



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 December 2017

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-second session

12–23 March 2018

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 Institute of Cultural Affairs International, 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

Transformation of Ukraine: New Opportunities for Women Living in Rural Areas

A large community of Ukrainian women from among the government, business and civil society expressed their readiness to actively participate in the sixty-second Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in order to integrate the world's best practices in human development in rural areas of Ukraine. In our opinion, this is necessary:

- Establishing close contact with the Commission on the Status of Women for the possibility of obtaining of the Economic and Social Council.
- Establishing business ties that are practically oriented towards the development of human potential and looking for hidden resources.
- Creation of international programs for the development of local communities and their effective implementation in small towns and rural areas of Ukraine.

Ukraine, like many other countries, is at the point of bifurcation. Ukrainian women are increasingly asking themselves questions:

- “Why and what for do people, especially leaders, act in one way or another, and how does this relate to the thoughts and attitudes of regular people?”
- “What tools, models, technologies, approaches are most effective for resolving territorial conflicts and establishing peace processes of the country's development?”
- “What is the role of every woman in the socio-economic growth of Ukraine's well-being?”

Today, Ukrainian women are taking the lead in the transformation of Ukraine. They readily support the integration of their experience, knowledge and intellect into the world community. Due to living on the territory of a geopolitical breakdown and armed conflict they understand that only by combining efforts one can achieve restoration and preservation of peace in the country. In many respects, the revival of Ukraine is the revival of women in Ukrainian villages.

As a result, twenty-five years of running the country, focused on meeting the private interest of individuals, we now have:

- reduction of the population of Ukraine by more than 5 million people
- the annexation of the Crimea and the Russian armed invasion of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Ukraine
- the emergence of 1.5 million internally displaced persons from zones of armed conflict
- more than 10 000 deaths of Ukrainians in the war zone in the East of Ukraine

The economic gap between the poor and the rich is growing rapidly. Corruption piercing all layers of society enables the criminal world to manage our state and to seriously interfere with the country's reform processes. This, in its turn, leads to the loss of real independence of Ukraine, the loss of reputation in the eyes of foreign partners, and makes it impossible for a stable growth of economic indicators in the regions.

At the same time, the Ukrainian society is consolidating and looking for effective ways to counteract the flawed system of governing the country. Women are increasing their activity, seeking effective ways of interaction and mutually beneficial partnership among themselves.

A woman in Ukraine is a Heart of the family, the house and land. Men calmly perceive women as equal partners alongside themselves in business, public projects, public administration, and even as their leaders. Women make 54 per cent of Ukraine's population. The following figures speak about their role in the life of modern Ukrainian society. About 45 per cent of women are active participants in the Revolution of Values of 2013-2014, 72 per cent of volunteers are women. 84 per cent of women are in the light and food industries, about 78 per cent of women are middle-level managers, over 75 per cent of women are employees of rural administrations, 23 per cent of women are leaders of Ukrainian enterprises, 16 per cent of women want to invest in their own business, 45 per cent of small businesses are owned by women, 80 per cent of participants in educational programs - women.

Ukraine has 41.8 million hectares of agricultural land, 69 per cent of the country's total land fund. The share of agricultural products in the country's foreign trade is over 19.7 per cent. Agriculture is an industry with stable upward dynamics. At the same time, Ukraine, with 90 per cent of its area being rural areas with a third of the population, and 53 per cent of them women, has low level support for agriculture. 40 per cent of rural women in Ukraine have high education, 18 per cent of farms are headed by women. Even though rural women are focused on their family and their household, they are repaying their loans with responsibility.

Currently in Ukraine, there is a large income gap between the city and the village. The poverty level in rural areas is almost twice that in urban areas, the average daily consumption of a rural resident is less than 4 euros. A great danger for rural regions is the massive outflow of specialists from different levels from villages to European countries. This has already led to a shortage of specialists. For example, in some regions, the number of doctors is less than 40 per cent of the required number; paramedic posts do not have paramedics and nurses. This requires a search for new approaches to the organization of local self-government to strengthen the cadre in the village, as well as to increase the responsibility of rural communities in matters of ecology, health and the development of new directions for women's social entrepreneurship in the countryside.

Since April 1, 2014 in Ukraine, the Local Self-Government Reform started, which opened many new opportunities for the development of rural areas and, in particular, it increased the social activity of rural women. The new territorial units (joint territorial communities), created within the framework of the Reform, increased their budgets by more than 7 times, which made it possible in just 2 years to repair many roads, communal property objects, schools, hospitals, provide water and gas supply to the homes of its residents, made administrative services more accessible, and also made 100 per cent coverage of the Internet possible. And most importantly, the Reform enabled 54 per cent of women in rural areas to take the leading position in local government.

The obsolete rural clubs are transformed into the Centers for Leisure and Development. In most cases, in such Centers active rural women organize interest groups for people of all ages, self-development trainings, discussion platforms.

50 per cent of Ukrainian women are active users of social media. The most popular resources of social communication are Facebook, Instagram, Google+,

Twitter. The emerging opportunity for free access to the Internet through modern communications (smartphone, computer) opens rural education for women in rural areas, enables them to find ways to optimize the family budget, expand their business partners and build communication with the international community.

A large number of foreign missions and international donors, currently providing technical assistance in Ukraine's reform, focus their main efforts on public and business projects that are being implemented in villages with the active participation of women. Because of this activity, there is an increase in the number of new farms due to internally displaced people from the war zone in the East of Ukraine, where women occupy a leading position.

In the context of Ukraine's multilevel reforming, an important role is played by the presence of women's strategic vision, understanding their own barriers and limitations, and the ability to find effective solutions to overcome them. The desire of women is to take leading positions in the upper echelons of state power (the representation of women today is 11.8 per cent). In Ukraine, the women's political lobby is gaining strength, and the growth of professionalism in exercising civil control over the actions of bodies of all levels of government.

The International Institute of Cultural Affairs, which unites 42 countries around the Technology of Participation in the implementation of its mission "Development of Human Potential", for five years of active work in Ukraine implemented many different initiatives for the development of local communities at the level of "power-business-community".

World experience of more than 1,500 facilitators of the International Institute of Cultural Affairs was gathered in a technology is successfully working today in thousands of organizations. More than 1000 facilitators work in Ukraine, and as many are working in the post-Soviet countries in projects of local and state development.

This allows realizing universal democratic values in the everyday life of local communities, and also makes it possible to implement the goals of the United Nations in the field of human rights and sustainable development until 2030 in Ukraine.
