



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 December 2013

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-eighth session

10-21 March 2014

**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 Verein Sudwind Entwicklungspolitik, 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

Verein Sudwind Entwicklungspolitik, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status since 2009 engaged in workers' rights, fair trade relations and global sustainable development, welcomes the discussion on challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Acknowledging the importance of collective efforts for poverty reduction and equal rights for women and girls through the pursuit of common goals, we have seen that the Millennium Development Goals agenda has serious shortcomings which must not be repeated in a future post-2015 framework. Women's organizations worldwide have criticized the Millennium Development Goals mainly for the following reasons:

- Not being anchored in the human rights framework
- The lack of a gender perspective throughout the Goals
- The top-down approach without the involvement of civil society
- Not addressing global inequalities and power relations

The lack of political will to address the root causes of poverty, such as unequal power relations and violence; the narrowing public political space owing to the influence of transnational companies; and systemic forms of discrimination/marginalization and exploitation of groups of people, particularly women, who still have to confront multiple forms of patriarchal control over their bodies, reproduction and labour, are the main reasons why the progress that has been achieved remains under constant threat.

The recent financial and economic crises, austerity programmes, climate change and different forms of massive destruction of the natural environment (e.g., through extractive industries and land-grabbing) have a negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of women, in particular, all over the world. Global neoliberal policies destroy solidarity and safety networks within societies. Together with human rights violations committed by different actors, they nurture extremist positions in the global North and South, which in turn contribute to a backlash against women's rights.

The post-2015 framework must be grounded on a rights-based approach that focuses on gender equality and the rights and empowerment of women and girls. We refer to the declaration (<http://viennaplus20.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/vienna-20-cso-declaration-final-post2.pdf>) adopted in June 2013 at the conference of civil society organizations convened in connection with an Austrian high-level meeting to mark the twentieth anniversary of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights and its Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The declaration highlighted some of the most crucial requirements for the advancement of women's human rights, such as the need:

- To take into account multiple forms of discrimination as well as intersections between capitalism and patriarchy
- To fulfil women's right to live a life free from violence

- To promote women's right to social and economic equality
- To tackle root causes of female migration and protect migrant women's rights
- To promote the full enjoyment of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights
- To face all forms of backlash, recognizing the universality of women's human rights
- To promote women's access to justice.

We are convinced that in order to achieve gender justice and sustainable development, the post-2015 agenda must differ substantially from the Millennium Development Goals in the following ways:

(a) It must be a comprehensive and human rights-based framework. Women's human rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled. Key pillars of a human rights-based approach, such as non-discrimination, participation and empowerment, and accountability, must be put into practice in the design, implementation and monitoring of the framework;

(b) The framework must be universal, with common but differentiated responsibilities. Industrialized countries and countries in transition, as well as developing countries must be held accountable for the advancement of women's human rights;

(c) The new framework must build on a gender-sensitive sustainable development perspective, including issues related to workers' rights, peace, women's (human) security and governance;

(d) Inequalities need to be addressed. Gender inequalities are striking all over the world, manifested, among other things, in women's unpaid workload; income distribution; patterns of wealth and consumption; possibilities for mobility; and access to resources, clean water, sanitation and housing, sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, decision-making and technologies;

(e) We need special indicators to hold the wealthier parts of the world accountable for the massive environmental degradation which their (our) lifestyle is producing. Sustainable development will not happen if the richer part of the world is not willing to agree to a measurable reduction in their use of natural resources, including, but not limited to, non-renewable energy;

(f) Transnational corporations as well as multilateral organizations have to be included in the accountability framework post-2015.

To conclude, we urge the inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda of gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women as a stand-alone, top-level goal that includes targets addressing the root causes of gender inequalities that were left out of the Millennium Development Goals, with a focus on violence against women and special attention to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Secondly, gender equality, women's and girls' rights and empowerment need to be mainstreamed across all future development goals, ensuring sector-specific attention and the collection of data disaggregated by sex and age, as well as gender-sensitive targets and indicators.

Central to the achievement of gender equality and women's and girls' rights and empowerment post-2015 are clear sets of measurable, time-bound, qualitative, gender-transformative goals and targets with strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms for good governance of all countries; the inclusion and participation of civil society, with equal representation of women; clearly indicated means of implementation; as well as gender-sensitive budgeting (including revenue systems and expenditure).
