



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Fifty-ninth session

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**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 Major Alliance Education Centre, 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**

### **Challenges during the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

Challenge discovered: women have been discriminated against in social-cultural practices, in land ownership and inheritance in some societies.

There is inequality in land ownership and inheritance that is based on gender discrimination:

- Women in many societies are not given the right to own land or inherit land.
- Women also are not given enough chance to give their views on agricultural activities.
- Women are main implementers of many decisions that are made by men in the communities.
- They are not given the opportunity to get big loans and higher education like men.
- Women are not given the right to control financial matters in the families and the communities at large.

### **Solutions**

The following are the solutions to the identified challenges.

#### **Empowering women**

Empowering women is the process of giving women more power and rights to have control over resources and more ability or liberty to participate in their agricultural activities. It implies building their local capacity by deliberately providing education, improving local infrastructure, leadership, economy and other resources.

The resources could be in the form of land or land based natural resources (like forest, minerals, water, wildlife) and air. The importance of empowering women is as follows:

- It promotes their abilities so they can participate more effectively in agriculture.
- It gives women confidence so they can give their opinions pertaining to agricultural development.
- It speeds up the development of agriculture by making women more efficient than before.
- Women can become more responsible in taking care of the resources so as to avoid the exhaustion of those resources especially the land.
- Women will be able to lead their life by facing problems confidently.
- Women are able to help the process of controlling populations in the country so that the life standard can be improved easily.

- Women can voice their views or concerns on matters that effect their livelihood.
- It can make women create even additional resources where resources were not enough.

The following are women's contributions in agriculture:

- They cultivate, harvest, milk the animals and process the crops.
- They take care of crops in the farm especially chasing or scaring away the animals and birds that attack the crops in the farms.
- They prepare food for the people in their families as well as those who work in the farms.
- They carry farm products to the market.

Other challenges include:

(a) Discouraging government's responses: Women often present their solutions and recommendations to the government but unfortunately sometimes these recommendations are not taken seriously into consideration.

(b) Conservative leadership: Many young women with views that could be useful are uneasy to join women's organizations. Perhaps to the nature of the leadership. Apparently, they fear opposition from the conservative leaders.

(c) Isolated Locations: Many organizations are concentrated in major towns with hardly any contact with rural areas, where most of the women live.

(d) Lack of funds is the main problem to women's organizations which hinder the progress of women in many societies. Many women's organizations suffer from lack of funding, consequently, projects fail and this is often equated with the failure of women's leadership.

The solution to the above challenges is the following:

(a) To provide equal opportunities of education for men and women. Women are supposed to be given more chances of learning in order to raise their education status where they have pre-mature university entry for female students only.

(b) To provide equal employment opportunities for men and women. The government has to make sure that women are actively involved in all states of development.

(c) To allow the registration of women's groups.

(d) The government to establish strong and strict laws against men who practice sexual harassment.

(e) To establish the laws which allow women to possess land.

(f) To continue to improve the policy implementation in order to have effective women's empowerment.