



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

**Resolution adopted by consensus* by the 111th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 1 October 2004)**

**BEIJING + 10: AN EVALUATION FROM A PARLIAMENTARY
PERSPECTIVE**

The 111th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Recognising the fundamental importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), its Optional Protocol, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and other regional instruments, including the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women,

Reaffirming the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, and the outcome document adopted at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session, Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century (Beijing+5),

Recognising the comprehensive nature of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 12 critical areas of concern highlighted, relating to the social, cultural, economic and political status of women worldwide,

Cognisant of the national action plans developed by 119 Member States of the United Nations, outlining their governments' progress in implementing the commitments announced at the Beijing Conference,

* The delegation of China expressed a reservation on operative paragraph 5 in view of the fact that, following its accession to the WTO, China had already removed its cotton subsidies. The delegation of Latvia had a reservation on operative paragraph 7 because it considered necessary to maintain agricultural subsidies in Latvia as a transitional measure for some years to come. The delegations of Morocco and Burkina Faso expressed reservations on operative paragraph 7 on the grounds that they were in favour of total elimination of all subsidies as opposed to radical reduction of agricultural subsidies only. The delegation of Mexico also expressed its reservation on operative paragraph 7 because it believed that subsidies should be removed gradually and that countries should be free to decide how to proceed in this regard.

Reaffirming the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals contained therein, in particular, the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women, without which development cannot be sustained, and *also noting* that the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action is an essential prerequisite for meeting all the Millennium Development Goals,

Recalling paragraph 4 of the IPU Universal Declaration on Democracy (1997), which states that "The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences",

Recalling the IPU's Plan of Action to correct current imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life, adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council (Paris, March 1994), and the Beijing Parliamentary Declaration, adopted by participants in the Parliamentarians' Day on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women,

Reaffirming relevant IPU resolutions, particularly,

- Education and culture as essential factors in promoting the participation of men and women in political life and as prerequisites for the development of peoples (Havana, April 2001);
- Promoting greater respect and protection of human rights in general and in particular for women and children (Beijing, September 1996);
- Parliamentary action for women's access to and participation in decision-making structures aimed at achieving true equality for women (Madrid, April 1995); and
- Policies to put an end to violence against children and women (Pyongyang, May 1991),

Underscoring the fundamental role played by women in all sectors of society,

Noting that ten years after the Beijing Conference, women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making positions in parliament, government, public administration, international organisations, justice systems and the economy, and that an equal participation of both women and men in positions of power is urgently needed for reasons of human rights, justice, democratic legitimacy and efficacy of public policy,

Dismayed that ten years after the Beijing Conference, effective gender equality is still far from being a reality: women continue to be paid less for work of equal value, more often than men are victims of poverty and unemployment, and are more frequently subjected to violence, and *appalled* at the discrimination faced by the girl child in the fields of education, health and personal development,

Extremely worried about the level of violence against women, including domestic violence, and *regarding* this as a main issue in the struggle for the protection of women, gender equality, empowerment of women and human rights,

Noting that the Forty-ninth Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNSCW), to be held in 2005, is an important event for the review and appraisal of the decade since the Beijing Conference,

Stressing the key role of parliaments and parliamentarians in promoting gender equality through their legislative, budgetary, policy and oversight functions and their mobilisation of public opinion and support,

Measures to strengthen parliamentary action in these fields

1. *Reaffirms* its commitment to the objectives set out in the Beijing Platform for Action and *calls for* a commitment of both men and women parliamentarians to strengthen parliamentary action to achieve gender equality both internationally and nationally, and to monitor progress on the fulfilment of commitments made at the Beijing Conference;
2. *Recommends* that parliamentarians be adequately represented at the Forty-ninth Session of the UNCSW, to be held from 28 February to 11 March 2005 in New York, which will review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session held in 2000;
3. *Calls upon* parliaments to promote efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including the promotion of gender equality, the empowerment of women, and the reduction of maternal mortality rates;
4. *Urges* parliaments to hold a debate on the status of national implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action before the Forty-ninth Session of the UNCSW, allowing for adequate input from women's organisations and non-governmental organisations; *urges* parliamentarians of States that have not yet submitted their responses to the *Questionnaire to Governments on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)* to enquire about the reasons for this delay and to arrange for their governments to present their responses as soon as possible; and *further urges* parliaments to debate the results of the Session of the UNCSW in order to ensure adequate parliamentary follow-up;
5. *Recommends* that there should be a stronger presence of women in decision-making structures within national parliaments and inter-parliamentary forums, as well as a gender-balanced national representation in foreign parliamentary relations, at both the bilateral and multilateral levels;
6. *Encourages* parliaments to play an active and positive role in the promotion of gender equality and to implement measures aimed at ensuring gender equality in representation, by establishing parliamentary committees on gender equality, composed of both men and women, making use of the tools of gender-budgeting analysis, ensuring the gender mainstreaming of all decisions and legislation, and allocating sufficient resources to these activities;
7. *Recommends* that parliaments strive for equal representation and participation of women and men in their work and that the number of women in all parliamentary

committees increase, aiming for a target of 50 per cent in accordance with the outcome document adopted at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session, Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century (Beijing+5), or at least 30 per cent, so that women can bring about changes in the approaches to the legislation prepared, and also, but not solely, incorporate their diverse perspectives and concerns;

8. *Highlights* the need to strengthen gender expertise to support and provide advice to parliamentarians and parliamentary bodies in ensuring the development of effective and sustainable gender equality initiatives;
9. *Calls upon* parliamentarians to play a more active role in the process of gender mainstreaming in every area of life;
10. *Further encourages* national parliaments, and through them their governments, in the framework of systematic gender mainstreaming efforts, to ensure that all government policies and programmes are analysed from a gender perspective, for example, through the use of gender impact statements for proposed legislation; and *also calls upon* legislatures to adopt the practice of reviewing all legislation, including the budget, from a gender perspective and, to this end, to ensure that sex-disaggregated data are collected, analysed and used as a reference in policy-making and legislative affairs;
11. *Calls upon* parliamentarians, as overseers of their governments, to ensure that international commitments are upheld and implemented, particularly those that fall under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol;
12. *Invites* all parliamentarians, men and women, to establish strong links with existing institutional mechanisms working for women's rights and non-governmental organisations, including women's organisations, in order to find innovative solutions to the problems of gender inequality;

Addressing specific areas of concern

Political sphere

13. *Invites* heads of State and government as well as leading figures in political parties to make strong, public commitments to gender equality and to make gender issues a permanent priority;
14. *Further invites* leaders to increase the proportion of women in decision-making positions at all levels, so as to ensure democratic development in all States;
15. *Calls upon* parliamentarians to challenge the social construction of gender-specific roles with a view to improving policies for women and men;
16. *Strongly urges* parliamentarians to promote a stronger presence of women in political parties and at all levels of decision-making through the adoption, for example, of quota systems or other forms of affirmative action; and *also urges* parliamentary committees to hold public inquiries to determine why women are

underrepresented in electoral politics and to devise recommendations for their governments;

17. *Stresses* the need to ensure the full and equal access of women to civic education, information and training as voters and candidates, and to combat negative societal attitudes that discourage women's participation in politics;
18. *Requests* governments to establish and make public specific annual objectives for ministers and administrators in respect of the advancement and training of women in government and in respect of gender implications in policies and programmes, and to report annually and publicly on how these objectives have been met;
19. *Emphasises* the need to create a more supportive environment for women in parliament through an examination and, where required, a revision of standing orders and rules of debate and the establishment of gender-sensitive codes of conduct; and *encourages* the development of more family-friendly working hours;
20. *Requests* parliaments to take into account the question of the political responsibilities and family obligations of women and men and to provide them with the necessary facilities and support to reconcile both roles;
21. *Encourages* the development of training programmes for journalists and other media staff on the importance of the non-stereotypical portrayal of women and men and girls and boys;

Economic sphere

22. *Calls upon* national parliaments to ensure that national laws enable women to participate in the economy, on an equal footing with men, for example by providing for separate taxation of income and by guaranteeing that women can freely purchase, sell and inherit property, own and manage business enterprises, and have access to loans;
23. *Endorses* the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015; and *recommends* that governments do everything in their power to ensure that women's particular needs are taken into account in formulating poverty reduction strategies;
24. *Encourages* governments and intergovernmental organisations, as well as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to promote the independence of women entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized enterprises, by providing them with micro credits and other financial assistance;
25. *Calls upon* parliaments to take appropriate legislative, budgetary and fiscal measures to improve the balance between work and family and to ensure that sufficient child-care facilities are available;
26. *Urges* parliaments and governments to promote equality between women and men on the basis of the following supplementary measures:

- passing and ensuring effective implementation of comprehensive anti-discrimination laws;
- guaranteeing equal access to education and training opportunities for women and girls;
- helping women start businesses;
- guaranteeing equal access to the labour market for both women and men;
- guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value;
- promoting gender partnership using relevant public information efforts at schools and in the media;
- developing legislation to address gender issues, inter alia to ensure gender equality and equal participation at the management level and on boards of directors in the private sector;
- addressing and supporting the empowerment of rural women and their specific needs;

Human security

27. *Underscores* the need for parliaments and governments to ensure the protection of everyone from any threats to their survival, dignity, and livelihood, particularly in the form of poverty, hunger, violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking in human beings, armed conflict, infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS, and a lack of access to education;
28. *Strongly endorses and encourages* further implementation of national reforms to broaden women's and girls' access to education and literacy programmes, ensure the right and access to reproductive and sexual health services, reduce poverty, and combat all forms of male violence against women and girls, including prostitution and trafficking in human beings;
29. *Calls upon* parliaments to pass laws against all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual abuse and harassment, incest, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, murder, systematic rape, female genital mutilation and crimes against women committed in the name of honour; ensure that the laws they pass protect victims and punish perpetrators of violence against women; monitor the implementation and enforcement of such legislation and allocate resources to programmes aimed at eradicating violence against women;
30. *Urges* governments and parties in armed conflicts to respect fully the norms of international humanitarian law and take all measures required for the protection of women and children, in particular to put an end to sexual violence against women and girls, and to ensure that perpetrators of such violence are prosecuted;
31. *Calls upon* governments, parliaments and international and regional organisations to identify and condemn the use of the systematic practice of rape and other forms of inhuman and degrading treatment of women as a deliberate instrument of war and ethnic cleansing, and to take steps to ensure that full assistance is provided to the victims of such abuse for their physical and mental rehabilitation;

32. *Stresses* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including those relating to sexual violence against women and girls;
33. *Encourages* governments to consider the ratification and enforcement of international covenants on trafficking in persons, including the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, to address the factors that encourage trafficking in women, to increase collaboration among law enforcement agencies to dismantle networks in trafficking, and to allocate resources to rehabilitate victims of trafficking in society;
34. *Encourages* the media to enhance public knowledge and information about women's human rights and sustainable development, to support a culture of gender equality, and to combat discrimination and violence;

Conflict resolution, reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction

35. *Strongly endorses* United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and *encourages* all parties involved to fully implement its recommendations;
36. *Recognises* the key role played by women as peace educators and caretakers of families and communities in conflict prevention, resolution and reconciliation; and *calls for* their full and equal participation in the development of democratic institutions once conflicts cease and during reconstruction processes, with a view to ensuring that sustainable peace can be built, based on mutual respect, cultural diversity and gender equality;

The girl child

37. *Strongly urges* all parliamentarians to ensure that where stringent laws protecting children and their rights do not yet apply, such legislation is enacted, and *calls upon* governments and parliaments to take every appropriate measure, including the enactment of legislation, to end violence committed against girl children;
38. *Calls for* a special focus on, and a more sensitive framework for, dealing with the problems of the girl child in reviewing the impact of programmes, laws and proposed bills; more sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data, methods and research; monitoring of the girl child's education, health and employment and monitoring of cultural communities and migration; and further awareness of, and concern for, the girl child in all advocacy efforts for children;
39. *Recommends* that penal systems should ensure that appropriate protection is afforded to girl child criminal offenders, and that their rights are guaranteed, including the right to personal integrity and personal development;
40. *Encourages* the IPU to continue its work against female genital mutilation and other harmful traditions and practices, with increased vigour;

41. *Recommends*, where they do not yet exist, that girl child movements or organisations be established, as these serve as networks for sharing information and can call into question customs and practices that discriminate against girls;

General

42. *Recommends* that international treaties and commitments related to gender issues, including the CEDAW, be widely disseminated in all communities, and that they be translated into national, ethnic and indigenous languages;
43. *Calls upon* parliaments of States that have not yet done so to ensure ratification of the CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, and *encourages* the IPU to continue promoting the role of parliament in the CEDAW process through its awareness campaigns and seminars;
44. *Calls upon* governments as well as international organisations, including the IPU, through its Secretariat, to collect and distribute sufficient statistical data to be able to analyse the gender-specific distribution of power – both in quantitative and qualitative terms – and to disaggregate all statistical data by sex, providing gender breakdowns;
45. *Calls upon* parliamentarians to encourage the development of leadership skills and to strengthen strategic partnerships for gender equality at the local/national, regional and international levels, so as to mainstream gender perspectives in their legislatures;
46. *Undertakes*, through the IPU Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, to monitor on a regular basis progress made by parliaments on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.