



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
14 December 2022

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-seventh session

6–17 March 2023

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 African Action on Aids, European Union of Women, Graduate Women International (GWI), International Alliance of Women, International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), International Council of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Inner Wheel, Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women’s Association, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and International Movement of Catholic Students), Servas International, Soroptimist International, Women’s International Zionist Organization, World Union for Progressive Judaism, and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations 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

Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. The situation of women and girls in rural areas is very diverse, so it was not surprising that the first attempt to reach consensus at 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2012 failed. It was a significant accomplishment to achieve relatively strong Agreed Conclusions (AC) at the 62nd session in 2018. If the measures agreed to at the 62nd session to reduce inequalities for women and girls in rural areas were realized, significant progress would be made on Agenda 2030, for women and girls and for the whole world. Four years after the 62nd session, there has been very slow progress in a few regions and sectors. In general, women have only been able to maintain what has already been achieved and prevent regression. Central factors for the equality of women in rural areas are the dismantling of stereotypes and gender-specific norms, the equal inclusion and participation of women in decision-making positions, and lack of adequate infrastructure in rural areas. Some of the most important factors in achieving equality and gender justice for women and girls in rural areas are the dismantling of structural barriers and internalized stereotypes, the lack of role models and gender-specific socialization. Women, girls and their organizations must be able to participate fully and equally in shaping society, the economy and politics, even in rural areas. It is therefore necessary to ensure that they are fully and equally involved in decision-making processes and positions of power, and have equal access to land, credit and other resources. Women and girls play key roles in agriculture, accounting for 43% of the agricultural labor force globally. However, they face obstacles including gender-based violence, and limited access to land, information, capital, credit and other inputs. Agriculture is a generally high-risk sector for trafficking, exploitation, forced labor, and violence against women. Gender-based violence causes fear, illness and other physical and psychological effects which can make women and girls unable to work at their full capacities, resulting in food insecurity and limited resources, which may also cause families to resort to child or early marriage. The situation may get worse in times of conflict, displacement, and food crisis which are often impacts of climate change. Another factor affecting women and girls in rural areas is the lack of infrastructure. Women and girls need gender-responsive, quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure including safe drinking water and sanitation, energy, transport, technology, education, health, maternal, childcare and others. Women and girls in rural areas are disproportionately affected by natural disasters, as they are often responsible for collecting firewood and water. To combat the impacts of climate change, technological solutions and behavioral or economic changes are not enough. Increased social sustainability and gender equity are also needed. The undersigned non-governmental organizations in consultative status to the Economic and Social Council, members of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women Vienna, call on all stakeholders and parties to the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women to remove obstacles and do more to empower women and girls in rural areas. Furthermore, we appeal to all parties to finally and immediately accelerate implementation of the Agreed Conclusions of the 62nd session.
