



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
6 December 2013

Original: English

---

### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-eighth session

10-21 March 2014

**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 Hadassah: Women’s Zionist Organization of America, 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**

Hadassah: Women's Zionist Organization of America, founded in 1912, has over 330,000 members, associates and supporters in the United States of America and international supporters spanning five continents. Hadassah is known for initiating and supporting pace-setting health care through the Hadassah Medical Organization in Israel, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 for being "a bridge to peace"; medical treatment by Hadassah personnel to those in need throughout the world; our members' advocacy; and health and wellness educational programmes. In addition, Hadassah supports education and youth institutions in Israel and is a staunch advocate for women's rights in the United States and across the world.

Hadassah's National Board delivered policy statements that represent the organization's official stance on a wide variety of issues facing the United States, Israel and international matters of concern. Based on these statements, Hadassah submits the present statement to the Commission on the Status of Women on the medical research and women's health research; women's economic equity and security; and trafficking in women.

### **Medical research and women's health research**

Hadassah, throughout its more than 100 years in support of cutting-edge medical care, recognizes that quality health care must include innovative medical and biotechnological research. Advanced medical and biotechnological research has contributed greatly to human survival and the eradication of many once-fatal and crippling diseases. Research and clinical trials, with the appropriate oversight, performed at Hadassah Medical Organization and at institutions worldwide, notably those in the areas of heart disease prevention and treatment for women, gene therapy, cancer treatments, organ and tissue transplantation and stem cell research, provide great hope for the discovery of new treatments and cures.

Hadassah strongly supports the generous funding of innovative and basic medical and biotechnological research in the United States for the benefit of all. In addition, Hadassah is deeply concerned about the tremendous gaps in knowledge regarding women's biology, health and disease and by the scarcity of research that is being done to fill those gaps. The study of gender-based biology and of differences between sex and gender in the development and progression of disease is in its infancy now. A multitude of diseases, including heart disease, the number one killer of women, are often misdiagnosed or overlooked entirely in women. Reasons for this deficit in medical knowledge include the exclusion of women from research studies and limited funding for studies of health, epidemiology, disease and pharmaceuticals that account for sex and gender differences. Research findings have also not been adequately explained and publicized.

Hadassah calls for the removal of these barriers and for the advancement in women's health through increased study of gender differences in medicine and study of women's health issues; increased funding for research on women's health in the United States and internationally; the encouragement of more women to enrol in clinical trials; increased public awareness of women's health issues; and the encouragement of women to enter the field of biomedical research.

### **Women's economic equity and security**

Hadassah is deeply committed to women's rights and expands its support for new measures that will achieve economic equity and security for women and their families. Hadassah has a long history of advocating for equal rights and a just economic society, championing policies on civil rights, pay equity, parental leave, the minimum wage and social welfare programmes that protect America's most vulnerable citizens. Hadassah also advocates for improved enforcement of those policies, and promotes the implementation of new measures that will provide flexibility for working families without forcing sacrifices to their economic security.

Hadassah recognizes the full and equal capabilities of female employees and respects their unique talents which contribute to society. However, women continue to face discrimination based on gender, pregnancy and motherhood. Although it has been 50 years since the United States Congress passed the Equal Pay Act, women earn 77 cents to a man's dollar, and the wage gap has not changed in the last decade. Hadassah recognizes the importance of the business community, especially small businesses, for economic development, and encourages cooperation between the public and private sectors to implement policies that support women's leadership and economic security without creating undue burdens for their employers.

Hadassah also reaffirms its support for pay equity policies, calling upon the Government of the United States to improve enforcement of equal pay laws and enact new measures that will reduce the gender wage gap. Hadassah also expands support for anti-discrimination policies to include pregnancy, urging the Government of the United States to improve enforcement of pregnancy discrimination laws and enact new measures that will help protect pregnant workers' rights. In addition, Hadassah expands support for family and medical leave in the United States, advocating for regulations which will allow more workers the opportunity to earn paid parental, family and sick leave. Lastly, Hadassah reaffirms its support for increasing the minimum wage and calls upon the Government of the United States to examine ways to introduce increases that account for inflation and the cost of living.

### **Trafficking in women**

Hadassah is committed to helping to protect the rights of women and young girls and is outraged by the global scourge of trafficking in women and young girls. Trafficking in women occurs when women are forced, defrauded or coerced into labour, slavery or sexual exploitation within and across national borders. Victims of trafficking are subject to gross human rights violations, including kidnapping, isolation, threat of deportation, confiscation of identifying documents, debt bondage, control of victims' money, rape, torture, starvation and threats of murder or torture of family members.

The United Nations estimates that, worldwide, human traffickers subject at least 12.3 million adults and children to forced labour, bonded labour or forced prostitution. The United States Department of State estimates that 14,500 to 17,500 persons are trafficked annually into the United States and that human trafficking disproportionately affects women and girls. Trafficking and its related crimes not only harm the victims, but also undermine the social, political and economic fabric of the nations where they occur by demeaning women and increasing violence and crime.

The United Nations, as well as the United States and Israel, have made significant progress in recent years toward the elimination of human trafficking. However, there is much work still to be done. Hadassah urges all nations to make the elimination of the trafficking of women and girls a priority by strengthening anti-trafficking legislation, sharing information, effective enforcement of human trafficking laws, aggressively prosecuting traffickers and mounting broad public information campaigns. Hadassah further urges countries to provide safe havens for victims of trafficking and institute a comprehensive range of social services for their rehabilitation.

---