



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 December 2012

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-seventh session

4-15 March 2013

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by International Council of Women and International Federation of Business and Professional Women, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

The International Council of Women and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women fully support the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. Discrimination and violence are a gross violation not only of the human rights of women and girls but also of all people. They are degrading and lower self-esteem. Women and girls who experience such violations may also suffer from physical and psychological damage, which is difficult to overcome and can lead to reduced participation in society as well as lower socioeconomic status.

Through sustainable development programmes, such as those overseen by Project Five-O and run by the International Council of Women, women and girls have the opportunity to improve their general well-being and status within the community, which brings respect and reduces the likelihood of discrimination and violence. These programmes have the added benefit of developing positive respectful relationships between boys and girls.

Education, which features directly or indirectly in the programmes, is a powerful tool that is a basis for ending discrimination and violence. Women and girls learn that they do have rights, they learn to become self-sufficient and, most importantly, they learn about gender equality. Gender equality is paramount in ending all forms of discrimination and violence.

The inhumane practices suffered by young women and girls are of extreme concern. These include female genital mutilation, honour killings and early forced marriages. War crimes, most notably rape, are of equal concern. The International Council of Women and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women work with their affiliated organizations and branches to overcome these atrocities. They urge Governments to honour the human rights conventions, platforms for action and Security Council resolutions that advocate the ending of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls. In partnership with other civil society organizations, the International Council of Women and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, through their affiliated organizations and branches, work to ensure that the recommendations are both implemented into law and acted upon.

The right of all women and girls to be respected and live free from the fear of discrimination and violence is a human right. It should never be abridged.

The International Council of Women and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women ask the Commission to call upon States to actively work towards eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls by developing viable programmes that include:

- (a) Mobilization of communities to raise awareness of discrimination, pinpoint harmful practices and behaviour and develop alternative models;
- (b) Education programmes to teach women and girls about their rights;
- (c) Empowerment of women in all aspects of life, including financial independence and gender equality, through the adoption of the Women's Empowerment Principles;

(d) Support for men and boys to change attitudes and beliefs that permit exploitative behaviour;

(e) Adoption of appropriate legislation to ensure that victims are protected from further abuse and that perpetrators are sufficiently penalized and undergo appropriate education.

Note: This statement is endorsed by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council: International Federation of Women in Legal Careers and International Federation of Women Lawyers.