



Distr.  
LIMITED

LC/L.2976/Rev.1  
23 April 2009

ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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**PROPOSALS BY THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE  
ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN  
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Brasilia, 13-16 July 2010

## CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
1.	What is the Regional Conference?.....	1
2.	Who convenes the sessions of the Regional Conference? .....	1
3.	Place and date of the session of the Regional Conference .....	2
4.	Participants in the sessions of the Regional Conference.....	2
5.	The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference .....	3
6.	The background to the eleventh session of the Regional Conference .....	3
7.	Objectives of the eleventh session of the Regional Conference.....	4
8.	Draft annotated index of the position paper for the eleventh session of the Regional Conference.....	4
9.	Sources for the preparation of the position paper for the Regional Conference.....	8
10.	Organization of the eleventh session of the Regional Conference .....	9
11.	Participation of civil society.....	9
12.	Side events .....	10
Annex 1	Questionnaire to governments on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) for preparation of regional review and appraisals in the context of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2010.....	11
Annex 2	Guidance on issues to be considered in responses.....	14

## 1. What is the Regional Conference?

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is a subsidiary body of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) which is convened on a regular basis to identify women's needs at the regional and subregional levels, present recommendations, undertake periodic assessments of the activities carried out in fulfilment of regional and international plans and agreements on the subject, and serve as a forum for discussion of relevant issues. The eleventh session of the Regional Conference is being organized in the framework of the international review process of the commitments entered into at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Summit.

### Permanent auxiliary bodies of ECLAC:

The Commission, which holds a session once every two years, has established the following permanent bodies:

- Committee of the Whole
- Committee of High-level Government Experts
- Central American Economic Cooperation Committee
- Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
- Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Regional Council for Planning
- Statistical Conference of the Americas

To date, the member States of ECLAC have held 10 regional conferences on the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean. The locations and dates of these sessions were as follows: Havana (1977); Macuto, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (1979); Mexico City (1983); Guatemala City (1988); Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles (1991); Mar del Plata, Argentina (1994); Santiago, Chile (1997); Lima (2000); Mexico City (2004); and Quito (2007).<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Who convenes the sessions of the Regional Conference?

ECLAC has the mandate to invite member States to be represented at sessions of the Regional Conference.<sup>2</sup> This mandate was ratified in 1996 by Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6

<sup>1</sup> The member States of ECLAC are: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States and Uruguay. The following territories are associate members of ECLAC: Anguilla, Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands.

<sup>2</sup> ECLAC mandates regarding activities oriented towards the women of the region are primarily set forth in the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development (ECLAC, 1977), adopted by the member States at the eleventh special meeting of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC on 21 November 1977, and in the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001 (ECLAC/United Nations Development Fund for Women, 1995), which was approved

entitled “Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women”, which “Recommends that the regional follow-up and monitoring of the regional platforms and programmes of action should be utilized as inputs for the review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;” and “Recommends also that the Council consider how best to integrate the inputs of regional commissions into the overall monitoring and follow-up to the Platform for Action”.<sup>3</sup>

In accordance with the corresponding regulations, no later than six weeks prior to each session of the Regional Conference, the office of the Executive Secretary of ECLAC sends invitations to the member States and associate members of the Commission to participate in the deliberations. Other Member States of the United Nations and representatives of other bodies and programmes of the United Nations system are invited to attend as observers, as are representatives of intergovernmental organizations and of nongovernmental organizations enjoying consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and special guests.

### **3. Place and date of the session of the Regional Conference**

Generally, a member country of ECLAC offers to host the session of the Regional Conference. On this occasion, the Government of Brazil will host the meeting, which has tentatively been scheduled for 13-16 July 2010 in Brasilia.

### **4. Participants in the sessions of the Regional Conference**

The sessions of the Regional Conference are attended by the member States and associate members of the Commission, as well as by observers with consultative status.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, the sessions are attended by observers from United Nations programmes and funds,<sup>5</sup> specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies,<sup>6</sup> intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations holding category I or category II consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.<sup>7</sup> In the interests of the member States, ECLAC has also traditionally invited other

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by the member States at the sixth session of the Regional Conference and adopted by ECLAC resolution 558(XXVI).

<sup>3</sup> See [online] <http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/ECOSOC/resolutions/E-RES-1996-6.doc>.

<sup>4</sup> Member States of the United Nations which do not belong to the Commission and States which are not members of the United Nations have consultative status and attend as observers.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Food Programme (WFP).

<sup>6</sup> These bodies include the World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO).

<sup>7</sup> Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Latin American Social Sciences Council (CLACSO), Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Inter-American

institutions which are in a position to provide valuable inputs in their fields. In extending such invitations, priority is given to regional or subregional organizations.

### **5. The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference**

The Regional Conference elects its Presiding Officers at the beginning of each session. For this purpose, the heads of delegation are invited to a meeting prior to the opening of the regular session. The Presiding Officers generally include a Chairperson (this office is usually held by the host country), two Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur. The members chosen to serve as Presiding Officers continue to do so until their successors are elected.<sup>8</sup>

The member States elect the Presiding Officers for each session of the Conference in accordance with the principles of rotation of duties and of appropriate representation of the various subregions. In order to maintain a permanent mechanism for action, it was established in the Regional Plan of Action that the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference would continue their work during the intervals between sessions of the Conference and would serve as a liaison between the Governments and the secretariat of ECLAC with regard to the integration of women into development.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, the Presiding Officers have met twice a year for the past decade and have held 41 such meetings since 1978.

### **6. The background to the eleventh session of the Regional Conference**

The eleventh session of the Regional Conference will be held at a time when the world is feeling the impact of the economic and financial crisis which began in 2008. The review of the agreements adopted at world conferences will take place against the background of a crisis which, according to many studies and forecasts, will add to the obstacles to the fulfilment of international commitments on human rights and the environment and of the Millennium Development Goals themselves.

The eleventh session will see the completion of the follow-up to a number of processes which began in the 1990s. 2009 will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, and in 2010 it will be the turn of the Fourth World Conference on Women, together with the tenth anniversary of the Millennium Summit and the second anniversary of the Secretary-General's worldwide campaign to eliminate violence against women.

The holding of the eleventh session will be preceded in March 2010 by the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, when government authorities will come together to review progress in relation to the Fourth World Conference on Women, with special attention to the situation of women in the five regions of the world.

The frame of reference for this review process will include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (New York, 2000), the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth

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Institute of Human Rights (IIDH), Organization of American States (OAS), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Latin American Parliament.

<sup>8</sup> Article 16 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission.

<sup>9</sup> See ECLAC, Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development (E/CEPAL/1042/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1997, article 88, paragraph 2.

World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995),<sup>10</sup> the international commitments relating to the advancement of women adopted by the world summits held in the 1990s,<sup>11</sup> and the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean adopted at the sixth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mar del Plata, 1994) and ratified by the Lima Consensus (2000), the Mexico City Consensus (2004) and the Quito Consensus (2007).

At their forty-second meeting, held in Santiago on 4 and 5 December 2008, the Presiding Officers recommended that discussions at the eleventh session should be linked to the conclusions of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, to be held in March 2010.<sup>12</sup>

### **7. Objectives of the eleventh session of the Regional Conference**

The eleventh session of the Regional Conference will undertake to consider achievements and challenges in the region for the achievement of gender equality, with emphasis on women's autonomy and economic empowerment, on the basis of an assessment of the main progress and challenges in the fulfilment of the commitments entered into at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and regional conferences on women. The following strategic issues are proposed for discussion:

1. What types of economic development and democracy are necessary for achieving gender equality?
2. What public policies promote gender equality in the context of the growth and development models of the countries of the region?

### **8. Draft annotated index of the position paper for the eleventh session of the Regional Conference**

Pursuant to the agreements concluded at the forty-second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, 4-5 December 2008), the ECLAC secretariat presents a draft annotated index of the position paper for the eleventh session of the

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<sup>10</sup> See Beijing Platform for Action, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> World Summit for Children (New York, 1990); United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992); World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993); International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994); World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> See draft resolution E/CN.6/2009/L.4, adopted at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women: "1. *Decides* to review, at its fifty-fourth session, the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session, of the General Assembly, entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace', emphasizing the sharing of experiences and good practices, with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges, including those related to the Millennium Development Goals; 2. *Requests* the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women, in preparation for the fifty-fourth session of the Commission, to hold informal consultations with all member States and Observer States of the Commission on the modalities of the review with a view to agreeing on its format and outcome; 3. *Decides* to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in this regard recommends, through the Economic and Social Council, that the General Assembly hold a commemorative meeting during the fifty-fourth session of the Commission in March 2010."

Regional Conference (Brasilia, July 2010). The proposed title for the document is “*Latin America and the Caribbean after the crisis: What State for what equality?*”.<sup>13</sup>

This document will comprise two main sections, corresponding to (i) an analysis of gender equality in the area of economic and employment development since the holding of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and (ii) a proposal for public policies with a rights-based approach in order to achieve gender equality.

### **Introduction**

The introduction will summarize the main conclusions to be developed in the document and the key ideas underlying them, with particular attention to the role of the State and public policies on equality in the region. It also identifies the main achievements and challenges on which a future agenda will be based.

### **Section 1**

#### **REVIEW OF ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

##### **1. Conceptual framework**

The analytical approach to be adopted in the document will be based on an analysis of economic development from an integrated and integrating rights-based approach in order to study relationships between the State, the market and society. This approach will include an analysis of sociocultural obstacles to gender equality, taking into account the following:

(a) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, particularly article 5 of that Convention, which calls upon States parties to take all appropriate measures to “modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women”;

(b) Strategic objective F.1 of the Beijing Platform for Action, which states that “Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy” aiming, among other things, to “Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources”; and

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<sup>13</sup> See ECLAC (2009). In agreement 14, the Presiding Officers agreed to “accept with satisfaction the topics proposed for consideration at that session of the Conference, namely, the economic empowerment of women, income distribution, employability and shared family responsibilities” and, in agreement 18, they requested ECLAC to send “a new version of the proposal for the organization of the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean”.

(c) Strategic Area VI of the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, which identifies the following as an area for priority action: “Promoting more equitable sharing of family responsibilities between women and men”.

## **2. Analysis of the situation of women**

The document will analyse the level of gender equality in three sections:

(a) A review of the advances achieved in economic and employment policies, on the basis of Governments' responses to the questionnaire sent by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations<sup>14</sup> on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) for the preparation of regional assessments and examinations to be held in 2010, marking the fifteenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(b) A regional analysis on the basis of the indicators adopted by Governments at the forty-second meeting of the Presiding Officers (Santiago, 4-5 December 2008) to be monitored by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean;

(c) An analysis of gender inequalities in the world of work in the region since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action.<sup>15</sup> This will review the main aspects of the relationship between economics, social equality and gender equality, with a systematized approach to the available data, on the basis of household and time-use surveys in the region.<sup>16</sup> Also taken into account will be the relationship between income distribution, employment, access to resources and shared family responsibilities differentiated by sex and income quintile.

## **3. Analysis of economic policies in the region**

In formulating the review of economic and employment policies, this section will focus particularly on the right to work, the right to equal pay and benefits and the right to equal pay for work of equal value, analysing the measures adopted by States to eliminate discrimination in the economic and social spheres in order to ensure the enjoyment of those rights in conditions of equality between men and women.

Particular attention will be given to the labour market and commerce, in areas including promotion and support for women own-account workers, land ownership, creation of small enterprises, and improvement of women's access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of credit, access to capital in conditions which are appropriate and equal to those offered to men, and the right to participate in financial decision-making, taking into account the specific problems facing rural women and their major role as family breadwinners, which includes their work in unpaid sectors of the economy.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See annex 1.

<sup>15</sup> The definition of total work is related to the sum of hours (per day, per week) devoted to paid work and to hours devoted to unpaid domestic work, by sex.

<sup>16</sup> See [www.eclac.cl/mujer](http://www.eclac.cl/mujer).

<sup>17</sup> See article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

#### **4. Impact of the financial crisis on women's total work**

The fourth area to be considered is the impact of the worldwide situation and the current crisis on women's employment. This area will include the financial crisis, new technologies and free-trade agreements. In order to correlate the information received from current development models in the region, comparative data will be classified according to the current-account status and the composition of public debt in each country in Latin America and the Caribbean, in light of the public policies identified in the previous section.

Also included in the analysis will be the outcome of the expert meeting entitled "Analysis of the financial crisis from the gender viewpoint: understanding its impact on women's labour", to be held in Mexico City on 23 and 24 July 2009. Also taken into account will be the recommendations of the expert meeting on employment opportunities and the use of new technologies for women, to be held in Santo Domingo in the second half of 2009.

Particular focus will be placed on the consequences of the economic crisis for the care economy and employment, as well as the impact of the food crisis on women's labour, particularly for those living in rural areas, and strategies for overcoming inequalities.

#### **5. Review of the mainstreaming of policies with a crosscutting gender perspective in State structures in the countries of the region**

Results will be presented from the comparative studies on gender institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean conducted by the Division for Gender Affairs, in the framework of two parallel projects: the substantive studies of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, with financial support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the worldwide study on national mechanisms for gender equity, executed by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations in coordination with the regional commissions, with financial support from the Government of Italy.

## **Section 2**

### **PROPOSED STRUCTURAL POLICIES FOR EQUALITY**

#### **1. Gender mainstreaming in times of crisis and beyond**

This section will present the best practices identified by the analysis, in the form of recommendations for policies and institutional mechanisms. It will identify proposals for coordinating women's financial, physical and political autonomy, with particular attention to policies in the economic area.

#### **2. Employment and labour policies**

Policy proposals will be formulated and analysed, together with the best practices that have already been implemented in countries in the region and which are oriented towards ensuring access for women to economic autonomy in conditions of equality with men, particularly in the context of the

financial crisis and its impact on gender equity and equality. Particular emphasis will be placed on women's access to resources, employment, markets and commerce, by means including promotion and support for women own-account workers, land ownership, creation of small enterprises, and improvement of women's access to credit and to capital in conditions which are appropriate and equal to those offered to men, and the right to participate in financial decision-making.<sup>18</sup>

### **3. Policies on shared family responsibilities**

Policy proposals will be formulated and analysed, oriented towards women's labour rights and the right to care and social protection as key elements for obtaining gender equality.

Both sections will take into account for purposes of policy formulation the structural diversity observed in the countries of the region, as described in the first part of the document, together with the cultural obstacles to equality identified throughout the present analysis.

## **9. Sources for the preparation of the position paper for the Regional Conference**

The position paper for the Regional Conference will be prepared by the secretariat of ECLAC on the basis of the following input:

1. World survey on the role of women in development 2009, on women's access to economic and financial resources.
2. Responses to the questionnaire that the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations, through ECLAC, has sent to Governments in order to prepare a regional report, which will highlight the main achievements and challenges in this area and will be submitted for consideration by the Governments in the framework of the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women to be held in March 2010 in New York. This report will provide the main input for the analysis of the regional situation to be conducted at the eleventh session of the Regional Conference.
3. The preliminary findings of the Gender Equality Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean.
4. Specialized studies by ECLAC and other United Nations bodies, as well as academic institutions in the region.
5. Comments by member States of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on preliminary versions of the document, presented at their forty-third and forty-fourth meetings, to be held in June 2009 and at the end of the second half of 2009, respectively.
6. Conclusions and recommendations of the expert meeting entitled "Analysis of the financial crisis from the gender viewpoint: understanding its impact on women's labour" (Mexico City, 23 and 24 July 2009).

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<sup>18</sup> Beijing Platform for Action, paragraph 166 (a).

7. Recommendations of the expert meeting on employment opportunities and the use of new technologies for women, to be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in the second half of 2009.

### **10. Organization of the eleventh session of the Regional Conference**

The eleventh session of the Regional Conference is to be the culmination of a process. The Commission on the Status of Women will identify the region's most important achievements and challenges at its fifty-fourth session in March 2010. Three months later, at the eleventh session of the Regional Conference, the region's Governments will focus on the formulation of policies and strategies that can be implemented in a changing global context.

The four-day programme for the session of the Regional Conference usually comprises one day for a plenary meeting (including the opening ceremony and the election of the Presiding Officers); two days for the presentation of reports; and one day for the drafting of agreements and the adoption of a consensus.

The secretariat proposes that the programme for the first day of the eleventh session of the Regional Conference consist of a single plenary meeting including an opening ceremony, attended by the President of Brazil, which would have a high political profile and full media coverage, and a high-level panel which may include prominent leaders from the region. This panel may consider the conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women and propose specific measures for implementation in the region in the short, medium and long terms.

The new Presiding Officers would also be elected on the first day.

The reports on the activities of the secretariat and of Governments, which are normally presented at the session of the Regional Conference, could be submitted earlier, possibly through virtual media, to provide more time for the analysis of proposals. The complete versions of the reports would then be published on the website of the Regional Conference.

### **11. Participation by civil society**

Non-governmental organizations may participate in the session of the Regional Conference as follows:

- By organizing an independent meeting prior or parallel to the session of the Regional Conference and preparing a statement or proposals for presentation during the session.
- As members of national delegations. This must be organized at the country level and be approved by the Governments concerned.
- As organizations with consultative status at the United Nations, in accordance with the rules of the Economic and Social Council.
- As observers specially invited by ECLAC, in the case of regional or subregional networks that are recognized for their work in implementing the Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Beijing Platform for Action.

## **12. Side events**

Side events are conducted under the responsibility of United Nations bodies, in cooperation with other entities that specialize in the topics related to the Conference, and in coordination with the secretariat.

### **Enquiries:**

Sonia Montaña, Officer-in-charge, Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC, ([sonia.montano@cepal.org](mailto:sonia.montano@cepal.org))

Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC, ([dag@cepal.org](mailto:dag@cepal.org))

[www.eclac.cl/mujer](http://www.eclac.cl/mujer)

## Annex 1

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO GOVERNMENTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING  
DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION (1995) AND THE OUTCOME  
OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(2000) FOR PREPARATION OF REGIONAL REVIEW AND APPRAISALS  
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 15<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION  
OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM  
FOR ACTION IN 2010**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The United Nations regional commissions will carry out a review and appraisal of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), in preparation for the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2010. The regional commissions will collaborate with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in this process.

The review and appraisal of progress will cover the five-year period between the responses submitted by Member States to the questionnaire in 2004 and the end of 2009. It will identify achievements, gaps and challenges and provide an indication of areas where actions and initiatives are most urgent to further implementation.

In preparing the review and appraisal of progress, the regional commissions will utilize the responses of Member States to this questionnaire. In addition, a variety of sources of information and statistics will be drawn upon, including reports submitted by States parties under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; information generated in the context of the Commission on the Status of Women; regional action plans and national reports to regional bodies; as well as and the outcomes of expert group meetings and other activities at regional level. Other sources of information include Common Country Assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, (CCA/UNDAFs), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, (PRSPs), national Human Development Reports and national Millennium Development Goal (MDG) reports.

**II. THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The questionnaire consists of four parts. Member States are requesting to provide information on efforts made and progress achieved since the most recent review and appraisal in 2005.

In Part One, reporting States are invited to highlight major overall achievements and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Responses in Part One of the questionnaire should be no longer than three pages.

In Part Two of the questionnaire, reporting states are encouraged to provide specific examples of achievements, including policy development, legislative change, advocacy, awareness-raising, capacity-development and programmes and projects which they have undertaken on implementation in the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action (except for critical area H which is covered in Part Three), as well as areas requiring further initiative and action identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Obstacles and remaining gaps and challenges in relation to the critical areas of concern should also be identified and a summary of lessons learned provided. Response to Part Two of the questionnaire should be no longer than 10 pages.

Part Three focuses on institutional development or those structures and measures countries have put in place to support promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. It covers the critical area of concern H in the Platform for Action: Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, and chapters V on Institutional Arrangements and VI on Financial Arrangements, as well as actions identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Information on national machineries, capacity-building programmes for line ministries, resource allocation, statistics and indicators, monitoring and accountability mechanisms and partnerships should be described in this section. Responses to Part Three of the questionnaire should be four pages in length.

In Part Four respondents are invited to provide information on the remaining key challenges and constraints in the reporting States, as well as any plans for future actions and initiatives to address these and to ensure full implementation of the Platform for Action in each of the critical areas of concern. Reporting States are encouraged, in particular, to indicate any new commitments they will make to accelerate implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly at national level over the next five years. Responses to Part Four of the questionnaire should be no longer than three pages.

The annex provides some examples of issues which could be covered under each part of the questionnaire. These examples are provided as guidance only. Reporting States are not required to cover all these issues but should focus on issues which are most relevant in their national contexts. Additional issues not included in the annex can also be raised in the responses.

### **III. METHODOLOGICAL NOTE**

The information being sought through the questionnaire is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Emphasis is placed on implementation, and reporting States are urged, as far as possible, to provide concrete information on impacts of initiatives and activities described. Activities and outputs and actions should be differentiated from achievements and impacts on the situation of women and on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. Reporting States are encouraged to provide quantitative data, disaggregated by sex and age, or to indicate where such data has already been submitted in other contexts. Countries wishing to provide information on indicators used at the national level to monitor activities for gender equality and empowerment of women may do so. Reporting States are also urged to provide information on the specific time periods for initiatives and actions taken.

For guidance, a list of reports submitted by Member States to the United Nations Secretariat prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), and the ten-year review and appraisal in the Commission on the Status of Women (2005), as well as the most recent reports submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of

Discrimination against Women, can be found on the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw>).

#### **IV. SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES**

Responses to this questionnaire should be sent in both hard copy and electronic format in one of the six official United Nations languages, no later than 31 March 2009 to the relevant regional commissions:

**Economic Commission for Africa**

African Centre for Women,  
P.O. Box 3001 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Contact: Thokozile Ruzvidzo, Officer in Charge  
African Centre for Gender and Social Development  
Fax: (251-1) 5 51-2785  
E.mail: [truzvidz@uneca.org](mailto:truzvidz@uneca.org)

**Economic Commission for Europe**

Palais des Nations 1211, Geneva, Switzerland  
Contact: Ewa Ruminska-Zimny, Senior Social Affairs Officer  
Office of the Executive Secretary  
Fax: (41-22) 917-0036  
E.mail: [Ewa.Zimny@unece.org](mailto:Ewa.Zimny@unece.org)

**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**

Women and Development Unit  
Casilla 179-D, Santiago, Chile  
Contact: Sonia Montano Director a.i.  
Division for Gender Affairs  
Fax: (56-2) 208-0252  
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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

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## Annex 2

**GUIDANCE ON ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN RESPONSES**

The examples below are provided as guidance only. Reporting States are not required to cover these issues but should focus on issues which are most relevant in their national contexts. Additional issues not included in the annex can also be raised in the responses.

**Part One: Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (3 pages)**

Please note that the response to Part One of the questionnaire should contain highlights of achievements and challenges. The issues raised in this part can be discussed in more detail in responses to other parts of the questionnaire. For example, issues related to globalization would be discussed in more details under Part Two of the questionnaire and issues on gender-responsive budgeting would be discussed under Part Three.

Guiding questions: The response could, for example, address the following issues and questions:

*(a) Has a national policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women been adopted and at what level? Was a strategy or plan of action developed to support the implementation of the policy? What mechanisms were established for monitoring and how are different actors held accountable for its implementation? Is there a national coordination mechanism at the highest level to ensure that the policy is implemented in all sector areas?*

*(b) What impact does the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, have on the promotion of gender equality? How is implementation of the Convention progressing?*

*(c) What are the main legislative and policy-making achievements in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment over the past decade? Please provide details.*

*(d) To what extent have gender perspectives and the concerns of women been taken into account in preparation of budgets at national, regional and local levels? Has this resulted in increased resources for gender equality? Describe efforts to increase and track budgetary allocations related to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women. Have gender-responsive budgeting procedures been introduced and to what effect?*

*(e) To what extent are the Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs) utilized as the national framework for development? What attention is given to Goal 3 on gender equality? Is national-level data available to effectively monitor the achievement of the targets under MDG3? Are gender perspectives and the concerns of women considered in all other MDG goals?*

*(f) Provide information on major government policy discussions and/or parliamentary debates where gender perspectives and the concerns of women have been taken systematically into account and resulted in policy and/or programmatic changes. What recent major reforms have taken place in the country where these perspectives were taken into account? What major*

*problems are being debated in the country where the perspective of women and gender equality are considered as an integral part of the overall debate?*

*(g) In countries emerging from armed conflict, to what extent were women involved, and gender perspectives and women's concerns included, in peace negotiations and in planning of reconstruction efforts?*

*(h) How has globalization (for example, the use of ICT, market liberalization, changes in trading patterns, etc) affected the empowerment of women and girls and the promotion of gender equality? What efforts are being made to reduce potential risks and to build on opportunities for women?*

*(i) In which sector areas have specific policies, strategies and/or action plans for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment been developed and implemented? To what extent are gender perspectives and the concerns of women routinely taken into account in legislation, policy making and programme development in other sectors, so that inequalities and gaps are identified and addressed?*

*(j) What types of significant partnerships have been established with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups, as well as the private sector and other stakeholders, in support of different aspects of national efforts on gender equality and empowerment of women —through for example, advocacy, participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes and service delivery?*

*(k) What efforts have been made to actively engage men and boys in the promotion of gender equality, including for example in eliminating violence against women and combating HIV/AIDS? What successes have been achieved and what constraints have been identified?*

*(l) What is the impact of climate change and food and energy crises on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women? What steps are being taken to reduce the potential risks for and impact on women and to engage women effectively in prevention and mitigation processes? Have social protection measures been put in place to reduce the impact on women and have measures been adopted to support women farmers?*

*m) What is the impact of the financial crisis on the promotion of gender equality? What measures have been taken to reduce the negative impact on women's access to resources, income and social protection? To what extent have measures to revive growth mobilized women's economic potential?*

**Part Two: Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (10 pages)**

*Please organize the response to this part of the questionnaire according the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (except for critical area H which is covered in Part Three of the questionnaire).*

Guiding questions: The response within each critical area of concern could address, but does not need to be limited to, the issues outlined below:

A. Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects

(a) *In relation to the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action and other key issues, what successful actions (such as legal measures, policy reforms, media campaigns, and pilot programmes or projects) have been taken by the Government or other actors (NGOs, civil society, the private sector) to achieve these objectives. Please provide concrete examples.*

(b) *To what extent have specific commitments on the critical areas of concern—for example in terms of resource allocation, legislative change and policy and programme development—made by the Government at the Fourth World Conference on Women or in other contexts, been met?*

B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

(c) *Describe the obstacles, gaps and challenges encountered in implementation of the critical areas of concern and other key issues identified.*

C. Lessons learned

(d) *Provide information on the main lessons learned in implementation in relation to each of the critical areas of concern and other key issues identified.*

(e) *Provide concrete examples of successful interventions and explain why these were judged to be successful? Describe any effort to replicate these efforts.*

**Part Three: Institutional development (4 Pages)**

Guiding questions: The response could address, but does not need to be limited to, the issues outlined below:

(a) *What national mechanisms exist for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women—for example, ministry, national commission, parliamentary committee or commission? What mandates and resources does each body have and have these increased in the review period? How do these bodies work together? Describe the location of the national mechanisms and the access to decision-making processes. What networks have been established and how effective are these networks? What resources do the national mechanisms have in terms of staff and financial support? What percentage of financial resources comes from international or bilateral donors or other external sources?*

(b) *Have focal points for gender equality and empowerment of women been established within line ministries, and in which ministries? What support is provided from within the ministries? What support (training, advice etc.) is provided by the national machinery? How effective are these focal points?*

*(c) What monitoring mechanisms have been established to measure progress in implementation—in relation to national policies, strategies and action plans as well as international commitments? How is accountability for promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women established across all ministries? How is coordination achieved? What role does the highest level of Government play?*

*(d) What levels of capacity for promoting gender mainstreaming have been achieved? Through which mechanisms? What are the remaining challenges in the area of capacity building?*

*(e) Has a core set of indicators been established and where is responsibility for monitoring located? What gaps and challenges remain in relation to data and statistics? In which areas is lack of sex-disaggregation still a problem? In which areas do new types of data need to be collected? To what extent are the national statistical office and the statistical units in line ministries aware, committed and capable of providing the required data? In which sectors, and to what extent, is sex-disaggregated data being used effectively to inform policy-making and planning?*

*(f) Provide information on the roles of different stakeholders. For example, what role does Parliament play in the promotion and monitoring of gender equality and women's empowerment? How could this role be strengthened? Describe the role of NGOs in planning and implementing the follow-up activities. Do NGOs participate formally in the mechanisms established to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women and support reporting on and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)?*

**Part Four: Remaining challenges and actions to address them (3 pages)**

***Provide information on areas requiring future action.***

*(a) List any further actions and initiatives which the Government intends to take to fully implement the Platform for Action and outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly beyond 2010.*

*(b) Describe the priority areas that have been identified for improving implementation in the next five years.*

*(c) Give examples of measures (with targets and timeframes) which will be taken in each of these areas.*

*(d) Outline explicit new commitments that will be made to accelerate implementation?*