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Statement submitted by Network of Women’s Non-governmental Organizations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 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

The Impact of Coercive Sanctions on the Human Rights of Iranian Women

We are writing to bring the CSW's attention to the issue of empowering Iranian women as one of the principal axes of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Declaration is a visionary agenda for the empowerment of women. It is also one of the reference frameworks used to analyse the situation of women around the world and assess the efforts of states in support of women's empowerment. Ongoing initiatives in countries reflect a commitment to The Beijing Declaration, which fosters an environment where women can thrive and contribute significantly to the economy and society. However, Iranian women, especially women-headed households, have faced challenges such as unilateral sanctions by some countries. The imposition of sanctions by the United States and European Union against the Iranian people has had serious and unfair effects on the country's most vulnerable people, like women. Among these, women-headed households bear the brunt of these economic hardships. In Iran, over 3.5 million women are the primary breadwinners for their families, representing approximately 12% of all households. These sanctions, aimed at weakening Iran's economy, have had severe ramifications on the daily lives of these women and their families, impacting their access to essential goods, healthcare, and opportunities for economic advancement.

Sanctions targeting key industries like oil, gas, and banking have caused inflation and unemployment to rise sharply. As a result, many women-led households struggle to afford basic needs like food, rent, and healthcare. The unemployment rate for women, which was already higher than for men, has worsened. This leaves many women without work or forced into unstable, low-paying jobs. Sanctions have also made it harder for Iran to trade with other countries and access resources. This has severely impacted women entrepreneurs. Many have had to close their small businesses because they cannot get the supplies or financial help they need.

Sanctions have restricted Iran's ability to import life-saving medicines and medical equipment, despite humanitarian exemptions in theory. Women-headed households, often dealing with aging parents or children with health needs, have faced escalating healthcare costs. Reports from the Iranian Red Crescent indicate that sanctions have delayed the procurement of medications for chronic diseases such as cancer and diabetes. Female-headed households, with already stretched incomes, are now forced to make impossible choices between health and survival.

The ripple effects of sanctions extend to education, where many women-led households can no longer afford the costs associated with schooling for their children. This limits the future opportunities for their children and continues the cycle of poverty.

The economic sanctions imposed by the United States and European Union have resulted in immense suffering for millions of Iranians, particularly for women heading households. These women, who already face societal challenges, are now disproportionately affected by unemployment, lack of access to healthcare, and diminished educational opportunities for their children. It is crucial that the international community recognizes the devastating humanitarian impact of these sanctions and takes immediate action to alleviate their harmful effects on female-headed households in Iran.

Recommendations

There are numerous of evidence that shows sanctions harm vulnerable populations while blocking globalization and not creating political or social change quickly. Despite all these challenges, Iranian women are working towards a more inclusive and equitable future for all its citizens by addressing women's unique challenges in different regions and sectors. The members of the commission should also take the following actions with the aim of promoting women's rights and empowering them in Iran:

- To condemn the Coercive Sanctions against Iranian civilians imposed by the US and Some other countries;
 - To implement and supervise the guidelines on ways and means to prevent, remove, minimize, and redress the adverse impacts of Sanctions;
 - To encourage a modern and innovative approach to diplomacy, which includes human rights, according to the UN Charter objective regarding the achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character.
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