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Summary record of the 22nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 12 June 2014, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) (Republic of Korea)

Contents

Coordination, programme and other questions

- (c) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system*

Economic and environmental questions

- (j) Women and development*

Social and human rights questions

- (a) Advancement of women*

* Items which the Council has decided to consider together.

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions

(c) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2014/63; E/2014/L.12)

Economic and environmental questions

(j) Women and development (E/2014/27-E/CN.6/2014/15)

Social and human rights questions

(a) Advancement of women (E/2014/3 and E/2014/27-E/CN.6/2014/15)

1. **Ms. Puri** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2014/63), said that in 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action had established gender mainstreaming as a global strategy for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. In 1997, the Economic and Social Council had defined gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes. Member States had agreed that gender mainstreaming was required to integrate specific concerns and experiences into all policies and programmes in all sectors so that inequality was not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming was to achieve gender equality. In addition to being principle-driven, gender equality and women's empowerment were crucial to sustainable development.

2. The report of the Secretary-General assessed progress in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women within the United Nations system since the adoption of Council resolution 2013/16. It was based on reporting from nearly all United Nations entities under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the analysis of

information provided by 132 resident coordinators in their annual reports for 2013. Using a common set of performance indicators, almost all United Nations entities had participated in the reporting exercise over two consecutive years.

3. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan had resulted in substantial improvements in the performance of the United Nations system on gender mainstreaming. In the second year of implementation, progress had been seen in 14 of the 15 performance indicators, including notable advances in the areas of gender responsive auditing, performance management, programme review and knowledge generation. Gender policies were in place in 29 entities, departments and offices, an increase of 6 over the previous year, with an additional 13 planned for 2014.

4. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan also highlighted the weaknesses of the Organization's work on gender, providing actionable findings. According to the report of the Secretary-General, entities exceeded requirements in only a few instances. Performance remained poor for many indicators, including evaluation, resource tracking, gender architecture and parity, capacity assessment and coherence. In the Secretariat, only 38 per cent of offices and departments met or exceeded requirements. Greater capacity was needed to meet the performance standards, and substantial technical assistance would be required to that end.

5. Strengthening the coordination and coherence of gender-responsive operational activities at the country level remained a key priority for the United Nations system. In that regard, UN-Women had produced an issues brief on gender mainstreaming in developing programming. Among a number of examples of effective United Nations system coordination where UN-Women had played a central role, accountability for gender equality at the programme level had been strengthened by the use of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) gender scorecard, the gender audit and the gender marker; UNDG had endorsed standards and principles for gender markers to guide the development of a system-wide approach for tracking resources that supported gender equality results; and a minimum set of gender indicators had been developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics as a guide for national and international production and compilation of gender statistics. That set of indicators had been endorsed by

the United Nations Statistical Commission and made publicly available in March 2014. The United Nations Statistics Division had also developed a set of guidelines on measuring violence against women.

6. As Chair of the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, UN-Women had developed a roster of United Nations gender experts to support country teams in their efforts to better integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women into their programming. It had also launched a course on gender equality and women's empowerment for all United Nations system staff, and supported the presence of gender advisers within resident coordinator offices in countries where UN-Women did not have full-fledged country offices. There were 105 United Nations Gender Theme Groups around the world, of which 62 were led or co-led by UN-Women.

7. While there had been substantial improvements in the Organization's performance on gender equality, much remained to be done in order for the United Nations system to lead by example in gender mainstreaming. The resolution before the Council was a means to strengthen the gender equality work of the United Nations system and she looked forward to its adoption. The post-2015 development agenda also represented a unique opportunity to advance the status of women.

8. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Observer for the Philippines), Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, introducing the report of the Commission on its fifty-eighth session (E/2014/27-E/CN.6/2014/15), said that progress in achieving and implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for women and girls had been slow and uneven. The Commission's priority theme — "challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls" — had therefore been very timely. At its fifty-eighth session, the Commission had set out to renew commitments to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women, and to give a strong impetus to their inclusion as core priorities in the post-2015 development agenda.

9. Following lengthy negotiations, the Commission had adopted agreed conclusions on the priority theme, which included a reaffirmation of existing commitments; assessments of the situation of women and girls with regard to each of the MDGs; critical issues related to gender equality and the empowerment

of women that were not adequately addressed by the MDGs; and factors that had held back achievement of the Goals for women and girls. It was the first time that the Commission, or any other intergovernmental body, had undertaken a detailed goal-by-goal assessment of the MDGs for women and girls. The findings strongly indicated where Member States and other stakeholders should focus their efforts in the future.

10. Based on the assessment, the Commission urged stakeholders to take actions to realize women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights; strengthen the enabling environment for gender equality and the empowerment of women; maximize investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women; strengthen the evidence base in that area; ensure women's participation and leadership at all levels; and strengthen accountability. The Commission also called for a stand-alone goal on gender equality, the empowerment of women, and human rights of women and girls to be included in the post-2015 development agenda. It had adopted several resolutions, one of which was before the Council for adoption.

General discussion

11. **Mr. Hisajima** (Japan) said that creating a society where women would "shine", as Prime Minister Abe had recently proposed at the General Assembly, was a priority area of Japanese foreign policy. Over the course of three years, Japan was providing official development assistance in the amount of more than 3 billion dollars, primarily for women in developing countries.

12. Women's health was vital for their social participation. Japan attached great importance to universal health coverage, which was an integral part of the post-2015 development agenda and must reflect a gender perspective. It was also imperative to have a paragraph on universal health coverage in the agreed conclusions of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission for Social Development. A draft resolution on gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters, submitted by Japan to the Commission at its fifty-eighth session, had been adopted by consensus with 79 sponsors.

13. A recently released revitalization strategy for Japan placed great importance on the success of women. An immediate goal was to increase the

representation of women in leadership positions to 30 per cent by 2020.

14. Japan had implemented projects for women in rural areas and refugee women in such countries as Guinea, Lebanon, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic, to increase their access to labour markets and enable them to achieve economic autonomy. War victims in the Syrian Arab Republic had been hired to work on reconstruction projects in affected areas, as part of a Japanese cash-for-work programme.

15. In September 2014, Japan would host the World Assembly for Women in Tokyo, a high-level international symposium and round table bringing together key figures from around the world to identify challenges facing women and generate new ideas that would enable women to flourish in Asia and worldwide.

16. **Ms. Robl** (United States of America), referring to the draft resolution on gender mainstreaming (E/2014/L.12) said that the emphasis placed on monitoring, evaluation and reporting on United Nations gender-related programmatic work, and the recognition that the Commission on the Status of Women and UN-Women played important roles in mainstreaming gender considerations throughout the United Nations, were to be commended.

17. With regard to the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-eighth session, the United States strongly supported the Commission's call for a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment to be included as part of the post-2015 development agenda. The agreed conclusions on the challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls included key priorities of her Government, including those of addressing violence against women and girls, female genital mutilation, honour crimes, and early and forced marriage; eliminating the demand that fostered commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour; meeting the needs of women and girls living with HIV-AIDS and in situations of natural disasters; promoting women's sexual and reproductive health and rights; ensuring girls' equal access to education; and recognizing the contributions of women human rights defenders. In 2013, the United States had launched an initiative to help humanitarian organizations, including United Nations entities, deploy staff and create

innovative programmes to respond to gender-based violence from the onset of a disaster or conflict.

18. While her delegation was pleased that women with disabilities and indigenous and older women had been specifically mentioned in the agreed conclusions, it would have welcomed a reference to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, who were too often subjected to violence and discrimination.

19. Violence against indigenous women and girls occurred worldwide and required additional attention from the United Nations system. Indigenous women and girls in the United States faced disproportionately high rates of violence. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 provided additional protection for them.

20. Older women were at risk of physical and emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation, including financial exploitation. Such abuse was rarely reported, and its extent and consequences were therefore not widely understood. Early and forced marriage remained high in developing countries, where one in seven girls was married before the age of 15. Such marriages threatened girls' health, education and enjoyment of human rights.

21. **Mr. Hahn** Choonghee (Republic of Korea) said that while there had been impressive normative progress with regard to gender mainstreaming, the advances in the rights and situation of women and girls had fallen short. Maternal mortality remained high in Africa; female genital mutilation, early and forced marriage and other harmful practices persisted; and violence against women in conflicts was perpetrated with impunity. Those issues had repercussions for all three main pillars of the United Nations: peace and security; human rights; and development. His delegation encouraged all United Nations agencies to continue to mainstream gender in accordance with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

22. Gender equality and women's empowerment should be included in the post-2015 development agenda not only as a stand-alone goal, but also as a cross-cutting issue. Indicators should be disaggregated by age and sex. The agenda should also incorporate a human-rights-based approach and the promotion of equality, since those elements were essential in order for sustainable development to thrive.

23. **Mr. Jamalhariri** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation had participated in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-eighth session. Saudi Arabia attached great importance to promoting and protecting the role of women and girls in society and upholding the status that they deserved, in line with the teachings and provisions of the Islamic Sharia. While his delegation had joined consensus on the outcome document of the session, it wished to register its reservations in respect of any and all references to the expression “reproductive rights” and of paragraph (o) in its entirety. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia declared that it understood that “comprehensive [...] education for human sexuality”, referred to in paragraph (x), should be appropriate to the individual’s sex and age, should accord with national legislation, and should take into account the role of family guidance in such education. With regard to paragraph (z), it was his Government’s understanding that the application of the phrase “with particular attention to women domestic workers, who are entitled to the same basic rights as other workers” should be consistent with the provisions of national legislation.

24. Divine decrees and the cultural and historical characteristics of States should be taken into account when considering the outcome document of the Commission’s fifty-eighth session. His Government would apply the document within the parameters established by national sovereignty, the Islamic Sharia, domestic law and its obligations under international human rights law.

25. **Ms. Puri** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that she was grateful for the political support expressed for the work of UN-Women and hoped that Member States would also provide additional financial support. She welcomed the focus on gender mainstreaming, particularly in the context of the post-2015 development goals. The adoption of universal goals on sustainable development would mark a new era in development cooperation, and they must reflect both the letter and spirit of gender mainstreaming.

26. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Observer for the Philippines), Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, said that the negotiations over the agreed conclusions had been intense. It was not always possible to ensure that every delegation was completely satisfied with every aspect of the outcome document; rather, the

conclusions reflected those points that could be agreed upon at a given session, as an approximation of what delegations wished to achieve.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-eighth session (E/2014/27-E/CN.6/2014/15)

Draft resolution: Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

27. **The President**, invited the Council to take action, under the agenda item “Economic and environmental questions”, sub-item (b), “Women and development”, on the draft resolution entitled “Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women”, contained in chapter I, section B, of the report. The draft resolution had been adopted by the Commission by a recorded vote of 22 to 1, with 10 abstentions. He understood that a recorded vote in the Council had been requested on the draft resolution.

28. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Indonesia and Russian Federation.

Against:

Canada and United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Austria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Serbia, Sweden and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

29. *The draft resolution was adopted by 12 votes to 2, with 15 abstentions.*

30. **Ms. Meitzad** (Observer for Israel) said that the draft resolution on the situation of Palestinian women was fundamentally flawed. Many crucial facts had been omitted, revealing that its true purpose was to demonize Israel. The drafters had demonstrated scant concern for the lives of the women in question.

31. The draft resolution contained no reference to the culture of patriarchy prevailing in the region, which was alone responsible for an illiteracy rate among Palestinian women nearly four times higher than the rate for men. Nor did it express concern over the

morality campaign in Gaza being conducted by Hamas, whose activities further limited women's already marginal place in society.

32. According to a Palestinian survey conducted in 2011, over 30 per cent of women in the West Bank had been exposed to violence or abuse in their lifetime. In the Gaza Strip, the figure stood at over 50 per cent. The number of so-called honour killings had doubled from 2011 to 2012, and then doubled again in 2013. Those facts were not reflected in the resolution.

33. A number of the original sponsors of the resolution themselves had deplorable records on the rights of women and girls, with females' unequal status codified in law. In many of the countries in question, women and girls were routinely raped, harassed, abused and murdered, while law enforcement turned a blind eye. In some of them, honour killings were a daily occurrence, and in some, women and girls were legally stoned to death for "morality crimes". By failing to address such issues, States were telling women that they should tolerate the intolerable and that their plight was not a high priority. The draft resolution was a biased exercise that cynically deflected attention from real problems and real solutions.

Draft decision: Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-eighth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission

34. **The President** invited the Council to take action, under the agenda item "Social and human rights questions", sub-item (a), "Advancement of women", on the draft decision entitled "Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-eighth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission", contained in chapter I, section C, of the report.

35. *The draft decision was adopted.*

36. *A panel discussion on the topic "The United Nations system: fit for purpose on gender mainstreaming", moderated by Ms. Lakshmi Puri (Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), followed. The panellists were Ms. Tatjana Von Steiger Weber (Switzerland); Ms. Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, (Deputy Executive Director for Management, United Nations Population Fund) and Mr. Chibaula David*

Silwamba (Zambia). The panellists made statements and an interactive discussion ensued, during which the panellists responded to comments and questions from the representatives of Japan and the United Kingdom and the observer for the European Union.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.