



Téléfax: (41-22) 928 90 10
Télégrammes: UNATIONS, GENEVE
Téléc: 41 29 62
Téléphone: (41-22) 928 92 65
Internet www.ohchr.org
E-mail: cmoller@ohchr.org



Address:
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 GENEVE 10

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The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights presents its compliments to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva, and United Nations programmes and agencies, and has the honour to refer to Resolution 12/17 entitled, "Elimination of discrimination against women", which was adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 12th session in October 2009.

Under the resolution, the Office was requested to prepare a thematic study on discrimination against women, in law and practice, and on how the issue is addressed throughout the United Nations human rights system, in consultation with States, relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms and agencies, including the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the agencies within the United Nations composite entity on gender equality and empowerment of women and all other relevant stakeholders, taking into account the efforts made in this regard, particularly by the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Office of the High Commissioner would be grateful to receive any relevant information for the preparation of this study.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would be grateful if any information with a maximum of 3,000 words could be sent to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (United Nations Office at Geneva, CH 1211 Geneva 10; Fax. +41 22 917 90 08; E-mail: registry@ohchr.org) by **15 May 2010**. Any enquiries may be made to Cecilia Möller, Chief a.i., Women's Rights and Gender Section, at cmoller@ohchr.org or by telephone: +41 22 928 92 65.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva, and United Nations programmes and agencies, the assurances of its highest consideration.

UNITED NATIONS - OFFICE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul F. M.", written over the typed name of the High Commissioner.

Geneva, 29 March 2010



General Assembly

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A/HRC/RES/12/17
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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Twelfth session
Agenda item 3

**PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL,
POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS,
INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council*

12/17. Elimination of discrimination against women

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, its Purposes and Principles,

Guided also by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in June 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights (A/CONF.157/23), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in September 1995 by the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1, chap. I), and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in September 2001 by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,

Bearing in mind the challenges still faced by all countries throughout the world to overcome inequality between men and women,

* The resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council will be contained in the report of the Council on its twelfth session (A/HRC/12/50), chap. I.

Recalling the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”, the declaration adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference,

Recalling also Commission on Human Rights resolutions 2000/13 of 17 April 2000, 2001/34 of 23 April 2001 and 2003/22 of 22 April 2003, as well as Council resolution 6/30 of 14 December 2007 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system,

Bearing in mind that international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and include guarantees to ensure the equality of women and men, girls and boys, in the enjoyment of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights,

Recognizing that women face multiple forms of discrimination,

Reiterating the need to intensify efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women throughout the world,

Recognizing that the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of life is essential for the full and complete economic and social development of a country,

Mindful of the fact that the elimination of discrimination against women requires the consideration of women’s specific socio-economic context, and recognizing that laws, policies, customs and traditions that restrict women’s equal access to participate fully in development processes and public and political life are discriminatory and may contribute to the feminization of poverty,

1. *Reaffirms* the obligation of States to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;
2. *Welcomes* the commitments made by the international community to implement fully the Millennium Development Goals and stressing, in that context, the resolve of Heads of State to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable;
3. *Also welcomes* the efforts made by States around the world to reform their legal systems in order to remove obstacles to women’s full and effective enjoyment of their human rights;
4. *Expresses concern* at the fact that, despite the pledge made at the Beijing World Conference on Women and the review by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session to modify or abolish remaining laws that discriminate against women and girls, many of those laws are still in force and continue to be applied, thereby preventing women and girls from enjoying the full realization of their human rights;

5. *Calls upon* States to fulfil their international obligations and commitments to revoke any remaining laws that discriminate on the basis of sex and remove gender bias in the administration of justice, taking into account that those laws violate their human right to be protected against discrimination;
6. *Recognizes* that women's inequality before the law has resulted in the lack of equal opportunities for women in education, access to health, economic participation, access to labour and disparities in salaries and compensation, public and political participation, access to decision-making processes, inheritance, ownership of land, financial services, including loans, and nationality and legal capacity, among others, as well as increased vulnerability to discrimination and violence, and that all countries face challenges in these areas;
7. *Acknowledges* the work undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the special rapporteurs of the Council on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and trafficking of persons, including women and children, contemporary forms of slavery, and other relevant United Nations bodies, agencies and mechanisms to eliminate discrimination in law and practice throughout the world;
8. *Emphasizes* the significant role that women play in economic development and in the eradication of poverty, stresses the need to promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value and for promoting the recognition of the value of women's unremunerated work, as well as for developing and promoting policies that facilitate the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities;
9. *Calls on* States to ensure full representation and full equal participation of women in political, social and economic decision-making as an essential condition for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a critical factor in the eradication of poverty;
10. *Welcomes* particularly the work undertaken by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on women's equality before the law;
11. *Recognizes* the important role played by the Council in addressing the issue of discrimination against women, in both law and practice;
12. *Welcomes* the convening of a panel on equality before the law during the eleventh session of the Council;
13. *Notes* that, although human rights treaty bodies and special procedures do, to some extent, address discrimination against women within their mandates, their attention to such discrimination is not systematic;
14. *Also notes* the work undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the issue;
15. *Requests* the High Commissioner to prepare a thematic study on discrimination against women, in law and practice, and on how the issue is addressed throughout the United Nations human rights system, in consultation with States, relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms and agencies, including the Committee on Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women, the agencies within the United Nations composite entity on gender equality and empowerment of women and all other relevant stakeholders, taking into account the efforts made in this regard, particularly by the Commission on the Status of Women;

16. *Decides* to address the above-requested thematic study at its fifteenth session, and to hold a half-day discussion on the issue in order to consider taking further possible action on discrimination against women at that session.

*31st meeting
2 October 2009*

[Adopted without a vote.]