



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 December 2013
English
Original: Spanish

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 *Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer y Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres* [“Foundation for Women's Studies and Research and Women's Network for Grass-roots Education”], 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

Equality for women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Millennium Development Goals are supposed to be fulfilled by 2015. As demonstrated in the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly held on 25 September 2013 at United Nations headquarters in New York, most countries are still a long way from achieving the proposed targets. In Latin America and the Caribbean many targets have not been met, particularly with respect to aspects that are most sensitive for women and girls such as:

- The persistence of poverty, which affects women and youth in particular. Yet even more serious than poverty is the inequality that exists in our countries. Our region has the highest degree of inequality in the world, despite the fact that poverty has declined in some countries. Inequality affects women and girls in particular, thereby perpetuating the exclusion of broad social sectors. Such exclusion will persist over succeeding generations if there is no change in the development model and no improvement in the distribution of resources;
- Reducing the devastation of the countryside and the oceans caused by climate change, which affects the poorest women and those who live in rural areas, compromising their quality of life and their health;
- The persistence of profound gender inequity that prevents women and girls from participating on a basis of parity with men in family, social, economic and political life;
- Discrimination against indigenous and Afro-descendent women, which makes existing inequalities between women and men in our region even worse;
- Lack of statistics broken down by sex, age, race and ethnic origin, which prevents a proper understanding of inequalities and the adoption of more appropriate policies;
- The high frequency of various forms of violence against women and girls, including the growing incidence of femicide without recognition, attention and adequate prevention, and persistent impunity for the aggressors;
- The still-high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity due in large part to complications from unsafe abortions and lack of proper health services. It is because the root causes are not being addressed that these rates are still so high. States must decriminalize abortion, and we call on Governments to revise their criminal legislation which condemns thousands of women, especially poor women, to suffer or die. It is imperative that Governments of the region provide for abortions in the cases permitted by law, something that is not now the case in most countries;
- The high prevalence of unplanned pregnancies and maternity among adolescents and girls at ever younger ages, often due to abuse or non-consensual sexual relations that condition the future of girls and adolescents in our region;
- The failure to guarantee sexual and reproductive rights and strong discrimination against the LGBTTT population that exists in countries of our region;

- The feminization of HIV/AIDS, discrimination that affects women living with HIV and the problems of accessing proper treatment, including access to antiretroviral drugs, sexually transmitted infections, prevention of cervical cancer and the violation of reproductive rights through forced sterilization, forced abortions and lack of access to advice and contraceptive methods for women living with HIV.

These pending issues must be incorporated into the sustainable development objectives to be prepared in connection with post-2015 activities.

We are discouraged to note that the document from the September 2013 High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly makes no mention of sexual and reproductive rights. While it highlights the importance of casting sustainable development in a human rights context, it ignores sexual and reproductive rights. As organizations devoted to protecting women's rights, we insist that sustainable development objectives should focus on all the rights of women, and especially on sexual and reproductive rights.

We also want to see a change in the development model that perpetuates inequality between rich and poor and that has its greatest impact on women, perpetuating their exclusion and marginalization.

Equality between women and men must be a fundamental consideration for the post-2015 period, especially in terms of women's access to decision-making positions in the world of work as well as in politics. Full equality for women will never be achieved if they are denied equal access to managerial positions in public and private enterprises, in labour unions, in Governments and parliaments.
