



United Nations Nations Unies
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for the Advancement of Women

AIDE-MEMOIRE

Expert Group Meeting

**Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation
of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration
and Millennium Development Goals**

Baku, Azerbaijan, 7-10 February 2005

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with its multi-year programme of work for 2002-2006, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), at its forty-ninth session from 28 February – 11 March 2005, will consider the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document adopted by the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”.

2. In preparation for the CSW session, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) will organize an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “Achievements, gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals”.

mobilize political commitment and initiate concrete action, 16 global targets and 48 global indicators were established. Participatory implementation and monitoring processes were encouraged. Stakeholders are to monitor and report on achievements and continuing challenges in MDG country reports, which inform public debate and facilitate advocacy.

10. The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs responded to calls for an overall common framework for specific, time-bound action to achieve global development goals. They also served as an important reference framework for major summits and conferences held after 2000⁶. In his most recent report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Secretary-General stressed that “[the Goals] are a measurable set of human development benchmarks that can provide clear indications of whether the world is managing to build the more j 21ment8 9slusive

Development Goals by the target date of 2015. Only by investing in the world's women can we expect to get there.”⁸

13. Several United Nations entities, as well as the Millennium Project's Task Force 3 on Education and Gender Equality, have facilitated the discussion on the integration of gender perspectives into the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. An International Workshop on Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals was jointly sponsored by the Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality, and the Multilateral Development Bank Working Group on Gender⁹. In its Second Guidance Note on “Country Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals” of October 2003, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) noted that gender equality was at the heart of reaching the MDGs and thus sex-disaggregated data essential for monitoring MDG progress¹⁰. Reports by the World Bank¹¹, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)¹² have pointed out that the achievement of the goals required the availability, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data to allow for consistent monitoring, and that this required more than a set of narrow, sector-specific actions. In a study of national MDG reports submitted until early 2003¹³, a UNDP consultant recommended ways to mainstream gender perspectives more effectively into national reporting processes, guidance notes and training programmes, including through consistent, cross-cutting gender analysis and the active participation of independent gender experts.

14. UNFPA has advocated for the inclusion of progress made towards achieving the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) goal on universal access to reproductive health services. This goal is not specifically included among the MDGs, but UNFPA has argued that it is essential for meeting the MDGs since the attainment of reproductive health and reproductive rights are fundamental for women's empowerment¹⁴. This view was re-affirmed by the Secretary General in Bangkok: “The Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not squarely addressed. And that means stronger efforts to promote women's rights, and greater investment in education and health, including reproductive health and family planning”¹⁵.

15. Several electronic discussion fora conducted over the course of the past two years have noted that policy-makers and practitioners at the national, regional and international levels have increasingly attempted to ensure that the constraints and challenges mentioned above are addressed, for example through enhanced participatory processes and a more comprehensive focus on gender perspectives in monitoring processes, including through nationally adjusted targets and indicators.

16. In 2005, the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, will be the focus of major review processes. A high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on a comprehensive review of all the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration, including the internationally agreed goals and the global partnership required for

⁸ Message for International Women's Day 2003, United Nations press release, 8 March 2003

⁹ World Bank, *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals*

¹⁰ UNDG, *Country Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals*, Second Guidance Note, October 2003, p.6

¹¹ World Bank, *Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals*, 4 April 2003

¹² UNIFEM, *Progress of the World's Women 2002: Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals*

their achievement, and of the progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, and of the outcomes and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, will take place from 14-16 September 2005. After the 2005 high-level plenary meeting, a review group is to be established by the Office of the Secretary General to decide on a revised set of indicators for monitoring the MDGs. Data availability at the country level would remain the key criteria for consideration of any new indicators.

17. In accordance with its multi-year programme of work, the Commission on the Status of Women will undertake a ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document from 28 February – 11 March 2005. At its forty-eighth session in 2004, the CSW decided that the review and appraisal would bear in mind the need to integrate a gender perspective in the implementation and review of the Millennium Declaration¹⁶. The Chairperson of the forty-ninth session of the CSW was requested to transmit its outcome, through ECOSOC, to the 60th session of the General Assembly, including to the high-level event of the General Assembly on the review of the Millennium Declaration.

18. In July 2005, the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will consider the theme “Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities.”¹⁷. In its resolution 2004/44¹⁸, the Council requested the functional commissions, the regional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies to contribute to the preparation of the input of the Economic and Social Council to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly. In its resolution 2004/4, ECOSOC also recommended that the General Assembly encourage its Committees and other intergovernmental bodies to take further measures to systematically integrate gender perspectives into all areas of their work, including the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow up to the outcomes of major United Nations summits and conferences, and in particular the high-level plenary meeting in 2005.

19. The CSW can make a contribution to integrated and coordinated implementation and follow up by suggesting actions to be taken by Member States and other stakeholders to ensure that the linkages between the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the

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- a) identify the achievements, including good practice examples, as well as gaps and challenges in linking the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals at national level;
- b) make specific recommendations on ways and means to increase the practical integration of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals.

IV. Documentation

22. The documentation for the meeting will consist of:

- a) A background paper prepared by DAW;
- b) Short papers prepared by each expert on a specific topic from her /his area of expertise;
- c) Papers prepared by observers.

V. Profile of the participants

23. The expert group meeting will be attended by 10-12 experts appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The expert group meeting will also be attended by

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