



## **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 National Council of Women of Great Britain, 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 National Council of Women of Great Britain welcomes progress towards implementation of the current Millennium Development Goals but urges renewed energy towards further achievements by all concerned before the due date of 2015; this is vital if current and future progress is to be sustained in coming years. The National Council of Women of Great Britain conducted a study on the impact of Millennium Development Goals on women and girls at its annual conference in October 2013 and identified four key areas of special concern: gender equality, poverty, education and health. These four areas are closely interrelated, and present and future action directed towards these aspects of the Millennium Development Goals can give the necessary impetus to real improvements and benefits for society.

Gender equality is a necessary element in securing success for the Millennium Development Goals, now and in the future, and the National Council of Women of Great Britain urges that a proportion of aid and resources towards improvements in all countries should be targeted specifically at implementation of measures to reinforce gender equality in the fields of education, poverty, health, business and commerce. A country which fails to recognize the economic benefits of including women and girls in educational programmes, and in the workforce as equal partners, risks ignoring half its potential workforce and hampering future economic development. Measures to reduce and eliminate discriminatory practices against women and girls, including exclusion from education, violence against women and girls and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, should be included in all programmes directed towards development.

Education is another key factor towards securing further advances for society. The National Council of Women of Great Britain urges that progress made so far should be advanced from primary to secondary and tertiary education, with the full involvement of women and girls. This also applies to their participation in science and technology. Women can become prime movers of education in their localities, encouraging girls to attend schools, but for this they need full support from local leaders. In addition, the provision of fresh water and sanitation are closely linked to the education of girls. Where women and girls remain the main providers of water for their communities, carrying heavy loads daily, and where lack of toilet facilities may affect their ability to attend school, aid and other resources should be targeted towards this problem.

Both poverty and health are also closely linked with the provision of clean water and sanitation, lack of which can spread illnesses and disease, contribute to a high death rate in babies and children and keep communities at a level close to starvation and deprivation. It also affects the possibilities for girls to attend schools.

The recent decision by world leaders to scale up action against acute poverty, hunger and disease reflects the need for more urgent action on those areas which have benefited least from progress on the Millennium Development Goals to date.

On health, the priorities remain the reduction of maternal and infant mortality, provision of clean water and sanitation, continuation of immunization programmes and medical control of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The National Council of Women of Great Britain urges a worldwide ban on female genital mutilation and child marriage.

For the future, the continued success of the Millennium Development Goals is clearly linked to the status accorded to women and girls in their own countries. Where their potential contribution to society is undervalued, the economic well-being of their country is affected. Greater emphasis should be put upon recognition of the human rights of women and girls.

---