



## **Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General  
17 November 2015

Original: English

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### **Commission on the Status of Women**

#### **Sixtieth session**

14-24 March 2016

#### **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 Canadian Federation of University Women, Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia, International Network of Liberal Women, Soroptimist International and Stichting African Sky, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved if violence against women and girls is eradicated.

International Network of Liberal Women is a network of women worldwide whose main objective is to advance the empowerment of all women and girls worldwide and to develop women's awareness of their rights and political, economic, social and cultural responsibilities. The Network, which reinforces relationships and exchanges among women all over the world, believes there is a rich opportunity for women on all levels, especially through liberalism, to come together and share expertise for mutual benefit and empowerment of all women and girls.

The International Network of Liberal Women has previously addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council at its 27th Session through written and oral (15 September 2014) Statements on the necessity of the adoption of a broad international legal framework that addresses all forms of violence against women and girls and domestic violence. Such a legal framework should also be specific and concrete, by proposing standards that states should strive to achieve. It is essential such a legal framework contains prevention, protection, prosecution as well as an independent monitoring system.

The International Network of Liberal Women believes that the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Eliminating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence constitutes such a legal framework.

The statistics on violence against women are truly shocking. For instance more than 1 in 10 girls worldwide has experienced forced sexual activity, over 130 million women have experienced female genital mutilation and 700 million women alive today were married as children.

While the Network supports all efforts for reducing violence against women, it strongly believes that an all-encompassing international legal framework is the best way to anchor the required changes into national law and institutions. Having a universal framework that prescribes specific standards and can be monitored by an independent entity stands a much better chance of effecting societal change than local initiatives that lack legal and political backing or independent control mechanisms. International Network of Liberal Women believes that adopting the Istanbul Convention globally would close the existing gaps in international women rights legislation and would introduce an international accountability to ensure actual improvements are made. Besides to the Members of the Council of Europe the Istanbul Convention is open to accession by non-European countries and the European Union.

The Network brings to the attention the fact that gender inequality and violence against women and girls as well as domestic violence in many parts of the world is a major impediment to social and economic development and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Although adopting the Istanbul Convention around the world would not reach the Sustainable Development Goals by itself, it is effectively a prerequisite to the achievement of many of these goals, whether they address gender equality, poverty, well-being, equal access to education, inclusive economic growth, the reduction of inequality, sustainable communities or peaceful and inclusive societies.

International Network of Liberal Women therefore calls upon:

- United Nations to adopt the Istanbul Convention, so as to ensure all national Governments are obliged under international law to effectively address violence against women, through prevention, protection, prosecution and monitoring
  - All Governments of States to sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention and implement it by developing national legislation accordingly.
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