In 1997, United Nations efforts to advance the status of women and ensure their rights continued to focus on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a comprehensive plan for women's empowerment adopted at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

The General Assembly took action on follow-up activities to the Conference, including ways to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to implement the Conference outcomes. In addition, the Assembly adopted resolutions on protecting women and ensuring their rights in a variety of situations, including women migrant workers, the girl child, women in rural areas, women in development, traditional practices affecting women's health and trafficking in women and girls.

The Economic and Social Council adopted a comprehensive set of agreed conclusions on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. It endorsed agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women on 4 of the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. The Council also addressed the situation of Palestinian women.

In 1997, the Commission on the Status of Women commemorated its fiftieth anniversary as the only intergovernmental body devoted to women's advancement. During its forty-first session (New York, 10-21 March) [E/1997/27], assessed progress achieved in implementing four of the critical areas of concern contained in the Platform for Action [YUN 1995, p. 1170] adopted at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women: women and the environment; women in power and decision-making; women and the economy; and the education and training of women. The remaining critical areas of concern related to poverty, health, violence against women, armed conflict, mechanisms to promote the advancement of women, human rights, the media and the girl child. The Commission adopted a set of agreed conclusions on the four areas considered.

Regarding women and the environment [E/1997/27 (agreed conclusions 1997/1)], the Commission recognized that gender equality was essential in order to achieve sustainable development and called for measures to ensure the active participation of women on an equal footing with men in sustainable development at all levels. The Commission stated that the involvement of women was essential for the development and implementation of policies aimed at promoting and protecting the environmental aspects of human health, and in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns and approaches to natural resource management. It proposed a series of actions for Governments, the private sector and the international community.

For the first time, in 1997 the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held two 3-week annual sessions. At its sixteenth (13-31 January) and seventeenth (7-25 July) sessions, the Committee examined reports from States parties to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

Critical areas of concern

The Commission on the Status of Women, at its forty-first session (New York, 10-21 March) [E/1997/27], assessed progress achieved in implementing four of the critical areas of concern contained in the Platform for Action [YUN 1995, p. 1170] adopted at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women: women and the environment; women in power and decision-making; women and the economy; and the education and training of women. The remaining critical areas of concern related to poverty, health, violence against women, armed conflict, mechanisms to promote the advancement of women, human rights, the media and the girl child. The Commission adopted a set of agreed conclusions on the four areas considered.

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In its agreed conclusions on women in power and decision-making [agreed conclusions 1997/2], the Commission called for accelerated implementation of strategies promoting women's full and equal participation in decision-making in the political, economic and social spheres. A gender balance should be promoted in governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the United Nations, as well as in the business sector. Political parties should fund training programmes to enable women to run for, be
Women elected to and serve in public office. Structural changes in the work environment were needed to promote reconciliation of work and personal life for women and men.

As to women and the economy [agreed conclusions 1997/3], the Commission stated that economic policies and structural adjustment programmes should be formulated and monitored in a gender-sensitive way, with input from women most impacted by those policies. It recommended that Governments, international organizations, the private sector, NGOs, employers' organizations and labour unions adopt a systematic approach to accelerating women's full participation in economic decision-making and ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of economic policies. It called for comprehensive policy-making on the use of analytical tools, effective legislation, transparency of women's and men's wages, changing the gender-based division of labour and the stereotyped choices of men and women; and effective guidance for employers. Governments should ensure women's equal access to economic resources, develop strategies to increase the well-being of low-wage workers, ensure the protection of migrant women workers, and enforce equal opportunity policies and labour laws.

On the education and training of women [agreed conclusions 1997/4], the Commission suggested that Governments, international bodies, donors and NGOs make special efforts to achieve the benchmarks contained in the Platform for Action regarding universal access to basic education. Other actions called for reducing the female illiteracy rate; providing women with labour market information; programme development in education, technical training and lifelong learning; the development of gender-sensitive teaching materials, classroom practices and curricula; and support for women's studies. The Secretary-General should continue to analyse and widely disseminate to Governments and NGOs information on the education and training of women and girls.

Reports of Secretary-General. In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6 [YUN 1996, p. 1060], the Secretary-General submitted to the Commission a February report on thematic issues related to the four critical areas of concern [E/CN.6/1997/3]. Drawing on the recommendations of expert group meetings convened by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, the report presented strategies for accelerating implementation of the Platform for Action in the four areas.

A February note by the Secretary-General [E/CN.6/1997/6] described activities already planned or undertaken by the Commission regarding poverty eradication, a critical area of concern that it had considered in 1996 [YUN 1996, p. 1055], and offered options for further action.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 21 July [meeting 36], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women [E/1997/27], adopted resolution 1997/17 without vote [agenda item 7 (c)].

Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 50/203 of 22 December 1995 and 51/69 of 12 December 1996 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action of the Conference,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6 of 22 July 1996 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, by which a multi-year programme of work for the Commission on the Status of Women was adopted as a framework for assessing the progress achieved in the implementation of the Platform for Action,

Noting that the Commission at its forty-first session reviewed progress achieved in the implementation of the Platform for Action in the critical areas of concern: women and the environment, women in power and decision-making, women and the economy, and training and education, and proposed ways and means to accelerate implementation in those four areas,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on thematic issues before the Commission on the Status of Women and the recommendations contained therein;

2. Calls upon Governments, the United Nations agencies and bodies and other international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society to cooperate in implementing the strategies adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and other recent international conferences;

3. Calls upon Governments, the United Nations system and other international organizations to mainstream a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, while maintaining institutional arrangements to carry out research and develop methodologies and tools for mainstreaming, and to advocate gender equality and the enjoyment by women of their human rights;

4. Endorses the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on women and the environment, women in power and decision-making, women and the economy and the education and training of women.

Mainstreaming gender concerns

Reports of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 51/69 [YUN 1996, p. 1062], the Secretary-General in a February report [E/CN.6/1997/2] reviewed progress in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on
Women and in mainstreaming a gender perspective within the UN system. The report focused on the activities of the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, and included information on the joint work plan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights, which aimed at facilitating the mainstreaming of women's human rights. It also discussed national action plans of Governments and activities of NGOs to implement the outcome of the Conference. In accordance with Council resolution 1996/5 [YUN 1996, p. 393], the Secretary-General presented information on social and economic developments that had a gender impact, in particular the situation of Palestinian women and the release of women and children taken hostage in armed conflicts and subsequently imprisoned.

In accordance with Council decision 1996/310 [YUN 1996, p. 1331], the Secretary-General submitted a June report on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all UN policies and programmes as well as mainstreaming by intergovernmental bodies [E/1997/66]. The report stressed the need to bring a gender perspective not only into socio-economic areas and activities within the responsibility of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, but also into areas where gender issues had not or had only infrequently been considered. It described mainstreaming efforts by the Secretariat and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the UN system. A series of recommendations were made to the Assembly, the Council and its functional commissions, the regional commissions, UN planning and budgeting programmes and policies, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and gender units and focal points. Proposals were presented regarding capacity-building for mainstreaming, information in support of mainstreaming, gender balance, lessons learned, integrated follow-up to global UN conferences and accountability.

**Commission action.** In March [E/1997/27 (res. 41/6)], the Commission on the Status of Women, reaffirming that mainstreaming a gender perspective was integral to the empowerment of women and to achieving gender equality, asked the Secretary-General to give due attention to the implementation of the Platform for Action, including mainstreaming. It called on all UN bodies and agencies, in implementing their programmes and assistance, to respect fully the human rights of women and the girl child. UNIFEM was asked to bring its experience in programme countries to the attention of other UN organizations with a view to strengthening the gender perspective of development programmes in developing countries and increasing synergy with other UN organizations. The Secretary-General was asked, in his thematic report to the Commission in 1998 on violence against women, women and armed conflict, the human rights of women and the girl child, to draw special attention to the full participation of women in all aspects of humanitarian assistance programmes. Stressing the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the individual programmes of the 1998-2001 medium-term plan [YUN 1996, p. 1299], the Commission encouraged the Committee for Programme and Coordination to examine the issue when reviewing the medium-term plan. The Commission encouraged the Economic and Social Council to develop specific recommendations for mainstreaming a gender perspective into all UN system activities. The Secretary-General was asked to report on the implementation of the Commission's resolution.

Also in March [res. 41/2], the Commission decided to ensure that the contributions and needs of women of all ages, including those of older women, were taken into account when monitoring the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all UN system policies and programmes.

In other March action [dec. 41/101], the Commission supported the increased efforts by the Division for the Advancement of Women to contribute actively to mainstreaming a gender perspective in all UN activities, programmes and policies and supported the increased cooperation between the Division, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and UN bodies and agencies, including the Centre for Human Rights. The intensified activities in coordination and outreach by the Division, including its recurrent publications, were appreciated, in particular the proposal to continue the publication Women 2000 in its new streamlined format, as well as the Women Watch Web site being developed jointly by the Division, UNIFEM and INSTRAW.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

At its July session, the Economic and Social Council [A/52/3/Rev.1] devoted part of the coordination segment to mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the UN system.

It adopted agreed conclusions 1997/2 on the subject, which defined the concept of gender
mainstreaming and presented principles for the UN system. Recommendations were made for the intergovernmental process of the United Nations, institutional requirements for mainstreaming in all policies and programmes, gender units and focal points, capacity-building and mainstreaming in the integrated follow-up to global UN conferences.

Women in the Secretariat

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/67 [YUN 1996, p. 1330], the Secretary-General, in a February report [E/CN.6/1997/7], updated information on the status of women in the Secretariat. The Secretary-General had appointed a Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, who assisted him in ensuring the system-wide coordination of policy for implementing the Platform for Action and for mainstreaming a gender perspective in all UN activities. The year 1996 had proved to be very difficult for improving the status of women in the Secretariat due to the recruitment freeze, ongoing restructuring, retrenchment and early separation programmes. Nevertheless, the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution made a slight gain.

Recently, efforts had been made to implement the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) [YUN 1994, p. 1383], which aimed at achieving gender equality by the beginning of the twenty-first century; the issuance and review of special measures for the achievement of gender equality; information-sharing; and staff development and training (see PART FIVE, Chapter III).

Commission action. The Commission on the Status of Women took note of the Secretary-General’s report on 21 March [E/1997/27 (dec. 41/102)].

Also on 21 March [dec. 41/101], the Commission stated that efforts should be made to improve service to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and to hold two regular annual sessions of the Committee, starting in 1997. Sufficient resources should be made available to the Division for the Advancement of Women to provide substantive support to the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women.

Enhancing UN capacity

Reports of Secretary-General. As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 51/69 [YUN 1996, p. 1062], the Secretary-General in May reported on ways to enhance the capacity of the Organization and the UN system to support the ongoing follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women [E/1997/64]. The report focused on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action [YUN 1995, p. 1170] in intergovernmental forums reporting to the Economic and Social Council, by the regional commissions and in the ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

Also in response to resolution 51/69, the Secretary-General in August submitted another report on the subject [A/52/281]. The report described measures taken and progress achieved in implementing the Declaration and Platform for Action by the UN system since the submission to the Assembly of his 1996 report on the subject [YUN 1996, p. 1060]. It also described factors related to the capacity of the UN system in terms of human and financial requirements.

The Secretary-General concluded that significant progress had been made since the submission of his previous report. He stated that the adoption by the Economic and Social Council of agreed conclusions 1997/1 on gender mainstreaming stood out as the most comprehensive intergovernmental action to date on gender mainstreaming. The Council was planning to hold a session in 1998 to further consider integrated conference follow-up, which should provide an opportunity to build upon the agreed conclusions. The consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women of a synthesized report on national action plans in 1998 would provide a comprehensive assessment of action at the national level and a stepping stone for the initiation of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action, scheduled for 2000. The mid-term review of the system-wide medium-term plan on the advancement of women, 1996-2001, by the Commission and the Council in 1998 should accomplish the same purpose with regard to action within the UN system.

Inter-Agency Committee on Women

The ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality held its second session (New York, 5-6 March) [ACC/1997/8] to consider mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the UN system. The Committee was established in 1996 [YUN 1996, p. 1060] to address, system-wide, all aspects of the implementation of the Platform for Action as well as gender-related recommendations emanating from other international conferences.

The Committee decided to establish an intersessional working group on gender mainstreaming and entrusted the group with preparing draft guidelines for budgeting processes and coding of budgets. It also decided to continue monitoring
the inclusion of gender aspects in the ACC task forces for integrated conference follow-up. The Committee entrusted its Chairman with preparing a draft mission statement.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 12 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee [A/52/638], adopted resolution 52/100 without vote [agenda item 106].

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 50/42 of 8 December 1995, 50/203 of 22 December 1995 and 51/69 of 12 December 1996,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolutions 1996/6 of 22 July 1996 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and 1996/34 of 25 July 1996 on the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, as well as the Council’s agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system,

Reaffirming that the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women will require immediate and concerted action by all to create a peaceful, just and humane world based on all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the principle of equality for all people of all ages and from all walks of life, and, to that end, recognizing that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice,

Deeply convinced that the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women are important contributions to the advancement of women worldwide and must be translated into effective action by all States, the United Nations system and other organizations concerned, as well as by non-governmental organizations,

Recognizing that the implementation of the Platform for Action rests primarily at the national level, that Governments, non-governmental organizations and public and private institutions should be involved in the implementation process and that national mechanisms also have an important role to play, and bearing in mind the fact that promotion of international cooperation is essential for the effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action,

Reaffirming its decision that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women, in accordance with their respective mandates and with its resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993 and other relevant resolutions, constitute a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism that plays the primary role in the overall policy-making and follow-up and in coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action, and reaffirming the need for a coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the results of major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields,

Reaffirming that the Commission on the Status of Women has a central role as a functional commission assisting the Economic and Social Council in the monitoring, within the United Nations system, of the implementation of the Platform for Action and in advising the Council thereon and should therefore be strengthened,

Reaffirming also that the Economic and Social Council should continue to oversee system-wide coordination on the basis of an integrated approach in the implementation of the Platform for Action, including the mainstreaming of a gender perspective, and should ensure overall coordination of the follow-up to and implementation of the results of all United Nations international conferences in the economic, social and related fields and report thereon to the General Assembly,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women;
2. Welcomes the initiatives and actions taken by Governments, the United Nations system and other international organizations, including their secretariats, as well as by non-governmental organizations and other actors of civil society, towards the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted by the Conference;
3. Stresses that Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Platform for Action, and reaffirms that Governments should continue to commit themselves at the highest political level to its implementation and should take a leading role in coordinating, monitoring and assessing progress in the advancement of women;
4. Calls once again upon States, the United Nations system and all other actors to implement the Platform for Action, in particular by promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels, including in the design, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes to ensure effective implementation of all critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action;
5. Calls for intensified efforts at the international level to integrate the equal status and all human rights of women into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activity and to address those issues regularly and systematically throughout the relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms;
6. Draws attention to the need to give due consideration to the human rights of women and the girl child in the preparations for the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, and the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
7. Welcomes the adoption, by the Economic and Social Council, of agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, to serve as a comprehensive basis for concrete steps to achieve measurable progress in gender mainstreaming at all levels and in all areas, and endorses the definition, set of principles and specific recommendations for gender mainstreaming contained therein;
8. Welcomes also the steps already taken by the Secretary-General to draw the attention of all senior managers in the United Nations system to agreed conclusions 1997/2 of the Economic and Social Council and to the need to ensure full accountability for their implementation, urges the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to ensure that managers are held accountable for gender mainstreaming in their areas of responsibility, and requests the Secretary-General and his senior managers to ensure, inter alia, in the work of the executive committees, that gender mainstreaming is systematically integrated in the reform process of the United Nations;

9. Reiterates that gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality must become an integral part of all policies and programmes in the United Nations system and of national activities to follow up and implement the Platform for Action and the outcomes of other recent United Nations conferences;

10. Directs all of its committees and bodies, and draws the attention of other bodies of the United Nations system to the need to mainstream a gender perspective systematically into all areas of their work, in particular in such areas as macroeconomic questions, operational activities for development, poverty eradication, human rights, humanitarian assistance, budgeting, disarmament, peace and security and legal and political matters;

11. Requests all bodies that deal with programme and budgetary matters, including the Committee for Programme and Coordination, to ensure that all programmes, medium-term plans and programme budgets visibly mainstream a gender perspective;

12. Invites other intergovernmental bodies, such as the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes, to monitor the way in which the concerned agencies, funds and programmes implement gender mainstreaming in their respective medium-term plans and programme budgets, including at the field level;

13. Reiterates the Council's request to the Secretariat to present issues and approaches in a gender-sensitive manner when preparing reports, so as to provide the intergovernmental machinery with an analytical basis for gender-responsive policy formulation;

14. Emphasizes that the role of gender focal points as catalysts for gender mainstreaming and in providing advice, guidance and assistance in monitoring of progress needs to be strengthened, including through adequate resources and through support at the most senior levels of management and decision-making;

15. Requests the Economic and Social Council to ensure that gender mainstreaming is an integral part of all its activities concerning integrated follow-up to recent United Nations conferences, building upon its agreed conclusions 1997/2;

16. Urges Governments that have not yet done so to establish or strengthen appropriate national machineries for the advancement of women at the highest political level, appropriate intra- and inter-ministerial procedures and staffing and other institutions with the mandate and capacity to broaden women's participation and integrate gender analysis into policies and programmes;

17. Notes with appreciation that many Governments have developed national strategies and action plans, some of them in consultation with non-governmental organizations, and urges those Governments that have not yet done so to prepare national action plans as strategic planning instruments, and to do so in consultation with non-governmental organizations, in full implementation of the Platform for Action, and to participate in the discussion by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1998 of a synthesis of national action plans as a first step in the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action;

18. Encourages non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, to contribute to the design and implementation of these strategies or national plans of action in addition to their own programmes that complement government efforts;

19. Calls upon Governments to invite and encourage the active support and participation of all women and men and a broad and diverse range of institutional actors, including legislative bodies, academic and research institutions, professional associations, trade unions, local community groups and the media, as well as financial and non-profit organizations, in the implementation of the Platform for Action, while emphasizing the principle of shared responsibility between women and men for the achievement of gender equality;

20. Recognizes the importance attached to the regional and subregional monitoring of the global and regional platforms for action by regional commissions and other subregional or regional structures, within their mandates, in consultation with Governments, as well as the necessity of promoting cooperation among Governments of the same region in that respect;

21. Calls upon States to take action to fulfil the commitments for the advancement of women and for the strengthening of international cooperation made at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and reaffirms that adequate financial resources should be committed at the international level for the implementation of the Platform for Action, in developing countries, in particular those in Africa and the least developed countries;

22. Invites the Secretary-General, in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, to pay special attention to the needs and role of women as actors and beneficiaries in the development process;

23. Recognizes that implementation of the Platform for Action in the countries with economies in transition requires continued international cooperation and assistance, as indicated in the Platform for Action;

24. Reaffirms that, in order to implement the Platform for Action, a reformulation of policies and reallocation of resources may be needed, but that some policy changes may not necessarily have financial implications;

25. Also reaffirms that, in order to implement the Platform for Action, adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels, as well as new and additional resources to the developing countries, in particular those in Africa and the least developed countries, from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources for the advancement of women, will also be required;
26. Calls upon Member States to allocate sufficient resources for undertaking gender impact analyses in order to develop successful national implementation strategies for the Platform for Action;

27. Recognizes that the creation of an enabling environment at the national and international levels is necessary to ensure the full participation of women in economic activities, and calls upon States to remove obstacles for the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action;

28. Requests Governments and the international community to implement specific programmes for the eradication of poverty and illiteracy, ensuring women's equal access to education, training, credit, employment and the promotion of entrepreneurial activities, and strongly urges the international community to support national efforts towards the advancement of women in developing countries, particularly those in Africa and the least developed countries;

29. Stresses that full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action will require a political commitment to make available human and financial resources for the empowerment of women, the integration of a gender perspective in budgetary decisions on policies and programmes and adequate financing of specific programmes for securing equality between women and men;

30. Calls upon Member States to commit themselves to achieving gender balance by, inter alia, aiming at gender balance in the composition of delegations to the United Nations and other international forums and by presenting, promoting and appointing women candidates in all government-appointed committees, boards and other relevant official bodies, as well as in all international bodies, institutions and organizations;

31. Requests the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to formulate a new system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women to cover the period 2002-2005, to submit a new draft plan to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2000, taking into consideration the results of the Council's 1998 comprehensive mid-term review of the plan covering the period 1996-2001, in order to provide guidance for the medium-term plans of the individual organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and to submit the draft plan to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session for comments;

32. Invites the Economic and Social Council to devote one high-level segment and one operational segment to the advancement of women and the implementation of the Platform for Action, taking into account the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women and all other functional commissions of the Council and the need for a system-wide approach to the implementation of the Platform for Action;

33. Welcomes the Council's decision to monitor annually, under an item entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits", the way in which its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies mainstream a gender perspective, on the basis of the annual report on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, and once again invites all functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, within their mandates, to take due account of the Platform for Action and to ensure the integration of gender aspects in their respective areas of work;

34. Reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat can effectively carry out all the tasks foreseen for it in the Platform for Action by, inter alia, providing sufficient human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations and to ensure that the Division can play a catalytic role in support of gender mainstreaming in the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and through policy advisory services at the request of Governments, in cooperation with other bodies of the United Nations system;

35. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that resident coordinators, in the execution of their mandates, fully incorporate a gender perspective, in particular into the coordination follow-up to recent United Nations conferences, fully utilizing all the expertise available in the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and other organizations of the United Nations system;

36. Notes the importance of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in the implementation of the Platform for Action, and encourages the strengthening of their cooperation and coordination within their respective mandates;

37. Encourages the Division for the Advancement of Women, acting as the secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women, to play an especially active role in generating new ideas, proposing practical suggestions and promoting constructive implementation of the Platform for Action, including gender mainstreaming;

38. Welcomes the growing number of ratifications to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the withdrawal of reservations, invites States parties to include information on measures taken to implement the Platform for Action in their reports, and encourages the Division for the Advancement of Women to provide to Governments, at their request, advice on reporting under the Convention;

39. Urges States to limit the extent of any reservations they lodge to the Convention, to formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible, to ensure that no reservations are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention or otherwise incompatible with international treaty law, to review their reservations regularly with a view to withdrawing them and to withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention or that are otherwise incompatible with international treaty law;

40. Welcomes the progress made by the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality in strengthening system-wide coordination for implementation of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming, and encourages the Committee to continue its cooperation with Administrative Committee on Coordination bodies to develop strategies, tools and
methodologies, such as gender-sensitive budgeting, to enhance implementation of the Platform for Action and for gender mainstreaming, in particular at the field level;
41. Notes with appreciation the work done by the Division for the Advancement of Women and by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, inter alia, in her role as the Chairperson of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, for the system-wide implementation of the Platform for Action, for increased system-wide attention to gender mainstreaming and towards the achievement of gender balance in the Secretariat and system-wide, and, in that regard, stresses the importance of increasing human and financial resources from all available funding sources;
42. Encourages international financial institutions to review and revise policies, procedures and staffing to ensure that investments and programmes benefit women;
43. Invites the World Trade Organization to consider how it might contribute to the implementation of the Platform for Action, including activities in cooperation with the United Nations system;
44. Decides to appraise progress on an annual basis and to retain on the agenda of its forthcoming sessions the item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women";
45. Decides also to convene, in the year 2000, a high-level plenary review to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Platform for Action, five years after its adoption, and to consider further actions and initiatives, and requests the Secretary-General, with a view to ensuring participation at a high political level, to explore, in a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, the possibility, among other options, of convening the review (a) at the start of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, (b) within the framework of the proposed millennium Assembly, if agreed upon by the General Assembly, (c) following the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women or (d) as a special session of the General Assembly;
46. Decides further that the Commission on the Status of Women shall serve as the preparatory committee for the high-level review and as such will be open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and observers, in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly, and invites the Commission to take appropriate action towards that end, including giving attention to appropriate arrangements for the involvement and participation of non-governmental organizations in the review;
47. Requests the Commission on the Status of Women to consider at its forty-second session the report of the Secretary-General requested in paragraph 45 above, thus enabling the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to decide on this issue, as soon as possible, at its fifty-second session;
48. Requests the Secretary-General to report annually to the General Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

Women’s rights

The 30-article Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 34/180 [YUN 1979, p. 895], set forth constitutional, legislative and other measures to promote equality for women. It also set standards by which countries could improve the situation of women, especially their living and working conditions.

The girl child

In 1997, the General Assembly again adopted a resolution on the girl child, a subject that was dealt with during the year by the Commission on Human Rights (see PART TWO, Chapter II).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 12 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/52/640], adopted resolution 52/106 without vote [agenda item 108].

The girl child

The General Assembly,
Also recalling the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s of the World Summit for Children, held in New York on 29 and 30 September 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs adopted at the World Conference on Education for All and the Declaration and Agenda for Action of the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held at Stockholm from 27 to 31 August 1996
Deeply concerned that girls, in particular adolescent girls, continue to be silent and invisible victims of violence, abuse and exploitation and that some legal systems do not adequately address the vulnerability of girls in the administration of justice, including the need for better protection of child victims and witnesses,
Recalling that in 1998 the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be observed, the mid-term review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development will be carried out and the Commission on the Status of Women will
review, at its forty-second session, the implementation of the sections of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women on the girl child and the human rights of women.

Welcoming the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children, in accordance with section II of its resolution 51/77 of 12 December 1996,

Stressing that discrimination and neglect of the girl child can initiate a lifelong downward spiral of deprivation and exclusion from the social mainstream.

Deeply concerned about discrimination against the girl child and the violation of the rights of the girl child, which often result in less access for girls to education, nutrition, physical and mental health care and in girls enjoying fewer of the rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood and adolescence than boys and often being subjected to various forms of cultural, social, sexual and economic exploitation and to violence and harmful practices such as incest, early marriage, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection and female genital mutilation,

Deeply concerned also that, in situations of poverty, war and armed conflict, girl children are among the victims most affected and that thus their potential for full development is limited,

Concerned that the girl child has become a victim of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and sexually transmitted diseases, which affect the quality of her life and leave her open to further discrimination,

Reaffirming the equal rights of women and men as enshrined, inter alia, in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

1. Stresses the need for full and urgent implementation of the rights of the girl child as guaranteed to her under all human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
2. Urges all States to take all necessary measures and to institute legal reforms to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to take effective action against violations of those rights and freedoms;
3. Also urges all States to enact and enforce legislation protecting girls from all forms of violence, including female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, female genital mutilation, incest, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child prostitution and child pornography, and to develop age-appropriate safe and confidential programmes and medical, social and psychological support services to assist girls who are subjected to violence;
4. Calls upon all States and international and non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively:
   (a) To set goals and to develop and implement gender-sensitive strategies to address the rights and needs of children, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to take into account the rights and particular needs of the girl child, especially in education, health and nutrition, and to eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against the girl child;
   (b) To take measures to ensure the non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of the girl child with disabilities;
   (c) To generate social support for the enforcement of laws on the minimum legal age for marriage, in particular by providing educational opportunities for girls;
   (d) To give attention to the rights and needs of adolescent girls, which call for special action for their protection from sexual and economic exploitation and abuse, harmful traditional and cultural practices, teenage pregnancy and vulnerability to the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and sexually transmitted diseases and for the development of life skills and self-esteem, reaffirming that the advancement and empowerment of women throughout the life cycle must begin with the girl child at all ages;
   (e) To take measures to increase awareness of the potential of the girl child and to promote gender-sensitive socialization of boys and girls from early childhood, with the aim of achieving gender equality, development and peace within the family and the community;
   (f) To ensure the equal participation of girls and young women on the basis of non-discrimination and as partners with boys and young men in social, economic and political life and in the development of strategies and the implementation of action aimed at achieving gender equality, development and peace;
   (g) To strengthen and reorient health education and health services, in particular primary health-care programmes, including in sexual and reproductive health, and to design quality health programmes that meet the physical and mental needs of girls and attend to the needs of young expectant and nursing mothers;
5. Urges States to enact and strictly enforce laws to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses, to enact and strictly enforce laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage and to raise the minimum age for marriage where necessary;
6. Also urges States to eliminate all barriers so as to enable girls, without exception, to develop their full potential and skills through equal access to education and training;
7. Encourages States to consider ways and means to ensure the continuing education of married women, pregnant women and young mothers;
8. Urges States to take special measures for the protection of children, in particular to protect girls from rape and other forms of sexual abuse and gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict, paying special attention to refugee and displaced girls, in line with the recommendations of the expert appointed by the Secretary-General to study the impact of armed conflict on children, and to take into account the special needs of the girl child in the delivery of humanitarian assistance;
9. Urges States parties to fulfil the obligations they have undertaken under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, including
domestic violence, sexual trafficking and child prostitution;

10. Urges States to implement measures to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, in line with the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences;

11. Requests all States to implement, on an urgent basis, measures to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation, including measures in line with those outlined in the Declaration and Agenda for Action of the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children;

12. Calls upon Governments, civil society, including the media, and non-governmental organizations to promote human rights education and the full respect for and enjoyment of the human rights of the girl child, inter alia, through the translation, production and dissemination of age-appropriate information materials on these rights to all sectors of society, in particular to children;

13. Calls upon Governments to encourage efforts by civil society and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, to establish community-based groups or local committees which could assist with the safety and welfare of children;

14. Requests the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to ensure that all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, individually and collectively, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the World Health Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, take into account the rights and the particular needs of the girl child, especially in education, health and nutrition, and eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against the girl child in the implementation of the outcomes of all recent global conferences, in particular the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001;

15. Calls upon the Commission on Human Rights, while considering, in accordance with agreed conclusions 1996/1 of 26 July 1996 of the Economic and Social Council, its input to the Commission on the Status of Women on ensuring women's equal enjoyment of their human rights, in particular those relating to economic resources, to pay particular attention to all the human rights of the girl child;

16. Requests all human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and other human rights mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to regularly and systematically adopt a gender perspective in the implementation of their mandates and to include in their reports information on and qualitative analysis of violations of human rights of women and girls, and encourages the strengthening of cooperation and coordination in that regard;

17. Calls upon States and international and non-governmental organizations to mobilize all necessary resources, support and efforts to realize the goals, strategic objectives and actions set out in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

18. Calls upon all States, all relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to implement commitments to goals and actions related to the girl child and to report on initiatives and progress to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session, pursuant to the decision of the Commission to review, in 1998, the progress made in the implementation of the provisions of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women relating to the girl child.

Violence against women

In February, the Secretary-General transmitted to the Commission on the Status of Women a report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on its role in eliminating violence against women [E/CN.6/1997/8], as requested in General Assembly resolution 50/166 [YUN 1995, p. 1188].

During 1996-1997, UNIFEM continued to facilitate regional initiatives to eliminate violence against women, including support for two projects in Brazil, assistance to produce and disseminate information in Ecuador and public awareness initiatives in Senegal. During that period, UNIFEM was also working to establish a Trust Fund to support actions to eliminate violence against women. The Trust Fund would support national, regional and international actions, including those undertaken by Governments and non-governmental organizations. Activities to be supported by the Fund included awareness-raising, capacity-building, legal literacy, training, action-related research, and innovative and catalytic support for efforts geared towards the prevention and deterrence of violence against women. Financial and organizational mechanisms for administering the Trust Fund had been established at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNIFEM. Pledges were received in excess of $1 million.

On 21 July, the Economic and Council, by resolution 1997/24, recommended for adoption by the General Assembly a draft text on crime prevention and criminal justice measures to eliminate violence against women, which the Assembly adopted as resolution 52/86.

(For details of action taken by the Commission on Human Rights, see PART TWO, Chapter II, and of action relating to crime prevention and criminal justice, see PART THREE, Chapter IX.)
Women migrant workers

In March [E/1997/27 (res. 41/4)], the Commission on the Status of Women took note of a 1996 expert group meeting on violence against women migrant workers [YUN 1996, p. 1070], and encouraged Member States to consider signing and ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 45/158 [YUN 1990, p. 594]. The Secretary-General was asked to reflect in his thematic report to the Commission in 1998 the major findings and recommendations from all of his reports to the Assembly on the issue of violence against women migrant workers, in order for the Commission to make recommendations thereon.

Report of Secretary-General. In a September report [A/52/356], the Secretary-General described measures taken to implement Assembly resolution 51/65 [YUN 1996, p. 1071] concerning violence against women migrant workers, based on information received from Member States, UN bodies and organizations and intergovernmental organizations. The report concluded that although Member States had introduced measures to ameliorate the situation of migrant workers and to combat discrimination and violence against women, few had adopted measures to combat violence against women migrant workers. More information and data were required on the situation of women migrant workers so that concrete strategies could be introduced. The analysis of national action plans by the Commission would broaden the information base against which strategies could be developed. (See also PART TWO, Chapter II.)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 12 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/52/637], adopted resolution 52/97 without vote [agenda item 105].

Violence against women migrant workers

The General Assembly,

Recalling all previous resolutions on violence against women migrant workers adopted by the General Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, as well as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women,

Reaffirming the outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, specifically as the results pertain to women migrant workers,

Emphasizing the need for accurate, objective and comprehensive information, as well as for a wide exchange of experiences and lessons learned by individual countries in protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of women migrant workers for policy formulation and joint action,

Acknowledging the results of the Expert Group Meeting on Violence against Women Migrant Workers, held at Manila from 27 to 31 May 1996, and the comments thereon by Member States and relevant international organizations,

Noting the large numbers of women from developing countries and some countries with economies in transition who continue to venture forth to more affluent countries in search of a living for themselves and their families as a consequence of poverty, unemployment and other socio-economic conditions, and acknowledging the duty of the sending States to work for conditions that provide employment and security to their citizens,

Acknowledging the economic benefits that accrue to sending and receiving States from the employment of women migrant workers,

Recognizing the importance of joint and collaborative approaches at the bilateral, regional, interregional and international levels in protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of women migrant workers,

Underlining the important role of relevant United Nations treaty bodies in monitoring the implementation of human rights conventions and the relevant special procedures, within their respective mandates, in addressing the problem of violence against women migrant workers and in protecting and promoting their rights and welfare,

1. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women migrant workers;

2. Encourages concerned Governments, in particular those of sending and receiving countries, to develop, as appropriate, systematic data collection methods and to update and share information on violence against women migrant workers;

3. Urges concerned Governments, in particular those of sending and receiving countries, to strengthen their national efforts to protect and promote the rights and welfare of women migrant workers, including through sustained bilateral, regional, interregional and international cooperation, by developing strategies and joint action and by taking into account the innovative approaches and experiences of individual Member States;

4. Also urges concerned Governments, in particular those of sending and receiving countries, to support and allocate appropriate resources for programmes aimed at strengthening preventive action, in particular information for relevant target groups and education and campaigns to increase public awareness of this issue at the national and grass-roots levels, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations;

5. Encourages concerned Governments, in particular those of sending and receiving countries, to support training programmes for public officials dealing with the problem of violence against women migrant workers, in particular law enforcers, to assist women migrant workers who are victims of violence, to provide, in the reporting of such cases and the prosecution of the perpetrators, adequate consular, counselling, legal and welfare services and to consider adopting appro-
appropriate legal measures against intermediaries who deliberately encourage the clandestine movement of workers and who exploit women migrant workers;

6. Encourages Member States to consider signing and ratifying or acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, as well as the Slavery Convention of 1926;

7. Invites all relevant United Nations human rights treaty bodies, in particular the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, relevant thematic and country rapporteurs, in particular the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and its working groups, within their respective mandates, to address the problem of violence against women migrant workers in their deliberations and findings, with a view to promoting and protecting their rights and welfare;

8. Invites the Commission on the Status of Women to address the issue of violence against women migrant workers at its forty-second session under the thematic issues on violence against women and/or human rights of women;

9. Invites the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights, at their sessions in 1998, to address the protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of women migrant workers in connection with the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

10. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a comprehensive report on the problem of violence against women migrant workers, taking into account the views of Member States and based on the expertise and all available information from the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the International Organization for Migration and other relevant sources, including non-governmental organizations, as well as to report on the implementation of the present resolution.

**Women in armed conflict**

In March [E/1997/27 des. 41/1]), the Commission on the Status of Women, condemning violent acts in contravention of international humanitarian law against civilian women and children in areas of armed conflict, called for an effective response to such acts, including the immediate release of women and children taken hostage or imprisoned. The Secretary-General and relevant international organizations were asked to facilitate their release. The Secretary-General was also asked to report to the Commission in 1998.

**Traffic in women and girls**

In a March resolution [E/1997/27 des. 41/5]), the Commission on the Status of Women expressed serious concern about the unabating traffic in women and girl children. It called for the accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by Governments of countries of origin, transit and destination and international organizations through: ratification and enforcement of international conventions on trafficking in persons and on slavery; measures to address the root factors that encouraged trafficking in women and girls for prostitution, forced marriages and forced labour; stepped up cooperation and action by law enforcement authorities to dismantle trafficking networks; allocating resources to programmes designed to rehabilitate into society victims of trafficking; and education and training programmes. The Commission called on Governments to criminalize trafficking in women and girls, to penalize offenders and to prevent misuse and exploitation by traffickers in such economic activities as the development of tourism and the export of labour. It decided to examine in 1998 the reports of the Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and of other relevant organizations and bodies, with a view to making appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly.

**Report of Secretary-General.** Pursuant to Assembly resolution 51/66 [UN 1996, p. 1072], the Secretary-General, in a September report [A/52/355], summarized information received from Member States, the UN system and intergovernmental organizations on measures taken to prevent trafficking in women and girls.

The report concluded that the information received revealed evidence of significant trafficking activity as well as the need for further data on the issue before effective strategies could be designed and implemented. The strategies thus far introduced had been predominantly legal measures and bilateral agreements. Strategies to confront trafficking in women and children were often affected by the international nature of the activity and the reluctance of the victims to complain or be involved in measures to address it.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 12 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/52/637], adopted resolution 52/98 without vote [agenda item 105].

**Traffic in women and girls**

The General Assembly,
Reaffirming the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Recalling the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

Recalling also its resolution 51/66 of 12 December 1996 on trafficking in women and girls.

Reaffirming the provisions of the outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Cairo from 29 April to 8 May 1995, pertaining to the traffic in women and children.

Noting with concern the increasing number of women and girl children from developing countries and from some countries with economies in transition who are being victimized by traffickers, and acknowledging that the problem of trafficking also includes the victimizing of young boys,

Emphasizing the need for more concerted and sustained national, regional and international action on the alarming levels of trafficking in women and girls,

Acknowledging the continuing work of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in combating trafficking in women and girls through preventive education, dissemination of information, research and the provision of shelters and programmes to rehabilitate and reintegrate survivors in society,

Deeply concerned with the increasing unabated use of new information technologies for purposes of prostitution, child pornography, paedophilia, sex tourism and trafficking in women as brides,

Convinced of the need to eliminate all forms of sexual violence and sexual trafficking, including for prostitution and other forms of commercial sex, and convinced also that sexual violence and sexual trafficking are violations of the human rights of women and girl children and are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person,

Stressing the need for Governments to accord standard minimum humanitarian treatment to trafficked persons consistent with human rights standards,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the traffic in women and girls;
2. Welcomes national, regional and international efforts to implement the recommendations of the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, and calls upon Governments to take further measures in that regard;
3. Also welcomes actions undertaken by Governments to implement the provisions on trafficking in women and girls contained in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, and calls upon Governments, particularly those of countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as regional and international organizations, as appropriate, to undertake immediate action or to strengthen efforts in their implementation by:

(a) Considering the ratification and enforcement of international conventions on trafficking in persons and on slavery;

(b) Taking appropriate measures to address the root factors, including external factors, that encourage trafficking in women and girls for prostitution and other forms of commercialized sex, forced marriage and forced labour, so as to eliminate trafficking in women, including by strengthening existing legislation, with a view to providing better protection of the rights of women and girls and to punishing perpetrators, through both criminal and civil measures;

(c) Stepping up cooperation and concerted action by all relevant law enforcement authorities and institutions with a view to dismantling national, regional and international networks in trafficking;

(d) Allocating resources to provide comprehensive programmes designed to heal and rehabilitate into society victims of trafficking, including through job training, legal assistance and confidential health care, and by taking measures to cooperate with nongovernmental organizations to provide for the social, medical and psychological care of the victims of trafficking;

(e) Developing educational and training programmes and policies and considering enacting legislation to prevent sex tourism and trafficking, giving special emphasis to the protection of young women and children;

4. Calls upon Governments to criminalize trafficking in women and girls in all its forms, to condemn and penalize all those offenders involved, including intermediaries, whether their offence was committed in their own or in a foreign country, while ensuring that the victims of those practices are not penalized, and to penalize persons in authority found guilty of sexually assaulting victims of trafficking in their custody;

5. Urges concerned Governments to support and allocate resources for programmes to strengthen preventive action, in particular education and campaigns to increase public awareness of the issue at the national and grass-roots level, and for programmes which provide shelter and helplines to victims or potential victims;

6. Encourages Governments to develop systematic data-collection methods and to continuously update information on trafficking in women and girls, including the analysis of the modus operandi of trafficking syndicates;

1. Urges Governments to strengthen national programmes to combat trafficking in women and girls through sustained bilateral, regional and international cooperation, taking into account innovative approaches and best practices;

8. Invites Governments once again, with the support of the United Nations, to formulate training manuals for law enforcement and medical personnel and judicial officers who handle cases of trafficked women and girls, taking into account current research and materials on traumatic stress and gender-sensitive counselling techniques, with a view to sensitizing them to the special needs of victims;
9. Invites Governments and civil society, especially non-governmental organizations, to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, to promote the responsible use of new information technologies, in particular the Internet, to prevent trafficking in women and girls;
10. Invites States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child to include information and statistics on trafficking in women and girls as part of their national reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, taking into account the general recommendation of the Committee, and to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, respectively;
11. Invites the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights to continue addressing, within their respective mandates, the problem of trafficking in women and girls as a priority concern and to recommend, in their reports, measures to combat such phenomena;
12. Encourages the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality to continue to address the issue as part of the integrated follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women;
13. Invites the Commission on the Status of Women, at its next session, to address the subject of the traffic in women and girls under the thematic issues on violence against women and the human rights of women;
14. Invites the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights, at their sessions in 1998, to address trafficking in women and girls in connection with the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
15. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session in March to review the theme women and health in 1999.

(For information on action by the Commission on Human Rights and its Subcommission, see PART TWO, Chapter II.)

Traditional practices affecting women’s health

The Commission on the Status of Women decided in March to review the theme women and health in 1999.

(For information on action by the Commission on Human Rights and its Subcommission, see PART TWO, Chapter II.)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 12 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/52/637], adopted resolution 52/99 without vote (agenda item 105).

Traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls

The General Assembly,
Recalling:
(b) The reports of the Special Rapporteur of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children and of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences,
(c) The reports of the United Nations Regional Seminars on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, which were held in Burkina Faso in 1991 and Sri Lanka in 1994, and the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children,
(d) The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, which proclaims, inter alia, that gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation, including those resulting from cultural prejudice, are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and which stresses the importance of working towards the eradication of any conflicts which may arise between the rights of women and the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices,
(e) The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, which calls upon Governments and communities to take steps urgently to stop the practice of female genital mutilation and to protect women and girls from all such similar dangerous practices,
(f) The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, which, inter alia, call upon Governments to enact and enforce legislation against the perpetrators of practices and acts of violence against women, such as female genital mutilation, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection and dowry-related violence, and to give vigorous support to the efforts of non-governmental and community organizations to eliminate such practices,
(g) The commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms,
(h) Article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which provides that States parties shall take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices that are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women, as reiterated in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action,
Women and children,

vention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Cairo from 29 April to 8 May 1995, in particular its resolution 8 of 7 May 1995 on the elimination of violence against women.

(l) The extensive work of the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children,

Reaffirming that certain traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls constitute a definite form of violence against women and girls and a serious violation of their human rights, and expressing concern at the continuing large-scale existence of such practices,

1. Welcomes:

(a) The progress achieved by a number of Governments in their struggle against harmful traditional or customary practices, in particular against female genital mutilation, and encourages the Governments in question to continue and to increase their efforts aimed at the eradication of these practices;

(b) The work carried out by the Special Rapporteur of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children;

(c) The joint statement by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund on female genital mutilation, which expresses a common purpose in supporting the efforts of Governments and communities to promote and protect the health and development of women and children by promoting awareness of the problem and by educating the public, health workers and those who carry out the practice, on all its health consequences;

(d) The appointment of a special ambassador of the United Nations Population Fund for the elimination of female genital mutilation;

(e) The efforts undertaken by the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and other United Nations bodies, programmes and organizations to raise awareness of this issue;

(f) The work carried out by non-governmental and community organizations in raising awareness of the harmful effects of female genital mutilation and other traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls;

(g) The fact that the Commission on the Status of Women will address the critical areas of concern, namely, "Violence against women", "The girl child" and "Human rights of women", at its session in 1998 and "Women and health" at its session in 1999, and invites the Commission to address the issue of harmful traditional or customary practices during those sessions;

2. Emphasizes:

(a) The need for Governments to analyse, from a gender perspective, all policies and programmes, particularly those relating to poverty, health and violence against women, with a view to assessing their implications for women and men;

(b) The need for national legislation and/or measures prohibiting harmful traditional or customary practices as well as for their implementation, inter alia, through appropriate measures against those responsible;

(c) The need to improve women's position in society and to promote their economic independence;

(d) The importance of education and the dissemination of information in raising awareness, in all sectors of society, of the serious consequences of traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls and the responsibilities of Governments in this regard;

(e) The necessity of involving, among others, public opinion leaders, educators, religious leaders, medical practitioners, women's health and family planning organizations and the media in publicity campaigns, with a view to promoting a collective and individual awareness of the human rights of women and girls and of how harmful traditional or customary practices violate those rights;

(f) That information and education with regard to harmful traditional or customary practices should also be targeted at men and that they should be encouraged to be responsive to such information and education;

(g) The importance of coordination between the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the relevant treaty bodies, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Commission on the Status of Women, including through the exchange of information, and encourages them, within their respective mandates, to continue to pay attention to traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls;

(h) The need for financial and technical assistance for developing countries from United Nations funds and programmes, as well as from international and regional financial institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors, so as to assist Governments in combating such practices;

3. Calls upon all States:

(a) To implement their international commitments in this field, inter alia, under the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children;

(b) To ratify, if they have not yet done so, the relevant human rights treaties, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to respect and fully implement their obligations under the relevant human rights treaties to which they are parties, emphasizing the incompatibility between the continuation of these harmful traditional or customary practices and the obligations they
have voluntarily undertaken through the ratification of such international human rights instruments;

(c) To include specific information on measures taken to eliminate traditional or customary practices harmful to the health of women and girls in their reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and to the Committee on the Rights of the Child;

(d) To intensify efforts to raise awareness of and to mobilize international and national public opinion concerning the harmful effects of female genital mutilation and other traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, in particular through education, the dissemination of information and training, with the aim of achieving the total elimination of these practices;

(e) To develop and implement national legislation and policies prohibiting traditional or customary practices harmful to the health of women and girls, particularly female genital mutilation;

(f) To support women's organizations, at the national and local levels, working for the elimination of female genital mutilation and other traditional or customary practices harmful to the health of women and girls;

(g) To cooperate closely with the Special Rapporteur of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children and to submit information on such practices with a view to enabling her to assess the progress achieved and obstacles encountered in implementing the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children;

(h) To cooperate closely with relevant United Nations funds, programmes and the specialized agencies, such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as with relevant non-governmental and community organizations, in a joint effort to eradicate harmful traditional or customary practices affecting women and girls;

4. Decides:

(a) To invite the Commission on Human Rights to address this issue at its fifty-fourth session;

(b) To request the Secretary-General to make the outcome of the discussions in the Commission on the Status of Women on this issue available to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session, if necessary, in the form of an oral report;

(c) To also request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution.

**Women in development**

In September, the Secretary-General submitted a report on action taken to incorporate a gender perspective into economic policies [A/52/345], in response to General Assembly resolution 50/104 [YUN 1995, p. 1184]. It stated that promoting gender equality by removing restrictions on women's access to, and control over, resources, opportunities, incentives, income and wealth should be pursued, not only as a human right and for reasons of social justice, but also as a strategy to promote economic efficiency and sustainable development. The report outlined ways in which mainstreaming the gender perspective into economic policies might offer insights into macroeconomic policy-making, and set forth principles that were a prerequisite for such mainstreaming. It was recommended that mainstreaming the gender perspective into economic policies should be effected in line with the following conditions: incorporating the gender perspective into programme design, implementation and evaluation, and the policy development process of all intergovernmental and multilateral development entities; undertaking measures to achieve gender balance between women and men in economic decision-making; strengthening national machineries; demonstrating commitment to gender mainstreaming at the highest level of State throughout the whole government system by adequately allocating resources, training and development of staff and measures of accountability; creating an enabling environment that allowed opportunities for women to have input into national and sectoral policies, programmes and budget processes; generating and maintaining all relevant data disaggregated by sex; developing indicators, conceptual tools and methods for gender analysis and applying them to economic policies by statistical services, economic agencies and UN bodies; and measuring and valuing unpaid work.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

By decision 1997/319 of 18 December, the Economic and Social Council decided that its high-level meeting of the operational activities segment of its 1998 substantive session would be devoted to "Advancement of women: implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the role of operational activities in promoting, in particular, capacity-building and resource mobilization for enhancing the participation of women in development".

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 18 December [meeting 77], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee [A/52/628/Add.7], adopted resolution 52/195 without vote [agenda item 97 (g)].

**Women in development**

The General Assembly, Recalling its resolution 50/104 of 20 December 1995 and all other relevant Assembly resolutions on the inte-
Reaffirming the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes of recent major United Nations conferences and summits.

Reaffirming also that gender equality is of fundamental importance for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions and recent United Nations conferences.

Recognizing the significant contribution that women make to economic activities and the major force that they represent for change and development in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas such as agriculture, industry and services,

Concerned that the continued discrimination against women, the denial or lack of equal rights and access to education, training and credit facilities and the lack of control over land, capital, technology and other areas of production impede their full and equal contribution to, and equal opportunity to benefit from, development,

Recognizing that discrimination in education and training, hiring, remuneration and promotion, and horizontal mobility practices, continue to restrict employment, economic, professional and other opportunities and mobility for women and impede women in achieving their full potential,

Reaffirming that investing in the development of women and girls has multiplier effects on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth,

Recognizing that the difficult socio-economic conditions that exist in many developing countries, particularly those in Africa and the least developed countries, have resulted in the acceleration of the feminization of poverty, especially in rural areas and among female-headed households,

Reaffirming that women are key contributors to the economy and to combatting poverty through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and in the workplace and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty,

Recognizing the continued need to review the impact of structural adjustment programmes in order to reduce any adverse impact on women, especially in terms of cutbacks in social services, education and health and the removal of subsidies on food and fuel,

Aware that, although globalization and liberalization processes have created employment opportunities for women in some countries, they have also created risks to and marginalization of women in developing countries,

Recognizing that the informal sector is a major source of entrepreneurship and employment for women in developing countries and that data collection on its importance and contribution should be improved,

Expressing its concern about the poor representation of women in economic decision-making, including in the formulation of monetary and fiscal policies as well as rules governing pay,

Emphasizing the promotion of programmes aimed at financial intermediation with a view to ensuring the equal access of rural women to credit and to agricultural inputs and implements and, in particular, to easing collateral requirements for access to credit by women,

Stressing the need for a family-friendly work environment, including appropriate working hours, affordable childcare and flexible working hours, and emphasizing the principle of shared responsibility between women and men for the achievement of gender equality,

Stressing also that neglecting a gender perspective in policy formulation and implementation exacerbates the feminization of poverty and economic inefficiency and has a high social cost,

Noting the importance of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, particularly the Economic and Social Council, in facilitating the advancement of women in development,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General and the recommendations contained therein;
2. Calls for the urgent implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the relevant provisions contained in the outcomes of all other major United Nations conferences and summits;
3. Stresses that a favourable and conducive international and national economic, financial, political, social and legal environment and a positive investment climate are necessary for the effective integration of women in development;
4. Reiterates its call to all Governments and all actors of society to implement the commitment made at Beijing to create an enabling environment by, inter alia, removing discriminatory barriers and ensuring the full and equal participation of women in economic activities through, inter alia, the adoption of gender-sensitive policies and legal measures and the provision of other necessary structures;
5. Stresses the importance of developing national strategies for promoting sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities to generate income among disadvantaged women and women living in poverty;
6. Urges Governments to develop and promote methodologies for mainstreaming a gender perspective into all aspects of policy-making, including economic policy-making;
7. Stresses the need to ensure that women and girls have full and equal access to all levels of education, vocational training and retraining programmes in order to improve their employment opportunities;
8. Urges all Governments to ensure women's equal rights with men and access to economic resources and to increase the access of women to credit by instituting innovative lending practices, including practices that integrate credit with services and training for women and that provide flexible credit facilities to women, in particular rural women, women in the informal sector, young women and women who lack access to traditional sources of collateral;
9. Invites Governments to enact legislation to ensure that women have equal access to and control over land, unmediated by male relatives, in order to end land rights discrimination, that women are accorded secure use rights and are fully represented in the decision-making bodies that allocate land and other.
forms of property, credit, information and new technologies, that in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action women are accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, inter alia, through inheritance, and that land reform programmes begin by acknowledging the equality of the rights of women to land and that other measures are taken to increase land availability to poor women and men;

10. Requests Governments to ensure that the priorities of women are included in, and that women fully participate in, decisions on public investment programmes for economic infrastructure, technology, water supply and sanitation, electrification and energy conservation, transport and road construction and to promote greater involvement of women beneficiaries at the project planning and implementation stages to ensure their access to jobs and contracts;

11. Urges Governments to promote and strengthen microenterprises, new small businesses, cooperative enterprises, expanded markets and other employment opportunities, to facilitate, where appropriate, the transition from the informal to the formal sector, especially in rural areas, to provide outreach programmes to inform low-income and poor women, particularly in rural and remote areas, of opportunities for market and technology access and to provide women with assistance in taking advantage of such opportunities;

12. Calls upon Governments to promote, inter alia, through legislation, family-friendly and gender-sensitive work environments and also to promote the facilitation of breastfeeding for working mothers;

13. Urges the international community, the United Nations system and other relevant organizations to give priority to assisting the efforts of developing countries to ensure the full and effective participation of women in deciding and implementing development strategies, through, inter alia, the increased access of women to health care, capital, education, training and technology and full and equal participation in decision-making;

14. Urges multilateral donors, international financial institutions and regional development banks to review and implement policies in support of national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reach women, in particular women in rural and remote areas;

15. Calls upon the United Nations system to support developing countries in their efforts to integrate gender concerns into national programmes and to implement those programmes, including by providing adequate resources for operational activities for development;

16. Also calls upon the United Nations system to integrate gender mainstreaming into all its programmes and policies, including in the integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences, in accordance with agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997;

17. Requests the United Nations development system to continue working towards establishing a more coherent approach to its support for the income-generating activities of women, in particular credit schemes;

18. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the sub-item entitled "Women in development";

19. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the outcome of the implementation of the present resolution, including the impact of the globalization and liberalization processes on the integration of women in development, the implementation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in enhancing the participation of women in national development programmes and the gender mainstreaming of United Nations programmes and policies.

Women in rural areas

In response to General Assembly resolution 50/165 [YUN 1995, p. 1185], the Secretary-General submitted a September report on progress in improving the situation of women in rural areas [A/52/326]. The report examined issues deemed to be of growing importance for rural women, including the role of women in agriculture and food security, access to productive resources, female-headed households and migration, and participation in community activities and decision-making processes.

The report underlined the importance of strengthening the productive and reproductive capacity of women farmers and entrepreneurs. The development of legal measures, policies and administrative regulations to guarantee rural women equal and secure rights of access to land was a priority. The report emphasized the importance of disaggregated data by sex on differentials in access to productive resources, including land and credit, as a prerequisite for effective policy formulation. Recommendations included increasing the number of women in decision-making positions and providing training in gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming for policy makers. In order to maximize the role rural women played in household and national food security, they should be guaranteed access to productive resources; the report presented a series of measures for Governments to promote gender equality in access to those resources.

On 7 February, the Economic and Social Council, by decision 1997/205, had authorized the Secretary-General to transmit his report directly to the Assembly.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 12 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/52/637], adopted resolution 52/93 without vote [agenda item 105].
Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 34/14 of 9 November 1979, in which it endorsed the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action as adopted by the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, and its resolutions 44/78 of 8 December 1989, 48/109 of 20 December 1993 and 50/165 of 22 December 1995,

Recalling also the importance attached to the problems of rural women by the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and by the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,

Recalling further its resolution 47/174 of 22 December 1992, in which it welcomed the adoption of the Geneva Declaration for Rural Women by the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, held at Geneva in February 1992, and urged all States to work for the achievement of the goals endorsed in that Declaration,

Welcoming the growing awareness of Governments of the need for strategies and programmes to improve the situation of rural women in rural areas,

Welcoming also the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Microcredit Summit, held in Washington in February 1997, in which micro-finance was identified as an important instrument of poverty alleviation, including for rural women,

Noting with deep concern that the economic and financial crises in many developing countries have severely affected the socio-economic status of women, especially in rural areas, and the continuing rise in the number of rural women living in poverty, including girls and older women,

Mindful of the need for fuller recognition and appreciation of the contribution of rural women to socio-economic development, including human capital development,

Mindful also that, despite the global trend towards rapid urbanization, many developing countries are still largely rural,

Recognizing the urgent need to take appropriate measures aimed at further improving the situation of women in rural areas,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas;

2. Invites Member States, in their efforts to implement the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Food Summit and the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), and bearing in mind the Geneva Declaration for Rural Women, to attach greater importance to the improvement of the situation of rural women, including older women, in their national development strategies, paying special attention to both their practical and strategic needs, by, inter alia:

   (a) Integrating the concerns of rural women into national development policies and programmes, in particular by placing a higher priority on budgetary allocation related to the interests of rural women;

   (b) Strengthening national machineries and establishing institutional linkages among governmental bodies in various sectors and non-governmental organizations concerned with rural development;

   (c) Increasing the awareness of rural women of their rights and their role in political and socio-economic development;

   (d) Increasing the participation of rural women in the decision-making process at the local and national levels;

   (e) Designing and revising laws to ensure that women have equal access to and control over land, mediated by male relatives, in order to end land rights discrimination; according women secure use rights and full representation in the decision-making bodies that allocate land and other forms of property, credit, information and new technologies; in the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, according women full and equal rights to own land and other property, inter alia, through inheritance; acknowledging, in the context of land reform programmes, the equality of women's rights to land and taking other measures to increase land availability to poor women and men;

   (f) Investing in the human resources of rural women, particularly through health and literacy programmes and social support measures;

   (g) Promoting and strengthening micro-financing policies and programmes, cooperatives and other employment opportunities;

   (h) Ensuring that women's unpaid work and contributions to on-farm and off-farm production, including income generated in the informal sector, are visible and recorded in economic surveys and statistics at the national level;

3. Requests the international community and relevant United Nations organizations and bodies to promote further the realization of the programmes and projects aimed at the improvement of the situation of rural women within the overall framework of integrated follow-up to recent global conferences;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with Member States and relevant United Nations organizations, a report on the implementation of the present resolution and to submit it, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

Older women

In March [E/1997/27 (res.41/2)], the Commission on the Status of Women decided that in 1998, when examining the human rights of women, it would also pay attention to the violation of older women's rights. Similarly, under the item "Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men", it would consider the status of older women and make substantive recommendations thereon. The Secretary-General was asked to report in 1999 on the key global issues regarding the differential impact of population ageing on men and women as a con-
Women

1203

tribution to the 1999 International Year of Older Persons (see PART THREE, Chapter XI).

Palestinian women

On 21 July, by resolution 1997/16, the Economic and Social Council, reaffirming that the Israeli occupation remained a major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration in the development planning of their society, asked the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to monitor and implement the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women [YUN 1985, p. 937] and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. The Secretary-General was asked to continue to review the situation, to assist Palestinian women and to report in 1998.

(See also PART ONE, Chapter VI.)

UN machinery

Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women

As at 31 December 1997, 161 States were parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 34/180 [YUN 1979, p. 895]. During the year, Algeria, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mozambique, Myanmar, Switzerland and Turkmenistan became parties. Also at year's end, 19 States parties had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention in respect of the meeting time of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which had been adopted by the States parties in May 1995 [YUN 1995, p. 1178]. The amendment would enter into force when accepted by a two-thirds majority of States parties.

The Secretary-General submitted his annual report [A/52/337] to the General Assembly on the status of the Convention, which contained information on signatures, ratifications, successions and accessions as at 1 August 1997. The report also included reservations and declarations and withdrawals thereof, objections, extensions of application and communications received by States parties between 1 August 1996 and 1 August 1997. On 12 December, the Assembly, by decision 52/420, took note of the Secretary-General's report.

Optional protocol


The Working Group included a revised draft optional protocol as an appendix to its report to the Commission on the Status of Women [E/1997/27]. The revised draft included an inquiry procedure enabling CEDAW to request State parties to explain and remedy complaints about serious violations of women's rights.

On 21 March [res. 41/3], the Commission, noting the progress achieved by the Working Group, commended the representative of CEDAW on her contribution to the work of the Working Group as a resource person. The Secretary-General was asked to submit in 1998 a report containing an annotated comparison of the draft optional protocol and the proposed amendments thereto with the provisions of existing international human rights instruments.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

In July, the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women [E/1997/27], adopted decision 1997/227 without vote [agenda item 7 (c)].

Renewal of the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

At its 36th plenary meeting, on 21 July 1997, the Economic and Social Council decided:

(a) To renew the mandate of the in-session Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, so that it might continue its work, pursuant to Council resolution 1995/29 of 24 July 1995, during the forty-second and forty-third sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women;
(b) To authorize the Working Group to meet in parallel with the Commission at its forty-second and forty-third sessions;
(c) To invite a representative of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to attend those meetings as a resource person.

CEDAW

During 1997, the 23-member Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, established in 1982 [YUN 1982, p. 1149] to monitor compliance with the 1979 Convention, at its sixteenth session (New York, 13-31 January), considered the initial and/or periodic reports of Canada, Denmark, Morocco, the Philippines, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Slovenia, Turkey and Venezuela on measures they had taken to implement the Convention. On an exceptional basis, Zaire submitted an oral report on the situation of women in the country. The Committee adopted general recommendation 23 on articles 7 and 8 of the Convention related to women in public life. In addition, it adopted three decisions and two suggestions related to its work.

CEDAW increased its annual meeting time from one to two regular sessions, each of three weeks' duration preceded by a pre-session working group. The convening of a second session was approved by the General Assembly in resolution 51/68 [YUN 1996, p. 1075] as an interim measure pending the acceptance by two thirds of the States parties of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

At its seventeenth session (New York, 7-25 July), the Committee considered the initial and/or periodic reports of Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg and Namibia. It also adopted two decisions related to the submission and consideration of reports from States parties.

On 7 February, the Economic and Social Council, by decision 1997/205, had authorized the Secretary-General to transmit the report of CEDAW [A/52/38/Rev.1] directly to the Assembly, which took note of it on 12 December (decision 52/420).

Commission on Status of Women

The 45-member Commission on the Status of Women, at its forty-first session (New York, 10-21 March) [E/1997/27], continued to focus on monitoring follow-up action to the Fourth (1995) World Conference on Women and on the development of a draft optional protocol to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (see above). It adopted six resolutions, two decisions, and four sets of agreed conclusions. It recommended two draft resolutions and three draft decisions to the Economic and Social Council for adoption.

On 21 July, by decision 1997/229, the Council took note of the report of the Commission on its forty-first session and approved the provisional agenda and documentation for its forty-second (1998) session.

On 23 July, by decision 1997/298, the Council decided, as an interim measure, to invite NGOs that were accredited to the 1995 Conference to attend the forty-second session, provided they had started the process of applying for consultative status in accordance with Council decision 1996/315 [YUN 1996, p. 1368]. The Secretary-General was asked to draw the attention of those NGOs to the provisions of the Council's decision and to the process established under resolution 1996/31 [ibid., p. 1360].

Communications on status of women

On 20 March, at a closed meeting, the Commission reviewed and adopted the report of its Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women [E/1997/27], established in 1993 [YUN 1993, p. 1050] to consider ways to make the communications procedure more transparent and efficient. The Working Group considered non-confidential communications and noted the continued absence of women in decision-making processes, particularly in the context of war and conflict resolution. It expressed concern at recurring situations of armed conflict, which sometimes amounted to genocide, leading to physical and psychological abuses of women and the continuing use of rape as a weapon of war. Concern was also expressed about the brutal treatment of women, incommunicado and arbitrary detention, prolonged detention without trial, rape and sexual abuse by security forces and prison officials, violence against pregnant women, sexual enslavement, and the number of arbitrary killings and torture of women. It noted that specific forms of violence against women continued to exist, as did discrimination against women in employment practices and harmful practices directed against women. The Group pointed out that the rights of migrant women workers and of internally displaced and vulnerable groups, including indigenous women, continued to be violated. It recommended that, in order to provide continuity in the review of communications, the Commission should nominate the same members to serve on the Group for two years.
UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

During 1997, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) focused on organizational reassessment and giving greater coherence and clarity to its programme directions. It developed its strategy and business plan, which delineated areas of focus and operations for the period 1997-1999. UNIFEM’s programme strategy was designed and guided by an empowerment framework and based on the promotion of women’s rights, opportunities and capacities.

In fulfillment of the recommendations of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action [YUN 1995, p. 1170] to strengthen its operational work and maximize the impact of its projects, UNIFEM’s programmes continued to focus on: strengthening women’s economic capacity; engendering governance and leadership; and promoting women’s human rights and eliminating all forms of violence against women.

During the year, the Fund enhanced work on promoting women’s empowerment and gender mainstreaming. It laid the groundwork for placing gender advisers to the resident coordinator system in 10 countries. In addition, UNIFEM, the United Nations Volunteers and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had fielded 15 gender specialists to strengthen support for national-level implementation of the Platform for Action.

WomenWatch (www.un.org/womenwatch), a collaborative project of the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, UNIFEM and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), was developed to provide UN information on women’s empowerment and gender mainstreaming. UNIFEM also developed its own Web site (www.unifem.undp.org).

In August [A/52/300], the Secretary-General transmitted to the General Assembly a report on UNIFEM’s activities in 1996 [YUN 1996, p. 1977].

Strategy and business plan

A March report to the UNDP Executive Board [DP/1997/18] contained the Fund’s strategy and business plan for the period 1997-1999. The plan set forth the strategic objectives and activities of the Fund and provided an overview of the market niche, challenges, opportunities and parameters that shaped the UNIFEM programme. The Fund’s three-year work plan and resource requirements were annexed to the report.

The strategic objectives would focus on increasing options for women, especially those living in poverty, through strengthening women’s economic capacity, promoting the realization of women’s human rights and the elimination of violence against women, and engendering governance and leadership. The Fund would strengthen its effectiveness by building on strategic links to field-level experience and incorporating the principles of a learning organization. The strategy also aimed to strengthen UN capacity to support women’s empowerment and gender mainstreaming in its policies and programmes, as well as to strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders. Other aspects of the strategy dealt with ensuring that UNIFEM personnel and financial and programme management systems supported its goals and programmes, and building a larger and more diversified resource base.

On 23 May [E/1997/33 (dec. 97/18)], the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board endorsed the UNIFEM strategy and business plan, and asked UNIFEM to support innovative and experimental activities in implementing the plan within the context of the Beijing Platform for Action. UNIFEM was also asked to develop further and strengthen its role as a catalyst with a view to strengthening the gender perspective of development programmes in recipient countries and increasing synergy with other UN agencies. It was further asked to focus on strategic interventions and build upon its comparative advantages in order to promote systemic change, in particular with regard to political and economic empowerment, and to maintain a balance between potential impact and the needs of women in the application of the criteria for programme selection. The Board decided that UNIFEM should report orally in 1998 and in writing every alternate year and progress made in implementing its strategy and business plan should be described in the annual report of the UNDP Administrator.

On 17 January [dec. 97/4], the Executive Board, noting a conference room paper on the applicability of a partial funding system to UNIFEM, endorsed the methodology for determining project approval and operational reserve levels for UNIFEM under the partial funding system, which was annexed to the Board’s decision. It approved its use, on a provisional basis, beginning in 1997, and its continuation on a no-objection basis, pending the discussion of the response to the evaluation of the Fund. The Board further decided that an appropriate monitoring mechanism should be established by UNIFEM in consultation with UNDP and that the Fund should report on the functioning of the partial funding modality in the annual financial report of UNDP and its administered funds, to be presented at each third regular session.
The Executive Board, on 19 September [dec. 97/24], approved $10.7 million for the UNIFEM 1998-1999 biennial support budget.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 12 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/52/637], adopted resolution 52/94 without vote [agenda item 105].

**United Nations Development Fund for Women**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 31/133 of 16 December 1981 in which it established the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women, and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which reaffirmed that the Fund had the mandate to increase options and opportunities for women's economic and social development in developing countries,

Recalling also its resolution 39/125 of 14 December 1984, in which it decided to transform the Voluntary Fund into the United Nations Development Fund for Women and to make the Fund a separate and identifiable entity in autonomous association with the United Nations Development Programme,

Stressing the important contribution the Fund continues to make in providing technical assistance to enhance the integration of a gender perspective into all development programmes, in accordance with the mandate of the Fund,

Considering the innovative and experimental activities of the Fund directed towards strengthening both governmental and non-governmental institutional capacities to ensure women access to development cooperation resources and full participation at all levels in the development process,

Taking note of the importance of the work of the Consultative Committee on the United Nations Development Fund for Women in policy and programme directions, in accordance with the mandate of the Fund,

1. Takes note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women;
2. Emphasizes the important work of the Fund in women's empowerment and gender equality within the framework of implementing the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and, in that context, notes the recently adopted strategy and business plan;
3. Reaffirms the catalytic role of the Fund in further developing and strengthening women's empowerment by enhancing the integration of a gender perspective into all development programmes, in accordance with its mandate;
4. Stresses the role of the Fund as a development fund in supporting activities related to women's economic and social development in developing countries;
5. Notes the intention of the Fund further to focus its interventions in support of women's empowerment and gender equality;
6. Encourages the Fund to continue to contribute to mainstreaming a gender perspective into all development efforts of Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and civil society;
7. Also encourages the Fund to strengthen its work within the United Nations system at the national level through the resident coordinator system, focusing on strategic interventions and building upon its comparative advantages, in order to promote systemic change, in particular with regard to women's political and economic empowerment;
8. Endorses the role of the Fund in strengthening women's economic capacity, encouraging women to become key economic players in combating the feminization of poverty and strengthening women's leadership and political empowerment so as to increase their participation in decision-making processes;
9. Recognizes the important role the Fund plays in promoting the realization of women's civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights so as to facilitate their full participation in society;
10. Welcomes the operationalization of the Trust Fund in Support of Action to Eliminate Violence against Women, and requests the United Nations Development Fund for Women to disseminate information on best practices and strategic interventions funded under that initiative which should contribute to the eradication of violence against women as an obstacle to development;
11. Encourages the United Nations Development Fund for Women, in order to fulfill its mandate, to continue to mobilize resources for its activities in a comprehensive manner from all available sources, including the private sector, and urges all Member States to contribute and to consider increasing their contributions to the Fund;
12. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session a report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, to be submitted in accordance with resolution 39/125.

**International Research and Training Institute (INSTRAW)**

The Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women held its seventeenth session at the Institute's headquarters in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 17 to 21 February 1997 [E/1997/53]. INSTRAW began work in 1979 [YUN 1979, p. 901] as an autonomous institution conducting research and training programmes for the advancement and mobilization of women in development.

At its 1997 session, the Board reviewed the implementation of the INSTRAW programme of activities during 1996, as well as the framework for research and training for the 1998-1999 biennium and the financial situation. It also discussed the extent and quality of INSTRAW networking with focal points and inter-agency cooperation. The Board recommended that high priority be given to women in situations of armed conflict, violence against women and follow-up
to the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements [YUN 1996, p. 992], and suggested that the girl child be included in the Institute's research programme. Other recommendations dealt with networking between INSTRAW and its focal points and enhancing the Institute's visibility through better distribution of its publications. The Board also adopted recommendations related to operational and budgetary issues.

**Report of Secretary-General.** Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/163 [YUN 1995, p. 1181], the Secretary-General, in a September report [A/52/352], described activities of INSTRAW during 1996-1997, during which period programmes focused on women's empowerment; statistics and indicators on gender issues; women, environment and sustainable development; women, media and communications; other inter-agency and collaborative activities; and information, documentation and communication. The report concluded that the Institute's activities in research, training, information and documentation placed a high priority on the obstacles that limited or impeded women from becoming equal partners in development. INSTRAW was at the forefront in establishing new concepts and methods for understanding the specific situation of women in the development process and in broadening the empirical and analytical parameters for such understanding. The developmental context required more research to better understand the complexities affecting women. Continued efforts in training and information were also necessary to promote women's essential contribution to development and to bridge the gap between the situation of women and the prevailing development practices. The Institute's activities were an integral part of UN efforts to mainstream gender into both policy and operational activities and hence to contribute to the implementation of the Platform for Action.

On 12 December, the Assembly, by decision 52/420, took note of the Secretary-General's report.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 12 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/52/637], adopted resolution 52/95 without vote [agenda item 105].

**International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women**

The General Assembly,
Recalling its resolution 50/163 of 22 December 1995,
Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/39 of 25 July 1996,
Taking note also of the report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its seventeenth session,
Reaffirming paragraph 334 of the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995,
Concerned about the declining resource base of the Institute,
1. Welcomes the appointment of the Director of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, and takes note with appreciation of the work done by the previous Acting Director;
2. Urges the Secretary-General to fill the existing vacancies in the Institute in order to permit it to carry out its mandate;
3. Emphasizes the role of the Institute as the only gender unit for research and training within the United Nations system, and reiterates the relevant provisions contained in the agreed conclusions 1997/3 of 21 July 1997 of the Economic and Social Council;
4. Requests the Institute to continue its cooperation with relevant entities of the United Nations system;
5. Also requests the Institute to better coordinate its activities for gender mainstreaming with relevant entities of the United Nations system with a view to developing joint activities and work plans in appropriate areas;
6. Welcomes the fact that in its activities the Institute places a high priority on the obstacles that limit or impede women from becoming equal partners in development;
7. Expresses its appreciation to those Governments and organizations that have contributed to and supported the activities of the Institute;
8. Invites Member States, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society to contribute generously to the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, thus enabling the Institute to respond effectively to its mandate;
9. Requests the Director of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women to develop a funding strategy and to establish a link between the activities of the Institute and its resource base;
10. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.