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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”

Ministerial round tables on “Good practices for strengthening institutions and maximizing financing to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”

Chair’s summary

1. On 12 and 13 March 2024, the Commission on the Status of Women held ministerial round tables on “Good practices for strengthening institutions and maximizing financing to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, in the context of the priority theme “Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective”. Ministers presented experiences, lessons learned and good practices in relation to the topic, with emphasis on the strengthening of national institutions for gender equality, the mobilization and allocation of financial resources for gender equality, and effective policies and strategies to eradicate women’s and girls’ poverty and accelerate progress towards gender equality.

2. The Minister of Social Development, Labour and Welfare of Curaçao, Ruthmilda Larmonie-Cecilia, chaired the round table on the first day. Ministers and high-level officials from 23 Member States participated. The Director General of the International Organization for Migration, Amy Pope, made closing remarks. The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines, Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, chaired the round table on the second day and made opening remarks. Ministers and high-level officials from 32 Member States participated. The Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Natalia Kanem, made closing remarks.



Well-resourced, capacitated and coordinated national institutions to address structural barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

3. Ministers emphasized that the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was not only a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development but also a fundamental step towards the realization of prosperous, peaceful and cohesive communities, societies and States. Ministers acknowledged the urgency of addressing structural barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including negative gender norms and stereotypes, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work borne by women and girls and the prevalence of gender-based violence. Ministers highlighted the need for gender-responsive legal and policy frameworks supported by well-resourced, capacitated and coordinated national institutions to tackle those structural barriers.

4. Ministers noted the importance of promoting and supporting the participation of women in decision-making and leadership roles, including in economic institutions such as central and commercial banks, national institutions, and political parties. Affirmative action and legislation on quotas were cited as good practices.

5. Ministers recognized the catalytic role of gender equality machineries in advancing progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. Ministers emphasized the importance of establishing such machineries as part of a well-coordinated institutional framework for effective gender mainstreaming in public policies. Best practices for strengthening institutional coordination included the creation of coordination mechanisms, the appointment of gender equality focal points and task forces within line ministries and coordination with economic and planning ministries, especially ministries of finance.

Mobilizing resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and ensuring their effective allocation through gender-responsive budgeting

6. Ministers recognized the urgency of increasing financial resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Ministers highlighted best practices in mobilizing resources for gender equality, including through direct public investments, grants and low-cost loans, public-private partnerships, blended finance, gender bonds, concessional finance, progressive taxation, reallocation of revenue from specific taxes, and increased official development assistance.

7. Ministers underscored the importance of gender-responsive budgeting, both for allocating adequate resources towards the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and for enhancing budget transparency and strengthening institutional accountability. Legal reforms, budget systems and the availability of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics were highlighted as key requirements for effective and results-oriented gender-responsive budgeting.

8. Ministers highlighted the importance of expanding partnerships and strengthening collaboration for increased resources and effective action on gender equality. Ministers stressed the pivotal role of international financial institutions and the private sector, including commercial banks and private financial institutions, in supporting the financial inclusion of women. Ministers further acknowledged the role of women's organizations in advocating for policy change and thus the importance of partnering with and providing support to such organizations to ensure inclusive and impactful gender-responsive policies.

Protecting the economic rights of all women and girls through pro-poor and gender-responsive strategies and policies

9. Ministers emphasized the economic empowerment of women as essential for achieving gender equality and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Ministers noted the specific challenges faced by marginalized groups of women, including women with disabilities, rural women, single mothers, older women, nomadic women and displaced and refugee women, as well as the need to support their economic empowerment through targeted policies and financial programmes, including cash transfers, direct subsidies and tax exemptions.

10. Ministers recognized the social and economic role played by women-owned and women-led micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. Ministers noted the need to further strengthen such enterprises by supporting their access to productive resources, including land, credit, technology and energy, and improving their access to markets through public and public-private partnerships and initiatives.

11. Ministers underscored the importance of ensuring the equal participation of women in the labour market and their equal access to decent employment, including as part of the digital transformation of work. Policies and programmes ensuring access to education and vocational training, affordable childcare and health care, social protection, and the prevention of harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace could support the equal participation of women. Ministers noted the importance of using robust gender data to develop such policies as well as the need to allocate sufficient resources to support their implementation.

12. Ministers shared best practices in transforming the care economy, including through the design of comprehensive national care systems, paid parental leave policies, and the development and funding of affordable and quality childcare services. Ministers highlighted the importance of promoting equal pay for work of equal value through the tracking of gender pay gaps using digital tools. Furthermore, Ministers underscored the importance of preventing, addressing and ending gender-based violence in all its forms, including child marriage, female genital mutilation and cyberviolence.
