



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
5 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 Non-Governmental Organization Federation of Nepal, 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

Non-Governmental Organization Federation of Nepal is an umbrella organization or national platform of 6,517 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in various fields of social welfare and development in Nepal. Established in 1991 for the promotion and protection of social justice, human rights, civic space and pro-poor development, Non-Governmental Organization Federation Of Nepal has evolved as a leading organization working for the entire NGO movement in Nepal. It is actively working to unite, organize, capacitate and mobilize civil society aiming to create a peaceful, democratic and just Nepal. Non-Governmental Organization Federation Of Nepal has a catalytic role to support member organizations to enable them to contribute to sustainable development, good governance, human rights, democracy and socio-economic transformation.

Since the Universal Periodic Review's first cycle Member States have made some policy level changes for the protection of the rights of women in their countries, however subsequent specific legislation rushed through without the necessary consultation process have not been able to establish rights to equality and non-discrimination.

The Constitution of Nepal, and the legal provisions of other Member States are creating milestones for gender equality and social inclusion, enshrining equal rights for women, the poor, the vulnerable and people from different social groups. Positive provisions included affirmative action to address historical disadvantages and a ban on sex or caste/ethnicity-based discrimination. The legal frameworks related to rights of women establishes for women the right to equal lineage; right to safe motherhood and reproductive health; right to participate in public and political life; right to property and family affairs; and positive discrimination in education, health, employment and social security. It also makes any act of violence against women punishable by law. The laws further elaborates the special provisions for the protection, empowerment or development of citizens, including those who are socially or culturally backward. Constitutions ensure entitlement to citizenship by descent form however the provision on citizenship remains discriminatory between men, women and intersectional groups in terms of acquisition, transfer and retention.

Social protection is a key human rights-based strategy for eradicating poverty and increasing equality and social justice to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As an example, in Nepal it is estimated that women spend at least 4.5 hours a day caring for the home, children and other dependents compared to men who spend around 1 hour. Care responsibilities prevent women from actively engaging in the labor market and their contributions go unrecognized.

Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that "every member of society has the right to social security." Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, "end poverty in all its forms everywhere," calls for nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all by 2030.

Women and girls are highly engaged in unpaid care and low-paid work, and experience time poverty. This restricts their access to empowerment and decent work, negatively impacts their health and well-being, limits their opportunities and undervalues their contributions. Formalization of informal world of work valuing the unpaid care and low-paid work, recognizing their contribution through social security package and developing the policies and programs to change the social discriminatory perception, will improve their livelihoods, which in turn will benefit families and communities. Social programs that tackle the stereotype social norms and practices designed to loosen traditional gender roles and social norms accelerate women's economic empowerment.

We have following observations which we urge Member States to consider during the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women:

1. Right to work and rights at work: A majority of the women and girls employed in the informal economic sector do not have dignified, just and favourable working conditions and social security. Women working in households, restaurants, dance bars, massage parlours, etc. are not adequately protected by law and mechanism. This results in abuse and stigmatization including unequal and low salaries, uncertain duty hours, job insecurity, harassment, violence and arbitrary arrests. Hence, women working in informal sectors should entertain with improving working conditions, ensure job security and establish complaint mechanisms, and the women's work should be valued, respected and recognized.

2. Right to social security: The governments of Member States have practised different types of social security services including a contribution-based social security scheme. Most of these schemes protect employees in formal sectors but women workers in informal sectors and unemployed may not benefit from them. The governments may provide allowances for senior citizens, widows, children, Dalits and endangered ethnic groups etc. However, many women migrant workers do not receive any incentives based on their contribution in national income and mobility of economy. Hence holistic social security to women working in informal sectors should be guaranteed and contribution-based social protection allowances to migrant workers should be assured.

3. Gender equality and violence against women and girls: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women guarantees that no women and girls shall be discriminated on the ground of race, sex, economic condition, geography and similar other grounds. Unconditional universal social protection would avoid stigmatization, promote inclusion and equality, and reduce gender stereotypes. Economic empowerment for women and girls will require transformations in the systemic policies and stereotypes which disadvantage women in the family, community and labor market. However, gender inequality prevails in member states in South Asian region, and women are discriminated in public and political forums. Women from Dalit, indigenous people, minority and Muslim groups and women with disabilities continue to face gender-based and identity-based discrimination. In this connection, an effective implementation of laws and policies on gender equality backed with sufficient resources are requirements, and we need to develop the plans and programmes to end harmful cultural practices and build awareness for eliminating discrimination against women.

Gender-based violence, especially violence against women in families and communities continue due to patriarchal social structure despite some legal safeguarding mechanism is being practiced. Hence, improving mechanisms to protect women against all forms of violence by developing a response mechanism with comprehensive essential service support is highly important. Discriminatory provisions in terms of acquisition, transfer and retention of citizenship should be reviewed and readdressed.

4. Social inclusion: Women yet lag behind in terms of meaningful participation and representation in political, social, economic life. One example, the Nepal Labor Force Survey 2017-18 presents that women were paid 30 per cent less than male. Female are excluded to hold managerial positions. Only 11 per cent women have control over their land out of 19.7 per cent of total women landowners. In this context, we recommend the Government to adopt special measures in line with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women's 2018 concluding observation and constitutional provisions on "special opportunities" to enhance access for rural women and girls in all spheres of decision making.

The Non-Governmental Organization Federation of Nepal's submit the following recommendations for consideration by the members and observers of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and call upon Member States to:

1. Protect women working in entertainment sectors by improving working conditions, ensure job security and establish complaint mechanisms.
 2. Ensure domestic work as decent work and social security to the domestic workers and women workers in unpaid care work.
 3. Adopt the essential policy measures to make the work-place safe, reduce the gender-based violence in public space and value the work of rural women and girls in informal sector including agriculture and entertainment sector.
 4. Guarantee social security to women working in informal sectors. Provide contribution-based social protection allowances to all internal and foreign migrant workers with full social reintegration programmes and policies.
 5. Ensure effective implementation of laws and policies on gender equality backed with sufficient resources, and develop the plans and programs to end harmful cultural practices and build awareness for eliminating discrimination against women.
 6. Improve mechanisms to protect women against all forms of violence. Develop a response mechanism with comprehensive essential service support, and investigate cases involving harmful traditional practices and punish those responsible, provide protection and rehabilitation to survivors.
 7. Raise awareness against issues such as the dowry system, menstrual taboos, polygamy etc.
 8. Ensure equality before the law for women by guaranteeing full rights to national identity (citizenship) to women and the ability to transfer citizenship to their children and husband.
 9. Adopt special measures with clear timelines, in line with Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women's concluding observation and constitutional provisions on "special opportunities", to enhance access for women facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination, and ensure women equal participation in all spheres.
-