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*Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality*

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**2014/2143(INI)**

6.11.2014

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Development

on the EU and the global development framework after 2015  
(2014/2143(INI))

Rapporteur: Malin Björk

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979;
  - having regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in Beijing and the subsequent outcome documents of the United Nations Beijing +5, +10 and +15 Special Sessions on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted on 9 June 2000, 11 March 2005 and 2 March 2010 respectively;
  - having regard to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) that took place in Cairo in 1994, where the global community recognized and affirmed that sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are fundamental to sustainable development;
- A. whereas two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) explicitly address women's rights, namely the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (MDG 3) and the improvement of maternal health (MDG 5), whereas a further three address living conditions of women and girls: achieving universal primary education (MDG 2), reducing child mortality (MDG 4) and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (MDG 6);
- B. whereas Member States have committed themselves to promoting gender equality in twelve critical areas for concern under the Beijing Platform for Action; whereas in its 15-year implementation review, the Council concluded that women's rights remain to be ensured in most of these areas;
- C. whereas the EU is committed to a Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015, but the pace of implementation has been extremely slow, as was highlighted in the Council Conclusions from 19 May 2014;
- D. whereas although the MDGs have achieved successes in middle-income and developing countries, progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women has been mixed, with MDG 3 remaining largely unachieved;
- E. whereas MDG 5 is the goal that lags the furthest behind and access to information on sexual and reproductive rights, including contraception and abortion, is fundamental to women's empowerment; as every day an estimated 800 women in the world die due to complications during pregnancy or childbirth; and about 222 million women in the developing world lack access to safe and modern methods of family planning whilst the proportion of development aid aimed at family planning as to total global aid for health is declining;
- F. whereas accounting for over 60 percent of people living with HIV, women and girls

remain at the epicentre of the HIV pandemic (MDG 6);

- G. whereas women are key actors in development policies; whereas the empowerment of women and girls and human rights of women and girls has been recognised as a priority in the post-2015 framework;
- H. whereas the ICPD Beyond 2014 Review shows that discrimination against women and girls remains evident in all societies; the review stresses that the fulfilment of individual rights, including SRHR, and capabilities is the foundation of sustainable development<sup>1</sup>;
- I. whereas women are harder hit by military conflicts as well as by economic and climate crises, and whereas they are accounting for a growing proportion of migration, now making up half the number of migrants;
- J. whereas migration is increasing in Europe and all over the world, and many women are victim of discrimination and violence if they want to change their culture, religion, lifestyle;
- K. whereas globally, women and girls constitute a majority of those living in extreme poverty, women play a very important role in the world's agricultural production and make up for 43% of the agriculture workforce in developing countries<sup>2</sup>, but own less than 10% of the land;
- L. whereas every year, 14 million girls are forced into marriage; whereas one woman out of every three in the world is assaulted, abused, raped, or suffers some other form of ill-treatment; and whereas violence and rape constitute a greater risk to women aged between 15 and 44 than cancer, road accidents, war, or malaria;
- M. whereas women's poverty and gender inequalities are also root causes and push factors in trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation, and whereas women and girls are exploited in sex industries in all regions of the world;
- N. whereas the denial of lifesaving abortion amounts to a serious breach of human rights;
- O. whereas the maternal mortality rate is 15 times higher in developing countries than in developed countries;
- P. whereas 62 million girls in the world do not attend school;
- Q. whereas lack of comprehensive sexuality education, youth-friendly reproductive health services and measures to prevent early and forced marriages, sexual harassment and violence prevent in particular girls from attending school and completing their education, driving gender inequalities and poverty;
- R. whereas the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value is a crucial issue in achieving gender equality;

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<sup>1</sup> [http://icpdbeyond2014.org/uploads/browser/files/93632\\_unfpa\\_eng\\_web.pdf](http://icpdbeyond2014.org/uploads/browser/files/93632_unfpa_eng_web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - infographic, ref.: <http://www.fao.org/resources/infographics/infographics-details/en/c/180754/>

- S. whereas women and in particular mothers are often victims of discriminations in their access to work, according to the type of employment; whereas that creates a strong prejudice for their carriers;
- T. whereas in many countries, national laws do not guarantee the same rights to men and women;
1. Calls for enhancing the implementation of the current MDGs in order to address more effectively the structural causes of gender inequality and women's empowerment, as well as the structural changes still needed to realise substantive equality, and stresses the fact that this is caused by various obstacles such as a lack of resources, lack of political will, the prevalence of the masculine model in political life and elected government bodies, lack of party support for women, socio-economic obstacles, women's lack of time resources, the role of social mass media and lack of sustained contact and cooperation with public organisations such as trade unions and women's groups, as well as policies which seek to limit women's and girls' rights and access to health services, such as donor country funding restrictions on humanitarian aid related to safe abortion services;
  2. Urges the United Nations to include gender equality, women's rights, the empowerment of women and human rights of women and girls as a stand-alone goal, as suggested by the OWG<sup>1</sup>, and essential precondition for equitable and inclusive sustainable development, as well as to ensure the integration of gender mainstreaming and gender-specific targets and indicators across all goals under the post-2015 global development framework, with a special focus on women experiencing increased marginalization due to intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities;
  3. Regrets that women's and girls' bodies, specifically their sexual and reproductive health and rights, remain an ideological battleground to this day and calls on the post-2015 development framework to recognise the inalienable rights of women and girls to bodily integrity and autonomous decision-making; among others, the right to access voluntary family planning, safe and legal abortion and to be free from violence, including FGM, child, early and forced marriage, and marital rape;
  4. Calls for a specific gender equality action plan accompanied by the necessary financing mechanism including gender budgeting tools in order to tackle intersecting and structural drivers of inequalities, and multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, cultural or religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, health status and abilities;
  5. Calls for ambitious gender-specific targets to be set as regards ending the feminisation of poverty and closing gender gaps, including enhanced access for women and girls to quality education, including secondary education, universal access to quality health services, the enhancement of access for women and girls to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including family planning and abortion services, the ending of all forms of violence against women and girls as well as gender based violence, and the boosting of

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<sup>1</sup> Open Working Group outcome document from 19 July 2014, ref: OWG\_Outcome\_Document\_19\_July\_2014, <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/file/449888/download/489787>, <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/owg>

women's social and economic independence, particularly in terms of employment and their participation in decision-making processes, stresses that the social economy helps to rectify three major labour market imbalances: unemployment, job instability and social and labour exclusion;

6. Calls for a clear strategy that lets women and mothers have access to work without discrimination, safeguarding the right to maternity and work at the same time;
7. Underlines that women's participation in political decision-making and negotiations, especially in conflict prevention, peace processes and peace building, is decisive to create favourable conditions for the stabilisation and strengthening of States, and thus for development; calls for the promotion of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 to ensure the participation of women in conflict resolution and democracy building;
8. Strongly condemns the continued use of sexual violence against women as a weapon of war; stresses that more needs to be done to ensure respect of international law and access to psychological support for women and girls abused in conflicts;
9. Condemns the lack of prosecution and punishments of aggressors towards women in conflicted areas; calls for more detailed data and statistics on impunity of aggressors accused of committing violence against women in conflicted areas;
10. Urges that the provision of EU humanitarian aid and that of its Member States should not be subject to restrictions imposed by donors regarding access to safe abortion for women and girls who are victims of rape in armed conflicts;
11. Insists on a specific gender equality chapter rooted in the next EEAS Human Rights Action Plan;
12. Insists that gender balance needs to be rooted in the EEAS overseas missions and on a dedicated women's rights and gender equality strategy for each mission;
13. Recognises that girls and young women are particularly disadvantaged and at risk and highlights the importance of supporting educational systems that provide access to basic educational needs, with special attention to alphabetisation and professional training, in order to tackle the violation of the right of girls to have education; recalls that specific focus is needed to ensure girls live free from violence, to remove discriminatory legislation and practices, and to empower girls and young women globally;
14. Maintains that all girls should be given easier access, free of charge, to good primary and secondary education, paying particular attention to the most marginalised groups;
15. Calls for enhanced policies on public systems to provide qualitative, sustainable and equal healthcare, with special attention to the elderly and persons with disabilities;
16. Underlines that any goal on health must include the achievement of the right to highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights; emphasises that women must have control over their sexual and reproductive rights, notably through easy access to contraception and abortion, points out that the right to

reproductive health is an integral element of human rights; in this context, strongly demands the criminalisation of forced sterilisation;

17. Calls for eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, and therefore urges the United Nations to set the eradication of all forms of violence against women as a priority objective and to further develop measures attracting special attention to extreme forms of violence such as domestic violence, honour killing, human trafficking, forced marriage, sexual exploitation and genital female mutilation, particularly to women in warzones, and to fight the consequences of violence against women for society such as unequal development and discrimination and vulnerability of women in the economy; considers that violence against women is a serious violation of human rights and should never be justified by religion, culture and tradition;
18. Emphasises the fact that the EU should stress the importance of a participatory approach in the new development framework, aiming to involve at all times actors at all levels, including civil-society and, in particular, women's organisations and gender equality organisations, as strong social accountability mechanisms at local level should report to national monitoring of development plans, leading to real inclusive governance at local, regional and national level;
19. Points to the importance of gathering age- and gender-specific data for the purpose of implementing such policies as might be shown to be appropriate;
20. Points out that the post-2015 framework must eliminate the root causes of poverty by promoting equality of outcome and empowerment for all, especially for those living in poverty, and marginalised and under-served populations, with an explicit focus on women, girls, and youth;
21. Calls for human rights principles to underpin the post-2015 framework, which must address, in particular, issues of inequality and discrimination, participation and the empowerment of marginalised and disadvantaged people in society - with a special attention to the rights of women, youth, migrants, people living with HIV, LGBTI persons and persons with disability;
22. Points to the need to establish effective specific protection arrangements for migrant women;
23. Urges the United Nations to emphasise in the MDGs the importance of the right of women to migrate and integrate themselves in a new culture changing their lifestyle without incurring violence and abuses;
24. Underlines that special attention should be paid to overcome financial and legal obstacles to sustainable development, protection and fulfilment of all women's human rights; urges the international community to address the unjust social, economic and environmental conditions that perpetuate the feminization of poverty, commodification of natural resources, and threats to food sovereignty that impede women and girls from becoming empowered, stresses in this context the issue of large-scale land acquisition by foreign investors, which is affecting local farmers and which has a devastating impact on women and children;

25. Regrets that the proposed targets do not recognise the differential impacts of environmental threats on the lives of women and girls, or their distinctive role in contributing to sustainability and in peace building activities, and emphasises the need to include the gender perspective in all future goals for sustainable development, accompanied by specific targets for women and girls;
26. Considers it essential to devise a global financing framework with an inbuilt gender perspective - using the European Development Fund where the EU is concerned - in order to attain the new sustainable development goals;
27. Maintains that the specific needs of women farmers have to be taken into account, especially where food security issues are concerned;
28. Calls for the integration of gender equality concerns as a cross-cutting issue in environmental and climate change policies, from their implementation through to their evaluation, so as to provide factual information to evaluate and improve the impact of these policies, and emphasises that, given the strong gender dimension of climate change in both its effects and in the solutions thereto, the EU should insist on a gender equitable, participatory and rights-based approach, to ensure a tangible reduction in gender inequalities in access to and control over resources for adaptation to climate change, as well as a gender balance in climate and disaster-related decision-making processes at all levels;
29. As the post-2015 development framework will be a universal agenda for global development, urges the European Commission to include SRHR in its next EU Health Strategy;
30. Calls for the goal of universal access to reproductive health to be further pursued within the new global development framework and treated as a priority, and for financial support for family planning to be provided on a commensurate scale;
31. Emphasises that universal respect for and access to SRHR contributes to the achievement of all the health-related MDGs: prenatal care and the ability to avoid high-risk births, reduce infant and child mortality; points out that family planning, maternal health and safe abortion services are important elements to save women's lives;
32. Calls for specific EU projects to promote SRHR in less developed countries to help prevent maternal mortality;
33. Calls for a new global framework that creates a more equitable and sustainable trade scheme based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade; takes the view that Fair Trade is an example of a successful partnership, involving many stakeholders around the world and at different stages along a supply chain, that ensures market access for disadvantaged producers, in particular women, guarantees sustainable livelihoods, respects labour standards, phases out child labour and encourages environmentally sustainable farming and production practices;
34. Urges the EU and its Member States to come up with an extensive review of the Beijing Platform for Action to mark its twenty years anniversary in 2015;



35. Maintains that women must be viewed as having a role to play in development and must therefore be consulted, not least through civil society.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	6.11.2014
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 28 -: 4 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Daniela Aiuto, Maria Arena, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Malin Björk, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Iratxe García Pérez, Anna Hedh, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Barbara Matera, Angelika Mlinar, Maria Noichl, Marijana Petir, Terry Reintke, Liliana Rodrigues, Michaela Šojdrová, Ernest Urtasun, Ángela Vallina, Elissavet Vozemberg, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Anna Záborská, Jana Žitňanská
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Mariya Gabriel, Arne Gericke, Sophia in 't Veld, Kostadinka Kuneva, Constance Le Grip, Elly Schlein, Dubravka Šuica, Monika Vana
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Hugues Bayet, Rosa D'Amato, Michela Giuffrida, Edouard Martin