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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”

Discussion guide for the ministerial round tables to be held on the occasion of the 30-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [2022/4](#) on the future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council decided that the session of the Commission would include a ministerial segment to reaffirm and strengthen political commitment to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, as well as their human rights, and to ensure high-level engagement and the visibility of the deliberations of the Commission, and that the segment would include ministerial round tables or other high-level interactive dialogues.

2. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution [2022/5](#), the Commission, at its sixty-ninth session, will undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the full realization of their human rights, as well as its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through a gender perspective. As part of the review and appraisal, the Commission will hold ministerial round tables to provide ministers with opportunities to engage in interactive dialogues to exchange experiences, lessons learned and good practices and to focus on key strategies and priorities for further action to address gaps and challenges.

* [E/CN.6/2025/1](#).



II. Organizational matters

A. Topic for the review and appraisal

3. In the context of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realization of their human rights, as well as its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda through a gender perspective, the Commission will hold two ministerial round tables on recommitting to, resourcing and accelerating implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, also with a view to contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. The ministerial round tables will be focused on current challenges and on the way forward in relation to the topic. Ministers will be encouraged to highlight effective policies, as well as challenges and lessons learned in their implementation, and to identify steps and measures that are necessary and planned in order to ensure that national responses contribute effectively to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full enjoyment of their human rights, through the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

B. Participants

5. The round tables will provide ministers with the opportunity to engage in dialogue and discussion. They will be open to all Member States and observers.

6. Ministers are invited to indicate, in advance and preferably no later than 21 February 2025, the ministerial round table in which they would prefer to participate. Each delegation is expected to speak in only one round table. The Chairs of the ministerial round tables, supported by a moderator, will guide the discussion with a view to promoting interaction. While they will have a list of ministers who have signed up for each round table, no list of speakers will be prepared in advance.

7. Each ministerial round table will begin with a moderated dialogue among up to five ministers on key issues arising under the topic. Following their moderated dialogue, the ministers will be invited to contribute lessons learned and good practices, exchange views and focus on key strategies and priorities for further action to address gaps and challenges. Statements will be delivered through interventions by ministers physically present in the room at United Nations Headquarters only. Interventions are not to exceed three minutes, and emphasis will be placed on dialogue. Time permitting, ministers may be given the opportunity to make more than one intervention. Written statements are strongly discouraged. In order to ensure time management, microphones will be automatically muted when the allotted time limit is reached.

C. Times and locations

8. The ministerial round tables will be held in Conference Room 4 at Headquarters, in New York, on Tuesday, 11 March 2025, and Wednesday, 12 March 2025, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

D. Outcome

9. The outcomes of the ministerial round tables will be in the form of Chairs' summaries, prepared in consultation with the regional groups through the members of the Bureau.

III. Items for discussion in the ministerial round tables

A. Background

10. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains the most comprehensive, visionary and widely endorsed global agenda for achieving gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realization of their human rights. In 1995, 189 Governments unanimously agreed on this groundbreaking and far-reaching framework for action. Visionary for its time, it identified issues of which many remain relevant today. Thirty years after its adoption, the Platform for Action represented and continues to represent an unprecedented consensus on the actions needed to advance gender equality, women's and girls' human rights and their empowerment. With its focus on systemic change, the Platform for Action also holds the key to unlock the bottlenecks and accelerate much-needed progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in the countdown to 2030.

11. Over the past five years, States have continued to take action to advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. As shown in the report of the Secretary-General on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (E/CN.6/2025/3), progress and key new policy directions have emerged across all critical areas of concern, from the promotion of integrated care systems that address the rights and needs of unpaid caregivers and paid care workers to the adoption of gender-responsive social protection measures to reduce women's poverty; from action to address various forms of violence, including gender-based violence that occurs through or is amplified by technology, to the integration of gender into public finance management; from humanitarian response plans linking women's and girls' empowerment with health and safety to advancing women's leadership in environmental governance and resilience-building. These measures underscore a growing commitment to fostering peaceful, inclusive societies and equitable climate action, marking progress in fulfilling global commitments.

12. Despite these efforts, there has been limited progress on gender equality outcomes, with stagnation in most areas, putting the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the vision of the Platform for Action, out of reach. While more girls are attending school, higher education levels have not led to greater equality in the labour market. The gender gap in labour force participation has remained stagnant for 20 years, with current rates standing at 63 per cent for women and 92 per cent for men. Some 9.8 per cent of women and girls live in extreme poverty. While this represents a slight improvement since the pandemic, at the current rate of progress it will take a further 137 years to eradicate extreme poverty for women and girls. Maternal mortality, although reduced globally, remains alarmingly high in conflict-affected countries, with 500 preventable deaths daily. Women's parliamentary representation has doubled since 1995, reaching 27 per cent, yet at the current rate of progress gender parity will not be achieved before 2063. Across many development areas, marginalized groups of women and girls remain disproportionately affected by slow progress.

13. This lack of progress is due in part to the strong headwinds that Governments have faced over the past five years. In their national reviews, States identified the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the climate crisis, the food and fuel crisis, and growing backlash against gender equality as factors that have slowed the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action over the past five years. In addition, growing accountability gaps, weakened institutions and underinvestment in gender equality, including limited funding for national women's machineries, are holding back progress. Meanwhile, rapid demographic and technological changes are creating new barriers to and opportunities for gender equality. This challenging and rapidly evolving context underlines the urgent need to recommit to the transformative vision of the Platform for Action, catalysing investments in gender equality solutions to deliver tangible change in the lives of women and girls and enhanced accountability for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of all women and girls.

14. During the round tables, ministers will be invited to focus on actions geared towards recommitment to, resourcing of and accountability for the full and accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, they are encouraged to highlight the transformative measures necessary to unblock bottlenecks, as well as the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in accelerating progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Ministers are also encouraged to use the discussion guide below and to consult the report of the Secretary-General on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly ([E/CN.6/2025/3](#)).

B. Discussion guide

15. The Platform for Action outlined three components to advance the critical area of concern that refers to gender-responsive institutions: the creation or strengthening of national machineries and other governmental bodies; the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into legislation, policies, programmes and projects; and the generation and dissemination of gender data for planning and evaluation. National gender equality mechanisms have been, inter alia, key drivers of policy advancements in critical areas, such as violence against women, while also championing women's access to decision-making and gender quotas. They are an important conduit for enhancing democracy and for ensuring the coordinated development, implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies across sectors and levels of government. Despite their critical role, however, they continue to lack the authority, capacity and resources needed to fulfil their mandate.

16. Achieving progress at scale and ensuring accountability require a whole-of-society approach that enables the meaningful participation of women and girls across branches (executive, legislative and the judiciary) and tiers of government (national and subnational), as well as in civil society. National human rights institutions are playing a growing role in monitoring and responding to violations of women's rights. The protection of civic space and the creation of an enabling environment for women human rights defenders and their organizations is critical for robust monitoring and accountability. When women's and girls' rights claims are not addressed at the national level, global human rights mechanisms, including those associated with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, can play a key role in holding States accountable for the realization of women's human rights. In addition, timely gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data are critical tools for ensuring evidence-based policy design, implementation, monitoring and accountability.

17. Ultimately, progress on gender equality and the realization of women's and girls' rights stands and falls with the allocation of adequate resources. This includes adequate funding for national gender equality mechanisms to enable leadership on gender equality initiatives and integrate gender considerations across all policy areas. In addition, increasing long-term, core and flexible funding for women's rights organizations is crucial to support their monitoring and accountability work. Broader structural changes in domestic resource mobilization strategies as well as the international financial architecture are needed to ensure sufficient funding for social protection systems, public services and infrastructure that are needed to achieve impact at scale. Gender-responsive budgeting is one component of gender mainstreaming and a critical tool for oversight and accountability for budget allocation decisions. Despite progress in implementing gender-responsive budgeting, however, public finance management for gender equality is still limited in scale and impact.

18. Ministers are invited to consider the following questions to help to focus the dialogue:

(a) What measures have proved successful in strengthening national institutional mechanisms for gender equality and empowering them to lead and coordinate gender equality policies more effectively?

(b) What are good practice examples of measures taken by Governments to address financing gaps at the national level and increase financing for gender equality?

(c) What steps are Governments taking to enhance accountability for gender equality and ensure the meaningful participation of civil society, in particular women and youth organizations, in the design, implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies?

(d) What policies and strategies have proved effective in amplifying women's voices, ensuring equal participation in decision-making at all levels and including young women and girls in leadership roles?

(e) What further actions can Governments take to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?
