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## Commission on the Status of Women

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: priority theme: women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls**

## **Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls**

### **Agreed conclusions**

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,<sup>1</sup> the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly<sup>2</sup> and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth, fifteenth, twentieth and twenty-fifth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women.<sup>3</sup>
2. The Commission reiterates that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>4</sup> and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *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 I, annexes I and II.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution [S-23/2](#), annex, and resolution [S-23/3](#), annex.

<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum ([E/2005/27](#) and [E/2005/27/Corr.1](#)), chap. I, sect. A; *ibid.*, 2010, *Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum ([E/2010/27](#) and [E/2010/27/Corr.1](#)), chap. I, sect. A; *ibid.*, 2015, *Supplement No. 7* ([E/2015/27](#)), chap. I, sect. C, resolution [59/1](#); and *ibid.*, 2020, *Supplement No. 7* ([E/2020/27](#)), chap. I, sect. A.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.



and the Optional Protocols thereto,<sup>6</sup> as well as other relevant conventions and treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,<sup>7</sup> the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>8</sup> the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>9</sup> and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination<sup>10</sup> provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realizing 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.

3. The Commission reaffirms that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of its reviews, and the outcomes of relevant major United Nations conferences and summits and the follow-up to those conferences and summits, have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>11</sup> and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

4. The Commission recalls the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in New York on 1 October 2020, which demonstrated commitment to the full and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of its reviews.

5. The Commission reaffirms the commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls made at relevant United Nations summits and conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action<sup>12</sup> and the outcome documents of its reviews. It recognizes that the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,<sup>13</sup> the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,<sup>14</sup> the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,<sup>15</sup> the New Urban Agenda<sup>16</sup> and the World Summit for Social Development contribute, inter alia, to women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and the elimination of violence. The Commission also reaffirms the Paris Agreement,<sup>17</sup> adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.<sup>18</sup>

6. The Commission recognizes the importance of relevant International Labour Organization standards related to the realization of women's right to work and rights at work which are critical for women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and the elimination of violence, and recalls the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization and the International Labour

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., vol. 2131, No. 20378; and vols. 2171 and 2173, No. 27531; and resolution [66/138](#), annex.

<sup>7</sup> See General Assembly resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., vol. 660, No. 9464.

<sup>11</sup> General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).

<sup>12</sup> *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.

<sup>13</sup> General Assembly resolution [69/15](#), annex.

<sup>14</sup> General Assembly resolution [69/283](#), annex II.

<sup>15</sup> General Assembly resolution [69/313](#), annex.

<sup>16</sup> General Assembly resolution [71/256](#), annex.

<sup>17</sup> See [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21, annex.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and notes the importance of their effective implementation.

7. The Commission recalls the Declaration on the Right to Development<sup>19</sup> and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.<sup>20</sup>

8. The Commission also recalls that 2020 marked the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the women and peace and security agenda, and reaffirms that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of peace processes is one of the essential factors for the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.

9. The Commission emphasizes 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 and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It acknowledges that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and decision-making in public life as well as the elimination of violence are essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all. It recognizes that women and girls play a vital role as agents for sustainable development.

10. The Commission acknowledges the important role played by regional conventions, instruments and initiatives in their respective regions and countries, and their follow-up mechanisms, in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including through women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and the elimination of violence.

11. The Commission reaffirms that the promotion and protection of, and respect for, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, including the right to development, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, are crucial for the full and equal participation of women and girls in society and for women's economic empowerment and should be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes, including those aimed at the eradication of poverty and the reduction of social exclusion. It also reaffirms the need to take measures to ensure that every person is entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, and that equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the promotion, protection and full realization of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

12. The Commission reiterates that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development needs to be implemented in a comprehensive manner, reflecting its universal, integrated and indivisible nature, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting each country's policy space and leadership while remaining consistent with relevant international rules and commitments, including by developing cohesive sustainable development strategies to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Commission affirms that Governments have the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and global levels with regard to progress made.

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<sup>19</sup> General Assembly resolution 41/128.

<sup>20</sup> General Assembly resolution 71/1.

13. The Commission remains deeply concerned that all women and girls, especially in developing countries, including small island developing States, and particularly those in vulnerable situations, are often disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, extreme weather events and natural disasters and other environmental issues, such as land degradation, desertification, deforestation, sand and dust storms, persistent drought, floods, sea level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification, including disproportionate exposure to risk and increased loss of life and livelihoods, and reiterates its deep concern over the challenges posed by climate change to the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It recalls that the parties to the Paris Agreement acknowledged that they should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and intergenerational equity and, in this context, also recalls the adoption of the second gender action plan by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-fifth session.<sup>21</sup>

14. The Commission reaffirms the need to promote women's full and effective participation and leadership in decision-making on the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, recognizing women's and girls' important role as agents of change, as well as to mainstream a gender perspective in the design, management, resourcing and implementation of climate change, environmental, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity policies, plans and programmes, ensuring that they are disability-inclusive, and to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to respond to and recover from the adverse impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, extreme weather events and natural disasters and other environmental issues. It acknowledges the necessity, for the full benefit of every person, including women and girls, of present and future generations having access to an environment adequate to their health and well-being, and the critical importance of ensuring such access for the empowerment of women and girls, sustainable development and the resilience of communities.

15. The Commission recognizes that gender inequality continues to be reflected in imbalances of power between women and men in all spheres of society and that, while there has been progress in the number of women elected or appointed to decision-making bodies, administrative posts and other public bodies and commissions, and temporary special measures, including quotas, have substantially contributed to increasing women's representation in national and local legislatures, progress towards gender balance is not sufficient. It also recognizes the need to significantly accelerate the pace of progress towards ensuring women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership at all levels of decision-making in executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and the public sector.

16. The Commission also recognizes the need to implement international, regional and national commitments and obligations aimed at achieving gender equality, including through temporary special measures, as appropriate, and create an enabling environment to promote women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and strengthen the voice, agency and leadership of women and girls.

17. The Commission emphasizes that all people have the right to take part in the government of their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, and that women have the right to vote in all elections and public referendums and stand for election to all publicly elected bodies.

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<sup>21</sup> See [FCCC/CP/2019/13/Add.1](#), decision 3/CP.25.

18. The Commission also emphasizes that the full and equal representation of women and men at all levels of decision-making in executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and the public sector and in all spheres of life is needed to promote peaceful, just, inclusive and sustainable societies. It notes that women's participation and leadership are needed in the formulation and implementation of government policies and regulations in order to reflect women's and girls' specific needs. It recognizes that temporary special measures and increased political will are needed to accelerate the pace towards achieving gender balance at all levels of government.

19. The Commission underlines that it is necessary to address gender inequality as well as discrimination and that, when women are not included in decision-making, policy outcomes are likely to be ineffective, or harmful, and may lead to the violation of the human rights of women and girls. It further recognizes that not all women and girls enjoy full and equal representation and participation, and expresses concern that they may be discriminated against on the basis of race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status.

20. The Commission acknowledges that women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life as well as leadership can help to support their empowerment in other sectors, including the arts, culture, sports, the media, education, religion, the private sector and finance. It further recognizes that sports and the arts in particular have the power to change perceptions, prejudices and behaviours and challenge social norms perpetrating gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls, break down racial and political barriers and are important enablers of sustainable development and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

21. The Commission recognizes the need to enhance women's full, equal and meaningful participation in advisory and decision-making bodies of political parties and, as appropriate, civil society organizations. It also recognizes that the private sector, through gender-sensitive policies and programmes to support women's participation and leadership, can contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

22. The Commission recognizes that young women are particularly underrepresented in public life and disproportionately excluded from consultations on issues that affect them, despite being involved in activities that call for broader change and address, inter alia, structural inequalities, climate change and poverty. It also recognizes that early exposure to women leaders as role models, as well as to legislative and policymaking spaces, motivates young women and girls, broadens networks and strengthens their opportunities to become fully engaged citizens. It further recognizes that measures are needed to enable young women and girls to successfully grow into leadership positions in public and private spheres by ensuring their full and equal access to education, technology and skills development, leadership and mentorship programmes, increased technical and financial support, and protection from violence and discrimination.

23. The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and girls, which is rooted in historical and structural inequalities and unequal power relations between men and women. It reiterates that violence against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations, in public and private spheres, including sexual and gender-based violence, such as sexual harassment, domestic violence, gender-related killings, including femicide, and harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, are pervasive, underrecognized and underreported, particularly at the community level. It expresses deep concern that

women and girls may be particularly vulnerable to violence because of multidimensional poverty and limited or lack of access to justice, effective legal remedies and services, including protection, rehabilitation, reintegration, and to health-care services. It re-emphasizes that violence against women and girls is a major impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and that it violates and impairs or nullifies their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

24. The Commission emphasizes that the promotion of full and equal participation and leadership of women in public life and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls are interconnected. It expresses concern that violence against women politicians, voters, candidates, election administrators, judges and members of local, grass-roots and women's organizations in public life is common. It recognizes that all forms of violence and discrimination, including in digital contexts, prevent women from exercising their equal right to participate in all spheres of public life, and emphasizes that their participation is essential to improving the work of public institutions and strengthening policy outcomes.

25. The Commission stresses the importance of investing in women's and girls' development and of strengthening their participation in order to break the cycle of gender inequality, discrimination, violence and poverty and to realize sustainable development, peace and human rights. It recognizes that accelerated efforts are required to develop, review and strengthen policies and allocate adequate financial and human resources, in order to address the structural and underlying causes of all forms of violence.

26. The Commission recognizes that sexual harassment impedes the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as women's participation and decision-making in public life. It stresses that sexual harassment in private and public spaces, including in educational institutions and the workplace, as well as in digital contexts, leads to a hostile environment.

27. The Commission also recognizes that the growing impact of violence against women and girls in digital contexts, especially on social media, and the lack of preventive measures and remedies underline the need for action by Member States in partnership with other stakeholders. It recalls that emerging forms of violence, such as cyberstalking, cyberbullying and privacy violations, are affecting a high percentage of women and girls and compromising, inter alia, their health, emotional and psychological well-being and safety.

28. The Commission acknowledges the need to address the effects of armed conflict and post-conflict situations on women and girls, including victims and survivors of sexual violence.

29. The Commission expresses its concern that certain aspects of mobility and transportation, including inaccessible platforms, overcrowded carriages and poorly lit stops, can create barriers for women and girls and can expose them to violence, including attacks, harassment and other threats to their safety, limiting their ability to move freely and safely in the public sphere.

30. The Commission acknowledges the importance of combating trafficking in persons in order to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, and in this regard stresses the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations

Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,<sup>22</sup> as well as of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.<sup>23</sup>

31. The Commission expresses concern that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on women and girls and is deepening pre-existing inequalities that perpetuate multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, as well as racism, stigmatization and xenophobia, and that it has further exacerbated vulnerabilities in their social and economic situations, including their access to essential health-care services and access to education, especially of girls who have been particularly at risk of dropping out of and not returning to schools, as well as their safety, well-being and livelihood. It further expresses deep concern over the increased demand for unpaid care and domestic work and the reported surge of all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, during confinement, as well as harmful practices, such as, child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. It further expresses deep concern that these disproportionate impacts compound existing obstacles to women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life.

32. The Commission emphasizes the critical role that women have played and continue to play in COVID-19 pandemic response efforts as well as in economic recovery and growth. It recalls that women are the vast majority of front-line health and social workers and that they are significantly engaged in the delivery of essential and public services, recognizes the need to ensure their access to decent work, just and favourable work conditions, including living wages, equal pay for work of equal value and universal access to social protection supported by national strategies, policies, action plans and adequate resources, and further emphasizes that it is necessary to strengthen the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women, including women with disabilities, in all stages of COVID-19 response and recovery. The Commission recognizes that the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response based on solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation and sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to reduce risks of future shocks and that all national responses are implemented with full respect for human rights. It expresses deep concern that, despite international agreements, initiatives and general declarations, there is an uneven distribution of COVID-19 vaccines worldwide.

33. The Commission recognizes that progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full enjoyment of their human rights, has been held back owing to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty, inequalities and disadvantages in access to, ownership of and control over resources, growing gaps in equality of opportunity and limited access to social protection systems and public services, including universal health-care services and education, gender-based violence, discriminatory laws and policies, negative social norms and gender stereotypes and the unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work. It stresses the urgency of eliminating those structural barriers in order to realize gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, which translate into their full and effective participation and decision-making in public life.

34. The Commission expresses concern that persisting structural barriers are compounding existing obstacles to women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and the elimination of violence. It notes that the current pace of progress is too slow and that expediting progress is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

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<sup>22</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2237, No. 39574.

<sup>23</sup> General Assembly resolution [64/293](#).

35. The Commission acknowledges that multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization are obstacles to women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life as well as to the elimination of violence. It respects and values the diversity of situations and conditions of women and girls and recognizes that some women face particular barriers to their empowerment. It also stresses that, while all women and girls have the same human rights, women and girls in different contexts have particular needs and priorities, requiring appropriate responses.

36. The Commission recognizes the right of women and girls with disabilities to full, meaningful and effective participation and inclusion in society, and that women and girls with disabilities should have the opportunity to be actively involved in all aspects of public, political, economic, cultural, social and family life, on an equal basis with all others.

37. The Commission also recognizes that indigenous women and girls, regardless of age, often face violence and higher rates of poverty, limited access to health-care services, information and communications technology, infrastructure, financial services, education and employment for women, as well as discrimination and exclusion of women from public life and decision-making, including in relation to communal and traditional indigenous lands and use of their natural resources, while also recognizing their cultural, social, economic, political and environmental contributions, including their contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

38. The Commission further recognizes the important role and contribution of rural women in the eradication of poverty and in enhancing sustainable agricultural and rural development, as well as sustainable fisheries. It highlights the importance of ensuring that the perspectives of all rural women and girls are taken into account and that women, and girls as appropriate, fully and equally participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience.

39. The Commission recognizes the positive contribution of migrant women and girls and their potential to foster inclusive growth and sustainable development in their countries of origin, transit and destination; underlines the value and dignity of migrant women's labour, in all sectors, including in care and domestic work; encourages appropriate steps to ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation in the development of local solutions and opportunities, as well as efforts to improve public perceptions of migrants and migration and to address the special situation and vulnerability of migrant women and girls, particularly migrant women employed in the informal economy and in less skilled work, to abuse and exploitation, underlining in this regard the obligation of States to protect, respect and fulfil the human rights of all migrants.

40. The Commission also recognizes that women's full and effective participation in public life depends on enabling factors such as economic independence and full and equal access to quality education, training, decent work and equal pay for work of equal value, universal health coverage, prioritizing the availability, accessibility and acceptability of health services, social protection, including for those in non-standard or informal employment and self-employment, sustainable infrastructure and public services, affordable and quality care services, as well as the reduction, recognition and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work. It further recognizes the need to promote social inclusion in domestic policies and to promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws.

41. The Commission further recognizes the potential benefits of new forms of information and communications technology and artificial intelligence that enable the

participation of women and girls in public life, while more attention needs to be paid to the impacts of such technology on all women and girls. It also recognizes that digital platforms can become public spaces in which new strategies to influence policy and politics are forged and where women and girls can exercise their right to participate fully and effectively in public life. It notes that new technological developments can also perpetuate existing patterns of inequality and discrimination, including in the algorithms used in artificial intelligence-based solutions. It also notes the importance of promoting equal access to information and communications technology and to the Internet for all women and girls, increasing women's access to digital technologies to enhance their productivity and mobility in the labour market, working towards closing digital divides, including the gender digital divide, ensuring that programmes, services and infrastructure are adaptable and suited to tackle different technological barriers, including literacy, and targeting science, technology and innovation strategies to reduce inequalities and promote the empowerment of all women and girls and women's full and effective participation in public life.

42. The Commission reaffirms the right to education for all women and girls, and stresses that equal access to inclusive, equitable and high-quality education significantly contributes to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by providing them with opportunities, knowledge, capacity, aptitudes, skills, ethical values and understanding to enable women's full and effective participation in public life. It recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, girls are still more likely than boys to remain excluded from education and that gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education include the feminization of poverty, child labour undertaken by girls, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, early and repeated pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from and at school, and bullying and cyberbullying in their technology-mediated environment, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, including for menstrual hygiene management, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work performed by girls, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than that of boys, which may influence the parents' decision on allowing girls to attend school.

43. The Commission remains deeply concerned by the persistence of high female illiteracy rates and gender-stereotyped roles of women and men, which inhibit women's equal participation in employment, leading to occupational segregation, including the widespread underrepresentation of women and girls in many fields of science and technology, which represents a loss of talent and perspectives, hinders economic development and women's economic empowerment and can contribute to the gender pay gap.

44. The Commission underlines the importance of leveraging education, including digital competencies, science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technologies, bolstering key dimensions such as creativity, entrepreneurship, critical thinking and soft skills, strengthening adequate access to education, training and skill development opportunities for women and girls and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

45. The Commission reaffirms the right of every human being to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, without distinction of any kind, and recognizes that its full realization is vital for women's and girls' lives and well-being and for their ability to participate in public and private life, and that it is crucial for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It recognizes that targeting and eliminating the root causes of gender inequality,

discrimination, stigma and violence in health-care services, including the unequal and limited access to public health services, is important for all women and girls.

46. The Commission recognizes that women and girls undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and that such uneven distribution of responsibilities limits women's ability to participate in decision-making processes and occupy leadership positions, and poses significant constraints on women's and girls' completion of, or progress in, education and training, on women's entry and re-entry and advancement in the paid labour market and on their economic opportunities and entrepreneurial activities. It stresses the need to recognize and adopt measures to reduce, redistribute and value the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within the household and by prioritizing, *inter alia*, sustainable infrastructure, social protection policies and accessible, affordable and quality social services, including care services, childcare and maternity, paternity or parental leave.

47. The Commission also recognizes that the sharing of family responsibilities creates an enabling family environment for women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, which contributes to development, that women and men make a significant contribution to the welfare of their family, and that, in particular, women's contribution to the home, including unpaid care and domestic work, which is still not adequately recognized, generates human and social capital that is essential for social and economic development.

48. The Commission acknowledges the benefit of implementing family-oriented policies aimed at, *inter alia*, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the full participation and decision-making of women in public life, work-family balance and the self-sufficiency of the family unit, and recognizes the need to ensure that all social and economic development policies are responsive to the changing needs and expectations of families in fulfilling their numerous functions and that the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of all family members are respected.

49. The Commission notes that universal access to social protection plays a central role in reducing inequality, eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions and promoting opportunities for women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life as well as the elimination of violence. It reiterates that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their families, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and that motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. The Commission, however, is concerned that gaps in coverage remain, especially for women and girls. It recognizes that social protection systems can make a critical contribution to the fulfilment of human rights for all, in particular for those who are trapped in poverty and those who are marginalized or in vulnerable situations and subject to discrimination.

50. The Commission also notes the vital importance of birth registration for the realization of all human rights, including the right to social security, as well as access to social protection systems, and for participation and decision-making in public life, and expresses concern at the low levels of birth registration among some indigenous women and girls, women and girls with disabilities, migrant women and girls, women and girls in rural areas, and women belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. It expresses further concern that all persons without birth registration and citizenship documents may be more vulnerable to marginalization, exclusion, discrimination, violence, statelessness, exploitation and abuse.

51. The Commission expresses concern that the feminization of poverty persists, and emphasizes that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions,

including extreme poverty, is indispensable for women's economic empowerment, their full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, the elimination of violence and the achievement of sustainable development. It further acknowledges the mutually reinforcing links between the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty, and the need to ensure an adequate standard of living for women and girls throughout the life course and the importance of supporting countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

52. The Commission expresses its concern about the continuing significant gender gaps in labour force participation and leadership, wages, income, pensions and social protection, and access to and control over financial, economic and productive resources, as well as occupational segregation, the undervaluation of female-dominated industries, unequal working conditions, the limited opportunities for career advancement and the overrepresentation of women in informal and non-standard forms of employment. It also expresses deep concern that women's educational gains have yet to translate into equal access to full employment and decent work, with consequent long-term adverse effects on the development of any society, and that the persistence of high female illiteracy rates and gender stereotypes inhibits women's equal participation in employment.

53. The Commission stresses the need to promote women's full participation in the formal economy, in particular in economic decision-making, and their equal access to full and productive employment, decent work and social protection, ensuring that women and men enjoy equal treatment in the workplace, as well as equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and access to power and decision-making. It reaffirms the importance of investing in women in all sectors in the economy, including by supporting women-led businesses and facilitating the access of women to finance, training, technology, markets, sustainable and affordable energy and transport and trade.

54. The Commission reaffirms the importance of significantly increasing investments to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls through, inter alia, the mobilization of adequate financial resources from all sources, including domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation, the full implementation of official development assistance commitments and combating illicit financial flows, so as to build on progress achieved and strengthen international cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation.

55. The Commission recognizes the importance of a conducive external environment in support of national efforts towards the empowerment of women, through promoting the control, ownership, management and participation of women in all sectors and levels, which includes the mobilization of adequate financial resources, capacity-building and the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, which in turn would enhance the use of enabling technologies to promote women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

56. The Commission also recognizes the special needs of all women and girls living in areas affected by humanitarian emergencies and in areas affected by terrorism, and recognizes that global health threats, the adverse impacts of climate change, more frequent and intense natural disasters, armed conflicts, violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and related humanitarian emergencies and the forced displacement of people threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades and have particular negative impacts on women and girls, especially in developing countries, that need to be duly assessed and addressed. It is deeply

concerned that women and girls living in these areas face particular barriers in gaining access to water and sanitation, as well as menstrual hygiene management, and that they shoulder the main burden of collecting household water and of care responsibilities, including those arising from waterborne diseases, in many parts of the world.

57. The Commission further recognizes the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and in peacebuilding and, in this regard, stresses the importance of the full, effective and meaningful participation of women, including by increasing their role in peace processes, as well as in decision-making in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and reiterates the importance of engaging men and boys as partners in promoting such participation.

58. The Commission welcomes the major contributions made by civil society, including women's and community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders, girls' and youth-led organizations and trade unions, in placing the interests, needs and visions of women and girls on local, national, regional and international agendas, including the 2030 Agenda. It recognizes the importance of having an open, inclusive and transparent engagement with civil society in the implementation of measures to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

59. The Commission recognizes that negative social norms and gender stereotypes can be reinforced by the media, advertising and film industries, and stresses the important role the media can play, while ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in media, in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including through non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive coverage.

60. The Commission also recognizes the importance of the full engagement of men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in the promotion of women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life as well as the elimination of violence and in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

61. The Commission urges governments at all levels and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites civil society, inter alia, women's organizations, youth-led organizations, feminist groups, faith-based organizations, the private sector and, national human rights institutions, where they exist, and other relevant stakeholders, as applicable, to take the following actions:

#### **Strengthen normative, legal and regulatory frameworks**

(a) Take action to fully implement existing commitments and obligations with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of any kind, so as to improve progress towards women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence;

(b) Consider ratifying or acceding to, as a matter of particular priority, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, limit the extent of any reservations, formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible to ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Conventions, review their reservations regularly with a view to

withdrawing them, withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the relevant Convention and implement the Conventions fully by, inter alia, putting in place effective national legislation and policies;

(c) Consider ratifying and, for those that have done so, implementing the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization, and note the importance of other relevant international labour standards, namely the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102),<sup>24</sup> the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), of the International Labour Organization, as well as the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189),<sup>25</sup> on decent work for domestic workers, and other relevant standards of the International Labour Organization;

(d) Refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries;

(e) Take measures to achieve women's equal and meaningful participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, social and cultural life and remove all structural barriers, inter alia, legal, institutional, economic, social or cultural, that prevent the participation of women and girls;

(f) Review and reform laws and policies that discriminate against women and girls and hinder women's equal participation in all aspects of public life, and implement targeted measures to address, inter alia, all forms of discrimination as well as violence against women and girls, ensuring women's and girls' access to justice and accountability for violations of their human rights;

(g) Enact or strengthen and enforce laws and regulatory frameworks that ensure equality and eliminate discrimination against women and girls, inter alia, laws and frameworks that prohibit discrimination based on pregnancy, motherhood, marital status or age as well as other forms of discrimination;

(h) Protect and promote the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and collective bargaining so as to, inter alia, enable all women workers to organize, join and participate at all levels in unions, workers' and employers' organizations, cooperatives and business associations, while recognizing that those legal entities are created, modified and dissolved in accordance with national law and taking into account each State's international legal obligations;

(i) Protect and promote the right to freedom of opinion and expression and women's equal rights to engage in political activities, and public life as a whole, to ensure women of all ages, without discrimination of any kind, fully, equally and meaningfully participate at all levels of decision-making and in all sectors, including through political parties and civil society, and women's and youth-led organizations, free from violence and harassment, including bullying or threats;

(j) Set specific targets and timelines to achieve gender balance in executive, legislative and judicial branches of government at all levels and in all areas, including in commissions, specialized committees and task forces, and achieve these through relevant measures, such as affirmative actions, appropriate temporary special

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<sup>24</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 210, No. 2838.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2955, No. 51379.

measures, inter alia quotas, appointments, training programmes and targeted outreach to women, including young women and women who are in vulnerable situations;

(k) Take all necessary measures to encourage political parties to nominate equal numbers of women and men as candidates, promote equal leadership in party structures and mainstream a gender perspective into party programmes;

(l) Encourage the implementation of measures and mechanisms, including appropriate mechanisms to track progress, to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender balance at all levels of elected positions;

(m) Develop and implement policies and programmes, including through appropriate funding and innovative measures to promote women as leaders, executives and managers, in all areas, in particular in strategic economic, social and political decision-making positions, with the goal of achieving gender balance at all levels;

(n) Ensure that the perspectives of women, and girls as appropriate, are taken into account in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and in humanitarian emergencies and that they effectively and meaningfully participate, on equal terms with men, in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to conflict prevention, peace mediation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as take into account the perspective of women and girls who are internally displaced and who are refugees; and ensure that the human rights of all women and girls are fully respected and protected in all response, recovery and reconstruction strategies and that appropriate measures are taken to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls in this regard;

(o) Strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant government institutions to collect, analyse and disseminate data, disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, to support the design, implementation and tracking of policies aimed at improving women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as to assess laws, policies, strategies and programmes to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, and enhance partnerships and the mobilization, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance to enable developing countries to systematically design, collect and ensure access to high-quality, reliable and timely disaggregated data and gender statistics;

### **Prevent and eliminate violence against women in public life**

(p) Eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spaces, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls and end impunity, and to provide protection and equal access to appropriate remedies and redress and to comprehensive social, health and legal services for all victims and survivors to support their full recovery and reintegration into society, including by providing access to psychosocial support and rehabilitation, and access to affordable housing and employment, bearing in mind the importance of all women and girls living free from violence, such as sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, domestic violence, and gender-related killings, including femicide, as well as elder abuse; and address the structural and underlying causes of violence against women and girls through enhanced prevention measures, research and strengthened coordination, monitoring and evaluation by, inter alia, encouraging awareness-raising activities, including through publicizing the societal and economic costs of violence, and working with local communities;

(q) Enact or strengthen and enforce laws and policies to eliminate all forms of violence and harassment against women of all ages in the world of work, in public and private spheres, and provide means of effective redress in cases of non-compliance; ensure safety for women in the workplace; address the multiple consequences of violence and harassment, considering that violence against women and girls is an obstacle to gender equality and women's economic empowerment; and develop measures to promote re-entry of victims and survivors of violence into the labour market;

(r) Pursue programmes and strategies to prevent and eliminate harassment in public and private spaces, including in digital contexts, inter alia, cyberbullying and cyberstalking, with an emphasis on effective legal, preventive and protective measures for victims and those who are at risk of harassment;

(s) Eliminate harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage, which may have long-term effects on girls' and women's lives, health and bodies, including increased vulnerability to violence and sexually transmitted diseases, and negatively affect opportunities to participate in public life, and which continue to persist in all regions of the world despite the increase in national, regional and international efforts, including by empowering all women and girls, working with local communities to combat negative social norms that condone such practices and empowering parents and communities to abandon such practices, confronting family poverty and social exclusion and ensuring that girls and women at risk or affected by these practices have access to social protection and public services, including education, and health care;

(t) Build the capacity of public officials in executive, legislative and judicial branches of government to adopt enhanced prevention measures to address all forms of violence against women and girls, including in digital contexts, and respond to incidents, enforce judicial and complaints mechanisms and sensitize officials by ensuring their training on the different and specific needs of women and girls who have been subjected to violence so that they are not revictimized when seeking justice and redress;

(u) Ensure women's and girls' unimpeded access to justice and to effective legal assistance so that they can make informed decisions regarding, inter alia, legal proceedings, so that all cases of violence are brought to justice, including the cases related to victims, and also ensure that all victims have access to just and effective remedies for the harm that they have suffered, including through the adoption of national legislation where necessary;

(v) Take measures to create a safe and enabling environment so that women are protected from all forms of violence and discrimination for engaging in public life, including in digital contexts, and take practical steps to prevent and address violence, including by combating impunity and ensuring that those responsible for violations and abuses are promptly brought to justice;

(w) Mainstream a gender perspective in the conceptualization, development and implementation of digital technologies and related policies and promote the participation of women in order to address violence and discrimination against women and girls in digital contexts, inter alia by encouraging digital technology companies, including Internet service providers, to respect standards and implement transparent and accessible reporting mechanisms;

#### **Strengthen gender-responsive institutional reforms**

(x) Take measures to achieve gender balance in leadership positions in decision-making bodies at all levels, develop transformative approaches and changes

in institutional structures and practices, and use the gender mainstreaming strategy to accelerate the implementation of legislation and public and fiscal policies, including through gender-responsive budgeting for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;

(y) Ensure that the perspectives of all women and girls are taken into account, that women, and girls as appropriate, fully and equally participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience, and that women and their organizations, and girl- and youth-led organizations, are fully, safely and actively able to participate in the decision-making process, policies and institutions at all levels;

(z) Strengthen the capacity of national machineries for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, by providing sufficient allocation of financial, technical and human resources, to enable them to effectively carry out their mandates;

(aa) Take account of the specific needs of women and girls in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, and increase women's leadership in those efforts, including through promoting gender balance in task forces, standing committees and other decision-making bodies, as well as promote the participation of members of women's organizations in decision-making bodies and processes, as appropriate;

(bb) Develop COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery plans that promote sustainable development and drive transformative change towards inclusive and just societies by, inter alia, targeting women and girls, underlining that economic response, including poverty eradication measures, social assistance and protection, and fiscal and stimulus packages should be equally accessible to all, and specifically address the care sector, with measures taken to reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, ensure equal pay for work of equal value for women, including in the public health sector, as well as take action to promote women's entrepreneurship and strengthen women's participation and leadership in economic activity;

(cc) Take appropriate measures to create a safe, enabling and violence-free working environment for women, especially front-line workers, and address women's and girls' specific physical and mental health needs and provide them with psychological and psychosocial support; provide appropriate personal protective equipment, essential hygiene and sanitation items, as well as access to safe and affordable drinking water; and ensure universal and equal global access to therapeutics, medicines and vaccines, as well as health technologies and products to face COVID-19, recognizing the role of extensive immunization against COVID-19 as a global public good for health;

(dd) Call on the United Nations system to continue to mainstream a gender perspective into its policies and programmes, including those addressing COVID-19 response and recovery;

(ee) Integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies, climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes, needs assessment, forecast and early warning systems, and response and recovery plans on disaster risk management, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation and pollution, especially in developing countries, and recognize the full and effective participation of women in decision-making at all levels, in particular on strategies and policies related to the impacts of climate change, while also noting the importance of the ongoing discussions regarding the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(ff) Support the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to respond to and recover from the adverse impacts of climate change, natural disasters and extreme weather events, through the provision of essential infrastructure and services, social protection and decent work for women as well as appropriate financing, including public and private climate finance, capacity-building, technology, humanitarian relief and disaster preparedness to avert, minimize and address loss and damage associated with the adverse impacts of climate change; and further increase the gender-responsiveness of climate finance with a view to strengthening the capacity of women;

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

**Increase the availability of high-quality financing in support of women's participation in public life**

(hh) Create conducive conditions for women's candidacies by ensuring equal access to campaign finances, as appropriate, as well as equal access to the media, training programmes, subsidies for childcare, early childhood education and care for other dependants;

(ii) Urge developed countries to fully implement their respective commitments, including the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national income for official development assistance to developing countries and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income for official development assistance to least developed countries, and encourage developing countries to build on the progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help meet development goals and achieve gender equality;

(jj) Strengthen international and regional cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation, and invite all States to enhance South-South and triangular cooperation focusing on shared development priorities, with the involvement of all relevant multiple stakeholders in government, civil society and the private sector, while noting that national ownership and leadership in this regard are indispensable for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and for improving their lives and well-being;

**Strengthen women's voice and leave no one behind in public life**

(kk) Provide capacity-building and training to enable women and girls to develop capacities, skills and expertise to participate in public life and exercise leadership;

(ll) Implement measures to address violence and higher rates of poverty faced by rural women and girls and ensure their access to quality education, public health, including health-care services, justice, water and sanitation and other resources, information and communications technology, infrastructure, as well as access of rural women to financial services, economic resources and opportunities, decent work, social protection, sustainable and time- and labour-saving infrastructure and technology, and land, to promote their full and effective participation and decision-making in public life;

(mm) Promote and protect the rights of older women by ensuring their equal access to social, legal and financial services, infrastructure, health care, social

protection and economic resources and their full and equal participation in decision-making;

(nn) Ensure the full and effective participation and decision-making of women of African descent in all aspects of society, including political, economic, social and cultural, recognizing the significant contribution of women and girls of African descent to the development of societies, and bearing in mind the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024);

(oo) Strengthen efforts to empower women and girls with disabilities and enhance their participation and promote leadership in society through taking measures to address all barriers that prevent or restrict the full and equal participation and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in all spheres of life, including through the creation of enabling programmes, community outreach, mentoring and capacity-building programmes, and ensure their access, on an equal basis with others, to economic and financial resources and disability-inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, transportation, justice mechanisms and services, in particular in relation to health and education, as well as productive employment and decent work for women with disabilities, including in government and the public sector, the private sector and civil society, and by ensuring that the priorities and rights of women and girls with disabilities are fully incorporated into policies and programmes and that they are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes;

(pp) Promote and protect the rights of indigenous women and girls by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence, ensuring access to quality and inclusive education, health care, public services, economic resources, including land and natural resources, and women's access to decent work, to ensure their empowerment and full and effective participation in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas and eliminate structural and legal barriers to their full, equal and effective participation in political, economic, social and cultural life, while respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge and recognizing the distinct and important role of indigenous women and girls in sustainable development and noting in that regard the importance for indigenous women and girls of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;<sup>26</sup>

(qq) Adopt national gender-responsive migration policies and legislation, in line with relevant obligations under international law, to: protect the human rights of all migrant women and girls, regardless of migration status; recognize the skills and education of women migrant workers to promote their economic empowerment in all sectors and, as appropriate, facilitate their productive employment, decent work and integration into the labour force, including in the fields of education and science and technology; recognize the importance of protecting labour rights and a safe environment for women migrant workers and those in precarious employment, including preventing and addressing abuse and exploitation, protecting women migrant workers in all sectors and promoting labour mobility; protect migrant women and girls against all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, ensuring access to justice to file complaints about rights violations; and take steps to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of migrant women in all matters that affect them, in accordance with national legislation;

(rr) Promote the active and meaningful participation of women and girls living with, at risk of or affected by HIV and AIDS on matters that affect their lives, and eliminate discrimination and violence against them, as well as the caregivers of

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<sup>26</sup> General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex.

persons living with HIV and AIDS, and take into account their vulnerability to stigma, discrimination, poverty and marginalization from their families and communities when implementing programmes and measures which encourage the equal sharing of caring responsibilities;

(ss) Support the important role of civil society actors in promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women; take steps to protect such actors, including women human rights defenders, and to integrate a gender perspective into the creation of a safe and enabling environment for the defence of human rights and to prevent violations and abuses against them in rural areas, inter alia, threats, harassment and violence, in particular on issues relating to labour rights, the environment, land and natural resources; and combat impunity by taking steps to ensure that violations or abuses are promptly and impartially investigated and that those responsible are held accountable;

(tt) Fully engage men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in: promoting women's and girls' access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure; eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, in both public and private spheres, by understanding and addressing the root causes of gender inequality, such as unequal power relations, gender stereotypes and practices that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls; designing and implementing national policies and programmes that address the roles and responsibilities of men and boys, including the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in care and domestic work; ensuring the enforcement of child support laws; and transforming, with the aim of eliminating, negative social norms that condone violence against women and girls and attitudes by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys;

### **Address root causes of gender inequality and eliminate barriers to women's full and equal participation**

(uu) Design and implement more effective measures aimed at eradicating poverty faced by women and girls and improving their living conditions to promote the realization of their full potential, and enable women's advancement and their equal participation in decision-making, including through labour policies, public services and social protection programmes;

(vv) Ensure women's economic empowerment and their right to work and rights at work, including by enhancing their full and productive employment and decent work, and access to productive and financial resources, in order to facilitate their full and equal participation in the labour market and decision-making, and ensure their access to leadership positions in the public and private sectors;

(ww) Eliminate occupational segregation by addressing structural barriers, encourage women's participation in the labour market, especially in emerging fields and growing economic sectors, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as information and communications technology, and recognize the value of sectors that have large numbers of women workers; and provide social protection, ensure equal treatment in the workplace, support the transition from informal to formal work in all sectors and promote equal pay for work of equal value and women's access to credit and entrepreneurship as well as financial inclusion and financial and digital literacy for women and girls;

(xx) Mainstream a gender perspective when designing, implementing and monitoring public policies in the planning and use of safe public spaces, public services and sustainable urban and rural infrastructure, including public transportation systems, promote the mobility, safety and empowerment of women and

girls, and ensure access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all women and girls, as well as for menstrual hygiene management, including for hygiene facilities and services in public and private spaces, which enable women's full and effective participation in public life;

(yy) Take all appropriate measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the reconciliation of work and family life, the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men and men's equitable sharing of responsibilities with respect to care and household work, including as fathers and caregivers, through flexibility in working arrangements, without reductions in labour and social protections, support for breastfeeding mothers, the provision of infrastructure, technology and public services, such as water and sanitation, renewable energy, transport and information and communications technology, and the implementation and promotion of legislation and policies such as maternity, paternity, parental and other leave schemes, as well as accessible, affordable and quality social services, including childcare and care facilities for children and other dependants, take steps to measure the value of this work in order to determine its contribution to the national economy, and challenge gender stereotypes and negative social norms in order to create an enabling environment for women's empowerment;

(zz) Enable the recruitment and retention of women in public life and decision-making by setting up support systems and adopting measures to support work-family balance; ensure that pregnant women and mothers with infants and young children can continue participating in public life and decision-making through policies that allow them to remain in the workplace safely, including by guaranteeing access to maternity protection and adequate social protection benefits, emphasizing men's responsibilities as fathers and caregivers as a means of enabling women to increase their participation in the labour market and decision-making in public life;

(aaa) Take concrete measures to realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health for all women and girls; and ensure the availability, accessibility and acceptability of quality health-care services to address all communicable and non-communicable diseases, including through universally accessible primary health care and support services and social protection mechanisms;

(bbb) Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development<sup>27</sup> and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes, and recognizing that the human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on all matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, as a contribution to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and the realization of their human rights;

(ccc) Promote and respect the right to education for women and girls throughout the life course and at all levels, especially for those who have been left furthest behind, and address gender disparities, including by investing in public education systems and infrastructure, eliminating discriminatory laws and practices, providing universal access to inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality

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<sup>27</sup> *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.

education, including free and compulsory primary and secondary education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, eliminating female illiteracy and promoting financial and digital literacy, ensuring that women and girls have equal access to leadership training, career development, scholarships and fellowships; strive to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary and secondary education and expand vocational and technical education for all women and girls, and foster, as appropriate, intercultural and multilingual education for all; and address negative social norms and gender stereotypes in education systems;

(ddd) Adopt positive actions to build women's and girls' leadership skills and influence, and support women and girls in diversifying their educational and occupational choices in emerging fields, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology; and mainstream a gender perspective in science and technology, academia, research institutions and research funding agencies;

(eee) Adopt measures to ensure girls' path to full and effective participation in public life, in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities and that develops their full potential, through access to education, and ensure their safety including in and out of school, and an environment free from discrimination, violence, bullying and harassment in school, inter alia, by improving sustainable, safe, accessible and affordable transportation and infrastructure;

(fff) Develop policies and programmes with the support, where appropriate, of international organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, giving priority to formal, informal and non-formal education programmes, including scientifically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive education that is relevant to cultural contexts and that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, and with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians and with the best interests of the child as their basic concern, 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 and foster informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills and to develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to, inter alia, enable them to protect themselves from HIV infection and other risks;

(ggg) Provide catch-up and literacy education for those who did not receive formal education and special initiatives for keeping girls in school through post-primary education, including those who are already married or pregnant, to promote their participation in public life, including by ensuring that pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, can continue and complete their education, and in this regard, design, implement and, where applicable, revise educational policies to allow them to remain in and return to school, providing them with access to health care and social services and support, including childcare and breastfeeding facilities and crèches, and to education programmes with accessible locations, flexible schedules and distance education, including e-learning, and bearing in mind the important role and responsibilities of and challenges faced by fathers, including young fathers, in this regard;

(hhh) Increase access of women and girls to digital technologies, including by promoting equal, safe and affordable access to information and communications technologies and to the Internet; enhance digital literacy, improve digital cooperation and harness the potential of technology and innovation to improve women's and girls' lives, to promote connectivity and socioeconomic prosperity and to close the

development divide and the digital divide, including the gender digital divide; and explore appropriate ways to address any potential negative impact of new technologies on gender equality;

(iii) Take effective measures to clear the substantial digital divides and data inequalities that exist within and among countries and regions, and between developed and all developing countries, recognizing that many developing countries lack affordable access to information and communications technologies, which is an impediment to the achievement of the full potential of women and girls;

(jjj) Promote women's participation in public life, including in political processes, by providing fair and balanced media coverage of women and men candidates, covering women's participation in political organizations and ensuring coverage of their activities; and develop strategies to eliminate gender stereotypes in all spheres of life and foster the positive portrayal of women as leaders and decision makers at all levels and in all areas.

62. The Commission recognizes its primary role for the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in which its work is grounded, and stresses that it is critical to address and integrate gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to ensure synergies between the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

63. The Commission calls upon the United Nations system entities, within their respective mandates, and other relevant international financial institutions and multi-stakeholder platforms to support Member States, upon their request, in their efforts to ensure women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

64. The Commission calls upon the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and in supporting Governments and national women's machineries, upon their request, in coordinating the United Nations system and in mobilizing civil society, the private sector, employers' organizations and trade unions, 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, including women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.