



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-first session

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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 Sisters of Charity Federation, Sisters of Notre Dame De Namur and Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, non-governmental organizations in special 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**

### **Women's Empowerment in the Changing world of Work**

The world has made significant advancements in every aspect of human life particularly in the last fifty years. There is a growing awareness that we are one global family and we need to act in solidarity, more than ever to sustain people and planet. Globalization has contributed to this, and has created winners and losers, resulting in deepening of inequalities within countries and between nations. Current challenges and existential threats like, global warming, climate change, wars and conflicts are undermining sustainable development. One of the biggest injustices that persist in our times is gender inequality and violence against women and girls across the globe — unfortunately there is no place in the planet which is safe for women and girls.

This poses a challenge to international organizations like the United Nations and policy makers everywhere involved in promoting peace and development. It calls for the urgent need for gender mainstreaming and targeted actions to strengthen sound policies, enforceable legislation, and transformative actions.

Women's economic empowerment is fundamental to gender equality. A decent job or employment with a steady income enhances the dignity of women. Given the education and resource gap, women should be provided with financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills. Access to financial resources and market is important for women to enter the workforce or to start their own businesses. For women to thrive it is necessary to have a safe, secure and enabling environment.

To promote women's economic rights and equal opportunities for full and productive employment, it is imperative to change the current gender based division of labour and ensure that unpaid care and domestic work is shared and re-distributed. What is called for is a paradigm shift, to rewrite centuries old practices to free women for the realization of their full potential and integration into the formal economy. Towards this end, active involvement of men and boys are crucial.

Experiences show in countries where women have access to public services — education and skills training, appropriate technology, decent jobs, transportation, healthcare, child care, access to finance and marketing have had positive impact not only on women themselves, but on the whole society. This learning has to be replicated in order to promote women's increased participation and contribution to public life.

In line with target 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, promotion of women's leadership at all levels of decision making can and will bring about tremendous changes. Women have a crucial role to play in conflict resolution, peace building and nation building. To recognize the role women can play in the workplace, the narrative has to change. Women are not victims to be protected, but are agents of change to be promoted. They are part of the solution. The leadership and perspective they bring can enhance the growth and development of all.

Recommendations:

- Create an enabling environment at the local and national levels for financing gender equality.
- Promote gender responsive policy and budget, structures and mechanisms that facilitate women’s right to work and rights at work at all levels.
- Increase investments significantly to close resource gaps and strengthen institutions for empowerment of women for entry into the work force.
- Promote inclusive ownership of land and resources.
- Ensure social protection to women in need at the margins — migrants, refugees, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, religious and ethnic minorities who are vulnerable to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In conclusion, women empowerment and gender equality are at the heart of the Transformative Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. ‘The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities.’

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