



POLITICAL DECLARATION

ON THE OCCASION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN



NOTE TO THE READER

In March 2020, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women was scheduled to conduct a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, twenty-five years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and of the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, held in 2000, as well as to contribute towards the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 172 States had undertaken national reviews and prepared national reports (*here*). All five United Nations regional commissions conducted regional review processes to assess trends and chart the way forward (*here*). A comprehensive report had been prepared to support the Commission's work (E/CN.6/2020/3).

Given the rapidly evolving situation of the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in early 2020, Member States resolved to hold a scaled down and shortened session. Consequently, the Commission held a meeting on 9 March 2020, when it adopted a Political Declaration on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/2020/27).

In adopting the Political Declaration, Governments welcome progress made, but also recognize that no country has fully achieved gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls, and that overall, progress has not been fast or deep enough. In some areas progress has been uneven, major gaps remain and new challenges have emerged in the implementation of the Platform for Action and its 12 critical areas of concern. These require intensified efforts, including in regard to education, participation and leadership, economic empowerment, unpaid care and domestic work, social protection, climate change and natural disasters, violence and harmful practices, armed conflict and peace processes, health, and hunger and malnutrition.

In response, Governments pledge to take further action to ensure the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly through a number of cross-cutting implementation strategies, including: eliminating all discriminatory laws; eliminating discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes; strengthening of institutions; gender mainstreaming in sustainable development; adequate financing; strengthening accountability; harnessing technology and innovation; closing data and evidence gaps; and strengthening international cooperation and partnerships for implementation of commitments.

Governments reaffirm that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and highlight the role of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Governments recognize the important role of UN-Women in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and welcome the contributions made by civil society to the implementation of the Platform for Action and pledge to promote and ensure a safe and enabling environment for them.

In closing, Ministers and government representatives commit to the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by strengthening collective efforts towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including full enjoyment of their human rights.

WE, THE MINISTERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS,

Having gathered at the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in New York, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, to undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”, including an assessment of current challenges and gaps that affect the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls throughout their life course and its contribution towards the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as to ensure the acceleration of the implementation of the Platform for Action, with a commitment to ensuring the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the preparations for and the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to all the major United Nations conferences and summits in the development, economic, social, environmental, humanitarian and related fields so that they effectively contribute to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,

1. *Reaffirm* the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the declarations of the Commission on the Status of Women on the tenth, fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women and commit to their implementation;
2. *Recognize* that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the fulfilment of the obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are mutually reinforcing in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the realization of their human rights, and call upon States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto;
3. *Emphasize* the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the relevant major United Nations conferences and summits and their outcomes and follow-up, and also emphasize that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda;
4. *Welcome* the convening of the regional reviews that have been undertaken by the United Nations regional commissions, taking note of the outcomes of these intergovernmental processes at the regional level, which have contributed to the 2020 review by the Commission on the Status of Women;
5. *Also welcome* the progress made towards the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through concerted policy action at the national, regional and global levels, further welcome the review activities undertaken by Governments in the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, noting the important contributions made by civil society and all other relevant stakeholders, recall General Assembly resolution 73/340 of 12 September 2019, and look forward to the high-level meeting of the Assembly on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held on 23 September 2020 on the theme of “Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”;
6. *Express concern* that, overall, progress has not been fast or deep enough, that in some areas progress has been uneven, that major gaps remain and that obstacles, including structural barriers, discriminatory practices and the feminization of poverty, persist, and recognize that 25 years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, no country has fully achieved gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, that significant levels of inequality persist globally, that many women and girls experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, vulnerability and

marginalization throughout their life course, and that they have made the least progress, which may include, inter alia, women of African descent, women with HIV and AIDS, rural women, indigenous women, women with disabilities, migrant women and older women;

7. *Recognize* poverty, global economic inequality and the lack of equitable distribution of development gains within and among countries as fundamental challenges to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

8. *Also recognize* that women and girls play a vital role as agents of development, that the achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities, and that the Sustainable Development Goals should be achieved for all;

9. *Further recognize* the importance of men and boys fully engaging as strategic partners and allies, as well as agents and beneficiaries of change, for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and commit to taking measures to fully engage men and boys in efforts to achieve the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

10. *Recognize* that new challenges have emerged, and reaffirm our political will and firmly commit to tackling the existing and emerging challenges and remaining implementation gaps in all 12 critical areas of concern, namely, women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, and the girl child;

11. *Also recognize* that these new challenges require intensified efforts for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and its 12 critical areas of concern, including by:

(a) Strengthening efforts to realize the right to education for all women and girls, eliminating barriers in this regard, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, training and skills development, promoting lifelong learning opportunities, and supporting women's and girls' participation in all sectors, especially those in which they are not equally represented, in particular science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and strengthening international cooperation on these issues;

(b) Ensuring full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making as well as equal access to leadership and representation for all women at all levels and in all spheres of society, as well as strengthening their voice, while ensuring a safe and enabling environment for them and taking action to eliminate any barriers in this regard;

(c) Ensuring women's economic empowerment by enhancing women's full access to and equal opportunities in the labour market and decent work, taking effective action against discrimination and abuse in the workplace, promoting equal pay for work of equal value, providing social security, supporting the transition from informal to formal work in all sectors, promoting women's access to credit and entrepreneurship as well as financial inclusion and financial literacy for women and girls, and enhancing cooperation with all relevant stakeholders;

(d) Recognizing and taking measures to reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and promoting work-life balance and the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within the household;

(e) Strengthening social protection systems and other measures to support and empower women and girls and to eliminate the burden of poverty on them, including female-headed households;

(f) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into environmental, climate change and disaster risk reduction policies, recognizing the disproportionate effect of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls, in particular those in vulnerable situations, strengthening the resilience and adaptive

capacities of women and girls to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters, and promoting women's participation and leadership in decision-making on environmental and climate change issues;

(g) Eliminating, preventing and responding to all forms of violence and harmful practices against all women and girls, in the public and private spheres, including in digital contexts, as well as human trafficking and modern slavery and other forms of exploitation and ensuring access to justice, and the provision of support services, including legal, health and social, to all women victims of violence;

(h) Strengthening the protection of women and girls in armed conflict and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all decision-making levels and at all stages of peace processes and mediation efforts, including in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts, and recognizing their leadership therein and the need for their enhanced representation in peacekeeping;

(i) Strengthening efforts to realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for women and girls throughout their life course and without discrimination of any kind, and promoting their equitable, quality and affordable access to health and well-being for all, including towards the achievement of universal health coverage;

(j) Addressing hunger and malnutrition among women and girls by paying attention to their diverse nutritional needs at all stages of life;

12. *Pledge* to take further concrete action to ensure the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including by:

(a) Eliminating all discriminatory laws and ensuring that laws, policies and programmes benefit all women and girls and that they are fully and effectively implemented and systematically evaluated to ensure their effectiveness and that they do not create and reinforce inequalities and marginalization;

(b) Eliminating structural barriers, discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes, and promoting social norms and practices that empower all women and girls and that recognize their contributions and eliminate discrimination and violence against them, including through their balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal in the media;

(c) Strengthening the effectiveness and accountability of institutions at all levels to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as ensuring equal access to justice and public services;

(d) Mainstreaming a gender perspective across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, for the realization of the human rights of all and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;

(e) Matching commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls with adequate financing through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources;

(f) Strengthening accountability for the implementation of commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(g) Harnessing the potential of technology and innovation to improve women's and girls' lives and to close the development divide and the digital divide, including the gender digital divide, as well as addressing the risks and challenges emerging from the use of technologies;

(h) Closing data and evidence gaps through improved regular collection, analysis and use of gender statistics, including through strengthening national statistical capacities, to strengthen the implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes;

(i) Strengthening international cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as public-private partnerships, to implement commitments to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;

13. *Reaffirm* the primary responsibility of the Commission on the Status of Women for the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and recall the follow-up work of the Commission in that regard, also reaffirm its catalytic role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, in promoting and monitoring gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system, and in coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Platform for Action, in which it is recognized that the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls is essential for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and further reaffirm that the Commission also contributes to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;
14. *Acknowledge* the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and reaffirm its important role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and in supporting Member States and coordinating the United Nations system and mobilizing civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
15. *Call upon* the United Nations system to continue to support the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including through systematic gender mainstreaming, the mobilization of resources to deliver results and the monitoring and assessment of progress with data and robust accountability systems;
16. *Welcome* the contributions made by civil society, including non-governmental organizations and women's and community-based organizations, youth-led organizations and all other stakeholders such as national human rights institutions where they exist, to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and pledge to continue supporting, at the local, national, regional and global levels, civil society efforts for the advancement and promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including by promoting and ensuring a safe and enabling environment for them, and recognize the importance of having an open, inclusive and transparent engagement with civil society as a contribution to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;
17. *Commit* to the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by strengthening our collective efforts towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including full enjoyment of their human rights.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), is a global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission was established in 1946 with a mandate to prepare recommendations on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. It is also responsible for monitoring, reviewing and appraising progress achieved and problems encountered in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at all levels, and to support gender mainstreaming.

Representatives of Member States, United Nations entities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with ECOSOC and other stakeholders participate in the Commission's annual session at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The session, which is usually held for ten days in March, provides an

opportunity to review progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, identify challenges, and set global standards, norms and policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

The session includes plenary meetings, high-level round tables, interactive dialogues and panels, as well as many side events. Its principal outcome are the "agreed conclusions" on the priority theme, negotiated by all States.

UN Women serves as the substantive Secretariat for the Commission and in that capacity, supports all aspects of the Commission's work. UN Women prepares policy analysis and recommendations that form the basis for the Commission's deliberations on the themes selected for each session, as well as for negotiated outcomes.

UN Women reaches out to stakeholders to create awareness and build alliances around the topics under consideration, and also facilitates the participation of civil society representatives in the Commission's sessions.

UN WOMEN IS THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN WOMEN SUPPORTS UNITED NATIONS MEMBER STATES AS THEY SET GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY, AND WORKS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY TO DESIGN LAWS, POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THESE STANDARDS. IT STANDS BEHIND WOMEN'S EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE, FOCUSING ON FIVE PRIORITY AREAS: INCREASING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION; ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN; ENGAGING WOMEN IN ALL ASPECTS OF PEACE AND SECURITY PROCESSES; ENHANCING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT; AND MAKING GENDER EQUALITY CENTRAL TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND BUDGETING. UN WOMEN ALSO CO-ORDINATES AND PROMOTES THE UN SYSTEM'S WORK IN ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY.



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