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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer, 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](#).



Statement

There have been (in some cases) significant improvements towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, most likely at least in part owing to the focus on the Goals despite the difficulties in the global economy experienced since 2007. Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer is still concerned at the prevarication of many Member States and others within the United Nations system when it comes to accepting that unpaid work by women and men should be accounted for, at the very least in accordance with strategic objective H.3 of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, as has been agreed and reaffirmed by all Member States, and the effect of this at the national level on policy development and implementation.

Our members still confront an almost complete lack of knowledge of unpaid work and its importance to economic, social and educational outcomes among most policymakers in the European Union and in many European countries. How will it be possible to support development if academics, politicians and civil servants have little understanding of the necessary care work undertaken primarily by mothers and grandmothers, as well as related and other unpaid and voluntary work? The tendency remains simply to label unpaid work a burden, without any positive or realistic engagement with those women who carry out this work in order to come to an agreement on how to account for, redistribute, replace and support this work.

Our organization requests that, during its review of the Millennium Development Goals, the Commission on the Status of Women specifically recognize statistics on unpaid work and highlight good practice in national accounts and time-use surveys, while encouraging Member States and the Statistical Commission to continue to develop the effectiveness of statistics on unpaid work and their use in public policy development.

Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer also requests, as a priority in the post-Millennium Development Goal period, that the United Nations highlight the contribution of women and men through their unpaid work and define targets for United Nations bodies and Member States to introduce specific statistics and policy measures, based on strategic objective H.3 of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, among others, and to include engagement with those who carry out unpaid care work and other unpaid work at the grass-roots level. The aim should be to find positive and sustainable solutions within families, communities and nations to recognize this work, which is of value to the economy and society, and to ensure that women have access to the value of all their work.

Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer further requests the Commission to continue to highlight the importance of education to women and girls, including issues of access to education in combination with unpaid work, as well as access to the support that they require for study and training. The experience of the Goals has shown that simple, direct and attainable targets can offer a clearer path on which Member States, United Nations bodies and community, voluntary and philanthropic actors can converge. Statistics on unpaid work should form one of the targets in the post-2015 agenda in order to improve the lives of caregivers and those for whom they care. Malala Yousafzai has succeeded in highlighting the importance of girls' access to education. The Commission should build on this momentum and suggest ways of bringing greater emphasis to education and training for women and girls.

Reliable and regularly collected statistics on unpaid work are a first step towards gaining equality for unpaid caregivers, the majority of whom are women. No fair economic or social policy will be introduced or retained unless policymakers have an overview of all work undertaken by women and men and its value.
