



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 November 2015

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixtieth session

14-24 March 2016

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”

Statement submitted by Union for International Cancer Control, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The Union for International Cancer Control is both a global membership organization, with over 900 members across 155 countries, and a member of an international alliance that works collectively to elevate the profile of non-communicable diseases on the global development agenda. The Union for International Cancer Control and its network wish to commend the 60th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women for recognizing the importance of addressing issues pertaining to women's empowerment and sustainable development, and the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

Non-communicable diseases including cancers, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, and mental health and neurological disorders are the leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for over two thirds of all global mortality. Of the total global non-communicable disease deaths, approximately 18 million occur in women of all ages, many of who are in the most productive years of their life. The inclusion of a target to reduce non-communicable diseases premature mortality in the adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an unequivocal sign of the United Nations and governments' increasing recognition that the growing burden of non-communicable diseases is one of the major health and development challenges of the 21st century.

Achieving Target 3.4 on non-communicable diseases is necessary to achieve, among others, Goal 3 on health, Goal 5 on gender equality, and Goal 10 on inequality.

Women and children in low-and middle-income countries often bear a triple burden of poor health related to reproductive and maternal health, communicable diseases, and non-communicable diseases. Increasing exposure to non-communicable disease risk factors affects not only women's health, but also increases the vulnerability of future generations to ill-health. For example, excessive consumption of alcohol, a behaviour that often develops in adolescence and a leading risk factor for non-communicable diseases, is also a factor in violence against women and girls, which can manifest in health issues such as HIV and other chronic conditions. Moreover, alcohol has been identified as a leading risk factor for death and disability globally, accounting for 3.8 per cent of death and 4.6 per cent of disability adjusted life years lost in 2004 alone.

The need for gender-sensitive and responsive health systems is particularly important in developing countries, where many women are unable to seek care owing to the lack of female caregivers, stigma, social and cultural norms. Lack of access to and availability of quality, affordable essential medicines, vaccines, and technologies further exacerbates the problem.

Strong commitments and immediate action to prevent and control non-communicable diseases requires the integration of non-communicable disease prevention and care into existing women and children's health programs. Integration of non-communicable diseases into existing women's health programmes will accelerate women's empowerment through holistic health prevention and promotion.

In light of this, we strongly urge the Commission to:

- I. Ensure that addressing non-communicable diseases through a lifecourse approach to health is a critical component of promoting women's empowerment. The Commission should seek to build on the commitments for action contained

in the United Nations Political Declaration on non-communicable diseases and the Outcome Document of the 2014 United Nations Non-Communicable Disease Review, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

II. Strengthen the focus on equity to ensure no one is left behind. Disaggregated data by gender, age, disability, and income will be necessary to ensure that the post-2015 era improves the lives of all women and girls throughout the lifecourse.

Please be assured the Union for International Cancer Control and its network stand ready to support Member States as we work to promote women's empowerment and integration of Non-Communicable Diseases and Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health programmes to help create a healthy, equitable future for all.
