



## Economic and Social Council

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### 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 Agricultural Missions, All India Women’s Education Fund Association, Alliance for Africa, Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, Association of War-Affected Women, Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha BAOBAB for Women’s Human Rights, CARE, Centre for Social Research, Coalition against Trafficking in Women, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Equality Now, Equidad de Genero: Ciudadania, Trabajo y Familia, European Women’s Lobby, Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya, Flora Tristan Peruvian Women’s Center, Foodfirst Information and Action Network, Forum for Women and Development, Global Justice Center, Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, International Council for Adult Education, International Women’s Anthropology Conference, International Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, Movimiento Manuela Ramos, National Alliance of Women’s Organizations, Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women, Programme on Women’s Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Servitas Cameroon, Soroptimist International, Tandem Project and Temple of Understanding, 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.



## Statement

As the 20-year review of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the 2015 deadline for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals approaches, women and girls continue to suffer from gender-based violence and discrimination everywhere around the world, even at the cost of their lives. A global legal framework to promote equality between women and men has been put in place over the past several decades, both internationally and regionally, but has not yet been implemented at the national and local levels. The framework includes detailed provisions for the protection of women's and girls' rights as, for example, set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. International frameworks and commitments make a difference in the lives of women around the world only, however, to the extent that they are actually implemented at the national level. The same is true for the Millennium Development Goals, Goal 3 of which includes promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Achieving gender equality, including through the prevention of violence against women and girls, is essential to meeting any internationally agreed development goals, as clearly outlined in the World Bank's *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*. Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals has not thus far been achieved, in part because of the prevalence of gender-based violence and discrimination and a basic lack of legal equality for women and girls around the world. We, the above-mentioned human rights, women's rights and development organizations, therefore call upon all Member States at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to endorse a stand-alone goal on gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment in the post-2015 development framework, with at least one of the specific components being freedom from violence, as recommended by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in its June 2013 paper entitled "A transformative stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment: imperatives and key components".

Progress towards this goal should be measured by discrete and universal indicators and be achievable within a generation. These should include qualitatively descriptive indicators addressing structural inequalities that contribute to violence against women and girls and discourage sustainable development. The repeal of discriminatory laws is one such important structural indicator that affects virtually every phase of a woman's life — employment, citizenship, property inheritance, marriage and divorce.

Discriminatory laws fundamentally promote inequality and the disempowerment of women and girls, limit economic and political opportunities and represent an official endorsement of sex discrimination and even violence against women and girls. Ridding the world of laws that discriminate against women and girls is an essential first step in ridding the world of sex discrimination and violence. Comprehensive equality before the law and access to justice are critical components in the urgent struggle to end violence against women and girls and in the conception of a new development framework to end poverty, as noted by the United Nations Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission in 2013.

We call on Member States to partner with civil society and to use the occasion of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission to re-energize their efforts and uphold their commitments, particularly to the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, as agreed at the Commission's fifty-seventh session, by, as a first step, endorsing a stand-alone goal on gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment in the post-2015 development framework.

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