



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 December 2020

Original: English

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 Transdiaspora Network, Inc., 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 still face problems and stigmas around equal pay, men sharing domestic work with women, sexual harassment and violence against women and girls, adequate health services and female participation in business and political decisions. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform was created as a forward-looking agenda for the empowerment of women. To this day, it remains the most comprehensive international policy framework and roadmap for action, and the current source of guidance and inspiration for achieving gender equality and the human rights of women and girls around the world.

The objectives of the Conference are monitored every five years at a meeting in the UN General Assembly. Each country presents a national report that reflects its progress, with which UN Women then produces a global report. The last evaluation carried out by UN Women in 2015, concluded that “no country has managed to complete the program”, and in this new evaluation, we do not believe the results will be much better.

Achieving equal opportunities between women and men is not only in the interest of women, but it is a fundamental issue to achieve social development that interests society as a whole.

In order to fully implement all the points of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, it is necessary to apply three fundamental instruments for the advancement and empowerment of women and their full participation in social life, including decision-making: enjoyment of human rights, health and education.

On human rights, women have the right not to suffer discrimination or violence due to the fact that they were born female. We have the right not to be mistreated or murdered by our partners, not to live in fear of being sexually assaulted and not to be discriminated against at work or in access to economic and production resources. Throughout history, the fight for human rights has been very present. And, although an improvement has been achieved worldwide, the same does not happen in the case of women's rights. Job opportunities continue to be uneven, and although today in some countries there are more women studying at universities than men, this is not reflected in the management of companies. Furthermore, with the exception of some countries, women tend to suffer wage discrimination; also political and social discrimination. This discrimination is aggravated in some places by racial discrimination, as in the case of Afro- descendant women. Inequality is also a reality, which in the worst cases results in femicide. These are just one of the few problems faced by women in the world when it comes to achieving their rights, and which, in the modern century should not be present.

Speaking of health, which goes beyond the absence of disease, it has not only a biological basis, but also some social determinants, among which, gender plays a fundamental role. Likewise, we assume that women are very diverse, and that the gender approach to health has to take into account this diversity and the different axes of discrimination that are intertwined with gender to produce inequalities in health. We speak of gender inequalities in health when we refer to the disparity in health between women and men, which is systematic, unnecessary, avoidable and unfair. This inequality is produced by social conditions. The concept of gender equality in health has to do with equality in opportunities and access to resources of different kinds. To achieve equity in health we have to refer to justice in the distribution of burdens and benefits, which means that women and men should be treated the same when their needs are the same, and that those needs that are different and should be addressed differently.

But how can we get to solve the aforementioned points? With the third fundamental instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women, education. The best and most effective factor to work towards equality is, without a doubt, education. One of the main goals of the educational system should be the training in respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, effective equality of opportunities between men and women, non-discrimination and the recognition of affective-sexual diversity, as well as the critical assessment of inequalities, allowing to overcome sexist behaviours. Only through a quality, inclusive and demanding educational system can access to equal opportunities be guaranteed to women in order that they achieve their full potential. Equal treatment and opportunities between women and men is a learning that all students must acquire throughout their education. It is the responsibility of all society and governments to create the conditions, acquire the necessary training and establish the resources and methodologies to achieve this essential goal to our society. The contribution of education to the achievement of equal opportunities between women and men is undeniable: so much so that anyone can achieve the maximum training that our own capacity allows us, regardless of our sex, to sensitize and educate against gender violence and respect based on equality of treatment and opportunities.

Now, speaking from the point of view of our Cross-cultural Youth Exchange Fellow, the history of women has focused primarily on making visible what had been hidden for years, and the presence of women in the musical field is not recent. Also, the situation of women is not the same in all historical periods. Beyond the exclusion that women have experienced, throughout history to develop musical practice, we also have to take into account the gender bias that has characterized musicological studies. The fact that the incorporation of feminism into musicology has been considerably late, has consequently entailed a lack of tradition, a lack of studies in which the great number of talented musicians that were marginalized in their time. And still, there have been women who have fought the ideologies of their time. Women determined to make music and to move in a “masculine world.” Women who were subjected to scrutiny and objection just because they were women. Women of bygone times, composers and performers who should be recognized and who should be given all the prestige they deserve in this century, along with the new generations of female classical musicians who come to fight strongly against gender stigmas.

We have come a long way, but we still have a few miles to go. Despite all the efforts made, despite the progress in general terms that has been notable, since 1995 the long-awaited and complete gender equality has not yet been achieved. Concepts such as feminism must be destigmatized, often misunderstood as the opposite of sexism. Nothing is further from reality; feminism is a set of movements that aims to establish an environment of equality between the sexes. Basically, that women should have the same opportunities as men. Men and women need each other in all areas and spheres of our existence and there is no better place for this message to sink in than in homes and schools, since that is where the men and women of the future live and are formed. We are called to build, together, a new, fairer and also more productive relational system in which our abilities and skills are put to the maximum use. Female empowerment at the work and public life level is the key to achieving gender equality since in the end; we are better and stronger together.