



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2016

Original: English

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 Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives en Famille, 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

Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives en Famille is a non-denominational, non-profit European federation of parent and carer non-governmental organizations seeking recognition for unpaid work.

This year's priority theme for the Commission for the Status of Women is women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. United Nations bodies and agencies have worked to highlight this issue, and to establish the need for a social protection floor as well as rights and access to quality work and equal pay. The Expert Group Meeting held in September 2016 in preparation for this meeting highlighted that care and domestic work are an important part of the picture.

Care and related domestic work are a benefit to those who need care, their families and society. Good quality care is provided on an unpaid basis, but this work is still not equally valued or recognised by the Member States despite the many reaffirmations of the Beijing Platform for Action, which includes specific objectives for the inclusion of unpaid work in relevant statistics (see for example Strategic Objective H3). When seeking to change economic policy and promote education and paid work, schemes are often not successful on the ground as the caring responsibilities of target populations plans have not been taken into account. In any event, key issues remain with respect to the invisibility of unpaid work and the lack of gender balance of caregivers.

There are direct costs to providing care, which include loss of income and, in some countries, increased tax rates for single-income households. There are often higher running costs associated with care: electricity, medical and transport costs are higher than they would be in households with no caring responsibilities.

It is extremely important to take care into account as the caregiver pay gap (i.e. the gap between the incomes of caregivers and non-caregivers) is even larger than the gender pay gap. And gender equality in pay does not correspond to equality in poverty rates: even in countries with very low gender pay gaps, single parents, women caregivers and elderly women are overrepresented among groups most at risk of poverty.

The agreed conclusions of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, the Review theme for this session, included specific references to the importance of care, including:

- 14. The Commission recognizes that care work, both paid and unpaid, and care services are of key importance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, and further recognizes that caregiving is a critical societal function which involves shared responsibility.
- 28. The Commission is concerned that several critical issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women were not adequately addressed by the Millennium Development Goals such as, inter alia: ... women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid work, particularly unpaid care work...

- Continue to develop and enhance standards and methodologies, for use at national and international levels, to improve data, inter alia, on women's poverty, income distribution within households, unpaid care work, women's access to, control and ownership of assets and productive resources, and women's participation at all levels of decision-making, including to monitor progress on the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls

The fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women also called for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives en Famille Recommendations

The emerging theme of this session is the empowerment of indigenous women. Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives en Famille requests that the Commission recognise the importance of the transmission and expression of intangible heritage, including language, through caregiving and that the Commission of the Status of Women conclusions reflect respect and support for diversity, to ensure that indigenous women have the legal and economic right to make decisions affecting their caregiving responsibilities.

Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives en Famille asks that United Nations Member States fulfil the obligations they have agreed under the Beijing Platform for Action, especially Strategic Objective H3, as well as the many other outcome documents of successive meetings of the Commission for the Status of Women. Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives en Famille also requests the implementation of the Agreed Conclusions of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women with respect to unpaid caregiving and related work by United Nations bodies and agencies and Member States.
