



# Economic and Social Council

## Meetings Coverage

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Commission on the Status of Women  
Forty-ninth Session  
19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Meetings (AM & PM)

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**COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN ADOPTS 10 WIDE-RANGING RESOLUTIONS,  
BUT FAILS TO CONCLUDE CURRENT SESSION**

**New Texts Concern Women's Economic Advancement, Gender Mainstreaming,  
Appointment of Special Rapporteur, Disaster Relief, Indigenous Women, Trafficking**

The Commission on the Status of Women adopted 10 wide-ranging resolutions today on improving women's status, including six new texts, but it was unable to conclude its session, owing to several roll-call votes this evening on a series of amendments to a new United States-led draft on women's economic advancement.

Chairperson Kyung-wha Kang (Republic of Korea) announced that the Commission had run out of time to take care of the session's remaining business. She said, "we will see if and when we are able to reconvene".

Still, the Commission succeeded in adopting six new resolutions on: gender mainstreaming in national policies and programmes; the possible appointment of a special rapporteur on discrimination against women; trafficking; integrating a gender perspective in post-disaster relief, particularly in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster; indigenous women; and women's economic advancement.

It adopted four traditional texts on: women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS; the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan; and the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women.

Earlier in the session, which focused on gaps and challenges in implementing the Beijing agenda, the 45-member functional Commission of the Economic and Social Council held a ministerial-level debate that culminated in the consensus adoption of a declaration, by which governments emphasized that the full implementation of the Beijing documents was essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

This evening, a series of amendments submitted from the floor by the South African and Cuban delegations to the draft on women's economic advancement -- all but one proposal were adopted -- involved adding and removing text, and rephrasing it on a range of topics from reproductive rights to the public sector's role in establishing an enabling environment for women.

After adoption of the first set of Cuban proposals, the United States' representative said she wished to withdraw the changed text from consideration. On a point of order, Cuba's representative said it was not possible to withdraw a text once it was amended. The United States later withdrew its sponsorship of the draft, after which, it was adopted, as orally amended, without a vote.

(page 1a follows)

According to the main thrust of the text, Member States were called on to undertake legislative, administrative and financial measures to create a strong enabling environment for all women entrepreneurs and women participating in the labour market. They were urged to design and revise laws to ensure women's full and equal rights to own land and other property, including through inheritance, and to undertake administrative reforms to give women the right to credit, capital, appropriate technologies, and access to markets and information.

Acting without a vote, the Commission adopted another new United States-led text on eliminating the demand for trafficking. It called on governments to take action to address the root factors, including poverty and gender inequality, as well as external factors that encouraged trafficking for prostitution and other forms of commercialized sex, forced marriage and forced labour, and to criminalize trafficking in persons, while ensuring protection and assistance to the victims.

This morning, the draft on Palestinian women was adopted by a recorded vote of the 45-member Commission of 38 in favour to 1 against (United States), with 2 abstentions (Canada, Iceland). By the terms of the text, sponsored by Jamaica on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, the Commission reaffirmed that the Israeli occupation remained a major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration in the developing planning of their society. It called for measures for the tangible improvement of the difficult situation on the ground and the living conditions faced by Palestinian women and their families. (For details, see Annex.)

In other business today, the Commission took note of the programme of work of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which was introduced by the Division's Director, Carolyn Hannan.

At the outset of the morning meeting, Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, briefed the Commission on the Status of Women in the United Nations system.

Also speaking were the representatives of Mauritius, Andorra, United States, Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, Slovenia, Jamaica (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Israel, Japan, Russian Federation, Canada, Luxembourg, Spain, Dominican Republic, India, Cuba, Bangladesh, United Kingdom, Netherlands, China, Algeria, Costa Rica, Thailand, Paraguay, Rwanda, Burkina Faso, South Africa, Mexico, El Salvador, Niger, Malaysia, and Nicaragua. The observer for Palestine also spoke.

The Commission will meet again on a date to be announced.

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### Background

The Commission on the Status of Women met today, in two meetings, to conclude its work. First, it was expected to hear from the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women on the Division's budget for the next biennium. Following that, it would begin consideration this morning of all draft resolutions. This afternoon, the Commission was expected to adopt its report and conclude the session, following which it would open its fiftieth session briefly for the purpose of electing the Bureau.

The draft resolutions before the Commission concerned: women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS; eliminating demand for trafficking in women and girls; appointment of a special rapporteur on laws that discriminated against women; mainstreaming a gender perspective into national policies and programmes; integrating a gender perspective in post-disaster relief efforts, particularly in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster; situation of and assistance to Palestinian women; the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); women's economic advancement; indigenous women; and the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan.

### Draft Summaries

Deeply concerned that the global HIV/AIDS pandemic disproportionately affected women and girls, and that the majority of new HIV infections occurred among young people, the Commission on the Status of Women would stress with deep concern that the HIV/AIDS emergency, with its devastating scale and impact, required urgent actions in all fields and at all levels, according to a revised wide-ranging draft resolution on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS (document E/CN.6/2005/L.2/Rev.1), sponsored by Mauritius on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The Commission would also stress that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were fundamental elements in reducing their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, and emphasize that their advancement was key to reversing the pandemic.

It, therefore, would urge governments to take all necessary measures to empower women and strengthen their economic independence and to protect and promote their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in order to enable them to protect themselves from the HIV infection.

In a related provision, the Commission would call on governments to intensify efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls in relation to HIV/AIDS, including through challenging stereotypes, stigmatization, discriminatory attitudes and gender inequalities and to encourage the active involvement of men and boys in that regard.

According to a two-part draft resolution on reducing demand for trafficking women and girls, sponsored by the United States (document E/CN.6/2005/L.3/Rev.1), the Commission, concerned about the increasing occurrence of trafficking for all forms of exploitation, especially for commercial sexual exploitation, which overwhelmingly affected women and girls, would call on governments to adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures to deter exploiters and discourage the demand that fostered trafficking of women and girls for all forms of exploitation.

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The Commission would further call on governments to criminalize trafficking in persons in all its forms, and condemn and penalize traffickers and intermediaries, while ensuring protection and assistance to the victims, with full respect for their human rights.

It would further call on governments to conclude bilateral, subregional, regional and international agreements to address the problem of trafficking in persons, especially women and girls; and to adopt specific measures aimed at reducing demand, as appropriate, to complement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

The Commission would call on governments and civil society to: take appropriate measures to raise public awareness of the issue; implement educational programmes; undertake research on best practices, methods and strategies, information and mass media campaigns, and social and economic initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls, particularly to eliminate demand; and encourage the business sector, in particular, the tourism industry and Internet providers, to develop or adhere to codes of conduct, with a view to preventing trafficking in persons.

Deeply concerned over all activities that fuelled the demand for victims of trafficking, in particular, activities by armed forces, peacekeepers and military and civilian advisers in other countries, the Commission would call on governments to ensure the provision of training on commercial sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, including trafficking, to armed forces, peacekeepers and military and civilian advisers to be stationed in other countries, including for United Nations peacekeeping missions, and to ensure that allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, including trafficking, would be swiftly investigated and dealt with to the fullest extent.

Under the terms of a draft resolution on the special rapporteur on laws that discriminated against women (document E/CN.6/2005/L.4), submitted by the Philippines and Rwanda, the Commission would urge governments to intensify their efforts to revoke any remaining laws that discriminated on the basis of sex and to remove gender bias in the administration of justice, in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action through the adoption of all appropriate means and measures at the national, regional and international levels.

The Commission would decide to consider at its fiftieth session the advisability of the appointment of a special rapporteur on laws that discriminated against women.

According to a comprehensive draft text on mainstreaming a gender perspective into national policies and programmes (document E/CN.6/2005/L.5/Rev.1), the Commission would reiterate that gender mainstreaming was a tool for effective policy-making at all levels and not a substitute for targeted, women-specific policies and programmes, equality legislation, national machineries for women's advancement and the establishment of gender focal points.

The Commission would stress that, in order to ensure effective implementation of the Beijing agenda and enhance the work for women's advancement at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, governments, the United Nations system and all other relevant organizations should strengthen their

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efforts to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes.

It would also stress that political will and commitment at all levels were crucial to ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the adoption and implementation of comprehensive and action-oriented policies in all areas.

In that regard, the Commission would call on Member States to, among other things: ensure that gender mainstreaming was fully understood, institutionalized and implemented; increase understanding of that process; develop and use frameworks, guidelines and other practice tools and indicators to accelerate gender mainstreaming; develop effective and coherent accountability mechanisms; involve parliaments and the judiciary, where appropriate, in monitoring progress; recognize civil society's role in that regard; establish or reinforce existing national machineries for women's advancement and provide them with the necessary human and financial resources.

Under a related term, the Secretary-General would be asked to report to the Commission at its next session on progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of programmes and policies that addressed the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels.

By a new draft text sponsored by the Philippines on integrating a gender perspective in post-disaster relief efforts, particularly in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster (document E/CN.6/2005/L.6/Rev.1), the Commission would urge governments, in planning for disaster preparedness and responding to natural disasters, to integrate a gender perspective, as well as to ensure that women took an active and equal role in all phases of disaster management.

The Commission would strongly call on governments and other relevant bodies, in their responses to disaster situations, to meet the needs of affected populations such as food, clean water, shelter and physical security, as well as to provide services such as health care, including reproductive health, psychological health and psychosocial support and education, taking into account the particular needs of women and girls.

In a related provision, the Commission would underline the need to address the gender equality dimensions of livelihood, security, land tenure, land rights, property and housing since they posed major challenges to women, in particular widows, women heads of households, women with disabilities and women who had lost family members in natural disasters. It also underlined the need to give special attention to the vulnerabilities and capacities of marginalized groups of women and girls.

Among its other terms, the Commission strongly urged governments, United Nations entities and other relevant bodies to take necessary measures to protect women and girls from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and all other forms of violence in the context of natural disasters, and to provide appropriate care for women and girls who had been exposed to sexual abuse and other forms of violence.

It called on governments to involve women in all levels of decision-making in disaster situations, including in community-level welfare centres for displaced

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persons, and it urged governments, United Nations entities and relevant stakeholders to support gender-sensitive capacity-building at all levels of disaster management.

The draft resolution on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (document E/CN.6/2005/L.7), sponsored by Jamaica on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, would have the Commission call on the concerned parties, as well as the international community, to exert all necessary efforts to ensure the full resumption of the peace process on its agreed basis, taking into account the common ground already gained.

The Commission would also call for measures for tangible improvement of the difficult situation on the ground and the living conditions faced by Palestinian women and their families.

It would reaffirm that the Israeli occupation remained a major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration in the developing planning of their society, and it would demand that Israel, the occupying Power, comply fully with the provisions and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions, in order to protect the rights of Palestinian women and their families.

In a related term, Israel would be called upon to facilitate the return of all refugees and displaced Palestinian women and children to their homes and properties, in compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Commission would call on the international community to continue to provide urgently needed assistance and services, in an effort to alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis being faced by Palestinian women and their families, and to helping the reconstruction of relevant Palestinian institutions.

The draft resolution on strengthening of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) (document E/CN.6/2005/L.8), tabled by Jamaica (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China) and Mexico, would have the Commission welcome that body's active participation and contributions to the review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform and the outcome documents of the 2000 General Assembly special session. It would also invite voluntary financial contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for INSTRAW and stress the importance of such contributions to enable it to carry out its mandate. The Secretary-General and all relevant United Nations bodies would be urged to support efforts to strengthen the Institute, particularly by promoting its collaboration with other United Nations system organizations.

Also by the text, the Commission would request INSTRAW's Executive Director to report to it at its fiftieth session on the implementation of its programme of work and strategic plan 2004-2007, in particular activities related to the follow-up to the Beijing follow-up.

The new draft text on economic advancement for women (document E/CN.6/2005/L.9), submitted by the United States, would have the Commission call on Member States to eliminate discrimination, provide equal access and encourage women's and girls' participation in education at all levels; undertake legislative and administrative reforms to create a strong enabling environment for women entrepreneurs; promote the collection, dissemination and analysis of statistics

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that are disaggregated by gender to better facilitate monitoring of the situation of women; and eliminate discrimination in the work place, providing equal opportunity for the hiring and advancement of women.

By further provisions of the text, Member States would be called on to facilitate further development of the financial sector to increase women's access to savings, lending and other financial services; encourage business organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professional associations, revolving loan funds and others to provide services to women entrepreneurs; enhance rural women's income-generating potential; promote government and civil society programmes that can enhance the economic opportunity of vulnerable women, such as widows, women with disabilities, elderly women, women belonging to racial and ethnic minorities, refugees and internally displaced persons; and promote equal access for women to information and communication technology-based economic activities and to information systems and improved technologies.

Also by the text, the Commission would encourage all relevant United Nations funds, programmes and agencies to assist governments in strengthening their capacity to reform laws, practices and institutions in order to promote women's entrepreneurship.

(At the time of preparation of this background section, the text of the draft resolution on indigenous women (document E/CN.6/2005/L.10) was incomplete.)

A draft text on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan (document E/CN.6/2005/L.11), tabled by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, would have the Commission welcome the Afghan Government's commitment to the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls, the restoration of the active participation of Afghan women in political, economic and social life, the education of girls, as well as boys, and the opportunity for women to work outside the home.

The Commission would also welcome the following: the provisions of the new Constitution; the ongoing security sector reform processes; the peaceful and successful presidential election on 9 October 2004; the candidacy of Afghan women in both the presidential and vice-presidential ballots; and the recent publication of a report on transitional justice.

Among its many other provisions, the text would also have the Commission urge the Government to: fully implement the Constitution and all international treaties to which Afghanistan was a party; ensure that legislative, administrative and other measures support women's and girl's full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms; enable the full, equal and effective participation of women and girls in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life throughout the country and at all levels; and ensure that women were able to register, run for office, campaign and vote in the upcoming national assembly elections.

The United Nations system, international and non-governmental organizations and donors would be invited to, among other things: ensure a human rights-based approach and coherent policy and resources for gender mainstreaming in all operations and programmes; ensure the full and effective participation of Afghan women in all stages of humanitarian assistance, recovery, reconstruction and development; support civil society in the field of human rights and encourage the involvement of women therein; and support measures for women's employment and the

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integration of a gender perspective into all social, development and reconstruction programmes, taking into account the special needs of widows and returning refugee and displaced women and girls, as well as those living in rural areas.

(For sponsors of the above draft resolutions, please access the texts by name and symbol number.)

#### Statements

RACHEL MAYANJA, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, said the Beijing Platform called on the United Nations to achieve overall gender equality at the Professional level and above, with particular reference to reaching the 50/50 gender balance goal at the managerial and decision-making levels by 2000. In early 2005, parity remained a target and not a reality. The Platform also called on Member States to nominate women candidates for election or appointment to United Nations bodies and specialized organizations, and to include them in their delegations to United Nations forums.

Providing a statistical update on the status of women in the United Nations system, she noted that with regard to women's representation in the Secretariat, in the Professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more, women represented 37.1 per cent of all staff, an increase of only 1.6 percentage points since 1998, and about 28.8 per cent of staff at the D-1 level and above, or an increase of 7.6 percentage points. Women represented 22.4 per cent of staff at the Assistant Secretary-General level, an increase of 9.4 percentage points, and 17.5 per cent of staff at the Under-Secretary-General level, an increase of about 6.5 percentage points.

Regarding Professional posts subject to geographical distribution, women accounted for 42.3 per cent of all Professional staff, an increase of 8.6 percentage points since June 1995. Of 13 missions, only four had more than 30 per cent women staff, and only two were headed by women Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. Ten missions, however, had gender advisers on their staff. The lesson was clear: recruitment and retention must be targeted by level. The trends revealed that there was no correlation between increases in the representation of women any given level, and those at higher levels.

Concerning the United Nations system, she noted that as of 31 December 2003, the representation of women in the Professional and higher categories had not significantly improved. Overall, it stood at 37 per cent, an increase of two percentage points from the previous year. Gender balance had been achieved in three organizations, namely, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

Turning to concerns over the previous decade regarding the achievement of gender balance, she said significant progress had been made. Various intergovernmental, oversight and inter-agency bodies paid more attention to gender balance issues than in the past. Women's representation had been regularly monitored by various bodies, including the General Assembly's Third and Fifth Committees, the Joint Inspection Unit, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). At the level of agencies,

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a number had put in place flexible work arrangements. In the Secretariat, several key measures had been taken in the past 10 years to improve the status of women, including a network of departmental focal points and the establishment of policies on sexual harassment.

Concluding, she said the impact of the Fourth World Conference had contributed to much-needed progress, although slower than anticipated, in achieving gender equality over the last decade, with practice still lagging behind. Progress had been made in the implementation of laws, policies and practices that stressed increased balance. The United Nations had focused on several areas, including recruitment strategies, promotion and retention policies. More concerted efforts were needed, however, to ensure a consistent upward trend in the representation of women at all levels and for targeted recruitment and retention of women, at senior levels. There was also a need to harmonize policies and practices within the United Nations system to allow a more unified and stronger managerial culture of gender responsiveness. Most important, there was a need for stronger leadership. The Commission's work in its upcoming session would represent a fundamental contribution which all policy makers alike must look forward to. The importance of that work could not be sufficiently stressed. It set the tone at the top, the single most powerful determinant of organizational change.

#### Action on Drafts

The representative of Mauritius, on behalf of Southern African Development Community (SADC), said there was a slight revision to the first preambular paragraph of the draft resolution on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS (document E/CN.6/2005/L.2/Rev.1): the word "recalling" should be changed to "reaffirming".

Additional co-sponsors were read out by the representative and the Commission CHAIRPERSON.

The representative of Andorra said her delegation was a co-sponsor; the interpreters had read out "Honduras" instead, she said.

Next, the Commission adopted the resolution, as orally revised, on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS without a vote.

Speaking before action on the next draft texts, the representative of the United States said she would express her position with respect to several draft texts. Her country was firmly committed to women's empowerment and the promotion of women's fullest enjoyment of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United States had devoted substantial monetary and human resources towards programmes and activities to eliminate violence against women, including: trafficking of women and children; increased access to health care, education, and economic opportunities; empowerment of women in conflict situations; the protection of and assistance to refugee women and internally displaced persons; increased women's political participation; and ensuring equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.

She said that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action expressed important political goals, which the United States endorsed. It reaffirmed the goals, objectives, and commitments of the Beijing documents based on several understandings. It understood that those documents constituted an important

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policy framework, which did not create international legal rights or legally binding obligations on States under international law. She had heard no delegation disagree with her interpretation that the Beijing documents created no new international rights, including a right to abortion. She appreciated the Chairperson's assertion that the Beijing documents should not be seen as creating any new human rights. This week, she had heard an international consensus on that point, which was useful to clarifying the intent and purpose of Beijing.

Based on consultations with States, she said she fully understood that States did not understand the Beijing or Beijing+5 outcome documents to constitute support, endorsement or promotion of abortion. Her reaffirmation of the goals, objectives, and commitments of those documents did not constitute a change in the United States' position with respect to treaties it had not ratified. It fully supported the principle of voluntary choice regarding maternal and child health and family planning. It had stated clearly and often that it did not recognize abortion as a family-planning method, nor did it support abortion in its reproductive health assistance.

She said that the United States understood that there was international consensus that the terms "reproductive health services" and "reproductive rights" did not include abortion or constitute support, endorsement or promotion of abortion or the use of abortifacients. Her country supported the treatment of women who suffered injuries or illnesses caused by legal or illegal abortion, including, for example, post-abortive care, and did not place such treatment among abortion-related services. It emphasized the value of the "ABC" -- abstinence, be faithful, and correct and consistent condom use, where appropriate -- approach in comprehensive strategies to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and the promotion of abstinence as the healthiest and most responsible choice for adolescents.

In addition, she said it was essential to recognize the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for adolescents to provide appropriate direction and guidance on sexual and reproductive matters, education, and other aspects of children's lives for which parents had the primary responsibility. The United States did not favour quotas as routine for women's advancement. The best way to guarantee women's involvement in the political process was through legal and policy reforms that ended discrimination against women and promoted equality of opportunity. She was glad to join the nations assembled in New York in committing themselves to tangible efforts on the ground devoted to continually helping women enjoy better, freer lives throughout the world.

Next, the Commission CHAIRPERSON announced that more time was needed on the language of the following three drafts: trafficking (L.3); special rapporteur on discrimination against women (L.4); and mainstreaming a gender perspective into national policies (L.5/Rev.1).

The Commission then took up the draft on integrating a gender perspective in post-disaster relief, particularly in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster (document E/CN.6/2005/L.6/Rev.1).

The representative of the Philippines then proposed amendments to the text in the title and in preambular paragraphs 1, 4 and 6. Preambular paragraph 9 would be deleted. In the operative portion of the text, she proposed amendments

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to operative paragraphs 1 and 3. She also read out the name of the additional co-sponsors.

The CHAIRPERSON then read out the names of additional co-sponsors.

Indonesia's representative said he did not wish to hamper adoption of the text, but the Commission should not turn a blind eye to the equal and unflagging efforts of the affected countries, themselves, in dealing with natural disasters. It was also important, therefore, to recognize their contributions. He proposed amendments to preambular paragraph 10 to reflect the spirit of national, as well as international, solidarity in cooperation in responding to the recent tsunami disaster and other disasters. Hopefully, the amendment would be acceptable to all delegations and would be adopted by consensus.

The representative of the Philippines, the draft's main sponsor, said she would accept the amendments.

The draft resolution on integrating a gender perspective in post-disaster relief, particularly in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster, as orally revised and further amended, was adopted without a vote.

The United States' speaker said she had been happy to join consensus, but she asked that her earlier statement be put into the record as an explanation of her country's position.

The representative of Australia said she had been pleased to reaffirm the Beijing Platform last week, as that remained the blueprint on which policies for taking forward the women's agenda were based. She had thought the session would focus on existing gaps and challenges, aimed at advancing that agenda. Instead, a lot of time had been spent "tied up" in drafting sessions on the resolutions -- 10 in all -- to ensure that the texts reflected national concerns. That had distracted participants from the important task they had come to the session to achieve.

She said there was great merit in some of the drafts, especially the one on the gender response to the tsunami and other natural disasters, which had had a devastating impact on many countries in her region, and her country had been quick to lend its support and assistance. She would not co-sponsor any of the texts, however, in a protest over the proliferation of resolutions at this important meeting. The Commission's working methods should be improved, in terms of its structure, relevance, and its practical and forward-looking methods. The expertise of the people who attended the sessions, most of them women, should be used to the utmost, and the sessions in future should refrain from falling into the trap of becoming a "giant drafting committee". She looked forward to the fiftieth session next year.

Slovenia's representative wished to be added to the list of co-sponsors on the resolution on the gender perspective of post-disaster relief (L.6/Rev. 1.). The CHAIRPERSON explained that action had already been taken on that text.

The Commission then turned to the draft resolution on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (document E/CN.6/2005/L.7).

The representative of Jamaica, on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, said that since the draft had been tabled, a number of changes had been made to the text. In the seventh preambular paragraph, the word "attacks" had been replaced by the word "military operations". Preambular paragraph 7 had been split into two paragraphs. Preambular paragraph 7 would recall the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004 on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied territory, and recall also General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004.

Preambular paragraph 8 would recall the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and affirm that those human rights instruments must be respected in the occupied territory, including East Jerusalem. The changes had been the result of negotiations with interested delegations, and she hoped the text would be adopted by consensus.

The CHAIRPERSON informed the Commission that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft.

#### Statements before Vote

The representative of Luxembourg asked for clarification, noting that the representative of Jamaica had twice omitted the word Palestinian in her statement.

The representative of Jamaica said the word "Palestinian" should have been included in the phrase "occupied territory" in the two paragraphs in question.

The representative of Israel said the resolution was political and one-sided. It singled out Israel and was contradictory. It also neglected to mention Israeli civilians deliberately targeted by Palestinian terrorists, and failed to condemn those acts of murder. The year 2005 had begun as one of great opportunity for the people of the Middle East, first and foremost, for Israel and Palestine. To ensure that that opportunity was not missed, Israel's Government would soon implement its disengagement plan, which was designed to foster peace in the region. Over the past weeks, it had released Palestinian prisoners, had provided increased entry permits for Palestinian workers, and would soon hand over control of major cities. Only genuine dialogue would bring peace. The draft represented an attempt to exploit the Commission for narrow political purposes unrelated to the advancement of women. Israel urged members to oppose the draft.

Canada's representative said his country had supported greater international attention to address the situation of women in armed conflict, including Palestinian women. Canadian assistance demonstrated its commitment to help alleviate poverty and enhance the security of the Palestinian people. He was deeply concerned that the living conditions of Palestinian women had been affected by Israeli operations. In that regard, it was encouraging to witness renewed security cooperation, the transfer of control of cities and preparation for Israeli withdrawal, which should result in improved conditions throughout the West Bank and Gaza. He would have liked to see those developments better reflected in the resolution.

He said Canada would abstain, largely in part due to operative paragraph 4. Canada had interest in the search for a fair resolution of the Palestinian issue. That solution should be negotiated in the context of a comprehensive peace

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agreement. It was not helpful to include language that was unrelated to its main purpose. He was also concerned about language that singled out acts of violence. The resolution should acknowledge the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority to protect the rights of women and children.

The United States representative said she would vote "no" on the resolution. The United States remained concerned about the impact of the current crisis on Palestinian women. It was the largest national donor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and contributed significant amounts to other United Nations programmes providing assistance to Palestinian women. It also provided bilateral assistance.

At the same time, the United States grieved for innocent Israelis, including Israeli women, who had suffered and died from Palestinian attacks. That was a reality which many did not recognize. The issue of territory and refugees must be negotiated between the two sides. The United States was committed to the Quartet in its work for the realization of the vision of two States living side by side. At a moment of genuine but fragile opportunity, the international focus should be on helping both parties maintain that progress. Such resolutions only undermined the United Nations ability to help promote peace and help the lot of Palestinian women and all people caught up in the conflict.

The text on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women was then adopted, as orally revised, by a recorded vote of 38 in favour to 1 against (United States), with 2 abstentions (Canada, Iceland). (See Annex.)

#### Statements after Vote

The representative of Japan welcomed the earnest peace efforts made by Israel and Palestine which were seizing an historic opportunity for peace. If the Middle East question were to be resolved, it was necessary that both countries make efforts to achieve peace. She hoped the situation of women would be improved through those efforts.

Making a general statement, the representative of the Russian Federation welcomed the choices of the Palestinian administration and the fact that the head of the Palestinian Authority had received a mandate to continue democratic reforms, work towards a political settlement of the situation and to act decisively in the face of terror. The main task today was to ensure that there would be a cessation of the violent confrontation, the restoration of substantive dialogue between Israel and Palestine, and the implementation of the Road Map, including Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Those steps would lead to the creation of a viable Palestinian State living in peace with Israel.

The observer for Palestine expressed appreciation to the Group of 77, as well as to all those who had adopted the text. She hoped their vision of the situation would become a reality. With such positive indices as the return to the negotiating table, she hoped that what had been said would become a reality. Unfortunately, all military checkpoints were still in place in the Gaza Strip. It had been divided into three sectors, and the establishment of settlements continued. In addition, the separation wall made the lives of some 500,000 Palestinians "hell" as it distanced them from their homes, livelihoods and

schools. She hoped that peace would prevail and the situation of Palestinian women would improve.

The representative of the Niger hoped that mechanisms could be identified so that lasting peace could be established in the region. It was the living conditions of women and children that had to be dealt with, regardless of where they were, in Palestine or Israel. The Commission had to use such mechanisms to ensure that women be given decent living conditions. That was what the resolution should do.

Turning to the draft on the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) (document E/CN.6/2005/L.8), Mexico's representative, on behalf of the text's co-sponsors, the Group of 77 and China, said the text was of particular relevance to the current session because it identified the Institute's important role in the review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform and the outcome document of the General Assembly's twenty-third special session. The co-sponsors believed that INSTRAW should continue to be a strategic partner with the Commission, and, thus, the text had requested that the Institute's Executive Director report to it at its next session on implementation of its work programme and on the strategic plan for period ending in 2007, especially on those activities related to the Beijing process.

The CHAIRPERSON then read out the names of additional co-sponsors, before the draft on INSTRAW (L.11) was adopted without a vote.

After the decision, the representative of the Dominican Republic thanked all delegations for the support they had provided to the Institute, which had its headquarters in her country, and which had offered Dominican women in their struggle for gender equality "extraordinary support". She asked all United Nations Member States to offer their support and cooperation, so that the Institute could continue its work with all women in her country.

The representative of Spain said he had wished to co-sponsor that text.

The CHAIRPERSON explained, once again, the statement would be noted, but the resolution had already been adopted.

Next, the Chairperson, reminding delegations that drafts L.9 and L.10 were not ready for action, moved into consideration of the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan (document E/CN.6/2005/L.11). After announcing the names of additional co-sponsors, she gave the floor to the draft's main sponsor.

Luxembourg's representative, on behalf of the European Union, announced additional amendments to several provisions in the preambular and operative sections of the text.

The CHAIRPERSON read out the names of more co-sponsors.

Prior to action on the text, India's representative thanked the European Union for its text and for the informal consultations, noting that the text had been substantially modified from the one adopted last year. She proposed oral amendments to the fifth operative paragraph.

Luxembourg's speaker thanked India's delegation for the proposal, but said that it was unacceptable to the European Union.

Canada's speaker appealed to delegations, both the main sponsor and the delegate who had proposed a further amendment, to reconsider their positions in the context of the reason the Commission was meeting. She wished to avoid a vote on the draft.

Cuba's representative asked for more time to analyse the amendments just submitted "all of a sudden". He had not wanted a procedural, complicated debate, and he asked if the delegation could dictate the last amendment, in order to allow for more time to reflect on it. He, too, wished to avoid a complicated process.

The CHAIRPERSON then called for a five-minute suspension of the meeting to study the situation and, if possible, reconsider positions on the matter.

Following the suspension, the Chairperson announced that a solution had been agreed, namely, to take operative paragraph 5, as proposed by India, to insert that into the preambular portion of the text, as the final paragraph.

Cuba's representative sought clarification on what would then be the fate of the current fifth operative paragraph.

The CHAIRPERSON explained that operative paragraph 5 would be deleted, and the numbering of the remaining operative paragraphs would adjust accordingly.

The Commission adopted the draft on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan (L.11), as orally revised, without a vote.

Turning to the draft on mainstreaming a gender perspective into national policies and programmes (document E/CN.6/2005/L.5/Rev.1), the representative of Bangladesh said it had been an honour for Bangladesh and the United Kingdom to table the resolution. She was very happy to see the draft had generated much interest and enthusiasm among Member States.

A new copy of the resolution had been circulated, she said. The text had a revised title. The old preambular paragraph 10 had been moved up and was now included as preambular paragraph 5. The preambular paragraphs following the new preambular paragraph 5 all remained, but had been relettered. Preambular paragraph 7 had also been amended. A new paragraph had been added as operative paragraph 6, subparagraph 1. As a result, the subparagraphs following had all been renumbered. There was also a new subparagraph 4, under operative paragraph 6. In operative paragraph 6, subparagraph 7 had also been revised. Subparagraphs 9 through 11 had been replaced with a single paragraph 9. Subparagraphs 11, 13 and 15 had also been amended. Operative paragraph 8, subparagraph 4, had also been revised, as had operative paragraphs 9 and 10.

She then read out additional co-sponsors of the text. She hoped the draft would receive the Commission's support, reflecting global solidarity in its shared endeavours to achieve gender equality.

The CHAIRPERSON also read out additional co-sponsors.

The text was then adopted as orally revised.

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Continuing its consideration this afternoon of the remaining draft texts, the Commission turned to the revised draft resolution on eliminating the demand for trafficking of women and girls (document E/CN.6/2005/L.3/Rev.1).

The United States representative said she was pleased to be introducing that very important draft on eliminating the demand for trafficking. Throughout human history, the battle between freedom and slavery had raged, and had stretched around the globe, depriving unthinkable numbers of people of their human rights. It was difficult to believe that in 2005, while slavery was officially outlawed in all nations, hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of women and girls were locked in modern-day forms of slavery. That unspeakable abuse must be stopped. Women and girls deserved liberty and freedom, and not slavery.

She said that the United Nations had been a positive forum for creating international cooperation towards the goal of eradicating trafficking, and she commended the work of the Philippines in the past resolution. Yet, for all the efforts, trafficking continued to flourish, so the United States was seeking to bring new energy to that fight. One way was to increase action to eliminate the demand. The human trafficking resolution, rather than duplicating United Nations' efforts, highlighted the demand side of that crime, while still recognizing the supply side and its root causes.

"If we don't get serious about drying up the market" for the exploitation in all forms of women and girls, it would not be possible to address human trafficking, she said. One important way was to link the problem to commercial sexual exploitation, which overwhelmingly harmed women and girls. The United States had worked very hard to accommodate the concerns of other delegations, and she hoped it would be possible to adopt the text by consensus. She then read out the changes that had been made during the course of deliberations, as well as the additional co-sponsors of the new draft.

After the Chairperson gathered the names of additional co-sponsors from the floor and the revisions were circulated, the Commission then adopted the resolution on trafficking, as orally revised, without a vote.

Speaking after the vote, India's representative said she appreciated the efforts of the main sponsor in presenting the resolution and its readiness to take on board many of the concerns of other delegations. Her delegation had not stood in the way of the text's adoption, but it had considerable difficulty with the way operative paragraph 2 c was currently phrased. (The provision concerned the adoption or strengthening and enforcing legislative or other measures to deter exploiters and discourage the demand.) That task was solely within the purview of governments, themselves. She trusted that issue would be satisfactorily addressed in the future.

The United Kingdom's representative, on behalf of Belgium, Hungary and Germany, said he welcomed the United States' initiative to put forth a resolution on eliminating the trafficking demand. That exploitation included, at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others, forced labour or services, slavery or similar practices, and servitude or the removal of organs, as stipulated in article 3 of the Protocol on Trafficking to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. He regretted, therefore, that it had not been possible to broaden the resolution to consistently include references to all forms of exploitation, in line with that Protocol.

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He said that trafficking was a complex issue requiring a comprehensive approach. By narrowing its scope, the text ignored other forms of sexual exploitation that were equally important. States had a duty to prevent and protect its populations against all forms of exploitation, and their failure to do so constituted a human rights violation. He was glad that that point had finally be included in the text.

The speaker from the Netherlands, fully aligning his delegation with the statement just made by the United Kingdom, said she wished to clarify her national position and policy. First, the Netherlands was firmly committed to combating trafficking in persons for all purposes, including for prostitution. Trafficking was a crime under Dutch law, and combating it was a priority of the police and the judiciary, by preventing it, assisting the victims and prosecuting the traffickers. Her country had a national rapporteur on human trafficking, who analysed the size and scope of the scourge and reported on it annually to the Government. In December 2004, her Government had presented a national action plan to combat trafficking in human beings.

Confirming that prostitution was legal in the Netherlands, she recalled that the ban on brothels had been lifted in October 2000, making the Netherlands one of the countries in the world to recognize voluntary adult prostitution as a legal occupation. An important intended effect of that policy was that it helped tackle human trafficking. The lifting of the ban had made prostitution a legitimate occupation and gave prostitutes the same rights and protections as other professionals. Labour laws were in place to protect against violence and coercion. Women's strengthened position was the best way to combat sexual violence.

Moreover, she said, abuses were easier to detect when prostitution operated publicly and legally, rather than in a clandestine subculture. The police were also in a position to pick up signs of human trafficking and obtain valuable information that could be used immediately to trace and prosecute offenders, in both the regulated and unregulated sectors. The law enforcement authorities in her country gave priority to combating trafficking in persons, the exploitation of prostitutes, and the employment of minors in prostitution.

The representative of China said she welcomed and supported the initiative to address the demand side of trafficking. There had still been several issues pending when consultations were adjourned yesterday, and she did not know how those had been solved, although she had no problem with the content of what had been adopted. Nevertheless, consultations should be conducted in a way that was transparent and inclusive, she said.

The representative of Algeria said he had joined consensus on the draft, aware of the importance of eliminating trafficking in all its forms. His country also believed it was necessary for the international community to mobilize itself to put an end to criminal activities linked to the sexual exploitation of women and girl children. Those activities, unfortunately, had reached an unprecedented scale and had become a concern for all. Although the resolution had already been adopted, he only now had received instructions to co-sponsor it.

Costa Rica's speaker said she had been pleased at the strides made during the current session, particularly the reaffirmation of the Beijing agenda. Although she shared the intention of a number of the draft resolutions, tabling them had sidestepped what had been agreed for the current session at the last

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session. She had taken a constructive part in crafting the texts to advance the cause of women, indeed the cause of all mankind, yet she had abstained in the voting to be consistent with the agenda that had been decided at the last session.

The representative of Thailand acknowledged the timeliness and importance of the trafficking text and had no problem with the wording, but she echoed China's view that the consultations should have been more transparent and inclusive. It would have been nice to have known the outcome of the final negotiations, rather than have that take place as a closed-door session.

Paraguay's representative, on behalf of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and associated countries, said he was fully committed to fighting trafficking in persons. The focus, however, must be on protecting and advancing the victims' human rights and tackling the root causes that made them particularly vulnerable to the scourge. He repudiated any kind of human exploitation, without exception, but he was concerned that efforts to combat trafficking might cause the victims to be criminalized, thereby turning the victims into criminals. Fighting trafficking must focus on the perpetrators, namely, the traffickers and the trafficking networks. Fighting trafficking must also be done in the context of existing international instruments governing the matter.

The Commission then took up the draft resolution on a special rapporteur on laws that discriminate against women (document E/CN.6/2005/L.4).

The representative of Rwanda read out amendments to the text.

Cuba's representative, speaking in on a point of order, asked that the revised text first be distributed to the Commission.

Rwanda's representative, starting with the amendments again, said the title of the draft would be amended to read "advisability of the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Laws that Discriminate against Women".

The second operative paragraph would become the first, and would be the only operative paragraph in the text. The third preambular paragraph would be deleted. The operative paragraph would read: "Decides to consider at its fiftieth session the advisability of the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on laws that discriminate against women, bearing in mind the existing mechanisms with a view to avoid duplication and in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to report to the Commission, at its fiftieth session, on the implications of the creation of a Special Rapporteur, and to include in his report the views, inter alia, of the Member States and relevant United Nations bodies, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights".

Listing additional co-sponsors of the draft, he called on members to adopt the text by consensus.

The CHAIRPERSON then read out additional co-sponsors.

The representative of the United States proposed the deletion of "including the CEDAW committee and the OHCHR". Given the reference to relevant United Nations bodies that preceded that language, it was neither necessary nor appropriate to enumerate possible such bodies in the resolution.

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Cuba's representative said it was improper to take on board new machinery which duplicated the mandate of existing ones. The Committee in its work and mandate evaluated legislation when it examined the reports of States parties. Looking at the recommendations adopted by that Committee, special attention was given to legislative matters. Efforts by the international community should be aimed at achieving universal ratification of the Convention and on strengthening existing machinery to advance the cause of women. The Committee's 23 experts did not have the time it needed to do its work and had requested additional sessions. The creation of new mechanism, moreover, would require additional resources and would have budgetary implications. It would also have consequences for States that would have to report. Cuba would stand in the way of consensus. It was indispensable, however, that the reference to the Committee remained.

Rwanda's representative said the proposed amendment was not acceptable to the co-sponsors of the draft.

The Commission then had a roll call vote on the proposed amendment to the draft resolution. The proposed amended was rejected by a vote of 1 in favour (United States) to 36 against, with 7 abstentions (Algeria, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Thailand, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates).

The representative of Burkina Faso said his vote should have been no to the amendment.

The draft resolution on the advisability of a special rapporteur on laws that discriminate against women was then adopted, as orally revised.

Speaking after action, the United States representative welcomed the focus that the resolution brought to the issues of laws that discriminated against women. It also admired its focus on implementation on the ground to advance women's rights, rather than on rhetoric. The United States must, however, disassociate itself from consensus on the text. The United States did not think it appropriate for the Committee to make recommendations regarding on the creation of a special rapporteur as that was beyond its mandate. The United States strongly supported the resolution's goal and approved of efforts to achieve that goal. The United States was a world leader in laws that promoted women's equality.

When the Commission turned to the draft on indigenous women (L.10), the representative of Bolivia said that the text had been extensively amended and enhanced by the valuable inputs made during informal meetings. She requested that the titles of the instruments cited in the first preambular paragraph be correctly named. The draft was a short, concise text, which was highly focused on the issue of indigenous women and girls. She hoped it would enjoy consensus. Indigenous women and girls would be extremely grateful for its adoption, and, in the near future, millions of indigenous women in the world for whom that "space" was being opened would be able to fully enjoy their rights in a way that was tangible and real, and not just an illusion. She read out a list of additional co-sponsors.

On a point of order, the representative of Costa Rica clarified his delegation's position. He had not withdrawn his name from the list of co-sponsors of that text. As he had said, he would not co-sponsor any of the texts because of his clear-cut commitment to what had been agreed at the Commission's last session.

After the Chairperson recorded the additional co-sponsors, members, acting without a vote, adopted the draft resolution on indigenous women (L.10), as orally revised.

Speaking after the vote, South Africa's representative said the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action had urged States to include a gender perspective in all action programmes against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Those documents further urged States to consider the burden of such discrimination, which fell particularly on indigenous women, African women, and Asian women, women migrants and women from other disadvantaged groups, and to ensure their access to means of production for economic advancement. In that context, any relevant provisions to the Durban texts should be focused on those realities. Her understanding was that the references in the resolution on indigenous women and women's economic advancement were informed by the urgent need for Member States to further address the challenges faced by women in the context of the 10-year review of Beijing.

The speaker from Mexico welcomed adoption of the text on indigenous women, who were among the most marginalized and poorest in the world, and who, therefore, deserved full attention, in order to gain access to all programmes adopted as part of the Beijing process. The resolution was proof of the commitment to do something for indigenous women, but that was just a first step towards more tangible realizations, which she hoped the Commission would produce in the future.

The representative of the United States said the explanation she had given this morning in terms of her country's understanding of the Beijing documents also applied to the present resolution.

Turning to the draft on women's economic advancement, she said that the scope of the text had broadened considerably during negotiations. It had originally been intended to focus on entrepreneurship, but since it had been modified substantially, she wished to read it out in its entirety.

Following requests by the delegations of Argentina, Cuba and South Africa to study the new text, the Chairperson allowed a brief suspension of the meeting.

After the break, Cuba's representative thanked the authors for having launched that initiative on trafficking, however, the text required certain adjustments to make it balanced and to see to it that it did justice to the many women living in poverty in developing countries. He, therefore, introduced a set of amendments to the revised text, which had been submitted by the United States.

South Africa's speaker said she wished to deepen the resolution in a manner that benefited the women of the world, particularly in developing and least developed countries. She supported the amendments just tabled by Cuba, and offered some additional revisions, including the addition of language concerning reproductive rights, which she said would enrich the text considerably.

Cuba's representative asked for the Chairperson's guidance: should he make his additional amendments now, or first have members analyse the amendments he already made, along with those of the South African delegation?

The United States speaker said she wished to hear all of the proposed amendments so she could analyse them altogether.

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Cuba's representative then read out two more amendments to the text. He said it was indispensable for those proposals to find their way into the draft.

Responding to the Chairperson's question as to whether those amendments were acceptable to the United States, the United States representative asked that each one be read by the sponsor and considered one at a time, and then said that because the term "reproductive rights" did not include abortion, the United States could agree that neglect of reproductive rights could have a negative effect on women, therefore, the United States fully supported measures to strengthen women's economic, political and social empowerment, and would reluctantly accept South Africa's amendment.

She then corrected her statement by saying she had just received instructions that the United States could not accept the South African amendment.

On a point of order, El Salvador's representative said he wished to remind those present of the General Assembly rule that proposals and amendments be voted on in the order originally introduced.

The representative of the Niger said that, given limited resources, she hoped that the efforts of highly indebted poor countries would be supported. The last paragraph, which called on Secretary-General to report on the implement of present resolution at its next session, should be withdrawn.

The CHAIRPERSON reminded the delegation that the Commission was in the middle of taking action on amendments proposed by Cuba.

The United States representative said she would join consensus on the proposed change, but that change was not consistent with the observed effects of globalization and market liberalization.

Following a roll-call vote, the first set of Cuban proposals was adopted.

Turning to South Africa's proposals, the representative of the United States said the South African amendment was not acceptable to her delegation. They had worked hard to arrive at language that was broad and covered issue in a way that was acceptable to most delegations. She asked, given the efforts put in to that text and the flexibility her delegation had shown, that the amendment be withdrawn. If not, she would call for a vote.

South Africa's representative said she would not reconsider her position.

The representative of Cuba totally supported South Africa's proposal.

Malaysia's representative said she was not in a position to support the last proposal, but in the interest of time, she would abstain and not seek a vote.

Nicaragua's representative said he could not accept the South African proposal and would vote against it.

Following the Chairperson's proposal for a show of hands, the United States requested a roll-call vote, saying it was a very important issue and a show of hands would not do.

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Following another roll-call vote, the Commission adopted South Africa's proposal to add to the end of preambular paragraph 21 that the neglect of women's reproductive rights severely limited women's opportunities in public and private life, including opportunities for education and their economic and political empowerment.

Costa Rica's representative expressed concern at what was happening, as the draft was only taking part of what had been said in Beijing. The amendment was selective and out of context. While his delegation was totally and fully in favour of respecting and promoting all of women's rights, those rights should never include abortion.

Following further discussion, the United States representative, speaking on a point of order, said it was very obvious despite hard work to achieve consensus on a very important issue, she would have to ask to withdraw the resolution.

Cuba's representative, speaking on point of order, said that a resolution, once amended, could not be withdrawn.

The CHAIRPERSON confirmed that the rules supported the Cuban position on the state of that draft resolution at this point.

The South African amendment was then adopted following a roll-call vote.

Cuba's representative then read out a second set of amendments, including adding another operative paragraph after the existing operative paragraph 13.

The United States representative asked those two proposals be separated. Regarding the amendment to operative paragraph 5, that was the heart and soul of the resolution. The whole intent of the resolution rested on the concept of creating an enabling environment in which women workers and entrepreneurs could flourish. That was a critical portion of the resolution, and if it were taken out, that was really gutting the intention of the resolution. She called for a roll-call vote, and would vote "no" against that proposed amendment.

Following a vote, the proposed amendment to operative paragraph 5 was defeated.

Given changes to the text, the United States representative withdrew her sponsorship to the text.

Cuba's representative wished to make clear where he stood on operative paragraph 5. In the original proposal, there were some valid points, but others were similar to the same recipes that for years international financial institutions had been imposing on developing countries, to the greater impoverishment of their people, particularly women and children. Therefore, his delegation dissociated himself from the contents of the second part of the paragraph.

Nicaragua's representative also withdrew his co-sponsorship, insofar as he did not accept the South African amendment, which had been adopted.

The Commission then adopted the draft resolution, as orally revised with further amendments.

(annex follows)

ANNEX

Vote on Assistance to Palestinian Women

The draft resolution on the situation of, and assistance to, Palestinian women (document E/CN.6/2005/L.7) was adopted by a recorded vote of 38 in favour to 1 against, with 2 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Botswana, Burkina Faso, China, Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania.

Against: United States.

Abstain: Canada, Iceland.

Absent: Bolivia, El Salvador, Gabon, Kazakhstan.

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