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Statement submitted by International Center for Ethno-Religious Mediation, Inc., 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

Twenty years ago in Beijing, China, the nations of the world made a promise to actively work to empower women globally. This agenda called on men and women to denounce injustices against women.

As of 2019, however, some countries have not yet endorsed the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Despite the abundance of activist efforts aimed at uplifting women in the United States, and even with many women running for the office of the president in 2020, women, especially women in minority groups, find themselves at a disadvantage in:

- the workplace
- economic positions
- public service and political roles
- the education sector
- obtaining proper healthcare

The workplace

In the workplace, be it the courtroom or the boardroom, there is a scarcity of women in leadership roles. Women and women of color often find themselves overlooked due to their gender and sometimes race when applying for a job or being promoted to leadership positions. Without gender and racial diversity in the workplace, the female perspective is absent. Sexism and racism often go hand in hand, leading women of minority groups to confront further discrimination.

Economic positions

Women earn about 80 cents for every dollar that men make. Women of minority ethnic groups earn less than white women. They also earn less than white men, who make up the majority of the United States workforce. The Institute for Women's Policy Research notes that in 2018, a Hispanic woman's weekly earnings were 61.6 per cent of White men's median weekly earnings. Hispanic women have lower weekly earnings than African American and Asian women, who earn 65.3 per cent and 93.5 per cent of White men's earnings, respectively. The Institute for Women's Policy Research projects that the Hispanic women's earnings will reach parity with white men in 2224, and African American women will reach parity in 2119. With the rising costs of childcare and college tuition, unequal pay makes it difficult for young and middle-aged women to pay back their student loans or support their children.

Public service and political roles

A challenge facing American politics is the conception that women are less capable than men, despite their educational background or level of experience. Women in politics are often taken less seriously. Media coverage of them, for instance, often focuses on their clothing or lack of a maternal aspect. Politico Magazine raises the point that women have sustained leadership roles in many countries, such as Liberia, India, the United Kingdom, and Dominica, but the United States has yet to accomplish this.

The educational sector

Young women in many countries face the challenge of obtaining access to any form of education. Although not as severe, there are still women in the United States

who do not have the same opportunities as men and are treated differently in educational settings. Young women or children are often evaluated against their male peers and are not expected to do as well without working harder. Under-representation of women in science, technology, engineering, and math fields or in non-engineering fields, such as criminal justice and economics, leads to many women turning away from such disciplines when deciding on a college major. The Brookings Institute details that when a woman succeeds within one of the aforementioned fields, she is expected to face various obstacles, such as, “those in the field thinking she’s not brilliant like her male peers; having her looks discussed on online job boards when she’s job-hunting; performing more service work if she becomes university faculty, and getting less credit for co-authored publications in some disciplines when she goes up for tenure.”

Obtaining proper healthcare

Overall, women require more healthcare treatment than men due to pregnancy, breast cancer, menstrual cycles, and more. Maternal mortality is a leading problem faced by women in the United States and internationally. Information from the World Health Organization (WHO) reveals that 295 thousand women died of maternal mortality in 2017, but many of these deaths were due to low resources and were preventable. African American women in the United States are predominantly affected by maternal mortality. PoliticoMagazine reports that 25.1 per 100,000 die from this affliction. There are various health issues that women face that are preventable, and aspects of maternal mortality are caused by obstacles to having sufficient coverage, connection to care, preventive services, and reproductive and sexual health services. Aside from the challenge of finding proper care with a low income, many minority women do not receive information on how they can get better coverage, such as those under 26 years of age using their parent’s health plan.

Looking ahead

As an emerging center of excellence for ethnic and religious conflict resolution and peacebuilding, the International Center for Ethno-Religious Mediation strongly advocates for a proactive solution to the many challenges minority women face, especially challenges in the workplace, economic positions, public service and political roles, the education sector, and obtaining proper healthcare. Solutions to address these challenges will begin by including representatives of minority women in the conversation and creating a channel through which their voices will be amplified and heard in public policy circles.
