



## 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 Afrikanische Frauenorganisation, Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas (FAWCO), Graduate Women International (GWI), International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), and Soroptimist 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

At the Fourth World Conference on Women, leaders from 189 countries adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It was the world's most widely endorsed and visionary agenda for women's rights. Women and men, girls and boys own the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – both those who created it and new generations since then. Together, they created an action plan grounded in the lived experiences of women and reflecting their ideas and aspirations. According to UN Women's "Equal is Greater", twelve areas of critical concern in the Platform cover areas of life requiring the most urgent action to deliver gender equality for women and men in all their diversity: poverty, education and training, health, violence against women, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision-making, mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment and the girl child. It was their plan to put gender equality in every national policy, budget and plan; create institutions dedicated to gender equality; guarantee an equal footing for women in the economy; take comprehensive measures to eliminate violence against women, apply gender quotas in political leadership and to tackle the unique challenges of girls and young women. 2025 makes the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Although the ambitious roadmap is more valuable than ever and gender equality is among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, not a single country has yet fully achieved gender equality. Achieving gender equality could inject an additional \$12 trillion into the global economy. Ending the gender digital divide could provide over \$500 billion. Closing gaps in skills could add \$10 trillion more. According to UN Women's "Equal is Greater," when countries act on the Platform's 12 areas of concern, they see benefits. Countries that passed laws to stop domestic violence have on average cut rates in half (UN Women and UN DESA 2024, the Gender Snapshot Report 2024). Barriers to the progress of the ambitious plan are crises such as climate-related disasters, conflicts or pandemics; these interact with existing inequalities, making them worse, undermining the world's efforts to react and recover. Despite this, progress is unstoppable; change is here. Ever more people, especially young people, know the value of gender equality for their lives and their world, and are aware of and demanding of their rights.

The NGO Committee on the Status of Women – CSW Vienna has made many campaigns and promoted events and activities concerning the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, also including young women in its work. It is working together with other Committees such as the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development, the NGO Committee on Ageing, and UN Vienna agencies such as UNEP, UNODA, UNODC and others. The NGO CSW Committee consists of many member organizations which it supports in their work such as campaigns and events concerning the prevention of violence against women and girls, as well as the prevention of Harmful Traditional Practices. It supports gender equality, the education of women and girls, the empowerment of women, the protection of older women and widows and the fight against the poverty of women, etc.

The Gender Snapshot Report 2024 of UN Women and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs highlights new data and the latest evidence on trends and gaps in Gender Equality. It finds that the world is still falling short on its commitments to women and girls. It states that points of light are declining poverty, narrowing gender gaps in education, and a push for legal reforms.

Now just six years before the 2030 deadline of the SDGs, not a single indicator under SDG 5 – Gender Equality has been fully achieved. According to the Gender Snapshot Report 2024, ending extreme poverty among women could take 137 more

years at the current rate of change. Furthermore, the report states that no country has all relevant laws to prohibit discrimination, prevent gender-based-violence, uphold equal rights in marriage and divorce, guarantee and provide full access to sexual and reproductive health. It concludes that gender parity in Parliaments may not be reached before 2063. The report stresses the high cost of not investing in women's rights and calls attention to proven solutions that benefit women and girls and entire societies. It emphasizes the need for radical action to shift the current trajectory and dramatically accelerate progress on gender equality and women's rights. According to the Gender Snapshot Report 2024, there is a need for robust laws that promote Gender Equality and address gender discrimination to achieve change. But discriminating frameworks prevail, undercutting progress worldwide.

The report shows that in 18 per cent of the countries, women do not have the equal right to confer citizenship to their spouses and their children. 54 per cent of countries do not have laws that base the legal definition of rape on the lack of freely given consent. 72 per cent of countries set the minimum age of marriage below age 18, with no legal exceptions, for both women and men. At the current rate, child marriage will not be eradicated until 2092.

In 51 per cent of countries there is at least one restriction preventing women from doing the same jobs as men. Sexual harassment, discrimination and violence against women in the workplace are still evident and therefore the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No.190) must be ratified by all States. This includes the implementation of strict zero tolerance policies in the workplace; women have to feel safe at work to unfold their potentialities as much as men. The Gender Pay Gap is still a reality and unfairly impacts women. Equal pay for work of equal value must be implemented.

Globally women spend 2,5 times as many hours per day on unpaid care and domestic work as men. Unpaid care work is a challenge for women and girls who act as primary caregivers of children and families. The present care crisis is a gender crisis. Further care work must be viewed as a shared role for caregivers in every context. Paid parental leave for both parents is essential. Investing in the care sector would create almost 300 million jobs by 2035, according to the report.

The Gender Snapshot Report 2024 shows that 39 per cent of young women fail to complete their upper-secondary school. This is down from 46 per cent in 2015, but it is still much too high a number of young women.

Education is a universal human right, and Member States must uphold their commitment to it. Basic literacy rates are still lowest among women, especially older and rural women. This highlights the need for access to lifelong, quality education. It is crucial to provide women and girls with basic and functional literacy skills, enabling them to enter the job market and access higher education.

Under a worst-case climate scenario, up to 158 million more women and girls could be pushed into poverty by 2050. The Report estimates that as many as 236 million more women and girls may experience food insecurity. Feminist Climate Justice offers a vision where everyone thrives on a healthy and sustainable planet. Recognition, redistribution, representation and reparation are its four pillars.

All these show that high motivation and steady engagement to act for a positive outcome of the ambitious roadmap of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and patience with the slow process of reaching the SDGs is needed. Nevertheless, governments and stakeholders have to be highly encouraged by NGOs, CSOs, and the people to support the fastening of this process.

The undersigned members of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women Vienna, all in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) call upon all United Nations Member States to:

- Ensure that women are able to participate equally and fully in the economy and in politics;
- Provide equal pay for equal work, and close the gender pay gap;
- Ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No.190) which includes the implementation of strict zero tolerance policies in the workplace;
- Take comprehensive measures to eliminate violence against women;
- Give access to basic and functional literacy and quality education to all women and girls;
- Include women in decision-making positions in climate action planning to participate in climate disaster prevention and the design of strategies for a sustainable, safe and healthy future for our planet.

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