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**Division for the Advancement of Women  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations**



**ACHIEVEMENTS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES  
IN LINKING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE  
BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION  
AND THE  
MILLENNIUM DECLARATION AND  
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

**Report of the Expert Group Meeting**

**Baku, Azerbaijan  
7 - 10 February 2005**

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## **I. Introduction**

1. To contribute to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly during the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) from 28 February – 11 March 2005, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) organized an expert group meeting on “Achievements, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals”. The meeting, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 7-10 February 2005, was hosted by the State Committee for Women’s Issues of the Government of Azerbaijan.

2. In discussing achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Expert Group Meeting focused on the respective policy mandates and processes, as well as the changing national and global contexts, with special emphasis on resources, rights and accountability. The meeting looked in particular at the needs for ensuring the application of a human rights framework to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. In addition, there was a strong focus on the importance of engendering the macro-economic framework and poverty reduction strategies, making resources work for women, and ensuring the participation of women’s. Based on the inputs of experts and observers, the Expert Group Meeting adopted recommendations for ensuring enhanced linkages between the respective review processes of the Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Declaration and MDGs. This report is the outcome of the meeting.

## **II. Organization of work**

### **A. Participation**

3. The Expert Group Meeting on “Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals” in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 7-10 February 2005, was attended by eleven experts from different regions; a consultant for DAW; fifteen observers, including from international organizations, governments, United Nations entities and civil society; eleven representatives of the host country; and two representatives from DAW (see Annex I).

### **B. Documentation**

4. The documentation for the meeting comprised (see Annex II):

- eleven papers prepared by experts;
- one paper prepared by an observer;
- a background paper prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women (Aide-Mémoire)
- a draft working paper prepared by a consultant to DAW
- other background documents

5. This report and all documentation relating to the meeting are available on-line on the DAW website: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/bpfamd2005/index.html>

### **C. Programme of work**

6. At its opening session on 7 February 2005, the meeting adopted the following programme of work (see Annex III):

- Opening session
- Election of officers and adoption of the programme of work
- Introduction to the meeting
- Presentation and discussion of the DAW consultant's paper
- Presentation and discussion of the Millennium Project Task Force 3 report
- Presentation and discussion of papers prepared by experts
- Working groups on:
  - Human rights framework
  - Involvement of civil society and women's organizations
  - Resources and macroeconomic framework
- Introduction of draft report and recommendations in plenary
- Adoption of final report and recommendations
- Closing session

### **D. Election of officers**

7. The experts elected the following officers:

Co-Chairs: Ms. Mary Shanthi Dairiam and Ms. Helen de Pinho

Rapporteur: Ms. Naila Kabeer

Co-Rapporteur for the plenary: Ms. Mary Amuyunzu-Nyamongo

### **E. Opening statements**

8. The opening speakers were introduced by Ms. Mominat Omarova, Deputy Chair of the State Committee for Women's Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

9. The meeting was opened by Ms. Zahra Guliyeva, Chair of the State Committee for Women's Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In her statement, Ms. Guliyeva welcomed the partnership with the Division for the Advancement of Women in the organization of the Expert Group Meeting in Baku. She noted the significance of the event as outputs and recommendations of the meeting would influence the discussions at the CSW and its panel discussion on the same topic. She highlighted the main principles of the gender policy of Azerbaijan, based on its commitment to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, the Millennium Declaration and MDGs, and other international documents. Special attention had been paid to the State Program on Poverty Reduction and Economic Development, which was the main instrument for the achievement of the MDGs at the national level. Integration of gender perspectives into the country's overall development strategy ensured increased efficiency in the implementation of this programme and equal access to the benefits envisaged in the programmes directed at economic growth and social welfare of the poor. Social-

economic reforms as well as the reforms in the field of education and health care had created the conditions for sustainable growth of the national economy and an improvement in the situation of the population, including women. Ms. Guliyeva also focused on the role of women in peace building in the region, and expressed her conviction that the empowerment of women and gender equality could be achieved only through joint efforts and a focus on women's rights as human rights.

10. Ms. Sylvie I. Cohen, Deputy Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, delivered a message from the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, Ms. Carolyn Hannan. In her statement, Ms. Hannan expressed her appreciation to the Government of Azerbaijan and its State Committee for Women's Issues for hosting the meeting. She thanked the United Nations Country Team and the Resident Coordinator for providing support. Ms. Hannan noted the special significance of the meeting, which was being held prior to the ten-year review and appraisal of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at the 49<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The outcome of the CSW's deliberations would feed into the review of the Millennium Declaration by ECOSOC and the General Assembly later in 2005. Ms. Hannan emphasized that the expert group meeting provided a timely opportunity for reflecting on achievements, gaps and challenges in constructively linking the Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and MDGs.

11. Ms. Hannan stressed that the Platform for Action remains the global policy framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women and that the MDGs comprise a sub-set of the objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of all major global conferences and summits, including the Beijing Platform for Action. Ms. Hannan pointed out that few precise targets were established for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and in this context the focus on implementation, monitoring and reporting on the MDGs could be constructively utilized. The policy debate at different levels over the past years had emphasized the importance of integrating gender perspectives in efforts to achieve all the MDGs. Despite this recognition, monitoring of progress at national level indicated a lack of attention to gender perspectives. Ms. Hannan assured the experts that the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting would provide important insights and assist the Commission on the Status of Women in its deliberations on how to provide an input into the review of the Millennium Declaration.

12. In his statement, Mr. Marco Borsotti, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, welcomed the holding of the expert group meeting in Baku. He stressed that the United Nations' continuing relevance was evidenced by the fact that it was the only organization that could bring together such a diverse group of experts to discuss issues of global importance. Mr. Borsotti also stressed the importance of the practical application of global policy frameworks in the national context. He noted that the host country was about to sign an agreement with UNDP on a gender survey, which would provide important information and data and enable the United Nations Country Team to work with national partners to ensure that development initiatives focused on sustainable human development and integrated gender perspectives. Mr. Borsotti also mentioned that the poverty reduction strategy of Azerbaijan had attempted to integrate the MDGs and ensure a focus on gender perspectives. This was especially relevant in a country that had witnessed significant economic growth over the past

decade, despite the prevailing climate of conflict. However, certain groups in society, especially women, had not benefited to the same extent. Unlike women in other countries, women in Azerbaijan were however not suffering from a lack of education or from labour market exclusion. Mr. Borsotti indicated that it was very important that national targets and indicators had been developed and adapted to take into account local realities.

### III. Background

‘The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition of social justice [...]. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all people.’

*Beijing Platform for Action (III.41)*

‘There is no time to lose if we are to reach the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015. Only by investing in the world’s women can we expect to get there’

*Message of the United Nations Secretary-General, International Women’s Day 2003*

13. The year 2005 offers major opportunities to build on the mandates and strengthen synergies between landmark governmental agreements: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action<sup>1</sup>, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and the Millennium Declaration<sup>2</sup>.

14. Progress in the implementation of these agreements will be assessed, respectively, by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action from 28 February to 11 March 2005; by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) high-level and coordination segments in a review of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration; and by a review of the Millennium Declaration at a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

15. In order to prepare for these reviews, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) called on a group of independent experts to discuss the key concerns and forward looking strategies related to ‘Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and MDGs’. The Expert Group Meeting was hosted by the Government of Azerbaijan and held from 7 to 10 February 2005. This report aims to identify principles, issues and strategic entry points for ensuring that achievements, gaps and challenges in relation to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Millennium Declaration and MDGs are addressed in the 2005 review processes in a consistent and harmonious manner.

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/55/2

## **A. Mandates of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs**

16. The Expert Group Meeting first reviewed the key policy mandates for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

17. The core mandate for the expert discussions was the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted by consensus by 189 Member States of the United Nations in 1995. The Platform for Action is a global agenda for women's human rights, gender equality and empowerment of women, developed through a process of dialogue and exchange within and among governments, international organizations, including the United Nations, and civil society. The Platform for Action builds on commitments made at the United Nations world conferences on women held in Mexico in 1975,<sup>3</sup> Copenhagen in 1980,<sup>4</sup> and Nairobi in 1985,<sup>5</sup> as well as other commitments made at the United Nations global summits and conferences in the 1990s.<sup>6</sup> The Expert Group Meeting underscored the fact that the Beijing Platform for Action provides the most important comprehensive mandate for governments to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are actively addressed as core development concerns.

18. The commitments made by Member States in the Beijing Platform for Action were reaffirmed and further strengthened by the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century", which took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 to 9 June 2000.

19. Another key mandate is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which is one of the most important international human rights instruments and which complements the Beijing Platform for Action. It is a legally-binding international agreement adopted in 1979, and has been ratified by 179 countries, 76 of which have also become parties to its Optional Protocol. It establishes an international bill of rights for women and proposes an agenda for action by States Parties to guarantee women the enjoyment of those rights. The Convention affirms the principle of equality in 30 articles covering several dimensions of the situation of women: civil and political rights, including the legal status of women; and social, economic and cultural rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, and rights affected by the impact of cultural factors on gender relations.

20. The Expert Group Meeting looked at how these two key mandates for gender equality and women's empowerment have informed the Millennium Declaration in 2000 in which Member States reconfirmed the right of every human being to development and set the target of halving global poverty by 2015. Member States committed themselves to support all efforts to uphold equal rights without distinction as to race, sex, language or

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<sup>3</sup> World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, Mexico, 19 June to 2 July 1975

<sup>4</sup> World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, Denmark, 14 to 30 July 1980

<sup>5</sup> World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, Kenya, 15 to 26 July 1985

<sup>6</sup> These included the World Summit for Children (1990), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and the World Summit for Social Development (1995)

religion<sup>7</sup>, and underlined that gender equality is one of the fundamental values essential to international relations<sup>8</sup>. They resolved to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable<sup>9</sup>. Governments also committed themselves to eliminate violence against women and to promote the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>10</sup>.

21. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which emerged from the Millennium Declaration, are eight time-bound, measurable goals that aim to focus the world's efforts on achieving a selected set of internationally agreed development goals by 2015.<sup>11</sup> The implementation of the goals includes the need to measure and monitor progress, mobilize political commitment and initiate policy action through a focus on 16 global targets and 48 indicators agreed during a United Nations inter-agency consultation process in 2001. The MDGs are a reference framework to measure human development benchmarks on the way to more inclusive and equitable global development. Member States' commitment to the implementation of the MDGs was reconfirmed at several United Nations and other multilateral events.<sup>12</sup>

22. Gender equality is understood as a cross-cutting theme throughout the goals, with MDG 3 specifically addressing the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.<sup>13</sup>

## **B. Processes for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs**

23. The Expert Group Meeting reviewed the processes for global, regional and national implementation, monitoring and advocacy processes, and channels for the reviews of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration. The experts noted that in 2005 an important series of events will provide key entry points and channels for discussion and review of their concerns. The first is the Commission on the

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<sup>7</sup> A/RES/55/2, para 4

<sup>8</sup> A/RES/55/2, para 6

<sup>9</sup> A/RES/55/2, para 22

<sup>10</sup> A/RES/55/2, para 25

<sup>11</sup> The MDGs are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

<sup>12</sup> For example in the Doha Ministerial Declaration (November 2001), the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development (March 2002), the Second World Conference on Ageing (April 2002), the Johannesburg Declaration of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (September 2002), and the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (December 2003)

<sup>13</sup> The target associated with Goal 3 is focused on the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015. The four indicators focus on the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education; the ratio of literate females to males of 15-to-24-year-olds; the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector; and the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments.

Status of Women that will undertake a ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly at national level, during its forty-ninth session from 28 February to 11 March 2005. At its forty-eighth session in 2004, the Commission decided to focus on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly bearing in mind the need to integrate a gender perspective in the implementation and review of the United Nations Millennium Declaration<sup>14</sup>.

24. The Chairperson of the forty-ninth session of the CSW was requested to transmit its outcome, through ECOSOC, to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, including to the high-level event of the General Assembly on the review of the Millennium Declaration. There is an important opportunity to bring the outcomes of the CSW on how to integrate gender perspectives and promote women's empowerment to the highest level when the Economic and Social Council will consider the theme "Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities" at the high-level and coordination segments of its substantive session in June/July 2005<sup>15</sup>.

25. Another important set of processes are the consultations with the United Nations system and Member States to review the Millennium Declaration. Consultations with Member States are currently being undertaken by the President of the General Assembly. In March 2005, the Secretary-General will issue a comprehensive report. Subsequently, there will be further consultations with Member States on all the substantive issues of the preparatory process that will serve as a basis for a first draft of the outcome document to be adopted at the high-level plenary session.

26. The Expert Group Meeting noted that among these consultations, informal interactive hearings with NGOs, civil society and the private sector will be held in June 2005 within the context of the ECOSOC substantive session. Another opportunity to input into the review process is 27-28 June 2005 when the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development will take place. Between July and August 2005, the President of the General Assembly will intensify consultations in order to build consensus and to take into account various inputs that can enrich the preparatory process and facilitate the adoption of the outcome document.

27. Apart from the intergovernmental CSW, ECOSOC and General Assembly review processes, there are on-going activities that are supporting the implementation of the MDGs by Member States. The United Nations system has designed a four-pronged approach to achieve the MDGs through action at national, regional and global levels:

1. Country programmes and operations coordinated by the United Nations Country Teams following guidance from the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) to help implement policies and programmes for achieving the MDGs;

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<sup>14</sup> Resolution 48/5

<sup>15</sup> ECOSOC decision 2004/294, 23 July 2004.

2. Country reporting and monitoring, coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which measures and evaluates countries' progress towards the MDGs;
3. The Millennium Project, an independent advisory body that provides analysis for an overall operational framework and issued its report on 17 January 2005<sup>16</sup>; and
4. The Millennium Campaign, which mobilizes governments, parliaments and civil society at the national and global levels.

28. All of these activities were considered by the experts as key entry points to ensure linkages between the Beijing Platform for Action and to engage in the MDG monitoring and implementation processes.

29. The experts further noted the fact that after the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, there may be room for negotiations for new indicators, through the MDG Inter-agency and Expert Group on Monitoring the MDGs, to build on and complement proposals made by the various Millennium Project Task Forces. This exercise will constitute an important opportunity to expand the set of indicators on gender issues within Goal 3 and other goals even if new targets or goals are not to be considered. Within the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Monitoring the MDGs, a Gender Subgroup composed of staff of several UN entities has met several times since 2003, and recommended language on gender analysis of existing trends as well as proposals for new or revised indicators.

30. Given the ample opportunity for discussion in the months ahead as provided by the various processes, the Expert Group Meeting welcomed the timely opportunity provided by DAW and their hosts, the Government of Azerbaijan, to meet as a group of independent experts in Baku in order to review and deliberate on the key issues, concerns and ways forward.

#### **IV. Challenges, gaps and opportunities**

31. The experts observed that the Beijing Platform for Action reaffirmed the rights perspective embodied in CEDAW and in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (1994) and provided a holistic vision for the achievement of gender equality and the promotion of women's rights. The active mobilization and engagement of civil society in the period preceding the Fourth World Conference on Women, and during the conference itself, meant that the Beijing Platform for Action was a consolidated consensus document with a high level of commitment on the part of international agencies, Member States, responsible national machineries and civil society organizations (CSOs).

32. Since the adoption of the Platform, national and sub-regional reports on its implementation point to important areas of progress in recognizing gender equality and women's empowerment as key to sustainable human development. However, the experts also recognized that the absence of concrete time-bound targets and indicators had made monitoring of the Beijing Platform for Action difficult. It was also noted in the report of

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<sup>16</sup> Reports of the 13 Task Forces established under the Millennium Project have also been issued or will be published shortly.

the Expert Group Meeting on the role of national mechanisms in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women<sup>17</sup>, held in Rome in November 2004, that unclear mandates, contradictory demands and lack of political will had frequently constrained their capacity to facilitate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action across all sectors of government.

33. The Expert Group Meeting was encouraged by the reaffirmation of the international community's commitment to equality of rights between men and women, the key principle of the Beijing Platform for Action, through their endorsement of the Millennium Declaration. However, concerns were expressed about the restrictive interpretation of the Goal on gender equality and women's empowerment and the uneven integration of gender perspectives into the other goals. It noted the disjuncture between the challenges identified by the reviews of the Beijing Platform, which emphasized economic and cultural barriers, and those raised in the MDG national reports, some of which had failed to include the goal on gender equality or to analyze gender issues in discussions of other goals. Concerns were also expressed at the top-down process by which the MDGs had been formulated and adopted and the minimal participation by civil society organizations and women's organizations, particularly those that represented the poorest and most marginalized sectors of society.

34. While the establishment of an independent goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women was an important development in itself, gender equality was clearly a cross-cutting theme across all other goals. It was therefore critical that gender perspectives were fully integrated into the implementation and monitoring of all the other MDGs. The full inclusion of gender perspectives was also equally important in the implementation of the other objectives of the Millennium Declaration that were not contained in the MDGs, such as peace and security.

35. At the same time, the Group recognized that the MDGs commanded a high level of commitment internationally and appealed to a broader set of stakeholders than the Beijing Platform for Action. They therefore offered a strategic opportunity to integrate the concerns of the Beijing Platform for Action into a wider agenda in order to build on the mutual synergies between the goals of each policy framework and thereby strengthen international commitment to the basic principles of gender equality and women's empowerment. Such efforts would help to challenge the global economic model embodied in the MDGs and to realign them more closely with the vision of the Millennium Declaration.

36. It was also noted that mobilization by civil society actors and women's groups to promote the integration of gender equality goals across the MDGs had the advantage of bringing them into closer dialogue with a much wider range of ministries and stakeholders than did the Beijing Platform for Action. The fact that the MDGs specified concrete and time-bound targets and indicators provided the possibility of monitoring progress on gender equality and women's empowerment, which was a greater challenge in the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action.

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<sup>17</sup> EGM/National Mechanisms/2004/REPORT, p.10-11

37. From this perspective, the experts strongly endorsed the seven strategic priorities recommended by the Millennium Project Task Force 3<sup>18</sup>. They commended the Task Force for addressing critical gaps in the MDGs, in particular, sexual and reproductive rights and health and violence against women. They also commended the Task Force for widening the focus of MDG 3 to take account of post-primary education, women's rights to land and property, equality of employment, women's time burdens and violence against women. They also commended the report of Task Force 4 for integrating attention to power relations and health systems as core social institutions for women's well-being in its analysis of maternal health issues.

38. The challenges that the Expert Group Meeting set out to address, building on the current policy debates and findings of Task Forces 3 and 4 were to identify principles and recommendations that would clarify the linkages between the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and MDGs, as well as strategic entry points at both national and international level.

## **V. Linking the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and MDGs in a changing context: Resources, rights and accountability**

39. The experts recognized that efforts to link the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs would need to challenge the dominant paradigm that informed current macro-economic thinking within international institutions and affected the formulation of gender sensitive policies at the national level. The current macro-economic framework ignored both the structural nature of poverty as well as the structural nature of gender inequality. In particular, it failed to take account of entrenched and overlapping disadvantages that led to the exclusion of poor people from market-generated economic opportunities and their further impoverishment. It also failed to factor the inter-relationship between production and reproduction into its analysis of the economy and hence persistently ignored the inter-relationship between women's paid and unpaid work.

40. As a result, it had promoted a form of globalization and market liberalization that has led to growing inequalities within, and across, countries and reduced delivery of core social services. It had brought about new employment opportunities for women worldwide, but these had largely been in the context of deregulated labour markets and expanding informal economies. While the effects vary by region, poor women are everywhere primarily concentrated in the least secure and worst paid economic activities. Moreover, the failure to value and provide support for women's unpaid work and to recognize the importance of their paid work to the livelihood strategies of poor households in rural and urban areas had led to the intensification of women's work

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<sup>18</sup> Millennium Project Task Force 3, *Taking action: Achieving gender equality and empowering women*, 2005. The seven priorities are:

1. Strengthen opportunities for postprimary education for girls while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education;
2. Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights;
3. Invest in infrastructure to reduce women's and girls' time burdens;
4. Guarantee women's and girls' property and inheritance rights;
5. Eliminate gender inequality in employment by decreasing women's reliance on informal employment, closing gender gaps in earnings, and reducing occupational segregation;
6. Increase women's share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies;
7. Combat violence against women and girls.

burdens as they struggle to combine their caring responsibilities with the need to earn a living.

41. The Expert Group Meeting noted other aspects of the changing realities in which the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs would be implemented. There has been a growth in conservative forces across the world, often linked to the rise of religious fundamentalisms of various kinds, as well as diversion of resources away from the fight against poverty to the war on terror. The growing inequalities associated with neo-liberal globalization have led to a rise in both legal and illegal forms of migration, with the latter in particular associated with highly insecure and exploitative forms of work. The increase in the trafficking of women and children and enforced prostitution are manifestations of the new socio-economic challenges facing women. The growing incidence of war and conflict has brought new forms of violence against women that the international community has been slow to recognize and act on. The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS among women, particularly marginalized women, is another emerging issue. The feminization of the AIDS epidemic is evident in that now nearly 50 per cent of the 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS around the world are female, and young women account for 62 percent of people aged 15 to 24 living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. The feminization of the epidemic demonstrates that prevention and care will fail if determinants of the epidemic such as gender inequality and poverty are not addressed.

42. A major shortcoming is the failure to invest in sexual and reproductive health services for all women with a life cycle approach, including building up their capacity to act in response to HIV/AIDS. Another important issue that has received too little attention is the neglect and violation of the rights of women living with HIV/AIDS, particularly their sexual and reproductive rights and inequitable access to anti-retroviral treatment.

43. In this increasingly challenging climate for women, particularly those from socially excluded groups, poor regions and conflict-affected areas, women's rights groups across the world have sought to protect some of the gains from Beijing but with increasingly meagre resources. The experts underlined that without resources, it was unlikely that the challenge of gender inequality could be met. Against this background, the Expert Group Meeting recognized that the MDGs could be seen as an important leverage to mobilize political will and resources more effectively for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Equally, the MDGs could draw on the Beijing Platform, not only to implement Goal 3, but also to ensure that concerns with gender equality and appropriate strategies of the Beijing Platform for Action critical areas of concern were integrated into the other goals as well. Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the achievement of all the MDGs, and the extent to which the MDGs can be achieved depends on how gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed. The MDGs should not be seen as an alternative or substitute to the legal and political commitments adopted in the nineties and before, but as a strategy to move the world from an era of commitments to an era of implementation.

44. The experts agreed that a rights-based framework provided an important conceptual link between the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration. This would require that efforts to meet the MDGs should be conceptualized and presented within a human rights framework, with specific attention to the rights of women and

children. While the Millennium Declaration does make a strong commitment to rights, this is not evident in the MDGs or in the analysis presented by the development community.

45. Countries that have committed themselves to the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs have also ratified key human rights conventions, including CEDAW. Their governments consequently have the obligation to work towards the progressive realization of these rights. A rights-based approach to the MDGs would contribute to governments' ability to discharge their obligations.

46. A rights-based approach would strengthen the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action through the MDGs for a number of reasons. A rights-based approach requires the de facto realization of the MDGs. Consequently, it would require the identification of the different actors responsible for meeting the goals, allocate the resources necessary and set up institutional mechanisms to hold these actors accountable. Given that rights draw attention to process as well as to results, they would ensure that the MDGs are implemented with due attention to structural factors that inhibit gender equality. The experts agreed that CEDAW provided a useful tool for tackling root causes of gender inequality and discrimination, which are barriers to the implementation of gender equality and are likely to undermine the implementation of the MDGs. The accountability processes set up under CEDAW provide a model for considering the process by which goals are translated into intended results.

47. A rights-based approach to the MDGs also requires full participation by all stakeholders, but above all, those that the MDGs are intended to benefit. This is in line with growing recognition within national and international bodies that "participation" by those with the most direct stake in outcomes of policies and programmes is the best way to ensure that those policies and programmes are implemented in the spirit in which they were adopted. That recognition needs to be extended to the participation by the world's women in the MDG process and to ensuring that their participation is genuine rather than symbolic.

48. One of the strong critiques of the MDGs is that they did not offer such an inclusive and extensive process of review and consultation as the processes around the Beijing Platform for Action and other United Nations conferences. Although they distil the aims of those conferences, they failed to seek the same consensus. It has therefore proven an uphill task to bring into the MDG fora the range of concerns that gender equality and women's empowerment demand from a systemic and institutional viewpoint. The MDG process has not taken advantage of the wealth of the debate and negotiations that have been a major feature of the processes relating to the Beijing Platform for Action. It is therefore of vital importance to ensure that the five-year and subsequent reviews of the Millennium Declaration and MDGs address the issue of how to use more effectively the mandate to include women's movements in all levels of the development process provided by the Beijing Platform for Action.

49. It is important to learn from the Beijing Platform for Action process and civil society and other stakeholders in 'engendering' the MDG process. The Beijing Platform for Action is linked to processes that have been developed over several decades and have included not only government and United Nations actors, but also women's organizations

that have worked at local, national, regional as well as global levels, to bring their experience, visions and knowledge into the governmental and intergovernmental process.

50. Women's organizations can play an important role in terms of building public support for the MDGs with a focus on gender justice. Women's organizations can be galvanized to help convince other CSOs about the links between gender equality and the other goals.

51. The experts noted that Goal 8 spelt out a global partnership for development related to key decisions about rules of international cooperation and resource allocation, but that there was no provision for participation by representatives of civil society organizations, including women's organizations. A major challenge was therefore to promote participation by civil society within these global forums.

52. Goal 8 calls for a change in the relationships between governments, the United Nations, and civil society. On all sides, this requires a deeper dialogue about how such partnerships are going to be real and effective. It requires a sophisticated understanding of how global policy-making dynamics work, and it also requires coherence among States, non-state actors and multilateral institutions that address the systemic inequities and power imbalances within the global economic system, which could ultimately undermine the goals.

53. The MDG process is an opportunity for gender advocates to popularize instruments of social and gender justice such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action to wider groups, beyond women's constituencies. One proposal is for people's movements (including women's movements) to take the national reports and critique them – perhaps producing shadow reports that question official claims and present alternative views than the national reports. Unlike the Beijing and CEDAW shadow reports, the MDG shadow reports could potentially bring together a whole range of movements and citizens groups to support each other in following-up with advocacy campaigns and political mobilization. The Millennium Campaign could also further engage women's advocacy groups in 2005 around Goal 8 and its focus on global partnerships and governance.

54. Finally, the experts emphasized that tackling structural gender inequalities will need additional resources, but will yield also valuable benefits from the medium-term perspective of the MDGs and from the longer-term perspective of the Beijing Platform for Action. Resources refer to financial flows, political leadership, knowledge, expertise and capacity necessary to challenge existing power structures at all levels. Current attempts at costing the goal of achieving gender equality and women's empowerment are hampered by the paucity of accurate data and suggest the need for greater investment in developing appropriate indicators and institutionalizing them within official statistical efforts at the national and international levels. However, while stressing the need to implement all the MDGs from a gender equality perspective, the experts noted that integration of gender perspectives into sectoral work does not preclude special attention to gender issues through the allocation of special resources in programming and budgeting.

55. Three working groups were set up during the course of the meeting to work further on the following key areas of concern identified by the experts: a) the human

rights framework; b) the macro-economic framework and poverty reduction strategies, including c) making resources work for women; and d) civil society participation. The following sections set out the main concerns raised by each of the working groups and includes the agreed seven recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting under each of the four topics addressed.

## **VI. The Millennium Declaration, the MDGs, gender equality and human rights**

56. The Expert Group Meeting underlined that the MDGs are derived from an international consensus on development goals and are not, as they stand, contrary to human rights principles. They will, however, be better achieved if the methodology for implementation addresses power relations and incorporates a human rights and gender equality framework. At present there is no evidence that the implementation of the MDGs is bringing a human rights framework to bear. As gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the achievement of all the MDGs, the extent to which the MDGs can be achieved depends on how gender discrimination and women's rights are addressed.

57. The Expert Group Meeting stressed that implementation of the MDGs is not neutral. The manner in which the implementation of the MDGs is undertaken could lead to the improvement of gender equality or, on the contrary, it could exacerbate women's subordination. For example, when addressing child mortality, considering women's role only as mothers or caregivers could be at the expense of women's own health and well-being.

58. CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action set out the human rights and gender equality framework. CEDAW provides the legal framework and the normative standards of equality and non-discrimination, and the Beijing Platform for Action provides the appropriate programmatic measures for the implementation of the MDGs.

59. The MDG initiative is therefore best seen as a communication and political strategy to create momentum for the full implementation of the commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and the outcomes of the United Nations conferences of the 1990s. Hence the MDGs should be seen as leverage to mobilize political will and resources more effectively for the implementation of these existing commitments. The Expert Group Meeting underscored that the MDGs are not an alternative or substitute to the outcomes of the major summits and conferences of the nineties or the conventions and do not constitute an option for a minimum agenda. They should be seen as a strategy to move the world from commitments to implementation. This is the most compelling and challenging imperative of the new millennium.

### **A. Why a human rights framework**

60. In answering this question, the Expert Group Meeting began from the premise that human rights are inalienable and set universal standards that do not permit derogation of rights according to culture, tradition and interpretation of religion or any other political or economic particularities. Human rights are interdependent, interrelated and indivisible, and there can be no selectivity in their implementation.

61. As set out in the Millennium Declaration, human rights create binding obligations on the State to enable people to exercise and enjoy their rights. Hence States have to establish legal and institutional mechanisms for implementation and monitoring. Emphasizing the linkages between international human rights instruments can reframe the MDGs as binding human rights obligations.

62. Using a human rights framework creates a potent tool for advocacy that effectively changes the dynamics of women's engagement with the State and the international community, from a position of needs fulfilment to a position of strength premised on rights that are guaranteed and that States have a duty to fulfil. This ensures a dynamic State-civil society relationship and facilitates State accountability to its people.

63. Such a relationship is critical to deter the erosion of entitlements of groups of people in the context of economic liberalization. The focus on the MDGs relating to universal primary education and maternal and child mortality in an environment in which these very services are being eroded by a combination of privatization and removal of subsidies, is contradictory. The human rights framework can create the needed tension for States between their commitments to the neo-liberal agenda and their commitment to the human rights agenda. The purpose of this tension is to ensure the primacy of international human rights instruments over trade agreements, debt and other agreements that impact on the rights of citizens.

## **B. Need for principles of equality and non-discrimination**

64. The understanding of human rights must be based on the normative standards of equality and non-discrimination. In the area of women's rights the principles of substantive equality and non-discrimination as demanded by CEDAW must be used. For example, parity and equality are often used interchangeably if not synonymously. Parity in itself is not problematic. Difficulties arise when parity is attained not because women's position has improved but because men have under-achieved. Attainment of parity can also be problematic when reduction of disparity on the aggregate masks and hides disparities among groups according to age, ethnic minority status or according to regions within a country. It is important not to look at parity simplistically.

65. Secondly, even when parity is achieved, this need not necessarily be an indicator of equality or that there is a change in power relations. While reduction in disparity between women and men in education, access to income, etc. is a precondition for equality, it does not indicate equality of opportunities and security if violence against women prevails, and there is no autonomy for women. Equality is only achieved if women can enjoy and exercise all fundamental rights and freedoms such as mobility, freedom of speech, freedom to decide and to organize, and the right to sexual and reproductive autonomy, to personal security, to own assets, to work and earn income, and to be recognized as full members of society.

66. Finally, the Expert Group Meeting reasoned that the goal of equality should be mainstreamed across all other goals. For the most part gender-blind sets of targets and

indicators chosen to monitor the progress of the MDGs support a model of development that is incompatible with the human rights origins of the goals.<sup>19</sup>

67. To address all of these concerns, governments must undertake to fulfil the commitments of the world conferences of the nineties and to the human rights instruments, in particular CEDAW.

**C. Re-affirming the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW as roadmaps for achieving the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs**

68. As the United Nations Secretary-General has clearly stated, the targets set by the Millennium Declaration are not new. They are derived from the global conferences of the nineties and from the body of international norms and laws that have been codified over the past half century. It is important to stress, as the Secretary-General has reminded all, that the plans of action needed for reaching these targets have, for the most part, already been developed and formally adopted by Member States. The Expert Group Meeting urges the United Nations system and governments to bear in mind that a women's rights-based approach and framework have already been agreed upon by States and thus provide the road map for achieving the MDGs. Furthermore the Secretary-General has stressed that what is needed is the implementation of existing plans. The Expert Group Meeting further urges States to demonstrate the political will to carry out commitments undertaken and to implement existing strategies. It is about fulfilling the promises already made to the women of the world.

69. The Expert Group Meeting highlighted that while most of the time-bound commitments contained in the programmes of action from the conferences of the 1990s were turned into MDGs, the time-bound quantitative, verifiable commitment contained in the ICPD and reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action of guaranteeing universal access to sexual and reproductive health was left out. The Expert Group Meeting urges States to fulfil promises made. In this the Expert Group Meeting fully endorses the Millennium Project's Report and Task Forces 3 and 4 recommendations to guarantee universal access to sexual and reproductive health as a strategic objective for the attainment of the MDGs, and measure it accordingly.

70. The way in which the implementation of the MDGs is taking place is narrowing the women's rights agenda. Women's movements around the world have been instrumental for the recognition of women's empowerment and gender equality. The MDGs should not undermine but build upon this agenda. Thirty years after the first world conference on women, twenty-five years after the adoption of CEDAW and ten years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, the centrality of gender equality to all development processes should be recognized and reaffirmed.

71. The selective approach to women's rights within the MDGs has meant the exclusion of crucial rights for women's equality. The implementation process has marginalized key rights, such as the right of women to live a life free from violence, women's sexual and reproductive rights and women's economic rights. A gender equality framework must be incorporated in all goals and appropriate sex-disaggregated indicators be developed.

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<sup>19</sup> For example in China, which has seen impressive economic growth in recent years, an estimated 30 million women are "missing" as a result of sex selective abortions and infanticide CESCR.1990.

## **Recommendations**

**1. Use CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action as the frameworks, instruments and mechanisms to ensure a rights-based approach in the implementation of the MDGs in order to achieve gender equality and women's autonomy and empowerment. CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action monitoring and review processes should also be used to hold governments accountable for the implementation of the MDGs and MDG-based poverty reduction strategies.**

**2. Implement the following priority Quick-Win interventions<sup>20</sup> for large-scale progress and vital gains to millions of people and start developing countries on the path to achieve the goals:**

**a) Guarantee universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for girls and women as a priority for achieving gender equality and empowering women;**

**b) Address as a first priority the needs of the most excluded women, among others, indigenous, slum dwellers, women living with HIV/AIDS, displaced and refugee women, young women, and those discriminated because of race, caste and ethnicity.**

**3. National governments are urged to develop gender equality indicators for all MDGs. To further this objective, national governments and the United Nations system are urged to improve the quality and frequency with which sex-disaggregated data on the basis of ethnicity, caste, minority and other socially excluded groups are collected by developing methodological guidelines and undertaking more vigorous and sustained data collection efforts.**

## **VII. Engendering the macro-economy and poverty reduction strategies**

72. The Expert Group Meeting considered the tenth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action as an opportunity to underline that the MDGs cannot be achieved without a vision of global economic justice that recognizes that reducing gender inequalities requires both addressing the macro-economic framework, which acts as a major barrier to women's empowerment, and also requires making resources work for women's empowerment. They noted that both the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly include specific recommendations on the need to take into account the impact of globalization.

73. The predominance of the neo-liberal economic framework is a key challenge arising from the current context for the effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs. Significant progress has been made during the last decade in understanding the relationships between economic growth, poverty, and gender equality. There are encouraging, albeit slow, moves towards a broader approach to poverty, from

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<sup>20</sup> Millennium Project: *Investing in development: A practical plan to implement the Millennium Development Goals*, 2005, pp. 67-68.

the conventional income/consumption dimensions to the multi-dimensional conception of poverty, including the intangible dimensions of human rights.

74. This progress in understanding the relationship between macro-economic policy and women's poverty should be translated into progressive change in development institutions and development practice. There is a need to analyze the intersecting effects of gender inequality with other factors that determine the achievement of MDGs, including the interconnectedness between the MDGs.

75. The Expert Group Meeting underlined that policy positions that build on the linkages between the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs, must seek to address the root causes of poverty and gender inequality that are embedded in the prevailing global macro-economic framework as well as in the structures at the micro- and meso-levels, and to challenge the power relations that are at the heart of global inequalities and imbalances against poor countries.

76. While the Expert Group Meeting recognized that the MDGs will have to be tailored to specific country contexts, this should not lead to the exclusion of the goal on gender equality and women's empowerment, as evident in some country reports.

77. As stated above, a rights-based approach to the MDGs would ensure that this does not occur. Poverty reduction strategies that incorporate the MDGs cannot be in conflict with human rights and gender equality commitments, but must facilitate their progressive realization. The principle of "progressive realization" acknowledges that deep-rooted inequalities cannot be removed overnight, but urges that all steps be taken to ensure that they are removed over time. It is one thing for a State or any other responsible actor to acknowledge a right and another for it to take action to ensure that that right is enjoyed. For example, the right to sexual and reproductive health will not be fulfilled through formal statements of intention and lip service. It takes time, money, commitment - and action. The principle of progressive realization articulated in human rights treaties requires States to take all appropriate steps to realize the right in question "to the maximum extent of available resources".

78. The principle of progressive realization, according to the Expert Group Meeting, highlights three critical issues in relation to policy formulation and implementation of the MDG-based poverty reduction strategies:

- *Action must be concrete, deliberate, and targeted.* All States, no matter how poor, can take certain immediate, concrete measures to advance the right to health.
- *Budget allocations are relevant.* Allocations of budget and official development assistance are relevant to human rights. For example discretionary, harmful cuts to the health budget arguably violate this right.
- *Some interventions must take priority over others.* Not all interventions are equally important for ensuring enjoyment of a right. When fundamental rights are at stake, particularly when the historical context points to a legacy of neglect, some interventions must take priority over others.

## **Recommendations**

**4. Make the MDG-based poverty reduction strategies gender-sensitive. This should be done by drawing on the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW, safeguarding women's and girl's rights and promoting their health, including reproductive and sexual health and rights; education; access to and control over economic and political opportunities and resources; and freedom from violence.**

**5. Apply a human rights-based framework for assessing the gender impact of trade and macro-economic policies and agreements before and after their implementation, and the impact of global public/private partnerships. Assessments should focus on (i) the differential distribution among women and men of the benefits and adjustment costs resulting from trade agreements and macro-economic policies in terms of livelihood systems, income, employment opportunities and quality of employment; and (ii) the capacity of governments to fulfil their obligations for women's economic and social rights, and to implement the required legal, regulatory and support measures (such as taxation and subsidies).**

## **VIII. Making resources work for women**

79. Achieving gender equality results depends on supportive policy environments and funding mechanisms at both the national and international levels. For low-income countries, the national policy environment and external financial support are closely intertwined, either directly, through policy conditions on the receipt of external loans and grants, or indirectly, from the type of policy advice, technical assistance or project and programme support that particular donors offer.

80. Government responses to the questionnaire on the Beijing review and appraisal process, and shadow reports that have commented on the success of the national coordination processes suggest that the main strategies of national machineries for the advancement of women, gender mainstreaming, gender-sensitive budgeting and policy making have to be coordinated with key decision makers (such as ministers of finance and parliaments) at the highest levels to ensure adequate integration of gender perspectives into implementation and monitoring processes, as well as sufficient resource allocation and impact.

81. Yet the Expert Group Meeting pointed out that national machineries are too often poorly resourced, insufficiently integrated into overall government structures, or carry insufficient political weight, which can hamper efforts at mainstreaming gender perspectives into the work of all national institutions. It is therefore important that opportunities are created for national machineries, gender experts in governments, women's organizations and gender equality advocates to use the opportunity created by the MDG process to ensure a stronger public commitment to gender equality and the existing governmental commitments contained in the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as CEDAW, in those countries that are States Parties to the Convention. Commitment has to be built for gender equality perspectives to be taken into account not just in meeting the MDG 3 target and indicators, but across all other goals.

82. The Expert Group Meeting underlined that this needs to include the earmarking of funds for women's needs in all departments and line ministries as well as including appropriate instruments and conditions for gender mainstreaming in all areas. Organizations committed to gender equality and women's national machineries in low-

income countries will need even greater and sustained financial support and more coherent and visionary technical support from external sources to achieve specific targeted interventions for women and girls.

### **Recommendations**

**6. Systematically scale up investments in women and girl's development (starting with those whose needs are most urgent), prioritizing areas that have been overlooked, such as sexual and reproductive health and where there has been persistent gender bias, by:**

- a) Developing new financing mechanisms to increase the resources available for the reduction of poverty and the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment;**
- b) Including explicit gender equality objectives in all key strategic areas of the poverty reduction strategies, including poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), particularly the economy and governance, infrastructure and labour policies, and allocate the necessary financial and human resources to the associated budgetary expenditure and monitoring;**
- c) Supporting gender-sensitive budgeting initiatives, at local, national and international levels (including the UN system), and developing and applying gender-sensitive methodology to accurately measure, assess, and track the impact and effectiveness of investments in women and girls and the effectiveness of those investments for reducing gender inequality;**
- d) Ensuring the achievement of gender equality in the MDGs through targeted funding by governments and donors for gender equality as an explicit development goal in its own right, as well as for ensuring that gender equality results and processes are identified and supported in all other development priorities;**
- e) Providing access, financial support, and capacity-building at both local and global levels for women to participate in the global partnerships and decision-making and monitoring processes of the MDG-based poverty reduction efforts. This must also include support for national machineries to play a meaningful role.**

## **IX. Participation of women's organizations in the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and MDGs**

83. The Expert Group Meeting stressed that women's organizations have played a major role both in the realization of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in its implementation. They have created an enabling environment through policy dialogue and strategic alliances that have moved forward an international and national agenda concerning women's empowerment and the promotion of gender equality. Women's organizations have been able to channel women's needs and demands to the State, helping the State to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and other development commitments. In that process, they have established vital links between the women's rights agenda, social justice and other development agendas, particularly poverty reduction, education, reproductive health and environmental sustainability. They have also brought the needs of marginalized women and girls (including indigenous groups, slum dwellers, migrant populations, displaced groups and women with disabilities and HIV/AIDS) to the mainstream public policy debate and resource

investments. Consequently, civil society has gained great knowledge, credibility, experience in policy dialogue and building partnerships with international and national actors, particularly States, for the implementation of the commitments of Beijing Platform for Action.

84. The Millennium Declaration recognizes both the importance of women's empowerment and partnering with CSOs in pursuit of development, gender equality and poverty eradication, indicating the need to work collectively for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all citizens. However, the recognition of this role has not been fully translated into formal and meaningful engagement in the advancement of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. Therefore, women's organizations have not yet fully acknowledged the MDGs as a tool for advancing women's empowerment and gender equality.

85. The process of achieving the MDGs is an excellent opportunity to bring the Beijing Platform for Action, including women's rights, to the core of the global commitments, which have been accepted by the international community as standards for measuring human development achievements at national, regional and global levels. In addition, the MDG process reinforces the partnership between women's organizations, governments, the United Nations and other stakeholders, thereby availing channels to form strong global and national alliances in the advancement of their development agendas. Not exploiting these strategic alliances will erode the potential of achieving the MDGs.

86. The Millennium Project report<sup>21</sup> recognizes that women's empowerment and gender equality is central to the achievement not only of Goal 3 but of all the other Goals. Taking the strategic points raised by the Millennium Project into account, it is critical to find ways of mobilizing the global and national capacities, resources and achievements resulting from the Beijing Platform for Action commitments. Women's organizations, through their local, national, regional and global networks, can build political will through reinforcing policy dialogue and by bringing new actors into the MDG process.

87. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action, the full integration of gender perspectives into the MDG process has been hampered by a lack of systematic and consistent implementation and monitoring compounded by a lack of capacity, data and resources<sup>22</sup>. As committed autonomous actors, women's organizations can help contextualize the MDGs and bring in local and national realities through knowledge generation, documentation, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation. Internationally, women's organizations can also mobilize and build public awareness around the goals, share best practices and technical expertise with governments, and deliver services directly. Women's organizations need to act with accountability and transparency, both in relation to their own activities and governments' implementation of the gender equality commitments of the MDGs.

88. In order to ensure that women's organizations can fully contribute to the MDGs, and that the MDGs can be a vehicle for them to realize their own agendas, the Expert Group Meeting underlined the need for sustainable partnerships between women's

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<sup>21</sup> Millennium Project: *Investing in development: A practical plan to implement the Millennium Development Goals*, 2005

<sup>22</sup> E/CN.6/2005/2, p. 117

organizations and governments, which are institutionalized with appropriate resource allocation and, where necessary, capacity building. The MDG process also needs to nurture partnerships among women organizations and other CSOs working to achieve the MDG goals. The concerns of the economically poor and marginalized women also need to be heard through the MDG process by institutionally engaging with community-based groups through mechanisms that secure women's rights and advance their empowerment. Building on the Beijing Platform for Action, Member States and the United Nations system should therefore ensure that women's organizations actively participate in all phases of MDG planning, implementation and monitoring processes.

### **Recommendations**

**7. The MDG process should include women's organizations as principal actors in the human development agenda, using the frameworks provided by the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW, and specifically:**

**a) Increase the capacities of women's organizations in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action to the achievement of the MDGs as well as in using the MDGs as a tool to advance women's rights agenda, by:**

- i) Promoting and strengthening genuine partnerships between governments, women's organizations, United Nations and other stakeholders to guarantee the integration of gender perspectives in all MDG processes, improving the coordination and participation mechanisms at national levels; and in particular by making the Millennium Campaign more responsive to civil society organizations working for gender equality and women's empowerment.**
- ii) Developing systems for improving the accountability for engendering all MDG processes as well as national reports by a monitoring process that could include shadow reports.**

## ANNEX I

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## ANNEX II

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/bpfamd2005/index.html> 1

#### A. PAPERS BY EXPERTS

- EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005//EP.1** *Making the missing link: MDGs, gender and macroeconomic policy*  
Zo Randriamaro, Madagascar
- EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005//EP.2** *Beyond parity: Development, freedom and women. Notes on women's rights in the Millennium Development Goals*  
Silvia Lara, Costa Rica
- EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005//EP.3** *Indigenous women, the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action*  
Bernice Aquino See and Victoria Tauli Corpuz, Philippines
- EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005//EP.4** *Gender, Youth and AIDS*  
Carmen Barroso, Brazil
- EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005//EP.5** *Challenges in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals in urban poor areas*  
Mary Amuyunzu-Nyamongo, Kenya
- EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/EP.6** *Practices of promoting gender equality using the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs processes and building partnership between government, private sector and civil society in the Komi Republic of the Russian Federation*  
Olga Savastianova, Russian Federation
- EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/EP.7** *Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the*

*Millennium Declaration and  
Millennium Development Goals*  
Ceri Hayes, United Kingdom

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/EP.8**

*The Relevance of the links between  
human rights, the Beijing Platform  
for Action and the Millennium  
Development Goals*  
Shanthi Dairiam, Malaysia

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/EP.9**

*Sexual and reproductive health: A  
foundation for achieving the MDGs*  
Zonibel Woods, Canada

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/EP.10**

*Transforming health systems to  
strengthen implementation of the  
Beijing Platform for Action and the  
Millennium Development Goals*  
Helen de Pinho, South Africa

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/EP.11**

*The Beijing Platform for Action and  
the Millennium Development Goals:  
Different processes, different  
outcomes*  
Naila Kabeer, Bangladesh

## **B. PAPERS BY OBSERVERS**

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/OP.1**

*Achievements and challenges in  
linking the implementation of the  
Beijing Platform for Action, the  
Convention for the Elimination of  
All Forms of Discrimination Against  
Women and the Millennium  
Development Goals*  
UNIFEM CIS

## **C. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/BP.1**

Aide-Mémoire

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/BP.2**

Selected UN Internet Resources

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/BP.3 Rev.2**

Selected background materials

**D. WORKING PAPER**

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/WP.1 (draft)**

*Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals*  
Wendy Harcourt, consultant to DAW

**E. INFORMATION NOTES**

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/INF.1 Rev.1**

Preliminary programme of work

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/INF.2**

Information for participants

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/INF.3 Rev. 2**

Preliminary list of participants

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/INF.4**

List of documents

**EGM/BPFA-MD-MDG/2005/INF.5**

Procedures followed in ad hoc expert group meetings

## ANNEX III

### PROGRAMME OF WORK

#### Monday, 7 February 2005

- 9:30 -10:00 a.m. Registration of participants
- 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. Opening session**
- Introduction of the opening speaker by Ms. Mominat Omarova, Deputy Chair, State Committee for Women's Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Opening statement by Ms. Zahra Guliyeva, Chair, State Committee for Women's Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Message from Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations delivered by Ms. Sylvie Cohen, Deputy Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations
- Opening statement by Mr. Marco Borsotti, UN Resident Coordinator / UNDP Resident Representative
- 11:00 – 11:15 a.m. Break
- 11:50 – 1:00 a.m.** Election of officers
- Adoption of the programme of work
- Introduction to the meeting
- Introduction of experts and other participants
- Presentation of working paper  
Ms. Wendy Harcourt, consultant to DAW  
*Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals*
- Presentation of the report of Millennium Project Task Force 3 (gender equality and empowerment of women)  
Ms. Carmen Barroso

	Discussion
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.	Lunch
<b>2:30 – 4:00 p.m.</b>	Presentations by experts
	Ms. Zo Randriamaro (Madagascar): <i>Making the missing link: MDGs, gender and macro-economic policy (EP.1)</i>
	Ms. Naila Kabeer (Bangladesh): <i>The Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals: Different processes, different outcomes (EP.11)</i>
	Ms. Silvia Lara Povedano (Costa Rica): <i>Beyond parity: Development, freedom and women. Notes on women's rights in the Millennium Development Goals (EP.2)</i>
	Discussion
4:00 – 4:15 p.m.	Break
<b>4:15 – 5:30 p.m.</b>	Presentations by experts
	Ms. Mary Shanthi Dairiam (Malaysia): <i>The relevance of the links between human rights, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (EP.8)</i>
	Ms. Ceri Hayes (UK): <i>Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (EP.7)</i>
	Discussion

**Tuesday, 8 February 2005**

<b>9:30 – 11:15 a.m.</b>	Summary of discussion by the Rapporteur
	Presentations by experts
	Ms. Carmen Barroso (Brazil): <i>Gender, youth and AIDS (EP.4)</i>

	<p>Ms. Helen de Pinho (South Africa):  <i>Transforming health systems to strengthen implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (EP.10)</i></p> <p>Ms. Zonibel Woods (Canada):  <i>Sexual and reproductive health: A foundation for achieving the MDGs (EP.9)</i></p>
11:15– 11:30 a.m.	Break
<b>11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.</b>	<p>Presentations by experts</p> <p>Ms. Bernice Aquino See (Philippines):  <i>Indigenous women, the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action (EP.3)</i></p> <p>Presentation of written contribution from Ms. Anastasia Posadskaya-Vanderbeck (Russian Federation) by Ms. Heike Alefsen</p> <p>Discussion</p>
1 – 2:30 p.m.	Lunch
<b>2:30 – 4:00 p.m.</b>	<p>Presentations by experts</p> <p>Ms. Mary Kigasia Amuyunzu-Nyamongo (Kenya):  <i>Challenges in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals in urban poor areas (EP.5)</i></p> <p>Ms. Olga Savastianova (Russian Federation):  <i>Practices of promoting gender equality using the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs processes and building partnership between government, private sector and civil society in the Komi Republic of the Russian Federation (EP.6)</i></p> <p>Discussion</p>
4:00 – 4:15 p.m.	Break
<b>4:15 – 7:00 p.m.</b>	Establishment of working groups and start of working groups

**Wednesday, 9 February 2005**

<b>9:30 - 11:15 a.m.</b>	Working groups
11:15 – 11:30 a.m.	Break
<b>11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.</b>	Working groups continued
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.	Lunch
<b>2:30 – 4:00 p.m.</b>	Feedback from the working groups to plenary Drafting of final report
4:00 – 4:15 p.m.	Break
<b>4:15 – 6:30 p.m.</b>	Drafting of report continued

**Thursday, 10 February 2005**

<b>9:00- 11:15 a.m.</b>	Drafting of report continued
11:15 – 11:30 a.m.	Break
<b>11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.</b>	Finalization of draft report
1 – 2:00 p.m.	Lunch
<b>2:00 – 4:00 p.m.</b>	Presentation of final report and recommendations by the Rapporteur Discussion Adoption of report Closing remarks