



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

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**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 Medical Women's Association of Nigeria, 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**

The Medical Women's Association of Nigeria (MWAN), a national body of female medical and dental Doctors, is honoured to contribute to the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69). MWAN is committed to advancing the health and well-being of women and girls across Nigeria and addressing the structural and social determinants of gender inequality in healthcare.

In line with the focus of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and its role in achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, the Medical Women's Association of Nigeria (MWAN) submits the following statement for consideration at the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69). The review also includes the assessment of contributions towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Whereas the Beijing Declaration remains a powerful tool in promoting women's rights globally, persistent gender inequalities continue to impact women's access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. The goals of gender equality and women's empowerment cannot be fully realized without addressing these gaps, especially in maternal and reproductive health.

Whereas women's health, particularly maternal health, remains a significant challenge. In Nigeria, maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the world, with poor access to quality healthcare services exacerbating this crisis. Reproductive health services are often inaccessible, and social stigma prevents many women from seeking necessary care. This situation demands urgent action to ensure that women's health needs are prioritized within national health policies.

Whereas gender-based violence (GBV) continues to undermine the health and well-being of women and girls. Violence against women, including domestic abuse, sexual assault, and harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), persists despite legislative frameworks. The lack of strong enforcement mechanisms and social stigma surrounding GBV further marginalizes survivors and limits their access to essential healthcare and support services.

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and intensified the disparities in healthcare access, especially for women. The diversion of healthcare resources towards pandemic response has led to disruptions in maternal health services, increasing the risks for women during pregnancy and childbirth. Women, who form the majority of frontline healthcare workers, have also been disproportionately exposed to the virus, further complicating their health outcomes.

## **Opportunities for Progress**

### **Strengthening Maternal and Reproductive Healthcare Services**

There must be increased investments in healthcare infrastructure, especially in maternal and reproductive health services. Governments must prioritize funding, improve access to healthcare facilities, and train healthcare workers, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Special attention must be given to addressing the high maternal mortality rates through improved antenatal care, access to skilled birth attendants, and postnatal services.

### **Promoting Access to Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Education**

Empowering women and girls with accurate information about their reproductive health is essential for achieving gender equality. Comprehensive sexual

and reproductive health education should be integrated into the national curriculum, ensuring that girls and women have access to information on contraception, safe pregnancy, and reproductive rights.

### **Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Promoting Women's Health**

Stronger enforcement of laws against gender-based violence, alongside accessible healthcare services for survivors, is crucial. Healthcare providers must be trained to provide sensitive, trauma-informed care to survivors of violence. Governments and civil society should collaborate to ensure that women and girls can access psychological, legal, and medical support.

### **Utilizing Innovation and Digital Technologies for Women's Health**

The integration of innovative digital health technologies can significantly improve women's access to healthcare. Telemedicine, mobile health applications, and digital platforms offer promising opportunities to deliver healthcare services remotely, particularly for women in hard-to-reach areas. Governments should invest in digital health infrastructure and ensure that women, particularly in rural areas, have access to these technologies.

### **Fostering Multisectoral Collaborations for Gender Equality**

Achieving gender equality in healthcare requires collaboration between governments, healthcare professionals, civil society organizations, and international agencies. Multisectoral partnerships can ensure that gender-based disparities in healthcare access and outcomes are addressed comprehensively.

### **Recommendations**

The Medical Women's Association of Nigeria (MWAN) urges the Commission to take the following actions:

#### **Support Universal Access to Maternal and Reproductive Health Services**

Prioritize and promote policies that ensure universal access to quality maternal and reproductive healthcare services, particularly in underserved and rural areas. This includes increasing investments in healthcare infrastructure, training healthcare providers, and ensuring access to essential maternal health services like antenatal, childbirth, and postnatal care.

#### **Promote Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Education for All**

Advocate for the integration of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education into national educational systems. Ensure that all women and girls have access to accurate information regarding contraception, family planning, safe pregnancy, and their reproductive rights.

#### **Strengthen Legal Frameworks and Enforcement Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

Encourage Member States to enhance their legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Governments must collaborate with healthcare professionals to provide trauma-informed care, including psychological, medical, and legal support, for survivors of violence.

### **Leverage Digital Health Technologies to Expand Access to Care**

Promote the use of digital health innovations such as telemedicine, mobile health platforms, and online health education tools. Governments should invest in the development of digital infrastructure, ensuring that women, especially in remote and rural areas, have equitable access to these technologies.

### **Facilitate Multisectoral Partnerships to Tackle Gender Inequalities in Health**

Advocate for stronger collaborations between governments, healthcare providers, civil society organizations, and international bodies to address gender disparities in healthcare access. These partnerships can help mobilize resources, share best practices, and ensure accountability in achieving gender equality in healthcare.

### **Conclusion**

The Medical Women's Association of Nigeria (MWAN) reaffirms her commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and calls for urgent measures to address the gaps in healthcare access for women and girls. Achieving gender equality in healthcare is a fundamental human right and is essential for the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By strengthening healthcare systems, promoting reproductive health education, addressing gender-based violence, and leveraging digital innovations, we can create a world where women are empowered to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

MWAN will continue to advocate for policies that promote women's health and work towards a future where no woman or girl is left behind.

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