



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
5 December 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-first session

13-24 March 2017

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 Organization for Development and Capacity Building, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The Women Organization for Development and Capacity Building is a civil society organization established in 2004. It is a volunteer, non-governmental, non-profit organization. It is active in capacity building for women, education, health, protection, support, peace building, economic empowerment and poverty reduction in areas of conflict and wars in South Sudan before the separation, Darfur, South Kurdufan, Blue Nile, East Sudan (Kassala and Red Sea) and the outskirts of the state of Khartoum. It has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and participated in the fifty-sixth, fifty-seventh, fifty-eighth and sixtieth sessions of the Economic and Social Council as well as in sessions of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The Organization seeks to develop and build the capacities of women in all areas. It attaches special importance to economic empowerment because of its direct effect on family stability, as most of the persons affected by conflicts are women and children. It does so with a view toward the challenges facing such empowerment against the backdrop of global changes.

A key priority of the Organization concerning economic empowerment is the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Organization has therefore sought to mobilize the productive capacities of women to achieve the first goal (no poverty), second goal (zero hunger), eighth goal (decent work and economic growth), twelfth goal (responsible consumption and production) and the seventeenth goal (partnership for the goals). The Organization has implemented many projects to achieve the first, second and eighth goals through the creation of small enterprises (household agriculture, livestock production, food processing, sewing and embroidery, and the transfer of ownership of means of production), benefiting 15,386 women; 9,000 women have benefited from the Organization's food security, livelihood methods and job creation project; 151,137 women and 216,320 children have benefited from the Organization's distribution of food and school meals; and 7,370 women have benefited from the establishment of rural savings and loan associations for women in Darfur, South Kurdufan and Blue Nile.

Measures undertaken by the Organization to achieve the twelfth goal include:

- Organizing Training programmes to enhance women's capacities.
- Evaluating the climate to help women select appropriate locations for agricultural projects and crops suited to the climate.
- Raising women's awareness of labour rights and laws to enable them to join unions and demand their rights.
- Marketing produce to increase income and encourage production to improve living conditions and create jobs.

Regarding realization of the seventeenth goal, the Organization has implemented projects through partnerships with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations World Food Programme, the Sudanese Humanitarian Funding Programme, Practical Action, World Vision and the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security. All of these efforts face local and international challenges owing to global changes, particularly the following:

- Political changes that affect countries, particularly at the level of the local, regional and global economy.
- Conflicts within and between States, which create instability that adversely affects the economy.
- Climate and environmental change, which affects agriculture and livestock.
- International relations driven by interests and passions that are a far cry from traditional moral conceptions of relations between States, resulting in the imposition of economic sanctions and blockades on states.
- States that seek economic hegemony and reject international laws that conflict with their agendas.

We are nonetheless working hard to surmount these local and global challenges. We have succeeded in making important economic development strides among women, which have raised household income and achieved a measure of family stability and peaceful coexistence in our areas of operation.

We have an effective staff and a broad base of volunteers in our areas of operation and have, since 2004, been well accepted among all communities and tribes in Darfur and in the displaced persons camps, where we provide integrated services in community projects that have clear, lasting effects that serve sustainable development. We are currently intensifying our efforts as a civil society organization in the areas where we are active; but certain humanitarian volunteer organizations, which also have advisory capacity and carry out humanitarian work in many communities, have created a difficult situation for us. These organizations accuse one of the parties to the conflict of using chemical weapons in Darfur. They do so without regard for the accuracy of this accusation, and without having it confirmed by their fellow civil society organizations present in the areas where the use of chemical weapons has been alleged. As result of such serious, unfounded accusations, citizens are deprived of the services of humanitarian action organizations, which fear the adverse effects of chemical weapons on their staff and volunteers. We, as a civil society organization that has consultative status, condemn this baseless accusation. We do so on the basis of our current field presence in the areas of Nertiti, Tor, Guldo, Rokoro, Golo, Salu, Fashasha al-Suq, Daya and Bori, including areas to which the accusation refers. We confirm that no such weapons have had any adverse effects on any of our staff or volunteers or the communities in which we provide services. We call upon the humanitarian action organizations to respect the Sudanese Voluntary and Humanitarian Work Act and the rules and regulations of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. We further call upon them to consider accuracy when they collect information, to select information from reliable sources and to refrain from becoming involved in political conflicts between States.