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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Institut Jules-Destrée, 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.



Statement

Millennia2015, an action plan for women's empowerment

Millennia2015, "Women as Actors of Development for Global Challenges" is a forward-looking research process, a think-and-action tank created and set in motion in 2007 by Institut Destrée, a pluralistic European research centre based in Wallonia and an official non-governmental organization (NGO) partner of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that has been in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since August 2012. The Millennia2015 process, which has been developed in collaboration with its international partners, is in three phases: "information transfer", "knowledge process" and "intelligence platforms". These phases correspond to three international conferences organized by Institut Destrée: the first was held in March 2008 in Liège, the second under UNESCO patronage at its headquarters in Paris on 3 and 4 December 2012 (including certificate courses and specific meetings on 5 and 6 December at UNESCO) on "Millennia2015, an Action Plan for the Empowerment of Women", while the third is set for 2015 at the United Nations in New York; it will look at the overall results expected by 2025 of the proposed action plan. Its multilingual portal is at <http://www.millennia2015.org>.

Millennia2015 contributed to the Commission on the Status of Women in 2010 under the auspices of the International Organization of the Francophonie. In November 2012, Millennia2015's "network of volunteer researchers" comprised 1,104 contributors to its think tank, 2,936 members and 9,498 contacts in 114 countries and regions, as well as upwards of 400 registrants at the international conference organized in Paris, under UNESCO patronage, on 3 and 4 December 2012.

Action learning, societal balance, change in men's mentality

Whereas it is important to recognize that women and men are partners with equal rights at all levels of private, professional and public life; to accept that women have degrees, jobs or incomes that are equal or even superior to those of the men around them, and the latter do not feel diminished thereby; to mobilize the media so that they report innovative information produced by women on the same footing as men; to persuade the media to stop reinforcing gender stereotypes; to support women in their efforts to escape poverty; to encourage women in their empowerment efforts despite social pressures; to stop using women and girls as a weapon of war in political and ethnic conflicts; to combat sexual violence by men against women and girls in their region by all means necessary; to provide redress to women and girls that are victims of sexual violence in terms of law, justice and health care; to provide equal opportunities to girls and boys in all areas; to give girls their legitimate right to education, teaching and training, from primary school to university; to educate people so as to change customary attitudes that discriminate against women and girls; to integrate right behaviour and respect for human rights, particularly those of women and girls, into core curricula; to mobilize women and families and convince them of the need for family planning; to recognize and value women's capacity as creators of the future; to change the attitudes of

men and boys from the earliest stages of their education so that they will recognize and respect women and girls as their equals in rights, skills and abilities; to stamp out misogyny and sexist societal structures; to bring men and boys to respect and promote the equality of women and men at all levels; to include women's skills and quotas for women in all countries' labour forces and employment values; to convince parents of the importance of education for their daughters as well as their sons; to equitably take advantage of women's participatory skills in decision-making; to recognize, heed and strengthen the skills of rural women; to respect and enforce the rights of older women and widows; and to balance the quotas of men and women in all decision-making bodies,

We deem it necessary, through Millennium2015, to change mindsets, to educate and involve society, especially men and boys, in eradicating gender discrimination, harmful traditional attitudes to women and girls, and all sexual violence in all contexts: family, society, conflict and war; so that girls and women are respected and enjoy equal human rights as well as equal opportunities for access to health, education, employment, independent living and decision-making.

Societal transformations

Whereas it is important to help women in war-torn countries to take responsibility as heads of household, even when poor, and to participate in economic development; to end wars and conflicts that destabilize women and their families by plunging them into poverty; to stop violence against girls, women and mothers; to enact laws with funding provisions to protect women and girls from female genital mutilation, early marriage and female infanticide; to spur women's economic, political and social achievements in countries dominated by conflict; to mobilize politicians at all levels to sustainably eradicate rape and violence against women; and to make positive reparation for rape and violence against women, through laws and courts and by allocating the necessary budget,

We deem it necessary, through Millennium2015, to conceptualize and implement the attitudinal changes needed to help women and men leaders to formalize, in law and behaviours, the eradication of rape and violence against women by men and boys unworthy of respect in conflict situations or in furtherance of an obscurantist position, while ensuring legal reparation and moral and financial compensation and recognizing the State's responsibility for safeguarding all citizens' integrity, both men and women, and for educating everyone in respect for others and for all human beings' fundamental rights.

Culture and society, discrimination and enhancement

Whereas it is important to cooperate with the guardians of customary culture on the transformation of men's habitual conduct towards women; to understand the basis of violence against women and girls; to formulate action to eradicate violence against women; to alleviate cultural constraints on women; to measure the effects of the advancement of women on the development of culturally Muslim societies; to ask religious and political

authorities to consider human rights and justice to be absolute values and practices, particularly as regards women and girls; to devise ways of enforcing already enacted laws to protect women by 2025; to adapt new practices to the cultural values of each country or region; to eradicate the spirit of hatred that may forestall all efforts to achieve peace and serenity unless all stakeholders gain a full understanding of the human issues; to bring the media to stop using easy and degrading images that are demeaning to women and girls, and to accept their responsibility as vehicles for education and citizenship by helping to reduce sexist stereotypes; to stop accusing and abusing women for spreading sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS, whereas men are equally likely to be carriers; to assimilate the fact that women and girls are human beings just as men and boys are, and to give real effect to human rights at all levels and in all cases; to induce male officials and policy makers to integrate women into conferences on conflict and peace, whose issues are of particular concern to them in regions in conflict; to enhance and encourage the access of women and girls, from every walk of life, able-bodied or disabled, to their own resources and training; to take into account women's ideas regarding social change for the future,

We deem it necessary, through Millennium2015, to hold discussions with the guardians of customary culture and religious authorities to transform men's hurtful conduct towards women, to analyse the roots of violence against women and girls in order to put an end to it, to make men understand that they are as much to blame for HIV/AIDS as women, so that solutions can be found, and to raise the media's ethical awareness so they will stop disseminating gender stereotypes.

It is our desire to present Millennium2015's action plans to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women so that it can work towards their collective and inclusive implementation by 2025.
