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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 Kosar Mashiz (Hazrat Zahra) Charity, 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

Women and young girls have the right to live dignified, they deserve respect, a safe environment to be holistically developed, a place where their basic needs are met and life skills are trained. However, gender inequalities have caused some young girls not to experience a safe environment, accordingly they have been raised without obtaining their basic needs and rights. Based on the statistics 35 per cent of young girls and woman worldwide are exposed to violence, 59 per cent of the total illiterate youth population are young women.

Since the beginning of the history woman, governmental and non-governmental organizations all over the world including developing countries, have been challenging and seeking to change the inequities between men and women. Based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, women empowerment is one of the most significant factors and vital drivers for accelerating progress on sustainable development (SDG 5).

Women empowerment is an internationally agreed goal for sustainability and development, an aim to improve the quality of life for families and communities. Empowerment leads youth, especially vulnerable girls, to participate fully in economic and social life. However, it must be noted that the quality of social life depends on a prior healthy and multidimensional development. Accordingly, early holistic-development as a prerequisite process for social integration and employment readiness is an essential approach which needs to be focused more across the world.

Holistic-Development and women empowerment

Holistic-development allows girls to reach their full physical, spiritual, mental, emotional and educational potential. Young girls' basic needs must be met in a setting similar to family so as to be successful and helpful and valuable in the society, therefore developmental practices influence the process of learning, decision making and the whole mental process. Accordingly, a safe and family-like structure has not only a positive impact on young girls' empowerment but also on economic growth.

Kosar Mashiz (Hazrat Zahra) Charity, as a non-governmental organization applies authentic and holistic-development for vulnerable girls with the aim of youth protection and empowerment as an effective process for accelerating sustainable development plus gender equality. It believes empowerment is a multi-dimensional process and human values are not determined by age, social or economic situation but by something much deeper that replicates the quality and development of their character. It is attributable to various factors such as culture, parent, educator's interventions, peer group influence and other similar environmental influences. Decision-making is also affected by the process of girl development since it can be regarded as an outcome of mental processes (cognitive process). Girls must feel supported holistically to make better choices, thus this process can best grow in a safe environment, a family-like setting where the basic needs of a youth are met, a place where there is freedom to choose. This is in fact what empowerment looks for: giving more autonomy in their own life by encouraging the power of their opinions. It goes without saying education and training is correlated with making better choices. Teaching how, when and what to choose is a significant factor for decision making and eventually women empowerment.

Role of training life skills on women empowerment

Education is a means to girl's empowerment which also follows social and individual impact. Education not only provides knowledge and information but also builds the character of young girls. It not only contains moral and ethical values but

also social, intellectual, cultural, spiritual values which are required for multi-faceted development of a human being. Education is one of the most sustainable long-term and transformative solutions for gender equality, girl's confidence, and eventually economic growth. Educational systems need to adopt a framework and practices that focuses on holistic development of girls.

Training Life skills for girls is a suggested core intervention approach which loads girls with skills, support networks and information so that they can be change agents in their own lives. Transformative-life skills strategy is a strategy used as an approach correlated with promoting human, empowerment, gender equality and employment readiness. It includes 3 core key elements which focuses on design, implementation and linkages to community that are most important for girls to benefit from life skills programs (UNFPA and UNICEF). Based on Boender, C. (2019) examples of life skills programs are; negotiation, participation, self-awareness, communication, resilience and critical thinking.

Conclusion

The issue of women empowerment and gender equality is a global aspect, and different communities and societies take different measures for that matter. Kosar Mashiz (Hazrat Zahra) Charity applies and empowers vulnerable young girls through holistic –development and seeks to empower and prepare young girls for employment and social integration. Over 27 years of experience it has protected and empowered hundreds of girls by providing education, life skill plus mental, physical and spiritual services. Accordingly, a multi-dimensional development is suggested for women empowerment, an environment where women and young girls are safe, protected, educated, trained and motivated to develop their skills and learn how to make decisions.

Kosar Mashiz (Hazrat Zahra) Charity foresees that this approach would be efficient and effective in accelerating gender equality and woman empowerment; all communities and societies must push themselves to strategically, intelligently and efficiently balance at global level and in universal justice the synchronization with all the people of the world and their activities and representations, so that relative equality and equity could flourish.
