



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 December 2013

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-eighth session

10-21 March 2014

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 African Action on AIDS, European Union of Women, Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas, Hadassah Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Social Workers, International Federation of University Women, International Inner Wheel, National Council of German Women’s Organizations, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women’s Association of Thailand, Socialist International Women, Soroptimist International, Women against Violence (Europe), Women’s International Zionist Organization and Zonta International, 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

We, the participating international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, present for the information of and consideration by the participants at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women the following statement on the priority theme, “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls”.

The targets set by the Millennium Development Goals can only be met when gender equality as a core principle is respected and integrated in all programmes and actions.

Gender-based inequalities have a negative impact on the individual and on society as a whole. Women continue to be denied opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives, whether deliberately or as a result of long-standing discriminatory social and cultural norms. Discrimination against women has been proven to impair the achievement of all the other development goals.

While we acknowledge that in developing regions the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day fell from 47 per cent in 1990 to 22 per cent in 2010, we have to point out that, although women make up half of the world’s population, they still represent 70 per cent of the world’s poor.

In every developing region, women hold less secure jobs than men with little or no financial security or social benefits. In 2012, the employment to population ratio was 60.3 per cent, with a gender gap of 24.8 per cent.

While several Millennium Development Goal targets have been met or are within close reach, stronger political backing, in the form of political will and funding, is necessary for women and children to further reduce the unacceptable maternal and infant mortality ratio. Furthermore, girls are more likely to be out of school than boys among both primary and lower secondary age groups, including girls from wealthier families. Strong political action is needed, since women still represent two thirds of illiterate adults worldwide.

Convinced that sustainable development can only be achieved through global partnership and with the full participation of women, we urge that:

- The post-2015 development agenda be based on gender equality and partnership in order to achieve the set goals
- Women’s decision-making power at all levels be enhanced
- Regulations prohibiting child labour be implemented and enforced
- A special target be introduced for achieving an end to gender-based violence
- Implementation and progress be monitored and evaluated annually, based on data disaggregated by sex
- Every opportunity be taken to remind Member States of the importance of peace and security, because sustainable development cannot be achieved in an environment of conflict or war

- Structural and systematic discrimination against women be addressed
 - A monitoring and accountability framework that is linked to international human rights mechanisms and based on partnership with all relevant stakeholders, including women's organizations, be adopted
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