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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 Sudanese Women General Union, 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

The Sudanese Women General Union was formed in 1990 as a national voluntary non-governmental organization (NGO) and legal entity. It is a member of the Sudanese Council of Voluntary Agencies and the Ministry of Humanitarian Aid.

It was registered as an NGO with the Commission on the Status of Women in 2007.

The Union was founded on the conviction that Sudanese women, who constitute 50 per cent of the population of the Sudan, deserve a rightful role in society. The Union is committed to a vision of society in which women, girls and children feel safe and confident in their homes and communities, to live freely, contribute to society and prosper in their daily lives.

The Union works for a healthy community, social and economic justice with human rights for women, for children, and for all, through its mandate in setting up strategies, policies, plans and programmes concerning the promotion and advancement of women. It has also: established a comprehensive database providing gender profiles; reviewed national, regional and international commitments concerning women's empowerment; created linkages across all sectors; networked with NGOs; and developed capacity-building programmes to achieve the following objectives:

- To promote and empower women, socially, economically and politically.
- To protect women's constitutional rights.
- To improve the welfare of women and children and to achieve substantial reduction of their mortality rates.
- To raise women's awareness about infectious and sexually transmitted diseases, and how they can protect themselves.
- To participate in peacebuilding and the dissemination of its culture.
- To reduce illiteracy among women.

Despite the fact that policies and strategies for women's empowerment have been adopted in the Sudan, further efforts are still required to reach gender equality. The Union has taken initiatives to combat violence against women and to empower women to attain their rights and play their role in combating violence against them.

The initiatives of the Union to combat violence against women are:

- A quota (25 per cent membership of women in Parliament).
- Advocacy for the implementation of protective legislation.
- Protection of women's rights and stopping all decisions that affect women's work in the formal and informal sectors.
- A comprehensive literacy programme, through mosques and khalwas, taking into consideration that education is a strong weapon in eliminating violence against women.
- Implementation of plans and construction of an office to receive complaints from victims of violence against women.

Recommendations

- Expand efforts to raise community awareness of the cultures and traditions that affect violence against women.
 - Change social norms to prevent violence against girls and women (through awareness-raising campaigns and community sensitization through media messages), and encourage further efforts on the part of the United Nations to support and fund national NGOs in the implementation of such programmes.
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