



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 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 Mouvement mondial des mères international, a non-governmental organization 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

Mouvement mondial des mères international (formerly World Movement of Mothers),

Welcomes the increasing awareness and concern about all the forms of violence perpetrated against women worldwide,

Reaffirms the importance of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which requires the equal participation of women for peace and security, and resolution 1820 (2008), which confronts sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict zones,

Appreciates the many resolutions adopted likewise by the Council to address the prevention and elimination of violence towards women and girls in all countries, in peace or at war, with a more comprehensive approach,

Welcomes and acknowledges progress achieved in the establishment of international norms and standards, legal and political agreements — both regional and international — clarifying the obligations of countries to eradicate and punish all forms of violence against women and visible implementation and progress at national level in many countries.

However,

Is deeply concerned that many States continue to contravene these binding agreements by the pervasiveness of excruciating violence against women and girls in conflict zones, as illustrated by a first-hand testimony from the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

Sarah, 18 years old, kidnapped, tortured, raped by militia. She is one of the lucky ones, she was released. She is one of thousands and older than most. It is cruel, it is atrocious, and it is what happens every day in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo but the worst is to come. From victims to pariah, there is a very short step. Raped women have nowhere to go, nowhere to get medical care. They are excluded from their own communities. Sarah is not an exception.

At Kila Siku, a project under the umbrella of “*En avant les enfants*”, we try to pick up the pieces and give them a fresh start by providing training, work and income in a safe and healing environment. Amongst girls and women who have suffered from various exactions, everyone has a chance to relive and regain their dignity. As long as impunity and anarchy are allowed to reign, no women will be safe. Security and law enforcement will be the only way to impose peace.

Mouvement mondial des mères international is deeply concerned by the pervasiveness of violence towards women in general. Worldwide, one in three women has been beaten, suffered sexual or other abuse, usually by someone close to her, at least once in her lifetime. Domestic violence reports, which are on the rise, are considered by some as progress, the consequence of more effective policies protecting women. Women are feeling more empowered and protected; therefore they are able to report such abuse. However they point to the stark facts which so many girls, women and mothers face.

Mouvement mondial des mères international strongly stresses that the term “domestic violence” is an intolerable oxymoron. The definition of “domestic” is: “devoted to home life that pertains to household affairs”. Should any community or

civilization accept that the home life of its citizens be tainted by violence? Which mother or woman can accept to be abused and violated in the sanctity of her home, often in front of her children? What incommensurable damage does this violence do to the children, the future generation of our societies, who witness it and are often abused themselves?

Mouvement mondial des mères international condemns the inability to develop “zero tolerance” policies against what is one of the most despicable crimes of humankind: the abuse of women and girls. All over the world abusers and rapists perpetrate shameful crimes with impunity. No religion, no political affiliation, no patriarchal society or cultural practice can justify this scourge. What can be more devastating to a family, a community, a society, or humanity than having its women violated and/or psychologically broken? What impact for their existing children who are at risk of being abused themselves or for their unwanted yet innocent children forever bearing the weight of this heinous crime?

Mouvement mondial des mères international notices that the mere need to specifically address “violence against women and girls” emphasizes the extent of persisting gender inequities into the twenty-first century.

Mouvement mondial des mères international reaffirms that women are givers of life, the primary caretakers and educators of future generations, the nurturers of our societies and reaffirms the importance of their contribution for a more secure world.

We therefore,

Demand the implementation and reinforcement of legal measures aimed at stopping the use of violence against women in times of war, particularly the spreading of rape as a weapon of war;

Request policymakers to intensify their efforts towards the elimination and prevention of violence by all means of action, enforcement and persevering political purpose. Efforts must be significantly increased to strengthen the mechanisms which prevent, curb and heal the effects of violence against women in times of peace as well as in times of war;

Strongly urge that all policymakers and politicians personally remember:

- that “abused women” could be their mothers, sisters, partners, givers of their own and children’s lives;
- at women form half of the world’s population and are entitled to respect and consideration;

Strongly urge all policymakers and politicians to measure and seriously take into account the consequences and potentially devastating effect the abuse of their women kin will have on the future of their society;

Ask what life lessons, values and examples will the young and vulnerable children grow up with and in turn apply during their adult life?

Strongly request policymakers and Governments to use not only principally short-term and quantifiable economic figures but resort to other long-term sustainable measurements to assess development in their countries and the well-being of populations;

Request policymakers to recognize the role of women, particularly mothers, in developing a culture of peace and non-violence and support their role within their family and society and their contribution to the building of peace in countries after conflict. A recent survey of mothers in 16 European countries confirms that absence of violence and healthy relationships within the family were highlighted as the most important factors contributing to the well-being of mothers and their family. When asked to vote on a list of factors that could contribute to improving the well-being of mothers, most respondents said it is very important not to “have violence in the family” (89 per cent). Fighting violence against women is necessary for the well-being of the family, the basic building block of society;

Urge policymakers to measure the importance of family mainstreaming in policies to protect families from poverty and stress-related violence.
