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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

Statement submitted by NGO Coordination post Beijing Switzerland, 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

A stand-alone goal and a cross-cutting issue: let's include the theme of gender in the post-2015 development agenda

NGO Coordination post Beijing Switzerland is an umbrella organization with 30 member organizations that take joint action for women's rights in Switzerland. Our work is based specifically on international norms (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the agreed conclusions adopted at various sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women) that we seek to have implemented in Switzerland. Multilateral discussions to be held during the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women this year will address the post-2015 agenda.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be pursued until 2015. While there have been some individual successes, including at the regional level, the view of the MDGs as successful is not one that is unanimously held. Although Goal 3 is the only one to deal explicitly with the theme of gender, the MDGs as a whole clearly touch upon the issue in various ways. Indeed, given that 70 per cent of those affected by poverty are women, poverty reduction is not possible unless the gender issue is addressed.

The current debate on follow-up to the MDGs provides civil society with a fresh opportunity to stress emphatically the importance of the theme of gender. It is in this context that we urge consideration of the theme of gender as a stand-alone goal while also retaining it as a cross-cutting issue.

Gender equality is a necessary condition for sustainable development, security, growth and a just society. Sexual and reproductive rights, the elimination of gender-based violence, the representation of women in decision-making bodies and the elimination of discriminatory social norms are topics whose importance and complexity point to the need to elaborate a stand-alone goal.

However, gender should also be considered as a cross-cutting issue in the sense that each goal of the post-2015 development agenda should contain at least one gender-specific indicator. That does not mean simply adding the words "woman" and "man" to the current goals, but rather using indicators that make it possible to assess whether the goals have indeed been met for each gender. Gender budgeting of adequate financial and human resources, as well as the clear political will to recognize women and girls as key to sustainable development and the creation of a just society, are necessary conditions for achieving that just society.

Switzerland has a long history of outspoken commitment to a just society. Through its involvement on behalf of women's rights, Switzerland is gaining greater international visibility and recognition.

Our organization is of the view that strong development goals can be sustainable only if the theme of gender is given pride of place in programme development. We hope that the Commission on the Status of Women will stake out a clear position in support of women's rights and commit to making the theme of gender a strong, stand-alone goal and a cross-cutting issue for the post-2015 era.