



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 December 2015

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixtieth session

14-24 March 2016

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 Amis des étrangers au Togo, 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

Women and the SDGs

In nearly all countries of the world, and in developing countries in particular, women and girls are often faced with discrimination, racism, xenophobia and exclusion. Despite their devotion to the just cause of humanity, to peace, and to the family balance, women are not recognized by men, who consistently relegate them to an inferior position. Thus, at the World Conference against Racism in 2001, Nelson Mandela and Mary Robinson declared that at the beginning of this new century the phenomena of exclusion, discrimination and xenophobia still persisted.

On 22 September 2011, the Heads of State and Government of the United Nations declared that this phenomenon had not gone away. Thus, the women at home must put up daily with all sorts of discrimination on the part of her husband, her in-laws etc. Widows are also victims of such discrimination in several countries, as are older women and migrant women. Women with disabilities are victims of prejudice, and young girls and married women suffer psychological, physical, and sexual violence on a daily basis. Women are faced with other scourges: forced marriages of young girls, genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual exploitation and slavery.

Discrimination against women is aided and abetted by political systems that exclude women and girls from decision-making processes. Faced with these challenges, women are mobilizing around UN-Women, and other organizations are asserting their inalienable rights both in rural and in urban areas, in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Raising awareness about women's and girls' rights remains a challenge. Traditional cultures, customs and religions are still areas where changes must be encouraged in order to promote the rights of women and girls in a manner consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders on 25 September 2015 in New York. Here are some examples:

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere;

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation;

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;

5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate;

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life;

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws;

5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women;

5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels;

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;

6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all;

6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations;

6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally;

6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity;

6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate;

6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes;

6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies;

6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.

Women and girls in the face of climate change

Women and girls are the persons most seriously affected by the consequences of climate change — flooding, cyclones etc. — which can plunge them into poverty. It is they who must search for the wood or charcoal needed to build the fire and feed the family. It is they, then, who destroy the forest for the sake of their family's

survival. In this way they contribute to the emission of household gases that are harmful to the climate. It is they who suffer the cardiovascular and other illnesses linked to toxic kitchen fumes.

This is why renewable energy for all was adopted in the post-2015 Agenda as a way of lightening the chores of women and girls and promoting gender equality by 2030. Women in rural areas have a special role to play in the coming modernization. Educating them is a priority in the process of transition towards a fossil-free world.

Women living in rural areas will share in the positive fallout from the campaign against climate change. They will see their living conditions improved, they will participate in promoting their rights, and they will benefit from medical centres that have access to electricity and will experience easier childbirth, through caesarean sections in particular.

Women's empowerment and female leadership will gain ground and will allow women to take on greater responsibilities and to play a part in decision-making, which has hitherto been reserved for men.

Women and girls will move forward apace with the SDG if the political will exists. Thus, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its related protocols, as well as the SDG themselves, must serve as guides for all (governments, the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector) in improving the living conditions for women around the world. With the Millennium Development Goals, there has been tangible progress in some African countries such as Rwanda, Mozambique, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, but there remains much to be done. It would be well if other countries would fall in behind them so that all women, particularly those living in rural areas, can enjoy their fundamental rights.
