



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixtieth session

14-24 March 2016

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by NABU — Knowledge Transfer Beyond Boundaries, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **Equal Wage for Women is a Human Right**

As articulated by the United Nation's High Commissioner for Human Rights: "Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible." From this fundamental principle also follows that each person regardless of gender or race should be equally remunerated without discrimination. Depriving individuals of equal wage for the same job is a serious violation of human rights. Moreover, we posit that the wage gap and positional disparity is not only a matter of promoting gender equality, but it is also a matter of enabling full economic access, upward economic mobility, engagement and participation for everyone, without exception, and maximizing vital national resources.

Many extol the advancement of, larger than in the past, prominent women as an indication that wage disparity and positional inequality do not exist or are of little relevance. However, the still prevalent injustice of wage disparity and positional discrimination cuts at the core of human rights and our commitment to empower every person to maximize their potential. Wage equality is also about maximizing the contribution of every person and resource to benefit the nation's interest. Every national resource, especially human resources should be valued and rewarded equally. The gender-based human right violation impacts families as well as the nation's ability to garner the highest and best use of every human resource available.

In many developing countries, women are primary breadwinners due to factors such as conflicts, poverty, lack of education and health crisis. In many developed countries, ageism clearly compounds this gender injustice extending its impacts into retirement plan participation, funding rates and ultimately available retirement options. Moreover, additional factors contribute to this gender disparity such as ethnicity, disabilities, as well as motherhood. It is also extremely important to note that women of colour are even in a more vulnerable and precarious position.

In conclusion, all individuals, regardless of their gender, should be provided equal access to advancement and equal financial compensation. Inequities in wage assignment, career advancement and leadership participation as not only unethical, but also limits society's ability to benefit fully from the capabilities of all its citizens, since each makes a unique contribution to the workplace, to leadership, and to their communities. We must affirm that wage equality is a human right first and foremost. As a matter of legal and moral principle, men and women should be evaluated and treated equally with each being rewarded on merit and contribution, with a special emphasis on structural changes directed at eradicating biases and discriminating systemic practices towards women.