



## **Economic and Social Council**

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### **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 Association Miraisme International, 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

### The effective inclusion of women and social development

“To be liberated, woman must feel free to be herself, not in rivalry to man but in the context of her own capacity and her personality”. (Indira Gandhi)

The pursuit of gender equality is central to sustainability and social development, considering its relevance to societies as each member maximizes their contributions made to the community. That is why international organizations, public administrations and various social actors have made important progress towards gender equality.

However, there are existing discriminatory patterns affecting women and their equal inclusion in different fields. It is notorious to all the predefined roles on household functions, care or child rearing, among others. These predefined roles transcend generations, decisively influencing the choice of toys and games, college careers and roles in the public sphere.

Based on these psychosocial factors, it is noted that it is not only about quantitative and statistical aspects but also the need to understand the qualitative dimension of the above statements: women are affected by poverty, discrimination, exploitation. Gender discrimination means that women commonly hold precarious jobs, with low pay; they frequently carry out household chores and often have little time to take advantage of other professional and academic opportunities.

Historically women have faced barriers, and today another obstacle is added; the invisibility of discrimination and its effects, based on the belief that inequality between men and women is something of the past and today there is full equality.

Dr. Clara Fassler, mentions in her study called Developmental and political participation of women that: “Women constitute 70% of the 1,300 million poor people in the world (ILO), two thirds of the 876 million illiterates in the world are women, 130 million girls and women have undergone genital mutilation. This figure, according to Amnesty International (AI), is increased by two million each year. 20% of women according to the World Bank have suffered physical abuse or sexual assault. According to ILO, only 54% of women of working age do versus 80% of men, globally they earn 30 to 50% less than men and perform only 1% of managerial positions. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), there are a total of 41,845 parliamentarians worldwide but only 14.6% are women”.

In this context, defending equality between women and men, and recognizing all human beings as having the right to meet and pursue their life projects, is fundamental for modern societies. The empowerment of women is the perfect addition to democracy that promotes common welfare and the progress of communities towards coexistence with respect.

Promoting the economic empowerment of women consolidates a direct path towards gender equality, reducing poverty and inclusive economic development, recognizing the enormous contribution that women make to economies, whether in business, in rural jobs, as managers or employees, or doing unpaid care work at home.

In this regard, gender diversity is positive in all areas of society, becoming an engine of development. The inclusion of women is a goal in itself and in turn, a means to achieve other objectives included in the 2030 agenda. Beyond the moral imperative, there is the promotion of sustainable development.

That said, it is necessary to guarantee women the ability to enjoy their rights, we in turn contribute to improved levels of quality of life for everyone in order to overcome the barriers that still exist in economic, social, cultural and political life. These barriers can be dismantled through special public policies caring for women in participation, health, equal employment opportunities and education.

Women and girls make up more than half the world's population, thus their role is crucial in building stable and just societies. As Amartya Sen mentions in *Development and Freedom*: "Perhaps nothing is as important today in the political economy of development as is to properly recognize the political, economic and social participation and leadership of women. This is a very important aspect of 'development as freedom'".

UN- Women published on their website that "22 per cent of national parliamentarians were women in August 2015, meaning that the proportion of women parliamentarians has increased slowly since 1995, when it stood at 11.3 per cent". Additionally, they add that "the existence of a correlation is observed between democratic and transparent political systems and reduced levels of corruption; both elements in turn create an enabling environment for an increased participation of women".

Similarly, the important role of women in peace processes is highlighted, and the importance of reaching a certain level of equality in the field of social, political, economic and cultural rights in order to regain confidence from the community and establish a conflict resolution process to provide sustainable and inclusive solutions.

It is common for women to be absent from peace processes, which generates a number of shortcomings such as lack of information about their needs and priorities, lack of women mediators in the community and less sensitivity towards gender issues (such as sexual violence) in the agreements reached in the process.

Based on the foregoing, it is considered a priority to promote the incorporation of talents, skills, practices and efforts of women in international actions and public policies, vindicating high-level support and inclusive policies in favour of gender equality and human rights. All in order to ensure the adequate participation of women in decision-making processes.

Gender equality is a major element in the defence and promotion of human rights as framed in numerous treaties, conventions, rules and regulations. Beyond the legal and conceptual framework, the achievement of this equality depends on the commitment of public personalities and promotion of a culture of equality in companies, educational centres, areas of higher education, etc. in the community.

The effective inclusion of women in all areas is a task for everyone, which will allow us to promote human development, the building of sustainable societies and the cultural basis for coexistence with respect and fairness.