



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 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 World Federation of Ukrainian Women’s Organizations, 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 World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations supports the priority and review themes of the 60th Session of the Commission, “women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development”, and “the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls”, as these are both closely related to our federation's mission and goals.

The World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (founded 1948) unites 29 organizations from 20 countries pursuing a spectrum of civic, religious, cultural, educational, and humanitarian goals. Our federation represents the activities of diasporan Ukrainian communities worldwide at the United Nations, as a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1993, accreditation with the United Nations Department of Public Information since 1991, and as a member of the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on UNICEF since 1997. The federation's core mission is to support the dignity and integrity of women in Ukraine and Ukrainian women in emigre communities by supporting adherence to international standards of human rights, raising public awareness of problems and violations, maintaining Ukrainian language and culture, cultivating awareness of Ukrainian history, family and social traditions. Our federation supports Ukraine's development into an independent, stable democracy with respect for rule of law.

The World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations fully supports the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030, in particular, Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls, as a prerequisite for the fulfilment of the targets under many of the other goals. This is underscored in the description of Goal 5: Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. The targets pertaining to Goal 5 are very specific. They call for ending discrimination against all women and girls, and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and labour exploitation and other types of exploitation. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon declared that the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved “without full and equal rights for half of the world's population, in law and in practice”.

Substantial progress has been made since the Beijing Conference in 1995 in the acceptance of human rights as synonymous with rights of women and girls (“Women's rights are human rights” — Hillary Clinton) as established by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We have many guarantees on paper for the human rights and equality of women and the prohibition of discrimination based on gender, race and religion; but these paper guarantees do not help if the laws are lacking implementation and if the political will to ensure their implementation is lagging. Sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls has not been eliminated, equal remuneration for the same work by men and women is not equal even in developed countries. The Global Gender Gap Report 2014 emphasizes persisting gender gap divides across and within regions. Based on the nine years of

data available for the 111 countries that have been part of the report since its inception, the world has seen only a small improvement in equality for women in the workplace. Poverty continues to affect disproportionately women of all ages and children.

In 2015, we also mark the 15th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. The recently presented Global Report on the implementation of resolution 1325 underscores the still insufficient inclusion of women in decision-making and mediation processes. There is evidence, however, that the participation of women makes for a more lasting peace. We call for a strong resolve and action to set mechanisms in place that will automatically include women in all aspects of conflict mediation, during, after and especially before violence breaks out.

Of particular concern for our federation is the situation in Ukraine, where armed conflict has caused massive displacement of women and children, as it has also in Syria and other countries affected by war, and there is increased incidence that gender-based violence attends a militarized context: rape, trafficking, and illegal detention.

UN-Women's most recent report on the progress of the world's women recognizes how significantly the world has changed since the conference in Beijing in 1995 citing "the rise of extremism, escalating violent conflict, recurrent and deepening economic crises, volatile food and energy prices, food insecurity, natural disasters and the effects of climate change [that] have intensified vulnerability and increased inequalities". Wars hinder sustainable development: the massive use of fossil fuels contributes to increases of CO₂ and the destruction of the environment. While more than \$14 trillion was spent on wars in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan in 2014 (according to the Institute for Economics and Peace), global power relations are undermining normal sustainable livelihoods. The worldwide disparity in wealth violates the human dignity of billions of people around the world.

We applaud the efforts of the United Nations to meet the goals of Agenda 2030 even as it strives to fulfil its main mission of maintaining world peace. Recently, the organizational structure, in particular that of the central body of the Security Council, has been criticized as impeding the work and mission of the United Nations. We support the movement towards meaningful reform that would further justice by providing appropriate mechanisms for the containment or curtailment of rights of countries found to be in violation of international law. We also turn to the General Assembly and all United Nations agencies to continue to address the ideal of disarmament, regarding both nuclear and non-nuclear arsenals. We urge continued effort to bring more women into the United Nation Agencies, to allocate sufficient funding for the programmes that will bring women and girls into equal participation with men and boys in all decision making processes. We also urge full attention to the prevention of further environmental destruction. Above all, we urge the serious commitment of funding for education to raise awareness of the importance of all societies to combine their best creative energies in an effort to transform our world into the kind of place of true peace and justice that we all desire.