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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 Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú and Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, non-governmental organizations 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

In March 2016, during the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, governments as well as women's and feminists' organizations will be faced with the challenge of treating sustainable development as a basic premise for achieving gender equality.

Although Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development deals specifically with gender equality, it is essential to guarantee such equality as well in the other 16 Sustainable Development Goals.

Four members of the Executive Committee on the Status of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, each and every one of the sustainable development goals must identify the aspects needed to improve living conditions for women, and indeed for all persons.

In this respect we give priority to the need to eliminate poverty and to seek and achieve more equitable development models that will reduce the extreme differences and the inequality which today characterize our region, the most unequal in the world. There can be no peace or development without societies that are more egalitarian not only in economic but also in social and cultural terms. To that end, our governments must adopt development models different from those of today, which have merely served to deepen inequality and poverty, especially among women and young people.

For this purpose again, societies must give priority to investing in education and health as a minimum requirement for ensuring that girls and boys, men and women will have the possibility to enjoy similar levels of development by narrowing the current gap. To this end education, especially at the primary and secondary levels, must not only be accessible to all, but must also be of better quality. This will require the strengthening of public, free and lay schooling as a way of bringing all citizens up to the same level.

In the area of health, it is essential to guarantee sexual and reproductive rights, as well as sexual and reproductive health for the entire population. In order to lower the maternal mortality rate, which today is unacceptably high in the countries of our region, we must ensure access to sexual and reproductive health programmes for all citizens, we must improve care during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum, we must offer obstetrical care, especially in emergencies, and we must make provision for the interruption of pregnancy and thereby eradicate unsafe abortion and its complications. Comprehensive sexual education must also be built into the formal education system and the health services so as, among other outcomes, to reduce the instances of unplanned adolescent pregnancy. Only in this way will we be able to assure people's health, and indeed their quality of life and their integration into the productive and reproductive system.

When it comes to work, we must do away with the informal and insecure labour in which the female workforce is now concentrated, with low pay and no social benefits. This means that activities such as domestic service must enjoy social benefits and be regulated like other productive activities and services.

An inescapable issue is to ensure that governments offer social services for the support and care of children, people with chronic illnesses, the elderly and persons with disabilities, all of whom are today being looked after without pay by the

women of the family, a situation that imposes severe constraints on women's integration into the labour market. This must be accompanied by putting family relationships on a more egalitarian footing, where the tasks of providing care and performing domestic chores are distributed on the basis of parity between the female and male members of the family.

It is essential today to protect the environment, by reducing the output of carbon dioxide and changing consumption practices that produce high levels of environmental pollution. The reluctance of the more developed countries to make these changes and to commit themselves to reducing levels of carbon dioxide emissions is unacceptable, and the citizenry will have to prevail upon their governments to take action.

Lastly, we give notice that the women, feminists and activists of Latin America and the Caribbean will continue their struggle to put an end to violence against women and girls. Such violence is increasing in all our countries, and is responsible for many deaths through femicide, while our governments stand by inactive and helpless. Only by eradicating gender-based violence and achieving a more equitable world can we have a region that is developed, more just and less unequal.

We feminists commit ourselves to supporting government efforts to this end, and rejecting all forms of discrimination and subjugation that keep us in our current status of inequality. To that, we say "enough".

Signatory nongovernmental organizations:

Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir

Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú

Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer
