



# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-fifth session

15–26 March 2021

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 Tarumitra, 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

Tarumitra welcomes the opportunity to speak on the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and open a review on the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action. In 1995, the United Nations implemented the Beijing Declaration to advance women's rights throughout the world. While progress has been made in the past 25 years, the Beijing Declaration continues to be extremely relevant and essential today. However, the Beijing Declaration is not the only framework that needs to be considered when talking about the global status of women. To accomplish the Beijing Declaration's full realization, it needs to work hand in hand with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As such, all inequalities faced by women today must be acknowledged, addressed, and acted up as well as continuing support for women's voices around the world.

Tarumitra is a student-led organization dedicated to teaching and empowering students to become ecologically sensitive, protect their local biodiversity, and promote a worldview that spreads solidarity and goodwill among all peoples. Tarumitra is also dedicated to teaching students the skills and tools needed to combat their local environmental problems. As such, Tarumitra believes that working with communities and peoples most affected by climate change and ecological degradation is vital for the planet's health and safety. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a framework needed to accomplish a more sustainable future.

Environmental protection is deeply ingrained into the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The goals call for an eradication of poverty, a reduction of inequality, and improvements in health and education. Other goals address climate change more directly, such as ensuring clean water availability and encouraging action against climate change. Nonetheless, climate change underlies and connects each goal. To accomplish what the Sustainable Development Goals have laid out, women must join the forefront of the conversation. Women must be able to participate and contribute to the completion of these goals, and their voices must be honored and acknowledged.

The disastrous consequences of climate change disproportionately affect women, especially women of color. Because of persisting gender inequalities around the world, women and men experience climate change in different ways. Women are often the stewards of local communities, and women of color receive fewer resources due to racial inequality. Women of color are more likely to be exposed to health risks such as polluted air and water. In many cultures, women are in charge of harvesting food and collecting water. Still, climate change affects how these tasks can be done as they become increasingly unreliable and polluted.

Additionally, climate change and its wide range of adverse effects such as droughts and floods disproportionately affect the poor. Women are more likely to be poor than men because women generally receive lower wages and hold jobs that are often the first to be affected by natural disasters and economic depressions. Women also face challenges in obtaining a good and affordable education because of cultural attitudes, transportation, and finances. Because women are often seen as the ones in charge of household chores, it leaves little room for them to pursue an education. For women located in remote villages, transportation poses an additional hurdle needed to be crossed to go to school. On top of that, not all schooling is free or affordable for middle to low-income families. Without an education, women are perpetually locked into poverty, unable to improve their circumstances. Measures need to be taken worldwide to provide access to resources for women and communities affected by climate change. Such resources should include access to free or affordable education

and a path for women to enter into developing fields that will play essential roles in combating climate change.

Globally, the status of women has changed over the past decades. Strong and powerful women are increasingly participating in essential roles in society, and women's rights are now openly promoted worldwide. The percentage of women in male-dominated fields such as engineering, business and national and local leadership has dramatically increased. Furthermore, the education system in well-developed countries encourages women to enter science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These fields and climate change are closely related because man-made technology and changes cause climate change. By encouraging women to take part in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, women will be better equipped to participate in conversations about the environment. Some data shows more than 50% of bachelor's degrees are awarded to women. However, less than a third of female students choose to pursue higher education in these fields. Women are still being deterred from entering technical and scientific fields.

While the past 25 years has brought enormous progress in achieving the goals of the Beijing Declaration, gender gaps around the world persist. With more women graduating with college degrees, more opportunities should be provided for women to pursue higher degrees or apply their skills to the workforce. Increased education and better employment opportunities will make women less vulnerable to natural disasters and allow them to continue to fight for increases in political rights and change cultural attitudes. Governments at both the international and national levels should be encouraged to give essential roles in combating climate change, environmental protection, and renewable energies to women. With a greater diversity of people in these fields, a more gender-sensitive approach to ecological problems and climate change can occur.

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