

1. At its second meeting, on 26 February 2007, the Commission on the Status of Women held a high-level round table on the priority theme “The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child” to follow-up on actions taken subsequent to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the consideration of the situation of the girl child by the Commission at its 43rd session. The interactive high-level round table focused on experiences, lessons learned and good practices, including results with supporting data where available, in relation to the implementation of previous commitments with regard to the priority theme. A discussion guide (E/CN.6/2007/CRP.4) provided the framework for the interactive dialogue.

2. The high level round table was organized in two parallel sessions in order to allow for interaction among the large number of participants. The sessions were chaired, respectively, by H.E Carmen María Gallardo, Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, and Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations. The dialogue followed a format consisting of two segments. The first segment was devoted to a dialogue among representatives of Member States who exchanged information on the progress made in their respective countries

observatories and other institutional mechanisms had been set up to promote gender equality, protect the rights of the girl child and implement gender mainstreaming in a wide range of areas, such as girls' education, trafficking, domestic violence, child labour and early marriages. Committees on child labour and ombudsmen for children had also been established. These bodies were mandated to implement and monitor national plans of action, strategies, policies, and programmes to combat discrimination and violence against women and girls.

5. Participants described efforts to sensitize the judiciary, law enforcement agents, and the general public, as well as girls themselves, on the human rights of girls. Media campaigns, conferences, seminars and debates were used to develop awareness of discrimination and violence against the girl child. Specific attention was devoted to the rights of particularly vulnerable groups of girls, including girls with disabilities, indigenous girls, migrant girls, girls living in rural areas, refugee and internally displaced girls, nomadic girls, street girl children and girls in conflict with the law.

6. Although the Education For All Campaign launched by UNESCO had improved girls' access to primary school education, participants noted that gender inequality continued, in particular at the secondary level. Initiatives had been taken in the formal and informal education sectors, including legislative measures and action plans; the building of schools, including mobile schools; the abolition of school fees; stipend programmes for girls; and the provision of school lunches. Efforts to combat gender stereotyping in schools, including through gender analysis of textbooks and information campaigns, were under way in many countries.

7. Physical and psychological of idn awT a n 7

11. Even in countries where girls had higher educational levels than boys, the unequal distribution of household responsibilities between men and women contributed to gender segregation in the labour market and high gender wage gaps. Participants requested increased sharing of good practice examples in this regard. Political reforms were needed to promote equal sharing of domestic responsibilities between women and men. Participants noted that infrastructural investments and the adoption of labour and energy saving technologies could contribute to releasing girls from time-consuming tasks.

12. The need to address harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), was raised by many participants. Initiatives undertaken included legislative measures to ban early marriage and FGM/C, awareness-raising programmes in the community, including through the targeting of traditional leaders, the education of girls on their rights; and the adoption of action plans to combat harmful traditional practices. It was noted that religion and culture

17. Many participants committed to combating trafficking in women and girls, including for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced marriage, illegal adoption, and illegal trade in organs. Initiatives reported in this area included the adoption of legal and policy measures, national action plans, and bilateral and multilateral agreements to combat trafficking. Perpetrators of trafficking were subject to increased punishment, especially when crimes were committed against minors. Efforts to support victims, including the establishment of shelters and one-stop crisis centres, and the implementation of rehabilita

violence against girls, and where laws existed, they were not always effectively enforced. Emphasis was placed on the importance of adopting laws in conformity with international human rights instruments, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as regional instruments.

23. Participants agreed that collaboration between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child should be enhanced.

24. The persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deeply rooted stereotypes regarding the roles of boys and girls in society was a continuing challenge to the elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl child and empowerment of girls. Participants called for comprehensive education and awareness raising programmes targeting girls and boys, as well as women and men, to change discriminatory stereotypes and allow girls to enjoy their rights. Media was raised as an important mechanism for raising public awareness, but participants also noted that media could perpetuate negative stereotypes.

29. The valuable contribution of civil society in combating all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl-child, particularly through awareness-raising and community mobilization, was recognized. Non-governmental organizations had successfully advocated for the adoption of laws and policies to protect the rights of women and girls and eliminate violence against them.

30. The role of the private sector was also stressed. For example, in one country major information and communication technology companies had voluntarily agreed to control Internet users' access to sexual content.

31. Many participants noted successful collaboration with entities of the United Nations system and stressed the need for continued partnerships. The importance of increasing the provision of resources to achieve the Millennium Development Goals was raised as a means to eliminate discrimination and violence against girls.

32. The high-level round table was also addressed by two girl-children who presented the views and recommendations of over 1,300 young people from 59 countries on discrimination and violence against girls, collected through a survey carried out by UNICEF. The girls noted that their views were seldom taken into account when decisions were made on matters affecting them and called for more interaction with decision-makers. While stressing that governments had the main responsibility for the protection of girls and the elimination of violence and discrimination against the girl child, they noted the important roles that families and communities should play. They called for the creation of safe spaces that allowed girls from different backgrounds to come together locally, nationally and globally, as well as for support for youth organizations, to implement peer-to-peer programmes and non-formal education.

33. The exchange of knowledge and experiences among high-level representatives of Member States, representatives of entities of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, and two girl children, was recognized as a valuable contribution towards the consideration of the theme of the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child by the Commission.