



## **Economic and Social Council**

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

**Sixty-second session**

12–23 March 2018

**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 Legiao da Boa Vontade — Legion of Good Will, 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

We, from the Legião da Boa Vontade / Legion of Good Will submit our recommendations on the review theme of the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women: “Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women.” In the following statement, we will share some of our successful experiences and propose innovative, feasible, accessible, and sustainable actions for media organizations and educational institutions in this area, as well as for social and educational programs aimed at families in situation of social vulnerability. The goal of these actions is to promote the digital citizenship of girls and women, one of the dimensions of global citizenship.

We operate in more than 170 cities worldwide, through the Legion of Good Will of Argentina, Bolivia, the United States, Paraguay, Portugal, Uruguay, and Brazil, where it all began in 1950. Considering just the last five years, we have provided close to 70 million social services and benefits in an extensive humanitarian operation.

### Digital Education of Girls and Women

We consider the concept of digital citizenship, in addition to the responsible use of technology, a fundamental human right. The mastery of basic technological tools is increasingly a condition for people to access their rights as well as to improve their social and economic opportunities.

In the last five years, out of the more than 35 thousand people who participated in our digital education courses and workshops in Brazil, two-thirds were girls and women. Of these, a fourth were elderly women. Our goal is to remove the social, economic, and cultural obstacles that prevent women from fully exercising their citizenship and to equally participate in the world of work, as we defend in the GOOD WILL Women magazine (São Paulo: Elevação Publishing House, 2017):

“If we are dealing here with the urgency of providing women with economic empowerment, it is because we must abolish, once and for all, the discrimination against them in terms of the access to the same development opportunities that men receive in the world of work. We can no longer accept the impediments that women encounter in this field, leading to a delay in the fight for gender equality and the eradication of poverty. How can we imagine effective public policies while half of the world’s population is relegated to an inferior economic level? This goes against logic!” (Paiva Netto, President of the Legion of Good Will).

This digital education work is in line with the conclusions of the 47th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (United Nations, March 2003): “4g: Make education, formal and non-formal, a priority in particular for the development of ICT and take measures to promote girls’ education so as to enable girls’ and women’s access to ICT.”

However, we emphasize that, from the perspective of gender equality, digital education goes beyond providing girls and women with the tools of new technologies. We believe that doing this is important, and we do it, since misinformation can lead to the precarious or limited use of existing resources. Nevertheless, we understand that digital education also has the role of raising awareness of Internet dangers. Instead of promoting women's emancipation, the

Internet can be used as enticement for human trafficking, encouraging the objectification of women, harassment, and gender violence.

Safernet, a Brazilian organization dedicated to the promotion and defence of human rights in the virtual environment, which has already given talks and organized workshops at the Legion of Good Will's International Congress on Education, received in the last eleven years more than 3.8 million anonymous cases. Their most frequent theme is child pornography, but there are also human trafficking, homophobia, and other crimes associated with gender violence.

For this reason, we offer digital inclusion courses and workshops as part of two of our programs: Skills-building Training and Productive Inclusion and Children: the Future in the Present! These programs are implemented after a social diagnosis of the community and they also adapt to the spontaneous demands of the population. Each girl or woman assisted, as well as her family, are accompanied individually by a social worker and, according to her needs, by a multidisciplinary team, receiving guidance and social support.

### **Media and Education**

Media organizations also play a key role in promoting gender equality. According to the latest report from the Global Media Monitoring Project (2015), progress in this area has been slow. In 2015, only 24% of the persons heard, read about, or seen in newspapers, television, and radio news were women, the same percentage observed in 2010. In the digital news delivery platforms, the percentage rises slightly to 26%. On the other hand, the percentage of stories that evoke gender equality issues more than doubled, reaching 9%.

The media content produced by the Legion of Good Will is committed to changing this reality. About 60% of our internal employees are female, working from operational positions to top management. Our material focuses on relevant themes such as preventing and combating gender-based violence, human trafficking, early exposure to sexual content, discrimination against women in the world of work, among others.

In Brazil, our content is broadcast through 30 open TV channels, that reach more than 18 million people, and 3 national cable TV channels, reaching more than 10 million subscribers. In the radio, 13 stations broadcast our content 24 hours a day in Brazil, and 13 other stations broadcast it at specific times (in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Portugal). On the Internet, we reached 4 million people in 2016. The GOOD WILL magazine, aimed at multi stakeholders, has a circulation of 50,000 copies.

Furthermore, we count on the free dissemination of our social mobilization campaigns and messages that value life. From January to September 2017, we obtained, in Brazil alone, more than 29 million participations within 3,800 media partners (radio and TV stations, websites, print media, and out-of-home media).

Based on this experience, we developed a professional training course with this critical and, above all, solidary awareness about the contemporary social and environmental challenges. In 2017, the first class of the Radio and TV technical course began, with theoretical and practical subjects, in the Good Will Professional Training School. At the beginning of the course, which is free, students were introduced to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (subject already worked on in projects with the population in our social service centres and schools).

These initiatives are in accordance with two of the conclusions of the aforementioned 47th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (United Nations, March 2003): "4o: Take effective measures, to the extent consistent with

freedom of expression, to combat the growing sexualization and use of pornography in media content, in terms of the rapid development of ICT . . .” and “4j: Establish or, where they already exist, expand skills training, vocational and employment training and capacity-building programmes for women and girls, and women’s non-governmental organizations, on the use, design and production of ICT, including to prepare them to take on leadership roles and to promote their participation in the political process, and integrate a gender perspective in ICT training programmes for teachers and in the training programmes for media professionals.”

To achieve these goals, it is imperative that existing initiatives in digital education be guided by the principles of gender equality and, more specifically, global citizenship, as proposed by the Pedagogy of Affection and the Ecumenical Citizen Pedagogy, created by educator Paiva Netto. That is why we, from the Legion of Good Will, are available to all interested parties in continuing the dialogue on this topic. To conclude, we would like to greet everyone for their engagement in this debate and present some highlights that summarize important points of our platform for this theme, which we have defended over decades:

“. . . The best technology to be developed in these times of unbridled globalization is of self-knowledge. It is superior to any technological discovery, because it has the power to prevent individuals (whether they have access to computers or not) from falling once and for all into suffering for having sunk into the most complete barbarism.”

“Without a sense of Ecumenical Fraternity, we would put an end to the planet, keeping our brilliant brains, but having opaque hearts. The longed-for reform of society will not come in its fullness if the Spirit of the citizens are not taken into account. (. . .). Yes, the world always needs progress, which will provide food and education; however, it equally needs the indispensable nourishment of Love and, therefore, of respect.”

“Solidarity and Fraternity are precisely the fuels that motivate the diligent action of all the idealistic social actors in the international community.

“If technology, then, overcomes human barriers (the Internet is an example of this) it is essential for Solidarity to develop itself ahead of it, in order to illuminate its paths. We have never been at a more auspicious moment for demonstrating how potentially great the possibilities are for using it in the service of nations” (Paiva Netto, in GOOD WILL Sustainable Development magazine — São Paulo: Elevação Publishing House, 2013).

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