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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by National Council of German Women’s Organizations, 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.



Statement

Domestic violence

The National Council of German Women's Organizations refers to paragraph 124 (d) of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, pursuant to which Governments are to adopt and/or implement and periodically review and analyse legislation to ensure its effectiveness in eliminating violence against women, emphasizing the prevention of violence and the prosecution of offenders, and to take measures to ensure the protection of women subjected to violence. In this context, the National Council demands that the States Members of the United Nations ensure, in their national legislation, that violent domestic partners be banned from the residences that they share with their victims. In order to prevent directives of this type from being circumvented by regulations on rights of access, violence, as well as consistent harassing, threatening or persecutory behaviour towards mothers, must be recognized as a threat to the well-being of their children, including in cases in which the children are not themselves the objects of violence or do not experience it directly. The serious psychological conditions from which mothers often suffer on account of violence, as well as future welfare, must be considered in decisions on access and custody. The solution must be that any violence means removal from the home, with access to children restored only if the perpetrator can demonstrate that the dangerous behaviour has changed.

Human trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation

The National Council refers to paragraph 130 (b) of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which calls for the taking of appropriate measures to address the root factors, including external factors, that encourage trafficking in women and girls for prostitution and other forms of commercialized sex, forced marriages and forced labour in order to eliminate trafficking in women. This includes taking effective measures in the countries of origin of human trafficking. In particular, Member States that are countries of destination are called upon to provide economic aid to the countries of origin, of a type targeted to promote economic independence for women. Countries of origin are called upon to ensure sustained support for local human rights groups. In addition, local counselling and aid projects are to be adequately supported and a stable level of coordination ensured. Counselling centres and shelters for women and girls affected by sexual violence and human trafficking are to be set up and their funding secured, especially in war and crisis zones. Actions to raise the awareness of national and international police and investigative personnel in these areas are also to be taken. To adequately inform those potentially affected, information on safe and legal means of emigration as well as on methods used by human traffickers is to be compiled and distributed thoroughly and without exception.

The National Council also refers to paragraph 130 (d) of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and demands that support structures for victims of human trafficking be established and expanded. Existing structures, especially non-governmental organizations, are to be actively included. Long-term and stable funding is to be secured. In developing actions to eliminate human trafficking, the States Members of the United Nations must preserve the human rights of victims and protect them from criminal prosecution. The greatest possible compensation is to be ensured for victims of human trafficking. This

includes having legal claims to remuneration for labour and to damages for physical and psychological injuries instituted effectively in practice, which means creating the requisite legal framework. It may be necessary for Member States to create funds that can provide direct compensation in cases of hardship or in cases in which claims cannot be made against perpetrators. Victims of human trafficking must be granted residence in States Members of the United Nations independently of their willingness to cooperate in investigative and criminal prosecution processes. Victims of human trafficking must be guaranteed legal claims to integration and educational measures in States Members of the United Nations.

In conclusion, the National Council refers to paragraph 124 (f) of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and demands that the States Members of the United Nations implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, taking into account general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, adopted at the eleventh session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
