



## **Economic and Social Council**

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### **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 Hydroaid, 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

The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls is a top development priority and a complex challenge for all countries. The Hydroaid strategy focuses on integrated approaches for achieving multiple objectives and ensuring long-lasting effects.

Gender-based violence has been recognized by the United Nations as the most pervasive yet least recognized human rights abuse in the world. One third of women worldwide have experienced emotional harassment, isolation, intimidation or physical or sexual violence at least once in their lives. Violence against women occurs in both the public and private spheres, across all societies, with women particularly at risk in developing countries. Good development plans must therefore include violence prevention goals, given that the safety and security of women is crucial to creating the conditions necessary for ensuring a peaceful existence, raising life quality standards and supporting self-improvement and community improvement processes.

Fostering education is probably the most effective and widespread strategy for achieving these goals because, as female education rises, women acquire skills and possibilities to negotiate their conditions, as well as options and choices for their personal safety and well-being, while uneducated women are unable to claim their own rights and continue to live in abusive relationships, with limited opportunities and scarce access to justice and services. However, education alone is not enough to sustain full, long-lasting development processes. We believe that more successful actions could be implemented within an integrated approach.

Hydroaid acknowledges the importance of women's role in society and strives to enhance their opportunities by promoting and facilitating their access to vocational training in the field of natural resources management. Our focus area, water resources management, is indeed fundamental in establishing best practices and women are traditionally deeply involved therein. In this perspective, we consider women's empowerment an investment for the future and the heart of a sound development agenda. While encouraging equal sharing of responsibilities and access to opportunities, Hydroaid also contributes to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 3, on gender equality, and focuses on the promotion of women's participation as a key strategy for guaranteeing awareness and long-lasting effects. In all our programmes, we employ an integrated approach combining solid vocational training, equal treatment and support for women's participation that eventually reinforces international women's empowerment efforts. Women's participation remains a critical issue in most societies and, in our opinion, there is no doubt that it is essential for the promotion of comprehensive cultural and economic policies and the achievement of real social justice.

In conclusion, we believe that increasing investment in education for women and girls should be considered a top priority and that it should be accomplished in accordance with integrated development programmes, including enforcement of appropriate legislation to prevent gender-based violence and promote equal employment opportunities, involvement of women in development and policy dialogues and support actions for victims and the most vulnerable through adequate assistance services.