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Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-fourth session

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Agenda item 3 (a)

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals

Regional perspectives in progress achieved and remaining gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

Moderator’s summary

1. At its 10th meeting, on 4 March 2010, the Commission on the Status of

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were held in October and November 2009, with the fifth scheduled to be held in Brazil in July 2010, covering the Latin American and Caribbean region. The ECA

elements for progress in gender equality. At the same time, the review processes in several regions indicated continued gaps in political and institutional support. Adequate sex-disaggregated data and indicators to permit effective and better-targeted policymaking remain scarce, together with monitoring and accountability, although some good examples of progress exist. While the potential of gender-responsive budgeting as an important tool for gender mainstreaming is increasingly recognized, it is not yet sufficiently or adequately applied.

6. Greater efforts are needed in all regions to accelerate progress in women's participation in leadership. While in some countries women now hold more than 30 per cent of the seats in national parliaments, and there are important examples of women holding key positions in the executive and the judiciary, significant disparities persist across and within regions. Low representation of women in decision-making positions in local government, as well as in the private sector, also remains a concern. The use of quotas, benchmarks and timelines has resulted in improvements, and those tools should be used more widely.

7. In all regions, women's participation in the economy is another area in which further progress is required. While women in a very few countries now constitute 50 per cent of the paid labour force, women continue to predominate in informal, unpaid and domestic work characterized by poor and precarious working conditions and a lack of benefits and social security. Gender wage gaps persist in various economic sectors and across education levels. As a result, steps are necessary to enhance social protection and to reconcile work and family responsibilities. The threats posed by the economic and financial crisis and the challenges of climate change and natural disasters should be used as opportunities to revisit economic and social policy frameworks and reorient them towards greater gender sensitivity, and to invest in social areas with a focus on women. Increased investment in agriculture and food security, the expansion of women's access to credit and support for women's entrepreneurship should be accorded greater priority.

8. Given the similarities and differences among regions with regard to progress and persistent challenges, greater attention should be given to both common and region-specific underlying factors. In particular, there is a need to examine and address gender stereotypes, as well as practices and traditions that impede progress in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Strategies should be developed, and good practices and lessons learned should be applied across regions to promote social norms and behaviour patterns that are supportive of gender equality goals.

9. The role of education as a driving force for change in all regions is highlighted. Furthermore, there is a need to better and more consistently engage men in efforts to achieve gender equality. The role of non-governmental and civil society organizations, in particular women's groups, is seen as indispensable in the

particular in the ECLAC region. The situation of migrant women in the economy, as well as their roles and rights within family contexts and in decision-making, will increasingly require responses at the policy level.

11. Demographic changes, in particular population ageing in the ECE region, will also require growing attention from a gender perspective, including with regard to women's participation in the labour force and men's sharing of family responsibilities. Greater attention should be given to the role of the corporate and private sectors in the promotion of gender equality.

12. The United Nations, in particular th