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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Interactive dialogue: accelerating implementation of commitments for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

Chair’s summary

1. On 15 March 2017, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive dialogue on the topic “Accelerating implementation of commitments for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”.
2. The Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, Andreas Glossner, chaired and moderated the dialogue and made an introductory statement and closing remarks. Ministers and high-level officials from 15 Member States and 14 invited speakers representing diverse stakeholder groups participated in the dialogue.

Policy measures to accelerate the implementation of commitments

3. Participants stressed their commitment to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals contained therein. They reiterated the key role that those outcomes have in strengthening legislation, planning and budgeting and in monitoring the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international human rights instruments, which created obligations for States parties with regard to the practical realization of gender equality, were also highlighted.
4. Participants underlined the critical role of the Commission on the Status of Women in strengthening the global framework for gender equality and the



empowerment of women. The annual sessions of the Commission gave a welcome impetus to the accelerated implementation of that framework.

5. Speakers provided examples of measures taken to implement commitments in a range of areas and through various approaches. Constitutional and legislative changes had taken place in response to commitments, including to address violence against women. Speakers gave examples of the integration of gender perspectives in comprehensive, longer-term national development frameworks. New and updated national action plans and strategies on gender equality contributed to their accelerated implementation. There was also increased investment in gender equality and the empowerment of women, and gender-responsive budgeting was increasingly being used in response to global commitments.

6. Several speakers highlighted efforts to strengthen institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women and to enhance collaboration with stakeholders, including parliamentarians and members of academia and civil society. Participants gave examples of incentives, including for the private sector, whereby public certificates and awards were being used to step up action. Examples were also provided of the improved collection, dissemination and use of data disaggregated by sex, age and other factors in support of the implementation of commitments. The support of the United Nations system for accelerated implementation was also mentioned.

Contributions by stakeholders to accelerate implementation

7. Representatives from Member States and various stakeholder groups highlighted actions taken in support of the accelerated implementation of commitments on gender equality. Civil society and other stakeholders played an important role in disseminating the agreed conclusions of the Commission at the local level, in mobilizing women at the national and local levels, and in monitoring implementation on the ground. They also provided an important link between women's organizations and the work of the Commission. Concern was raised about the shrinking space in which civil society organizations could advocate for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women, and there were calls to provide a safe and enabling environment for civil society to undertake its work.

8. Speakers noted that national human rights institutions played a vital role in the promotion of the human rights of women, given their independent status and expertise and direct knowledge of the human rights situation in national contexts. Such institutions can follow up on the agreed conclusions, using a human rights-based approach to close the remaining gaps. That expertise can contribute an important and unique dimension to the work of the Commission, and it was recommended that national human rights institutions be provided with the necessary status to participate in the work of the Commission.

9. Human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and mechanisms contributed to the implementation of commitments within their areas of expertise and mandate. The recommendations from processes such as the universal periodic review could be effectively linked with the agreed conclusions for accelerated implementation on the ground. The recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and of special procedures, such as the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, can also add impetus to implementation. In turn, some speakers confirmed that the work of the Commission provided important policy contexts to some mandate holders, and the agreed conclusions on preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls was highlighted as an example.

10. Participants illustrated the roles of the judiciary and parliaments in accelerating the implementation of commitments. Efforts such as training on gender equality for all those working in the judicial system, the convening of commissions on gender equality and monitoring progress through statistical tracking had led to measurable improvements. The role of the media in particular was highlighted as a channel for sharing information and conveying non-discriminatory images and messages.

11. Speakers emphasized the importance of consistent leadership from the highest level to help in accelerating change. The establishment of networks of women leaders at the regional level was presented as a good example. Investing in women's businesses by various stakeholders, such as regional development banks, made a measurable contribution to women's economic empowerment and the implementation of commitments. Such efforts took on heightened importance in the changing world of work and with the new opportunities created by technology that should be seized for the benefit of women and by women. An invitation was extended to the Commission to deepen its collaboration with the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, to enhance the existing global policy frameworks and ensure that women can take full advantage of, and contribute to, the opportunities created through science, technology and innovation.

12. Participants called for steps to reach women who are subject to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including in remote communities. Attention had to be paid to the needs of women affected by conflict, climate change and natural disasters and of those in humanitarian emergencies. Effective implementation of commitments required that women in the most remote areas be reached.
