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* [**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**](https://www.un.org/press/en/un-bodies/economic-and-social-council)
* [**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**](https://www.un.org/press/en/un-bodies/commission-on-the-status-of-women)

**SIXTIETH SESSION, 14TH & 15TH MEETINGS (AM, PM & NIGHT)**

**Concluding Session, Women’s Commission Agrees on Approach for Gender-Responsive Implementation of Sustainable Development Agenda**

The Commission on the Status of Women, closing its sixtieth session today, approved a robust set of Agreed Conclusions that the top United Nations gender official said would pave the way for a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“It is critical for us to ensure that 2030 arrives with women and girls in a different place, in a world where there will be substantive equality,” said Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Entity of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (UN-Women), in closing remarks.  So far, no country had achieved gender equality; however, she hoped that would change by the target date of 2030.

In particular, she welcomed the Agreed Conclusions’ highlighting of the education, health, humanitarian and economic needs of women, with all those linked to the 2030 Agenda and its importance for women and girls.  The document also made reference to indigenous women, women with disabilities, rural women and youth, she said, which underscored the importance of recognizing the intersecting challenges that millions of women and girls faced.

By the terms of the Agreed Conclusions, which were presented in an informal paper, the Commission reaffirmed the importance of significantly increased investment to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.  That included the mobilization of financial resources from all sources — including domestic and international — and the full implementation of official development assistance (ODA), as well as strengthened international cooperation through North-South, South-South and triangular models.

Also by the text, the Commission urged Governments to ensure the promotion and protection of the human rights of all women and their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.  It urged them to adopt, review and ensure the accelerated and effective implementation of laws that criminalized violence against women and girls, as well as comprehensive, multidisciplinary and gender-sensitive preventive, protective and prosecutorial measures and services.

In other business today, the Commission took action on six additional texts, recommending four draft resolutions to the Economic and Social Council.  Among those, it approved, without a vote, a draft resolution on the Commission’s Multi-year programme of work (document E/CN.6/2016/L.6), by which the Council would establish the themes for the Commission’s sixty-first, sixty-second and sixty-third sessions.

Also without a vote, the Commission approved a draft resolution entitled “Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS” (document E/CN.6/2016/L.5), as orally revised.  Introducing that text, the representative of Botswana, speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, said the document emphasized the need for urgent action to address the devastating and disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls.  The resolution’s adoption by consensus would demonstrate the collective commitment by Member States to eliminate the AIDS pandemic by 2030, as mandated by the 2030 Agenda.

Speaking in explanation of position following the adoption, the representative of the United States said the resolution ambitiously aimed to remove obstacles to treatment in low- and middle-income countries.  However, joining the consensus did not imply that States must accede to instruments to which they were not already parties, nor did it imply the creation of any rights or principles not previously recognized or any other change in the status of treaty or customary law.  Furthermore, the resolution could have gone farther in recognizing the right to comprehensive sexual health education.

In that regard, the representative of Finland, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said there were many parts of the text that the Union would have liked to have seen strengthened or emphasized, such as the crucial nature of education in eradicating the HIV/AIDS epidemic.  Meanwhile, the representative of Liechtenstein, also speaking on behalf of Canada, Iceland, New Zealand and Norway, called on States to scale up resources to provide women with comprehensive sexual health education.

The representative of Sudan, also speaking on behalf of Nigeria, Yemen, Libya, Algeria, Belarus, Pakistan, Niger, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, said those countries had joined consensus because of the text’s importance, but felt that some of their views had not been accommodated in a number of paragraphs, including operative paragraph 9 which should have focused on the provision of health care, rather than on social norms about sexuality that were not acknowledged in the laws of many Member States or in international law.  The representative of Mauritania agreed with those reservations.

The representative of Iran said some elements of the resolution were inconsistent with previously agreed language and were subject to broad interpretations.  She therefore disassociated her delegation from provisions of the text that might be inconsistent with its national priorities.

The observer for the Holy See supported the main purpose of the resolution.  However, he did not agree with some of the newly proposed language, especially that which promoted risk-taking behaviours and abortion, nor did he consider abortion to be part of the term “sexual and reproductive health”.  Reaffirming his delegation’s well-known position on the use of contraception and related practices, he went on to underscore the primary responsibility of parents to educate their children as well as their right to hold religious beliefs.

Also approved without a vote was a draft resolution on “Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned during armed conflicts” (document E/CN.6/2016/L.4).  Introducing that text, the representative of Azerbaijan said it addressed the situation of women and children hostages, who were victims of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, the impact of trafficking in persons during situations of armed conflict and the increased vulnerability of women and children to violence.

By a recorded vote of 20 in favour to 2 against (Israel, United States) with 11 abstentions, the Commission approved a draft resolution entitled, “Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women” (document E/CN.6/2016/L.3).

Speaking on that item before the vote, the representative of Israel called the text an attack on his country and said it failed to hold the Palestinian leadership accountable, did nothing to help Palestinian women and only advanced the agenda of those who sought to use the Commission as a political platform.  Year after year, the Commission singled out one country only, with not a word to say about countries where women were treated like second-class citizens, unable to drive or leave the house without their husband’s permission.  He asked delegates to vote against the text and to commit themselves to ending an annual charade that endangered the Commission’s credibility by indulging the whim of one party.

The representative of Finland said European Union members represented in the Commission would abstain in the vote, adding that country-specific issues covered in the text should be dealt with in the General Assembly.

His counterpart from Kazakhstan, expressing support for Palestinian women and children, said he would vote in favour, as did the delegate from Indonesia, who regretted that many Palestinian women and girls were living in poverty and exposed to violence and discrimination on the part of the occupying power.

The representative of Switzerland, explaining his decision to abstain, said a number of important features had not been addressed in the draft and that the General Assembly was the more appropriate forum to address the topic.

Speaking after the vote, the representative of the United States said her delegation remained troubled by the Commission’s insistence in including political elements and one-sided resolutions in its work.  The United States was committed to supporting the Palestinian people, in particular women, through practical and effective means.  In that regard, she noted that her country was the largest bilateral donor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), having provided some $390 million to the Agency in 2015.  She remained concerned about the humanitarian situation of Gaza and the fact that punishment of women for so-called “ethical crimes” continued to occur.

The representative of Japan also expressed concern about the plight of the Palestinian women; however, he said his delegation had abstained in the vote as the resolution was not well-balanced.

Also speaking after the vote, the observer for the State of Palestine urged the international community and the Commission in particular to continue its efforts in support of the Palestinian people.  The situation of Palestinian women and children had deteriorated to an alarming level as a result of the Israeli occupation and crimes committed by the regime.  Those practices remained a major obstacle to the empowerment of Palestinian women, she said.  Indeed, if Israel continued to attempt to silence Palestinian voices through its policies of oppression, discrimination and terror, those voices would only become louder and clearer.

Also today, the Commission approved, by consensus, a provisional agenda for its sixty-first session (document E/CN/6/2016/L.1), and a draft report on its sixtieth session (document E/CN.6/2016/L.2).  Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur Šijla Ðurbozović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) introduced the latter.

The Commission took note of a number of documents, including a letter dated 8 December 2015 from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women (document [E/CN.6/2016/11](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/11)) and a note by the Secretariat on the Contribution by the Commission on the Status of Women to the work of the Economic and Social Council (document [E/CN.6/2016/12](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/12)).

It also took note of a report of the Secretary-General on women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development (document [E/CN.6/2016/3](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/3)); a report of the Secretary-General on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women (document [E/CN/6/2016/4](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/4)); a report of the Under-Secretary-General transmitting the report of UN-Women on the normative aspects of the work of the entity (document [E/CN.6/2016/2](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/2)); and a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of UN-Women on the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (document [A/HRC/32/3-E/CN.6/2016/8](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/8)).

Also noted were a report of the Secretary-General on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS (document [E/CN.6/2016/9](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/9)); a report of the Secretary-General on proposals for priority themes for future sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (document [E/CN.6/2016/10](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/10)); a report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its fifty-eighth, fifty-ninth and sixtieth sessions (document [A/70/38](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/38)); a note by the Secretariat transmitting the results of the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ([E/CN.6/2016/13](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/13)); a Chair’s summary of the ministerial round table on “Enhancing national institutional arrangements for gender equality and women’s empowerment (document [E/CN.6/2016/14](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/14)); and a Chair’s summary of the ministerial round table on “Strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks for gender equality and women’s empowerment” (document [E/CN/6/2016/15](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/15)).

In addition, the Commission took note of a Chair’s summary of the ministerial round table on “Financing for gender equality and women’s empowerment in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (document [E/CN.6/2016/16](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/16)); a Chair’s summary of the ministerial round table on “Fostering gender-responsive data, design, collection and analysis and building the knowledge base” (document [E/CN.6/2016/17](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/17)); a Chair’s summary of the high-level interactive dialogue with ministers on “Building alliances for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (document [E/CN.6/2016/18](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/18)); a Chair’s summary of a panel discussion on the priority theme “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development” on the sub-topic “Key strategies for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (document [E/CN.6/2016/19](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/19)); a Chair’s summary of a panel discussion on the priority theme “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development” on the sub-topic “Participation and partnerships for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (document [E/CN.6/2016/20](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/20)); and a Chair’s summary of the discussions under the review theme of the sixtieth session, namely, “Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls” (document [E/CN.6/2016/21](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2016/21)).

Closing the sixtieth session and opening the sixty-first session, the Commission re-elected its Chair, Antonio De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil), by acclamation.  It also elected three Vice-Chairs:  Jun Saito (Japan), Šijla Ðurbozović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Andreas Glossner (Germany).