



## CALL TO ACTION

The meetings of this year's 54<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women will review implementation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly as well as their application for shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

The *Platform for Action* with the twelve critical areas of concern it identifies as obstacles to the advancement of women and girls and the strategic objectives and actions needed to address each, remains today the global policy framework for the advancement of gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls. However, the Beijing+10 meetings in 2005 found that there is a wide gap between global policy development and implementation on the national level.

Over the last two days, the Beijing+15 NGO Global Forum has noted progress made and discussed many gaps and challenges remaining to full implementation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* from global, regional, national and local perspectives.

As a product of our deliberations and a contribution to advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls worldwide, the Global Forum offers the following **Call to Action** to countries around the world, members of the United Nations community and advocates for the rights of women and girls everywhere:

1. The process of formulating the *Platform for Action* was an inclusive dialogue and exchange between governments and international organizations, including the United Nations and civil society.

**Global, national and local strategies, including for the achievement of the MDGs, must be re-directed to a more participatory and human rights-based approach, including mainstreaming a gender-perspective in all programs and policies.**

2. Millennium Development Goal #3 - promote gender equality and empower women - is the driving force for the achievement of gender equality in all of the MDGs. However, the targets and indicators established for measuring progress for achieving MDG#3 are inadequate, as they measure only a small part of the aggregate actions needed to empower women.

**Governments, international organizations, the private sector and NGOs should concentrate on designing, funding and implementing actions that will particularly address structural changes to end discrimination against women and girls.**

3. Past efforts to implement both the *Platform for Action* and commitments made to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women offer concrete examples and information for actualizing gender equality.

**These frameworks must be utilized to incorporate gender into all aspects of the Millennium Development Goals. Equality of result, not intention, and accountability are key.**

4. Strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and implementing the *Platform for Action* may be specific to the particular situation in countries, regions and local communities.

**The participation of women in prioritizing and implementing these initiatives is crucial to their sustainability, as is funding and human resources.**

5. Limited data collection, lack of gender disaggregated information, analysis and reporting are obstacles to policy making, planning, and monitoring of both the *Platform for Action* and the Millennium Development Goals.

**These processes must be expanded to ensure that women in all their diversity are the beneficiaries and the agents of change.**

6. Reducing poverty is a major objective of both the *Platform for Action* and the Millennium Development Goals. The right to food is basic.

**The feminization of poverty must be urgently addressed through policies that emphasize full employment, decent work and a guarantee of basic rights in the workplace, especially in the informal sector.**

7. The catastrophic effects of climate change are undermining the human rights of all, especially those of rural women.

**Gender-based strategies for reducing women's vulnerability to risks posed by climate change as well as increasing their resilience to respond should be incorporated into the implementation of the *Platform for Action* and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.**

8. Little progress has been made in the achievement of MDG #5, target #1 - reduce maternal mortality, and on MDG #4, target 1 - reduce child mortality.

**Increased political will to commit vigorously to women's health and reproductive rights throughout the life cycle is urgently needed.**

9. Although both the *Platform for Action* and the Millennium Development Goals prioritize education, women and girls still comprise the majority of the world's illiterate population.

**Educating girls is a successfully proven strategy to reduce poverty, improve family health, protect the environment and promote gender equality. Attention must be focused not only on enrolment rates, but on initiatives that will promote gender equality in the school environment and keep girls in school.**

10. Despite progress at the policy and political level, violence against women and girls persists unabated in all parts of the world. Violence against women is about power; it establishes and maintains the dominance of men and the subjugation of women. It is both an example of gender inequality and a means by which it is perpetuated.

**Men and boys must be engaged in changing the social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities. Innovative programs and activities are required to achieve this end.**

11. Though women constitute more than half of all international migrants, the gender aspects of their needs and particular vulnerabilities and their contributions have long been ignored in policy formulation.

**States must work for full implementation of all international conventions and laws protecting women migrants from exploitation, violence and trafficking.**

12. For more than three years, women have advocated for a new gender architecture within the UN system. Such an entity would enhance the capacity of the UN to better meet the needs of women at national and local levels.

**The United Nations should give high priority to a well-resourced gender entity led by an Under Secretary-General, as approved by the General Assembly in September 2009.**

In conclusion, we call on the United Nations to hold firm to the vision of its Charter, which commits to the equality of women and men and the basic rights of all individuals, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations must continue to expand its monumental efforts as the world leader in promoting gender equality and the rights of women and girls. The cost of gender equality is modest compared to the cost of gender inequality.