

Commission on the Status of Women

**Report on the sixtieth session
(20 March 2015 and 14-24 March 2016)**



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Summary

At its sixtieth session, the Commission on the Status of Women, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/18, considered as its priority theme “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development”. It also considered as its review theme “The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls”, evaluating progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from its fifty-seventh session.

Based on its new methods of work, adopted by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 2015/6, the session included a ministerial segment comprised of four ministerial round tables, one interactive dialogue among ministers, consideration of the review theme and a general discussion. As called for in its new methods of work, the consideration of the review theme included, for the first time, presentations, on a voluntary basis, by 10 member States from different regions on lessons learned, challenges and best practices, and means for accelerated implementation to eliminate and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls. In addition, 11 Member States presented their efforts on the implementation of the agreed conclusions through short interventions. The Commission also held two interactive expert panel discussions on the priority theme, one of which focused on key strategies for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the other on participation and partnerships for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An expert panel discussion held in conjunction with the review theme reflected on ways to support and achieve accelerated implementation, including through addressing data gaps and challenges in the enhanced collection, reporting, use and analysis of data with regard to the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. The Commission did not discuss emerging issues, trends, focus areas and new approaches to questions affecting the situation of women, including equality between women and men.

The Commission adopted agreed conclusions on the priority theme. They included references to existing commitments and areas and issues, as well as actors, of importance in the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Commission urges all stakeholders to take action in the following five areas:

- (a) Strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks;
- (b) Fostering enabling environments for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;
- (c) Strengthening women’s leadership and women’s full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development;
- (d) Strengthening gender-responsive data collection, follow-up and review processes;
- (e) Enhancing national institutional arrangements.

The Commission called on the United Nations system and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to support gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also affirmed that it will contribute to the thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals taking place in the context of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and exercise its catalytic role for gender mainstreaming, so as to ensure that follow-up and review processes benefit all women and girls and contribute to the full realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030.

The work of the Commission on the priority theme and its agreed conclusions constitute an input to the work of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum.

In addition, the Commission adopted the following:

(a) A resolution entitled “Multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women”, for action by the Economic and Social Council;

(b) By a recorded vote, a resolution entitled “Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women”, for action by the Economic and Social Council;

(c) A decision for adoption by the Council, entitled “Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its sixtieth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the sixty-first session of the Commission”;

(d) A resolution entitled “Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts”;

(e) A resolution entitled “Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS”.

The Commission further decided to take note of the report of its Working Group on Communications and to include it in the present report in its entirety.

continue to address the issue of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts and its consequences;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including relevant practical recommendations, taking into account the information provided by States and relevant international organizations;

18. *Decides* to consider the question at its sixty-second session.

Resolution 60/2
Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS*

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹ and the outcomes of its reviews, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women,² the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,³ the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development⁴ and the key actions for its further implementation and the outcomes of its reviews, the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁵ the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women;⁶ the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS,⁷ Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 on women and peace and security and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁸ including the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the resolve of Member States to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030,

Noting with deep concern that the global HIV epidemic disproportionately affects women and girls and acknowledging the progress achieved in the realization of Goal 6 of the Millennium Development Goals, halting and reversing the spread of HIV where the global response to HIV has averted millions of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths since 2000, when the Goals were set,

Recognizing the need to intensify efforts to end the AIDS epidemic through fast-tracking the HIV response across the prevention and treatment continuum, including in the context of the 90-90-90 targets of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and acknowledging the specific vulnerabilities of adolescent and young girls and women owing to, inter alia, unequal power relations in society between women and men, boys and girls,

* For the discussion, see chap. III.

¹ *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, annexes I and II.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

³ General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

⁴ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

⁶ General Assembly resolution 48/104.

⁷ General Assembly resolution 65/277, annex.

⁸ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

Acknowledging that prevention, treatment, care and support for people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS are mutually reinforcing elements of an effective response that must be integrated into a comprehensive multisectoral gender responsive approach to end the AIDS epidemic,

Noting with concern that regulations, policies and practices, including those that limit the legitimate trade in generic medicines, may seriously limit access to affordable HIV treatment and other pharmaceutical products in low- and middle-income countries, recognizing that improvements can be made, inter alia through national legislation, regulatory policy and supply chain management, and noting that reductions in barriers to affordable products could be explored in order to expand access to affordable and good-quality HIV prevention products, diagnostics, medicine and treatment commodities for HIV, including for opportunistic infections and co-infections,

Stressing that gender equality and the political, civil, social, economic and cultural empowerment of women and girls, as well as the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, are fundamental in the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development,

Stressing also that the lack of protection and promotion of the human rights of all women and their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, and insufficient access to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, aggravates the impact of the AIDS epidemic especially among women and girls, increasing their vulnerability and endangering the survival of present and future generations,

Recognizing that children and adolescents are more likely to be lost to care and that those on antiretroviral medication are less likely than adults to reach viral load suppression and that there are many challenges in diagnosing and treating infants, children and adolescents,

Stressing the value and importance of social protection for the most vulnerable in achieving universal health coverage that comprises universal and equitable access to quality health services and ensures affordable and quality service delivery to people living with HIV, including women and children, and making sure that universal health coverage also promotes HIV/AIDS responses,

Recognizing that over 13.3 million children have lost one or two parents to HIV and AIDS and that those children have complex needs pertaining to protection, care and support and that they may be at increased risk of infection, as well as at increased risk of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of Member States and the United Nations system to end all forms of violence against women and children, in particular the girl child, including the Secretary General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" and the "HeForShe" campaign,

Deeply concerned that all forms of violence against women and girls, discrimination and harmful practices are among key contributing factors to the spread of HIV among women and girls,

Deeply concerned also by the increased vulnerability to HIV infection faced by women and girls living with disabilities resulting from, inter alia, legal and economic inequalities, sexual and gender-based violence, discrimination and violations of their rights,

Noting with concern that populations destabilized by armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, internally displaced persons, refugees and, in particular, women and children, especially girls, are at increased risk of HIV infection,

Recognizing that women and girls are more vulnerable to HIV infection and that they bear a disproportionate burden of the impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, including the care of and support for those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, and that this negatively affects the enjoyment of their human rights, including the right to health,

Recognizing also that access to quality education and information and the retention of girls in school are critical elements in the prevention of HIV infection among women and girls,

Acknowledging the leadership of governments, in cooperation with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and other specialized agencies of the United Nations, the international donor community and financing mechanisms, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, in increasing domestic and international resources to support programmes that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to address HIV and AIDS,

Welcoming the leadership and commitment shown in all aspects of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including in the HIV and AIDS response, by governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and people living with HIV, including through the African Union road map on shared responsibility and global solidarity for AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria response in Africa,

1. *Calls upon* governments, international partners and civil society to give full attention to the high levels of new HIV infections among young women and adolescent girls and its root causes, bearing in mind that women and girls are physiologically more vulnerable to HIV, especially at an earlier age, than men and boys, and that this is increased by discrimination and all forms of violence against women, girls and adolescents, including sexual exploitation and harmful practices;

2. *Calls upon* Member States to intensify efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all spheres of life, recognizing that structural gender inequalities, discrimination, violence against women and girls and harmful masculinities undermine effective HIV responses and the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls;

3. *Calls upon* all governments to enact and intensify the implementation of laws, policies and strategies to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls in the public and private spheres and harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and trafficking in persons, and ensure the full engagement of men and boys in order to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV;

4. *Also calls upon* all governments to intensify efforts to reduce the particularly high levels of HIV infection among women and girls, who epidemiological evidence shows are at higher risk, by reducing barriers to their participation in HIV prevention and care, where possible, as well as removing barriers to their full participation in society, and by addressing practices such as trafficking in persons that contribute to HIV risk and the social marginalization of women and girls;

5. *Further calls upon* all governments to ensure a just and equitable world for women and girls, including through partnering with men and boys, as an important strategy for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

6. *Calls upon* all governments to promote universal health coverage, as part of a comprehensive social protection package, which implies that all people have equal access, without discrimination of any kind, to nationally determined sets of the quality promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative basic health services needed and to essential, safe, affordable, effective and quality medicines, especially through the promotion of primary health care, while ensuring that the use of those services does not expose the users to financial hardship, with a specific emphasis on women, children and the poor, vulnerable and marginalized segments of the population;

7. *Urges* Member States to adopt and implement measures that promote access to, retention in and completion of education by girls, including catch-up and literacy education for those who did not receive formal education, special initiatives for keeping girls in school through post-primary education, including those who are already married or pregnant, or caring for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, and adopt social protection measures as protective strategies to reduce new HIV infections among young women and girls;

8. *Calls upon* Member States to address gender-based HIV-related stigma and discrimination against and among women and girls, so as to ensure the dignity, rights and privacy of women and girls living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, including in education, training and informal education and the workplace;

9. *Urges* governments to eliminate gender inequalities and gender-based abuse and violence, increase the capacity of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection, principally through the provision of health care and services, including, inter alia, sexual and reproductive health care, as well as full access to comprehensive information and education, ensure that women can exercise their right to have control over, and decide freely and responsibly on, matters related to their sexuality,

including their sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, in order to increase their ability to protect themselves from HIV infection, and take all necessary measures to create an enabling environment for the empowerment of women and strengthen their economic independence and, in that context, reiterates the importance of the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality;

10. *Calls upon* Member States to recognize women's contribution to the economy and their active participation in caring for people living with HIV and AIDS and recognize, redistribute and value women's unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, the promotion of equal sharing of responsibilities with men and boys, and social protection targeted at women and girls who are vulnerable;

11. *Calls upon* governments to accelerate efforts to scale up scientifically accurate age-appropriate comprehensive education, relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men, in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, with information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem, informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills and develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to enable them to protect themselves from HIV infection;

12. *Also calls upon* governments to take concrete long-term measures to achieve universal access to comprehensive HIV prevention, programmes, treatment, care and support for all women and girls and to remove all barriers to achieving universal health coverage and improve access to integrated sexual reproductive health-care services, information, voluntary counselling and testing and commodities, while building the capacity of adolescent girls and boys, young women and men to protect themselves from HIV infection and enabling their use of available commodities, including female and male condoms, post-exposure prophylaxis and pre-exposure prophylaxis, while seeking to avoid risk-taking behaviour and encouraging responsible sexual behaviour;

13. *Urges* governments to commit to remove before 2030, obstacles that limit the capacity of low- and middle-income countries to provide affordable and effective HIV prevention and treatment products, diagnostics, medicines and commodities and other pharmaceutical products, as well as treatment for opportunistic infections and co-infections, and to reduce the costs associated with lifelong chronic care, including by amending national laws and regulations, so as to:

(a) Optimize the use to the full extent of existing flexibilities under the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights specifically geared to promoting access to and trade in medicines and, while recognizing the importance of the intellectual property rights regime in contributing to a more effective AIDS response, ensure that intellectual property rights provisions in trade agreements do not undermine those existing flexibilities, as confirmed in

the Doha Declaration on the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and Public Health, and call for early acceptance of the amendment to article 31 of the Agreement adopted by the General Council of the World Trade Organization in its decision of 6 December 2005;

(b) Address barriers, regulations, policies and practices that prevent access to affordable HIV treatment by promoting generic competition, in order to help to reduce the costs associated with lifelong chronic care and by encouraging all States to apply measures and procedures for enforcing intellectual property rights in such a manner as to avoid creating barriers to the legitimate trade in medicines and to provide for safeguards against the abuse of such measures and procedures;

(c) Encourage the voluntary use, where appropriate, of new mechanisms such as partnerships, tiered pricing, open-source sharing of patents and patent pools benefiting all developing countries, including through entities such as the Medicines Patent Pool, to help to reduce treatment costs and encourage development of new HIV treatment formulations, including HIV medicines and point-of-care diagnostics, in particular for children;

14. *Calls upon* governments and stakeholders to uphold commitments to eliminate mother-to-child transmission and keep mothers alive, including through integrating HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, including confidential voluntary counselling and testing and elimination of mother-to-child/vertical transmission, with other primary health-care services, especially sexual and reproductive health-care services, and through means to prevent new infections among women and adolescent girls of reproductive age and the provision of sexual and reproductive health-care services and lifelong antiretroviral medication for women and girls living with HIV;

15. *Also calls upon* governments and stakeholders to intensify combination prevention initiatives for women and girls for the prevention of new infections and to reverse the spread of HIV and reduce maternal mortality;

16. *Urges* governments and stakeholders to address the increased vulnerability to HIV faced by older women and women and girls with disabilities, ensuring their equal access to prevention, treatment, care and support, as an integral part of their HIV and AIDS response;

17. *Stresses* the importance of governments, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and other United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes in developing and implementing strategies to improve infant HIV diagnosis, including through access to diagnostics at the point of care, significantly increasing and improving access to treatment for children and adolescents living with HIV, including access to prophylaxis and treatments for opportunistic infections, and promoting a smooth transition from paediatric to adult treatment and related support and services, while taking into account the need to put in place programmes focused on delivering services to HIV-negative children born to women living with HIV, as they are still at high risk of morbidity and mortality, and developing actions to limit post-delivery transmission through breastfeeding through the provision of information and education;

18. *Calls upon* governments and stakeholders to prioritize gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in all policies and programmes related to populations destabilized by armed conflict, including refugees, internally displaced persons and, in particular, women and children, who are at increased risk of HIV infection;

19. *Urges* governments to increase political commitment and domestic financing to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through national HIV and AIDS responses targeting women and girls that respect, promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for women and girls, including in the context of the HIV epidemic, and promote equal economic opportunities and decent work for women and girls;

20. *Also urges* governments to promote the active and meaningful participation, contribution and leadership of women and girls living with HIV, civil society actors, the private sector, youth and young men and women's organizations, in addressing the problem of HIV and AIDS in all its aspects, including promoting a gender-responsive approach to the national response;

21. *Requests* governments, the private sector, the international donor community and funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations to intensify financial and technical support for national efforts to end AIDS and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, focused on women and girls affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic, and also to intensify financial and technical support for mainstreaming gender and human rights perspectives in policies, planning, programmes, monitoring and evaluation;

22. *Requests* governments to make available comprehensive data disaggregated by age, sex and other characteristics relevant in national contexts to inform targeted responses to the gender dimensions of HIV and AIDS;

23. *Stresses* the importance of building up national competence and capacity to provide an assessment of the drivers and impact of the epidemic, which should be used in HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support and for mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS;

24. *Encourages* the international community and research institutions to support action-oriented research on gender and HIV and AIDS including on female-controlled prevention commodities;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of the present resolution to the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Decision 60/101

Documents considered by the Commission on the Status of Women*

5. At its 14th and 15th meetings, on 24 March, the Commission on the Status of Women decided to take note of the following documents and to bring to the attention of the Economic and Social Council the Chairs' summaries of the four ministerial round tables, the ministerial dialogue and the two expert panel

* For the discussion, see chap. III and chap. V.