Bulgaria,³⁵ Canada,³⁵ Chile, Denmark,³⁵ the Dominican Republic, Ecuador,³⁵ Finland,³⁵ France, Germany, Ghana, Greece,³⁵ Ireland,³⁵ Israel,³⁵ Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan,³⁵ Lithuania, Luxembourg,³⁵ the Netherlands,³⁵ New Zealand,³⁵ Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal,³⁵ the Republic of Moldova,³⁵ Romania,³⁵ Slovakia, South Africa,³⁵ Spain,³⁵ Sweden,³⁵ Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, introduced a draft resolution entitled “Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan” (E/CN.6/1999/L.7). Subsequently, Costa Rica,³⁵ Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia,³⁵ Cyprus, Czech Republic,³⁵ Hungary,³⁵ Iceland,³⁵ Kenya, Malaysia, the Philippines,³⁵ Poland and Slovenia³⁵ joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

36. At the 17th meeting, on 1 April, the representative of the United States of America orally revised operative paragraph 8 of the draft resolution as a result of informal consultations by inserting the words “within Afghanistan” after the words “into all United Nations programmes”.

37. At the same meeting, Colombia, Georgia, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Nepal, the Russian Federation and Venezuela joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, as orally revised.

38. Following a statement by the representative of Germany (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union and associated countries, as well as Cyprus, Iceland and Liechtenstein), the Commission approved the draft resolution, as orally revised, and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for adoption (see chap. I, sect. B, draft resolution I).

Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups

39. At the 13th meeting, on 11 March, the observer for the Philippines,³⁵ on behalf of Chile, Ecuador,³⁵ Georgia,³⁵ Ghana, Guatemala,³⁵ Indonesia,³⁵ Kenya,³⁵ Namibia,³⁵ Panama,³⁵ Peru, the Philippines,³⁵ Senegal, Thailand, Venezuela³⁵ and Zambia,³⁵ introduced a draft resolution entitled “Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups” (E/CN.6/1999/L.8),

³⁶ See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 89.

“*Upholding* the importance of attaining full mental health for all people, as recognized in General Assembly resolution 46/119 of 17 December 1991, entitled ‘The protection of persons with mental illness and the improvement of mental health care’,

“*Welcoming* the strong commitments to women and mental health made by the Director General of the World Health Organization at the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women,

“*Concerned* that depression affects women twice as often as men, owing, among other factors, to the imposed inferior social and economic status of women and girls throughout the world,

“*Concerned also* that women throughout their life cycle experience tremendous health burdens created by gender discrimination; all forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence; lack of appropriate physical and mental health care, nutrition and education or access to them; high rates of illiteracy; and the stress of multiple and conflicting roles,

“*Acknowledging* that special attention must be given to the mental health needs of women, including those who are marginalized because of, *inter alia*, race, ethnicity, religion, age, social and economic status, physical and/or mental disability, exploitative commercial sex, displacement, migration and HIV/AIDS,

“1. *Calls* for the urgent implementation of the health objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and other relevant international agreements with the integration of mental health as a priority issue;

“2. *Requests* Governments to include in their national policies and plans of action for women specific measures that would address the mental health needs of women and girls, especially the need for psychosocial care and counselling services;

“3. *Calls upon* Governments to take all possible steps to eliminate

“9. *Requests* the relevant United Nations bodies, in collaboration with relevant agencies, to adopt measures and develop projects that address and support the mental health needs of women and girls;

“10. *Calls upon* the United Nations to develop and disseminate a training manual designed to provide primary health care workers, social service professionals, and other community workers with the appropriate skills for assisting women and girls who are experiencing problems and mental disorders as a result of trauma, all forms of discrimination, exploitation, abuse and oppression;

“11. *Urges* the Secretary-General to find ways within the United Nations and in coordination with other relevant agencies to organize regional expert group meetings with a view to developing gender- and age-disaggregated and gender-sensitive psychosocial and mental health situation analyses and indicators as bases for determining progress in women’s and girls’ emotional well-being and mental health, for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session;

“12. *Invites* concerned non-governmental organizations, funding sources and the private sector to support and develop a programme that will bring a wide range of expertise and proven interventions to the training of local community workers, teachers and primary health care staff and provide appropriate interventions for stress-related disorders to girls and women in crisis;

“13. *Decides* to include in the framework of the review process for the special session of the General Assembly to appraise and assess progress achieved in implementation of the Beijing Programme for Action the emerging issue of mental health of girls and women, so that further initiatives and action can be undertaken;

“14. *Invites* States Members and United Nations agencies concerned to report on existing measures relevant to the present resolution, and/or taken to implement it, for consideration by the Commission at its forty-fourth session.”

40. At the 14th meeting, on 12 March, statements were made by the Secretary of the Commission and the observer for the Philippines.

41. At the 17th meeting, on 1 April, the Commission had before it a revised draft resolution entitled “Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups” (E/CN.6/1999/L.8/Rev.1), submitted by the sponsors of draft resolution E/CN.6/1999/L.8 as well as Colombia,³⁷ and Papua New Guinea.³⁸

42. At the same meeting, the observer for the Philippines informed the Commission that Senegal should be deleted from the list of sponsors of the revised draft resolution.

43. Also at the same meeting, Ethiopia joined in sponsoring the revised draft resolution.

44. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representative of the Sudan and the observer for Algeria.

45. The Commission then adopted the revised draft resolution (see chap. I, sect. D, resolution 43/3).

³⁸ In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

³⁹ Saint Lucia was not present during the vote.

⁴⁰ The delegations of Bolivia and Côte d'Ivoire subsequently indicated that their votes should have been

perspective is integrated in all activities and that senior managers get appropriate assistance from gender experts or gender focal points”.

54. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft agreed conclusions, as orally

Chapter III

Initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and preparation for the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000

1. The Commission held a general discussion of agenda item 4, together with agenda item 3 (b), at its 1st to 4th meetings, from 1 to 3 March 1999. It had before it a letter dated 25 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations transmitting the report of the European Conference on Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action (E/CN.6/1999/9) (for the discussion, see chap. II).
2. Action taken by the Commission under agenda item 4 is detailed in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” on its second session (E/1999/60).

Chapter IV

Communications concerning the status of women

1. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 12th meeting (a closed meeting), on 10 March 1999.
2. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/27, the Commission

“16. The Working Group noted with concern remaining discriminatory provisions against women in national legal systems.

“17. The Working Group took note of cases referring to difficulties for women in exercising their right to nationality, citizenship and the right to family unity.

Chapter V

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention

1. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 15th meeting, on 12 March 1999.

Action taken by the Commission

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional

would be provided at the time of the entry into force of the optional protocol. In the meantime, no additional requirements would be necessary.”

8. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the draft resolution and revised draft optional protocol for adoption by the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (see chap. I, sect. A).
9. Also at the same meeting, the Chairperson of the Commission made a statement.
10. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.
11. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of India, Japan, Germany (on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, as well as Cyprus, Iceland and Liechtenstein), Norway, the Republic of Korea, Ghana, the Russian Federation, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Turkey, Senegal, Mongolia, Rwanda and Mali, and by the observers for New Zealand, the Philippines, Luxembourg, Bangladesh, Slovenia, Iraq and Yemen.
12. At the same meeting, statements were made by the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, Marcela Maria Nicodemos (Brazil) and by the Chairperson of the Working Group.

Chapter VI

Provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Commission

1. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at its 17th meeting, on 1 April 1999. It had before it a note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda and documentation for the forty-fourth session of the Commission (E/CN.6/1999/L.12).
2. At the same meeting, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women made a statement.
3. The Commission then approved the provisional agenda and documentation for its forty-fourth session (see chap. I, sect. C, draft decision II).

Chapter VII

Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-third session

1. At the 17th meeting, on 1 April 1999, the Chairperson of the Commission introduced

Chapter VIII

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-third session at United Nations Headquarters from 1 to 12 March 1999 and 1 April. The Commission held 17 meetings (1st to 17th). In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1997/227, the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women also met during the session.

2. The session was opened by the Chairperson, Patricia Flor (Germany), who also made a statement.

B. Attendance

3. The session was attended by representatives of 44 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations, non-member States and entities maintaining permanent observer missions to the United Nations, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system, and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. A list of participants is contained in annex III to the present report.

C. Election of officers

4. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/21, the officers elected

3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women:
 - (a) Review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system;
 - (b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men;

and Social Council for adoption, which would allow the Commission to hold an additional meeting for one day in order to complete its work (see chap. I, sect. C, draft decision III).

Annex I

Summaries of the panel discussions on the critical areas of concern

A. Women and health: moderator's summary

1. On 3 March 1999, the Commission held a panel discussion at its 5th meeting, followed by a dialogue at its 6th meeting, on women and health, one of the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action adopted at Beijing. The panellists were Sandra Dean-Patterson (Bahamas), Coordinator of Health Social Services, Ministry of Housing and Social Development; Mahmoud F. Fathalla (Egypt), Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Assiut University; Stephen Matlin (United Kingdom), Director of Human Resource Development Division, Commonwealth secretariat; and Peter Piot, Executive Director of the Joint and Co-

legalization of abortion in her country and expanded services has considerably reduced maternal deaths resulting from induced abortions. Another representative said that the development of medical technology has led to the over-treatment of pregnancy and childbirth

in women's health. Several representatives informed the panel about modifications to the legal frameworks in their countries, which are beneficial to women's health. They relate to health insurance, patients' rights, health-care and social security systems. Progress was noted by several representatives in the collection of health statistics disaggregated by sex and age and the development of gender-specific indicators on health. The next step, as one representative pointed out, is the development of gender-specific indicators on quality of life and social and mental well-being.

12. Special emphasis was put on the importance of mainstreaming the gender perspective into all fields of health. This includes a focus on the role of men and the importance of partnership, in particular in reproductive health. A gender perspective should be integrated into medical education and research. This would also lead to changes in the health sector at the decision-making level, where women are still not a decisive presence. There is a need

national machineries may choose to engage in direct implementation of policies and specific projects. It was pointed out that their role in gender mainstreaming does not preclude the need for projects specific to women.

17. National machineries should adopt a participatory approach rather than playing a prescriptive role, and should decentralize their activities so as to ensure that the needs of their constituencies and the interests of the majority of women of all classes from all sectors, especially those living in poverty in both rural and urban areas, are addressed.

18. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, policies and programmes specifically targeting institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women have been adopted and implemented in many countries. National legislation has been reviewed and modified in several countries to allow for the integration of gender mainstreaming into all policies and programmes and to ensure the elimination of gender discriminatory legislation.

25. The need for systematic collection and analysis of statistical data on unremunerated work

7. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Liechtenstein, Romania, Japan, Canada, Norway, Lesotho, New Zealand, Ecuador, Australia, Zimbabwe, Switzerland, Turkey, the Philippines, Mexico, Algeria, Slovenia, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Egypt, Costa Rica, China, Sri Lanka, Ghana, India, the United States of America, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic.

8. Also at the same meeting, the Deputy Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women made a statement.

General exchange of views

9. At the 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Working Group, at the invitation of the Chairperson, held a general exchange of views on agenda item 6 of the Commission.

10. Delegations recalled that the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the General Assembly would be commemorated in December 1999. They considered that the adoption by consensus of the optional protocol would be a fitting way to commemorate this event, especially as 163 States were already parties to the Convention. It would also represent a concrete follow-up to the Platform for Action, which had called for the preparation of an optional protocol and for the Convention's universal ratification by the year 2000.

11. Delegations stressed that the optional protocol would strengthen implementation of the Convention and of the human rights of women. Delegations called for the completion of an instrument that would be effective and accessible to women, and would reflect the specificity of the Convention and the real situation of women, as well as of women's experiences of violations of human rights. They noted that in finalizing the optional protocol, the Working Group should be guided by principles including effectiveness for women, consistency with existing human rights instruments and the practice developed thereunder, the requirement of its practicality in the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the need for its clarity as a legal instrument.

12. Many delegations suggested that both a communications as well as an inquiry procedure should be included in the optional protocol, and that the range among those who could lodge complaints should be broad. Many delegations also noted that a specific provision prohibiting reservations to the optional protocol should be included. At the same time, it was stressed that the optional protocol should be accessible to the largest number of States parties. Delegations expressed confidence that the flexibility of all negotiating partners would ensure the successful conclusion of the work of the Working Group.

13. At the 2nd meeting, on 11 March 1999, interpretative statements were made by the representatives of Japan, Ghana (also on behalf of Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), the Philippines, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Egypt, New Zealand, Algeria, Canada, Senegal, Cameroon, Germany (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the associated country Cyprus as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country Switzerland and the EFTA countries members of the European Economic Area (EEA), Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), Mali, Austria, Jordan, Denmark (also on behalf of Finland, Iceland and Norway) and Morocco.

14. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women.

15. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.
16. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of a number of non-governmental organizations.
17. At the 3rd meeting, on 11 March, interpretative statements were made by the representatives of the Netherlands, Costa Rica (also on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela), India, Tunisia, Italy, Cuba, Israel, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (also on behalf of Sweden).
18. At the same meeting, general statements were made by the representatives of Germany (on behalf of the Western European and Other States Group), Australia, Spain and Mexico.
19. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in her capacity as a resource person in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/227 of 21 July 1997.
20. At the same meeting, a statement was made by a representative of a non-governmental organization.

Action taken by the Working Group

Draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

21. At the 2nd meeting, on 11 March, the Working Group had before it the text of the revised draft optional protocol (E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.2), submitted by the Chairman on the basis of informal consultations held on the compilation text contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-second session (E/1998/27), and the text

“Therefore, the Austrian delegation takes the view that the Committee will accept communications concerning each and every substantive provision set forth in the Convention and will examine whether the State party has taken all necessary steps to fulfill the obligations as stipulated in the Convention. Thus, the Committee — in interpreting the term ‘rights’ referred to in article 2 of the optional protocol — could use as source of inspiration the case law of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

“Furthermore, the Austrian delegation is of the opinion that — during its

“Article 2 should ensure that victims will be able to submit communications to the Committee under that article, at the same time, it should also prevent totally irrelevant persons from taking advantage of the special situation of the victims for their own purposes by acting in the name of the victims. The delegation of China, therefore, is of the opinion that the will of the victims should be fully respected, and that their representatives, if any, should be from the same country as the victims.

“On Article 4:

“It is the general practice that politically motivated communications are inadmissible in other communication procedures concerning human rights in the framework of the United Nations. That is an important principle to protect human rights properly. And this principle should be equally applied to communication procedures under this protocol. In this respect, the delegation of China is of the opinion that the phrase of ‘an abuse of the right to submit a communication’ contained in subparagraph

“1. As regards article 2, it is our understanding that, when communications are submitted ‘on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals’, a broad-based approach will be taken in determining who will be entitled to submit such communications, in order to ensure effective access to justice;

“2. With respect to the question of consent, referred to in the second part of article 2, we assume that the personal, social and cultural conditions of women who have suffered the alleged violation of their rights will be taken into account;

“3. We take it that the term ‘violation’ in the first sentence of article 2 refers to omissions as well as acts of the State party. The same interpretation holds true for article 8;

“4. In article 4, the rule of exhaustion of domestic remedies will be understood

realization and promotion of the human rights of women by putting an end to discrimination against women in all its forms.

“Regarding article 9, paragraph 2, it is our view that the term ‘inform’ should be understood as a part of a process of interaction between the States Parties and the Committee under the inquiry procedure.”

Egypt

“The delegation of Egypt hopes that the adoption of the draft optional protocol will be an important step in promoting the role of the General Assembly of the United Nations in enhancing the rule of law in the international community and in strengthening the rights of women at the threshold of the third millennium. At the same time, Egypt’s delegation would like on this important occasion to state a number of positions of principle in the clearest possible terms.

“1. With regard to article 2, the delegation of Egypt stresses that allowing the submission of communications on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals, as this article does, must be conditional on their being exceptional and compelling circumstances in which it is not possible to obtain the consent of the victim to the

“(b) We, the delegations referred to above, in accordance with general principles of International Law, understand the reference to ‘violation’ in the first sentence of article 2 and the reference to ‘violations’ in the first paragraph of article 8 of any of the

counsel, the author should normally be a party involved in the process of seeking domestic jurisdiction. At any rate, the party should be able to demonstrate a standing association with the society concerned. We would interpret 'consent' as not acting contrary to the wishes of the victim and without violating her right to privacy should she so desire.

“In article 4 (1), ‘unreasonably prolonged’ should be interpreted in the light of

that there do exist other channels of communication outside of the optional protocol, such as procedure 1503 of the Commission on Human Rights, which do not call for the consent of the victims.

“We do recognize that there are situations which may arise where the consent of the victims cannot be obtained and there is need for application of the optional protocol. In such event, my delegation is of the view that interpretation of such events should be in conformity with the rules of procedure of existing human rights treaty bodies, namely the rules of procedure of the Human Rights Committee, rule 90 (b), the rules of procedure of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, rule 91 (b), and the rules of procedure of the Committee against Torture, rule 107 (1) (b).

“With regard to article 11, my delegation would like to note that it is in line with Indonesia’s proactive policy in dealing with the promotion and protection of the human rights of women. The Government of Indonesia is committed to the protection of victims who come forward, through its draft legislation for witness protection which is now in the final stage of completion. In addition to that legislative measure, the Government of Indonesia, within the framework of technical cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at Geneva, will implement witness protection programme for the officials of the Office of the Attorney General

“We consider the protocol an historical achievement, because it gives women an important instrument to exercise their recognized human rights, even if my delegation would have preferred a stronger optional protocol.

“We are confident that the Committee jurisprudence will be open to a developing

compromise, my delegation did not want to break consensus but stresses that the adoption of article 17 should not constitute a precedent in the future.”

Morocco

“The Moroccan delegation stresses that the interpretation of the provisions of the Protocol will be subordinated to absolute respect for the sovereignty of Morocco and its moral and spiritual values and to the compatibility of those provisions with the Constitution of Morocco.”

Netherlands

- Risk of ill treatment, intimidation or reprisals.

Where a complaint is made on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals, such complaints may be made by NGOs such as women's groups and human rights organizations which are already protecting and defending women's human rights on the ground in many countries.

"2. On article 8 (1), we understand the term 'grave' to be distinct from systemic and imposes no higher standard than 'serious' violations.

"3. In both article 2, and 8 (1) we interpret violation of any rights set forth in the Convention as inclusive of all of the provisions and obligations under the Convention as a whole and not parts of it, namely articles 2-16 and enunciated in article 24 of the Convention.

"My delegation has always felt that although all of us here are representing our Governments, it is really on behalf of the women in our respective countries, especially the most marginalized, vulnerable, oppressed and silenced women, that we are dedicating this work on the optional protocol. Finally, let me express my delegation's grateful thanks and appreciation to the women's groups and NGOs that have been with us all these years, giving us both valuable information and inspiration to carry on."

Russian Federation

"The delegation of the Russian Federation has joined the consensus on the draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

"At the same time, we believe that retaining the current wording of article 17 will render ratification of the optional protocol by a large number of States difficult, thereby significantly reducing the effectiveness of this international instrument, which must really protect the rights of women on a universal basis."

Tunisia

"I should like, on behalf of my country, to convey our warm thanks to the Working Group and its Chairperson, as well as to the Coordinator, for the efforts made by one and all to ensure agreement on the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

"While Tunisia stresses the importance of the protocol in promoting the rights of women and ensuring respect for such rights in practice in order to bring parity and equality of opportunity, it considers that the protocol can only be ratified within the framework of respect for constitutional legality in each country and for each country's national sovereignty.

"I request that this statement be included in the record of the meeting."

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (also on behalf of Sweden)

"I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegation of the United Kingdom and also on behalf of the delegation of Sweden.

"We understand article 6, paragraph 1, of the protocol to mean that in cases where the individual or individuals refuse consent to the disclosure of their identity to the State Party, the Committee may not continue to consider their communication under articles 2 to 7 of the protocol.

“The Committee may, of course, take into account the information received with the communication, if it is relevant to its other functions, for example those under article 8 of the protocol and under article 20 of the Convention.

* * *

“The representative of Germany made a statement earlier today on behalf of all the member States of the European Union and the Central and Eastern European

India

Kamalesh Sharma, Kiran Aggarwal, Mridula Sinha, Gautam

Senegal	Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, Ibra Deguène Ka, Mankeur Ndiaye, Maïmouna Diop, Khady Fall Ndiaye, Maïmouna Sourang Ndir, Mame Bassine Niang, Maty Diaw, Mame Dieynaba Leye, Fatou Alamine Lo, Khardiata Lo Ndiaye
Slovakia	Daniela Rozgoňová, Eva Kimliková, Zuzana Vranová,

Non-member States represented by observers

Holy See, Switzerland

Entity maintaining a permanent observer mission to the United Nations

Palestine

United Nations

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Joint and Co-Sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Development Fund for Women

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Intellectual Property Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Intergovernmental organizations represented by observers

Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Council of Europe, European Community, International Organization for Migration, Organization of American States, Organization of the Islamic Conference

Non-governmental organizations

A large number of non-governmental organizations that either are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or had been accredited to the Fourth World Conference on Women also attended the session

Annex IV

List of documents before the Commission at its forty-third session

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
E/CN.6/1999/1	2	Provisional agenda and annotations
E/CN.6/1999/2 and Add.1	3 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
E/CN.6/1999/3	3 (b)	Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Gender and ageing: problems, perceptions and policies"
E/CN.6/1999/4	3 (c)	Report of the Secretary-General on the thematic issues before the Commission on the Status of Women
E/CN.6/1999/5	3 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat
E/CN.6/1999/6	3 (a)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a report by the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/166 on the role of the Fund in eliminating violence against women
E/CN.6/1999/7	3 (c)	Letter dated 16 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations transmitting two documents concerning the work of the Council of Europe in the fields of equality between women and men and gender mainstreaming
E/CN.6/1999/8	2	Letter dated 9 February 1999 from the President of the Economic and Social Council transmitting an excerpt from Council resolution 1999/1
E/CN.6/1999/9	4	Letter dated 25 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations transmitting the report of the European Conference on Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.1	6	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the results of the twentieth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.2	3 (a)	Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work in the field of advancement of women for the biennium 2000–2001
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.3	3 (a)	Note by the Secretary-General containing a preliminary executive summary of the 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.4	3 (c)	Summary submitted by the moderator of the panel discussion on women and health (Ms. Patricia Flor)
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.5	5	Report of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women
E/CN.6/1999/CRP.6	3 (c)	Summary submitted by the moderator of the panel discussion on institutional mechanisms (Ms. Nonhlanhla P. L. Mlangeni)
E/CN.6/1999/L.1	2	Note by the Secretariat on the status of documentation for the session
E/CN.6/1999/L.2 and Rev.1	3 (c)	Draft and revised draft agreed conclusions on women and health submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission
E/CN.6/1999/L.3 and Rev.1	3 (c)	Draft and revised draft agreed conclusions on institutional mechanisms submitted by the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission
E/CN.6/1999/L.4	8	Draft report of the Commission on its forty-third session
E/CN.6/1999/L.5	3 (a)	Draft resolution entitled "Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts", submitted by Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Ecuador, Georgia, Guatemala, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, South Africa, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe
E/CN.6/1999/L.6	3 (c)	Draft resolution entitled "Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome", submitted by Zambia on behalf of the Group of African States
E/CN.6/1999/L.7	3 (a)	Draft resolution entitled "Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan", submitted by Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America
E/CN.6/1999/L.8	3 (c)	Draft resolution entitled "Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups", submitted by Kenya, Panama, Philippines, Thailand and Zambia

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
E/CN.6/1999/L.8/Rev.1	3 (c)	Revised draft resolution submitted by Botswana, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Namibia, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Thailand, Ukraine, Venezuela and Zambia
E/CN.6/1999/L.9	3 (c)	Draft resolution entitled "Palestinian women", submitted by Guyana on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China
E/CN.6/1999/L.10	3 (a)	Draft resolution entitled "System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002–2005", submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission
E/CN.6/1999/L.11	2	Draft decision entitled "Enabling the Commission on the

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
E/CN.6/1999/WG/L.3	6	Draft resolution, entitled “Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women”, submitted by the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention, Aloisia Wörgetter (Austria), on the basis of informal consultations
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/1	3 (c)	Statement submitted by the International Federation of University Women, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/2	3 (b)	Statement submitted by the International Federation on Ageing, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
E/CN.6/1999/NGO/3	3 (b)	Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, a non-governmental organization in