

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-second session
12 – 23 March 2018

**Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality
and the empowerment of rural women and girls**

Draft agreed conclusions

Recommendations of NGO CSW NY

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth, fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women. **(CSW 61 AC, para 1)**
2. The Commission reiterates that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, as well as other relevant conventions and treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the **International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Family Members, and The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security and subsequent Resolutions** provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of **rural** women and girls. These instruments **mandate** the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls throughout their life cycle, **especially** rural women and girls **and those living in informal and indigenous settlements**. **(Based on CSW 61 AC, para 2)**
3. The Commission reaffirms that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of its reviews, **the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action**, and the outcomes of relevant major United Nations conferences and summits and the follow-up to those conferences and summits, have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action **and human rights treaties** will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. **(Based on CSW61, para 4)**
4. The Commission emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship between the empowerment of rural women and girls and the realization of their human rights and gender equality as expressed through the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be implemented in a comprehensive manner which is reflective of its universal, integrated and indivisible nature as well as its intersecting and interacting goals. The Commission recognizes the importance of relevant International Labour Organization standards related to the realization of women's economic empowerment, and recalls the Resolution on Decent Work and**

Informal Economy in addition to the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. (Based on CSW61 AC, para 3,6,7 and E/CN.6/2018/3, para 2)

5. The Commission acknowledges that rural women and girls are a heterogeneous population who face multiple and intersecting inequalities and forms of discrimination which warrant the engagement of community and religious leaders, relevant family structures, civil society, academics and media outlets as stakeholders in implementing institutional responses tailored to each population's specific priorities. The commission also acknowledges that all groups of rural women and girls including mothers, single women, indigenous women, widows, those affected by chronic illnesses and STIs such as HIV/AIDS, women with mental, neurological and substance use disorders, women with disabilities, stateless women, women who are migrants, refugees and internally-displaced persons, those affected by armed conflicts, natural and man-made disasters, as well as women and girls of ethnic, cultural, religious and gender minorities each fulfil a unique role. Therefore, both local and national policies must complement these women's and girls' respective contributions to their communities. Furthermore, the Commission acknowledges that rural communities are increasingly being affected by the impacts of encroaching urban development, and through the loss of their younger generations to more developed areas. This shift in demographic distribution has a significant impact on the accessibility of education, healthcare, justice systems and public services which compounds the severity of all other challenges faced by rural women and girls of all ages. (Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 6)

6. The Commission stresses the urgency of eliminating structural and systemic barriers as well as patriarchal systems which hinder gender equality for all women and girls including in wealthy nation states. The Commission urges all stakeholders to take concrete action to identify and address discriminatory laws and policies, harmful traditional practices, and negative gender norms, roles and stereotypes. States, civil society, and rural women themselves must also collaborate to prevent oversight of the challenges facing rural women and girls when designing infrastructure and drafting plans for both national and local level development. The Commission reaffirms the most recent General Assembly Resolution on Women in Development and expresses deep concern that the lack of adequate sanitation facilities and related challenges, such as water scarcity and unsafe water supplies, disproportionately affect rural women and girls, including their labour force and school participation rates. Such issues of access increase their vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse. Thus, The Commission calls for the strengthening of efforts to achieve safe sanitation for all and to end open defecation. Special attention must be directed to rural women and girls, through efforts to ensure safe access to sanitation and hygiene facilities, including menstrual hygiene management. (Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 44, A/RES/70/219, para 21; 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 4)

7. The Commission stresses the urgency of eradicating multidimensional poverty and eliminating its institutional drivers in order to fulfill the rights of rural women and girls of all ages to an adequate standard of living, a life free of violence, discrimination, and harmful socio-cultural practices. Underscoring the significance of agricultural activities in rural areas, The Commission encourages the proliferation of multi-stakeholder and multisectorial partnerships which protect the right of all rural women, including widows, to own, inherit, bequeath, manage and profit from land and productive assets

in addition to rural women and girls' access to credit and social protection floors. Such partnerships must also collaborate in the fortification of public services as well as the universalization of food security, quality education and training, employment in the formal economy under ethical conditions, equal remuneration, and the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for rural women and girls of all ages, including those who are migrants, stateless or displaced persons. The Commission emphasizes that ensuring economic empowerment and strengthening the livelihoods of rural women and girls positively contributes to socioeconomic empowerment and wellbeing in addition to national sustainable development strategies. However, in order to seize opportunities for change, rural women and girls of all ages must have unfettered access to justice, equitable participation in the justice system and the rule of law must be upheld for all persons in all contexts. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, paras 3 and 43**2017, *A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 11*)

8. The Commission also stresses the importance of rural women's voice, agency and leadership, including autonomy and bodily integrity, as indicated by their full, equal and effective participation at all levels of decision-making as well as marginalized rural women and girls' equitable enjoyment of justice. The Commission emphasizes that good health is a critical precursor to the engagement, empowerment, and economic stability of rural women and girls, and that good health also facilitates the realization of human rights in rural areas. Therefore, The Commission defends rural women and girls' right to health and calls upon States to progressively realize the full and universal enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health as mandated by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Commission calls on all relevant stakeholders at the community, national, regional and international levels to take concrete action towards ensuring that this right to health is enjoyed by rural women and girls of all ages, ethnicities, religions and genders, including indigenous women, widows, mothers, single women, women living with chronic illness or disability in addition to women and girls who are migrants, stateless or displaced persons. This universal standard of health must be inclusive of preventive and routine care, psychosocial, pediatric, geriatric, perinatal, neonatal, gynecological and dental services. The commission stresses that human and patient rights must be protected for rural women and girls in all contexts, and that stigmas and harmful traditional practices must be eliminated in the treatment of mental, neurological and substance use disorders. WHO's most recent Global Burden of Disease studies affirm that mental, neurological and substance use disorders currently constitute the leading cause of disability worldwide and will surpass HIV/AIDs, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease in their contribution to lost DALYs (disability adjusted life years) by 2030. The dignity and human rights of women and girls living with disabilities must be protected and these capable women and girls must be empowered via education and appropriate accommodations. Furthermore, the sexual and reproductive health rights of all women, girls and widows must be protected in both law and practice. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, including paras 6, 13, 23,** 2017, *A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 11, 2015, A/RES/69/313, GA Resolution 69/313, Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) para. 111; 2015, A/RES/70/132, GA Resolution 70/132, Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas, OP2 (m)*)

9. The Commission expresses its concern especially about the continuing impacts of **growing inequality, humanitarian, financial, food, climate and healthcare** crises, which are compounded by slow or stagnant economic growth, **austerity cuts**, worsening political **tensions**, humanitarian **disasters, armed and multi-actor** conflicts, environmental degradation, unsustainable agricultural and land use practices, and the dynamics of migration and urbanization. **Such calamities disproportionately affect rural women and girls, especially those whose age, marital status, ethnic, religious, or gender identity position them in increasingly vulnerable situations. The impact of these global crises on the lives, livelihoods, physical and mental wellbeing of rural women and girls is greatly exacerbated by structural barriers to women's social independence, financial stability and ability to become self-reliant. Furthermore, The Commission strongly affirms WHO's definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" as well as the Mental Health GAP Action Plan slogan that there is "no health without mental health". Therefore, the commission urges states and all relevant stakeholders, including community leaders, academics and NGOs, to integrate mental health screening and services as a pillar of primary care, while proactively disseminating psychosocial care and support to rural women and girls, including those who are migrants, stateless and displaced persons, and especially to those who are survivors of violence, conflict, natural or man-made disasters and the humanitarian crises referenced above. (Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, paras 9, 28; 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 11)**

10. The Commission encourages acceleration in the provision and maintenance of infrastructure **that addresses the needs of all women and girls, including those living with disabilities, in performing daily tasks and in accessing education and employment opportunities. Priorities for the provision of public services to rural women and girls include sustainable energy, secure transportation networks, and safely accessible water and sanitation systems. Sanitation infrastructure must incorporate appropriate sustainable technologies designed to combat the transmission of communicable disease and waterborne illnesses which disproportionately affect rural women and children. The livelihoods of rural women and girls must also be enhanced by guaranteeing affordable and accessible information and communications technology (ICT), including through appropriate and accountable technology transfer; quality education, vocational and entrepreneurship training, universal access to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental healthcare, and the protection of all human rights. (Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, paras 7, 14, 17, 40, 44; A/RES/70/219, 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 11)**

11. The Commission reaffirms the need for greater financing from all sources, including **tax revenues and increased official development assistance, in order to leave no rural woman or girl behind as noted in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. Similarly, The Commission stresses the necessity of multisectoral and multistakeholder partnerships to ensure the successful development, implementation and maintenance of sustainable, evidence based interventions. Greater resources at the community, national and international level must be allocated to the prevention of and response to all forms of violence and abuse against women and girls in both public and private places. Examples of such violence include but are not limited to early, child and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, femicide, honor-based killings, female infanticide and foeticide, denial of birth registration to the girl child, sexual violence and the enforcement of**

rape-marriage laws, marital rape, trafficking of persons, torture, modern slavery, abusive labor practices, the detention of displaced and migrant youth, and the separation of displaced and migrant families. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 43, 2005, CRC/C/GC/6, Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 6, Violence against women migrant workers, OP20)**

12. The Commission, in order to continue working towards the full, effective and accelerated implementation of CEDAW and its General Recommendation No 34 on rural women, as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, all of which will make a crucial contribution to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, urges Governments, the relevant entities of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations to proactively invest in multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral partnerships. Such partnerships must facilitate the collaboration of national human rights institutions where they exist, non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, faith-based organizations, the private sector, employer organizations and trade unions, women's rights and other civil society, grassroots and community-based organizations, and especially rural women's civil society organizations and cooperatives, feminist groups, girl-led and youth-led organizations. Likewise, relevant family, community and tribal structures as well as the media, should be recruited to engage in these efforts as applicable. The Commission thanks all aforementioned parties for their renewed commitment to the empowerment of all rural women girls in addition to prioritizing the improvement of the situation of rural women and girls in their local, national, regional and global development strategies and, thus, urges them to take the following actions. **(Drawing on CSW AC 60, 61, and E/CN.6/2018/3)**

Strengthen normative and legal frameworks and eliminate laws, policies and practices that discriminate against rural women and girls

(a) Uphold and implement existing national and international commitments and obligations with respect to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls of all ages with an emphasis on their full enjoyment of all human rights, which constitute an integrated framework that leaves no rural women or girl behind. Consider the adoption, where appropriate, of national legislation to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of women in indigenous and local communities relating to traditional medicines, biodiversity and indigenous technologies; **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (a) and General Assembly Resolution 72/148 Paragraph 2(bb) December 2017)**

(b) Strengthen and enforce laws, policies and regulations that prohibit discrimination against rural women, widows, and girls of all ages, ethnicities, religions and gender identities, including those who are migrants, stateless and displaced persons, through the enhancement of gender-responsive rural development policies. Take steps, including a gender-sensitive review of national legislation, to repeal any laws or legal procedures and eradicate practices – national or customary – that promote discrimination on the basis of sex and ensure that provisions of multiple legal systems, where they exist, comply with international human rights obligations, commitments and principles, including the principle of non-discrimination. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (b) and CSW51 Agreed Conclusions United Nations, March 2007 Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child)**

(c) Implement targeted measures to address the multiple and intersecting inequalities and marginalization rural women of all ages, the girl child, mothers, heads of households, indigenous women, widows, those affected by chronic health conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease

and cancer, or STIs including HIV/AIDS and HPV, as well as women living with mental, neurological and substance-use disorders or disabilities, and women and girls who are of diverse genders and sexual orientation. Female irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, internally-displaced and stateless persons, as well as women any ethnic, cultural, or religious minority must enjoy equal protections and access to services as mandated by multiple, intersecting international human rights treaties. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (b) 2015, A/RES/69/313, GA Resolution 69/313, Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) para. 111)**

(d) Accelerate efforts to prevent and eliminate violence, harassment, abuse and maltreatment of all rural women and girls in all public and private places. This includes women and girls who are displaced, economic migrants or seasonal workers, widows, or who are living with mental or chronic illness and women with disabilities. Legislative and judicial reform must reflect zero tolerance policies for all forms of violence including femicide, honor-based killings, intimate partner violence, domestic and psychological violence, marital rape, sexual violence, gender based cyber violence, physical, sexual, psychological or economic abuse, levirate, widow inheritance, and the denial of the right to divorce or to remarry if widowed or divorced. Take decisive action to combat forms of violence which disproportionately impact girls such as school related violence, violation of bodily integrity, as well as the structural, cultural and situational drivers of child, early, temporary and forced marriage, rape-marriage laws, trafficking of persons, coercive and deceptive recruitment into the sex-trade, and female genital mutilation. Train law enforcement officers, the judiciary and professionals working with women and children in the handling of cases of child early, temporary and forced marriage. Improve legal infrastructure and remove all barriers to reporting violations of human rights and to accessing legal counselling, assistance or remedies, especially for girls and young women. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (c), 2017, A/RES/71/175, GA Resolution 71/175, Child, early and forced marriage, OP. 11, CSW 57 Paragraph 34(zz) CSW 57 Paragraph 34(cc))(General Assembly Resolution 72/148 Paragraph 2(m), E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (c) and gender-related killings, including femicide (General Assembly Resolution 72/148 Paragraph 2(m) (E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45(c)); 2007, E/2007/27-E/CN.6/2007/9, CSW Agreed Conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, para. 14.9(d)**

(e) Undertake legislative and administrative reforms to protect and promote all rural women and girls' full and equal rights to land and land tenure security. Ensure the right to their equal, access to, ownership of, and control over productive resources and assets and all other forms of property, including intellectual property, inheritance, natural resources, financial services, and information and communications technology by ensuring and promoting economic empowerment, financial stability and social independence. The protection of rural women's land and property rights must also extend to situations in which prior registration of property has been prevented and where private ownership is unrecognized in the face of large scale land acquisitions associated with foreign direct investment. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (d) 2017, A/RES/71/170, GA Resolution 71/170, Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: domestic violence, OP. 15 (d);)**

(f) Ensure the full and equal participation and leadership of rural women and girls in rural development and governance, including in agricultural cooperatives and farmers' organizations, and decision-making at all levels through adequate laws, policies, regulations and other targeted measures, including quotas and affirmative action. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (e))**

(g) Strengthen **transnational and domestic** coordination between national gender equality mechanisms and other governmental institutions **while prioritizing** collaboration with non-governmental and civil society organizations, **and especially rural girls and women**. Ensure that **women and children have full and equal access to effective legal remedies for violations, including domestic mechanisms, which are monitored and revised to ensure that they function without discrimination**. Eliminate corruption and clientelism in effort to guarantee the enforcement of international mechanisms that address human rights as provided, *inter alia*, under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (e))**

(h) Ensure **equitable access by rural women and girls, regardless of their immigration status, to justice, quality legal services, remedies and support systems while championing their unfettered participation and representation in all levels of the justice system**. All relevant stakeholders must collaborate to both enact and enforce legislation that regulates the relationship between different mechanisms within plural legal systems in order to reduce conflicts of law and ensure that rural women can claim their rights. The Commission further calls upon States to ensure access to justice and accountability mechanisms and remedies for the effective implementation and enforcement of laws aimed at preventing and eliminating discrimination against women and girls, taking into account the multiple, intersecting and aggravating forms of discrimination as outlined above. Systematic efforts must be undertaken to thoroughly educate marginalized rural women and girls about their rights under the law. Additionally, comprehensive training must be administered to law enforcement officers and monitoring mechanisms must be implemented to assess how they address discrimination and gender inequality. Facilitate access to the legal system through law enforcement and reporting procedures by taking steps to remove all barriers to accessing legal counselling, assistance and remedies. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (f) 2015, A/RES/69/313, GA Resolution 69/313, Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) para. 111)**

Implement economic and social policies for the empowerment of rural women and girls

(i) Pursue macroeconomic policies that support **female entrepreneurship and smallholder agricultural production as well as** food security and nutrition of rural women and girls and their communities by mitigating the negative impacts of international investment and trade rules, **intellectual property agreements, climate change and rapid urbanization**. Continue to encourage private investment in rural women in order to close the gender gap in agriculture. Facilitate their access to extension and financial services, agricultural inputs and land, water, sanitation and irrigation systems, global and digital markets in addition to innovative technologies. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (g) General Assembly Resolution 72/148 Improvement of the Situation of women and girls in rural areas :Paragraph 2(s):December 2017)**

(j) Enact economic and social policies **and laws** to eradicate rural poverty and support rural women's decent work and income security, **including work in the formal economy, equal remuneration, climate-resilient agricultural production, food security and child nutrition**. As noted in the 47th Commission on the Status of Women, a focus on the gender-sensitive dissemination of information and communications technologies is essential in order to prevent and combat any adverse impact of the digital revolution on gender equality and the perpetuation of existing inequalities or

discrimination, including the economic, social and sexual exploitation of women through both traditional media and new technologies. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (h))**

(k) Design and implement fiscal policies that promote gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls including those who are migrants, displaced or stateless persons. Direct financial services, support and microcredit, to empower rural girls to continue their education and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. Develop livelihood enhancing initiatives through access to technical and vocational education and life skills training, including financial, digital and legal literacy for all women and girls throughout the lifecycle. Promote women's equal access to full and productive employment and decent work, as well as equal political participation and rights to inherit, own and control land and productive measures. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (i); 2017, 2015, A/RES/69/313, Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda), Annex, para. 41; A/RES/71/175, GA Resolution 71/175, Child, early and forced marriage, OP. 10)**

(l) Invest in essential infrastructure, affordable and accessible ICT, data for development, sustainable energy, sustainable transport and safely managed water and sanitation, including through accountable and appropriate technology transfer in order to improve the lives, livelihoods and wellbeing of all rural women and girls. Support the development and maintenance of rural infrastructure, as well as investments in referral mechanisms, equipment and supply chains, to improve maternal and newborn healthcare services in rural areas. Ensure that rural women and girls of all ages, including those who are irregular or labor migrants as well as displaced or stateless persons, have access to the full continuum of care. Said continuum must encompass treatment for mental, neurological and substance disorders, rehabilitative services for women living with disabilities, ongoing management for women with chronic illnesses, immunizations, preventative screenings and assessments in addition to functional quality control and monitoring mechanisms that are in place for all areas of service delivery. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (i) and 44, 2014, A/RES/69/148, GA Resolution, 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 11)**

(m) Invest in quality services for care, education, and health, inclusive of sexual and reproductive health. Improve mechanisms at both the community and national level for the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls in order to improve the lives, livelihoods, mental and physical wellbeing of rural women and girls of all ages, religious, ethnic and gender minorities. Eliminate legal, administrative, financial and social barriers that hinder universal access to timely, high quality health services for all rural women and girls through gender-responsive national and local strategies. Multisectoral partnerships must be strengthened to ensure that public-health systems and policies for rural women and girls are comprehensive, affordable, better targeted and equipped to address the unique needs of individual populations. These multistakeholder partnerships and programmatic efforts must seek-out and encourage women's active participation in their design and implementation. Where appropriate, implement WHO's task shifting frameworks and cascade implementation models to empower rural women to be their own force for change while simultaneously increasing the number of professional health-care providers, especially in rural areas, to alleviate the current burden on women and girls who provide unpaid care services. Enhance the prevention and management of non-communicable illnesses and chronic health conditions which contribute significantly the global burden of disease for rural women such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancers, STIs including HIV/AIDs and HPV in addition to mental, neurological and substance use disorders by guaranteeing universal health and sexuality education for rural girls and women of all ages. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (i) and 44 2009, E/2009/27-E/CN.6/2009/15;**

2013, E/2013/27-E/CN.6/2013/1; 2009, E/2009/27-E/CN.6/2009/15; 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 11)

(n) Reprioritize fiscal expenditures to extend social protection coverage to all rural women and girls and establish social protection floors to ensure access to social protection for all, **regardless of their immigration status**. Reallocate development funding to enhance rural women's and girl's access to affordable, safe, effective and good quality treatment and medicines. Emphasise the delivery of quality, sustainable and affordable care to underserved, vulnerable and marginalized segments of the rural population. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (j); 2013, E/2013/27-E/CN.6/2013/11, CSW Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, para. 34, (hhh))**

(o) Ensure the **equal right to work and rights at work** of all rural women in both informal and formal economies **as well as domestic and foreign labour markets**. Conduct a thorough review of legal and informal labor recruitment practices to guarantee that all rural women workers are equally protected by international labour standards and national labour and market laws. Eradicate discriminatory or patriarchal economic practices such as limited access to bank accounts and credit, mandatory male participation in contractual agreements, as well as norms and policies which prevent rural women's acquisition of numeracy and literacy or limit their opportunities for formal education and experiential learning, in addition to all forms of inequity in the ownership and inheritance of property. Provide vocational training and life-long learning opportunities for women and girls of all religious, cultural and gender identities in order to improve their numeracy, financial, digital and legal literacy, regardless of their immigration status. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (k) 2017, E/CN.6/2017/L.5, CSW Agreed Conclusions on Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, para. 40 (oo), Addressing the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers)**

(p) Implement and enforce laws and regulations that uphold the principle of equal pay for work of equal value **and the right to decent conditions of work** in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment for women of all ages in rural areas. Enact legislation that ensures equality and prohibits discrimination against women based on pregnancy, motherhood, widowhood, marital or immigration status, in addition to age, religious, ethnic or gender identity, and extinguish all other intersecting forms of prejudice. Implement measures to ensure the elimination of the pension gap for rural women and ensure that women are equitably covered under financial protection policies, have access to adequate pensions, and that all of these considerations are incorporated in current and future pension reforms. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (l))**

(q) Identify and eliminate all policies and practices that condone forced, bonded, and child labour, including recruitment for labour migration, as well as exploited domestic, agricultural and sexual services. Implement judicial and legislative frameworks which recognize that rural poverty is one of the indicators of vulnerability to slavery in all forms. Institute policies at both the community and national level which are cognizant that rural poverty, in conjunction with restricted access to quality education and equitable employment, significantly increases the risk of coercion and victimization by the sex-trade supply chain in addition to abusive labor practices, all forms of exploitation, gender-based violence, trafficking, torture and black-market organ sales for girls and young women, especially those who are migrants or who have been forcibly displaced. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (m))**

(r) Undertake targeted measures **at local, national and regional level** to recognize and measure unpaid work performed by rural women and girls in addition to reducing and redistributing

their disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work. **Enforce** the equal sharing of responsibilities with rural men and boys and the provision of infrastructure, such as sustainable energy, sustainable transport and safely managed water and sanitation, **information and communications** technologies, and public services. **This includes the facilitation of access to quality care for children and dependants that is both accessible and affordable for rural women. Drastically improve infrastructure and the safety of transportation in rural areas to ensure that all rural girls and women have sustainable access to education and employment. Guarantee that all related facilities provide appropriate accommodations for rural girls and women of all ages who are living disabilities, chronic illnesses or mental, neurological and substance use disorders. (Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (n)2015, A/RES/70/132, GA Resolution 70/132, Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas, OP2 (m); 2011, E/2011/27-E/CN.6/2011/12, CSW Agreed conclusions on the access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work, para. 22 (p))**

(s) Systematically measure and incorporate the value of unpaid work performed by rural women and girls, including unpaid care and domestic work, in the calculation of gross domestic product and the formulation of economic and social policies. **Implement fiscal policies reflective of the global understanding that the gross domestic product growth rate could increase significantly if every country achieved gender equality as underscored in the most recent General Assembly Resolution on Women in Development. Likewise, socio-economic reform must acknowledge that rural women remain especially affected by the slow pace of the global economic recovery, and proactively address the fact that economic and social losses owing to a lack of progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all rural women and girls have a significant and enduring impact on the livelihoods of their families, communities and nations. (Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (o)A/RES/70/219)**

(t) Facilitate the entry of rural women, especially young women, into formal, capital enhancing and technologically advanced sectors of the economy by initiating a vocational transformation from agricultural and domestic activities to academic endeavours with an emphasis on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) disciplines and entrepreneurship skill-set building. Pursue and implement policies that promote the transition from the informal to the formal economy to ensure access to decent work, labour standards and social protection. Eliminate the barriers faced by married, disabled and disadvantaged girls in remaining in and/or returning to in returning to school in addition to guaranteeing quality early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary education as well as experiential learning. Ensure more resourcing and inclusive education for children and adolescents with disabilities through quality teacher training, recruitment and retention of teachers in rural areas, especially women teachers where they are underrepresented. Collaborate through multi stakeholder and multi-sectoral partnerships in the construction of gender-sensitive education facilities which provide a psychosocially safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environment for all. Implement structures to prevent the disruption of rural girls' education and that facilitate an effective transition from education or unemployment to decent work for women and girls of all ages. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (p,w), E/2017/27 E/CN.6/2017/21 17-05997 17/59 (l) General Assembly Resolution 72/148 December 2017 Paragraph 2(hh); 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/16, HRC Resolution 35/16, Child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings, OP. 6)**

(u) Increase the share of trade and procurement from rural women's enterprises and cooperatives, and foster their access to local, national and international markets and digital platforms. Upgrade legislative mechanisms to address disinformation and propaganda, safeguard media

diversity, ensure media transparency and accountability, and promote rural women's access to, participation in, and ownership of media. Emphasize the ever increasing need to invigorate the impacts of globalization and migration with inclusivity and sustainability for rural women and girls of all ages, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, religious and gender identities. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (q), CSW 47 AC, para4(m),(n),(p))**

(v) Strengthen the capacity of rural women and girls to respond to economic, political and social shocks, conflicts and humanitarian crises by providing essential infrastructure, **quality public services**, decent work, **sustainable social protection**, **equitable education and skill-set building** and by defending the right of all to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Implement targeted peer-mentorship schemes to women of all ages at and at all stages of academia and employment in order to facilitate gender parity across all sectors and improve the socioeconomic security of all rural women and girls. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (r); 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 11)**

(w) **Fortify** the resilience of **all** rural women and girls to climate change and environmental degradation, such as deforestation, desertification, loss of agricultural biodiversity, and rising sea levels by strengthening access to financing, sustainable energy, **education, healthcare, sustainably managed information and communications technologies**, and strong, **gender-sensitive social protection schemes**. Mainstream a gender perspective in decision-making processes and the governance of natural resources, leveraging the participation and influence of women in managing the sustainable use of natural resources, and enhancing the capacities of Governments, civil society and development partners to better understand and address intersections between issues of gender and natural resources. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (s); General Assembly Resolution 72/148 Improvement of the Situation of women and girls in rural areas :Paragraph 2(f):December 2017; 2017, E/CN.6/2017/L.5, CSW Agreed Conclusions on Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, para. 40 (hh), Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment)**

(x) Increase financial and human investments in quality, affordable and accessible health-care facilities and support services for rural women and girls which facilitate universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare and rights in order to ensure that all rural women and girls enjoy their right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Strengthen international cooperation in order to assist in the development of human resources for health with an emphasis on technical assistance and ICT training. Universalize safe transportation and sustained access to health services in remote and rural areas, taking into account the challenges faced by many developing countries in the retention of skilled health personnel. Expand, improve and promote high quality community-based health services for all rural women and girls, regardless of their immigration status, in low, middle and high-income countries alike. Implement public health policies which emphasize preventative care and highlight the importance of early detection in the treatment of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer as well as chronic illnesses and STIs such as HIV/AIDS. Improve the availability of care for women and girls living with disabilities, as well as hospital and hospice-based treatment, geriatric and pediatric care in addition to treatment and support services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders in rural areas, indigenous and remote settlements. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (t)2009, E/2009/27-E/CN.6/2009/15, CSW Agreed conclusions on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS, para. 15 (mm))(2009, E/2009/27-E/CN.6/2009/15, CSW, 2015, A/RES/69/313, GA Resolution 69/313, Addis Ababa Action**

Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) para. 111; 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 11)

(y) Take measures to reduce maternal, **infant and child** mortality rates in rural areas and increase access to quality care before, during and after childbirth. **Integrate information and communications technologies in the dissemination of** comprehensive health and sexuality education to all rural women and girls. **Ensure adequately trained and skilled human resources, especially midwives, obstetricians, gynaecologists and doctors in addition to the provision of incentives and other means to secure the presence of qualified health-care professionals who are able to perform interventions to prevent obstetric fistula and postpartum hemorrhage in rural and remote areas indigenous and informal settlements. (Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (t) 2017, A/RES/71/169, GA Resolution 71/169, Intensification of efforts to end obstetric fistula, OP. 14, (d)) (2014, A/RES/69/148, GA Resolution, Intensification of efforts to end obstetric fistula, OP. 12 (b))**

(z) Ensure universal access by rural women and girls to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including health-care services for family planning, **autonomy in the context of breastfeeding, fulfil their right bodily integrity, and provide educational and legislative measures to enhance their capacity to** decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality. **All such rights must be enjoyed free of coercion, discrimination and violence in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, 15 the Beijing Platform for Action 16 and the outcome documents of their review conferences (Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (u) General Assembly Resolution 72/148 (2017) Paragraph 2(g)**

(aa) Strengthen HIV/AIDS **and other STI** prevention, treatment and care in rural areas, including health and social services for rural girls and women of all ages, religious, ethnic and gender identities, including those living in indigenous or informal settlements and those who are migrants, displaced or stateless persons. Technology is an essential asset to such endeavors, as internet capable devices, and digital platforms, such as WHO's mhGAP Intervention Guide 2.0 app, standardize treatment, increase quality of care, and facilitate remote support and supervision; **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (v); 2013, E/2013/27-E/CN.6/2013/11, CSW Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, para. 34, (hhh))**

(bb) Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure the full and equal participation of rural women and girls in and their completion of quality education at the primary, secondary, vocational and technical level. **Emphasise early childhood education and expand the scope of ICT-enabled mobile learning and training to facilitate the acquisition of numeracy, legal, financial and digital literacy. Identify and eliminate causes of rural girls being withdrawn from or prevented from enrolling in school, and provide safe, sustainable, accessible school infrastructure and quality teachers in rural areas as well as indigenous and informal settlements. (Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (w); 2006, E/2006/27-E/CN.6.2006/15, CSW Agreed conclusions on enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work, para. 7, (s))**

(cc) Increase the capacity of national statistical offices and other relevant institutions to collect, analyse and disseminate sex- and age-disaggregated data and to produce gender statistics to support policies and action for rural women and girls, while monitoring and tracking progress towards the Goals. **Utilize alternative methods of obtaining quantitative and qualitative information to fill the gaps in data on hard to reach groups. Address the lack of quality, accessible, timely and reliable data**

disaggregated by sex and age, as well as statistical information on disabilities, to facilitate change through evidenced based policies and programs. Ensure that no one is left behind by intensifying efforts to include women's unpaid work in official statistics, and developing a systematic and comparative research base on rural women that will inform all levels of decision making. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (x) General Assembly Resolution 72/148 December 2017 Paragraph 2(ee))**

Strengthen the collective voice, leadership and decision-making of rural women and girls

(dd) Ensure that rural women and girls and their organizations fully and actively participate in the **national and international** decisions, policies and institutions that affect their livelihoods, **mental and physical well-being and resilience, as well as the issues of national and social interest, including through affirmative action, where appropriate. Promote and protect the right to vote and to be elected in addition to the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association for all women and girls, including human rights defenders in rural areas. (Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (y) E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (e)) General Assembly Resolution 72/148 Improvement of the Situation of women and girls in rural areas: Paragraph 2(b):December 2017)**

(ee) Protect the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining to enable rural women workers, including informal and migrant workers, to organize and join unions and participate in economic decision-making and policy formulation. **Develop and implement strategies to decrease women's and girls' vulnerability to all adverse impacts of globalization and environmental factors through gender-responsive strategies on mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Support the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to assert their human and legal rights in instances of climate-induced migration through the promotion of their health and well-being, as well as access to sustainable livelihoods. Implement recruitment and oversight mechanisms in rural areas while providing adequate resources to ensure women's full participation, and equitable impact in decision-making at all levels.(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (z); 2016, E/2016/27-E/CN.6/2016/22, CSW Agreed conclusions on women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development, para. 23 (l), Strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks; 2015, A/RES/70/132, GA Resolution 70/132, Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas, OP2 (d))**

(ff) **Ensure** the effective participation, decision-making and leadership of rural women in women's enterprises, farmers' organizations, producer cooperatives and other civil society organizations. **Promote the right to freedom of expression, access to meaningful information and use of communications technologies for rural women and girls in order to increase opportunities for expanded self expression and their ability to make well-informed choices (Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (aa))**

(gg) Provide adequate opportunities, human and financial resources to strengthen rural women and girls' collective agency and facilitate the formation their own organizations to exercise voice, and leadership. Ensure sustained access to essential health-care services, equipment and supplies, education, skills training and income-generating projects and support to women and girls so that they can break out of the cycle of poverty. **(Building on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 45 (bb)(2017, A/RES/71/169, GA Resolution 71/169, Intensification of efforts to end obstetric fistula, OP. 14, (q))**

(hh) Include rural women in all the processes about peace agreements and discussions, in line with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. *(and building on 2015,*

A/RES/70/132, GA Resolution 70/132, Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas, OP2 (d)

13. The Commission recognises the need to educate and train men and boys of all ages to better understand, uphold and promote the rights of girls and women, and encourages men and boys to take an active part in, and to engage fully as agents and beneficiaries of change in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. Initiatives to involve all men and boys in achieving gender equality for all rural women and girls must involve community and religious leaders, relevant family structures and the media in the recognition and eradication of harmful stereotypes and gender-norms which perpetuate women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work. Proactively promote policies and initiatives supporting the reconciliation of work and family life and the equal sharing of all responsibilities between women and men. Enhance flexibility in working arrangements for rural women, especially those who are mothers, heads of household or widowed. Ensure that these arrangements are implemented without reductions in labour and social protections through targeted action and continued oversight at both the community and national level. **(Based on CSW61 AC, para 12, 2017, E/CN.6/2017/L.5, CSW Agreed Conclusions on Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, para. 40 (z), Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment; 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/10, HRC Resolution 35/10, Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women: engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls, OP.9 (k); 2017, A/HRC/RES/35/18, HRC Resolution 35/18, Elimination of discrimination against women and girls, OP. 6)**

14. The Commission calls upon all Governments to ensure that national planning, decision-making, policy formulation, program implementation, budgeting processes, **including formal gender budgeting frameworks as part of national policy**, and institutional structures contribute to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls, recognizing that this requires both targeted action and mainstreaming gender perspectives into all efforts. **(Based on CSW61 AC, para 42, and 2017 HLPF MD, para 17)**

15. The Commission calls upon the United Nations system, and especially the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, **International Labour Organization**, and the World Food Programme within their respective mandates, and other international organizations, including international financial institutions, to work collaboratively to support the implementation, measurement and monitoring of the present Agreed Conclusions and of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. **(Based on E/CN.6/2018/3, para 46)**

16. The Commission calls upon UN-Women to continue to play a central role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and in supporting Governments and national women's machineries, upon their request, in coordinating the United Nations system and in **actively supporting, rural women's and girls' organizations**, civil society, the private sector, employers' organizations and trade unions and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of **CEDAW** and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. **(Based on CSW61 AC, para 45)**

