

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN  
Paix –Travail- Patrie

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MINISTERE DE LA PROMOTION DE  
LA FEMME ET DE LA FAMILLE  
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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
Peace- Work-Fatherland

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MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT AND THE FAMILY  
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**68<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68)**

New York, from 11 to 22 March 2024

**PRIORITY THEME:**

**"ACCELERATE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GENDER  
EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL  
WOMEN AND GIRLS BY ADDRESSING POVERTY  
AND STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS FROM A  
GENDER PERSPECTIVE"**

**GENERAL REPORT**

March 2024

## INTRODUCTION

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the world's leading intergovernmental body dedicated exclusively to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established by ECOSOC resolution 11/II/ of 21 June 1946. The CSW plays a key role in promoting women's rights by documenting the reality of women's lives around the world and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 1996, ECOSOC, in its resolution 1996/6, extended the mandate of the Commission and decided that it should play a leading role in the follow-up and review of progress made and difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the perspective of gender mainstreaming in UN activities.

Now a tradition, Cameroon took part, as it does every year, in the 68th session (CSW68) which took place from 11 to 22 March 2024 in New York, under the theme ***"Accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions from a gender perspective"***.

The Cameroonian delegation which took part in this high-level meeting worked under the supervision of Mrs ABENA ONDOA née OBAMA Marie Thérèse, Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) and the coordination of the Permanent Mission of Cameroon in New York. It was composed of:

- 1) NYANID Zacharie Serge Raoul, Minister Plenipotentiary, Chargé d'Affaires at the Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations in New York;
- 2) Nelly BANAKEN, 2<sup>nd</sup> Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations in New York;
- 3) Martine ATANGANA MBEZELE épouse ONGOLA, Director of Women's Social Empowerment (MINPROFF);
- 4) MOTO YOUNG née ISOH Francisca CHUBE, Director for the Promotion and Protection of the Family and the Rights of the Child (MINPROFF);
- 5) BEKONO Bernadette Françoise, Sub Director for the Promotion of Women's Rights (MINPROFF);
- 6) ESENI BANJONJ née NDAGHA Cordelia ANDZEINGYI, Sub Director for the Follow-up of the Promotion of Women's Entrepreneurship;
- 7) EKITI NJOH DOPGIMA Stella, Director of the Buea Women and Family Empowerment Centre (MINPROFF);
- 8) MOUNGUI MEDI Lasconi, Service Head for Political and Legal Organs of the United Nations (MINREC);

- 9) 9) DJUKOUO NZONGANG Aldrine épouse NGAGOUE, Bureau Head of Specialised Cultural Institutions (MINREX)
- 10) AKEDE METOUGUE Eric, Head of the Legal Affairs Division (MINJEC) ;
- 11) DONSOP MEINANG Adeline Honorine, Sub-Director of Cooperation (MINJEC);
- 12) Fadimatou IYAWA Ousmanou, President of the National Youth Council
- 13) ETOGA Ursule, Technical Adviser (Senate).
- 14) NSANGOUE Corine, Sub Director in charge of International Cooperation (FEICOM);
- 15) NGOMO Julie Ule, Gender Focal Point in the Cooperation Division (FEICOM);
- 16) FABO Ursula Raina, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (CNDDR);

This delegation was joined by representatives of the WFP, UN Women, Plan International Cameroon and ONUSIDA who assisted the Cameroonian delegation.

This report highlights the key points of this activity and focuses on the following main points:

- I. Preparations for Cameroon's participation;
- II. Deliberations;
- III. Organisation of side events by the Cameroonian delegation;
- IV. Cameroon's participation in the side events;
- V. Adoption of results and agreed conclusions;
- VI. Presentation of the CSW69 themes.

## **I. PREPARATIONS FOR CAMEROON'S PARTICIPATION**

In order to ensure Cameroon's participation, the Minister set up a **preparatory committee for the 68th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women** on 30 December 2023. It was made up of 30 MINPROFF officials, 27 officials from sector ministries, 14 international NGOs and UN Agencies, 9 civil society organisations and 3 representatives of religious denominations.

During the various meetings organised, this committee was responsible for drafting the country report and the presentations of the Head of Cameroon's Delegation for the general debate and the ministerial round tables identified, as well as preparations for other activities programmed and the follow up of various exit permits.

Similarly, Cameroon took part in the African pre-consultation of the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (pre-csw68) **of the African Union (AU) ministers in charge of gender**, from 10 to 14 November 2023 in Addis Ababa, in order to draw up Africa's **common position on the priority theme**. Since 2012, Member States of the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), civil society representatives, United Nations agencies and other

development partners have been meeting to debate and adopt a common African position, to speak with one voice, and choose a yearly theme in order to influence agreed conclusions at global level.

## **II. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES**

CSW68 consisted of several stages:

- a) Opening ceremony;
- b) General discussion ;
- c) Ministerial round tables ;
- d) Interactive dialogue ;
- e) Presentation of the evaluation theme.

### **A. OPENING CEREMONY**

On 11 March 2024, the Commission on the Status of Women, which is the largest annual gathering of the United Nations dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, opened deliberations of its sixty-eighth session with an observation of “frightening setbacks” in terms of women's rights. According to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, the explanatory factors highlighted the resurgence of patriarchy, new technologies in favour of men, persistent inequalities and the violence of conflicts.

At the start of the session, the Chairperson of the Commission adopted a provisional agenda and the proposed organisation of deliberations, after supervising the election by acclamation of Mrs YOKA BRANDT, from the Netherlands, Mrs Maria Florencia GONZALES, from Argentina, and Mrs Dunia PIRES DO CANTO, from the Republic of Cabo Verde, as Vice-Chairpersons.

The opening ceremony was marked by speeches of the following personalities:

- Mr Antonio Manuel Revilla Lagdameo (Philippines), Chairperson of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women;
- Mr ANTONIO GUTERRES, Secretary General of the United Nations;
- Mrs LACHEZARA STOEVA, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC);
- Mr Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly;
- Mr Ivan Simonovic, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council;
- Mrs ANA PELAEZ NARVAEZ, President of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;
- Mrs REEM ALSALEM, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences;
- Mr Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme;

- SIMA BAHOUS, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women;
- Mrs Dorothy Estrada-Tanck, Chair of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls;
- Mrs CHETNA GALA Sinha, CSO representative;
- Mrs Stacey MDLA, youth representative;
- The various exposés by the regional delegations, including that of Uganda, which presented the common African position drafted on November 2023 in Addis Ababa.

According to the Executive Director of UN-Women, SIMA BAHOUS, the following priorities are concrete and achievable ways of putting an end to poverty among women and girls:

- Establish inclusive and equitable taxagreements: they should focus on redistribution, progressive taxation, well-targeted investment, increase publicaid for development and national mechanisms to promote women's rights;
- Put in place accessible, high-quality public services adapted to the needs of each individual: this includes quality education for girls and decent work for women;
- Establish inclusive and gender-sensitive social protection systems, with full and equal access and benefits for women and girls living in poverty;
- Invest in the care economy as a strategy to reduce poverty among women and girls and build stronger green and care economies.

## **B. GENERAL DISCUSSION**

During the general discussion, which was attended by two Heads of State, three Vice-Presidents, more than 100 ministers and 4,800 representatives of civil society organisations, several member States acknowledged that additional efforts are needed to increase the resources required to combat poverty among women and girls. The delegations called for reforms to enable countries mobilise and invest resources in favour of gender equality. These measures include debt relief, progressive taxation and the guarantee that public resources are allocated to meet the needs and rights of women and girls.

The discussions began with statements from the regional and international communities.

It was in this context that Mr NYANID Zacharie Serge Raoul, Minister Plenipotentiary, Chargé d'Affaires at the Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations in New York, delivered the declaration of Madam the Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family, who spoke at length about the actions taken by the Government to reduce poverty and respond to the specific needs of women and girls in several areas. Focus was on:

- Implementation of the National Strategy for Inclusive Finance.

Before concluding, the Representative of Cameroon highlighted the following challenges:

- Evaluating the funding needs for implementing policies and programmes to combat poverty and promote women's empowerment and gender equality by identifying the various sources of funding that can be mobilised;
- Strengthening support for women living in rural areas, particularly through the development of cooperative societies for the production and processing of local products, thereby improving access to and control over productive resources, including inputs, appropriate technologies, credit and land;
- Strengthening women's organisational, technical and institutional capacities to improve access to modern technologies, innovative financing and digital financial services;
- Investing in family-centred policies and programmes as part of an integrated and comprehensive approach to poverty eradication;
- Reinforcing collaboration with technical and financial partners to strengthen technical and financial support for women and girls' organisations, particularly in crisis zones.

The continuation of the general discussion of the Commission on the Status of Women was an opportunity for delegations to understand that 10.3% of women in the world live in abject poverty, and that women experience higher rates of poverty than men, a gap that is expected to persist until 2050. If current trends continue, 8% of women in the world will still be living on less than 2.15 dollars a day by 2030.

The Ministers who took the floor at the General Assembly also shared their experiences in combating poverty and violence against women and girls in order to empower them.

### **C. MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS**

The Commission on the Status of Women held two ministerial round tables on mobilising funding for gender equality and policies to combat poverty among women and girls.

#### **1) Ministerial Round Table 1: "mobilising financing for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls: policies and strategies to end poverty among women and girls".**

The participants in this round table gave details on the policies and budgetary resources implemented by the member States to reduce poverty, which affects

women much more than men. One figure was at the centre of discussion: that is the 10.3% of women in the world who live in abject poverty.

From the outset, the Prime Minister of Latvia, who chaired the discussions, mentioned the reforms undertaken by her government to ensure a minimum income for women, particularly when they retire. She also called for action to combat gender stereotypes, which can have a negative influence on life and career choices. The introduction of paternity leave for men is also essential if they are to assume their responsibilities as fathers, she added.

In the same vein, the President of Uzbekistan Senate gave details on the changes in attitude towards women in her country, which aims at reducing the rate of women living in poverty to 6% by 2030.

The Philippines Secretary for Budget pointed out that 24% of her country's budget is dedicated to cross-cutting policies aimed at empowering women. She also mentioned the increase in loans allocated to women entrepreneurs, as well as efforts to facilitate women's access to healthcare.

This opinion was shared by the various ministers who took the floor, and who emphasised on:

- The importance of cash transfers to women, because empowerment is not just a question of resources and must be achieved through innovative means;
- Increasing women's participation in the economic and social life of the country, as an essential means of breaking the "vicious circle of poverty";
- Amendments to the Family Code to improve women's work-life balance;
- Developing women's entrepreneurial spirit;
- The importance of gender specific budgeting;
- Equal access to quality education so that women can avoid the "unemployment and informal employment trap";
- Women's financial inclusion.

To conclude the round table, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic Affairs at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) highlighted the delays in achieving gender equality. He also said that more needs to be done as concerns women's unpaid work, and stressed on the need to put in place ambitious budgetary policies to benefit women. He also called for the prejudices affecting women to be combated, saying he was nevertheless "encouraged" by the reforms undertaken in this area in many countries.

## **2) Ministerial Round Table 2**

Place under the theme "**Good practices for strengthening institutions and maximising funding to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**", the second ministerial round table was an opportunity for

delegations to highlight the importance for States to equip themselves with solid, accountable public institutions, as well as economic, fiscal and social policies that promote gender equality, if they hope to put an end to poverty among women and girls. It was a great opportunity for speakers to give details on the policies put in place, particularly at institutional and budgetary levels, in order to achieve gender equality and reduce "poverty feminisation".

The ministers who successively took part in this exchange gave concrete examples of what is being done in their respective countries, be it in guaranteeing equal access for women and girls to the job market; integrating the gender equality issue at all levels of decision-making; eliminating negative stereotypes; guaranteeing women and girls' education; investing in women entrepreneurs, and to work towards the objective of "equal pay for equal work", not forgetting data availability and accessibility.

The Curaçao Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Development, Labour and Social Welfare, who chaired the round table, cited the merits of gender budgeting, which enables governments to analyse the gender impact of budgets and allocate resources to policies that tackle inequalities.

To achieve this, it is essential that data on budget allocations and spending be made available and accessible on time, stressed the French Minister for Equality between Women and Men and the Fight against Discrimination, who further explained that in her country by 2030, gender-sensitive budgeting will be based on concrete indicators to assess whether the appropriations concerned are favourable or unfavourable to reduce gender inequalities. Since 2020, in Spain, the aim has been to integrate the reduction and elimination of inequalities into all public policies, during the designing phase. Thus, if the impact of these policies on gender equality are negative, they are excluded from the budget, the Spanish Minister explained.

She equally appreciated the success of Spain's 2007 law imposing gender-equality electoral lists. Thanks to this measure, in 2023, women occupied 44.3% of the seats in parliament and 43.3% in the Senate.

In his closing remarks of the round table, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) called for resolute investment in policies to protect rights, including sexual and political rights. According to her, "women must be able to take deliberate decisions about their bodies and their lives".

#### **D. INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE**

It focused on the importance of gender-sensitive budgeting. Panellists noted that women are particularly exposed to income inequality and poverty. Experts and delegations called for the centralisation of the international human rights framework in the field of economics to promote gender-sensitive and pro-poor policies

**E. Assessment of CSW63: Presentation of ten voluntary exposés on "Social protecting systems, access to public services and infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls".**

Ten members, namely Australia, Colombia, Iran, Jordan, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Poland, Rwanda and Ukraine, took part in this exercise, which provided an opportunity for interactive dialogue with Commission members.

The Australian delegation later presented its action plan, aimed particularly at addressing the risks faced by women at every stage of their lives.

Ukraine's presentation focused on the "full scale war" unleashed by Russia, which has already caused the death of 29330 civilians, including 1822 children, and the displacement of 4 965000 Ukrainians, of whom 60% are women.

The Rwandan delegation gave an overview of the country's social protection policy, citing the 2020 law establishing the maternity leave regime, as well as the 2021 text guaranteeing equal rights for women and men in terms of access to ownership and use of land.

Poland's intervention focused on several important measures to promote women's empowerment, namely equal pay for equal work and women's access to technology and digital technology, as well as fair opportunities in the labour market.

In Mali, emphasis is laid on strengthening women's access to funding, by adapting the credit system to women's specific needs, testified the Minister of Women's Empowerment, Children and the Family, who pointed out that women represent 59.26% of loans beneficiaries granted by decentralised financing systems. In terms of achievements, she cited the rate of coverage of the population by the medical insurance scheme, which has risen from 16% in 2019 to 28.9% in 2022, as well as the creation of 17 care centres for women and girl survivors of violence.

As concerns the challenges to be met, the Minister cited the operationalisation of the universal health insurance scheme; the strengthening of the legislative framework in the field of fighting violence against women and children; the integration of the gender approach into on-going political and international reforms; and among others improving women's access to information and communication technologies,

In response to Cameroon's questions about universal health coverage, barriers to the empowerment of women and girls, and access to funding, the Minister announced that the Malian government had put in place measures such as compulsory health insurance. As for the solutions considered to overcoming the barriers to the empowerment of women and girls, she insisted on the importance of working in the formal sector rather than in the informal economy, where 90% of women work. As for the difficulties women face in accessing finance and land, and the repercussions of illiteracy and insecurity, she replied that there is a monitoring

and consultation framework to ensure the efficiency of support provided to women and girls.

### **III –ORGANISATION OF SIDE EVENTS**

#### **A- SIDE EVENTS AND CAMEROON'S ACTIVITIES**

The Cameroonian delegation, in partnership with civil society organised eight side events namely:

##### **1) Presentation of best practices to Empower women and youth in peace and security in Cameroon**

Organised by MINPROFF, MINREX, CNDDR, UN-WOMEN, WFP, CAMYOSFOP (Room C 11March, 1.30-2.45), this event enabled the Cameroonian government to share with partners and donors a 3-year sustainable plan to save lives, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Action Plan of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and the CNDDR 2021-2025 gender strategy for possible partnership and funding.

In terms of best practices: stakeholders were informed of the achievements in gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the SALIENT project, UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and related resolutions, and the CNDDR gender strategy.

Partners and donors pledge to support Cameroon's efforts in inclusive participation in the fight against Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), peace building and the DDR process in Cameroon.

This move was supported by the Cameroon's Government in involving women and youth in SALW control and peace negotiations through the effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security.

##### **2) Gender mainstreaming in the youth, women, peace and security agenda**

Organised online by MINJEC on 15 March 2024, in partnership with MINPROFF, MINREX, NCDDR, CNYC, UN Women and WILEF (the moderator), the aim of this event was to mobilise funds for the youth - women - peace - security agenda. The event took place at the headquarters of the permanent mission in New York and in the Cabinet of the Minister of Youth Affairs and Civic Education, and featured two panels. The first was a presentation by the Minister for Youth Affairs on the REAMORCE project, and a presentation by the Minister Women's Empowerment on the implementation of the national action plan on Women - Peace - Security and the main challenges. The second was a presentation by the Coordinator of the NCDDR, Mr FAI YENGO Francis, and the President of the National Youth Council, Mrs

Fadimatou IYAWA Ousmanou. This was followed by discussions with the moderator, who mobilised a number of donors.

### **3) Funding and responsibilities in favour of gender equality and women's empowerment: Learning from the past, co-creating the future**

Co-organised by UN Women and the ministries in charge of gender and women's empowerment in Rwanda, Uganda and Cameroon, the main objective of this side event was to share these countries' progress in financing gender equality, particularly through GSB and its accountability, as well as building partnerships to introduce new funding models in a changing global context. Based on their experiences with GSB programmes over time, discussions focused on efforts to institutionalise funding for gender equality and women's empowerment through specific laws, dedicated budget lines, budget circulars and budget declarations. The various countries demonstrated how these principles have been applied at both central and local level.

Moderated by Mrs Jennet Kem, UN Women's representative in Rwanda, the session began with three opening speeches from the countries concerned, and followed by discussions, the following good practices were highlighted:

- the transition from cash payments to digital payments, favoured by initiatives such as the "Better than Cash Alliance", represented by Uganda, which aims to improve transparency, efficiency and security while increasing financial inclusion;
- ensuring women's access to digital identification systems through the digitalisation of salaries and the creation of affordable financial instruments that put women at the centre;
- financial inclusion of young women: by providing opportunities for young girls, including those who do not have access to formal education, opportunities for participating in political debates, can be increased. An illustrative example was shared, focusing on initiatives working directly with secondary school girls facing educational barriers.
- involving men in women's empowerment.

### **4) Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of vulnerable groups in Cameroon** organised by CAMYOSFOP in partnership with MINPROFF, MINJEC, UN WOMEN, WFP and PLAN INTERNATIONAL CAMEROON:

The aim of this activity was to present the various transformative initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in conflict-affected areas. It also aimed to identify the challenges and the partners likely to support the government.

**5) Hygiene and sanitation for gender security and protection** by the NGO ACAHIJEC and its partner Miss Caricom International Foundation with the support of UNESCO; the aim was to present a documentary on the vision of a clean school and

the actions carried out in partnership with MINESEC. This activity featured the distribution of a book entitled "Clean School or School with a difference".

**6) Enhancing inclusive transformative approaches to gender and disability to promote gender equality and women's empowerment** by the Cameroonian NGO Reach Out.

During this activity, the NGO Reach Out shared its best practices as regards gender transformative approaches, using appropriate language to better communicate and empower the community. These best practices included:

- Involving men (key partners and spouses) to support and encourage women's economic empowerment;
- Teaching women how to make their economic activities more sustainable through record keeping and good business management;
- Creating and using school peace clubs and mobile community peace clinics to strengthen social cohesion.

**7) The Global Network of women peace builder, media for 1325: journalist and peace builders unite to advance WPS worldwide** (Friday 15 March)

Lessons learned and recommendations on sustaining peace efforts in Cameroon, DRC, Papua New Guinea and Yemen; organised by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders in partnership with several implementing partners in Cameroon, Congo, Papua New Guinea and Yemen. Its aim was to discuss how to sustain peace in the community, thereby enhancing women's voices for a more sustainable and inclusive peace, and to adopt inclusive, people-centred and conflict-sensitive approaches to peace-building.

**8) Working session with the International Women's Peace Group (IWPG)**

It is a South Korean NGO that works to educate women on peace in order to create a peaceful world. This NGO already has more than 8,000 partners in 130 countries, including civil society organisations and ministries working to promote gender equality. IWPG officials, who are already working with Cameroonian CSOs, wish to invite the Minister to the world conference to be held in Seoul in September 2024, and to be able to work with MINPROFF to achieve the peace the world needs.

The actions of this NGO are based on 03 pillars:

- Peace education (women's personal peace, self-esteem and women peace leaders, creating a climate of peace in families and communities);
- Culture of peace from primary school up to university level;
- Support for the declaration of peace through the dissemination of good practices across the global IWPG network.

## **IV- CAMEROON'S PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS SIDE EVENTS**

Members of the Cameroonian delegation participated in side events to which Cameroon was invited for relevant subjects. They include:

### **1) Women's empowerment in times of conflict in West Africa: the case of Mali,**

This in-person side event was organised on 15 March 2024, at the United Nations headquarters, CR-12 from 10 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.) as part of the regional project for the Sahel Women Empowerment and Demographic Dividend. Best practices include:

- Increasing funding for activities to empower women through ongoing programmes and projects;
- developing and/or strengthening specific programmes to promote the enrolment of girls and their retention in school, particularly those affected by conflict;
- strengthening actions to prevent and combat violence against women and girls in conflict zones;
- committing friendly countries as well as technical and financial partners to support Mali's efforts in this fight.

### **2) The status of women in South Sudan and Africa: the need for lasting peace:**

This side event examined why the role of women in peacebuilding is crucial in general and in South Sudan in particular. It also highlighted the opportunities offered by the recent Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCISS) which offers women the opportunity to participate in future peacebuilding efforts. Finally, the objective was to assess the challenges that have hindered the effective participation of women in peacebuilding and propose recommendations that could help address this persistent underutilization of women's vast skills to support sustainable peace in South Sudan

### **3) Harnessing the nexus of gender-sensitive policies and equitable agri-food systems**

Organised by African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD), in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uganda, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Malawi and the Permanent Mission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, on 15 March 2024, at the United Nations Headquarters. The aim was to show how gender-sensitive policies can enable greater inclusion in agri-food systems and demonstrate how addressing the life challenges

faced by women in these sectors can help improve nutrition and reduce poverty, thereby accelerating the socio-economic development of communities.

**4) Empowerment of women and girls to access public services and progress on commitments to generational equality in Tanzania:**  
(United Nations Headquarters, 20 March, Room D, 11am-12.45pm)

Sponsored by UN-Women, WILDAF and ERSF, the event focused on exchanges on the empowerment of women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises through public procurement in Tanzania. The discussions revealed that gender-sensitive public procurement is an effective tool for improving women's economic empowerment and promoting gender equality. Tanzania has put in place public procurement systems and regulations that include provisions for equal opportunities and fair treatment, and require that 30% of public contracts be awarded to women, young people and people with disabilities.

**5) The high-level meeting with African Union Ministers in charge of gender and the status of women** on the common African position during CSW68 at the Permanent Mission of the African Union to the United Nations (Wednesday 20 March 10 a.m.-12 p.m.)

The aim was for the member states of the African Union to discuss the theme and the related challenges with UN-Women officials. Uganda, voice of the CTS, expressed their gratitude to the United Nations Commission for listening to them and reporting the date to allow ministries to commemorate 8 March in their respective countries. The grievance this year was to plead for the high-level meeting of the ministries of the African Union to be held during the first week of the CSW works, because it is an opportunity for the ministries to talk with one voice and to be able to discuss actions carried out in favour of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. UN-Women was then requested to support member States in the development of the Beijing +30 assessment and the implementation of the agreed conclusions of CSW68.

**6) The youth forum** in partnership with UN Women, provided an opportunity for youth to work with policy-makers, formulate their ideas and highlight their priorities, especially as concerns the methods that will help in applying the principle of responsibility (Friday 15 March);

**7) The economic empowerment of women and girls: a lever to achieving inclusion and tackling poverty in Morocco:**

This was an opportunity for the Moroccan government to raise awareness on its commitments to eradicate poverty and promote the economic rights of women and girls. Good practices include:

- economic empowerment as a key lever in the fight against poverty;

- contributions to an international conference on population and development to promote gender equality and women's empowerment;
- feminisation of poverty, evolution of the women's economic empowerment mechanism;
- implementation of policies and programmes for the economic empowerment of women and the fight against poverty;
- implementing an institutional mechanism to fight against poverty among women and girls;
- sharing experiences and good practices to promote the economic empowerment of women and girls;
- improving employment opportunities for women and girls and promoting sustainable living.

**8) Accelerating gender equality in fragile environments: focus on women and girls organised** by SONDE GENDER JUSTICE in collaboration with the NGO Reach out from Cameroon; the aim was to share their experience on the economic empowerment approach used to empower women in the South West region of Cameroon rocked by crisis. Develop strategies to economically empower women in order to achieve a sexist, egalitarian and violence-free world. It also involves case management.

**9) Breaking the cycle of poverty: inclusion of widows and orphans** organised by the Grace Garden Women's Health Association in Cameroon, in partnership with the organisation Come together widows and orphans of Kenya, through democracy of the UK, the Global Widows Fund and WI-HER: the aim was to demonstrate that widowhood is a critical but neglected gender issue affecting more than 300 million women, with around 10% of whom live below the poverty line. Best practices include:

- Organise para-legal training for widows, as is the case in Kenya, with the support of legal guides;
- create microfinance for widows ;
- Develop widows' skills, for example in sewing;
- Sensitise widows on inheritance and land rights;
- Organize more and more widows into functional groups to offer them job opportunities and orphans in the micro-financial institution.

**10) Financing social protection and care systems for the fulfilment of human rights, gender equality and poverty reduction**(UN headquarters New-York Room 6, Monday 18 March) organised by UNICEF UNDP FAO WFP with ILO;

**11) Empowerment of women and girls for access to public services and advancing commitments on generational equality organised by Tanzania.** This good practice from Tanzania aimed at enabling other countries to promote the participation of women-led enterprises in public markets by developing guidelines that government can adopt and identifying innovative and inclusive public policy interventions that can be scaled up in

countries (Wednesday 20 March, United Nations Headquarters, Room D from 11.30am-12.30pm);

- 12) Financing and accountability for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment « Learning from the past, co-creating the future »**, Wednesday 20 March, 11h30-12h45, CR-C, hosted by ministries in charge of gender and women's empowerment in Rwanda, Uganda and Cameroon);
- 13) The experience of one-stop centres**, organised by Mali, Thursday 21 March, 13:15-14:30, United Nations headquarters, CR-D
- 14) Promoting gender equality: the CSW68 event presents strategies for advancing women's rights worldwide.** Organised by UN Women in partnership with UNDP, UNFPA and OHCHR. The aim was to discuss strategies to promote gender equality (Wednesday 20 March, UN-Women headquarters).
- 15) Side event "One Stop Centre"** organised by Mali with the support of UNFPA. The one-stop shops set up by the SPOTLIGHT programme contribute to the holistic care of GBV victims. The 17 that are operational are housed in health facilities and have a medical doctor, psychologist, magistrates, defence and security forces and social workers specifically assigned to each One Stop Centre. There is need to create 145 One Stop Centres in order to cover the whole of Mali. Best practices include:
  - Using health facilities to house one-stop centres;
  - Establish gender focal points to fight against violence on women and girls;
  - universal health coverage.

## **V- ADOPTION OF THE RESULTS AND AGREED CONCLUSIONS**

The Commission on the Status of Women ended the deliberations of its 68<sup>th</sup> session by adopting, after prolonged negotiations that continued late into the night on Friday, its agreed conclusions relating to the adoption of a plan to strengthen the financing of institutions in order to eradicate poverty among women and girls.

The final document of the session reveals that additional efforts are needed to increase the resources required to combat poverty among women and girls, the Executive Director of UN Women pointed out.

The agreed conclusions call on States and other stakeholders to put in place reforms that will enable countries to:

- Mobilise public and private financial resources;
- strengthen the international financial architecture;
- ensure that national budget processes take gender equality into account;
- prevent regressive fiscal policy that has a disproportionate impact on women and girls;

- implement gender-sensitive economic and social policies, including the scaling up of women's leadership representation and political participation in economic institutions;
- apply fundamental labour norms to ensure equal salary;
- Implement policies to support women-owned businesses;
- Put in place strong, flexible, multi-year funding to local women's rights organisations to fight poverty;
- Step up investment in the care economy in order to reduce poverty in terms of time and women's income and broaden their employment opportunities;
- National capacity build for the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data on multidimensional poverty;
- adopt new development strategies for sustainable economies;
- strengthen inclusive and gender-sensitive social protection systems.

The Commission also adopted a resolution on HIV/AIDS which calls on States to increase investment in gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

## VI. PRESENTATION OF CSW69 THEMES

Following the close of the session, the Commission conducted the election of the Bureau of its sixty-eighth session.

In 2025 the world community will commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

In accordance with its work schedule, the Commission announced the priority theme for the next session, to be held in 2025: "**the review and evaluation of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the special session of the General Assembly**". The theme of the evaluation will focus on: "**Current challenges affecting the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution to the full achievement of the Sustainable Development Programme by 20230**" (adopted conclusions of the sixty-third session).

In this regard, States are called upon to initiate comprehensive national reviews of progress made and challenges encountered.

The United Nations regional commissions are called upon to carry out regional reviews and organise regional intergovernmental meetings. These meetings will serve as input for the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.