



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-first session

13-24 March 2017

**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 of Medical Students’ Association, 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.

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## **Statement**

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations welcomes and affirms the theme of "Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work" at the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

As future health-care providers, we acknowledge gender equality as a crucial issue which still remains to be addressed through recognition of gender as a social determinant of health. This social determinant functions not only as a barrier for women to access competent and sensitive health care but also for the development and progress of science, health promotion, and disease prevention in general.

We call upon Member States, non-governmental organizations and all relevant parties to recognize, rethink and react in order to enhance capacity development of women, and promote progress.

When we recognize, we expose the flaws that persist in our inherently patriarchal society; flaws that lead women to be treated inferiorly to men in the labour markets. While in 2013 male employment was above 70% globally, females barely crossed the 45% landmark. This drastic divide is attributable to systems that prioritize men with respect to wages, job opportunities, formation spaces, as well as the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and provide input. From the perspective of health care providers, female medical professionals face lower residency acceptance rates and professional recognition compared to their male peers.

When we rethink, we reconceptualize and examine the core values that education reflects from within our societies. We call upon those present to rethink the mission and vision of our education systems. We must identify and address the gaps in order to expose gender inequality in a working environment. Are these divergences evident to the eyes of students? Are students about to think critically about them? Can they act upon them from the formation period? We call all health-care providers to raise their voices for a better inclusion of women's realities within a health-care system, within a nation, within society, and we call upon health-care providers of all genders to recognize, uplift and support these voices as they are raised. Rethinking means the restructuring of a concept: the tearing down and rebuilding of our values.

Change is built upon reaction. We must react collaboratively as a community and as a society that embraces the importance of the social role that women have in sustainable development. In order to be effective, this reaction must be inclusive of all women regardless of skin colour, religion, ability, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, social status and other.

### **And so? Where to start?**

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations recognizes the importance of collaboration in realizing these goals. Member States and organizations must embrace the issues concerning women's socioeconomic empowerment collectively by constantly advocating to end policies that prevent women from freely expressing their rights, as well as policies which allow the systematic deterioration of core values.

As a youth-led organization, we stress the importance of the inclusion of young generations in the creation of viable and sustainable solutions to reach gender equality. Active empowerment of youth is critical to the completion of Sustainable Development Goal 5.

As future medical providers, we must discuss access to health care and the appropriation of women's bodies within the contexts of political movements/governments and human rights violations. In many ways health development and the defence of women's rights are also an important marker in health development and the well-being of the global community.

Recognize, rethink, and react — these are the actions and opportunities that we call upon those present to undertake. The realization of women's economic empowerment will not occur from a single action. However, by integrating our efforts and developing a solid foundation of common values and goals, we will be able to effectively mobilize the greatest of resources: passionate and knowledgeable teams of individuals.

Recognize oppression.

Rethink systems.

React in solidarity.

Thank you for your attention

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