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Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

2012/2289(INI)

27.3.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Development

on the Millennium Development Goals – defining the post-2015 framework
(2012/2289(INI))

Rapporteur: Anne Delvaux

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SUGGESTIONS

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

- having regard to the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000,
- having regard to the report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) entitled 'Beyond the Midpoint: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals', published in January 2010,
- having regard to the UNDP Human Development Report 2010 entitled 'The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development',
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979,
- having regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in Beijing and the subsequent outcome documents adopted at the UN Beijing +5, Beijing +10 and Beijing +15 Special Sessions on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted on 9 June 2000, 11 March 2005 and 2 March 2010 respectively, in which member states undertook to take action to promote gender equality between women and men in 12 areas,
- having regard to the UN 'Gender Chart 2012', which measures improvements regarding the gender equality aspects of the eight MDGs,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 April 2010 to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions entitled 'A twelve-point EU action plan in support of the Millennium Development Goals' (COM(2010)0159),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 8 March 2010 entitled 'EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015' (SEC(2010)0265) and to the Council conclusions of 14 June 2010 endorsing that European action plan,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 June 2010 on 'progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: mid-term review in preparation of the UN high-level meeting in September 2010'¹,
- having regard to the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994, at which the global community recognised and affirmed that sexual and reproductive health

¹ OJ C 236 E, 12.8.2011, p. 48.

and reproductive rights are fundamental to sustainable development,

- A. whereas the majority of the Millennium Development Goals, especially those relating to the reduction of poverty, children's education and the reduction of maternal mortality, are difficult to attain unless the strategies for achieving them also focus on the family;
- B. whereas two of the Millennium Development Goals relate specifically to women: promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women (MDG 3) and improving maternal health (MDG 5); whereas a further three contribute directly to improving the living conditions of women and girls: achieving universal primary education (MDG 2), reducing child mortality (MDG 4) and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (MDG 6);
- C. whereas, two years from the 2015 deadline for achieving the MDGs, at the global level women continue to be poorer than men; whereas although more girls are attending primary school, considerable gender gaps still exist at secondary school level; whereas although 20 % of members of parliament in the world are women, at the current rate of progress it will take over 40 years to achieve fair representation;
- D. whereas various studies show that if women are educated and can earn and control their own income, a number of favourable results follow: maternal and infant mortality declines, women's and children's health and nutrition improve, agricultural productivity rises, climate change can be mitigated, population growth slows, economies expand and poverty cycles are broken;
 1. Urges the UN to accelerate progress in advancing the development agenda and to enhance the importance accorded to women's rights and gender equality by making them the subject of several specific, globally agreed goals in the post-2015 MDG framework and emphasising their status as cross-cutting issues within development cooperation programmes as a whole;
 2. Considers it regrettable that the current MDG framework has not been able to address effectively the underlying structural causes of gender inequality and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination experienced by women and girls around the world; recognises that women should be central players in the development of the post-2015 framework, but also central actors in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation; calls on the Commission and the Member States to emphasise the need to identify equality between women and men as a stand-alone goal and a precondition to achieving other development goals;
 3. Emphasises that family-focused policies in support of employed parents have proven both valuable and efficient in many areas of social development, and that the very achievement of the Millennium Development Goals depends on how well families are empowered to contribute to it;
 4. Urges the UN to consider the family-oriented provisions set out in the outcome documents of major UN conferences and summits held in recent decades or to be held in coming years, as the outcomes of those conferences provide a framework for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

and guide international efforts in that direction;

5. Urges the UN, when assessing the MDGs after 2015, invariably to base its reasoning on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) as described in the UNDP Human Development Report 2010, bearing in mind that the GII is the index providing the most representative and complete picture of the gender equality situation in a given country, and to adopt an approach encompassing both the quantitative and the qualitative points of view; points out that the UN must evaluate more closely the reasons for which progress in improving maternal health has been relatively slow compared with the other MDGs, and that targets and indicators for the future goals must genuinely reflect the barriers women and girls face (e.g. access to education beyond enrolment) and be disaggregated by gender, in order to ensure that certain sections of the population are not left behind;
6. Calls for the post-2015 MDG framework to set ambitious targets for women's rights and gender equality in terms of women's empowerment and well-being, women's full and equal participation in decision-making in public life, whether in the political, economic, social or environmental sphere, combating violence against women, access to quality education (at primary, secondary and higher levels) and training, promotion of universal health coverage through health systems which are public and free at the point of use, access to micro-credit facilities in order to combat poverty and social exclusion, access to effective, quality health care, universal access to and improvements in sexual and reproductive health and rights, the quality and stability of employment, equal pay, career development, the representation of women in politics and economic activity, and ownership and inheritance rights;
7. Calls on the Commission and the UN to ensure that the post-2015 development framework recognises and implements the right to the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, as a fundamental human right and includes targets for access to quality, affordable, accessible and acceptable health services, care and information throughout people's lives; takes the view that this should include: access to contraceptives, especially for unmarried and young women; prevention, support and treatment in relation to unsafe abortions, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and gender-based violence; pre-natal and postpartum care and services; and confidential and accessible services for young people;
8. Calls for the post-2015 MDG framework to combat all forms of violence and harmful practices perpetrated against girls and women: harassment, rape and sexual abuse, prostitution, slavery, exploitation, murder, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, domestic violence, etc.; stresses that upholding women's rights, including their sexual and reproductive rights, and safeguarding respect for their human dignity is essential to preventing and combating gender-based violence, providing victims with protection and appropriate counselling and ensuring that perpetrators are punished; calls on the Commission to make the fight against impunity for the perpetrators of such violence one of the priorities for its development assistance policy; calls for consideration to be given, in defining future MDGs, to the specific objective of combating all types of violence against women, by including a specific target for the eradication of violence against women and girls;

9. Emphasises the need to continue to condemn and punish genital mutilation, honour crimes, forced marriages, forced early marriages and any form of violence, in particular domestic violence, carried out inter alia in the name of religion;
10. Urges the UN, in the post-2015 framework, to focus on synergy between the consideration of sexual and reproductive rights and the achievement of other MDGs such as girls' education and women's empowerment, thereby promoting access to family planning services, especially in rural areas;
11. Calls for the post-2015 MDG framework to ensure a participatory approach and a robust accountability framework rooted in human rights and the principles of equality and equity, by establishing measures and mechanisms to track political, programmatic and financial accountability for commitments made in respect of human rights;
12. Calls for accelerated global action to reduce maternal, newborn and child mortality and reaffirms the central importance of universal access to reproductive health care;
13. Calls for continued support for research into more effective and sustainable prevention and treatment programmes, including research and development in relation to effective forms of medical intervention, including vaccines, drugs and diagnostics;
14. Calls for the post-2015 framework provisions fully to involve women's associations in content definition and formulation and the implementation of the new MDGs, based on their expectations and experiences;
15. Notes that women play a crucial role in nutrition and food security, being responsible for 80 % of farming in Africa, even though they are still hardly ever able to own the land they cultivate; stresses that the eradication of hunger consequently depends on aid to enable small farmers to produce sufficient food for themselves and their families; points out that most small farmers are women; calls for a gender-sensitive approach integrated into all elements of food security programming; underlines the need to prevent and treat malnutrition by means of evidence-based intervention, giving priority to pregnant women and young children;
16. Urges the UN to take a human-rights-based approach when assessing the MDGs after 2015 and to ensure that legal and enforcement measures are put in place to protect women's rights, without any form of discrimination, coercion or violence on any grounds, regardless of age, sex, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, marital status, disability, HIV status, national origin, migration status, language skills, sexual orientation, gender identity and other factors and status, through adequate legislation; takes the view that any legal, policy or regulatory barriers or punitive provisions must be removed, such as prohibitions on pregnant adolescents attending school;
17. Emphasises the necessity of providing a quality basic education for marginalised populations, particularly those from rural or conflict-affected areas, and for children with disabilities and child labourers;
18. Urges that further efforts be made to integrate the gender dimension into all foreign assistance policies and programmes, including those aimed at eliminating discrimination

and violence against women; calls for funding for gender equality strategies in each development assistance agency, including funding for local women's organisations that focus on empowering women and girls;

19. Calls for further research on the links between child and adult pornography and the impact it has on girls, women, boys and men, as well as the relationship between pornography and sexual violence, and for concrete measures to combat them;
20. Urges the ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women by all countries in order to promote gender equality;
21. Underlines the need to design and implement health programmes in order to strengthen health systems, taking into account the fact that the global economic crisis has undermined progress on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases;
22. Stresses the importance of the goal of improved maternal health with regard to reducing the maternal mortality rate and achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and family planning; stresses the importance of education and awareness-raising in the area of sexual and reproductive health as an integral part of the women's health agenda;
23. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, bearing in mind that gender equality and non-discrimination are cross-cutting aims, to increase the amount of development aid allocated to programmes focusing on them, so as enable the gender dimension to be mainstreamed at every stage of development aid programming (identification, formulation, implementation and evaluation);
24. Stresses the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the formulation and achievement of all the MDGs; stresses that specific programmes for the empowerment of women, their social and economic independence, and non-discrimination are necessary in order to secure gender equality and fulfil the MDGs;
25. Strongly reiterates its view, as expressed in other resolutions, that, according to the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, the aim of family planning programmes must be to enable couples and individuals to make free, responsible and informed decisions about childbearing, and to make available to them a full range of safe, effective and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice without any form of coercion; calls for the Member States, the Union and the UN to adopt this approach in the post-2015 MDG framework;
26. Calls on the competent authorities to introduce a 'family mainstreaming' approach to the implementation of the post-2015 MDG strategy, in accordance with the policies defined under the system adopted by the UN¹;
27. Draws attention to the fact that progress on MDG 2 regarding education has been moderate; observes in particular that more girls are receiving primary education; stresses that more must be done to ensure that girls complete their primary schooling and gain

¹ UN Human Rights Council, Resolution 12/21 and other related resolutions.

access to secondary and higher education;

28. States that special attention needs to be paid to educating both sexes about gender issues from the outset of their schooling, so that attitudes and social stereotypes gradually change and gender equality becomes a basic principle of society in all countries of the world;
29. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to include in their bilateral agreements with non-member countries binding clauses prohibiting all types of discrimination based on sex, marital status and age, along with various religious or traditional practices, including gender mutilation, gendercide, honour crimes, abduction, illegal confinement of women and forced marriages;
30. Calls for the post-2015 MDG framework to have adequate financial resources dedicated to development, environmental and pro-poor spending in order to achieve the goals; maintains that donors need to meet long-standing financial commitments, including the commitment to donate 0.7 % of gross national income as official development assistance, in the post-2015 framework and should invest in increasing revenue from innovative sources of finance and put an end to tax evasion and tax avoidance;
31. Reaffirms the importance of taking account of the situation of women, not simply as a vulnerable section of the population, but also as active facilitators of development policies; stresses, likewise, that women have proven competence in resolving problems and conflicts, and therefore urges the Commission and all countries to increase the role played by women in action groups and working parties;
32. Urges the Commission and the Member States to speak with one voice in the upcoming negotiations and to take on board Parliament's recommendations in the EU position on the post-2015 MDG framework;
33. Urges the Member States to support the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family, which comes on the eve of the target year for the MDGs, as it provides an opportunity to focus once again on the role of families as part of an integrated, comprehensive approach to development;
34. Stresses that the lack of progress on those MDGs that relate to the position of women is caused not only by financial or technical obstacles, but particularly by a lack of political will;
35. Urges the provision of EU humanitarian aid that contributes to the attainment of the MDGs and which should be made effectively independent from the restrictions on humanitarian aid imposed by the USA or other donors, in particular by ensuring access to abortion for women and girls who are victims of rape in armed conflicts.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	20.3.2013
Result of final vote	+: 25 -: 0 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Marije Cornelissen, Edite Estrela, Iratxe García Pérez, Mikael Gustafsson, Livia Járóka, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Astrid Lulling, Norica Nicolai, Angelika Niebler, Siiri Oviir, Antonyia Parvanova, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Marc Tarabella, Britta Thomsen, Anna Záborská, Inês Cristina Zuber
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Minodora Cliveti, Silvia Costa, Anne Delvaux, Mariya Gabriel, Mojca Kleva Kekuš, Katarína Neveďalová, Angelika Werthmann