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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 Center for Practice-Oriented Feminist Science, 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

For decades the global community has been seeking strategies capable of sustainably reducing or ending violence against women and girls and contributing to gender equality. We therefore feel we have to draw the Commission's attention to a highly successful strategy in that respect: the value-centred approach.

The value-centred approach was developed by Muthgard Hinkelmann-Toewe, Director of the Center for Practice-Oriented Feminist Science at the University of Applied Sciences in Fulda, Germany. Therefore it is a scientifically substantiated strategy. The approach is the intellectual property of the Center for Practice-Oriented Feminist Science and legally protected.

In a recent study, *The Dynamics of Social Change: Towards the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Five African Countries*, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy, documented how powerful the strategy really is.

Among a wide range of interventions and approaches implemented, the study identified the Fulda-Mosocho project in south-west Kenya, which has generated important changes in attitudes towards violence against women and has also led to collective abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting in the area of intervention. Relevant dynamics of change were set in motion among the population addressed by the project. The value-centred approach appeared to play a crucial role in bringing about social change and is transferable to other regions and countries.

The value-centred approach is not only capable of bringing about the abandonment of the harmful tradition of female genital mutilation in a very short period of time of 3.5 years, but it is also capable of achieving the broader goals of reducing gender inequality and violence against girls and women.

The value-centred approach is capable of changing the complex social dynamics that form the breeding grounds for gender inequality and violence against women and girls. This means that the value-centred approach is capable of motivating men to decide to change their behaviour, their feelings and their thinking.

The Senior Chief of the Mosocho Division, Kenya, said, "You have brought peace to our families!" That does not come out of the blue. To bring about sustainable social change in this respect, the value-centred approach relies on gender equality experts who are especially trained in the approach for this kind of work. That means the approach enables changes in complex social dynamics hand-in-hand with the beneficiaries.

The value-centred approach is a successful answer to violence against women and girls, especially in respect to primary prevention. When applying the approach:

- Human rights for women and girls are implemented step by step
- The economic situation of families/communities improves

That means that the approach is not only a pedagogical approach but also an economic one.

How it feels when men start to value women is reflected in the following quotation:

“We have learned that the female body is valuable and wonderful — as it was created. Mosochi has become a place where girls are smiling nowadays, because they are safe; women are smiling, because they feel societally acknowledged by boys and men; men and boys are smiling, because they now know that girls and women are valued in the Kisii community”.

At the end of our statement we turn to those who are responsible in the Commission to:

- Make the above-mentioned UNICEF study known to all relevant decision-makers in policymaking and programming
 - Make the value-centred approach known to all relevant decision-makers in policymaking and programming
 - Exert influence on donor working groups and donors to make funds available especially to those strategies, such as the value-centred approach, that advance gender equality and de facto eliminate and prevent of all forms of violence against women and girls
 - Exert influence on donor working groups and donors to change funding criteria so that that further gender equality experts can be trained and assigned.
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