



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixtieth session

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Women’s Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The Women's Learning Partnership — 20 independent women's organizations including Peace International — Bethesda, Maryland, All Women's Action Society — Malaysia, Asmita Resource Centre for Women — India, Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc — Morocco, Association des Femmes Chefs de Famille — Mauritania, Aurat Foundation — Pakistan, Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan — Kyrgyzstan, Cidadania, Estudo, Pesquisa, Informação e Ação — Brazil, Collective for Research & Training on Development-Action — Lebanon, Forum for Women in Development — Egypt, Fórum Mulher — Mozambique, Foundation for the Support of Women's Work — Turkey, Groupe d'Initiatives pour le Progrès Social — Senegal, Shymkent Women's Resource Center — Kazakhstan, Sisterhood Is Global Institute — Jordan, The Center for Advancement of Development Rights — Nigeria, Women's Affairs Technical Committee — Palestine, Women and Youth Development Institute of Indonesia — Indonesia, Women's Self-Promotion Movement — Zimbabwe promoting rights, development, and peace in more than 40 countries — stands united in our call for global action in response to the proven link between women's empowerment and sustainable development. At this critical turning point in history, when it is no longer possible to separate human security from sustainable development, and sustainable development from the empowerment of the one half of humanity that has been systematically marginalized and disenfranchised, our thousands of activists and their constituencies seek to move the international community to the next stage of creative, collaborative, and effective actions necessary to establish lasting peace and development.

At this 60th session of the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women, the Women's Learning Partnership aspires to contribute to reorienting post-2015 decision-making processes that will ensure true collaboration between civil society and government policy-makers, bridging two worlds separated until now through institutional cultures and practices. For without standing face to face in wholehearted dialogue, neither alone can resolve the spread of religious and other forms of extremism compounded by poverty, the displacement of at least four million refugees, violence, and social polarization that now threaten the very freedoms, prosperity, and global security the United Nations has resolved since 1948 to promote and uphold across the globe.

As there is overwhelming evidence that empowering women is among the most effective ways to ensure sustainable development, women's empowerment should be of central import in any policy decision. And yet the consideration of women remains a low priority for most governments, especially when facing short term security decisions. But at every stage leading to our recent global security crises — from the seemingly minor decision within a family to send its eight-year-old daughter on a seven-mile journey for water instead of to learn to read; to a husband's legal ability to prevent his wife control over her own destiny and the small income that enters her hands; to the widow who looks back towards a country to which she can never return, and forward towards a wall of restrictions, a lack of resources, and the social ostracization of her family — the long-term effects of women's disempowerment have left our global communities vulnerable. They consistently undermine the goals of the many security treaties and agreements established by governments who excuse their overlooking of human rights and the condition of women by suggesting an overriding need for stability.

The resulting instability the global community currently faces can only be checked when both policy-makers and the constituents who influence them fully understand that empowering women will significantly contribute to sustainable development and lead to greater global security and are held accountable for their actions. The international community must require governments to implement the legal, political, social and institutional mechanisms that enable women's empowerment.

Congruently, member states must address an issue that is endemic across the globe and has prevented women at every stage of their lives from enjoying unfettered access to their human rights and from becoming fully contributing members of their societies, inhibiting their states' growth, development and security. The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls privately within the context of their families, and publicly, in relations with the state and social institutions, and in conflict and war, must be the focus of policy-makers if women are to be fully empowered. Building on the work of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, and the United Nations Millennium Development and Post-2015 Development Agenda, the Women's Learning Partnership proposes the following list of commitments and steps the international community can take to establish the conditions necessary for women to become the catalysts for lasting peace and security globally.

The Women's Learning Partnership reaffirms and supports the key recommendations of the United Nations World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2014: Gender Equality and Sustainable Development to:

- Develop and implement sustainable development policies that are in line with international norms and standards on gender equality, non-discrimination and human rights
- Ensure that macroeconomic policies create decent work and sustainable livelihoods and reduce inequalities based on gender, age, income and other contexts
- Promote decent green jobs and adequate wages for agricultural and informal workers, especially women, through labour market regulation and gender-responsive employment policies
- Ensure that sustainable population policies are grounded in sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the provision of universally accessible quality sexual and reproductive health services, information and education
- Ensure universal access to water, with a goal of reducing unpaid care work; to clean, private and safe sanitation for all women and girls that is responsive to gender-specific needs; and to efficient solid-fuel stoves or cooking technologies that use cleaner fuels and involve women in their design, testing and marketing.

The Women's Learning Partnership calls on the United Nations member states to establish and strengthen dialogue between governmental and non-governmental entities at the national and regional level on the fundamental link between sustainable development, women's empowerment and security by opening more

channels of communication and collaboration between civil society organizations and policy-makers.

- We encourage member states to establish programs, including colloquia, conferences, publications, and advocacy campaigns, to educate policy-makers and their constituents on the critical necessity of working closely with civil society to empower women in order to ensure lasting development and security.

The Women's Learning Partnership calls on United Nations member states to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of women and girls and put an end to the systematic use of violence against women as a tool of warfare.

- We urge member states to address all forms of gender-based violence through political, legal and social mechanisms by becoming signatories to and upholding the mandates of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; and Articles 1 and 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provide definitions for violence against women.
- We urge international political and community leaders to use the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women as a means of mobilizing their constituents to stop violence against women and to educate the public about the fundamentally dependent relationship between women's empowerment, development, and security.

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