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Statement submitted by International Federation of Business and Professional Women, 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.

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Statement

Introduction

International Federation of Business and Professional Women supports statements of our sister organizations on increasing the number of women in decision-making and management and prevention of any kind of violence against women. We, however, focus here on issues that are close to our heart and have not received as much attention.

International Federation of Business and Professional Women stresses that women should be supported in their role as actors, not only as beneficiaries or victims. We unconditionally support the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as defined in Transforming Our World — the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We emphatically support the implementation of the:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the Optional Protocol;
- Beijing Platform for Action;
- International Labour Organization (ILO) Decent Work Agenda and the importance of the ILO Resolutions No. 100 on Equal Pay and No. 111 on Discrimination in the Labour Market; and
- Women's Empowerment Principles.

1. Management of and control over natural resources and basic services

Key to women's empowerment is access to water and energy and land ownership. Although this has been acknowledged many times in policy documents, it has not been put in practice.

Across the globe, there are millions of water and sanitation related jobs ensuring that water is made available every day. According to the ILO's World Water Development Report, 75% of the jobs in the world are water-dependent. But the percentage of women in paid green jobs is extremely low. In many regions, women's care work includes water use and management: cooking, cleaning and laundry, which require fetching and hauling water. In spite of this, women remain insufficiently recognized and involved in environmental policy making and environmental management. This must change. Achieving environmental sustainability, gender equality and women's empowerment are closely intertwined.

- Ensure not only the number of women participating on user boards but also make certain that they have a real voice and role in decision-making;
- Advocate measures to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, modern and renewable energy and water services for all uses;
- Raise the awareness of women about the environment and climate change.

2. Formal and Informal Education

Through education, women and girls can develop skills needed for success in the world of work. Education and training should take into account that the

employment needs of women to be successful vary from place to place, and should be tailored appropriately. Target 4.3 states that by 2030 there must be equal access for all women and men, including immigrants, to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university; Target 4.4 states by 2030, the number of youth and adults, including immigrants, who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship must be substantially increased.

- Ensure quality education at all levels for girls and women, including STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics — we would also like to include Environment and Manufacturing), and educational programs to increase the digital and scientific literacy of women and girls;
- Create vocational training programs for non-traditional jobs. According to the latest figures of the ILO, only 17% of the workforce in energy and water are women. On the other hand, we know there is going to be a huge shortage (100s of thousands) of trained professionals in the water and energy sector. There is huge potential there especially at mid-level management and needed experts;
- Examine all curricula in order to eliminate all gender stereotypes. A module on gender equality should be added to all curricula that are used in formal, informal, vocational, adult and in-service training and educational programs;
- Provide incentives for lifelong learning and development of leadership skills;
- Promote the culture of entrepreneurship through the school and university curricula in the educational system;
- Establish Business Development Centres and Business Incubators for young women entrepreneurs.

3. Women Empowerment Principles and Decent Work

Provide decent work and a safe workplace for woman and men, including immigrants, according to ILO's decent work agenda. During the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, decent work and the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda — employment creation, social protection, human rights at work, and social dialogue — became integral elements of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda calls for the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work. Key aspects of decent work are embedded in the targets of many of the other 16 goals of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

Promote the UN Women and United Nations Global Compact Initiative on Women's Empowerment Principles by companies and government as employers:

- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality;
- Treat all women and men fairly at work - respect and support human rights and non-discrimination;
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers;
- Promote education, training and professional development for women;

- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women;
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy;
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

4. Equal Pay for Equal Work and Work of Equal Value

Unpaid care work shapes the types of jobs that can be undertaken by women. Because there is no monetary remuneration, it reduces the voice of the worker, usually a woman, over decision-making and impacts her ability to accumulate savings and assets. Regarded as a woman's "natural" work performed in the private sphere of the family, unpaid care work entails a transfer of hidden subsidies to the rest of the economy that goes unrecognized.

Governments need to create conditions to improve the economic independence of all women, including migrant workers, documented and undocumented, as a condition for equality between men and women. Such conditions must include equal employment in the formal economy, equal pay, pension, poverty alleviation strategies, accessible and affordable child and elder care, social and health services, and generous maternity leave benefits. Employment guarantee programs can provide support by constructing the required assets and infrastructure like water supply at the doorstep. Therefore,

- Appropriate measures to reduce and close the gender pay gap must be taken;
- Occupational segregation must be eliminated;
- Consultations and negotiations with employees' representatives to provide women workers a voice in identifying and moving gender gaps need to be available;
- Harmonization among business and private lives for women and men promoting work-life balance and addressing traditional care roles of women and men need to be provided;
- The gender pension gap must be reduced. In the short run, poverty alleviation strategies should function as a safety net for people at risk of falling into poverty, the majority of whom are women. Reducing the gender pay gap will have a considerable effect in closing the gender pension gap;
- Legal and affirmative measures and governmental subsidies to improve child and elderly care systems and to provide parental leave benefits need to be established in order to create appropriate infrastructures for parents to reconcile work and family life;
- Because unpaid domestic work is mainly done by women hampering their aspirations in the labour market, there must be appropriate actions and infrastructures to reconcile work and family life;
- Minimum wage standards need to be established including domestic and agricultural workers made up of primarily immigrants and women;
- Promote financial inclusion for women entrepreneurs by providing funds and collateral schemes;

- Develop gender sensitive procurement policies to empower women vendors in supply chains;
- Support initiatives that are established to enable women entrepreneurs for accessing updated market information and creating value-added products.

5. Women on Boards

Women are still underrepresented in management positions and on boards.

- Provide the equal representation of women and men on boards of governments, universities and private and public corporations by 2020 through appropriate binding and legal measures and affirmative action at country and regional levels.

6. Data, Monitoring and Evaluation

Gender-differentiated statistics and indicators must be collected nationally, regionally and globally and made available in order to measure gender gaps and consequently adjust development programmes to rectify inequalities to ensure women's empowerment in the world of work.

- Compile transparent gender disaggregated data on the basis of age, sex, geography, income, disability, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity and other factors relevant to monitoring inequalities;
- Develop gender-differentiated indicators to determine whether inequality between the sexes has increased or decreased over time in the employment sector, including access to productive resources and wage ratios.

Conclusion

Equality between women and men is regarded as a basic and inviolable human right. In our increasingly globalized and interconnected world, utilizing all social, environmental and economic assets is vitally important to achieve the sustainable development goals. Despite the progress in gender equality in the last two decades, women still face violence, discrimination, exclusion and alienation. In labour markets, gender inequality is still a controversial issue both for employment or entrepreneurship. As the world moves toward the achievement of the 2030 agenda, the increasing contribution of women has to be realized to build stronger communities and a stronger global economy. The Sustainable Development goals cannot be achieved without the participation of women.

Co-signed by Women for Water Partnership