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Commission on the Status of Women

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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 Working Women Association, 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

Promotion of the Millennium Development Goals agenda and women's decent work in the Sudan

Introduction

Working Women Association, highly dedicated to gender equity and women's empowerment, welcomes States' consideration of the priority theme of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls", and the review theme, "Access and participation of women and girls to education, transportation, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work".

About Working Women Association

Our organization is a voluntary social institution registered in the Sudan as a non-governmental organization with the Humanitarian Aid Commission in November 1991 under the Voluntary and Humanitarian Act. We are considered one of the most active women's civil society associations working to enhance the standards and principles of decent work among working women. We endeavour to increase awareness about the rights of women at the social, economic and political levels in the Sudan. We also endeavour to improve the vocational and intellectual competence of our members, among whom are working women in the public and private sectors.

Our organization has 16 branches all over the Sudan at the federal, state, municipal and grass-roots levels. We have 400,000 members. We were granted consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in 2010.

Our mission and objectives

Mission

Our mission is focusing on diverse issues related to gender equality, especially in the workplace, in the Sudan. We are of the opinion that the realization of gender equality and decent work for all women in the Sudan cannot be achieved without an enabling national economic environment committed to the realization of the economic and social rights of men and women.

Objectives:

We endeavour to:

- Enhance standards of work, patriotism and the values of faith among working women
- Raise the intellectual and professional efficiency of working women
- Help defend and advocate the rights of working women
- Monitor the rights and benefits of members and resolve problems facing working women
- Conduct capacity-building and development activities for women at work

- Promote the economic and social roles of working women
- Cooperate with organizations, social forces and concerned authorities in the field of gender and work at the local, regional and international levels
- Improve the vocational and intellectual competence of members as well as their economic and social status
- Mobilize working women to carry out their roles towards society and the State
- Study and revise labour laws and regulations to benefit working women
- Cooperate with civil society organizations to strengthen the role of Sudanese women in achieving national welfare, economic development and human security, especially for women and girls in the Sudan.

Our achievements

We are dedicated to promoting human rights and peaceful coexistence among people's cultures and religions through our programmes, activities, educational materials, symposia, workshops, studies and conferences. For many years Working Women Association has worked to develop and facilitate women's human rights and social justice in the Sudan, calling attention to the critical importance of working towards the full realization of women's rights, economic, social, cultural, political and civil.

Development is a gendered process that affects women and men differently. Working Women Association works to establish a human rights framework, which can offer a method to access the development strategies relevant for women and girls that are specifically addressed by the Millennium Development Goals: primary education, gender equality and women's empowerment, maternal health and decent work. We contributed significantly to implement the Millennium Development Goals agenda and objectives with special emphasis on women's rights in the workplace, including:

- Improving the status of working women by revising the national legislation in line with international conventions related to women and work
- Eradicating poverty through microfinance projects
- Encouraging domestic markets through the establishment of cooperatives for rural working women
- Upgrading working women in the informal sectors
- Awareness-raising for working women to reduce maternal mortality through reproductive health services
- Combating harmful traditional practices affecting women and girls

Challenges facing working women in the Sudan

The challenges facing working women in the Sudan can be summarized as follows:

- Upgrading the performance of professionals in the Sudan, especially of women

- Consolidating voluntary work on gender issues through a dedicated, coherent, capable, creative and active membership that endeavours to promote working women's rights
- Accomplishing duties and responsibilities related to women at work
- Upgrading professions practised by women, developing women at work, providing a decent work environment for working women, strengthening partnerships and collaborating with various partners and stakeholders
- Engaging in a national programme for the development of legislation related to working women and conducting legal awareness among women in the field
- Promoting Sudanese working women at all levels, especially intellectual, professional, cultural, social and economic
- Encouraging Sudanese working women to play a positive and constructive role in the labour market, the family and the whole community

Finally, we hope that individual workplaces and employers are inspired to address violence against women in all its forms by building equal and respectful relationships between women and men and putting practical interventions in place in their organizations.

Our recommendations

The Working Women Association calls on the concerned authorities in the Sudan in the formal and non-formal sectors as well as civil society organizations to implement the agreed conclusions of the Commission, respect international human rights law and agreements and commit to the Millennium Development Goals.

The Working Women Association strongly urges Governments at national level to:

- Conduct monitoring and accountability evaluations utilizing established human rights covenants and conventions
- Ensure that measures adopted to promote women's empowerment in the labour market enforce labour rights
- Expand assessments of the realization of women's health, especially reproductive health and protection against maternal mortality
- Expand assessment tools for gender equality and empowerment to take into account the intersection of gender with other forms of disadvantage

Working Women Association calls on the Commission to facilitate and support States' endeavours to fulfil their human rights obligations. We remain committed to working with the United Nations in building a world where the human rights of all are fully realized.

We specifically recommend the following:

- Addressing challenges facing women in the workplace; changes in labour policy will be critical to recognizing and addressing the consequences of violence against women in the workplace

- Developing strategic policies as well as concrete plans of action to promote women's rights in the workplace
 - Promoting and protecting women's rights to employment and participation in decision-making
 - Strengthening awareness about gender inequality in the workplace and capacities to address it, and promoting the implementation of policies to prevent violence against women and protect victims
 - Playing a leading role in building the Sudanese knowledge base on effective workplace health interventions
 - Enhancing women's participation and representation in constituents' structures and creating decent and safe working conditions for women
 - Enhancing the capacities of the Government of the Sudan to address challenges facing women in the workplace, improving access to information related to gender and development, and supporting non-governmental organizations and civil society
 - Addressing attitudes and behaviours of men and women, including through awareness-raising, sensitization, networking and developing the capacities of stakeholders
 - Advocating the adoption of international and regional agreements signed by the Government of the Sudan
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