



Economic and Social Council

Provisional

8 October 2010

English

Original: French

Substantive session of 2009

General segment

Provisional summary record of the 40th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 28 July 2009, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Ali (Vice-President) (Malaysia)

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In the absence of Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg), Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions: mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Economy and environmental questions: women and development

Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Introductory statement

Ms. Mayanja (Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that the global financial crisis posed a threat to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The call launched to all States in the ministerial declaration adopted at the end of the high-level segment to renew their commitment to prevent and eliminate maternal and child mortality and morbidity and strengthen health systems, at all levels, was timely. The fact that the Council had chosen “Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women” as the theme for its 2010 annual ministerial review showed how central the topic was in the current time of crisis.

The Secretary-General’s report on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2009/71) presented some of the measures taken by the United Nations, including training to ensure that its staff were able to promote gender equality in all spheres of activity. United Nations agencies were also making progress at the country level in that area. Inter-agency collaboration was being strengthened, and unified methods for measuring progress were being developed.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remained a relevant framework for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women at the regional, subregional and national levels, and significant advances had been made in reducing inequalities with regard to access to basic education, development and the implementation of policies and programmes that took into account the issue of gender equality as well as access by women to leadership positions in political life.

The decrease in incomes and employment resulting from the crisis would significantly slow down progress in poverty reduction and the fight against hunger, areas where women were particularly affected. In the conclusions it had adopted after its fifty-third session, which had focused on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS, the Commission on the Status of Women had noted that gender inequality, which resulted in imbalances of power in all areas of society, helped to perpetuate stereotypes and imbalances in the existing division of labour between men and women.

Participants in the interactive panel entitled “Gender perspectives on global public health: implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals” had found that gender inequality continued to reduce the potential for women worldwide to access quality health care, a trend that would only worsen in the crisis unless steps were taken quickly. The limited access of women to reproductive health care also had consequences on the health and survival of children.

The persistence of violence against women in all regions of the world called for the urgent attention of the international community. The Secretary General had launched the “Unite to End Violence Against Women” campaign and had called on all Governments, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders to join in the struggle. Sexual violence against women in armed conflict remained a major problem, and the international community must take action against that phenomenon and recognize the critical role that women could play in resolving conflicts and building peace and in disarmament and the process of demobilization and reintegration.

Only by relying on the principles of creativity, inclusiveness, sustainability and commitment to innovation could the international community succeed in ending gender inequality in education, in promoting the empowerment of women and in reducing maternal mortality, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.

Creativity made it possible to develop tools to assist groups affected by exclusion, including poor women; the approach taken by the Grameen Bank had inspired many banking institutions. One should also take advantage of new technologies and new modes of

communication to empower women and girls with better access to information. The Innovation Fair held during the Council's high-level debate had shown the many possibilities offered by information and communications technology in the dissemination of health messages and the strengthening of health services.

Gender equality required a comprehensive approach and should therefore be taken into account in policies and programmes in all sectors and areas. Discussions on financing for development had clearly demonstrated the link between gender equality, the empowerment of women and sustainable economic and social development.

In order to be effective over time and produce satisfactory results, the programmes developed must be able to be implemented at the national level and take into account local resources and capacities. It was clear that twenty years after the launch of the global campaign to reduce maternal mortality, an unacceptable number of women still were dying of complications during childbirth, especially in developing countries.

Finally, States must show flexibility and innovation in implementing measures aimed at achieving the internationally agreed goals. The United Nations had, for its part, changed its approach to development by adopting the "Delivering as One" approach, and, given the urgency of the situation, the General Assembly should consider the possibility of creating a powerful body dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

General discussion

Ms. Al-Taani (Iraq) said that protecting the rights of women was a critical issue not only for women and women's organizations but also for policy-makers worldwide. In Iraq, after decades of tyranny, deprivation and exclusion from public life, women sought active participation, and the authorities are working on the problem.

The Iraqi Government had reviewed with interest the reports of the Secretary-General on the subject and wished to note that the objectives set in the Millennium Development Goals formed an integral part of its strategies, including the fight against violence against women. Institutions had been established and plans designed to educate and inform the public on the

subject; a national centre to protect women against violence was in the planning stage; and several shelters already housed women at risk in the regions. Information campaigns had also been launched in various media on the subject of female genital mutilation and honour killings. Meanwhile, projects had been implemented to combat human trafficking and forced marriages — offences punishable by three to ten years of imprisonment.

Despite the challenges their country had been facing over the past five years, Iraqi women had shown great courage, and they had now taken on many responsibilities in the country and participated in elections and in the drafting of the constitution. One goal was to increase the proportion of women in parliament from 25 per cent to 30 per cent — an ambitious figure already reached in some provinces. The status of women was, therefore, a priority for the new Iraq, as evidenced by its international commitments and its domestic law, despite the fact that terrorism hindered progress in that area. The significant advances made included the removal of the prohibition against women travelling without a legal representative, the increase in the number of women working in the diplomatic service, including overseas — something long prohibited — and the many information and awareness campaigns on the issue of equality between the sexes.

Mr. Rutgersson (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Iceland, Norway, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia aligned themselves with his statement.

He stressed that gender equality enhanced respect for human rights, reduced poverty and promoted economic growth and public health. It was therefore a major component of the United Nations mandate, and the celebration in 2009 of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women had provided an opportunity to take stock of efforts in the area. The European Union strongly urged all States parties to submit their reports under article 18 of the Convention.

The European Union also acknowledged the essential role of the Commission on the Status of Women and called for a strengthened infrastructure within the United Nations system to advance the

implementation of gender equality, including at the national level. His delegation hoped that the discussions in the General Assembly on the subject would bear fruit. The European Union stressed the important role of national institutional capacities to advance the cause of women, as well as the role of national human rights institutions and civil society, including women's organizations.

The global economic recession aggravated the already bad situation in many countries and the poorest and most vulnerable groups of the population. Experience had shown that crises disproportionately affected women, who were less able to adapt easily because of entrenched inequalities in social systems. However, there were now multiple crises, including the economic crisis, the food crisis, the energy crisis, the climate crisis and the health crisis with the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, among others. It was therefore essential that adequate social protection mechanisms be put in place or be strengthened in countries with the concerted help of the international community. The incorporation of a gender perspective in the short- and long-term responses to the crises at all levels was essential, in the view of the European Union, which sought to eliminate, *de jure* and *de facto*, gender discrimination in all its forms.

The European Union believed that it was crucial to reform health systems, particularly with regard to sexual and reproductive health, as inadequate health care systems were clearly obstacles to the achievement of women's rights. His delegation was particularly concerned about the lack of progress in improving maternal health. According to the latest United Nations report on the Millennium Development Goals, maternal mortality had decreased by only 1 per cent per year worldwide between 1997 and 2005, instead of the 5.5 per cent per year required to achieve Goal 5 of the Millennium Development Goals. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan had stressed to the Council, maternal health indicators provided a barometer for health systems. The European Union was committed to reducing maternal mortality by three quarters by 2015, which would require that 21 million additional births be supervised by skilled health personnel by 2010. The European Union would also support efforts to ensure that by that year 50 million more African women had access to modern contraceptives.

Millions of women were faced with another obstacle to their empowerment and health, namely,

violence committed by men in times of conflict and in peacetime. Targeted responses were needed to protect girls and women of all ages and to ensure their access to services, support and justice. In that connection, the European Union called for accelerated implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

The challenges were admittedly numerous but not insurmountable. Some progress had already been achieved, but there remained much room for growth. It was time for all Member States to act. The European Union was willing to work with them and with the United Nations to work out the best ways to make progress towards achieving gender equality.

Ms. Savitri (Indonesia) welcomed the emphasis in the reports before the Council on lessons learned, best practices and the prospects for better implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and other targets at the international level with regard, especially, to the status of women. Indonesia welcomed the approach of the United Nations aimed at strengthening the integration of a gender perspective throughout the system, while noting that progress remained uneven despite several promising initiatives. The lack of predictable long-term human and financial resources remained the main obstacle to the implementation of support activities in that field at the national level.

Vulnerable populations, including women, suffered most from the current crises, which might not have been the case if they had better access to health services, education, productive resources and employment. Being at the heart of the family and economic life, women could help to overcome the current crises. The international community must tirelessly support the role of women in development. Efforts were needed to address that dimension in the management of the financial crisis and safeguard the achievements of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

At the national level, Indonesia, as a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, was committed to advancing the cause of women. It had developed to that end a number of organizations and mechanisms, including the National Commission on Violence against Women and the Ministry of State for the Emancipation of Women and had recently adopted a

law on political parties requiring that all parties be composed at least 30 per cent of women. The increased representation of women in Parliament and the Government also deserved to be highlighted.

Inequality between men and women persisted in various spheres of society and in the entire world, and the debates to be held soon for the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action should focus as much on the implementation of national policies to promote gender equality as on the commitments that had been made in that area at the regional and international levels but had not yet been met.

Mr. Goltyaev (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Government was convinced that, given the fact that the current crisis particularly affected the most vulnerable groups of the population, continued efforts to protect the rights of women and put an end to discrimination against them in the political, social and economic development must be considered a priority. It was also necessary to strengthen the role of international organizations working for gender equality, including the Commission on the Status of Women.

Women, who constituted 54 per cent of the population of Russia and almost half of its workforce, were a mainstay of the national economy. With their strong presence in small- and medium-sized enterprises and the public sector, they had a role to play in implementing national strategies aimed at ending the crisis, and it was important to enable them to realize their full potential, including balancing the requirements of their professional and family lives.

In recent years, Russia had implemented a series of measures to strengthen the social protection of mothers and children. The size of maternity allowance and the allowance for dependent children had been increased, and the dependent child allowance was now paid to unemployed women as well. For the past two years, the State and local authorities had been making a lump-sum payment at birth for the birth of a second child and subsequent children.

Russia, which had recently submitted its periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, intended to strengthen measures aimed at improving the status of women at

the national level and to follow up on the recommendations made in the context of the universal periodic review.

Ms. Mugwe (Observer for Kenya) said that it was still necessary to ensure adequate funding for operations aimed at promoting gender equality and developing the appropriate institutions and frameworks. It was universally recognized that gender equality and the empowerment of women required the mainstreaming of a gender perspective. Kenya believed that three conditions must be met in order for such a strategy to be effective. First, policies must be implemented effectively at the international, national and local levels, which required genuine political will to meet the persistent challenges in terms of financial and human resources, accountability and mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement. Additionally, a critical mass of specialists and persons responsible for gender equality issues must be trained and hired to assume their functions. Finally, actions must be monitored and evaluated. Her delegation endorsed the call for the development, with the help of the United Nations, of a standardized approach to monitoring and evaluation based on a methodology and common indicators. New technologies that made it possible to share information and best practices would undoubtedly play a role, and the United Nations should establish collaboration with other development partners and civil society to provide technical assistance to developing countries to that end.

Kenya was working to implement gender mainstreaming across its territory, including through the use of affirmative action, and emphasized the need for increased collaboration on the part of the international community in that area. Her delegation supported some of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report and called for concerted efforts to ensure follow-up and implementation.

Mr. Kornev (Belarus) said that Belarus was actively implementing a policy aimed at promoting gender equality, particularly in the fields of social protection, education, employment and the access of women to decision-making positions, the results of which had been presented in Belarus's seventh periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Belarus was implementing its National Action Plan on gender equality for 2008-2010, which sought to combat gender discrimination and create the

conditions needed for women and men to best achieve their potential in an environment of equality in all spheres of activity.

Belarus had proposed that the United Nations develop and implement a global plan to combat human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and girls, in order to strengthen international cooperation in that field. The United Nations agencies dealing with gender equality should strengthen their support to developing countries and middle-income countries so as to enable them to implement their programmes and strategies in that area, and the ongoing reform of United Nations structures devoted to gender equality should in no way be allowed to have an adverse impact on the effectiveness of those structures or on the level of technical assistance they provided to improve the status of women. Belarus endorsed the recommendations adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at the end of its fifty-third session, including the proposals relating to the multi-year programme of work of the Commission for the period 2010-2014.

Ms. Phatoomros (Observer for Thailand) said that gender equality and the advancement of women were among the priorities of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and that Thailand, like other members of the Association, was moving forward in the practical implementation of its obligations and international commitments. The foreign ministers of the 10 member countries of ASEAN had recently adopted the mandate of a new body, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, and a proposal had been made to establish an ASEAN commission on the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children.

Thailand believed that public health was a core issue for gender equality and the advancement of women, particularly in the context of the current global economic and financial crisis, although gains had remained fragile in that area. A major concern of the Thai Government was to improve maternal health, in accordance with Millennium Development Goal 5, an area where little progress had been achieved in recent years. Thailand had therefore become a sponsor of the resolution on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights that the Human Rights Council had adopted in June 2009 at its eleventh session and which was expected to make it possible to deal more effectively with maternal mortality worldwide.

The problems women faced in regard to access to care were difficult to resolve because of persistent gender stereotypes, which were found in all societies. The Thai Government was of the view that real progress towards gender equality required the adoption of a comprehensive strategy aimed at accelerating the necessary social changes, by vigorously integrating a gender perspective into all policies, programmes and systems of education at all levels.

The advancement of women involved far more than the satisfaction of basic needs, in that it required empowerment and efforts to ensure the full enjoyment by women of their rights without discrimination. It was therefore more necessary than ever to ensure that women, who constituted the majority of the world's population, were not alone in bearing the brunt of the crisis, and every effort must be made to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action, which constituted the main framework for action to promote and protect the human rights of women internationally.

Mr. Chu Guang (China) said that the Chinese Government supported the action of the United Nations, which must play a major role in resolving the crisis and the promotion of gender equality. In that regard, his delegation called for a concerted response from the international community to develop policies and programmes incorporating the principle of equality between the sexes and equipped with increased assistance to developing countries so as to enable them to reduce debt, maintain economic and social stability and safeguard the fundamental rights and interests of women and children.

Promoting gender equality was a fundamental policy of the Chinese Government, which had in recent years attached great importance to social development and had worked tirelessly for the establishment of a harmonious society guaranteeing equal rights for all. In April China had launched the first national action plan for human rights, one chapter of which was devoted to protecting the rights of women, with specific provisions and measures regarding the participation of women in political life, the employment of women, parity in professional life, education and reproductive health. Measures against human trafficking and domestic violence had also been planned.

The Chinese Government had also incorporated the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals into its national goals for social development. Those goals, which sought to reduce poverty, boost literacy and reduce infant mortality, had, moreover, been achieved in fewer than the planned seven years. Maternal mortality had declined by 63.4 per cent compared to 1990.

With the approach of the year 2010, which would mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and include the holding of the high-level debate in the Economic and Social Council on the theme of current global and national trends and challenges and their impact on gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Chinese Government was interested in taking stock of its activities and exchanging best practices with the entire international community in order to advance implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to women, promote gender equality and advance the cause of protecting the rights and interests of women.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil) said that, after extensive consultations with multiple stakeholders, including civil society groups representing all regions of the country, Brazil had adopted its second national plan for women, focusing on the principles of gender equality, the empowerment of women and respect for diversity, following up on the first plan launched in 2004.

Brazil has also adopted a national plan to combat violence against women, which had a budget of \$600 million dollars under the Maria da Penha Law of 2006. The plan included: more severe sanctions against perpetrators of violence against women and the establishment of a hotline for women victims of violence; protective measures for reproductive health, particularly aimed at halting the spread of HIV/AIDS among women; measures against the sexual exploitation of girls and young women and against trafficking in women; and steps to promote the rights of women prisoners.

Brazil supported activities aimed at mainstreaming the gender perspective in all policies and programmes of the United Nations system, including the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, and welcomed the work carried out by the specialized agencies, funds and

programmes of the United Nations to help developing countries in the field of the empowerment of women, in particular the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

Ms. Adou-Ngapi (Republic of the Congo) said that the Republic of the Congo had undertaken many activities aimed at promoting gender equality, a principle formally recognized by the Congolese Constitution. Anxious to implement that principle, the Congo had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and had already submitted five reports to the Committee established to oversee its implementation. The Congo had identified several priority areas of the Platform for Action, focusing on violence against women, the rights of women and girls, as well as the education and health of women and girls.

The Republic of Congo welcomed the special emphasis placed in the reports on the reduction of mortality and morbidity. A road map had been developed in that area and actions had been taken to support women victims of obstetric fistula. Those programmes, which were being implemented with the support of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, covered women both in urban areas and in rural areas.

With regard to women's contributions to the resolution of political conflicts, the Congo had extensively implemented United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). The Government had received the support of organizations of the United Nations system in the medical, psychological and economic areas to assist women who had been affected by armed conflict or had been involved in such conflicts.

In order to realize the principle of equality between the sexes, the Congo had developed a national gender policy that provided for the inclusion of gender issues in sectoral policies and national development programmes. The Congo supported the theme on gender equality for the high-level segment of the 2010 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and hoped that emphasis would be placed on empowering women who were attempting to deal with the global financial and economic crisis, so as to eliminate discrimination against women rooted in

socio-cultural considerations as well as in their precarious social and economic status.

Ms. Kremb (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that the staff of the Federation supported, assisted and rescued people in situations of extreme vulnerability, including disasters and health emergencies, every day of the year and that the primary objective of the Federation was to save the lives of men and women and protect livelihoods without discrimination. Particular emphasis was placed on protecting programme beneficiaries against exploitation and sexual abuse.

As part of a formal commitment to prevent the abuse of power called “Pledge 101”, which the Federation had developed and signed in 2007 on the occasion of the thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, a new code of conduct had been developed for use by all staff of the Federation in line with the zero tolerance policy of the United Nations, so that humanitarian assistance would be provided in an atmosphere of respect and complete security, and measures focusing on the inclusion of a gender perspective, child protection and the prevention of sexual violence were included in all policies and all programmes of the Federation.

Equipped with its new working methods and the training activities on such issues that it organized for international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the Federation intended to consolidate its work on gender equality through exchanges with others institutions, including the United Nations, and by sharing its good practices so as to strengthen its ability to assist men and women.

Ms. Hodges (International Labour Organization) said that, since its inception, the International Labour Organization (ILO) had always regarded equality between men and women as an important objective and that the principle of mainstreaming gender in all its programmes and policies, and in all its strategic goals, had recently been recognized as a fundamental tool for promoting gender equality, in particular in the Decent Work Agenda, but also in the conclusions adopted by the International Labour Conference at its recent session in June 2009. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, adopted in 2008, stressed the importance of gender equality and non-discrimination in each of four major components

of decent work. The ILO had much to offer the United Nations system in that area.

Since the opinion issued in 1999 by the Director General on the policy of equality between men and women, the Bureau for Gender Equality had been working with its constituents and internally to apply the guidelines that the Economic and Social Council had issued in 1997 on mainstreaming gender equality. The ILO addressed the issue in two ways: all of its policies and programmes were to take into account systematically the specific needs of women and men; and targeted interventions, mainly for women to date, should seek to clear away old inequalities. In practice, the ILO worked simultaneously on three fronts: personnel matters, substantive issues and structures. The ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-2009 ensured the inclusion of the principle of gender equality in all ILO activities.

The strategy of mainstreaming gender equality was intended to meet the particular needs of men and women in all ILO programmes and to help to change policies, laws and programmes in order to ensure gender equality in the labour area. Expert advisory services were offered to member States and social partners in order to facilitate the implementation of international labour standards, including those concerning equal remuneration, non-discrimination in the workplace and part-time work. Gender audits could be carried out, and advice was offered on establishing institutional mechanisms to ensure mainstreaming a gender perspective in ILO sectors, departments and programmes, at headquarters and in field offices. The ILO provided and updated valuable tools, including a knowledge base, for action aimed at promoting equality between men and women in the workplace.

Ms. Perraudin (International Federation of University Women), speaking on behalf of Femmes Africa Solidarité, the International Alliance of Women, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, the Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women’s Association, the Women’s World Summit Foundation and Zonta International, said that 2010, which marked the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Conference and the tenth anniversary of the Millennium Summit, would be a crucial year in Council debates on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

While progress had been made since the adoption by the Council in 1997 of a decision to mainstream a gender perspective throughout the United Nations system, the application of the principle was still not systematic and remained poorly understood. Direct and indirect discriminatory practices persisted in all socio-economic sectors and in the private sphere. Gender equality was being addressed in terms of social protection, whereas it was a fundamental right. Discrimination against women was based on social norms that were reflected in all economic fields. Most economic policies tended to protect those who were already in a position of power, ignored the fundamental inequalities related to the non-remuneration of housework and took little account of women's contributions to the functioning of society.

The Federation urged the Council to consider, in 2010, the disparities observed in mainstreaming a gender perspective, particularly in the context of achieving the development goals envisaged in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

As noted by the Commission on the Status of Women, the Millennium Development Goals had eclipsed the Beijing strategic objectives regarding the participation of women in decision-making and the economic empowerment of women. Globalization had had a negative impact on women's access to education by promoting the development of paid private education as a result of the reduction in public spending. That was just one example of the phenomenon of the feminization of poverty linked to globalization. Inequalities between men and women in employment also remained a major problem. In that context, temporary special measures should be taken to eliminate structural discrimination.

Action on draft resolution E/2009/L.20

The President invited the Council to adopt draft resolution E/2009/L.20, entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system", which had been submitted following informal consultations conducted by the delegations of Chile and Estonia. He informed the Council that the draft had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2009/L.20 was adopted.

Ms. Kaljuate (Estonia) thanked all the negotiating parties and the secretariat for their

cooperation and support, which had enabled delegations to reach a consensus on that vital issue. The text reflected the common will of member States to continue efforts to promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, particularly in the debates to be held at the 2010 session of the Council based on the comprehensive report requested of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Morrill (Canada) expressed the disappointment of the Canadian delegation, which would have preferred the adoption of a more substantive text. Taking into account the principle of gender equality was the responsibility of all agencies of the United Nations system, not only organizations dealing specifically with gender equality.

Canada noted with satisfaction, however, that the Council had, in its resolution on operational activities, sought to balance the progress made during the year and the need to comply with existing mandates, pending the outcome of discussions on system-wide coherence. He invited the Council to maintain that approach and to restore all the elements of resolution 2008/32 in 2010.

Social issues and human rights: advancement of women

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-third session (E/2009/27)

Mr. Gustafik (Secretary of the Council) said that the conclusions set out in Part A of Chapter I of the report represented only a contribution to the annual ministerial review in 2009 and had not been forwarded to Council for adoption, contrary to what paragraph 1 implied.

The President took it that the Council wished to take note of the conclusions.

It was so decided.

The President drew the Council's attention to the four draft resolutions contained in Part C of Chapter I of the report of the Commission for adoption by the Council.

Draft resolution I (“Future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women”)

The President said that, in the absence of any comments, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt draft resolution I entitled “Future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women”.

Draft resolution I was adopted.

Draft resolution II (“Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women”)

The President recalled that draft resolution II, entitled “Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women”, had been adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women in a recorded vote. He invited delegations to present their comments on the draft.

Mr. Sammis (United States of America) said that the United States was deeply concerned about the current humanitarian situation in Gaza, including its impact on Palestinian women, and would continue to play an important role in humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. In addition, President Obama was committed to revitalizing the peace process in the region through the two-State solution. But, the adoption of resolutions as biased as the one under consideration ran counter to the diplomatic efforts being deployed. That was why the United States had voted against the draft resolution when it had been submitted in New York and had requested at the current session that it again be the subject of a vote. He wished to announce that his delegation would again vote against the text and invited other representatives to do the same.

At the request of the representative of the United States, a vote was taken by roll-call.

Cameroon, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

In favour:

Algeria, Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, China, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Namibia, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Against:

Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Côte d’Ivoire, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malawi, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Sweden.

Draft resolution II was adopted by 23 votes to 5, with 16 abstentions.

Ms. Atout (Observer for Palestine) welcomed the constructive work that had accompanied the negotiation of the draft resolution and thanked all those who had supported the draft resolution. She stressed that there could be no prospect of long-term development in Palestine if the specific needs of Palestinian women were not met.

Mr. Fautua (New Zealand) said that the New Zealand Government was deeply concerned by the suffering of Palestinian women, which was exacerbated by the recent hostilities between Israel and Hamas. However, other women in the region, including Israeli women, were also suffering from the continuing conflict in the Middle East. The New Zealand delegation would have preferred a more balanced text that urged all parties to the conflict to renounce violence and respect human rights. In addition, it considered that it was not the role of the Commission on the Status of Women or the Economic and Social Council to consider issues of such political significance, which were rather within the purview of the General Assembly. For those reasons, his delegation had voted against the draft resolution.

Draft resolution III (“Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women”)

The President said that, in the absence of any comments, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt draft resolution III, entitled “Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women”.

Draft resolution III was adopted.

Draft resolution IV (“Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women of the Commission on the Status of Women”)

The President said that, in the absence of any comments, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt draft resolution IV, entitled “Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women of the Commission on the Status of Women”.

Draft resolution IV was adopted.

Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-third session and provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-fourth session of the Commission

The President said that, in the absence of any comments, he would take it that the Council wished to adopt the draft decision entitled “Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-third session and provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-fourth session of the Commission”, which appeared in Part D of the report.

It is so decided.

Draft decision E/2009/L.16 (“Commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”)

The President invited the Council to adopt draft decision E/2009/L.16, entitled “Commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”. He explained that the draft had no programme budget implications.

Draft decision E/2009/L.16 was adopted.

Draft decision E/2009/L.17 (“Participation of non-governmental organizations in the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women”)

The President invited the Council to adopt draft decision E/2009/L.17, entitled “Participation of non-governmental organizations in the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women”, adding that the draft had no programme budget implications.

Draft decision E/2009/L.17 was adopted.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.