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Statement submitted by Center for Women's Global Leadership, 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 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2012/100.



Statement

Why human rights are important for achieving the Millennium Development Goals

The Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University notes that it is critical for Member States to address the enabling environment that results in poverty, as a means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Center recognizes the human rights framework as a central component in assessing macroeconomic policies. Macroeconomic policies can either serve to enhance or to erode people's enjoyment of basic human rights. A human rights framework offers a method through which macroeconomic policies can be assessed to better ensure that Governments realize human rights, particularly the right to work and to an adequate standard of living, as delineated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

In this current economic climate, policies are focused on austerity, while populations are experiencing increased levels of unemployment and inequality. The implementation of macroeconomic policies focused on employment generation through a human rights lens is an effective way to facilitate job creation and decent work in order to erode poverty. A fundamental aspect of States' human rights obligations is that of non-discrimination and equality. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women prohibits discrimination against women in all its forms and obligates States to condemn such discrimination and to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights ... (article 11)". Similarly, article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights articulates a principle regarding discrimination and equality.

As evidence shows, women and men experience poverty and vulnerability differently; however, little attention has been given to the material realities and roles of women and men in measuring compliance with the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, given women's responsibility in the care economy, macroeconomic policies and institutions, including the market, concretely affect women's opportunities and capabilities. Specific austerity policies can have the effect of either reducing or increasing the burden of unpaid care work. As a result of the gender division of labour, women have a greater responsibility for unpaid work, which decreases their ability to exercise "the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay", laid down in article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Human rights provide a clear and universally recognized framework for guidance in the design, implementation and monitoring of economic policies and programmes. To better ensure the promotion of productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty, the Center for Women's Global Leadership recommends the following to Member States:

- Develop macroeconomic policies that facilitate the exercise of the right to work and to an adequate standard of living

- Enact decent work in employment that leaves enough time for leisure and the unpaid work of taking care of families and community activities
 - Cultivate jobs that are of decent quality and employment opportunities that are equitably distributed to include women and marginalized populations
 - Create an appropriate mechanism through which economic and finance ministries and departments at the national level can better understand and formulate policies that accurately reflect the linkages between the achievement of human rights and macroeconomic policies.
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