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Commission on the Status of Women

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Agenda item 3 (c) (ii)

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the 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 the critical areas of concern and
further action and initiatives: women’s equal participation
in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution
and in post-conflict peace-building**

Panel discussion on women’s equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building

Summary submitted by the moderator

1. At its 4th meeting, on 2 March 2004, the Commission on the Status of Women

3. Participants noted that considerable progress had been made at the international level in ensuring the promotion of gender equality and women's equal participation in all aspects of peace processes. Such progress was reflected in the growing number of international commitments, including those contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". The historical significance of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and

processes, and especially in post-conflict reconstruction. The importance of maintaining effective links with rural women during all phases of peace processes was discussed, as was the need to ensure that the voices of internally displaced women and refugee women were heard. The situation of widows required particular attention, not only as victims of conflict but also as crucial players in reconstruction processes and in the survival of their families. It was suggested that the Secretary-General should be requested to prepare a report on the role of widows in post-conflict reconstruction. Experience highlighted the need to address the specific needs of women in disarmament and reintegration programmes, and to involve them fully in the reconstruction process.

7. Women needed clear, accurate and timely information about the timing and location of formal and informal peace negotiations to allow them to overcome barriers to participation. They needed access to training, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention and peace-building, to enhance their capacity to participate effectively in negotiations. There was also a need to collect sex-disaggregated data and to undertake studies on the situation of women in different countries so as to find better ways for involving women in conflict prevention activities.

8. Participants emphasized that women's participation in political and public life, particularly in decision-making positions at all levels — at the grass-roots, national and international levels — was crucial for strengthening women's equal participation also in the area of peace and security. Participants identified a number of effective tools that could be used in that regard, such as gender-sensitive electoral laws and processes and special measures such as affirmative action, including quotas for women in public and electoral offices, as well as voter education efforts. It was also emphasized that, within the United Nations system, more women should be appointed to senior level positions, in particular as special representatives or special envoys of the Secretary-General. The inclusion of gender advisers in peacekeeping missions and the participation of women in peacekeeping missions, including in command positions, were important for increasing attention to gender equality. At the same time, it was emphasized that the promotion of gender equality in the framework of peace processes was the responsibility of all actors.

9. Participants also highlighted the need to develop a comprehensive approach to combat violence against women and trafficking in situations of conflict, including through the formulation of codes of conduct for peacekeeping personnel and efforts to fight corruption. It was suggested to establish the post of United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking, who would also focus on conflict-related situations. Particular emphasis was placed on the urgency to prosecute violations of women's human rights. The promotion and protection of women's human rights, during conflict and in its aftermath, should be pursued through the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and in the framework of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments of particular relevance to women.

10. Adequate financial resources should be provided to support and sustain women's participation in peace processes and to facilitate consultations and networking among women and women leaders. Donors and funding entities were urged to support women's own efforts and to earmark resources within peacekeeping budgets to support women's initiatives on the ground. Within national budgets, resources should be allocated to support the development and functioning of

