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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 42nd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 24 July 2007, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. MÉRORÈS (Haiti)  
(Vice-President)

later: Mr. JAZAIRY (Algeria)  
(Vice-President)

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**(a) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

In the absence of Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania), Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)  
(A/62/65, A/62/82-E/2007/66, E/2007/47 AND E/2007/L.19)

Draft resolution E/2007/L.19: Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations

Ms. HERRERA CASEIRO (Cuba) introduced the draft resolution, which inter alia reaffirmed the recognition by the United Nations of the legitimacy of the aspirations of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to exercise their right to self-determination and the need to extend all possible assistance to those peoples. She hoped the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Mr. LOAYZA (Bolivia) said that his delegation welcomed the opportunity to sponsor the draft resolution. He recalled that General Assembly resolution 61/231 had renewed the Organization's commitment to the development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The report of the President of the Council on consultations with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (E/2007/47) provided information on the leading role played by the United Nations system in promoting the goal of decolonization and development in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

He noted in particular efforts undertaken in cooperation with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in the area of disaster management. Such regional bodies were implementing the lessons learned from the evaluation of programmes and taking full advantage

of mechanisms for communication and cooperation within the United Nations system. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was likewise implementing programmes to provide assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories to reduce their economic fragility.

The United Nations system as a whole must contribute to assistance programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean to the same extent as in other areas of the world, with a view especially to promoting the economic and social development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Department of Public Information and the Department of Political Affairs should likewise work to increase awareness of opportunities for assistance for those Territories and of the important role regional bodies could play.

Mr. IBARRA MARTINEZ (Observer for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his delegation, as a member of the Special Committee on Decolonization, reiterated its support for the self-determination of colonial countries and peoples and called on the administering Powers of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to allow the peoples of those Territories to exercise their right to self-determination, including independence. The administering Powers should likewise adopt measures to protect the inalienable rights of those Territories, such as the right to dispose of their natural resources, including land. The United Nations system should also continue to provide any assistance necessary to those Territories following exercise of their right to self-determination, including independence.

His delegation had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution because it was important to implement the United Nations mandate concerning decolonization before the end of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. In that context he underscored the excellent work of the Special Committee on Decolonization and reaffirmed the need for the Council to continue to defend the interests of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS (continued)

(e) MAINSTREAMING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE INTO ALL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (E/2007/64)

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS (continued)

(I) WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT (E/2007/27)

SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (E/2007/27, E/2007/64, E/2007/75 and E/2007/79)

Ms. MBUGUA (Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) welcomed the recognition in the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of the need to promote gender equality and empowerment, as well as the holding of a ministerial round table at the Council's current session on women's participation in poverty alleviation and economic growth. She said that the Council had always been at the forefront of efforts to promote poverty eradication and sustainable development as well as gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system and among Member States. Reaching those goals would not however be possible without a strong mandate for mainstreaming a gender perspective in financing for development, and she therefore looked forward to significant gender-related inputs in the context of the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development in September 2007 in New York, the 2008 High-level Forum to review progress in the implementation of the Paris Declaration in Ghana and the 2008 Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development in Doha.

In that context she recalled that the 8th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting, on the theme of financing gender equality for development and democracy, held in Uganda in June 2007, had stressed the critical importance of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus for the achievement of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals. The participants had underscored the need to track money allocated by governments and donors for gender issues, create an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship and market access for their products and ensure their participation in trade policy formulation. Finance ministers had been urged to implement gender-responsive budgets. Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women would be the priority theme of

the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and it was hoped that the outcome of the session would contribute to the review of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

At its most recent session, in March 2007, the Commission had considered the theme of the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. Although policies and frameworks currently existed to protect the rights of the girl child, violence against women and girls continued unabated. The Commission had noted the important role civil society could play in identifying at-risk girls in order to enable governments to strengthen protective measures. Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the national level also provided a strong framework for national action to protect the rights of girls, including in conflict situations.

She welcomed the progress noted in the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system (E/2007/64). The data contained in the report had been validated during the February 2007 session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. With regard to the implementation of Council resolutions 2006/9 and 2006/36, she said that most entities currently had gender mainstreaming strategies and had begun to invest in gender-related training and capacity-building and new approaches. E-learning in particular was a useful tool for reaching staff in different duty stations and would accelerate the sharing of information and knowledge.

Senior management had shown greater commitment to gender mainstreaming, for example by introducing mandatory gender and leadership training and enhanced accountability for gender mainstreaming. At the country level, the One United Nations pilot programme offered promising new ways to mainstream gender into the work of country teams. The United Nations Development Group had recently endorsed pilot gender performance indicators for that programme and developed a process for selected country teams to devise models for integrated programming to support gender equality.

Clear gaps nevertheless remained. Gender analysis, which was a critical tool for gender mainstreaming, was still not being systematically applied in all policies and programmes. The

incorporation of a gender perspective in results-based management training remained weak even though that training provided an excellent entry point for integrating a gender perspective in policies and programmes. In addition, follow-up systems had not yet been put into place to help entities assess the impact of training and capacity development initiatives, for example on staff performance.

There must be greater inter-agency action on mainstreaming a gender perspective, which would require an increased effort on the part of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. The Network provided a forum for system-wide discussion of gender mainstreaming issues. Its efforts had led to the adoption in December 2006 of the United Nations system-wide policy and strategy on gender equality and empowerment of women by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the first such policy framework for gender issues. A system-wide action plan for the implementation of that policy was currently being developed by the Network.

Continued progress towards gender mainstreaming would require concerted efforts and unwavering commitment. Every entity of the United Nations system had a responsibility to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Only by bringing together the specialized expertise and knowledge acquired over time would the Organization be able to move closer to the goal of gender equality.

Ms. KULZHANOVA (Kazakhstan) said that gender equality was a key factor in development and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, yet women continued to have unequal access to resources and opportunities and suffer abuse, violence, poverty, and discrimination. Member States must ensure equal opportunity for women - especially rural women and women living in poverty - in economic development, including training and access to microcredit. Governments should ensure pay equity for women and men and allocate appropriate resources to gender equality, including child and dependent care, parental leave and flexible work arrangements for men and women, in order to facilitate reconciliation of work and family life. Women should also be integrated into economic decision-making.

Gender issues must continue to be mainstreamed into national legislation and policies and the development programmes of the United Nations system, with appropriate budget allocations.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) High-level Regional Consultation on Gender Equality and Rights-based Development Planning and Budgeting in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), held in Kazakhstan in May 2007, was an example of effective cooperation between the United Nations and Member States. Participants had discussed the challenges and opportunities in making national development planning and assistance gender-responsive, based on the experience of the CIS countries. Participants had adopted the “Almaty Declaration” as a contribution to the High-level Forum to be held in Ghana in September 2008.

She stressed that development for women was development for society as a whole. If given the opportunity women would not only improve their own situation but make a significant contribution to the development of the entire international community.

Ms. GÓMEZ OLIVER (Mexico) welcomed the work carried out by the Council in promoting the advancement of women, particularly with regard to the incorporation of the gender perspective into national policies and within the United Nations. However, she expressed concern that many of the commitments undertaken by States were slow to be implemented. Women continued to be subjected to discrimination, sexual violence and labour exploitation, were denied equal access to education and employment opportunities, and new challenges emerged constantly that required programmes and policies aimed specifically at women. Particular attention was required to address the double discrimination suffered by women who belonged to particularly vulnerable groups, such as migrant or indigenous people.

The modest progress made at the national level was regrettably not matched by concrete results within the United Nations. The extent of gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system had been very limited, particularly in areas not directly concerned with women’s issues. It was therefore necessary to create effective monitoring mechanisms to adequately follow up the mandates approved by the Council on that issue, particularly the obligatory training of United Nations personnel on gender issues, and to establish a database of reliable statistics on the progress made. The Commission on the Status of Women must strengthen its interaction with the Council’s other subsidiary bodies in order to coordinate joint strategies to implement policies on women.

Mexico had repeatedly expressed concern with regard to the fragmentation, duplication of efforts, inefficiency in the administration of resources and lack of coordination that characterized the work currently undertaken by the United Nations bodies concerned with women's issues. In order for the United Nations to effectively fulfil its role in the promotion of, and provision of technical assistance for, the implementation of the relevant international commitments, it was indispensable for Member States to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the existing gender architecture, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Population Fund and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Bearing in mind that significant obstacles to the implementation of internationally agreed instruments such as the Beijing Platform for Action remained, strengthening of the system's operational capacity should be prioritized.

Only by advancing towards the achievement of the gender-related targets agreed by the international community could the Millennium Development Goals be attained and sustainable development and full respect for the human rights of all in society guaranteed.

Ms. KOLONTAI (Belarus) said that her Government had attached great importance to facilitating gender equality and ensuring the rights of women over the past 10 years. In that regard, 2006 had been designated the year of the mother, and 2007 the year of the child, which had not been a purely symbolic gesture, but rather had involved extensive State efforts in support of women, children and families. Among a number of important measures adopted in that field was a new national plan aimed at eliminating gender discrimination in all areas of life, particularly in the workplace, and encouraging women to work in traditionally male-dominated areas. Belarusian women were already well represented in senior positions in business and the judiciary, and they accounted for one third of the deputies in the Belarusian parliament and 45 per cent of municipal deputies. A large number of women's associations also made an important contribution to civil society.

Belarus was actively involved in efforts to combat trafficking in women and children, including ensuring that employment opportunities were available to women to make them less vulnerable to trafficking. In 2006, at the initiative of Belarus, the General Assembly had adopted a resolution to improve coordination to combat trafficking. She underscored the importance of

implementing that resolution and elaborating an action plan for the United Nations on combating trafficking in persons. Efforts between States, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs must be coordinated to create partnerships in that area. A number of important international conferences on trafficking in women and girls had been held that year at the initiative of Belarus.

Mr. MAJIB (Iraq) said that Iraq had long been a pioneer of promoting the rights of women and empowering them in the economy, family and society. Iraq was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, but the successive conflicts in his country had made it difficult to fully implement that instrument. Nonetheless, participation of women's associations in civil society was increasing, and training was being provided to women. In Iraq, women had taken on positions of responsibility in all sectors of society, despite having suffered years of poverty and being the victims of illiteracy and malnutrition.

The new Constitution included provisions guaranteeing equality of the sexes. For example, all Iraqi citizens, men and women, had the right to participate in public life and could vote and stand for election, and all Iraqis were equal before the law, without any discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic origin or religion. Under the Constitution, the State guaranteed social security and health to each individual, particularly women and children, and there were also provisions concerning housing and income. The Constitution established an electoral law providing that 25 per cent of deputies must be women.

The Iraqi people needed the support of the international community to ensure the stability and security necessary to create a new society that would also meet the needs of Iraqi women and enable them to play their full role in a society based on democracy and human rights.

Mr. Jazairy (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan) said that the culture of Sudan attached great importance to the dignity of both women and men. Sudan had been one of the first States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and had also ratified its two optional protocols.

Recognizing the interdependence of development and human rights, priority had been attached to the empowerment and advancement of women, in keeping with the country's circumstances and values. Emphasis had also been placed on critical intervention points, which had yielded positive results.

The peace agreement signed in January 2005 had allowed further progress in the advancement of women. The interim Constitution set tasks for peace and achieving political, economic and social equity for all segments of society, men and women equally. A national policy for the empowerment of women, based on the country's cultural heritage and in accordance with the priorities set out in the Beijing Platform for Action, had been adopted by the Council of Ministers in March of that year. The policy promoted the participation of women as full partners in development, and focused on such areas as capacity-building for women in the fields of health, environment and education; economic empowerment; participation in political life and decision-making processes; and peacebuilding and dispute settlement.

Although the gender gap in higher education was now to the advantage of women, they still lagged behind at the primary level. Concerted national efforts and support from the international community were required in order to improve that situation and achieve internationally agreed objectives. Maternal, child and infant mortality remained high and also required intensified efforts. The representation of women in the legislative body had increased to 19 per cent, and measures were being taken to achieve a level of 25 per cent in the upcoming elections.

Administrative decisions had been taken to prohibit female genital mutilation in clinics and hospitals. The Ministry of Education had made every effort to include awareness-raising of that practice in educational curricula, and significant efforts had also been made by civil society in that regard. Nonetheless, the practice remained widespread and required further social awareness-raising in preparation for the necessary legislation to come into force.

Although the phenomena of sexual violence and rape were rare and harshly punished under the law, there had been some manifestations in the conflict-affected areas of Darfur. Legal mechanisms had been established to protect women and girls and put an end to impunity, and psychological rehabilitation centres had also been opened for victims. Some of the cases had

been due to the behaviour of elements of the United Nations mission, and since the presence of hybrid forces had now been accepted, it was hoped that the United Nations would make further efforts to ensure that such behaviour did not recur in the future.

Mr. GOLTYAEV (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation supported the United Nations approach to gender equality, which was crucial for sustainable social development. Despite clear progress, the international community still faced a complex range of problems in relation to gender equality, including the feminization of poverty, lack of effectiveness of mechanisms for the empowerment of women, gaps in legislation on non-discrimination and an increase in violence against women. The Russian Federation was committed to fulfilling its obligations in respect of the promotion and protection of women's rights, in the context of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Achieving gender equality was a priority of the Russian Federation's domestic policies, and to that end a government commission on gender equality had been established, one of the first tasks of which had been to draft a national strategy on gender equality. The commission was taking a range of measures to ensure gender equality in the social, economic, educational and cultural spheres and was developing legislative and institutional frameworks. The Russian Federation valued the work of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which played a leading role in the promotion and protection of women's rights and strengthening gender equality and the development of constructive dialogue. The increasing politicization of the work of the Commission was worrying, and efforts must be made to concentrate on the practical aspects of improving the situation for women, since it was inappropriate to use the forum for the advancement of opportunistic and often confrontational initiatives with little to do with the mandate, aims and activities of the Commission.

While his delegation welcomed United Nations efforts to integrate gender equality into the activities of its institutions and mechanisms, and particularly noted the work carried out in the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/36, it considered that much remained to be done. Efforts in that regard should be measured, well planned, and conducted in a timely but not hasty manner, in order to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations as a whole. The work of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women was particularly valuable, and the Institute's budget should consist only

of voluntary contributions. The United Nations, including the Economic and Social Council, played an invaluable role in the promotion of gender equality, and the Russian Federation welcomed international cooperation in that regard, and was open to dialogue with all interested parties.

Mr. MARTABIT (Observer for Chile) said that activities must continue to be developed to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women. As follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Chilean Government had undertaken a firm commitment to gender equality, reflected in the Gender Agenda for the period from 2006 to 2010 - a technical and political instrument that compiled the principal commitments in that area. The fulfilment of those obligations was the responsibility of the Council of Ministers for Gender Equality, and they had been incorporated into the Government programming system, thus enabling the President to undertake periodic evaluations.

A reform of the social security system was currently under way, which included a significant increase in pensions for women on low salaries, thus significantly improving the quality of life of retired women and ensuring that they did not fall below the poverty line. The reform would also guarantee all women a minimum pension, regardless of whether they had been in paid employment or not or had contributed to the social security system. As to parental leave, a law had been promulgated establishing the right of fathers to four days' paid leave on the birth of their child.

The Government, through the Chilean National Service for Women, had designed a code of best work practices and non-discrimination for the central administration of the State, whose objective was to promote measures and programmes to combat discrimination against women, such as training and career development for women, equal remuneration and work/life balance policies for women and men, and which would also be applied in the private sector. In terms of equal opportunities in the field of employment, the major challenge facing the Government was to generate and apply gender policies in the employment sector that would improve work conditions for women by 2010. Particular attention was paid to creating instruments to assess the results of gender policies for equal pay and equal opportunities.

Mainstreaming of women's rights throughout the United Nations system continued to be a high priority for Chile. It was essential to integrate a gender perspective into all issues on the United Nations agenda. Chile would soon be presenting a draft resolution on the mainstreaming of women's rights throughout the United Nations system at the Human Rights Council, for which it hoped to receive the co-sponsorship and support of other delegations, the United Nations institutions and representatives of civil society.

Ms. PARK Yu Ri (Observer for the Republic of Korea) said that her Government fully supported the United Nations gender mainstreaming initiative and commended the progress made to date in terms of capacity-building of the United Nations agencies and personnel in that area. She stressed that gender mainstreaming was not an end in itself, but rather an approach to attaining the goal of gender equality and empowerment of women through the implementation of national gender equality policies. Her delegation strongly supported the idea of establishing a focal point to coordinate decentralized efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in the United Nations system. Greater attention should be paid to developing innovative forms of capacity-building and evaluating the content and quality of training. Gender mainstreaming initiatives should pay particular consideration to women in developing countries, and the United Nations should give priority to support for programmes and projects that would significantly benefit them, combining gender equality and social development.

Her delegation welcomed the seven recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General, and strongly encouraged the United Nations bodies to develop concrete plans of action to implement and prioritize them.

Ms. PHUMAS (Thailand) said that, while some progress had been made in gender mainstreaming at both the national and international levels, particularly within the United Nations system, a gap remained between understanding of basic gender mainstreaming concepts and their implementation in daily work. Efforts must therefore be intensified to build individual and organizational capacity for gender mainstreaming, as well as to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women at all levels. Thailand was committed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

She noted with satisfaction that the Human Rights Council continued to give priority to the issues of violence against women, advancement of women, gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Although not currently a member of the Human Rights Council, Thailand had joined more than 50 countries in issuing a joint statement on the question of mainstreaming a gender perspective into the work of the Human Rights Council at its session in March 2007. It was necessary for all United Nations mechanisms and agencies to continue to closely coordinate their work and resources to ensure that gender equality was top of the global agenda and the relevant commitments of the international community were implemented in the most effective and efficient manner.

The Thai Government believed that progress for women represented progress for all, and that the enhancement of gender sensitivities supported the development of society. Thailand had made considerable progress on the issue of violence against women. A number of projects had been launched by the ministries concerned to ensure the country's effectiveness in addressing and raising awareness and understanding of violence against women. Thailand had also undergone a process of educational reform to promote knowledge of children's and women's rights, gender roles in the family and people's participation in community development, regardless of sex. Efforts to mainstream gender perspectives and combat sexual harassment at work and increase the participation of women in public life had also been consistently promoted. Thailand had likewise undertaken considerable efforts to achieve its Millennium Development Goals on gender equality and empowerment of women. In promoting the advancement of women and addressing the problem of violence against women, it was essential to foster a culture of best practice exchanges among countries in the development of national laws on those issues. The United Nations agencies concerned should also be encouraged to assist countries in that regard.

It was essential to address the problem of violence against women and promote the equality and empowerment of women as well as the concept of mainstreaming gender equality at the grassroots level, beginning by changing the attitudes of men and boys as well as women and girls. Education played a significant role in developing proper attitudes that lasted a lifetime, and could serve as a functional mechanism to instil awareness of women's human rights, self-confidence and self-worth in girls and women, as well as respect for women in boys and men.

She expressed concern with regard to the lack of progress in meeting the gender balance targets of the United Nations. The United Nations system should do its utmost to strictly uphold that principle. She therefore encouraged all United Nations organizations to move towards the goal of achieving 50/50 gender balance.

Ms. MUÑOZ ALÍ (Bolivia) said that, as a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and with a view to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Bolivia had been implementing political, economic and social changes, despite the difficult conditions inherited from neoliberal economic models that had feminized poverty. In 18 months, the Government had implemented policies to guarantee equal access to health services, particularly in rural areas, and attached great importance to its literacy programme for women and men as well as guaranteeing schooling of boys and girls through the school voucher system, and a nutrition programme for boys and girls up to the age of 5.

The eradication of gender discrimination, which had characterized the colonization process in Latin America, was a major challenge. The Aymara and Quechua civilizations had always granted women equal roles, and those traditions had survived to some extent despite the processes of cultural inquisition and market economy. She outlined the forms of exploitation suffered by indigenous women during the colonial period and their participation in the wars of independence.

Under the first indigenous President, Bolivian women were now participating for the first time in the Constituent Assembly, debating their rights and making political and social demands. Women occupied the important posts in the Cabinet, thus ensuring effective participation in political decision-making.

She drew attention to the double discrimination indigenous women were subjected to, and stressed that the gender mainstreaming process must take due account of that group.

Mr. TORRINGTON (Guyana) said that, although there was no lack of United Nations mandates or lack of agreement between States Members of the United Nations on the subject of gender equality, greater emphasis should be placed on the successful implementation of those mandates. The United Nations must be seen to give good examples of

principles and best practices, particularly through mainstreaming gender equality in all of its programmes. His delegation noted with interest the content of the United Nations Secretary-General's report, contained in document E/2007/64, in particular the emphasis on the need for capacity-building among staff members. Violence against women was not only iniquitous in itself but also prevented women from contributing to peace and development at all levels. Guyana would contribute actively to strengthening the United Nations system to promote the empowerment of women.

Ms. BAQUERIZO (Ecuador) said that her delegation supported efforts to promote gender mainstreaming in the United Nations and welcomed the progress made in that regard. She called on all United Nations entities to ensure that gender mainstreaming was considered a priority, and welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Parity must be achieved in all countries and efforts must be made to ensure the full participation of women in all aspects of society.

Ms. BAIARDI (Paraguay) said that Paraguay endorsed efforts by the international community to improve the status of women throughout the world, and drew particular attention to the situation of older women, who constituted a considerable proportion of the population and whose needs were often neglected. The situation of migrants and orphans should also be given due attention, since in situations of conflict orphans were often raised by their grandmothers, who required special support and assistance.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-first session (E/2007/27)

A. Agreed conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-first session, contained in Chapter 1, Section A, of its report, for transmission to the commemorative high-level plenary meeting devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children. In the absence of any objections, he took it that the Council wished to transmit the agreed conclusions to the commemorative meeting.

It was so decided.

B. Draft resolution: Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the draft resolution on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, contained in Section B of the report.

Mr. HAYEE (Pakistan) said that Pakistan had introduced the resolution at the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2007, where it had received wide support. The resolution expressed concern about the grave situation of Palestinian women in the occupied territories, which resulted from the severe impact of the illegal settlements and unlawful construction of a separation wall. The resolution called for full compliance with the principles and provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1949 Geneva Conventions. It also called for the provision of urgently required assistance and services to alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis faced by Palestinian women and their families. He hoped that the resolution would enjoy the support of the Council.

The PRESIDENT said that a vote had been requested on the draft resolution.

The vote was taken by roll-call.

Kazakhstan, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Algeria, Austria, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Cape Verde, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Against: Canada, United States of America.

Abstention: Angola.

The draft resolution was adopted by 38 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 1 abstention.

Ms. SHESTACK (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that while her Government remained concerned about the situation of Palestinian women, it also grieved for the innocent Israelis who had suffered and died as a result of Palestinian terrorist attacks, which went unrecognized in the international community. One-sided resolutions only served to undermine the ability of the United Nations to play a constructive role in furthering the peace that would improve the lot of Palestinian women, and all those involved in the conflict.

Ms. THOMPSON (Costa Rica), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that Costa Rica attached great importance to the rights of all women, and had therefore voted in favour of the resolution. Although Palestinian women were in a particularly dire situation in the occupied territories, United Nations bodies and the international community must strengthen women's rights throughout the world, irrespective of their nationality.

Ms. FURMAN (Observer for Israel) expressed her dismay at the adoption of the resolution, which she said was not universally applicable, and turned a humanitarian issue into a political one, by focusing attention on Palestinian women and promoting unequal standards. Although Israel supported efforts to improve the quality of all women, it did not consider the present resolution appropriate, since it was selective and ignored internal factors in Palestinian society that negatively affected women, as well as ignoring the harmful effects of terrorism and intra-Palestinian violence on Palestinian and Israeli women.

Women from both sides of the conflict were suffering, and efforts were being made to decrease hostilities and renew security, in order to create improved social and economic conditions for all. Selectiveness, such as that demonstrated by the adoption of the resolution, would not assist those efforts.

C. Draft decision: Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-first session and the provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-second session of the Commission

The draft decision was adopted.

The PRESIDENT announced that the Council had concluded its consideration of the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.