



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
23 April 2013
English
Original: French

Substantive session of 2013

Geneva, 1-26 July 2013

High-level discussion, annual ministerial review

Statement submitted by the Burkinabes Association for Child Survival, 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 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

Women, Technology and Sustainable Development

In the speech he delivered on 29 January 2013 at the opening of the eighteenth regular session of the African Union Assembly, Mr Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization, stated that “We have 1,000 days to reach the Millennium Development Goals. It is time to accelerate progress in order to complete our task.” That is to say that achieving that progress will not happen without everyone’s involvement.

There will not be any economically efficient, culturally viable, socially fair, ecologically wise development without public discussion regarding the issues at stake for science. There will be no globalization with a human face without willingness from all to make science “a shared and mutually supportive asset for the benefit of all peoples.”

For we know that billions of individuals, primarily women, are still left out of, or even excluded from, that global-scale social contract. They are not in a minority, and yet their participation in scientific and technological development remains far below that of men. On a global level, science and, even more, technology, remain the preserve of men.

On a worldwide scale, few women hold positions of responsibility in cultural, scientific and technological fields. Women are also under-represented in the fields of research and development, whether in academia, the public sector, or private companies. Community radio stations, mobile telephones and Internet access are powerful educational tools, enabling men and women to take part in discussion on various themes and discoveries, and to debate their significance for the future. Unfortunately, a large number of women and men, particularly in rural and remote regions of African countries, do not have access to such forums.

It is time to change this situation. Science, technology and innovation can facilitate efforts to eradicate poverty, achieve food security, combat diseases, improve the quality of education and encourage gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Enhancing women’s skills and ensuring them equal access with men will expand the pool of talents and prospects that countries can harness in order to respond to these challenges. We must release the power of women’s involvement in science.

How can agriculture become an excellent field of employment for women without women agronomists in our agriculture ministries and our agricultural research centres? How can technology evolve to lighten women’s workload if we have no women engineers to tackle the specific problems encountered? How can we prevent women from dying in childbirth without professionally trained midwives and women obstetricians and gynaecologists?

There are no limits to the tasks women can accomplish if they are given opportunities and access to resources on an equal footing.