



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

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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”**

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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

### **Women's economic empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean.**

In September 2015, the States of the world approved the Sustainable Development Agenda and they committed to carrying out the necessary actions in order to have a more egalitarian, poverty free world with a development model protecting the environment and improving people's lives.

The implementation of the Agenda 2030 for the next fifteen years lands in Latin America and the Caribbean at a time of economic deceleration, volatile macroeconomic conditions and vulnerability due to international prices of goods for export significantly decreasing. In this context states will find themselves with less resources for implementation and enforcement of policies. Public expenditures may be reduced, especially policies for equality. However, Sustainable Development Goals may become an opportunity to level equality and sustainability and put them in the core of attention and policies; therefore, it is suggested to include an equality perspective in macro-politics and pay more attention to the distributive effects of them.

Policies for eliminating poverty must be linked to policies of economic investment, debt, trade, taxes and include women in an egalitarian way to elaborate and apply policies that foster the sustained growth and address the structural causes of poverty. We recommend linking the notion of poverty with inequalities and policies of investment, debt, tax and furthermore, that women in poverty are incorporated in an egalitarian way to elaborate and apply policies that promote sustained growth and address the structural causes of poverty. The formulation and application of policies and programs must also involve and articulate with key sectors and actors, including women's organizations and grass roots groups.

All people, particularly the poor and more vulnerable, will have the same rights to economic resources and also access to basic services, to property and control of lands and other goods, heritage, natural resources, new adequate technologies and financial services, including micro financing as target 1.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals state. In order to achieve that, public expenditure must be reformed to adapt to equality in economic, social and cultural rights. A special mention should be given to access of rural, remote and urban women to financial services, as well as the development of small business capacity. In this regard, indigenous women are carriers of traditional knowledge, capable of improving their situation and development.

We recommend promoting the access of women to productive resources, as well as collecting all data according to sex, age and culture on poverty that will allow the linkage of poverty with gender inequalities. We also recommend promoting mobilization and advocacy actions by women's and feminists' organizations and including measures for the access of rural and urban women to financial services, especially indigenous and Afro-descendant, considering the adequate information and the creation of mechanisms of control for the operation of these entities.

Economic autonomy of women and promoting organizations as cooperatives and other collectives for the creation of income and the enjoyment of economic

rights, require improving the capacity of women in handling new technologies, especially indigenous, Afro-descendent, disabled women and women with different sexual orientation and of different ages. In a framework of search for equality, it is required to recognize and value the relationship between the production of goods and services done in the market and the production of them in households (social reproduction), and the need to start institutional reforms that give women the full enjoyment of their economic rights as access and control of lands and other economic goods as established in target 5.a of the Sustainable Development Goals. This measure will increase productivity and the sustainable development of countries.

Indigenous women, who are in the worst situation of exclusion and vulnerability, do not want to fall behind on the implementation of the 2030 agenda; this is why they are calling to be included in investments for the development of their own capabilities for counting on a sustainable economy. Their knowledge about biodiversity on food and medicinal herbs, production techniques and food transformation, textile management and indigenous knowledge for the mitigation and adaptation of climate change, are contributions that deserve being encouraged through concrete public policy, as subjects of change for development.

We consider the recognition of care and unpaid family work, with the provision of public services, allocation of funds of social infrastructure, elaboration and implementation of policies of social protection a great advance. We recommend the application of educational policies that change the division of labour that promote the shared responsibilities within families to overcome gender stereotypes and recognize care as a right for all, in all stages of life, and a three party responsibility among families, the State and society. We recognize the need of improving the use of technology, specifically information and communication technologies. In this regard, we propose states incorporate data on information technology and communication disaggregated by sex, age and culture and carry out affirmative actions of training women on new technologies.

Sustainable Development Goal 8 proposes “Promoting sustained and sustainable economic growth, full employment and decent work for all”. Therefore, it is important to take into account that in Latin America and the Caribbean, 54% of informal work is done by women. (ECLAC, 2014). This is directly linked to domestic and unpaid care work that mainly falls on women and prevents them from having access to equal working conditions as men.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, ensuring decent full employment for women is a great challenge. In the region, the level of informal female employment is very high and it means that half of working women on their diversities do not have social protections. Women work mainly in domestic service, especially women in poverty. Therefore, we recommend that states in the region ratify International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 189 and Recommendation 201 on domestic workers that promote equal treatment. Moreover, it is important that advances are made through legislation that enforces the equal of rights of women domestic workers.

Equality in payment for the same job established by ILO Convention 100 has been claimed by many other international and regional instruments but still hasn't been achieved by most countries.

Sustainable Development Goal 10 refers to ‘Reducing inequality within and among countries’ and proposes in target 10.2 ‘empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status’. We suggest that the States review the fiscal system in countries to verify their relation or not with gender inequalities. We suggest that they incorporate policies of equal employment as a way of overcoming discriminations.

Concluding, in view of the imminent period of economic deceleration in the region, with the volatility of the macroeconomic conditions and the possible reduction of resources for the application and implementation of policies on equality, the Agenda for Development represents an opportunity to equate the place of equality and sustainability and to put them in the centre of attention and of policies. Therefore, we recommend including in macro policies an equality approach and devoting more attention to the distributive effects of them.

If eliminating poverty is a key goal, policies that attempt to comply with that must be aligned with economic policies of investment, debt, trade, taxes and incorporate women in an egalitarian way and apply policies that foster sustained growth and that address the structural causes of poverty. In this regard it is necessary to eliminate the factors that exclude women in all aspects.

It is essential that the right to economic resources is guaranteed and, therefore, develop specific measures that allow rural and urban women to access technical and financial services. In this framework it is key to promote partnership and cooperation and allocate designated budget items to guarantee the access to economic rights that account for the economic autonomy of women.

The Agenda 2030 is ambitious, but in order for it to be realized, what was fragmented must be now unified. The commitments that countries have made over the past 20 years on specific topics were combined in the Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 so that in 2030 the world can be a more liveable place for all people.