



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 December 2009

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-fourth session

1-12 March 2010

Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*

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”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals

Statement by Armenian International Women’s Association, Associated Country Women of the World, Baha’i International Community, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, International Association of Women in Radio and Television, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, International Federation of University Women, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women’s Association, Soroptimist International, Trickle Up Program, United Nations Association of the United States of America, United States Committee for UNIFEM, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, World Federation of Ukrainian Women’s Organizations and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations 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.

* E/CN.6/2010/1.



Statement

1. We, international and national non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and members of the NGO Committee on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), call special attention to the many important contributions of UNIFEM both to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to the integration of the Millennium Development Goals into the international framework for the advancement of gender equality and women's human rights.

2. UNIFEM focuses its activities on one overarching goal: to support implementation, at the national level, of existing international commitments to advance gender equality. In support of this goal, UNIFEM works in the following thematic areas:

- (a) Enhancing women's economic security and rights;
- (b) Ending violence against women;
- (c) Reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women and girls;
- (d) Advancing gender justice through democratic governance in stable and fragile States.

3. UNIFEM views the human rights of women as the lens through which its work is carried out.

4. UNIFEM is active in all regions of the world and at the international, regional, national and global levels, working with countries to formulate and implement laws and policies to eliminate discrimination, promote gender equality in such areas as land and inheritance rights, ensure decent work for women and end violence against women. Through its programmes, UNIFEM also helps institutions to become more accountable on issues related to gender equality and women's rights, to strengthen the capacity and voice of women's rights advocates and to change harmful and discriminatory practices in society. A strong component of UNIFEM's work is its partnerships with women's organizations.

5. UNIFEM's activities are framed by two international agreements: the Beijing Platform for Action, resulting from the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, known as the women's bill of rights. The spirit of these agreements has been affirmed in the Millennium Declaration and in the eight Millennium Development Goals for 2015, which include combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and gender inequality, and building partnerships for development. In addition, Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009) on sexual violence in situations of conflict are crucial references for UNIFEM's work in support of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

6. UNIFEM's publications have progressively emphasized some aspects of the need to integrate the Millennium Development Goals into the more comprehensive framework for gender equality and women's empowerment contained in the Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other intergovernmental outcomes in order to

give countries a single, clear set of benchmarks for monitoring progress on these core concerns.

7. In its 2005 publication “Pathway to Gender Equality: CEDAW, Beijing and the MDGs”, UNIFEM emphasizes that the understanding and experience generated through the Beijing and the Convention processes can be used to better implement the gender equality obligations and commitments set out in the Millennium Declaration. In that publication, UNIFEM proposes two ways to enhance the synergy between the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention and the Millennium Development Goals: (a) by identifying connecting points between the three processes, including relating to monitoring and reporting; and (b) by highlighting some critical gender equality concerns for each Millennium Development Goal and pointing out specific measures that Governments have committed to take in these areas.

8. In its publication “Progress of the World’s Women 2002, Volume 2: Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals”, UNIFEM documented progress, or lack thereof, at the national level in meeting the Millennium Development Goals for women’s empowerment and gender equality. This publication also brought to the forefront a widely voiced concern of women’s equality advocates that the targets and indicators set for all of the Goals were inadequate for measuring and achieving the full scope of Goal 3, to “promote gender equality and empower women”.

9. In its publication “Progress of the World’s Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women?”, UNIFEM shows that realizing women’s rights and achieving the Millennium Development Goals depends on strengthening accountability for commitments made to women and gender equality. A core component of efforts to update the vision of the Millennium Declaration is to ensure the full participation of women in public decision-making at all levels and to hold to account those responsible for ignoring or violating women’s rights.

10. UNIFEM’s programmes support gender equality laws, national plans of action for gender equality and essential gender mainstreaming policies, but are also focused on working with partners to support implementation by increasing awareness and resources.

11. UNIFEM is currently studying the data and statistics being compiled on the Millennium Development Goals in order to support public policy formulation and accountability with a view to providing much-needed gender analysis and an understanding of the implications of that data.

12. In its work to advance implementation of the Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals, UNIFEM has targeted violence against women, sometimes called “the missing Millennium Development Goal”, as a root cause of gender inequality and an obstacle to engendering women’s rights worldwide. UNIFEM’s efforts in this critical area, including its management of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women and its “Say NO to Violence against Women” campaign, are important contributions to advancing women’s rights.

13. UNIFEM has supported the efforts that resulted in a resolution by the General Assembly to create a combined gender entity within the United Nations system that will have the positioning, authority, resources and coordination to drive the gender equality agenda.

14. UNIFEM is the specialized body with operational capacity that Governments, women's advocates and United Nations partners call upon when they need advice on gender-related programmes and policies. We urge continued support of UNIFEM's critical work to achieve the vision of both the Platform for Action, and its goals of development, peace and equality, and the Millennium Development Goals by ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to policy and programme initiatives.
