

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-fifth session
15 – 26 March 2021

**Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as
the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all
women and girls**
Draft agreed conclusions

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth, fifteenth, twentieth and twenty-fifth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**
2. The Commission reiterates that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, as well as other relevant conventions and treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, throughout their life cycle. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**
3. The Commission reaffirms that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of its reviews, and the outcomes of relevant major United Nations conferences and summits and the follow-up to those conferences and summits, have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**
4. The Commission reaffirms that the promotion and protection of, and respect for, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, including the right to development, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, are crucial for women’s economic empowerment and should be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes aimed at the eradication of poverty and women’s economic empowerment, and also reaffirms the need to take measures to ensure that every person is entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, and that equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the promotion, protection and full realization of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**
5. The Commission recognizes that while there has been progress in the increased number of women elected or appointed to decision-making positions and while gender quotas have substantially contributed to women’s representation in national and local legislatures, progress is too slow and full gender parity is far from being reached at all

levels of the executive and legislative branches of government and the public sector. **(Based on E/CN.6/2021/3, para 9 and 16)**

6. The Commission expresses concern that women remain significantly underrepresented in all aspects of decision-making and that violence against women in public life is widespread, while organized opposition to women's participation in public life is sometimes strong and violent. It notes that failure to expedite women's participation and decision-making in public life and the elimination of violence against women will make it impossible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. **(Based on E/CN.6/2021/3, para 3 and 7)**

7. The Commission expresses concern that the COVID-19 pandemic is rolling back the limited progress made toward the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and that the effects of the pandemic are compounding existing obstacles to women's participation and decision-making in public life. **(Based on E/CN.6/2021/3, para 6 and 9)**

8. The Commission also expresses concern that women politicians as well as women voters, candidates and election administrators have faced targeted, gender-based violence in elections, intended to stop women from accessing power and limit their perspectives in policy formulation. **(Based on E/CN.6/2021/3, para 40)**

9. The Commission recognizes the need to implement international and national commitments and norms, including through temporary special measures, create more enabling environments and institutional systems, eliminate violence against women in public life and strengthen the voice, agency, participation and leadership of women who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, to reach equality in participation and decision-making in public life. **(Based on E/CN.6/2021/3, para 4)**

10. The Commission emphasizes that all people have an equal right to participate in their country's government through public office and informal leadership, that it is necessary to address inequality between men and women in the sharing of power, and that women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making, including in the private sector, is a critical strategy for achieving gender equality. **(Based on E/CN.6/2021/3, para 2)**

11. The Commission acknowledges the important contributions made by women's organizations to promote legislation and mechanisms to advance gender equality, eliminate laws that are discriminatory against women and increase women's inclusion in public life. **(Based on E/CN.6/2021/3, para 30)**

12. The Commission acknowledges the benefit of implementing family-oriented policies aimed at, inter alia, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the full participation and decision-making of women in public life, work-family balance and the self-sufficiency of the family unit and recognizes the need to ensure that all social and economic development policies are responsive to the changing needs and expectations of families in fulfilling their numerous functions and that the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of all family members are respected. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**

13. The Commission recognizes that negative social norms and gender stereotypes can threaten women's rights and participation in public life, and that efforts to increase understanding of gender equality and women's rights to participate in public life and decision-making, including the support and political will of male leaders, are vital for accelerating changes to social norms. **(Based on E/CN.6/2021/3, para 47 and 50)**

14. The Commission expresses concern that the feminization of poverty persists and emphasizes that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is indispensable for women's economic empowerment and sustainable development. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**

15. The Commission also recognizes the importance of the full engagement of men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in the promotion of women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**

16. The Commission urges governments at all levels and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites civil society, inter alia, women's organizations, youth-led organizations, feminist groups, the private sector, national human rights institutions, where they exist, and other relevant stakeholders, as applicable, to take the following actions: **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**

Strengthen normative, legal and regulatory frameworks

- (a) 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; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (a))**
- (b) Undertake comprehensive reforms to eliminate laws, policies and regulations that discriminate against women; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (b))**
- (c) Establish targets, action plans and timelines to achieve gender parity for all executive, legislative and administrative positions, as well as in public commissions, tasks forces and negotiations teams; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (c))**
- (d) Appoint women to executive positions to form local and national gender parity cabinets; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (d))**
- (e) Adopt electoral gender quota laws with 50 per cent targets and ensure implementation through rank order rules and sanctions for non-compliance; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (e))**
- (f) Adopt and effectively implement a range of regulations and temporary special measures for the public and private sectors to accelerate equal participation of women in decision-making and leadership, including for women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (f))**

- (g) Repeal or amend legal provisions that contribute to the shrinking of civic space and reduce women's organizations' abilities to register, engage in advocacy, receive external funding, and report on rights issues; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (g))**
- (h) Improve collection and use of globally comparable data, disaggregated by sex, age and other factors on women's participation and decision-making in public administration, the judiciary, political parties and other areas of political and public life; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (h))**

Prevent and eliminate violence against women in public life

- (i) Reform legal frameworks to criminalize violence against women in political and public life, both online and offline, and to end impunity; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (i))**
- (j) Build the capacity of law enforcement personnel, prosecutors and judges to apply laws on violence against women, respond to incidents, and hold perpetrators accountable; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (j))**
- (k) Establish and ensure access to complaints and reporting mechanisms for survivors of violence; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (k))**
- (l) Allocate resources for training, prevention and essential services to eliminate violence against women in political and public life; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (l))**
- (m) Ensure that women human rights defenders, members of women's organizations and feminist movements are protected from violence for engaging in public life; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (m))**
- (n) Continue to resource international and regional human rights mechanisms and special procedures to monitor, report and provide recommendations on violence against women in public and political life; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (n))**
- (o) Set standards on what constitutes online violence against women in public life to be able to hold media, and companies who run social media platforms, accountable for removing such content; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (o))**
- (p) Increase capacity of national statistical systems to collect data on violence against women in public life (both online and offline) regularly and systematically; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (p))**

Strengthen gender-responsive institutional reforms

- (q) Ensure gender-sensitive approaches to COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery by appointing women and gender equality advocates to leadership positions through gender parity targets for relevant task forces, standing committees and other decision-making bodies; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (q))**
- (r) Resource specialized gender equality committees or commissions and women's caucuses, and networking forums, as well as institutional capacity-building on gender equality in parliaments, ministries and public administration; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (r))**
- (s) Ensure that all public institutions have in place, and comply with, codes of conduct that establish zero tolerance for violence, discrimination and abuse, and internal reporting and complaints mechanisms; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (s))**

- (t) Ratify and put into force the ILO Convention (No. 190) on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (t))**
- (u) Increase transparency in institutions and allow members of women's organizations and feminist movements access to debates and decision-making processes, to voice their opinions and share their expertise; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (u))**

Increase the availability of high-quality financing in support of women's participation in public life

- (v) Create conditions and incentives for women candidates' campaigns to be financially supported by public and private funds, including through gender-sensitive political financing, subsidies for childcare, fundraising networks and non-partisan crowdfunding and endowments; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (v))**
- (w) Incentivize political parties to finance women's campaigns and promote their leadership; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (w))**
- (x) Raise the percentage of official development assistance funds that go to standalone gender equality targets and women's organizations; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (x))**
- (y) Increase the quality and quantity of funding available to support women in public life through the creation and financing of specific funds that prioritize direct funding to women's organizations and feminist movements; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (y))**

Strengthen women's voice and leave no one behind in public life

- (z) Facilitate the entry of women into the political pipeline through capacity-building and training and awareness raising, and provide targeted support to women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination to participate in public life and politics; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (z))**
- (aa) Implement awareness raising measures and sensitize community and religious leaders, the media, men and boys and different generations of women to counter social norms that restrict women's rights and participation in public life and decision-making and to take deliberate action to adjust them; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (aa))**
- (bb) Strengthen an enabling environment for women's participation in public life and decision-making by addressing women's poverty, unpaid care burden, unequal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, education and technology, and fostering skills-development; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (bb))**
- (cc) Increase young women's representation and participation in public life through community outreach, mentoring, capacity development programmes and early exposure to legislative and policymaking spaces; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (cc))**
- (dd) Incentivize media, advertising, film and television industries to reverse gender-based discrimination in the portrayal of women leaders in public life and decision-making; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (dd))**
- (ee) Fund and support public information campaigns with positive messages and images of women's role in public life to help change stereotypes; **(E/CN.6/2021/3, para 65 (ee))**

17. The Commission recognizes its primary role for the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in which its work is grounded, and stresses that it is critical to address and integrate gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to ensure synergies between the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**

18. The Commission calls upon the United Nations system entities, within their respective mandates, and other relevant international financial institutions and multi-stakeholder platforms to support Member States, upon their request, in their efforts to ensure women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**

19. The Commission calls upon the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and in supporting Governments and national women's machineries, upon their request, in coordinating the United Nations system and in mobilizing civil society, the private sector, employers' organizations and trade unions, and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. **(Based on CSW Agreed Conclusions)**