



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 December 2021

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-sixth session

14–25 March 2022

**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 International Alliance of Women, 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 International Alliance of Women, an international non-governmental organization and its allies celebrate advocates and UN member states who work toward “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes. We also applaud the focus on “Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work”.

We are at the edge of a precipice due to the lost decades orchestrated by political interests. Women have been disproportionately impacted by the refusal of power brokers to acknowledge and mitigate the climate crisis circumstances. The irresponsible stance of governments toward this crisis exacerbates environmental fragility, contributes to the multiplication of disasters and influences the displacement of communities. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by the lack of policies and programmes to protect their rights and well being.

One revelation during the pandemic lockdowns was how quickly governments can pivot and respond to a crisis when motivated. We are at a crisis moment now, with the climate instabilities that threaten life. The political debates raging against scientific data must conclude with immediate action to resolve the situation. Governments have the information needed to be agile and make appropriate decisions to move humanity forward.

Gender equality must be first and foremost in all implementation of mechanisms to slow the impending climate apocalypse. IAW calls on UN member states to live up to their obligations under the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW and align these with national commitments under the Paris Climate Accord, Biodiversity Convention and UNFCCC.

This alignment of agreements is helpful because these provisions together would lead governments in the right policy direction. The actions we are calling for are thus justified by legally binding and policy-consensus UN agreements, i.e., we are not asking for new consensus, but demanding specific actions that make governments honour their commitments.

The climate crisis is a persistent issue with intersectionality in the increase in violence against women, racism, food insecurity, lack of gender budgeting and migration due to environmental disasters. Engaging women and girls in the creation of climate polices and programmes ensures that women and girls are part of the solution.

Responding to the climate crisis and disaster risk management is directed at rectifying long standing inequalities but also about building a naturally resilient world in the interest of everyone with women at the center of recovery.

Neoliberal policies have become dominant, which means a focus on macroeconomic policies, reducing the role of the state, cutting back on public expenditures and liberalizing markets and trade. All these policies have negative effects on women and systematically do not respect Human Rights and human needs.

Time has come to develop counter strategies from a feminist perspective. Economics is not gender neutral and women’s experiences should be accounted for or even be at the center of economic analysis. We need to redefine our economy. We need new concepts to contribute to the understanding of the economy. Care economy is one such concept, reproductive economy is another one. We should consider both as integral parts of the economy.

The climate crisis has uncovered the huge decent work deficits that still prevail today. The crisis highlights the vulnerability of millions of working people in the subsistence farming, land management in developing countries where women have high participation and which does not have social protection coverage.

The world faces a devastating challenge from which we may not return. It is imperative that the international framework UN member states for climate response be multilateral, transparent and inclusive. We cannot have major economies making decisions for Island nations, Indigenous communities or vulnerable economies. Authentic representation matters and makes the difference from being myopic to being visionary.

Climate change threatens the realization of women's rights/human rights, threatens the achievement and sustainability of development outcomes, threatens natural environments and biodiversity, threatens the economy and livelihoods, threatens food security and food production, threatens water security and threatens peace. IAW recognizes that Climate change intersects and worsens the outcomes of justice, democracy, peace, economy, elimination of violence against women, and health.

The International Alliance of Women stresses the importance of UN member states acting with urgency to pass a comprehensive recovery legislation, with women represented at the negotiation tables. The IAW Action Programme articulates the responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure women's rights are protected. We rely on UN member states to recognize the role of Non Government Organizations and work with civil society especially women's organizations in a productive framework to:

- Recognize the urgency of integrating women's rights in climate change policies, which is indeed a challenge for achieving sustainable and equitable climate compatible development.
- Recognize interrelations between women's rights, climate change, and all areas of sustainable development in policy, implementation and financing.
- Recognize that empowerment of women and achieving equal socioeconomic rights for women is mandatory in order to build climate resilience.
- Prioritise the needs of women in disaster risk reduction and recovery, including safety, access to information, access to decision-making, and access to sexual and reproductive health services.
- Prioritise the needs of women climate refugees, including migrant and displaced women, who are at risk for of increased violence against women, trafficking and exploitation with consequences on for their sexual health rights, and loss of access to health services due to migrant status including those related to family planning.
- Prioritise the needs of rural women and women food producers, especially considering ensuring women's land rights, access to information and decision-making on climate change adaptation, access to climate resilient crops, and access to climate insurance.
- Recognize the rights of indigenous women in climate change policy, and the knowledge of women about biodiversity protection.
- Recognize linkages between climate change and women's health.
- Recognize linkage between climate change and the military pollution and correct the cancellation of this devastating issue in the Paris Agreements; create measures and indicators to decrease all militarisation and its impact on the climate and peace goals.

- Recognize that women are primary caregivers and that negative health effects of climate change, including higher incidence of infectious, waterborne and vector-borne diseases, will increase their burden.

Recommendations for change orientated action by UN Member States:

Economic independence of women

- Review national and international data with intention to respond positively and generate gender aggregated data for vulnerable groups, migrant women, refugee women, women asylum seekers, LGBTIQAA++, women of minorities and indigenous women in all areas of life, especially on their economic human rights.
- Protect women's equal opportunity to work and their right to equal remuneration and equal social security.
- Ensure a publicly funded Child care – equal Parental leave – Day care system that is accessible in rural as well as highly populated areas.
- Guarantee re-entry into the work force at the level a woman exited for a leave of absence both after a parental leave or leave to care for a sick child or sick relatives.
- Create opportunities for women to work in the climate response economy.

Development of education in rural areas

- Analyze the situation.
- Sexual and reproductive and health education.
- Eliminate child labor.
- Incentivize child education for the family.
- Provide education on mitigating the climate crisis locally.

Empowerment of Afghani women

- Remain committed to eliminate the occurrence of violence toward women and girls.
- Install early warning mechanism to monitor human rights abuses targeting women and girls.
- Extend the appointment of a Special Rapporteur to monitor the situation of human rights as it develops in Afghanistan by The Human Rights Council.
- Examine the quality of life of Afghan women through a climate change lens.

Gender lens

- Analyze the situation by gender-based statistics (crime statistics, gender budgeting, education statistics etc.) and understanding of context.
- Educate journalists and make sure that they give a voice to all genders.
- Develop positive non-violent masculinities to promote peace.
- Study and respond to the impact of the climate crisis on women.

Climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes must be gender sensitive:

- Analyze the impact of climate change, environment and disaster events on women's economic empowerment.
- Protections for women must be prioritised to ensure their well being due to climate change, environment and disaster events.
- IAW's 38th Congress requests that governments shift at least 50% of all military expenditure and investments to public health, education, climate stabilisation and sustainable development.
- Hold negative actors accountable for their contribution to climate change, environmental and disaster events.

It must also be noted that, the fundamental standards of women's rights in all climate change measures that help contain population growth, ensuring rights of women to make decisions freely (whether to have children, how many, and when), and to have access to information, services, and contraceptives have to be protected.

The International Alliance of Women and its Network will continue to monitor UN member states on their commitment to realize a world that prioritises achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes, as well as, Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work.

Endorsed by:

Associated Country Women of the World

Association of Presbyterian Women of Aotearoa, New Zealand

Canadian Federation of University Women

Congressional Black Caucus Political Education & Leadership Institute

Dianova International

Federation of Cuban Women

Global Foundation for Democracy and Development, Inc.

Graduate Women International (GWI)

Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Loreto Generalate

International Council of Jewish Women

International Council of Women

International Federation of Business and Professional Women

International Federation of Women Lawyers

International Federation of Women in Legal Careers

International Federation on Ageing

International Presentation Association

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence

Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association

People's Decade of Human Rights Education

Servas International

Sisters of Charity Federation

Soroptimist International

Temple of Understanding

Unitarian Universalist Association

United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society

Women’s Federation for World Peace International

Women’s International Zionist Organization

Women’s World Summit Foundation

Supported by:

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development

Awaz Centre for Development Services

Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Credo-Action

Law Enforcement Action Partnership, Inc.

Nurses Across the Borders

Servicios Ecumenicos para Reconciliacion y Reconstruccion
