



**Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-ninth session**

The Commission on the Status of Women as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming

**Thursday, 19 March 2015
10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.**

ISSUES PAPER

1. Introduction

In its resolution 2013/18, the Economic and Social Council decided that at its fifty-ninth session, in 2015, the Commission on the Status of Women will undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as opportunities for strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda through the integration of a gender perspective.

As part of the review and appraisal at its fifty-ninth session, the Commission will hold an interactive discussion on the role of the Commission on the Status of Women as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming. This dialogue will bring together the Commission with several Chairs/Vice-Chairs of functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council. The dialogue will focus on experiences and lessons learned of the functional commissions in the integration of gender perspectives in their work, as well as on challenges encountered, and on opportunities for moving forward. The dialogue also aims to enhance inter-action of functional commissions with the Commission on the Status of Women towards accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

2. Elements for discussion

A. Background

As part of its mandate, the Commission on the Status of Women is asked to act as a catalyst in support of gender mainstreaming in all areas of work of the United Nations. Towards this end, the Commission has transmitted the outcome of its work to relevant intergovernmental processes to enhance their attention to gender equality issues. It has also interacted with other bodies, and especially some functional commissions, to exchange views and experiences on issues of common interest (see details in E/CN.6/2014/14).

At the same time, all intergovernmental bodies, including the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, are called upon to mainstream gender perspectives into all issues under their consideration and within their mandates (see most recently A/RES/69/151). One way for assessing

the status of gender mainstreaming in the work of functional commissions is to analyze the resolutions adopted by these bodies in regard to reflection of gender perspectives. The following information is drawn from the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the subject, A/69/182, including the methodology used.

Analysis shows that the pace of progress of gender mainstreaming across functional commissions, and over time, remains uneven. Trends in the reflection of gender perspectives in resolutions in the years 2010 – 2013 indicate a high level of 47 per cent in 2012, and a low of 16 per cent in 2013. Reports of the Secretary-General submitted to these bodies and which provide the basis for intergovernmental discussions increasingly reflect gender perspectives (see table 5 below).

Figure V

Trends in the share of documents of the functional commissions that include a gender perspective

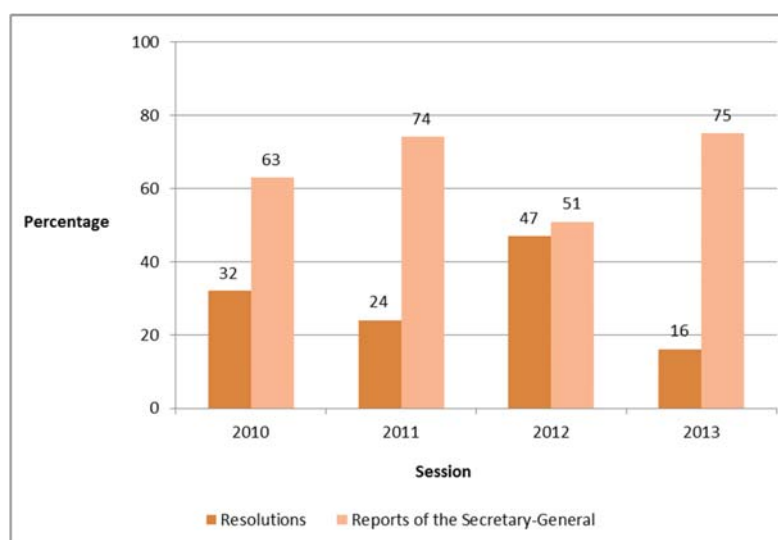


Table 5

Number and percentage of reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions in 2013 that include a gender perspective

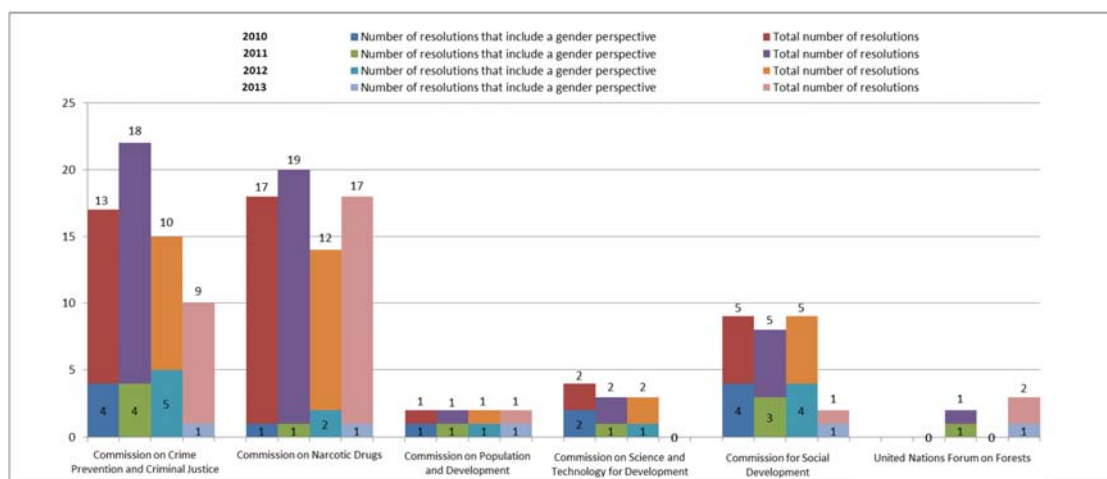
<i>Body to which report is submitted</i>	<i>Total reports</i>	<i>Number including a gender perspective</i>	<i>Percentage including a gender perspective</i>
Economic and Social Council	15	13	87
Functional commissions of the Council ^a	40	30	75
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice ^b	8	5	63
Commission on Narcotic Drugs ^b	4	2	50
Commission on Science and Technology for Development	2	2	100
Statistical Commission	8	4	50
Commission on Population and Development	4	4	100
Commission for Social Development	7	7	100
United Nations Forum on Forests	7	6	86

- ^a These results do not include the Commission on the Status of Women, owing to its exclusive focus on gender equality issues.
- ^b The Commission on Narcotic Drugs considered reports of the Secretariat, which were included in the analysis.

While some functional commissions, such as those on Population and Development, Science and Technology for Development, and Social Development, consistently pay attention to gender perspectives, other commissions such as those on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and Narcotic Drugs, have done so to a lesser degree (see figure II below).

At the same time, several commissions have, at different points in the past, adopted gender-specific resolutions. Commissions also submit draft resolutions for adoption by the Economic or Social Council and/or the General Assembly¹, and some of these have included attention to gender equality issues. For example, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice drafted the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules, A/RES/65/229), as well as a draft resolution on Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women, A/RES/65/228. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development drafted two resolutions in 2013, which were later adopted by the Council, and which gave special attention to the gender dimensions of science and technology and information and communications technologies (E/RES/2013/9 and E/RES/2013/10).

Figure II Trends in the share of resolutions of some functional commissions that include a gender perspective



Note: The United Nations Forum on Forests meets biennially.

Table 6 Number and percentage of resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions that included a gender perspective in 2013

Originating body	Total resolutions	Number including a gender perspective	Percentage including a gender perspective
Economic and Social Council	43	16	37
Functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council ^a	31	5	16

¹ In 2013, 72 per cent of the resolutions adopted by the Council at its substantive session had originally been drafted by the functional commissions.

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice	9	1	11
Commission on Narcotic Drugs	17	1	6
Commission on Population and Development	1	1	100
Commission on Social Development	1	1	100
Commission on Science and Technology for Development	–	–	–
United Nations Forum on Forests ^b	2	1	50

^a These results do not include the Commission on the Status of Women, owing to its exclusive focus on gender equality issues. The Statistical Commission traditionally only adopts decisions.

^b The United Nations Forum on Forests meets biennially.

These trends suggest that there is significant scope for exploring ways to enhance attention to gender perspectives in the work of functional commissions. The dialogue should explore good practices that have enabled commissions to address gender perspectives more systematically, both in terms of substantive issues and working methods, as well as opportunities for other commissions to further accelerate their efforts. The role of the Commission on the Status of Women in support of gender mainstreaming, and ways how this role should be further strengthened, should also be explored.

B. Questions for discussion

The following questions could be addressed in the dialogue:

- *What tools, methodologies and working methods have enabled functional commissions to examine and integrate gender perspectives in their areas of work?*
- *What factors have enabled functional commissions to address gender perspectives more systematically and consistently across their entire mandate?*
- *What obstacles and challenges have functional commissions encountered in addressing gender perspectives, and what solutions have been explored? What plans do functional commissions have to further integrate gender perspectives in their work?*
- *What measures or steps could the Commission on the Status of Women take to more effectively exercise its catalytic role and contribute to gender mainstreaming in functional commissions?*
- *What role could other stakeholders, in particular the entities of the UN system and non-governmental organizations play in support of gender mainstreaming across the work of functional commissions?*

3. Format

The panel will be presided by the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, H.E. Ms Kanda Vajrabhaya, and will be moderated by the President of the Economic and Social Council. Following opening comments by the Moderator, Chairs/Vice-Chairs will be invited to make opening comments of 5 – 7 minutes presenting the experience and lessons learned, as well as tools and approaches used by the respective Commissions in integrating gender perspectives across the agenda, as well as and challenges encountered. These will be followed by an interactive dialogue of panelists with Member States, entities of the United Nations system and civil society, on ways for strengthening the contributions of the functional commissions to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women within their mandates, and the role of the Commission on the Status of Women as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming. Interventions from the floor should not exceed 3 minutes and could include questions directed to panelists; suggestions for ways as to how functional commissions could strengthen the integration of gender perspectives in their work; steps to be taken

by the Commission on the Status of Women and recommendations how the Commission could better exercise its catalytic role. The role of other stakeholders, including civil society and the UN system, in strengthening attention to gender perspectives through their contributions to the work should also be explored.

The outcome of the panel will be a Chair's summary that should contribute to enhanced gender mainstreaming.