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Commission on the Status of Women

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Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Note by the Secretariat

1. Since 2002, the Economic and Social Council, pursuant to paragraph 13 of its agreed conclusions 2002/1 (A/57/3/Rev.1, chap. V, sect. A, para. 9), has invited its functional commissions to provide inputs to the overall theme of the Council's coordination and high-level segments as they relate to their areas of work. In its resolution 61/16, the General Assembly adopted new working methods for the Council to strengthen its role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination in the implementation of, and follow-up to, the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields. Within the framework of the new working methods, the Assembly decided that the Council should hold annual ministerial-level substantive reviews as part of its high-level segment and requested the Council to urge its functional commissions to contribute to the review. At its substantive session of 2008, the Council requested its functional commissions to contribute to the annual ministerial review, in accordance with their mandates (see Council resolution 2008/29, para. 8).

2. The theme of the annual ministerial review of the Council in 2012 will be "Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals".

3. The present note has been prepared by the Secretariat to highlight the recent and ongoing work of the Commission on the Status of Women that relates to the theme of the review and that could serve as the Commission's input to the high-level

* E/CN.6/2012/1.



segment of the Council's substantive session of 2012. In this regard, the Commission's resolutions, agreed conclusions, as well as the summaries of its discussions, on the situation of women with regard to the main aspects of the theme of the review could contribute to enhancing the deliberations and outcomes of the Council on gender perspectives.

4. The priority theme of the Commission at its fifty-sixth session is "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges". The Commission's related discussions, outcomes, and agreed conclusions in particular, as well as the moderators' summaries of the high-level round-table meeting and interactive expert panels on the priority theme, could also serve as inputs to the 2012 annual ministerial review of the Council. In addition, the reports of the Secretary-General on the priority theme (E/CN.6/2012/3) and on the role of gender-sensitive governance and institutions for the empowerment of rural women (E/CN.6/2012/4) contain analyses recommendations that could also be useful for the review since they cover such issues as food security and investment in agriculture; access to resources, employment opportunities and markets; unpaid care work and access to services; sustainable development; gender-responsive institutions; service delivery; participation and leadership; and data.

5. In 2010, the Commission adopted resolution 54/4 on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. At its fifty-sixth session, the Commission will have before it a report on the implementation of that resolution, which examines the macroeconomic policy environment and analyses the situation of women as workers, entrepreneurs and decision makers. The report contains a section on work and employment and sets out measures to reduce the burden of unpaid work through investment in infrastructure and services; to remove the barriers to women's participation in the labour market; and to strengthen institutions and enact reforms needed to secure decent working conditions. The report could serve to draw further attention to gender perspectives in the Council's deliberations.

6. The priority theme of the Commission at its fifty-fifth session was "Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work". The outcome of that session, and in particular the agreed conclusions on the topic, included recommendations covering the following six areas: strengthening national legislation, policies and programmes; expanding access and participation in education; strengthening gender-sensitive quality education and training, including in the field of science and technology; supporting the transition from education to full employment and decent work; increasing retention and progression of women in science and technology employment; and making science and technology responsive to women's needs. Various measures were suggested to support the transition from education to employment. They include addressing the specific barriers that women and girls face in the transition from school to work, mechanisms to recognize women's prior learning and management skills, improved access to gender-sensitive career counselling and to job search support services, steps to eliminate occupational and sectoral segregation and the gender pay gap, and steps to support the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for women and men, as well as the equal sharing of employment and family responsibilities. The recommendations, together with moderators' summaries from panel discussions, provide important context and raise pertinent issues that the Council could consider during the annual ministerial review.