



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

Twenty-first session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Women's Human Rights International Association (WHRIA), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 August 2012]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **Protecting the achievements of equality between women and men**

The women's equality movement has made great progress in all areas. Despite facing many obstacles to freedom and equality of women, this movement has had great achievements in various fields in all developing countries, particularly in the last decades of the last century. These accomplishments are the result of years of struggle by men and women who consider women's rights to be human rights and worked tirelessly in attaining them. To maintain and build on these achievements must be the priority of civil society, especially women's and human rights organizations.

Regression in the field of gender equality can be considered a real threat in countries that have faced sudden changes during the past few years. Although this threat exists for all social and civil achievements, when it comes to the women's equality movement such a regression can have a greater impact with dangerous repercussions for all of human society.

One of the excuses and pretexts which could threaten equality is the issue of different races and the cultural and religious differences amongst them.

Considering this fact, no social group has been hurt more by the types of violence listed in the declaration of human rights than women under the pretext of social differences. We refer once again to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Any kind of violence against human rights under the pretext of cultural differences should not be allowed.

Considering that establishing democracy in any society is directly related to role of women in that society, it is imperative that the United Nations and other human rights organizations pay special attention to this issue. In this regard, we request that the High Commissioner for Human Rights pay particular attention to this issue; cultural differences should not be allowed to affect gender equality issues.

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