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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 12 October 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Hilale (Morocco)
later: Mr. Mohamed (Vice-Chair)..... (Guyana)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 29: Advancement of women (A/70/38 and A/70/124)

(a) Advancement of women (A/C.3/70/3, A/70/204, A/70/205 and A/70/209)

(b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/70/180)

1. **Ms. Puri** (Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) welcomed the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 5, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and the reinforcing targets underpinning all the other goals. That opportunity should be seized and taken forward with the requisite determination, commitment and investment. Transformative financing would be needed to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and realization of gender equality and women's empowerment within a generation.

2. A groundswell of commitment had been generated by the Beijing+20 process. At the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, ministers and Government representatives had pledged to implement the Beijing Platform for Action fully and expeditiously and to close gender-equality gaps. Participants at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action, an unprecedented event during which Heads of State and Government had made personal and political commitments to the issues of gender equality and women's empowerment, had voiced strong calls to action to which decision-makers should respond. Every effort should be made to ensure that the climate agreement to be adopted at the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2015 added its contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment. The agreement should empower women to lead in adaptation, mitigation and resilience and become effective participants in the international community's work with regard to climate change.

3. The report on violence against women migrant workers (A/70/205) was very timely; women and girls were the oft-ignored face of migration, and violence against women was a challenge at all stages of the migration cycle. Denied their rights and subjected to persecution and discrimination, they often encountered the perils of people smuggling and trafficking. As migrant workers, they contributed to the economies of their host countries, but were also exposed to exploitation and violence. There was an urgent need for States to establish effective legal, policy and regulatory frameworks to protect women migrant workers, including domestic workers, and to ensure their access to justice.

4. In the context of the report on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/70/204), she said that rural women, who were at the forefront of coping with the consequences of climate change, natural disasters and post-conflict situations, had fared worse than rural men and urban women and men in the Millennium Development Goal indicators for which data was available. They also faced compounded and multiple forms of discrimination, inequalities and violence. States should therefore step up their efforts and investment in rural development and in rural women's access to infrastructure and services, safeguard their human rights and ensure their economic, social and political empowerment. The international community now had an opportunity to connect Sustainable Development Goal 5 and its means of implementation to other Sustainable Development Goals relevant to rural women, in particular those concerning food security and sustainable agriculture.

5. On gender perspectives in the work of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, UN-Women was disappointed that the percentage of resolutions with a gender perspective adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session had declined in comparison with previous years, although the percentage adopted by the Economic and Social Council had increased by 16 per cent in 2014. The Committee was urged to work closely with the other Main Committees to reverse that trend. UN-Women would support those efforts.

6. Gains made in gender equality and women's empowerment in recent years, including the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, must be translated into action at all levels and by all stakeholders. UN-Women had endeavoured to respond

effectively to the new and expanded requests from Member States for support and guidance. As those demands were likely to continue to grow, it would need to have the capacity to provide the substantive support that would ensure the accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Notwithstanding all its efforts, UN-Women did not have resources commensurate with its tasks. She appealed to the General Assembly to strengthen the capacity of UN-Women to fully implement its normative support function, and to ensure that it was appropriately financed so that it was fit for purpose.

7. **Ms. Hayashi** (Chair, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) said that prior to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, 189 States had already accepted the principles inherent in Goal 5 as legally binding when they became party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Though the inclusion of Goal 5 as a stand-alone goal augured well for the future, it was important for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to be soundly grounded in a human-rights based approach to development. In order to ensure the effective, inclusive and transparent review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in line with the joint statement adopted in June 2015 at the 27th meeting of the chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, the Committee called on Member States to ensure that information gathered and acted upon by treaty bodies was systematically included in the follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals.

8. The Committee regularly called on States parties to the Convention to remove structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, ensure equal opportunities for women and girls in education and employment, alleviate women's unpaid care burden, and promote women in leadership and decision-making positions. Moreover, it was in the process of formulating guidance to State Parties in the form of new general recommendations which would address the rights of rural women; gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change; and the rights of women and girls to education.

9. Education was key to the empowerment of women, as it enhanced the enjoyment of other human rights. Quality primary- and secondary-school education increased women's bargaining power within

the labour force and facilitated their access to health care and adequate sanitation. In addition, empowering women through education, skills training and legal literacy was vital in addressing gender-based violence. States should tackle poverty and empower women by addressing power imbalances across societies and the underlying structural barriers to gender equality, such as unequal access to and control over resources and gendered division of labour. The Committee was currently updating its General Recommendation No. 19 in that regard.

10. General Recommendation No. 33 identified six interrelated components of justice systems that were essential to ensure women's access to justice, and provided guidance to States on how to eliminate discriminatory procedures, practices and stereotyping within justice systems. Through its work under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, the Committee sought to strengthen women's access to justice when they were unable to obtain redress at the national level. Over the past year it had adopted final decisions on nine individual communications, and had also concluded proceedings in relation to inquiries under the Optional Protocol.

11. To further rationalize its working methods, in line with General Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, the Committee had begun to implement the simplified reporting procedure, and had further harmonized its approach to conducting dialogue with States parties, preparing concluding observations and elaborating general recommendations with that of other treaty bodies. However, the necessary staffing support had not kept pace with the Committee's increased workload or the expectations placed on it by women worldwide.

12. **Ms. Schneider Calza** (Brazil) asked the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women whether there was a possibility that the Commission on the Status of Women could bring countries together in New York to discuss best practices with regard to the implementation of international commitments on the elimination of discrimination against women and combating human trafficking, in particular of women; and whether she foresaw women parliamentarians playing a concerted role in the promotion of awareness of the need for universal ratification of the Convention.

13. **Ms. Kirianoff Crimmins** (Switzerland) said that Switzerland was fully committed to the promotion of women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. Progress in those areas was essential for global sustainable development, as women's economic independence could serve as a barrier against poverty. It was time to include women and girls as both actors and catalysts for change. She asked the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women what the Committee's role would be in promoting the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 5, and what the main challenges were likely to be in that respect. She also asked how the Committee planned to handle the growing number of communications and enquiries it received, in the context of the strengthening of the treaty bodies.

14. **Ms. Nescher** (Liechtenstein) asked the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to elaborate on the impact General Recommendation No. 30 had had on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, how the Committee had applied the recommendation, and what follow-up could be expected.

15. **Mr. Holtz** (United Kingdom) said that his Government welcomed the simplified reporting procedure for States parties to the Convention, and had found its national review both constructive and insightful. He asked the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to comment on the key benefits of that new, streamlined approach and on the obstacles to effective examination of reports by the Committee.

16. **Ms. Skotnes** (Norway) said that it had taken approximately one year to prepare her Government's national report. That process had been worthwhile, as it had helped to set the gender-equality agenda in the various national ministries. Norway sought to have a transparent report-preparation process that involved civil society, which had also made a contribution in the form of a shadow report. She asked the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women whether civil society was sufficiently involved in the various government reporting processes.

17. **Mr. Whiteley** (Observer for the European Union) urged all States that were not yet party to the Convention to take the necessary measures to do so. The European Union noted the withdrawal of

reservations by several States, both general reservations and those that pertained to specific articles of the Convention. States were encouraged to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to actively implement the Convention, including through legal reform, law enforcement and the removal of all obstacles to ensuring gender equality and to the promotion of human rights regardless of economic, political or cultural systems or traditions. The European Union welcomed the simplified reporting procedure, and urged countries to submit reports, especially those countries whose reports were long overdue. The ability of civil society organizations to play an active and independent role would be key to the Committee's success; he asked the Chair to share her views on what hindered new ratifications and the full implementation of the Convention by States.

18. **Mr. Saito** (Japan) said that education was key to the advancement of women and girls. In that vein, his Government had contributed \$7.4 million to the establishment of middle-school-level education facilities in Pakistan, which was expected to result in a significant increase of middle-school enrolment among girls. Japan, however, understood that such an increase was not enough to empower girls. It had therefore pledged to contribute over 42 billion yen in official development assistance toward quality education in the next three years. He asked the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to elaborate on what, in her view, constituted quality education.

19. **Ms. Rabbi** (Morocco) said that although progress had been achieved with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment, 31 million girls were not attending school, even more were not enrolled in secondary-level education, and 493 million women were illiterate. Bearing in mind the conclusions that the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had drawn during the high-level debate in March 2015, she asked the Chair how she would assess the possibilities offered by the 2030 sustainable development agenda, and what new means could be used to strengthen international technical and financial cooperation as well as the exchange of good practices between States.

20. **Ms. Mejía Vélez** (Colombia) asked whether the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had had an opportunity to work on the issue of transitional justice. Colombia

was one of a number of countries that had been making efforts to implement transitional justice and to strengthen the justice system at the local and regional levels, which would contribute to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16.

21. **Mr. Al-Kumaim** (Yemen) said that although circumstances had not been ideal, women in Yemen had been able to exercise political rights, including the ability to serve as members of parliament, occupy Government posts or run for the presidency. Though limited to some extent, women had enjoyed rights equal to those of men. However, ongoing conflicts had resulted in the marginalization of and discrimination against over 10 million women. There was a great need for humanitarian assistance; the education system was paralysed, and about 2 million students were out of school. He asked how, in the context of their mandates, both the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Assistant Secretary-General of UN-Women would address those circumstances, and whether they had plans to cooperate with the Security Council.

22. **Mr. Coloma Grimberg** (Chile) said that the current refugee situation was important both globally and to Chile specifically and asked what the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was doing to address that situation.

23. **Ms. Hayashi** (Chair, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) said that the Inter-Parliamentary Union was invited to each session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; it had provided information and was currently working on the issue of a gender-sensitive parliament. The Committee was trying to enhance collaboration with parliaments to find out about efforts made by parliaments at local levels. It was important for the Committee to be visible in New York and collaboration with the Commission on the Status of Women and other organizations had helped in that regard.

24. In 2014, for the first time in the history of the treaty bodies, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child had adopted a joint general recommendation on harmful practices. Such cooperation should be enhanced and the importance of gender perspectives should be emphasized in all treaty body systems.

25. As regards the review process, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had followed the practice of including recommendations on the Millennium Development Goals in its concluding observations to States Parties and that practice would continue for the Sustainable Development Goals. The review process for sustainable development would need to be based on a human rights approach. The first country to be subject to the new simplified reporting procedure would not report until 2016. Under the new procedure, States Parties would not be required to give a full report but to respond to a list of questions. It would be a challenge to draft a list of questions without a report. In the future the Committee would require support from the Secretariat and new resources to address the problems caused by insufficient funding.

26. In accordance with General Recommendation No. 30, States should adopt or implement national action plans on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) both to provide remedies to women as a vulnerable group and to support women as agents for change. The focus was on the empowerment of women during and after conflict so that women could participate in new gender-sensitive societies. Regarding transitional justice after conflict, more study of Sustainable Development Goal 16 was needed. The Committee's General Recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice referred to the existence of plural justice systems in some countries. The treaty body system needed to address women's rights in conflict contexts. General Recommendation No. 30 promoted women as agents for change and the building of society on a gender-equal basis. The Committee had adopted General Recommendation No. 32 on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women. States Parties should amend and introduce gender-sensitive refugee criteria so that gender-based persecution was a ground for refugee applications.

27. Non-governmental organizations were important in the dialogue between the Committee and States Parties. She drew attention to the San José Guidelines adopted at the meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies held in San José, Costa Rica in June 2015. The Committee received information from many sources concerning harassment or intimidation by States or non-State actors of groups or individuals who contacted the treaty body system; protection was required for those human rights defenders.

28. Many countries had expressed general reservations on articles of the Convention, particularly articles 2 and 16. Some reservations on those articles had been withdrawn. Regarding universal ratification, more effort was needed to engage in dialogue with non-States parties in various regions.

29. The Committee's draft recommendation on the right to education included the concepts that teachers must be guaranteed a safe environment to teach and States Parties must provide proper support, including funding. Materials and curricula must be gender-sensitive so that children could acquire the skills and training to become gender-sensitive adults. The Sustainable Development Goals allowed the burden of care to be shared between women, men and society. Without that new perspective, women could not be empowered economically, socially or politically.

30. **Ms. Puri** (Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, UN-Women) said that UN-Women would work with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It would continue to highlight the normative importance of the Convention as a bill of rights for women and girls everywhere. Work would be carried out regionally and nationally to support governments in translating the Convention into their legal systems and constitutions and in its implementation. UN-Women would also support the engagement of civil society on the ground and in the preparation of the reports of States parties.

31. The 2030 Agenda was significant in that gender equality and women's empowerment had been mainstreamed in the broader sustainable development agenda. The gender compact within the 2030 Agenda was based on the Convention and on the Beijing Platform for Action. UN-Women would develop indicators relating to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the work to be done at all levels. Indicators had already been developed by UN-Women for 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals with gender-sensitive targets and Member States should support work relating to indicators and data.

32. The activities of UN-Women in the Middle East had been disrupted by ongoing conflicts but had now resumed. There would be a more detailed report on those activities, including the restoration of education

services for women and girls. UN-Women was of critical importance to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including in key countries such as Yemen.

33. **Ms. Šimonovič** (Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences) said that she looked forward to building on the legacies of her predecessors and continuing to build partnerships and synergies to combat violence against women and girls, based on a comprehensive and universal approach. Violence against women was a global problem despite the existence of a significant number of legal instruments and policy documents at the global and regional levels. The main task was to accelerate the full incorporation and implementation of international, national and regional instruments, policy documents and recommendations; to protect victims; and to prosecute perpetrators.

34. It was significant that the Sustainable Development Goals included a stand-alone goal, goal 5, on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Substantive equality would be achieved through the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres and the elimination of all harmful practices, including child marriage, early marriage and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation. Implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals would require systematic gender mainstreaming in all targets and indicators. Under her mandate, she would have an important role to play in accelerating and monitoring progress in implementing the Goals.

35. She had identified three broad areas which would require priority attention under her mandate; the holistic and effective implementation of international standards on violence against women, including improved follow-up of previous recommendations; finalizing the work in progress; and current challenges that required immediate attention. The main challenge to the implementation of international standards was the implementation gap caused by the lack of a holistic and comprehensive approach and insufficient connection between global and regional instruments and the mechanisms for monitoring their implementation. Synergies must be achieved between the Convention and its Optional Protocols, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and

Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) as well as regional instruments on violence against women.

36. With regard to finalizing the work in progress, she would prioritize the prevention of violence against women as a part of the mandate that dealt with eliminating the root causes of violence against women. She would focus on the obligations of States to address and modify harmful stereotypes and to repeal all national penal and family laws that were conducive to violence against women and girls, as well as on the meaningful inclusion of men and boys, awareness-raising campaigns, education, and the training of professionals.

37. Work also needed to continue on the consequences of violence against women. Such work could focus on adequate services for victims, such as a sufficient number of shelters and efficient protection orders, as well as gendered access to justice. Data on the gender-related killing of women and girls was crucial to preventing such violence but was not yet universally available. Stronger cooperation between her mandate and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime could be important in accelerating implementation of the goals of her mandate at the level of national criminal justice systems.

38. Discussions on the adequacy of international, national and regional legal frameworks to combat violence against women needed to continue. The next step could be to seek the input of regional human rights systems, treaty bodies, in particular the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and former Special Rapporteurs. It was crucial to continue collecting input from Member States and non-governmental organizations in order to take fully informed decisions on measures needed to accelerate the eradication of violence against women.

39. With regard to current challenges, violent extremism was among the immediate challenges related to violence against women. Member States were invited to submit their views on current challenges and topics that should be addressed.

40. There was a need to examine the overall efficiency and effectiveness of her mandate in relation to other global and regional mechanisms dealing with violence against women. She hoped to establish fruitful cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, including in relation to

that Committee's plans to revise General Recommendation No. 19 on violence against women. She also intended to strengthen cooperation with other relevant mandates such as the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and mandates relating to the trafficking and sale of children, albinism, minority issues, indigenous persons and older persons.

41. Her reports to the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women would afford important opportunities to exchange views on how to accelerate the elimination of violence against women. Strong links with UN-Women were also crucial to her mandate. She had met with the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to discuss possibilities for cooperation. It was also necessary to enhance cooperation between international and regional mechanisms in order to follow up the different recommendations on the elimination of violence against women.

42. In connection with the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), she said that prevention of violence against women and girls and the causes and consequences of that violence must begin during times of peace. The Women, Peace and Security Agenda should be strongly connected with the broader agenda of gender equality and empowerment of women and the elimination of violence against women.

43. In December 2015, she would be making her first country visit, at the invitation of the Government of South Africa. She had attended the World Assembly for Women 2015 in Tokyo, the Special Partnership Meeting at the World Assembly for Women, and the panel event "Uncovering the Gendered Dynamics in Global Affairs: Peace, Development and Human Rights Beyond 2015" in New York, organized by the Center for Global Affairs of the New York University School of Professional Studies; and she would be participating in a number of conferences and other meetings over the next few months.

44. *Mr. Mohamed (Guyana), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

45. **Mr. Al-Khaqani** (Iraq) said that the rights of women and girls in areas of his country occupied by the Islamic State were being violated. Not only were

women and girls being denied their rights to education and equality; they were also at risk of murder, rape or forced marriage, even if they were already married. The police and security forces had rescued a large number of such girls and women and returned them to their families. However, many were suffering severe psychological trauma and some had committed suicide. He asked whether there were any specific programmes that could be used to rehabilitate those women and reintegrate them into society.

46. **Ms. Pérez Gómez** (Colombia) said that a large proportion of violations of women's rights occurred at the local and regional levels, which was also where the implementation of existing normative instruments was weakest; she asked how the Special Rapporteur would develop her mandate to enhance implementation at those levels. The Special Rapporteur should work closely with the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice to ensure the elimination of the discriminatory laws that were contributing to the implementation gap. Her country was proud of the inter-American human rights system, in particular the contribution it had made to the advancement of the rights of women through instruments such as the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). The mandate of the Special Rapporteur had important links to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and was particularly important in the context of enhancing women's leadership and empowerment in order to enable them to access positions of power, where they would be in a position to break down the cultural and structural constraints at the root of violence against women.

47. **Ms. Fitzmaurice Gray** (Ireland) said that the increasingly depraved actions of violent extremists had undone decades of work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Humanitarian emergencies had also led to increased vulnerability for women and girls. The international community was faced with the challenge of responding to acts such as systematic sexual exploitation, sexual slavery and the targeting of adolescent girls seeking education. Impunity for all forms of gender-based violence must be addressed at the national, regional and international levels through legal procedures as well as peace and reconciliation processes. Prevention could only be achieved by addressing inequality and allowing all of

society to contribute to that goal. Therefore, while States bore ultimate responsibility for protecting victims and punishing perpetrators, civil society organizations must be allowed to continue to highlight threats and acts of violence against women. The inclusion of a specific target on the elimination of violence against women in the 2030 Agenda provided an impetus for renewed international action; she asked the Special Rapporteur how that momentum could be harnessed.

48. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the situation of women in the occupied territory was deteriorating daily as a result of killings and the destruction of homes and land carried out by the occupying Power and illegal settlers. The destruction by settlers of olive trees was particularly detrimental, as olive culture was the main source of income for many women. Recent killings included those of 18-month-old Ali Saad Dawabsha, who had been burned to death in an arson attack on his home, and a pregnant woman and her two-year-old daughter, who had lost their lives in an Israeli airstrike. Such attacks were being carried out with impunity and the Palestinian people had no recourse; even if they took matters before the international courts they faced many obstacles. She asked what practical measures the United Nations system, and in particular the Commission on the Status of Women, could take to protect Palestinian women in the occupied territory from violence and ensure that the perpetrators of crimes were duly punished.

49. **Ms. Birštunaitė** (Lithuania) said that addressing the problem of violence against women, which had enduring effects on women and on society at large, would require a comprehensive and systematic approach involving the United Nations system, Member States, regional organizations and all other stakeholders. She asked which of the measures included in existing international and regional instruments could be used to combat the phenomenon and what the main task of the Special Rapporteur would be during the term of her mandate.

50. **Ms. Doláková** (Czech Republic) said that her Government had adopted an action plan for the prevention of domestic and gender-based violence for 2015-2018, which had been developed with input from non-governmental organizations, Government ministries and experts from the academic sector and covered areas such as education, inter-disciplinary

cooperation and victim support. As women's empowerment was one of the most effective ways to combat gender-based violence, her Government had made mainstreaming a cross-cutting principle of its development cooperation and transition promotion policy. In recent years, her Government had worked with non-governmental organizations to implement projects focused on education, health care, political participation, empowerment and the prevention of gender-based violence. She asked how sufficient involvement of women in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies aimed at combating gender-based violence could be achieved.

51. **Ms. Schneider Calza** (Brazil) said that her delegation particularly welcomed the Special Rapporteur's cooperation with other special procedures mandate holders, United Nations bodies and regional organizations. She asked what the United Nations could do to encourage regions that did not currently have legally binding normative frameworks on women's rights and violence against women to develop such instruments; how technical cooperation could contribute to the development of institutional and legal frameworks governing those issues in countries that did not yet possess them; and how a legally binding global mechanism on violence against women and girls, with its own monitoring system, could be created within the context of the United Nations.

52. **Mr. Whiteley** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union condemned all forms of violence against women, which was occurring at an appalling rate around the world. While there were certainly frequent violations of women's rights associated with the conflicts and worsening humanitarian situations in certain regions, it was important to remember that even in the absence of armed conflict many women and girls faced domestic violence, intimate partner violence, stoning, forced abortion and sterilization, female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage. He called on all Member States to take action to combat such practices. The 2030 Agenda provided a benchmark for measuring progress on Goal 5, target 2, which aimed to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. He asked how the results of the research on the three regional human rights systems described in the report by the previous Special Rapporteur could be used to develop strong

indicators for that target, given that those indicators could be very important for all actors involved in efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against all women.

53. **Ms. Kirianoff Crimmins** (Switzerland) said that while her delegation broadly welcomed the report by the previous Special Rapporteur, it did not see the need for a new legally binding instrument on violence against women and girls, which could have the effect of fragmenting the existing framework for the protection of women's rights. Instead, Member States should ratify and implement the numerous existing instruments as soon as possible. In that regard, her country had signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in 2013 and was working towards its ratification.

54. Her Government was committed to combating violence against women, which was one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world, including in Switzerland. She asked how the Special Rapporteur intended to incorporate Sustainable Development Goal 5, targets 2, 3 and 6, on violence in the public and private spheres, harmful practices and access to sexual and reproductive health care, in her mandate. She also asked whether the Special Rapporteur planned to take up the issue of access to sexual and reproductive health services and the enjoyment of reproductive rights for victims of violence.

55. **Mr. Holtz** (United Kingdom) said that his Government would outline a new strategy for preventing violence against women and girls at the domestic and international levels later in 2015, guided by the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. The Declaration, in conjunction with other instruments such as the outcome documents of international and regional summit meetings, provided a sufficient international framework for global action; a new international treaty was not warranted. The international community should focus on implementing the many existing agreements and commitments, including those undertaken in 2014 at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Girl Summit in London.

56. With regard to the focus of the Special Rapporteur's mandate, his delegation felt that it would be important to consider the denial of access to sexual

and reproductive health care and rights, in the context of ending violence against women and girls. He asked the Special Rapporteur to elaborate on the role she envisioned for her mandate in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

57. **Mr. Sargsyan** (Armenia) said that his Government was considering signing the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. It supported the mandate of the Special Rapporteur but believed that care must be taken to ensure the integrity of that mandate. The report of the previous Special Rapporteur on the mission to Azerbaijan (A/HRC/26/38/Add.3) included wilful improvisations and interpretations concerning the politically sensitive issue of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Recalling subparagraph (d) of the third preambular paragraph of the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council on the importance of ensuring universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues, and the elimination of double standards and politicization, he said that it was unacceptable for a Special Rapporteur, who ought to be impartial and independent, to be misled by position that did not represent those of the international community. In conclusion, he said that his Government was committed to women's empowerment, the prevention of violence, ensuring the enjoyment of human rights and the implementation of Armenian equal rights legislation and of the Convention.

58. **Ms. Mballa Eyenga** (Cameroon) said that her delegation welcomed the Special Rapporteur's commitment to focus on education, which was an important lever for preventing and combating violence against women, as education gave women the means to take care of themselves and was therefore a means of empowerment. She asked whether the Special Rapporteur's vision of a holistic approach included action against poverty, which was of the utmost importance to her delegation and had frequently been mentioned in discussions on the definition of violence against women within the Committee and in bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women.

59. **Ms. Phipps** (United States of America) said that her delegation welcomed the involvement of the Special Rapporteur in the Equal Futures Partnership to expand women's political and economic participation and other regional and international meetings. She

asked whether the issue of statelessness would be a priority for the Special Rapporteur, given that statelessness was associated with an increased risk of family separation, arbitrary arrest and detention, human trafficking, sexual and physical violence and various other forms of exploitation and abuse. She also wished to highlight the important but often neglected issue of violence against older women, which was of great concern to her country. Lastly, she asked the Special Rapporteur to elaborate further on how she intended to address the attitudinal approaches that were the root cause of violence against women.

60. **Mr. Barkan** (Israel) said that his country was committed to preventing violence against women and children. The Palestinian refusal to negotiate had led to a wave of terrorist attacks in Israel, in the context of which the Palestinian National Authority, Hamas and Islamic jihadist groups were harming Palestinian women and children by inciting them to commit stabbings and murders. His country was taking steps to protect itself against those terrorist acts. He asked how the United Nations could help prevent Palestinian women and children from being persuaded to murder Israelis and, consequently, putting themselves and their people at risk.

61. **Mr. Coloma Grimberg** (Chile) said that while violence in armed conflict was an important issue, efforts to combat domestic violence, which was widespread, systematic and structural, should not be neglected. The vast majority of Member States had expressed their concern about violence against women in the Third Committee and other fora, but ways must be found to harness that political will in order to develop effective new measures and ensure the implementation of existing mechanisms. He asked what steps should be taken to give further consideration to the development of a legally binding international instrument on violence against women and girls.

62. **Mr. Al-Kumaim** (Yemen) said that the synergies mentioned by the Special Rapporteur could be useful in providing the women of his country with the assistance they needed. His Government wished to enhance synergies and cooperation with aid agencies working in Yemen, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and bodies which could provide assistance in the context of the ongoing conflict in his country, such as the United Nations Mine Action Service, in order to achieve the ultimate

goal of eliminating violence against women, including in conflict situations.

63. **Mr. Amoros Núñez** (Cuba) asked what the role of the General Assembly, as opposed to the Security Council, could be in addressing conflict-related issues, particularly the causes of conflict, and the question of whether those causes were related to economic and social factors such as poverty, inequality and exclusion.

64. **Ms. Šimonović** (Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences) said that violence against women and girls was reaching appalling levels in Iraq. Addressing that issue would be a priority, especially in view of the ongoing intensive discussions about the key role of women in combatting terrorism and violent extremism.

65. With regard to improving the implementation of existing instruments at the local and regional levels, it was important to identify key gaps and problems and implement standards that were producing results. The Convention of Belém do Pará provided an excellent model for other regions. Regional mechanisms should avoid duplicating international ones and should aim for concrete results. Implementation at the national level should be coordinated across all areas of law.

66. She would continue to focus on the role and participation of non-governmental organizations in combatting violence against women. As to the need for a comprehensive approach encompassing all stakeholders, she said that implementation at the national level was of key importance. Involving sufficient numbers of women in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies aimed at combating gender-based violence would take political will and would require work at different levels to bring about changes in the laws and climate of each country.

67. With respect to the issues raised by the Observer for the State of Palestine and the representative of Israel, the two States should work jointly to enable her visit so that she could provide constructive assistance.

68. It was indeed important for her, under her mandate, to cooperate with other special rapporteurs on issues related to violence against women. As to the advisability of adopting a legally binding United Nations instrument on violence against women, some such instrument was needed — if not a United Nations treaty, then perhaps a revision of General

Recommendation No. 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women or an additional protocol to the Convention. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women called on States parties to adopt guidelines, which might be useful for addressing areas that were still considered insufficiently clear.

69. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence contained the same obligations as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, but explained them in greater detail, making it helpful for interpreting obligations under the Convention. In that connection, the strategy which the United Kingdom was developing on the basis of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women could prove useful internationally by clarifying the obligations created by the Declaration.

70. If the previous Special Rapporteur had potentially violated the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council in her report on the mission to Azerbaijan, the matter should of course be discussed, as the Code of Conduct was paramount. The connection between poverty and violence against women was critical, as was the empowering value of education. The Convention, and the jurisprudence of its Committee, needed to be subjects of study at the university level.

71. Statelessness was a very important issue, and she would continue to address it. She would also address violence against older women. Altering attitudes with respect to violence against women was one of her priorities.

72. Sustainable Development Goal 5, target 2, on eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls, should provide an umbrella for efforts to find synergies among the different instruments and mechanisms. Women in situations such as in Yemen needed to be able to benefit from such synergies. In general, it would be necessary to take a comprehensive approach to assisting women in conflict situations, applying different mechanisms and agendas jointly, in order to obtain concrete results.

73. **Ms. Puri** (Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality (UN-Women)) said that the adoption of the agreed conclusions of the fifty-seventh session

of the Committee on the Status of Women and the inclusion of violence against women in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represented major victories. With respect to the questions relating to poverty, economic empowerment, universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services and reproductive rights, it was necessary to make a connection not only vertically among the Goal 5 targets, but also horizontally with other Sustainable Development Goals, including in particular Goal 1 on ending poverty and Goal 16 on creating just and peaceful societies.

74. She hoped to focus both on the recruitment and appalling abuse of women by violent extremists and on how women could become effective agents for preventing and countering extremism. On the subject of the last of the Beijing+20 events, to be held in Istanbul in December 2015, she was looking forward to working closely with the Special Rapporteur and hoped to see the participation of experts from the key regions, as well as political commitments to normative progress and implementation on the ground. UN-Women was helping some 80 countries to implement programmes for ending violence against women.

General discussion

75. **Mr. Teffo** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group welcomed the mainstreaming of women's issues in the Sustainable Development Agenda, as well as the stand-alone gender-related goal 5. While there had been progress in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, severe challenges remained, including high incidences of poverty and gender-based violence at all stages of women's lives. There was also a marked disparity in the advancement of women among regions. It was time to translate lofty aspirations into action, which must address root causes, such as gender disparities, armed conflicts and socioeconomic constraints. The Group of 77 and China reaffirmed its support for the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and for the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

76. More vigorous efforts were needed at all levels to address such problems as increased trafficking in women and girls, violations of women's fundamental rights, violence against women and girls, the spread of HIV/AIDS, women's unemployment, and women's

lack of access to social services and health care, including treatment for communicable and non-communicable diseases which adversely affected the ability of women to realize their rights and achieve their fullest potential.

77. The Group of 77 and China was also deeply concerned about the suffering of women and girls living under foreign occupation and stressed the urgent need for collective action to remove the obstacles that prevented them from fully realizing their rights.

78. New threats and challenges were emerging, including the negative impacts of the global economic and financial crisis; the food crisis and continuing food insecurity; energy access; climate change; distortions and impediments in international trade, as well as the need to design stimulus packages taking into account women's needs, priorities and contributions. The Group of 77 and China also underscored the importance of gender-responsive budgeting initiatives in order to contribute to gender equality and the fulfilment of women's rights. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, it was even more imperative for national efforts to be made to promote the inclusive and effective participation of women and girls, at all levels of decision-making and their economic empowerment.

79. The continued absence of women in peacekeeping was a major impediment to the achievement of gender equality. On the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, the objectives of that resolution must not be forgotten. The Group of 77 and China reiterated the importance of continuing to share national experiences and best practices with a view to expanding coordination at the national and international levels in support of national programmes for women, including disabled, migrant, rural and indigenous women and girls. In that connection, UN-Women played a vital role in promoting better coordination within the United Nations system. It was also of critical importance to enhance international cooperation and global partnership, including by fulfilling commitments on official development assistance, debt relief and market access, financial and technical support and capacity-building, in particular in areas such as women's education, health and job creation.

80. **Ms. Strasser-King** (Sierra Leone), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the African

Group recognized that it would not be possible to achieve the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without a revitalized and enhanced Global Partnership supported by the concrete policies and actions outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda reiterated Africa's commitment to provide adequate resources to strengthen women's voices and efforts, ensure the full and equal participation of women in all decision-making processes and governance structures and build women's productive capacities as agents of change. In January 2015, the African Union had adopted Agenda 2063, a shared framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development that sought to make optimal use of Africa's resources for the benefit of all Africans equally.

81. The African Group recognized that peace and security were essential to sustainable development, and that good governance, democracy, social inclusion and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law were preconditions. Agenda 2063 committed the African States to silencing the guns of war by 2020, including by ensuring that women had a role in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. The African Group appealed to the international community to give women in conflict or post-conflict zones and countries facing sanctions the assistance needed to strengthen their productive capacities and achieve sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

82. Violence against women and girls and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage, as well as persistent injustice and inequality in both developing and developed countries, and the relegation of women to vulnerable, low-paid jobs or unpaid domestic and caregiving work, prevented the full enjoyment of their human rights and limited their opportunities for education, training, employment and political activity. Although migration had the potential to foster growth and human development for countries of origin and countries of destination, women with irregular migration status were particularly vulnerable to exploitation, violence and abuse. The Group called on the international community to provide inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels, including life-long learning opportunities for women in vulnerable situations.

83. In the developing world, women faced persistent structural constraints, and were hindered in

diversifying their livelihoods or increasing their resilience to climate change by a lack of access to land, agricultural technologies and financial capital. In recognition of women's potential to drive sustainable development, however, African countries had made considerable progress in terms of political participation of women and their economic empowerment through microcredit programmes and schemes.

84. Maternal deaths, which were largely preventable, were linked to inadequate health services for women. Many of the problems that endangered women's health in Africa, including distance from health facilities, scarcity of health experts and inadequate access to potable water, proper sanitation and energy devices, could be solved by resilient infrastructure, innovation, and inclusive, sustainable industrialization. For that reason, the Group called on the international community to fulfil its commitments on official development assistance, technology transfer, access to markets and capacity-building.

85. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the States members of CARICOM recognized the essential role of women in the socioeconomic and political development of the region and were proud of the results of their efforts to include women and girls in their national development processes. CARICOM welcomed the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda, and reaffirmed its full support for Goal 5, as well as the adoption of the Political Declaration at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

86. CARICOM continued to make significant strides towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development objectives concerning gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly in the areas of mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies and programmes, enhancing education and training opportunities for women and girls, and increasing the participation of women in leadership and decision-making. National women's machinery had been established over the past 30 years in order to advance the status of women and, since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, had focused on gender mainstreaming and the establishment of multi-sectoral gender focal points at all levels of Government. All CARICOM States offered universal and equal access to education at the primary and secondary levels, and many were experiencing increasing enrolment rates at the those levels. The increase in women's participation

in the workforce recorded in several countries, including Bahamas, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was thought to be directly linked to the larger number of women completing tertiary education. Many States members had also adopted legislation to ensure equal access to microfinancing and property rights. The rankings of CARICOM States in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report 2014 produced by the World Economic Forum on wage equality reflected both significant achievements and a need for further work.

87. One of the greatest areas of concern for CARICOM was gender-based violence, which had an impact not only on women and girls but also on their families and communities. Fear of violence affected the choices and freedom of women, in particular those with fewer resources. Almost all CARICOM States had developed legislation and policies to protect victims, punish perpetrators and criminalize various acts of physical, psychological and sexual violence. Nevertheless, statistics from country reports indicated a troubling level of sexual abuse and human trafficking of girls, while women continued to be victims of domestic abuse. Such problems could only be resolved by ensuring that men and boys were fully involved in efforts to combat gender-based violence.

88. The rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases, in addition to HIV/AIDS, and ongoing changes in population dynamics owing to ageing and migration, posed additional problems for the region. Adolescent pregnancies continued to represent a significant challenge; CARICOM was implementing a strategy developed jointly with the United Nations Population Fund to reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean by at least 20 per cent between 2014 and 2019.

89. Civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations, women's and community-based organizations, were making an important contribution to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and CARICOM would continue to work with them to further the advancement of women. Significantly increased investment was needed to close resource gaps, including through the mobilization of funds from every possible source, as well as increased priority to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the allocation of official development assistance, so as to enable smaller States

to build on the progress they had made and ensure effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Social, economic and political investment in the empowerment of women and girls was fundamental to ending intergenerational transmission of poverty, violence and exclusion and to achieving equitable and sustainable development outcomes.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.