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Statement submitted by Word of Life Christian Fellowship, 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

In spite of the joint and relentless efforts of UN-Women, The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, non-governmental organizations (NGO), Civil Society organizations (CSO), which has created some improvement in the area of effective participation and decision-making in public life, elimination of gender based violence, gender equality and empowerment of women and the girl child, there is still a significant amount of push needed, in terms of policy changes, methods of operation changes, re-prioritization of agendas and funding, necessary to accomplish these priority objectives captured in the CSW 65 2021 themes. Below are recommendations in achieving the above-mentioned themes.

Liberate the present to secure the future we want

If there is one thing humanity should hopefully have learnt during this time of the COVID 19 pandemic, it is that we are more connected in time and in space than ever before. A mishap in Wuhan, China, turned out to be not only China's problem, but everyone's problem.

According to UNICEF, by 2050 Africa's population is estimated to be about 2.4 billion and by the end of the century, 4.2 billion, meaning that 40 per cent of the human population will be African, but also possibly severely disenfranchised if present trends persist. To those with a myopic view, this is Africa's problem. To those with foresight, this is a global problem. Consequently meaning, with majority of women and girls, being disenfranchised but forming majority of Africa's population, if current trends in population growth persist, these numbers encourage us to see that we must work hard together to prepare Africa for her future and thereby, the future of the world indirectly.

In helping Africa we will liberating the future labour force and empowering them to produce at maximum efficiency, for the greater good. Helping Africa is no longer just a humanitarian gesture, or because she is begging. Helping Africa is now a prudent, scientific, moral, logical and wise thing to do.

A new normal

We can no longer afford to continue to do business as usual, which clearly has failed.

We must quickly evolve and adapt to a "new normal".

Women and girls who form majority of the population in most nations in the world should benefit from the resources.

A new normal should include trade agreements and MOU's between International groups and local communities, budget allocations at National and local regional levels, indigenous and foreign investors, committed to adopting and include clauses, stipulations and conditions, and strenuously stand on the importance of the respect of the role of law, human rights of all, and particularly the rights of women, girls and children, as one of the non-negotiable conditions for partnerships and collaborations.

New labor laws

Global moves to change labour laws could significantly reduce the avenues that predisposes women and girls to become victims of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, like racism and marginalization. In the case of women, from developing nations, who migrate and in host countries, they are exploited, to provide

cheap, and unorganized labor. Furthermore, racial profiling and gender prejudices, drives certain jobs to certain areas, leaving other areas without or with minimal opportunities for those women and girls for academic, financial or social empowerment, thereby limiting women and girls full and effective participation and decision-making in public life.

Strategically use what we have now while planning for the future

Empowering and simultaneously diversifying women and girls participation in the labour market through continued encouragement on the liberal arts. While it is important to support and encourage women and girls to explore career opportunities in STEM, the reality globally is that, even in the world of science and technology, the decision makers that drive those industries are those in Liberal Arts; managers, directors, accountants, lawyers, and so on and so forth. Having trained and qualified women and girls in those offices will ensure a gender sensitive approach and perspective on many decisions.

Secondly, it is also a more immediate, effective and fiscally more responsible approach, to strategically continue to emphasis on the Liberal Arts because, traditionally women and girls already found it easier to enter these industries at entry level, doing clerical work. Having had a basic know how, It would therefore be financially, psychologically, and even socially and culturally easier to encourage and help these women and girls move on to the positions of more responsibility, influence and financial empowerment. For example it will be easier in every way, to get girls or women who are already in clerical jobs as secretaries, go back to school and become accountants, than for said girls or women to try branching out into STEM and become engineers. Now, a mechanic could decide to become an engineer, but how many women or girls are mechanics presently? Clearly having more women engineers is a great thing, but realistically, this is a much longer term goal. Compare that to the number of women and girls right now who are already in clerical jobs, who could more easily become accountants, or court clerks or lawyers, receptionist who become managers and marketing directors and CEO's, teachers who become social workers, professors and diplomats.

Holistic empowerment

We also want the empowerment of women and the girl child to be interpreted in the broadest terms. What good would it do to empower her academically, financially and then fail to empower her to protect herself?

Also provide women's self-defence trainings that surpasses just physical resistance. It should also incorporate self-awareness, psychological, spiritual, verbal and emotional training to be able to deescalate potentially violent situations.

Change of mind, change direction, change the outcome

There is the bitter irony where one of the great female characteristics and coping mechanisms also becomes one of her greatest weakness. Her ability to be patient, persevere, coupled with cultural and customary pressure that groomed her to be quiet in her expression of her emotions, leaving her closed up, even to her own detriment. She is the "strong silent" type, but now, she needs to learn the balance of when and how to cry for help. She needs to learn how defend herself and other women too. We need to teach her these things.

Including men and boys as part of the solution team

Upscaling in our efforts to educate and enlighten not only women and girls, but also men and boys on the ills of, and measures to eradicate gender directed violence and discrimination.

We need to make men and boys understand that, joining in the fight to eradicate these ills is a moral, spiritual, obligation and a labour of love to ensure the future safety and wellbeing of their wife's, daughters, granddaughters, sisters, nieces, mothers and grandmothers. "Protection of their own family". This might be a more compelling reason to leverage the participation of men and boys in the efforts towards gender empowerment, equality and protection.

We need the support of our sons, grandsons, brothers, nephews, fathers, grand fathers and husbands. In fact we are counting on their love and support. They need to know that their contribution is crucial.

African diaspora factor: Africans helping Africa

Diaspora remittances now outweigh Western aid to Africa. The BBC reports that in 2010, Africans living outside of the continent remitted \$51.8 billion to the continent. In the absence of formal welfare mechanisms in many African countries, diaspora remittances fill the void.

A fifth of all African-born physicians work overseas, according to one study, as reported by CNN.

Imagine the reversal of the brain drain and the benefits to the struggling continent of Africa, if Africans committed to solving Africa's problems.

Imagine the many medical missions that could be easily available.

Imagine the empowerment that will ensue with multiplied training and mentoring for all and especially women and girls.

We call on women nation builders worldwide and in particular from the continent of Africa to push for institutionalization of laws and protocols to facilitate more structured and meaningful participation of the African Diaspora, in the affairs of the continent of Africa. Pushing for and implementing dual citizenship for Africans in diaspora.

Things must change in the next 10 years things must be better in the next 25 years, for women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
