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Statement submitted by Trinity Girls Network Corporation and Trinity International Univer of Ambassadors Corporation, non-governmental organizations 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

Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion of Women & Gender-Based Violence and Women's Safety

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. As the global community works toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we must recognize that economic empowerment and financial inclusion, as well as the elimination of gender-based violence, are essential components for women's advancement. This statement seeks to highlight the importance of addressing these critical issues and offers recommendations for actionable solutions.

Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion of Women

The Current Landscape

Economic empowerment is a vital tool for achieving gender equality, yet significant barriers remain. Across the globe, women are disproportionately affected by poverty, earning less, and having fewer opportunities to accumulate wealth. According to the World Bank, women constitute the majority of the 1.7 billion adults globally who are unbanked. Moreover, gender disparities persist in the workforce, with women often concentrated in informal, low-wage jobs without access to financial services or economic resources. These systemic challenges limit women's ability to participate fully in economic life, affecting not only their personal well-being but also that of their families and communities.

Financial inclusion – ensuring that women have access to affordable financial services like savings accounts, credit, and insurance – is a key lever for their economic empowerment. However, women often face obstacles such as lack of collateral, limited financial literacy, and restrictive social norms that prevent them from accessing these resources.

Impact of Economic Empowerment

The economic empowerment of women creates a ripple effect that benefits entire societies. When women have access to financial resources, they are more likely to invest in education, health care, and nutrition for their families, breaking the cycle of poverty. Additionally, economically empowered women are better able to participate in decision-making processes within their households, communities, and even at the political level.

Increased financial inclusion also promotes women's entrepreneurship. Women-owned businesses contribute significantly to local economies, creating jobs and fostering innovation. However, the gender financing gap is one of the most significant challenges they face. Data from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) shows that nearly 70 per cent of women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries face funding gaps.

Recommendations

- **Expand Access to Financial Services:** Governments, financial institutions, and development organizations must work together to create more inclusive financial products tailored to women's needs, including micro-loans, savings accounts, and insurance policies. Technology, such as mobile banking, can be leveraged to reach women in remote or underserved areas.

- **Enhance Financial Literacy:** Financial literacy programs specifically targeting women must be expanded. Education in managing finances, investments, and budgeting should be part of broader capacity-building initiatives to ensure that women can make informed financial decisions.
- **Support Women’s Entrepreneurship:** Governments and private-sector actors should create and enforce policies that ensure equal access to capital, mentorship, and markets for women entrepreneurs. Investment in women-led startups and SMEs should be incentivized through tax benefits and public-private partnerships.
- **Eliminate Legal Barriers:** In many countries, discriminatory laws and regulations prevent women from owning property, accessing credit, or opening bank accounts without a male guarantor. Legislative reforms are crucial to removing these barriers and ensuring women’s financial independence.

Gender-Based Violence and Women’s Safety

The Current Crisis

Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most pervasive human rights violations worldwide, with profound and long-lasting effects on survivors and their communities. One in three women globally experiences physical or sexual violence in her lifetime, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). GBV takes many forms, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, human trafficking, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues, with reports of domestic violence surging as lockdowns confined women to homes where they are often vulnerable to abuse.

GBV is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. It limits women’s ability to participate in the workforce, hinders their access to education, and undermines their health and well-being. Survivors of gender-based violence are more likely to experience economic marginalization, making it crucial to address both safety and empowerment simultaneously.

Impact of Gender-Based Violence

The impacts of GBV extend far beyond the immediate physical and psychological harm to survivors. Societies where gender-based violence is prevalent suffer from diminished social cohesion and lower economic productivity. The cost of intimate partner violence alone is estimated to be around 5.2 per cent of the global GDP annually, due to lost wages, healthcare expenses, and legal costs.

Gender-based violence also perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality. Women who experience violence are more likely to be excluded from economic opportunities, trapping them in dependency and increasing their risk of future violence. Children growing up in violent households are more likely to experience or perpetrate violence later in life, perpetuating the cycle.

Recommendations

- **Strengthen Legal Protections:** Governments must enact and enforce strong laws to protect women from all forms of gender-based violence. This includes ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable through legal mechanisms, and that survivors have access to justice and reparations.
- **Provide Comprehensive Support Services:** Support systems for survivors, including shelters, counseling, and legal aid, must be expanded and made

accessible to all women, particularly those in rural or marginalized communities. These services should be integrated with economic empowerment programs to help survivors regain independence.

- **Promote Community-Based Prevention Programs:** Preventing GBV requires changing societal attitudes toward women and violence. Community-based initiatives that engage men and boys in challenging harmful gender norms are essential. Schools and community centers should provide education on respectful relationships and the importance of gender equality.
- **Increase Funding for GBV Interventions:** Governments, international organizations, and NGOs must prioritize funding for gender-based violence prevention and response initiatives. This includes not only immediate response measures such as crisis hotlines but also long-term strategies that address the root causes of GBV, such as economic inequality and social norms.
- **Leverage Technology for Women's Safety:** Technology can be a powerful tool in preventing and responding to GBV. Mobile applications that allow women to discreetly report abuse, GPS-enabled devices for tracking survivors, and digital education platforms to raise awareness about violence can enhance women's safety and access to support.

Conclusion

The issues of economic empowerment and gender-based violence are interconnected, and progress in one area can reinforce progress in the other. Women who are economically empowered are less likely to experience violence, and those who are protected from violence are better able to participate fully in economic life. It is essential that global, regional, and local actors work together to address these issues in a holistic manner.

By ensuring that women have access to financial services, educational opportunities, and safe environments, we can create societies where women can thrive economically, socially, and politically. We call on the global community to take bold steps in advancing both women's economic empowerment and their safety from gender-based violence, creating a more just and equitable world for all.
