



# General Assembly

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### Third Committee

Agenda item 28

#### Advancement of women

**Austria, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia and Uruguay: draft resolution**

### **Women and girls and the response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recognizing* the significance of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, and reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted therein<sup>1</sup> and the outcome documents of its twenty-third special session<sup>2</sup> and reaffirming the political declaration adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women,<sup>3</sup>

*Reaffirming* the obligation of all States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and also that all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women and girls, are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>4</sup> the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>5</sup> the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,<sup>6</sup> the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

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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 1, annexes I and II.

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

<sup>3</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2020, Supplement No. 7 (E/2020/27)*, chap. I, sect. A.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>5</sup> See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*



against Women,<sup>7</sup> the Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>8</sup> the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>9</sup> and other human rights instruments,

*Recalling* the high-level meeting on universal health coverage, held in New York on 23 September 2019, and reaffirming its political declaration, entitled “Universal health coverage: moving together to build a healthier world”,<sup>10</sup>

*Welcoming* its resolutions 74/270 of 2 April 2020 on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), 74/274 of 20 April 2020 on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19 and 74/306 of 11 September 2020 on the comprehensive and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic,

*Expressing appreciation* for the leadership of the Secretary-General, and recognizing all efforts and measures proposed by him concerning the response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including his appeal for an immediate global ceasefire, his appeal for peace at home and in homes around the world and his special appeal to religious leaders to join forces, work for peace and focus on the world’s common battle to defeat COVID-19, as well as the establishment of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, the World Health Organization Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 and the United Nations Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19, and noting the issuance of all relevant United Nations reports and policy briefs on the impacts of COVID-19, including the policy briefs on the impact of COVID-19 on women and on COVID-19 and human rights,

*Determined* to address the COVID-19 pandemic through a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation among States, peoples and generations that enhances the ability and resolve of States and other relevant stakeholders to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>11</sup>

*Noting with grave concern* the impact on human life, health, safety and well-being caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has spread all around the globe and risks rolling back even the limited gains made on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the past decades,

*Recalling* that the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation are derived from the right to an adequate standard of living and are inextricably related to the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as well as the right to life and human dignity,

*Alarmed* by the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities that perpetuate all multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including racism, stigmatization and xenophobia, and violence, including domestic violence, and put women and girls at particular risk, compounding and further exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic on the full and equal enjoyment of human rights, which are exacerbated for women and girls throughout their life course, and recognizing that all national responses must ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Stressing* the importance of strengthening national health systems and infrastructures,

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

<sup>10</sup> Resolution 74/2.

<sup>11</sup> Resolution 70/1.

*Recognizing* the critical role of and efforts made by health workers, 70 per cent of whom are women, and other front-line and essential workers, including humanitarian personnel, around the world aimed at addressing the pandemic through measures to protect the health, safety and well-being of people, and emphasizing the importance of providing health and other essential workers with the necessary protection and support,

*Concerned* that the increased demand for paid and unpaid care work, the unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men and job losses in professions dominated by women, combined with the decreasing accessibility and affordability of childcare, are deepening the already existing inequalities in the gender division of labour and could further exacerbate the gender pay gap, the gender pension gap and the gender care gap,

*Concerned also* by the high incidence of informal and non-standard forms of employment where women are disproportionately represented, as this can restrict women's universal access to social protection when entitlements are tied closely to formal employment, which can perpetuate women's lack of income or force women to continue working, thus exacerbating the risk of exposure to COVID-19,

*Recognizing* that existing formal and informal social networks such as women's organizations, in particular women peacebuilders in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict, community groups and civil society organizations often provide the front-line contributions of the response to the pandemic in communities and remain critical during its aftermath,

*Deeply concerned* by the increased violence against women and girls around the world, particularly in conflict-affected areas, in the current context of confinement measures, with surges being reported in many cases of upwards of 25 per cent in countries with reporting systems in place, and emphasizing the need for strengthened prevention and response mechanisms,

*Stressing* the importance of the use of high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable data disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other characteristics as an essential tool for the design, implementation and evaluation of effective policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, while expressing concern about the proliferation of disinformation and misinformation in the fight against COVID-19,

*Concerned* by the devastating risks caused by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for women and girls in humanitarian emergencies and crises and situations of armed conflict, where social cohesion is already undermined and institutional capacity and services are limited,

1. *Calls upon* Member States to fully respect and implement their obligations under international human rights law and existing commitments with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those contained in the outcome documents and reviews of relevant international conferences, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,<sup>12</sup> as part of their COVID-19 response, and stresses that there is no place for any form of discrimination, racism, stigmatization and xenophobia in the response to the pandemic;

2. *Emphasizes* the critical role that women play in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, and urges Member States, the United Nations system and regional

<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.

organizations, and other relevant actors to strengthen women's leadership and to ensure the full, effective and meaningful participation of all women and women's organizations in decision-making processes and in all stages of response to COVID-19, as well as in economic recovery processes, and ensure the need to include gender mainstreaming in other United Nations initiatives and projects specifically approved in this pandemic, including in budgetary response;

3. *Also emphasizes* the need to develop economic recovery plans that drive transformative change towards inclusive societies by, among other things, targeting all women and girls, especially those who are in vulnerable situations, underlining that economic response, including poverty eradication measures, social assistance and protection, fiscal and stimulus packages, must be equally accessible to men and women, be gender-responsive and specifically address the care economy and the issues of informal and non-standard forms of employment, and recognize unpaid care and domestic work, and consider focusing on actions regarding financial security for women, equal pay and career opportunities, as well as women leadership and female entrepreneurship;

4. *Calls upon* States to ensure meaningful engagement with civil society organizations and national human rights institutions, where they exist, in protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls during the response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic;

5. *Calls upon* Member States, and relevant stakeholders, to identify and seize opportunities to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment as well as their participation in and access to the labour market, including through innovative ways of working that enable an equal sharing of care and family responsibilities between women and men;

6. *Calls upon* Member States and other relevant stakeholders to take steps to bridge the gender digital divide as part of the efforts to ensure the full empowerment of women and girls, including their participation in economic recovery and enabling women to work remotely and girls to continue their education during the pandemic;

7. *Urges* Member States to integrate prevention and response efforts and reinforce plans and structures on the fight against sexual and gender-based violence, in particular domestic violence, and in online and offline contexts, by designating protection and health-care services as essential services for all women and girls, especially those who are most vulnerable to violence and stigma, by increasing emergency lines and shelters, and raising advocacy and awareness campaigns, and ensure recovery efforts seek to address gender stereotypes and negative social norms and the unequal power dynamics across community and household levels;

8. *Calls upon* States to take all measures necessary to ensure the right of women and girls to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, and to develop sustainable health systems and social services, with a view to ensuring universal access to such systems and services without discrimination;

9. *Emphasizes* the importance of the right to education and the continuation of learning for all individuals, including girls, acknowledging that during the pandemic adolescent girls are at particular risk of dropping out and not returning to school even after the pandemic is over, and calls upon Member States to ensure that girls are protected and supported in returning to school once it is deemed safe to do so, and in this regard to take the appropriate measures to ensure the availability of

learning materials and remote learning platforms in order to provide online, television and radio teaching alternatives;

10. *Reaffirms* the need to ensure the safe, timely and unhindered access of humanitarian and medical personnel, including gender protection officers, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as their means of transport, supplies and equipment, and to support, facilitate and enable transportation and logistical supply lines, in order to allow such personnel to efficiently and safely perform their task of assisting affected civilian populations, especially women and girls, and in this regard also reaffirms the need to take the measures necessary to respect and protect such personnel, hospitals and other medical facilities, as well as their means of transportation, supplies and equipment; and recalls its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations and all subsequent General Assembly resolutions on the subject, including its resolution 74/118 of 16 December 2019;

11. *Calls upon* Member States to take the steps towards collecting and ensuring the availability of high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable data disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other characteristics in scientific research on COVID-19, and in the analysis on the global health impact as well as the political and socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to address the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation and support the provision of clear, objective and science-based data and information on COVID-19;

12. *Calls upon* the United Nations to remain seized of the matter and to ensure a system-wide gender-responsive approach to COVID-19, inter alia, through the inclusion of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Population Fund in all relevant actions at Headquarters and in the field, including humanitarian actions, under the leadership of the Secretary-General;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to follow up on the matter and in this regard to brief the General Assembly, as appropriate and within existing resources.