

## 1998/9. Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan

### *The Economic and Social Council,*

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>23</sup> the International Covenants on Human Rights,<sup>24</sup> the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,<sup>25</sup> the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>4</sup> the Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>26</sup> the Beijing Declaration<sup>1</sup> and the Platform for Action<sup>2</sup> adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and other instruments of human rights and international humanitarian law,

Deeply concerned by the continuing and substantiated reports of violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, in particular in areas under the control of the Taliban, resulting, *inter alia*, in restrictions on movement, denial of equal access of women to health care, prohibition of most forms of female employment, restrictions on education for women and girls, the closing of girls' schools and severe limitations on the enrolment of females in institutions of higher education and on their access to humanitarian assistance,

Welcoming the ongoing work of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, in particular his special focus on violations of the human rights of women and girls, especially in territories under the control of the Taliban faction,

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<sup>23</sup> General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>24</sup> General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

<sup>25</sup> General Assembly resolution 39/46, annex.

<sup>26</sup> General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

Welcoming also the decision of the Secretary-General to send a gender mission to Afghanistan, hoping that it will serve as a model for future efforts to address the gender dimension of crisis or conflict situations, and encouraging the Secretary-General to continue to send such high-level missions, when appropriate,

Taking into account the report of the United Nations Inter-Agency Gender Mission to Afghanistan,<sup>27</sup> led by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, which took place from 12 to 24 November 1997,

Expressing its appreciation for the international community's support of and solidarity with the women and girls of Afghanistan, being supportive of the women of Afghanistan who protest against violations of their human rights, and encouraging women and men worldwide to continue efforts to draw attention to their situation and to promote the immediate restoration of their ability to enjoy their human rights,

1. *Condemns* the continuing violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, in all areas of Afghanistan;

2. *Calls upon* all parties within Afghanistan to recognize, protect, promote and act in accordance with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion, in accordance with international human rights instruments, and to respect international humanitarian law;

3. *Strongly urges* all of the Afghan factions to end discriminatory policies and to recognize, protect and promote the equal rights and dignity of women and men, including their rights to full and equal participation in the life of the country, freedom of movement, access to education and health facilities, employment outside the home, personal security and freedom from intimidation and harassment, with special respect to the implications of discriminatory policies for the distribution of aid;

4. *Appeals* to all States and to the international community to ensure that all humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan integrates gender concerns and actively attempts to promote the participation of both women and men and to promote peace and human rights;

5. *Encourages* the continuing efforts of the United Nations, international and non-governmental organizations and donors to ensure that all United Nations-assisted programmes in Afghanistan are formulated and coordinated in such a way as to promote and ensure the participation of women in those programmes and that women benefit equally with men from such programmes;

6. *Welcomes* the establishment of the ad hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Gender in Afghanistan under the leadership of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and encourages States to make particular efforts to promote the human rights of women in Afghanistan;

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<sup>27</sup> For the text, see the Women Watch web site (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/news/archive.htm>).

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that reports of future gender missions are made available to the Commission on the Status of Women.

*44th plenary meeting  
28 July 1998*