



## 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”**

### **Statement submitted by International Federation for Home Economics, 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**

### **Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls**

The International Federation for Home Economics demands that women and girls be empowered, that their needs and rights be kept in focus to harness their potential and importance for sustainable development.

#### **Unpaid and Domestic Work — Workload of Women**

From its foundation, Home Economics engages with studies related to time, work and resource management in households. Research shows that in most countries of the world, the major part of the unpaid work at home, i.e. cooking meals, child care and care for relatives, is done by women even if they participate in paid work outside work as well.

Women comprise on average 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, and produce more food for household consumption than men, however, they are often regarded as family members who “help with farming”.

Women often do the most labour-intensive tasks and produce up to 89% of the food in some African countries (FAO). They are further overrepresented in low paid work such as part-time and seasonal work (FAO, 2011). As a result, women often suffer from triple responsibilities the sum of which is burdensome in most instances: domestic work, paid work, with their wages being lower than those of men, and child/relative care work.

Especially unpaid care and domestic work is often challenging, and not adequately recognised and valued and does not lead to a sufficient pension (UN General Assembly, 2013). In all countries women need to be unburdened in tasks such as child care, time management and housekeeping especially because these take up long hours in the day.

At the minimum, women cry out for respect and recognition of their vital contribution to wider societal development and sustainability.

#### **Equal Rights for Men and Women — Access to Resources, Land and Leadership**

Women are heads of more and more households worldwide. Many households are dependent on female income, either as sole income or as significant supplement to the family income.

Poor families headed by women in developing countries, especially in rural areas, are facing poverty, malnutrition and exclusion, loss of status and lack of land-rights. Often they are vulnerable to forced marriage or rape. This can be due to discrimination by both national governments and faith-based organizations.

This often results from laws and policies, inheritance laws as well as social norms and practices, which discriminate and disenfranchise women. Women, who have to care for their family and generate income need full access to ownership and control over land, and equal rights to economics resources, financial services, credit, inheritance and natural resources to succeed (UN HRC, 2012).

The Way forward: Expectations and specific Recommendations for Policymakers from the Perspective of International Federation for Home Economics

Following the Beijing Platform for Action and the aims set by the Development Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals the International Federation for Home Economics recommends the following:

- Recognize and support the important role and the high, often underutilized productive potential of women as key players for reaching sustainable development goals.
- Ensure that all girls and women of the world receive education to improve their everyday life management for the benefit of their household members and communities.
- Build on partnerships between women and men to achieve development opportunities for the whole community.
- Promote gender equality agenda to improve women's access to capital, resources, credit, land, technology, information, technical assistance and training.
- Women farmers need training in the production of commodity crops, such as cocoa, coffee and cotton so that they can benefit from selling in international markets.
- Strengthen the empowerment of women as key actors for social, economic and sustainable development.
- Acknowledge the importance of education in Home Economics subjects to improve food security, eradicate poverty, and improve in quality of life.
- To ensure that rural women are not left behind by the SDGs, all data relating to gender equality and women and girls' empowerment should be disaggregated between rural and urban women.

Recommendations for Home Economists and Home Economics teachers, Home Economics associations and International Federation for Home Economics how they can support transforming our world

In addition, Associated Country Women of the World points out that these recommendations must be linked to the indicators, which are used to measure the progress in achieving the targets.

The indicators of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations related to Sustainable Development Goal 5 are:

- 5.a 1% of people with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land by sex;
- 5.a 2% of countries where the legal framework guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control.

Recommendations:

- Maintain an advocacy role in respective countries through Planning and Development agencies, Ministries with responsibilities for Agriculture, Child Welfare, economic and social well-being, health and education, communication and technologies and labour and compensation equity among other relevant agencies.
- Partner with other non-governmental organizations to strengthen the call by the United Nations to improve the lot of women and children for the universal development of families in a progressively sustained way.
- Use their research agenda and publication activities to publicise undesirable practices social practices of discrimination against all gender groups.
- Devise creative solutions to the existing problems and practice such solutions in visible ways both in personal, community and national levels as appropriate.
- Promote gender equality at homes, communities and the societies at large in a contextually relevant manner.
- Promote boys' and girls' access to quality Home Economics education at all levels, starting from primary education.
- Enhance the role of women in economic development through vocational education and training in Home Economics related fields.

**Closing**

In recent years the synergies between gender equality, women's empowerment and various levels of sustainability, i.e., economic, social and environmental, was increasingly acknowledged. The important multifaceted role of women and girls in the household, community and larger society underlines the need to empower them through education in day-to-day life management, in resource management and in increasing their economic capacity through access to vocational training, and in raising their awareness on their contribution to wider societal development.

Gender equality and empowerment starts with self-respecting women themselves, before it moves to the home, the wider community and transforming society. Societies that empower women give them equal legal rights, access to resources including land ownership, creates policies that removes all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and ensure that boys are not alienated but grow up valuing and respecting women and girls.

These are the conditions for women to reach their full potential and achieve sustainable development.

The International Federation for Home Economics demands that women and girls be empowered, that their needs and rights be kept in focus to harness their potential and importance for sustainable development.