

Economic and Social Council
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Item 19: Social and human rights questions
(a) Advancement of women

Introduction of the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its sixty-sixth session

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Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations
Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women

8 June 2022

Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to present the outcome of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which took place from 14 to 25 March 2022, in a hybrid format.

As Chair of CSW, I can report to you that we had a productive session, in spite of the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission took advantage of its working methods to have as full and substantive a session as was possible. The hybrid format adopted for the session enabled the Commission to create opportunities for ministerial engagement to share experiences and lessons learned, and to recommend action on the way forward.

The Commission's ministerial segment included participation of 2 Heads of State, 3 Vice-Presidents, and 112 Ministers and ministerial-level representatives, as well as 61 senior government representatives who took part in the general discussion — all expressing their strong commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Eighty-eight (88) ministers and senior officials from around the world shared experiences in four ministerial round tables. Participation of stakeholders in two interactive dialogues further enriched the debates. Member States, intergovernmental organizations and UN entities organized 213 virtual side events, and more than 800 virtual parallel events were organized by civil society.

In accordance with its multi-year programme of work, the Commission considered “*Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*” as its priority theme.

The Commission adopted Agreed Conclusions on the priority theme, in which it recognized that gender inequality coupled with climate change, environmental degradation and disasters pose a challenge for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It laid out policy recommendations for Governments and other stakeholders, in five key areas:

- Strengthening normative, legal and regulatory frameworks;
- Integrating gender perspectives into climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes;
- Expanding gender-responsive finance;
- Enhancing gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex; and
- Fostering a gender-responsive just transition.

The Agreed Conclusions sent an important message on the imperative to fully implement existing commitments and obligations with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, without discrimination of any kind. They also emphasized the critical role that women play in disaster response and COVID-19 recovery efforts.

I am pleased to report that the agreed conclusions respond directly to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 72/305. They identify gaps and challenges and make action-oriented policy recommendations to inform the integrated view of the Council and its efforts to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. As such, these agreed conclusions provide an important input to the work of the Council and of the High-level Political Forum.

As mandated by the Council, the Commission reviewed its methods of work and made a recommendation on how best to utilize the year 2025 on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing +30. Following successful negotiations, the Commission adopted two draft resolutions which are now before the Council for consideration.

In accordance with its methods of work and in an effort to enhance implementation and accountability, the Commission places a strong emphasis on evaluating progress in the implementation of agreed conclusions from previous sessions. This year, the Commission reviewed progress on the Agreed Conclusions from its sixty-first session on “*Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work*”. Twelve Member States from different regions made voluntary presentations of the lessons they have learned, trends and challenges faced, and actions and initiatives taken to implement the CSW61 agreed conclusions. The presentations were followed by comments and questions from representatives of twenty-eight partner countries and civil society organizations. The review gave good insights on targeted national efforts to implement the SDGs so as to leave no woman or girl behind.

Through an interactive dialogue on the emerging issue “*Harnessing COVID-19 recovery for gender equality and a sustainable future*”, the Commission paid particular attention to how countries can ‘build back better’ from COVID-19, while prioritizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

The Commission also decided to take note of the report of its Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women and to include it in the present report.

Madame Vice-President,

Next year, the Commission will consider the priority theme “*Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls*”. The Commission will also review progress in the implementation of the Agreed Conclusions of CSW62 on “*Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls*”.

I look forward to the support and guidance of the Council and its Member States in preparation for and during the upcoming sixty-seventh session of the Commission.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the CSW66 Bureau, for their excellent collaboration, support and guidance in this past session. Special thanks go to the facilitator of the agreed conclusions, H. E. Ambassador Antje Leendertse of Germany and the facilitator of the methods of work and Beijing+30 resolutions, Mr. Maris Burbergs of Latvia for their skillful facilitation and leadership throughout the negotiations.

We count on the Council’s leadership to ensure that the outcomes of the Commission’s sixty-sixth session, and in particular its Agreed Conclusions, are taken fully into account and inspire your work and that of the HLPF.

I thank you for your attention.
