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**Commission on the Status of Women**

**Forty-eighth session**

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions**

**Resources mobilization and enabling environment for  
poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of  
the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries  
for the Decade 2001-2010**

**Note by the Secretariat**

*Summary*

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2001/27 of 26 July 2001, invited its functional commissions to provide concise, action-oriented inputs to its



## **I. Background**

1. Poverty eradication, including in the least developed countries, has been an issue of concern to the international community for several decades and remains at the forefront of national and international development agendas. The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Brussels on 20 May 2001,<sup>1</sup> “builds on the outcomes of recent major United Nations conferences and summits in the specific context of least developed countries and adopts ways and means of their application to address the particular problems facing those countries” (para. 3). The overarching goal of the Brussels Programme of Action is to achieve substantial progress towards meeting the Millennium Declaration Goal of

led to a reduction in social expenditures, thereby adversely affecting women, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries. This is exacerbated when responsibilities for basic social services have shifted from Governments to women” (para. 18).

5. The Platform for Action also addressed the least developed countries in relation to women and health, which is critical for poverty eradication:

“In many countries, especially developing countries, in particular the

in particular the least developed countries, have resulted in the acceleration of the feminization of poverty and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty.<sup>6</sup>

9. The General Assembly has furthermore highlighted that although globalization and liberalization processes have created employment opportunities for women in many countries, they have made women, especially in developing countries and in particular in the least developed countries, more vulnerable to problems caused by increased economic volatility.<sup>7</sup>

10. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 40/9, entitled "Implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical area of concern: poverty", adopted at its fortieth session, recognized that more women than men lived in absolute poverty and that the imbalance was on the increase, resulting in limited access of women to income, resources, education, health care, nutrition, shelter and safe water in all developing countries, particularly in Africa and in the least developed countries.<sup>8</sup>

11. The Commission further stressed that the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, should play a central role in enhancing the financial and technical support and assistance for developing countries, particularly African countries and least developed countries, in their efforts to achieve the objectives of the eradication of poverty and the full integration of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, as set forth in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, particularly the goal of the eradication of poverty.<sup>9</sup>

12. In its agreed conclusions on "Women and the economy", adopted at its forty-first session, the Commission on the Status of Women highlighted that the international community, in particular the creditor countries and international financial institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions, should further pursue effective, equitable, development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of the developing countries on the basis of existing debt-forgiveness procedures.<sup>10</sup>

should cooperate more to ensure the continuing promotion of the advancement of women (Platform for Action, para. 338);

(b) International financial institutions, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the regional development banks, should be invited to examine their grants and lending and to allocate loans and grants to programmes for implementing the Platform for Action in developing countries, especially in Africa and the least developed countries (ibid., para. 354);

(c) The United Nations system should provide technical cooperation and

reduction of overall poverty and on the eradication of absolute poverty, with targets, benchmarks for monitoring and proposals for allocation and reallocation of resources for implementation, including resources for undertaking gender impact analysis; where necessary the support of the international community could be enlisted, including resources (para. 7).

17. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/193 of 18 December 1997, reaffirmed that all Governments and the United Nations system should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective and use gender analysis as a tool for the integration of a gender dimension into the planning and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes on poverty eradication (para. 4).

18. The General Assembly, in its resolution 58/206 of 23 December 2003, entitled "Women in development", urged all Governments and international organizations, including the United Nations system, to incorporate a gender perspective in their planning and evaluation, inter alia, in common country assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist (para. 32).

#### **A. Poverty and rural women**

19. The Beijing Platform for Action noted that, "while poverty affects households as a whole, because of the gender division of labour and responsibilities for household welfare, women bear a disproportionate burden, attempting to manage household consumption and production under conditions of increasing scarcity. Poverty is particularly acute for women living in rural households" (para. 50). It also established gender mainstreaming as a critical strategy for the promotion of gender equality, including in relation to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

20. A number of recommendations aimed at creating an enabling environment for improving the situation of rural women, are outlined below:

(a) ... attach greater importance to the improvement of the situation of rural women in their national, regional and global development strategies by, inter alia:

- Creating an enabling environment for improving the situation of rural women, including integrating a gender perspective in macroeconomic policies and developing appropriate social support systems (General Assembly resolution 56/129, para. 6 (a));
- Integrating a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes with an emphasis on reducing the disproportionate number of rural women living in poverty (ibid., para. 6 (g));

(b) Mobilize all parties involved in the development process, including academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and grass-roots and women's groups, to improve the effectiveness of anti-poverty programmes directed towards the poorest and most disadvantaged group of women, such as rural and indigenous women, female heads of household, young women and older women, refugees and





(a) Pursue and implement sound and stable macroeconomic and sectoral policies that are designed and monitored with the full and equal participation of women, encourage broad-based sustained economic growth, address the structural causes of poverty and are geared towards eradicating poverty and reducing gender-based inequality within the overall framework of achieving people-centred sustainable development (Platform for Action, para. 58 (c));

(b) Generate economic policies that have a positive impact on the employment and income of women workers in both the formal and informal sectors and adopt specific measures to address women's unemployment, in particular their long-term unemployment (*ibid.*, para. 58 (h));

(c) Provide adequate safety nets and strengthen State-based and community-based support systems, as an integral part of social policy, in order to enable women living in poverty to withstand adverse economic environments and preserve their livelihood, assets and revenues in times of crisis (*ibid.*, para. 58 (g));

(d) Develop and implement anti-poverty programmes, including employment schemes, that improve access to food for women living in poverty, including through the use of appropriate pricing and distribution mechanisms (*ibid.*, para. 58 (j));

(e) Enable women to obtain affordable housing and access to land by, among other things, removing all obstacles to access, with special emphasis on meeting the needs of women, especially those living in poverty and female heads of household (*ibid.*, para. 58 (m));

(f) Ensure access to free or low-cost legal services, including legal literacy, especially designed to reach women living in poverty (*ibid.*, para. 58 (p));

(g) Design and strengthen poverty eradication strategies, with the full and

macroeconomic policies, efficient management of public revenue and expenditure, better allocation of resources and incentives and a solid framework to implement stabilization or economic reform programmes.

24. The Beijing Platform for Action called for a gender-perspective-based analysis of policies and programmes, including those related to macroeconomic stability, structural adjustment, external debt problems, taxation, investments, employment, markets and all relevant sectors of the economy, with respect to their impact on poverty, on inequality and particularly on women (para. 58 (b)). The Platform for Action further highlighted the need to seek to mobilize new and additional financial resources that are both adequate and predictable and mobilized in a way that





- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., para. 15.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 1997, *Supplement No. 7* (E/1997/27), chap. I.C.1, agreed conclusions 1997/3, para. 21.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 2001, *Supplement No. 7* (E/2001/27), chap. I.A., sect. IV, draft resolution IV, agreed conclusions A, sect. 4 (c).
- <sup>12</sup> General Assembly resolution S-23/3, para. 101 (i); see also agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women (note 11 above).
- <sup>13</sup> Commission on the Status of Women resolution 40/9 (note 8 above), para. 9 (h).
- <sup>14</sup> General Assembly resolution 56/188, para. 19. See also agreed conclusions 46/1 of the Commission on the Status of Women, *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 7* (E/2002/27), chap. I.A, sect. III, draft resolution III, sect. A, para. 5 (cc); and General Assembly resolution S-23/3, para. 8.
- <sup>15</sup> See note 8.
- <sup>16</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 7* (E/2002/27), chap. I.A, sect. III, draft resolution III, sect. A.
- <sup>17</sup> *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.
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