

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11 – 22 March 2019

**Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for
gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls**
Draft agreed conclusions

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 and 62 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 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, throughout their life course. **(Based on CSW 61 AC, para 2 and CSW 62 AC para 2; E/CN.6/2019/3)**
3. The Commission reaffirms that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of its reviews, 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 will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. **(Based on CSW61 AC, para 4 and CSW62 AC, para 3)**
4. The Commission emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and 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. **(Based on CSW62 AC, para 8)**
5. The Commission acknowledges the important role played by regional conventions, instruments and initiatives in their respective regions and countries, and their follow-up mechanisms, in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas. **(CSW62 AC, para 7)**
6. The Commission recognizes the progress made in women's and girls' access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure. It welcomes that social protection

coverage has increased, that more girls are in school than ever before, and that women's and girls' access to essential health services has improved. **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, para 14, 17, 26)**

7. The Commission stresses the importance of addressing remaining gender gaps and biases in social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure. **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, para 14, 20, 26, 29)**
8. The Commission expresses concern about rising inequalities and persistent poverty, compounded by the impacts of lingering crises, slow recovery and austerity measures, widespread labour market informality, worsening political and humanitarian conflicts, climate change, environmental degradation, and the dynamics of migration on the lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing of women and girls. **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, para 6, 7, 8, 18)**
9. The Commission emphasizes the interlinkages between social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure. It stresses the need for greater coordination and policy coherence across sectors to ensure that social protection, public services and infrastructure policies complement one another in their objectives, functions and financing, so as to avoid trade-offs and harness synergies for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, para 10, 25 and 42)**
10. The Commission stresses the need for stronger gender-responsive, human rights-based and integrated approaches to the design and implementation of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure that recognize unpaid care and domestic work, enable the mobility of women and girls, support the realization of their sexual and reproductive health and rights, enhance their access to economic opportunities and strengthen their resilience to shocks. **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, paras 14, 26, 29, 42)**
11. The Commission acknowledges that the ability of women and girls to fully benefit from social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure is particularly constrained when they face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on age, income, geographic location, race, ethnicity, health or migration status, and disability, among others. It also acknowledges that different groups of women and girls have particular needs and priorities, warranting tailored policy and institutional responses. **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, para 4, 14, 26, 27)**
12. The Commission stresses the importance of ensuring the meaningful voice, agency, leadership and participation of women and girls in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, and also recognizes their role and contribution as beneficiaries, users and providers, of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure. **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, para 16, 33 and 40)**
13. The Commission affirms that accelerated investments in gender-responsive social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure are critical to tackle economic, social, environmental and demographic challenges on the path to sustainable development and reaffirms the need for greater financing from all sources, including increased official

development assistance, in order to leave no woman or girl behind. **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, paras 2, 6, 42)**

14. The Commission recognizes the importance of fully engaging men and boys, as agents and beneficiaries of change, and as strategic partners and allies in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. **(CSW62 AC, para 45)**
15. The Commission urges governments, the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, and invites national human rights institutions, where they exist, civil society, including women's organizations, feminist groups, youth-led organizations, faith-based organizations, as well as the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders, as applicable, to take the following actions: **(Based on CSW60 AC, para 23; CSW61 AC, para 40; CSW62 AC, para 46)**

Strengthen the normative, legal and institutional environment

(a) Take action to fully implement existing commitments and obligations with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms so as to improve their lives, livelihoods and well-being; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43 (a))**

(b) Enshrine the right to social protection in national legal frameworks, supported by national strategies and action plans with gender equality and women's empowerment at their core; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (b))**

(c) Adopt a human rights-based and gender-responsive approach to the design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, and ensure their availability, accessibility, adequacy, acceptability and quality; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (c))**

(d) Create and strengthen coordination across sectors and levels of government and with private for-profit and not-for-profit providers for the integrated implementation of gender-responsive social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (d))**

(e) Strengthen the capacity of and funding for national gender equality mechanisms to support and monitor the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into the design and delivery of social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (e))**

(f) Ensure that women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination enjoy equal access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (f))**

(g) Invest in social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure to support the productivity and economic viability of women's work in the informal economy; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (g))**

(h) Ensure that women have equal access to decent work in public services and infrastructure and take measures to reduce gender pay gaps, strengthen collective bargaining and enable women's career advancement; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (h))**

Address gender gaps and biases in social protection

(i) Conduct context-specific assessments of gender-differentiated risks across the life course and their intersection with other forms of discrimination to inform the design and implementation of social protection schemes; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (i))**

(j) Work towards universal and gender-responsive social protection systems, including floors, that ensure the income security of women across their life course; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (j))**

(k) Extend comprehensive social protection systems to all women, especially to women in informal employment, and progressively improve the adequacy of benefits; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (k))**

(l) Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work by ensuring access to social protection for unpaid caregivers, including coverage for health care and pensions; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (l))**

(m) Guarantee access to maternity protection in accordance with the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) of the International Labour Organization for all workers and promote the equal sharing of responsibilities by expanding parental leave that incentivizes fathers' participation in child-rearing; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (m))**

(n) Prevent the exclusion and stigmatization of women who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination by avoiding narrow means-tested targeting and opting for broad coverage of benefits; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (n))**

(o) Assess the need for conditionalities and ensure that, where they exist, non-compliance does not lead to punitive measures that exclude already marginalized women and girls; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (o))**

Transform public services for gender equality and women's empowerment

(p) Scale up investment to increase the availability of public care services and coordinated, multisectoral services for women and girls who are survivors of violence; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (p))**

(q) Identify and remove financial and non-financial barriers that constrain women's and girls' access to public services, such as physical distance and transportation, lack of information and decision-making power and stigma and discrimination; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (q))**

(r) Ensure that public services are of adequate quality, gender-responsive, age-sensitive and disability-sensitive, culturally relevant and physically accessible for older women

and women with disabilities, and free from violence, stigma and sexual harassment; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (r))**

(s) Ensure the affordability of health-care services through universal health coverage that includes universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights across the life course; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (s))**

(t) Use gender-responsive educational curricula to improve the quality of education services, eliminate gender stereotypes and transform unequal power relations; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (t))**

(u) Improve employment standards of women workers in front-line health, education and care services and strengthen recognition and protection for the most vulnerable groups, such as community health workers; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (u))**

Make infrastructure investment work for women and girls

(v) Prioritize investment in environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure, including in technology and digital telecommunications, that promotes women's health, well-being, livelihoods and productivity and generates employment for women in non-traditional sectors; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (v))**

(w) Conduct systematic and transparent assessments of the environmental, human rights and gender impact of infrastructure projects with the full participation of women and girls in affected communities; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (w))**

(x) Guarantee the availability of clean water and safe sanitation for women and girls, including for menstrual hygiene management, in homes, schools, health clinics, transportation hubs, refugee camps, government offices, work sites and other public places; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (x))**

(y) Ensure household-level access to adequate levels of electricity through grid and off-grid solutions that support women's multiple roles and their specific livelihood needs; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (y))**

(z) Ensure that the implementation of community energy systems, such as mini-grids, provides targeted support and incentives for women's participation and leadership as users and producers; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (z))**

(aa) Ensure that urban transport policies and planning are accessible and gender-responsive, consider women's multiple roles as workers and caregivers, protect their safety and promote their mobility and economic empowerment; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (aa))**

Mobilize resources, strengthen accountability and improve evidence

(bb) In the context of austerity measures, refrain from cutbacks, in social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure that benefit women and girls; **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (bb))**

(cc) Increase investment in universal and gender-responsive social protection, quality public services and sustainable infrastructure through domestic resource mobilization, including progressive and gender-responsive tax measures and budgeting; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (cc))**

(dd) Strengthen international cooperation, meet commitments to ODA and ensure that ODA investment in social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure is directed to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (dd))**

(ee) Evaluate the costs and benefits of private sector participation in social protection systems, public service delivery and infrastructure development and hold private providers accountable for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (ee))**

(ff) Promote the full and equal participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in policy dialogues and decision-making relating to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (ff))**

(gg) Create and strengthen gender-responsive accountability mechanisms, such as gender audits, and include beneficiaries and users in the evaluation of social protection, public services and infrastructure projects; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (gg))**

(hh) Improve the collection and use of data, disaggregated by sex, age, income and location, on access to and the adequacy of social protection benefits, including child allowances, pensions and disability and unemployment benefits; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (hh))**

(ii) Strengthen the collection of data, disaggregated by sex, age, income and location, on time use and on violence against women and girls, and use these data to inform social protection, public services and infrastructure policies; **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (ii))**

(jj) Complement quantitative impact evaluations with qualitative studies of the implementation of social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure to make visible the adverse consequences for women and girls. **(E/CN.6/2019/3, para 43, (jj))**

16. The Commission recognizes its primary role for the follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in which its work is grounded, and stresses that it is critical to address and integrate gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to ensure synergies between the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. **(CSW62 AC, para 47)**

17. The Commission calls upon the United Nations system entities and other international organizations, including international financial institutions, to support the implementation, measuring and monitoring of the present Agreed Conclusions and of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels. **(Based on E/CN.6/2019/3, para 44)**

18. 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 mobilizing civil society, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders, at all levels, in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including towards social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. **(Based on CSW61 AC, para 45 and CSW62 AC, para 52)**