



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 Foundation for Human Horizon, 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

A man talking about women issues in UN-Women convention may sound funny, but allowing me to speak at this forum, UN-Women has sent a strong message that women and men are equal partners in achieving the UN-Women goals for the next 15 years. My mother never went to school, she must have been married before the age of 16, and then she had 5 children. The oldest is my brother, since my parents were labourers at farm they wanted to have another son in the family. My parents tried 3 times to have son, and my 3 sisters were born. When I was born as the 5th child, as per the norm the family was complete. But after my birth, there was a drought at my place, and most of the men went to cities to find work, my father followed them, leaving my mother in charge to feed five babies. He was earning less than a \$ 1 per month in Mumbai and was sending most of the money back home to my mother to feed us. My mother being a strong woman, started working as labourer at farms, and sent all five of us to school. Soon my oldest sister dropped out of school before she started the 1st grade, because my parents were not able to afford clothes to send her to school, and then another sister dropped out of school for the same reason. My parents never stopped sending my brother to school, because he was considered the hope for all of us, that one day he would be educated and able to take care of all of us.

Since I was scared of school and teachers, my 3rd sister who is 2 years older than me started coming to school in my class. For the next 18 years we studied together, she is a lawyer in the Mumbai High Court, and I opted for social work and left India for further study. Today my sister takes care of my parents and other siblings it is not my brother.

My story has everything UN-Women is fighting for, all three women in my family had to sacrifice their right to education to give the opportunity to the man in the family. They had to work harder than male members of the family, as my mother was taking care of us, as well as working in the farm.

I would like to bring attention to all members five important considerations we should fight for:

First, as mentioned in the paragraph 42 (a) to II of Women Commission report, every women and girl should be able to have human rights. Second, (paragraph 42 (jj) to (xx)) creating environment for gender equality and empowerment, third, (paragraph 42 (yy) to (ddd)) investing in women empowerment, fourth, paragraph (eee) to (hhh)) creating evidence based modules for women empowerment, and paragraph (iii) to (mmm)) developing women leadership in all walks of society.

We are working under “Save the Female Child” project to help newborn girls and mothers, providing at least one-year nutritional, medical, and financial support. So girl children are not considered as a burden in the society. Looking at statistics, in India since 1990s, 500,000 girls were being lost annually due to female foeticide. MacPherson estimates that 100,000 abortions every year continue to be performed in India solely because the fetus is female. UN-Women needs to address Female Feticide issue all around the globe. Every document, conference, policy papers UN-Women publish needs to incorporate the female foeticide issue to attract member states attention, to demand legal frameworks to stop female feticides.

After a girl child is born, immediate human rights are food, health and shelter. In regards to food as a human right, girl children are more likely to suffer from nutritional deficiencies than male children. Globally, 50 per cent of all pregnant women are anemic, and at least 120 million women in less developed countries are underweight. Research shows that being underweight hinders women's productivity and can lead to increased rates of illness and mortality. In some regions, the majority of women are underweight: In South Asia, for example, an estimated 60 per cent of women are underweight. The Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations member states in 2000 challenge nations to create effective interventions to improve women's and adolescent girls' nutrition. Taking such action not only improves the health of girls and women today, it has far-reaching intergenerational effects that can help countries develop.

Preventing malnutrition requires a political commitment. Public health systems need to prevent and treat micronutrient deficiencies, encourage households to meet the dietary needs of women and adolescent girls throughout their lives, and ensure their access to high-quality health services, clean water, and adequate sanitation. Policymakers should also address women's low social status and ensure that girls have access to education — which should include information on nutrition. Such policy measures can help increase women's age at first pregnancy, an important determinant of maternal health and child survival, and can encourage women to space their births.

We all should join hands to raise two important concerns in this UN-Women meeting, first stop female feticide and second consider food, shelter and healthcare as a human right for women/girls.
