



## **Economic and Social Council**

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### **Commission on the Status of Women**

#### **Fifty-ninth session**

9-20 March 2015

#### **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”**

### **Statement submitted by International Federation for Home Economics, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## **Statement**

### **Success for sustainable development through home economics education and training**

Home Economists around the world promote gender equality and empowerment of women. According to the Beijing Platform for Action 1995 women have a crucial role for social, economic and sustainable development and in the family. The family is the basic unit of society and economy. From a home economics perspective the family is seen as a group having a strong social solidarity and multifaceted functions. As such, a family needs to be protected, strengthened and empowered.

The tasks of women are multifaceted. Depending even on cultural issues, they have a high workload on managing the household, which means their contribution to resource management including natural and financial resources, food and time. They have to care for children, older and handicapped persons. They have to clean house and textiles, to prepare meals and to contribute to the household production and income generation.

As the Beijing Platform states women make a great contribution to the welfare of the family and caring for other members of the family. Even caused by cultural traditions women have a high level of work burden as they work at unpaid level at home, in the community and on the labour market. From a home economics perspective women still bear a disproportionate burden for several reasons including: health issues, migration and divorce, more and more households worldwide are headed by women and many other households are dependent on female income.

Poor families headed by women in developed countries, but especially women in rural areas of developing countries are facing poverty, malnutrition and exclusion.

From a home economics perspective the main aspect for development is the empowerment of women through education not only on primary and secondary level but also on everyday life management.

Many projects around the world show the importance and the success of home economics education and training for the sustainable development and the improvement of life for families and most of all women and children. Women holding improved skills in hygiene, gardening and family farming, food processing and nutrition improve the food security and health care situation of their family members. Sustainable consumption and use of natural resources as water and fire wood for cooking as well as income generation leads to improved opportunities for women. Skills on best practice in household financial management and sustainable purchasing improve the spending and income side of a household budget.

Even if good progress were made in some countries, today in the year 2014 many women are still facing challenges pointed out in the Beijing Platform for Action 1995: they do not have opportunities and autonomy, they are facing lack of access to economic resources, including credit, land ownership and inheritance as well as lack of access to education and support services. In lots of countries they are excluded from participation in the decision-making process.

In total, women have a high production potential, which needs to be used for development.

Men should be enlightened about the rights of women and their strong potential for development. They need to be strong partners to ensure the sustainability of the development for women, girls and the community.

In addition to the number of tasks and the high workload and the inequality between genders, currently women are facing problems like wars and terrorism especially in the Middle Eastern countries as well as epidemic plagues in African Countries. The women and girls in these regions are in a less secure position than ever before. They are victims of violence against women in conflict areas.

Taking the current developments into account and facing the fact that in lots of areas of action only minimum progress was made over the last 20 years the International Federation for Home Economics requests that the international community, as well as all governments and economical stakeholders:

- Recognize the important role and high productive potential of women as key factor for reaching sustainable development
- Ensure all girls and women of the world receive education to improve their everyday life management for the benefit of the household members and communities
- Build on partnerships between women and men to receive development opportunities for the whole community
- Push forward the gender equality to improve women's access to capital, resources, credit, land, technology, information, technical assistance and training
- Strengthen the empowerment of women as key actors for social, economic and sustainable development
- Acknowledge the importance of education in home economics subjects to improve food security, eradicate poverty, and make progress in quality of life and sustainable consumption and production of households and communities.

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