



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 November 2016

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-first session

13-24 March 2017

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 Corporativa de Fundaciones, 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

Corporativa de Fundaciones is a leading community foundation based in Jalisco, Mexico. As an organization, we lead efforts that contribute to the transformation of our society, strengthen the cultural values and the common good of all social actors. Through professional, responsible and collaborative work, we seek to empower Civil Society Organizations to achieve sustainable development. In Corporativa de Fundaciones, we envision Civil Society Organizations as key actors of sustainable development as their work is intrinsically linked to the needs, aspirations and interest of the community. As such, Corporativa de Fundaciones enhances sustainable development through the creation and promotion of partnerships between social investors and Civil Society Organizations. We respond to the critical issues of our community by promoting and supporting the institutional strengthening of our community's non-profit sector. In seventeen years of operation, Corporativa de Fundaciones has witnessed significant transformations in many Civil Society Organizations. We provide institutional strengthening mechanisms that reflect continuous improvement and adaptation, better services, greater effectiveness, a wider social impact, financial and environmental sustainability, as well as articulated visible and well-informed advocacy efforts. Corporativa de Fundaciones impacts on women's economic empowerment through a project called MATI aimed to ensure women in vulnerable conditions gain all skills and tools to participate in the economic life of our society through multi-stakeholder partnerships. Corporativa de Fundaciones is an accredited non-governmental organization with the Economic and Social Council, the Inter-American Development Bank and other international, national and local organizations.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisions a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity; equality and non-discrimination, and of equal opportunities for all. A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social, and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed. The Sustainable Development Goals urge the international community to situate gender equality at the core of global sustainable development. Global Goal 5 calls upon Member States and stakeholders to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities everywhere, especially in the economic life. This requires effective cooperation from all stakeholders, especially non-state actors working at the national and local levels and supporting State policies and actions that ensure women's full inclusion in the public and private spheres.

Globally, women are less remunerated than men. They participate in labour markets on an unequal basis with men. Inequalities towards women are persistent in all countries, especially in developing nations where education, political participation and representation are less prone to involve women. Women are more likely than men to work in the informal sectors and in rural areas, they derive their livelihoods in small-scale farming often unpaid or dangerous. More women than men work in undervalued, low-paid and vulnerable jobs. The overall working conditions of women around the globe show the need for Member States and stakeholders to take collaborative action to achieve Global Goal 5 with a special focus on women's economic empowerment. In Mexico, women represent nearly half of the active workforce of our country, and it is estimated that they spend on

average 373 minutes of each day on household related activities, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This means that on average, women work three times more than men in our country, along with other forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, which highly impact upon their context and opportunities in development.

Women's economic empowerment should be at the core of global sustainable development as it concentrates factors to help women succeed, fulfil their human rights and advance in the marketplace. Economic empowerment focuses on increasing skills and access to produce resources, create enabling environments and assist women in taking action to benefit economic growth and development. This requires sustained and bold action to advance women's opportunities and rights for their participation. In order to increase women's economic opportunities, actions should include more and better jobs; open business environments that support them in starting their own businesses; securing women's legal rights to land and property; decent jobs; ability to access finance; and overall, educational and empowerment programmes that support their self-esteem, self-awareness and human rights' full realization, especially for those women living in rural areas and vulnerable conditions. In addition, women's economic empowerment should be at the core of advocacy efforts that influence institutions and public policies determining growth and development at the international, regional, national and local levels.

Women's economic empowerment is a prerequisite for sustainable development. This requires sound public policies; holistic approaches; long-term commitments and partnerships. These partnerships should be multiple and diverse, and benefit from the experience Civil Society Organizations have promoted in the path to women's economic empowerment. Civil Society Organizations play a key role in enabling leadership roles as catalysts of empowerment and development in their communities. They are the means of getting communities the economic benefits they need in an efficient, direct and cheaper way. Civil Society Organizations can have an impactful and successful difference in the lives of a segment of society in great need of assistance, especially in countries like Mexico where gender economic challenges represent an obstruction for achieving sustainable development.

We applaud the efforts of the Commission on the Status of Women for its continuous commitment towards gender equality. Corporativa de Fundaciones calls upon Member States to consider the following recommendations in this 61st Session "Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work":

1. Gender equality: Strategies and policies must promote and ensure bold actions towards gender equality and better opportunities to achieve that women's rights, their voices, needs and realities are being heard in all levels in society, and by all stakeholders. Strengthening social protection policies and legislations, as well as advocating for equal opportunities between women and men will provide adequate conditions to contribute to a more just and liveable world for all.
2. Entrepreneurship: Women should be able to access better and decent jobs, equal rights to economic resources, as well as leadership positions to participate in decision-making processes that financially contribute to their well-being and their families'. Conditions should be secured to achieve women's economic empowerment, by facilitating the conditions for them to develop entrepreneurial

skills, techniques and knowledge to produce and manage their own businesses, in order to enhance self-employment that enables them to become more confident and independent within their households.

3. Local development and grassroots-level management: We must promote sustainable economic and social empowerment of women in vulnerable communities. It is crucial to engage in grassroots-level efforts and deliver innovative and participatory educational programmes. We shall enable environments where solidarity and support among women contribute to their social and economic development, in order for them to find solutions towards challenges that affect them and reach their full potential to become self-reliant agents that transform their lives, and those around them.

4. Microcredits: Facilitate the conditions to provide access to affordable, inclusive and sustainable economic opportunities, such as small loans or microcredits with low annual interest rates. This should be accompanied by training programmes in savings, financial literacy, and budget management. This also helps reducing financial vulnerability by investing directly in their productive activities and increasing their income and contribution to the economy at home, and in their communities.

5. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships: Multi-stakeholder collaboration is fundamental to break down the barriers to women's empowerment. Civil Society Organizations, the private sector, academia, citizens and national governments must take responsibility to participate, promote and strengthen initiatives, networks, dialogues and efforts towards gender equality, job creation, capacity-building, secure children and women's rights and education, as well as social and economic development in vulnerable communities.

We reaffirm our commitment to work hand in hand with the United Nations for a more just and sustainable world. Furthermore, we call on the Commission on the Status of Women to facilitate the conditions and support Member States to achieve women's economic empowerment and sustainable development, as well as to expand the participation of Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders in this process.
