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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Summary report of the annual full-day of discussion on women's human rights

**Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Human Rights***

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I. Introduction

1. On 16 June 2016, the Human Rights Council convened, pursuant to its resolution 6/30, its annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women. The discussion was divided into two panels: the first focused on the theme “Violence against indigenous women and girls, and its root causes”; the second, on “Women’s rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

II. Violence against indigenous women and girls, and its root causes

2. The first panel discussion was moderated by Chief Wilton Littlechild, lawyer and Commissioner with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and Member of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The panel comprised the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović; founder and Director of Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú (CHIRAPAQ), journalist and indigenous peoples’ rights activist, Tarcila Rivera Zea; indigenous lawyer, founder and Managing Director of the Riverview Global Partners, Josephine Cashman; and the Executive Director of the Yiaku Laikipiak Trust, Jennifer Koinante.

A. Statement by the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

3. In her opening remarks, the Deputy High Commissioner pointed out that violence against indigenous women was a manifestation and a consequence of discrimination, exclusion, isolation and subordination. She drew attention to the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by indigenous women, and how they exacerbated inequalities even further. Multiple and intersecting layers of discrimination exposed indigenous women to a vicious circle of disempowerment and marginalization, the breeding grounds for violence. The pernicious consequences of these multiple drivers of inequality also led to higher-than-average rates of infant and maternal mortality, disproportionate rates of early and unwanted pregnancies, higher rates of sexually transmitted infections, and HIV/AIDS; and continued intimidation, gender-based violence, including sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking and gender-related killings of indigenous women and girls.

4. Poverty also had a disproportionate impact on indigenous women; land appropriation had resulted in their loss of traditional livelihoods. Furthermore, compensation and job skills following land seizure tended to exclude women, in particular indigenous women. The Deputy High Commissioner stressed that young indigenous women faced barriers in their access to education, in particular the burden of domestic and care responsibilities. She furthermore recalled the barriers to exercising freely their human rights with regard to sexual and reproductive health, such as the absence of culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive health information (rarely translated into indigenous languages), geographical isolation from facilities, and lack of access to essential commodities or information relating to legal entitlements.

5. The Deputy High Commissioner recalled that, although the prevalence of violence against indigenous women was still unknown because of the lack of comprehensive data and limited research and analysis, the information available suggested that indigenous women and girls were three times more likely to suffer from violence than other women. The lack of civil and vital statistics – such as on births, marriages and death, with its causes – and the absence of comprehensive census information, including disaggregation, on

indigenous identity limited the research and analysis needed for preventive measures. A range of cultural, economic, legal and linguistic factors impeded the access of indigenous women to both national and traditional justice systems, and therefore to remedies for violence suffered. When they demanded their rights, individual or collective, they were often subjected to intimidation, threats or violence. As a result, impunity for perpetrators remained widespread.

6. The Deputy High Commissioner highlighted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an opportunity to make more efforts in research and analysis to ensure systematic attention to violence against indigenous women, to understand the root causes and to take preventive action. She referred to the text of the 2030 Agenda, which envisioned a world where there was gender equality, a world that was just, tolerant, open and socially inclusive. She recalled its interconnected attention to protecting the environment, and explained that the link between people and planet must be fully respected. A world where there was greater harmony between people and planet was the promise of the 2030 Agenda; in this world, there was no place for violence against women and girls.

B. Overview of presentations

7. The moderator welcomed the theme of the panel. He recalled article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which called upon States to take measures to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination. He also stressed that there was growing recognition of the harm caused by colonialism and continued socioeconomic marginalization on the safety and well-being of indigenous women and girls.

8. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences recalled the international and regional legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right of indigenous women and girls to a life free from violence. She referred to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and to other United Nations human rights treaties containing a non-discrimination clause. The treaties imposed an obligation on States to act positively by enacting and implementing laws and policies that guarantee that all rights contained in the treaties were enjoyed by men and women, on an equal footing and without any kind of discrimination.

9. The Special Rapporteur referred to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation No. 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on violence against women, and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women. These instruments detailed obligations relating to the elimination violence against women. She also referred to article 22, paragraph 2 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

10. With regard to the regional level, the Special Rapporteur referred to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which described obligations in regional contexts. The Special Rapporteur recalled that the State and its agents must not commit acts of violence against women. Such an obligation entailed the duty to ensure that an effective legal framework was in place to address all forms of gender-based violence. States also had an obligation to act with due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish and provide remedies for acts of gender-based violence against women, including indigenous women and girls,

committed by non-State actors. The failure of a State to act with due diligence to prevent acts of violence against women when its authorities knew or should know the danger of violence, or to investigate and punish, constituted a human rights violation.

11. The Special Rapporteur pointed out that, although the obligations of States were well established, they had not been fully implemented. She stressed that the principle of equality between men and women was integral to Sustainable Development Goal 5, which applied equally to indigenous women. The Special Rapporteur stressed that the theme of the annual resolution of the Human Rights Council on violence against women – focusing on preventing and responding to violence against indigenous women – was an important opportunity to spell out specific measures that States should take to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of indigenous women and girls to a life free from violence.

12. The Director of Centro de Culturas Indigenas del Perú, Tarcila Rivera Zea, thanked the Human Rights Council for having included indigenous women in its agenda. For indigenous women, inclusion should be accompanied by addressing power imbalances and racist ideologies that result in discrimination against indigenous women and girls. Ms. Rivera Zea recalled the great contribution of indigenous women and children, and stressed the importance of inclusiveness, including with a view to improving the access of indigenous girls and women to education. The inclusion of the cultural diversity and historical background of indigenous peoples in educational material was crucial for non-indigenous children to be aware of the positive contribution of indigenous peoples to society.

13. Ms. Rivera Zea recommended opening a dialogue between the domestic justice system and indigenous justice to foster better understanding of indigenous women's rights, including both their collective and individual rights. While stressing the importance of indigenous collective rights, she also emphasized the centrality of indigenous women's individual rights, not only with regard to domestic violence but also to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the broader right to health.

14. The Managing Director of the Riverview Global Partners, Josephine Cashman, speaking as a Worimi woman from Australia, stated that, despite the progress made in gender equality in Australia, indigenous women continued to live as second-class citizens and were victims of violence and abuse that resulted from negative attitudes, including tolerance of abuse and violence. In the Northern Territory of Australia, the majority of indigenous male prisoners were in jail for serious violent offences, usually committed against their wives, girlfriends, mothers or children. Ms. Cashman pointed out that the national rate of hospitalization of indigenous women for non-fatal family violence was 35.7 times that of non-indigenous women. In the Northern Territory, the statistics were even more shocking, given that the rate was 86.5 times that for non-indigenous women and girls. She pointed out some of the root causes of family violence, and urged that an approach based on the individual responsibility of offenders be promoted.

15. Ms. Cashman referred to several programmes aimed at addressing violence against women and children. She stressed the need to allocate adequate funding to meet the chronic needs of victims of violence and for reforming offenders, and to examine innovative and sustainable models addressing the violent behaviour of offenders, for the safety of all in their communities. This should include programmes to combat violence against women, and remedies such as ensuring sustainable employment and other social services for victims, and training and education of offenders convicted of violence against women. Lastly, she urged States to consider the police's ability to respond in a culturally appropriate way, in particular within the justice system, where aboriginal victims faced the most severe barriers, and to support programmes strengthening data collection in order to map progress.

16. The Executive Director of the Yiaku Laikipiak Trust, Jennifer Koinante, reported that the socialization of girls, in general in society but also within indigenous communities, embedded and accepted violence against women and girls as a part of traditional culture. Ms. Koinante stressed that violence against indigenous women in Africa was heightened in situations where there was little or no infrastructure or security. Indigenous women disproportionately suffered from poverty and were denied representation at all levels, from the local to the national levels.

17. Ms. Koinante shared some recommendations on how to address violence against indigenous women in accordance with the specific barriers that they faced locally. For instance, one challenge in Kenya was the lack of a coordination mechanism with the participation of indigenous women for the design and implementation of strategies and programmes to address violence against indigenous women. Lack of awareness deprived indigenous women of the opportunity to enjoy their constitutionally guaranteed rights. Furthermore, the lack of a specific policy on indigenous peoples resulted in a situation where indigenous women's issues were treated together with those of non-indigenous women, and the specificity of analysis and cultural sensitivity was lost. High illiteracy levels also contributed to social, political, cultural and economic barriers. For all these reasons, Ms. Koinante called upon United Nations agencies to act in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to assess violence against indigenous women in Africa and thereby to guide the region to make the changes necessary to foster a violence-free and healthy environment for indigenous women, their children and their communities.

C. Interventions by representatives of States Members of the Human Rights Council, observer States and other observers

18. During the dialogue, delegations agreed that violence against indigenous women and girls was a pervasive and persistent global phenomenon that deserved international attention. Forms of violence affecting indigenous women and girls included female genital mutilation, rape, trafficking, forced and early marriage, domestic violence and killings. Many delegations noted that combating violence against women should be given the highest political priority.

19. Several delegates referred to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its inclusive spirit, highlighting the need to address structural discrimination and poverty affecting indigenous peoples, and in particular women. It was stressed that, in spite of their natural resources, indigenous women were disproportionately represented among those living in poverty, the result not only of racism, but of geographical and political marginalization as well. Consequently, they were exposed to multiple human rights violations, including a heightened risk of violence. Some speakers also referred to the recent killing of Berta Caceres, a prominent indigenous women and human rights defender in Honduras.

20. Indigenous women and girls faced compounded forms of discrimination, which heightened their exposure to different forms of violence due to various factors, such as illiteracy, stereotypes and lack of access to justice, and certain cultural practices. Some speakers pointed out that the lack of access to resources, and the conduct of extractive industries, were also linked to the magnitude of violence against women. The engagement of indigenous children and youth to instil values from an early age about rejecting violence against women was mentioned as an important entry point.

21. Within this context, several delegates reported on domestic strategies and national plans or commitments to support the rights of indigenous peoples.

22. The need for holistic and cross-sectoral approaches that integrate customary law and traditions was stressed, and some relevant examples shared. A considerable number of delegates reported legislative measures, such as the explicit recognition of the rights of indigenous people.

23. Some delegates pointed out that their gender equality plans and/or plans on violence against women included indigenous women. Numerous delegates considered empowering women through educational measures and capacity-building the best measure to address violence against indigenous women and girls, by programmes with non-formal education to ensure their literacy. Addressing the harm caused by colonization and dismantling patriarchal and racist attitudes, including through education, were mentioned as prerequisites to the elimination of violence against women. Some delegates stressed the importance of engaging men in efforts to prevent and address violence against women and girls, and offered examples of existing initiatives. It was repeatedly emphasized that women's empowerment should be included in policies to eradicate gender-based violence and to ensure that indigenous women can act as agents of their own development, or to build their capacity for leading and managing natural resources. Programmes that involved the economic empowerment of indigenous women were also mentioned as effectively contributing to a reduction in violence.

24. A considerable number of delegates also reported concrete, ongoing efforts to support indigenous communities in ending violence against women and girls, including through prevention, early intervention for women at risk or service responses for those who had suffered violence.

25. With regard to health, some delegates expressed the need to make greater efforts to ensure access to health care, particularly sexual and reproductive health services, in rural and remote areas. Reporting on specific tools for prevention, one delegate referred to the adoption of safety packages for indigenous women to combat violence. In addition, the need to increase protection for indigenous human rights defenders was also considered a related matter of critical importance.

26. Numerous delegates highlighted their view that ensuring the accountability of perpetrators was a priority concern. In that respect, some delegates reported specific strategies to address violence against indigenous persons by using criminal provisions established to address violence against women, such as the criminalization of femicide.

27. One delegate reported on institutional steps to address this issue, such as the establishment of a national public inquiry into the numerous missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, while another delegate reported the creation of new government departments to coordinate different aspects of the response to violence against indigenous women and girls (such as with regard to education, risk assessment and initial response, legal process, and victim safety and support).

28. With regard to justice, the lack of criminal jurisdiction over non-indigenous perpetrators committing gender-based violence against certain groups of indigenous women was identified as a cause of impunity. To overcome this gap, some delegates emphasized that it was crucial to enact national laws by recognizing tribes, and to assign jurisdictional authority to prosecute non-indigenous offenders in tribal courts. Working with tribes to implement these laws in an effective manner was also considered important.

29. Lastly, concern was expressed at the overrepresentation of indigenous women in prisons around the world for minor offences. Delegates therefore called upon States to address this issue and that of violence and discrimination against incarcerated women, including by staff in prisons.

D. Concluding remarks by the panellists

30. The panellists agreed on the need for holistic approaches that addressed structural factors of violence and discrimination against women and girls.

31. Recalling the framework of the 2030 Agenda, the panellists stressed that violence against indigenous women and girls was directly related to poverty, education, gender inequality, the availability of water, climate change and also the promotion of peaceful societies. To reduce inequality and social and cultural divisions and gaps, and to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind, indigenous women and girls must play a central role in the implementation of the Agenda. The importance of the Agenda was based on the political will and commitment expressed to achieve gender equality, including through the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, and to uphold the equal rights of all people, men and women.

32. Within this context, the panellists emphasized that States had an obligation to eradicate violence against indigenous women and girls. In order to realize this obligation, a first critical step was the prompt removal of all discriminatory laws.

33. One major challenge was the fact that indigenous culture was often seen as a problem, instead of as a source of solution and inspiration. In this regard, the panellists stressed the important role of education in eliminating racism and racial discrimination against indigenous women, and in empowering indigenous women and girls in all areas of their lives, including by promoting their political participation and economic empowerment through national programmes.

34. With regard to action that could be taken at the international level, recommendations included strengthened interaction between indigenous women and human rights mechanisms, including the special procedures and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Such cooperation could help to consolidate the best practices identified, and raise awareness of relevant legally binding norms. The panel referred to the individual communications procedure under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as a powerful tool to report and address violence against indigenous women at the international level. Furthermore, the establishment of an international network of indigenous lawyers was suggested, as a platform to share information about human rights mechanisms and experiences in interacting with such mechanisms.

35. In order to ensure justice, adopting and adequately implementing national legal systems, sensitive to indigenous standards and customs, and ensuring coherence between domestic and indigenous justice systems were recommended. In this effort, attention must constantly be paid to ensuring adherence to human rights obligations, and guaranteeing access to justice for all indigenous people, especially women.

36. With regard to data, the panellists recalled that most States did not have adequate data collection processes, such as data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity. Urgent measures were therefore needed to improve data collection and to enhance research on indigenous peoples in order to support more effective monitoring of their enjoyment of human rights.

37. The panellists concluded that the attention of the Human Rights Council to this issue was a welcome development, and called for increased support for the leadership and participation of indigenous women.

38. The moderator thanked the panellists for this historic discussion, and concluded by emphasizing that the situation would improve for indigenous peoples if women took a more

prominent role in the world. As an individual and collective duty, he urged the participants to continue to work together in this area.

III. Women's human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

39. The second panel discussion was moderated by the Executive Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Paul Ladd. The panel comprised Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott Despoja; the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, Arancha González; Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jayati Ghosh; and Young Women's Coordinator in the World Young Women's Christian Association, Vanessa Anyoti.

A. Statement by the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

40. In her opening remarks, the Deputy High Commissioner observed that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was transformative, rights-based, universal and a testament to the importance of the indivisibility of human rights. It was integrated across its Goals, undivided in its priorities and interconnected in its vision for delivery; an agenda extending far beyond Member States, it was a promise to all stakeholders: parliaments, academic and scientific communities, civil society, the private sector, the international community and the United Nations system. It was also the result of the largest-ever public consultation undertaken by the United Nations.

41. While commending the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, the Deputy High Commissioner highlighted the inequalities that had deepened during the period of their implementation, and noted the numerous transitions of modern-day societies that threatened to compound those inequalities. She pointed out that, at present, the contours of fragility, instability, poverty and conflict tracked the geographical distribution of young people. Noting that the current generation of young people was the largest ever, and that by 2030 the generation of older people would also be the largest ever, the contrasts in age of populations reflected the distribution of privilege, opportunity and dignity. She also pointed out that, over the next 15 years, people would be on the move, forced by conflict or devastating poverty, or by under the promise of opportunity presented by migration. Such a reality would direct a new focus on urban centres.

42. The Deputy High Commissioner stressed that, although the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development held much promise, it would amount to nothing without leadership and investment commensurate with its aspirations. For women, the urgency of the 2030 Agenda could not be overstated, as their human rights continued to be violated in numerous ways. The Deputy High Commissioner referred to the alarmingly high rates of gender-based violence and the unacceptable rates of maternal mortality and morbidity, in both cases pointing out the preventable nature of these violations. She emphasized her concern with regard to the rights of adolescents, citing the example of child marriage and their disproportionate vulnerability to contracting HIV and dying from AIDS. The Deputy High Commissioner called for an open dialogue with adolescents about sexual and reproductive health and rights and intimate issues of dignity. With regard to gender parity in leadership, where women were still underrepresented, she stressed that it was not a numbers game, but a tool to track and allow accountability for gender equality, or to ensure women's participation, which was critical to the success of the 2030 Agenda. She

particularly noted with concern that, at the recent elections by States Members of the United Nations of expert members to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, not one woman had been elected to the Committee.

43. The Deputy High Commissioner stressed the importance of women's participation and of giving voice to those excluded, including young people, indigenous persons, minorities or women with disabilities. She also called upon organizations to reflect on their own structures and to change the demography of women's leadership. Stressing the importance of addressing unconscious bias, she emphasized the need to dismantle harmful gender stereotypes. She also highlighted the need to combat harmful practices, sometimes justified by references to cultures and traditions, and pointed out that no culture or tradition could be invoked to justify the cruelty experienced by women, and especially by girls. As an example of the progress made on this issue, she highlighted that, across sub-Saharan Africa, thousands of communities had agreed to end female genital mutilation in recognition that such a practice was not essential for their cultural integrity.

44. The Deputy High Commissioner pointed out that the Human Rights Council, and indeed all United Nations bodies, had a unique role to play in taking the 2030 Agenda forward. Partnerships between Member States and country offices of the United Nations were a key factor in delivering on the promises of the Agenda. She quoted the title of a speech by Martin Luther King – "I have a dream" – as a poetic lens to summarize the ambition of the 17 Goals, 169 targets and 230 indicators comprising the Sustainable Development Goals. She called upon everyone to take advantage of the unique opportunities offered by the Agenda.

B. Overview of presentations

45. As Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the panel moderator, Paul Ladd, referred to relevant gender and development research that the Institute had undertaken on gender and development, focusing on issues such as unpaid work and violence against women.

46. The moderator congratulated States on their commitment to adopting the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which not only built on the legacy of the Millennium Development Goals but also tackled more diverse and interconnected issues; it was a universal agenda, with a unanimous commitment to leave no one behind.

47. Fulfilling the rights of women and girls was a critical pillar of the 2030 Agenda, since they faced considerable human rights violations. Supporting the empowerment of women and girls, and investing in them, politically and financially, was an investment for the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals. Mr. Ladd added that one challenge was to ensure that States' policies on trade and intellectual property respect their commitments under the 2030 Agenda.

48. Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott Despoja, pointed out that, in the 2030 Agenda, gender equality was affirmed as a fundamental human right and a driver of progress across all development goals. Gender equality was the sole focus of Goal 5, and integrated into the others. The Sustainable Development Goals had therefore the potential to make real advances, including in relation to equal rights in economic resources, such as land and property; equal leadership opportunities, with regard to peace processes and State-building; and the elimination of gender-based violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation. Global trends, including economic and social shifts and globalization, created not only new opportunities but also risks for women, who were underrepresented in the formal labour market and had less access to economic resources. Ms. Stott Despoja also pointed to the disproportionate impact of crises, conflict and climate

change on women and girls. She stressed that addressing these challenges required targeted and gender-sensitive programmes, and also efforts to ensure more women in decision-making positions, to invest in them as active agents of change, and to close gender gaps in labour markets, education, health and other areas. Ms. Stott Despoja called for an end to the appalling scourge of violence against women and girls.

49. In order to realize gender equality, a concerted, coordinated and sustained effort was essential. National commitments to promote and protect human rights were required for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as were strong partnerships across all sectors, including the private sector and civil society, where the contribution of women was vital. Ms. Stott Despoja pointed out the importance of solid data to support the effective implementation of policies on gender equality, and of the need for systematic monitoring and evaluation efforts.

50. Ms. Scott Despoja responded to certain concerns expressed relating to discrimination based on pregnancy in the context of work, and noted that it was common in many countries. She highlighted the need for a culture change and legislative reforms in this regard, and in relation to violence against women. In conflict and humanitarian settings, there was a need not only for measures to protect women and girls from violence, but also for their sexual and reproductive health and rights to be respected and acknowledged. She urged countries to establish the position of Ambassador for Women and Girls as an important sign of their commitment to gender equality.

51. The Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, Arancha González, explained that, although important advances in women's empowerment had been made under the Millennium Development Goals, inequalities persisted. Focusing her remarks on the labour market, Ms. González pointed out that women were still overrepresented among those living in poverty. She also pointed out the contradiction that, although women made up two thirds of the global workforce and produced half of the world's food, they only earned 10 per cent of the world's income and owned 1 per cent of the world's property. Out of one billion people living in poverty worldwide, 60 per cent were women living on less than one dollar a day. According to the International Labour Organization, nearly 100 countries had at least one legal restriction on women's economic opportunities, 80 countries restricted the type of jobs that women could perform, and 15 countries still demanded the husband's permission as a legal requirement for job acceptance.

52. Like other speakers, Ms. González emphasized that gender equality was not only about Sustainable Development Goal 5, but also essential to achieving any of the Goals. Women's economic empowerment was, in particular, a crucial element of the 2030 Agenda. Women's participation in the paid economy benefited families and societies as a whole, and had a significant effect on poverty reduction.

53. Ms. González referred to the #SheTrades campaign conducted by the International Trade Centre as an example of global commitment to encourage women's participation in international trade. The campaign included a commitment to take 1 million women entrepreneurs to market by 2020, focusing on such areas as data, public policy, government procurement, supply chain constraints for women, access to finance and women's land ownership rights. In response to the interventions made during the discussion, Ms. González emphasized the importance of collecting disaggregated data and measuring progress through indicators, including progress on women's economic empowerment. She also stressed that many public policies were crafted by Parliaments in which women's participation was often very low, and called for efforts to ensure higher rates of women's representation in political institutions.

54. Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jayati Ghosh focused her intervention on the

interconnectedness between Goal 5, on gender equality, and Goal 10, on reducing inequalities more broadly, pointing out that the former could not be achieved without simultaneous progress on the latter. Elaborating on this point, she focused on three specific targets of Goal 5: the elimination of violence against women; addressing women's unpaid work; and ensuring equality in the area of property and economic resources. She linked these targets with some of the targets of Goal 10, namely, those on equal opportunities and equality of outcome; fiscal and social protection policies for greater equality; regulation of global financial markets and institutions; migration; and the implementation of the principle of special and differentiated treatment for developing countries. Highlighting that the Goal 10 targets underlay the measures needed to reach the targets under Goal 5 by ensuring the necessary fiscal and policy space, she expressed the view that, with the current global and financial architecture, it was highly unlikely that the Goal 10 targets would be met.

55. Explaining this perspective, Ms. Ghosh pointed out that current policies privileged corporate rights over human rights, prioritized austerity (which added to women's unpaid work) and more generally served to restrict the fiscal and policy space countries needed in order to put progressive policies in place. These policies also contributed to social divisions, which fuelled anti-immigrant sentiments across the world. Goal 10 could not be achieved without clear acknowledgement of the barriers that Governments faced in terms of broader global dynamics.

56. Responding to interventions raised in the discussion, Ms. Ghosh recommended that Governments not insist upon or force fiscal austerity on their own citizens or on any other country; prioritize public spending on services and social protection; not negotiate or sign economic partnerships agreements that required strengthening intellectual property rights that privileged companies and corporations over citizens; and emphasize changes in the content of policies, and not take merely symbolic measures or pay lip service. Lastly, the Human Rights Council should be aware of the disastrous political implications of the gap between official declarations and people's self-perceived reality, which could lead to the rise of divisive political forces and instability.

57. According to the Young Women's Coordinator in the World Young Women's Christian Association, Vanessa Anyoti, sustainable development depended on investment in the capacities and the well-being of young girls and women. Given the centrality of human rights to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, she stressed that the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals would mean full respect for human rights for all people. Within this context, it was crucial to ensure that human rights discussions were inclusive and fully representative of all populations, including young people. Ms. Anyoti underlined the need for awareness-raising and capacity-building among young people to increase their knowledge, including with regard to United Nations human rights mechanisms, working methods and outcomes. These actions were critical for enabling young people to realize their role in monitoring compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals.

58. Ms. Anyoti stressed that including young people in the design and implementation of plans and strategies for the Sustainable Development Goals was vital to more inclusive development. To realize this, young people should have access to technical assistance, infrastructure and the full utilization of information and communications technology (ICT). Ms. Anyoti highlighted the importance of transparency in implementing the Goals, emphasizing the need for accurate baseline data and for making the data on the implementation of the Goals accessible and available to everyone. The support and commitment of and action by all faith communities was a key to achieving gender equality; she therefore urged faith-based leaders and actors to reassess cultural or religious practices that were not aligned with faith principles or that undermined the dignity of young women and girls. She concluded by pointing out that the present generation of young people was

the last that could solve climate change, noting its impact on gender inequality, and called for inclusion of young people in discussions thereon.

59. In response to some of the issues raised during the discussion, Ms. Anyoti underlined the importance of sexual and reproductive health services, including access to youth-friendly and affordable services. She also stressed the importance of including young people at every level of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and of consulting them as full partners.

C. Interventions by representatives of Member States, observer States and other observers

60. In their interventions, delegates strongly supported the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which integrated all three dimensions – environmental, economic and social – of sustainable development with a rights-based approach. Many delegates highlighted the goal on gender equality, and recognized that, across all regions, many challenges remained to the achievement of equality between women and men. Delegates expressed their commitment to promoting gender equality and combating discrimination against women through the implementation of Goal 5, and by mainstreaming women's rights throughout the entire 2030 Agenda, to achieve transformative and substantive change.

61. Many delegates regretted that, although women and girls accounted for more than half the world's population, women's participation in political decision-making and economic development was still limited. They called for the empowerment of women and girls in social and economic spheres, and the strengthening of women's leadership and participation in decision-making at all levels. A number of delegates shared suggestions for enabling such empowerment, including a focus on grass-roots interventions, the application of quotas, and the establishment of dedicated mechanisms at the national level to monitor the achievement of gender equality. A representative of one State also proposed the creation of a committee to increase the representation of women on boards of directors in the private sector, and also to increase their representation in high-level and decision-making or managerial positions. Microcredit programmes were also highlighted as one measure to boost women's economic empowerment.

62. Delegates also referred to the importance of ensuring quality education for women and girls not only for them to reach their full potential, but also for the benefit of their communities and countries. The use of ICT was mentioned as a key means to fuel empowerment and education opportunities. Delegates reported on such strategic initiatives as granting full scholarships at the secondary and tertiary levels to all girls studying science; training activities and workshops for women and men in entrepreneurship and innovation; and leadership and early childhood development and gender-sensitive education.

63. Some delegates focused their concern on the realization of sexual and reproductive health and rights. In this regard, they emphasized the continuing violations of women's and girls' rights in this area, and the severe consequences of such violations. States' obligations to ensure rights relating to sexual and reproductive health were particularly noted.

64. Many delegates referred to continued violence against women and girls in all regions, and recalled the disproportionate impact of crises and conflict on women and girls, which raised greater barriers to services and rights. Eradicating the global pandemic of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres was flagged as an urgent priority for many States, and many good practices were shared in this regard. Several delegates referred to their efforts to criminalize violence against women, including

femicide. The issue of cyberbullying, which had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, was also highlighted as a new area where legislation was being enacted.

65. Several delegates also emphasized the importance, while implementing the 2030 Agenda, of paying special attention to marginalized groups of women, including indigenous women, refugee women, women with disabilities, and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women.

66. Strengthening the collection of gender-responsive disaggregated data was also considered a priority. Some delegates referred to the need for disaggregated data by gender and other relevant factors to develop policies that reflect national realities, while tracking the commitment to leave no person behind in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The gender-responsive budgeting, capacity-building or strengthening of statistical offices was also considered crucial, as was the need for human rights-sensitive indicators.

67. A number of delegates recognized the need to strengthen normative legal and policy frameworks on gender equality. In this regard, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were essential instruments of reference. Certain regional instruments also reflected a collective commitment to promoting the rights of women and addressing violence against them. Several delegates highlighted the adoption in their countries of gender equality laws and frameworks as important steps for working towards the elimination of discrimination against women. Such efforts included strategies focusing on women's economic empowerment, enhancing women's participation at all levels and tackling the negative impact of gender stereotypes. Delegates also reported on efforts to implement recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women with regard to the adoption of new laws and policies.

68. A considerable number of delegates referred to the important role of human rights mechanisms, such as the treaty bodies, the special procedures and the universal periodic review, and the work of OHCHR in supporting States to implement the 2030 Agenda in accordance with human rights obligations.

D. Concluding remarks

69. The panel discussions offered an opportunity to recall the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, even though significant challenges remained to be addressed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Panel members reaffirmed that, while progress towards women's rights should be celebrated, more efforts were needed to close gender gaps, reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination and combat violence against women and girls.

70. The moderator emphasized many serious human rights issues that disproportionately affected women and girls, relating to poverty, conflict, access to employment, unpaid work, lack of access to finance, sexual and reproductive health and rights, political participation, violence and abuse. Cross-border issues, including finance, trade, intellectual property, mobility and migration, also needed to be taken into account. Cooperation at the multinational and regional levels to deal with these issues was therefore crucial.

71. In their concluding remarks, the panellists emphasized the importance of improved data collection. Greater investment in statistical offices was critical to measuring data, as was strengthened capacity to disaggregate data. They also agreed that technical and financial assistance for countries facing barriers to collecting data and analysing gender dimensions should be considered a priority. Better information would be critical to

monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, assessing progress and upholding accountability.

72. Targets relating to the elimination of violence against women, the economic participation of women, addressing unpaid work and removing all forms of discrimination against women were mentioned as serious challenges to be tackled under Goal 5. Attaining these targets in a holistic way across the 17 Goals, and implementing the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a gender-sensitive perspective, were considered the key to delivering on the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

73. Regional cooperation on development was seen as pivotal and essential to create partnerships across countries and regions to benefit the 2030 Agenda.

74. Panellists collectively called upon States to put in place inclusive processes, with particular emphasis on the voice of marginalized groups, in order to advance the 2030 Agenda. The Human Rights Council, its mechanisms, including the universal periodic review and the special procedures, and the treaty bodies were instrumental in assisting States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with a gender and human rights perspective. In this respect, the inaugural Youth Forum of the Human Rights Council was also mentioned as an example of an effective bottom-up approach to ensure inclusion of diverse voices, especially those of young people.

75. Lastly, the panel unanimously recognized the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an ambitious, comprehensive and people-centred set of universal and transformative goals and targets. The 2030 Agenda was therefore a tremendous opportunity to advance development in all parts of the world.
