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High-level segment

Statement submitted by Make Mothers Matter, 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 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.



Statement

Leave no mother behind: Empowered mothers are change makers that can make the SDGs succeed.

“Empowering women is not only a goal in itself.

It is a condition for building better lives for everyone on the planet.”

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, International Women’s Day 2007

For mothers around the world, especially the poorest living in rural or remote areas, the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) bring big hopes for a better future for them, as well as for their children.

At the same time, Make Mothers Matter is convinced that empowering mothers can have wide ranging positive impacts, cutting across many Sustainable Development Goals. Indeed, empowering mothers means investing in children and families, and would be a high return on investment to advance the 2030 Agenda.

Mothers must be recognized as change makers, who, if only they are adequately supported and empowered, can be instrumental in the realization of many of these goals and targets.

Support mothers in breaking the cycle of poverty

Mothers and their children are disproportionately represented among the poorest and among the most vulnerable populations. As highlighted in the report that Magdalena Sepúlveda, the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights presented to the United Nations General Assembly in October 2013, the unequal distribution of unpaid family care work and all its consequences is at the root of women’s particular vulnerability to poverty and gender inequality. All over the world, mothers remain the main providers of unpaid care. This indispensable but invisible work, is performed in the homes, and includes domestic work and care of children, elderly and other dependent family members. Unpaid family care work sustains the wellbeing of families and communities, and subsequently supports the market economy. But in time, it also results in poverty, restricts mobility, and often impedes mothers’ ability to seek employment or engage in income generating activities, maintaining many of them in poverty.

Addressing mother and child poverty is essential in order to break the cycle of poverty, and has the potential to end inter-generational poverty. The World Bank found that women reinvest an average of 90 per cent of their income in their families, vs. 30 per cent to 40 per cent for men.¹ Mothers are more likely to use their economic resources on food, education and health care for their children, thus creating a path out of poverty.

Addressing the unequal distribution of unpaid care work responsibility and empowering mothers is key to breaking the circle of poverty.

¹ The World Bank, Gender Equality as Smart Economics: A World Bank Action Plan, 2006.

Empower rural women in their multiple roles as household managers and caregivers, food producer and marketers to enhance food security and nutrition

Women make major contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all countries, especially developing countries. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), women comprise on average 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, and account for an estimated two thirds of the world's 600 million poor livestock farmers. Many of them actually depend on agriculture as a primary source of income. In the least developed countries 79 per cent of economically active women, report agriculture as their primary source of livelihood. Mothers also often are engaged in subsistence farming and thus provide a huge amount of time and energy in ensuring nutrition and food security for their family.

But in their role as farmers, rural women remain discriminated against in terms of access to land, credit, and other productive resources such as access to seeds, fertilizers, information, training, etc. In addition, due to the lack of basic public infrastructures, the labour burden for rural women exceeds that for men as it includes a higher proportion of unpaid household responsibilities related to preparing food and collecting fuel and water.

Empowering rural women should be central to governments' action in relation to the 2030 Agenda. Policies should aim at supporting their multiple roles as household managers and caregivers, food producers and marketers, not to mention their role in nature conservation and climate adaptation. A gender sensitive development of public infrastructure and services is key to supporting rural women in these multiple roles and should be developed with them. Water and sanitation as well as electricity/energy are top priorities; but roads and transportation services, access to information and communication technology, schools, health-care centres, childcare and other care services are also important.

In rural areas, women should be regarded and thus supported in their multiple roles as mothers and farmers, and considered as change-makers for food security and improved nutrition.

Prioritize and invest in maternal health: healthy mothers can ensure healthy lives for their children

Pregnancy and childbirth continue to be life threatening for women. In 2015 an estimated 303,000 women died from related complications,² with 99 per cent of these deaths occurring in developing countries. Many more suffer from maternal morbidity, which leaves them with permanent consequences that can affect their physical, mental or sexual health, or even their cognition, mobility, status and participation in society. Pregnancy and childbirth are also the leading cause of death among the 16 million girls aged 15 to 19 who become pregnant each year. Behind these shocking statistics, there are also hundreds of thousands of children orphaned and in dire circumstances in these families.

² Trends in maternal mortality: 1990 to 2015 — Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and the United Nations Population Division.

Most of these deaths and disabilities are preventable and these high numbers are simply not acceptable — Maternal mortality and morbidity is the ultimate discrimination faced by poor women and is the result of their lower social, economic, and health status.

On the other hand, the impact of mothers' physical and mental health on their children's health and development is now well documented. Adequate nutrition during pregnancy improves childbirth outcomes and affects child development in the womb. A growing body of evidence indicates that the first early years of a child's life, and in particular the "1001 critical days" from conception to age 2, are crucial for a child's long-term development and his future physical, emotional and mental health.³ In particular, the earliest emotional experiences of a baby have a major impact on the development of its brain. Neuroscience has confirmed that problems that affect the child's health in this period, such as malnutrition and excessive stress, impair the child's physical and neurological development.

When mothers and caregivers are educated on the importance of hygiene, good nutrition, the relevance of the bond with the baby and on the impact of the stimulations he or she receives, they can actively contribute to their child's physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

Indeed, a preventive approach with a focus on mothers' education and mental health from the earliest days of pregnancy and giving support to the family to provide a safe, harmonious and stimulating environment to the child is a cost effective way to reduce mental and physical problems later in life. Child Early Education also has an important complementary role in supporting children's development.

Mothers and mothers-to-be who have the opportunity to meet with other mothers can educate, support and nurture each other. They can share knowledge and personal experience on a number of topics such as health, nutrition, etc., building social bonds and gaining confidence in themselves and their competences to raise their children. This is the aim of the workshops that Make Mothers Matter organizes, and of other such networks like Mama Cafes in the Netherlands. As another example, mother2mother in South Africa successfully trains, employs, and empowers mothers living with HIV to bring health and hope to other mothers, their families, and communities.

Educated and supported mothers can be change makers for their children's health and even for their own and other mothers' health.

Stop the intergenerational perpetuation of violence against women and empower mothers as agents of peace

Violence against women, domestic violence in particular, is widespread across all socioeconomic classes. Children experiencing domestic violence suffer emotional and psychological trauma, with negative physical and cognitive impact on their development. In addition, boys who witness their mothers' abuse are more likely to batter their female partners as adults, and girls grow up in the belief that threats and violence are the norm in relationships.

³ 1001 critical days Manifesto, launched in the UK in 2013 — www.1001criticaldays.co.uk.

This vicious circle must be broken. Mothers must be supported to move from being a victim to standing for their rights and becoming part of the solution — for example through Human Rights Education.

Make Mothers Matter also upholds that peace awareness must be developed in the home from early childhood, and that mothers have a major role in teaching how to prevent violence and promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

“Change the world for girls, so that girls can change the world”.⁴ Ensure girls’ education and end child marriages

It is widely acknowledged that education plays a key role in development, poverty eradication and ultimately peace; most mothers are well aware of its importance for their children.

The education of adolescent girls particularly, has the potential to end poverty — for themselves, their family and beyond. Girls should be able to go to school instead of staying home helping their mothers with unpaid care work, or being forced into early marriage.

Educated girls will become empowered mothers who in turn will have positive impact on their families, their communities and societies. They are the change makers of our future.

Therefore, Make Mothers Matter calls on Member States to give top priority to the fight against women’s poverty and discrimination as the foundation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Beyond the general measures and policies that can address poverty (like reforming national laws that discriminate — notably property and inheritance law, implementing social protection floors that include universal health coverage, etc.), Make Mothers Matter would like to make the following recommendations:

- Address unpaid care work through redistributive policies. Gender sensitive development of public infrastructure and services that reduce and redistribute domestic chores and care are essential for women’s empowerment.
- Support rural women in their multiple roles. The largest dividends lie with them.
- Invest in maternal health, and give women and girls access to reproductive health care and education.
- Educate mothers and other primary caregivers on the importance of early child development — in particular the “1001 critical days” — and on their power to break the cycle of poverty.
- Ensure girls’ access to education well beyond primary school. End child and early marriage.
- Engage men, in particular fathers in their caring role and promote shared responsibilities.

⁴ The Girls effect — www.girleffect.org.

Empowering mothers and eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls produce what the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has rightly called a “double dividend”: “Healthy, educated and empowered women have healthy, educated and confident daughters and sons”.⁵ The 2030 agenda is about “the future we want”, and mothers and families can have significant impact on this future in multiple ways.

⁵ UNICEF, The State of the World’s Children 2007: Women and Children — The Double Dividend of Gender Equality.



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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Written statement*/ submitted by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the,
World Council of Churches,a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[4 December 2000]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

1. The World Council of Churches and its member churches have consistently affirmed that the Christian faith must speak with conviction and relevance to the political, social and economic problems of contemporary society. The understanding of the wholeness of the Gospel leads to political sensitivity, a socio-economic discernment resulting in specific stands and actions in the struggle for justice for all. The ecumenical movement has a long history of moral criticism of the economic order. Points of critique include lack of economic democracy, social injustice and the stimulation of human greed. The World Council of Churches has repeatedly voiced its concern and spoken out against the present unjust economic system that is based on flagrant international inequality in the distribution of knowledge, power and wealth. It has denounced the acquisitive materialism that has developed into a dominant ideology of our times. It was over two decades ago, in August 1974, when the Commission of Churches on International Affairs spoke about economic injustice in the following terms that remain relevant: *“Every generation in human history has been confronted by injustice in the systems regulating the economic, social and political relationships of individuals. Today we face an unjust international system regulating the economic relationships of nations and peoples. This system is dominated by a minority composed of highly developed countries who control the world in accordance with their own order of priorities. But this system has been challenged by a majority of nations in the world”*. The process of rapid globalisation of national economies today has only increased social and economic injustice in the world and further widened the gap between the rich and the poor.
2. The VIII Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Harare, 1998) addressed the negative impact of globalisation and made the challenge of globalisation a central priority. The Assembly said *“that despite the independence of many formerly colonised people, power is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a relatively few nations and corporations, particularly in the North. Their power extends across the globe into many areas of life. Their power is extensive and intensive. Major decisions are made by these thirty or so nations and sixty giant corporations. The international globalisation of production, capital and trade further strengthens the power of financial centres of the global market. Globalisation affects all of us. It contributes to the erosion of the nation-state, undermines social cohesion and intensifies the conquest of nature in a merciless attack on the integrity of creation. The debt crisis and structural adjustment programmes become instruments to gain more control over national budgets and create a profitable and safe environment for investments by the private sector at an unbearable costs for the people”*. Following this mandate the WCC has intensified its work on globalisation, focusing on its impact on the human rights and dignity of peoples and communities all around the globe.
3. The process of globalisation has rendered national economies vulnerable to outside economic forces, often in alliances with national elites whose interests are served by imposed models of economic development. The reinforcement of these political alliances has systematically removed from ordinary people the social power to order and direct their lives. Traditional life styles of self-reliance have been undermined by integrating people into a market culture that encourages consumption but denies the means to fulfil their aspirations. Strong pressures for social regulation marginalize and punish those who cannot sell their productive labour and those who resist cultural and

economic integration and homogenisation. The free-market ideology that fuels the engine of globalisation claims that competition, and commodification in the production and distribution of goods and of human beings themselves, is natural and moral. However, the rapidly growing inequality within and between nations has fragmented societies by fomenting new, destructive religious, ethnic, linguistic and other divisions. The globalization process has imposed inhuman working conditions on millions of people that are forced either into unemployment or casual labour with no social protections and thus into poverty and despair. It has increasingly undermined the participation of large sectors of society in the political process within their own states, making a mockery of democracy. It has eroded democratic participation at the international level as well, promoting the fiction that economic and political decisions can be taken separately. The increasingly dominant role of economic mechanisms such as World Trade Organisation, World Bank and International Monetary Fund circumvents the political mechanisms of international cooperation embodied in the UN Charter.

4. The World Council of Churches welcomes the preliminary report of the Special Rapporteurs, Joseph Oloka – Onyango and Deepika Udagama on “*Globalisation and its impact on the full enjoyment of human rights*”. (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/13) This report discussed at the 52nd Session of the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights is timely and pertinent. It draws attention in clear and lucid terms to the negative aspects of globalisation that lead to the exclusion of large sections of people in the Global South from the social benefits of globalisation. Its exposé on the role of international economic and financial institutions is of particular value. The report rightly points out that the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund “*must cease treating human rights issues as peripheral to their formulation and operation.*” The World Council of Churches looks to the follow-up of the Rapporteur’s recommendations that call for formulating guidelines that would lay down the framework for the basic human rights obligations of the main actors of globalisation. If implemented this would provide badly needed checks on unfettered actions of international financial institutions.
5. Since the VIII WCC Assembly different programme units of the World Council of Churches in cooperation with churches and related organisations have organised workshops, consultations and seminars at national and regional levels and have also commissioned papers to assess the impact of globalisation particularly on social, economic and cultural rights. The findings reveal that globalisation with its emphasis on liberalisation is at odds with principles of sustainable community development that ensure and guarantee basic human rights. It promotes the reduction of state regulations on the market, letting free market forces reign supreme, and allows the high degree of freedom to large corporations. A direct outcome of this is the shift in donor approaches from funding individual development programmes to regional funding through centralised fund approving structures. This top-down approach has effectively sidelined concerns for equity and real participation of the poor and disadvantaged in decision making. As a result national development is guided even more by external actors, giving rise to strong new peoples’ movements against centralised control of global corporations and institutions. In region after region micro-credit from international financial institutions and other capitalist institutions is presented as a panacea for all ills of under development, and foreign investment is diverting local

resources from survival needs of the local people to the limitless demands of the global markets.

6. In October 2000 the WCC, in cooperation with the World Alliance and the Africa Alliance of the YMCAs, organised a workshop in Bagbe, Togo on “*Globalisation and its impacts on Human Rights in Africa.*” Some 30 participants from nine African countries identified challenges and outlined an agenda for action. They noted that while international norms and standards of human rights are gaining acceptance all around the globe, the contradictions resulting from the project of globalisation of the world economy acts as a barrier to their realisation and contributes to their violation. The workshop pinpointed the following elements of globalisation that pose obstacles to the realisation of basic human rights of the African people:

- The project of globalisation is a link in the chain of series of exploitative actions to appropriate the resources of the countries of the South by the countries of the North – first through slave trade then through colonialism and now through neo-liberalism.
- The breaking down of borders and economic barriers have paved the way for imposition of unfair and unequal trade and economic conditions, often prescribed by international financial institutions like the WTO, IMF, and WB through policies like the structural adjustment programmes causing displacement, marginalisation and social exclusion of the people of Africa.
- Globalisation is a denial of the process of self-reliance, building and strengthening of local and national capacity by providing unfair incentives to foreign investors through tax exemptions, repatriation of profits etc.
- Globalisation encourages policies of deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation that result in erosion of power and authority of the state, deprivation of social security, breakdown of family and civil structures leading to displacement and migration.
- Globalisation compels people to seek security in ethnic, religious and national groupings that promote hatred and xenophobia leading to violence and civil strife.
- Globalisation has resulted in violations of human rights of the African people. For example structural adjustment programmes in the region were introduced as a mode of intervention that offered financial resources to countries if they agreed to follow certain guidelines. In reality this has meant privatisation, wage restrictions and currency devaluation. It has promoted deep social and economic crises characterized by unemployment and loss of national sovereignty and has fostered dependency on foreign aid as opposed to self-reliance and development of local and national capacity, thereby depriving people of employment or the right to work.
- The debts incurred during structural adjustment programmes have increased the dependency on IMF and WB taking away the countries’ political, economic and social power, leaving them vulnerable and without national sovereignty. The debt burden also affirms the belief that the North is superior thus putting the dignity and self-esteem of the African people under constant pressure and making them feel inferior.



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Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-fourth session

9–20 March 2020

**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 African Women’s Development and Communication Network, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

African women rekindling the Beijing fire of revolution at Beijing+25 and beyond

Globally, there is recognition that advancing gender equality and women's rights is central and critical to inclusive and sustainable development. However, gender equality still remains the greatest human rights challenge of our time. Despite gradual progress in different countries, such as affirmative action practices and enactment of gender-responsive laws that promote and protect the rights of women and girls, no country has achieved gender equality. Women and girls in Africa continue to experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

In September 1995, thousands of women and men from around the world met in Beijing, China for the pivotal Fourth World Conference on Women, which culminated in the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Beijing Conference was instrumental in formulating this globally adopted framework with its 12 critical areas of concern on gender equality and women's empowerment. During this historic process, African women took pride in having pushed for the girl-child agenda. Many have described the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as being a progressive policy framework and blueprint for advancing gender equality and women's rights – notwithstanding, emerging priorities beyond the 12 critical areas of concern.

In 2020, as the world marks 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, there is enough evidence that shows a lot still needs to be done regardless of the notable gains achieved so far. The Beijing+25 review processes at national, regional, and global levels are providing opportunities for feminists and women's rights advocates to not only take stock but also pause, deeply reflect, and boldly demand that governments as the primary duty bearers confront the persistent obstacles, challenges, and backlash on existing gains hindering accelerated implementation of women's rights commitments.

The African Women's Development and Communication Network takes note that in many countries, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action continues to accelerate activism within the women's movement. Since its adoption, there is definitely a tangible shift within the African women's movement, including vocal recognition that women matter as well as notable participation of women in leadership across different sectors, albeit slowly. For instance, globally, Rwanda has the largest share of women in decision-making at 61 per cent. The gains are commendable, including the establishment of gender ministries; however, a critical analysis shows that these gains are under threat.

Drawbacks to achieving freedom from all forms of discrimination

Twenty-five years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, African women continue to face multiple structural and systemic barriers in the social, economic, and political spheres, including being disproportionately concentrated in low-wage categories, precarious, and unpaid care labour. Women's contributions to the economic sector are not recognized and counted in gross domestic product. Yet, women do the bulk of the labour in the informal sector, the agricultural sector, and the care economy, which drives the formal sector.

Structural inequalities still persist in many countries, coupled with misogyny, and increasing injustices against women and girls in a context where religion, politics, and culture interface to oppress women, notwithstanding the reeling effects of

neo-colonialism that prevent the full achievement of women's rights and gender equality.

It is therefore imperative to note that with the changing and rising trends of inequalities and repression, women's empowerment becomes a greater urgency.

The rhetoric must end!

The irony envisioned in the regional development projection across the globe and in Africa in particular negates the reality of gender inequality as is outlined in national demographic presentations annually. While countries purport to be making tremendous strides towards for instance economic development, gender equality lags behind. The slow pace of progress is unacceptable. The women's (feminist) movement is deeply concerned that there is seemingly a lack of serious commitment in ending this rhetoric.

Key asks by African women's (feminist) movement

- Why is it that 25 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the world is still largely (90 per cent) patriarchal?
- Why is tangibly resourcing women's rights movements in Africa still a mirage?
- Why are so many women in all their diversities still being left behind in the design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of their own development, despite the collective vision and commitment of the development agendas, notably Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and even the Maputo Protocol?

The 2019 Equal Measures 2030 Sustainable Development Goal Gender Index, covering 129 countries and 95 per cent of the world's population of girls and women revealed that no country in the world has reached the "last mile" on gender equality. With just 11 years to go until 2030, nearly 40 per cent of the world's women and girls (1.4 billion) live in countries that are not meeting the gender targets. Sub-Saharan Africa is the lowest-ranking region in the Sustainable Development Goal Gender Index. Even the highest-scoring countries with high gross domestic product have more to do, particularly on complex issues such as climate change, gender budgeting and public services, equal representation in leadership, gender pay gaps, and gender-based violence.

A screening of bilateral funding for women's rights organizations in 2015–16 revealed that around 40 per cent of the Official Development Assistance had some focus on gender equality, but less than 0.5 per cent supported women's rights organizations. This is because investments in sustaining women's networks and movements is rarely seen as key to achieving gender equality. Yet, achieving gender equality commitments require the mobilization of resources to finance such key actors beyond public services delivery.

Beyond data – In a world where sufficiently gender-disaggregated data is not available, gender inequality is compounded by other factors. Women and girls in low-income countries around the world experience multiple discrimination on the basis of age, income, ethnic or religious identity, geographic location, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, immigration status, or HIV status, among other factors. Measuring progress based on national statistical data with huge data gaps runs the risk of failing to identify and address pockets of extreme forms of inequality and masks the fact that multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination affect some groups of women and girls more than others. Age is another crucial, often overlooked dimension on which data should be disaggregated. Age-aggregated data show that women and girls in different age groups experience vulnerabilities in different ways:

adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and violence, for example, and older women are more likely than older men to live in poverty, ill health, and with limited access to protective resources.

Diversity and intersectionality – Every voice deserves to be heard. Women are not homogeneous and interventions should squarely address and celebrate their diversity. Women with disabilities, for instance, face multiple dimensions of discrimination, especially in finding and retaining employment. Data for 51 countries shows that only 20 per cent of women with disabilities are employed, compared to 53 per cent of men with disabilities and 30 per cent of women without disabilities.

Breaking silos – The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action brought together women across the continent from all walks of life to shift power 25 years ago. It is critical to galvanize the power of this declaration by breaking barriers and working across movements. More can be achieved by working collaboratively and recognizing that women's rights are not sectoral. A collective fight is needed to assert sexual and reproductive rights, to have the power to decide, to be represented, participate meaningfully, and lead in all aspects that affect women in both private and public spaces, including questioning the extractive nature of multinational companies, calling for the right to land, right to information and protection from cyberbullying and for environmental and climate justice. All these are struggles for women's rights and gender equality that intersect and should not be convoluted or siloed but looked at critically and prioritized as outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years ago.

African women's rights advocates and feminists call for accountability to commitments on women's rights and gender equality

Lastly but most importantly, there is a need to ensure accountability by governments in resourcing and translating women's rights and gender equality commitments made over the years in their full totality to address the realities faced by women and girls such as poverty, gender-based violence, the burden of unpaid care work, unemployment, multiple discrimination, and as the worst victims of bad governance, conflict and economic instability.



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INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Written statement* submitted by Nord-Sud XXI, a non-governmental organizations in special
consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in
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submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Rights negation and cultural genocide in Mexico

1. The Mexican indigenous as being a former nation, have lived for centuries in the lands and territories they now inhabit. From the Spanish invasion to nowadays, they live in permanent fight to stay, to survive, to rescue and defend this lands and territories that have seen them born.
2. They built up during centuries a rich culture where they have learnt and understood that, together with the nature, they form a complete and harmonious whole. That's why, their footstep and walk haven't changed the environment nor damaged the mother Earth and, on the contrary, they still take care of all the nature richness. They learnt and understood also that as former nation they have built a culture based on a way to conceive the world starting from the elder's wisdom and that have promote a deep love for the mother Earth and it's natural fruits.
3. Their culture, their land and territories are still being threatened. From the brutal invasion it hasn't become another single chance for these people to live in the respect and harmony that existed before that barbarous invasion; most of their social organization and communal work has been smashed; their language, religion and self-conscience as a nation has been modified and it is being pushed to destruction.
4. It's visible that in all the Mesoamerican territory where big cities and culture used to exist and live together before the invasion, today, there is just poor, humiliated villages reduced to an existence of discrimination that reaches genocide.
5. The destruction of their organization and communal life has been the cause of their ruin, the displacement of their grandeur and it's replacement for misery and vassalage.
6. The successive governments of the country, from the Spanish invasion to nowadays, have deprived them of all cultivable areas and have reduced them to live in the mountain range, in the forests and in the deserts, subject to constant aggressions and to a thousand types of exploitation; kicked out from their own territories. Non of these governments have recognized them as the former nation they are, not even as proprietors of those mountain ranges, forests or deserts that keep the biggest natural and biological richness ever; nor respect the elemental security that their lives need.
7. These people, owners of the lands, woods and waters that give life to the cities, can't make use of these resources for lack of technology and money, having to sell them off chip or accept illegal expropriations for modest indemnifications; powerless when faced with the lack of agricultural justice; faced with the lack of courts, response to recognize and entitle their communal properties; faced with the lack of solutions to the very old limit conflicts that divide those nations, and that, almost always, have been provoked and fomented by the ones with the political power and the money owners.
8. Recognizing the will of these nations to live keeping their own rule systems, and their elementary forms of organization and communal life; the will to keep a relation in harmony with the mother Earth; and the growing solidarity of all the Mexican and worldwide indigenous nations to face together a neoliberal globalisation system that reduces and eliminates human being, that destroys and kills all the ways where individuals and societies can express completely. The only way to wholly reconstruct Indian nations is rebuilding and strengthening the ancestral relationship that they had and keep on having with Mother Earth.

9. Rebuild the human and integral relationship with the Mother Earth, means to reconstruct the fraternal relationship with the rest of the Indian nations, all brothers at the very beginning, in culture, in will and in suffering, to supply ones with the others the weaknesses, to put together each breath in the same wind and each voice in an invincible scream that allows them to transform -with the whole of the Mexican nation- the Country in a Country for all.

10. For 509 years the history of all the indigenous nations is a history of fight, work and love for the earth; but also a history of permanent resistance as it's proved by the constant rebellions in 1530, 1540, 1766, 1810, 1910, 1934, 1988, 1991, and the actual fight for the recognition of the indigenous rights and culture started on 1994.

11. The Mexican Nation's will is expressed in the subscription of the Work International Organisation's Hundred Sixty Nine Agreement, that settles the only way in which this agreement signing States must legalize in the matter of indigenous nations, respecting their own social structure and culture, together with the ownership and occupation of their land, territories and natural resources.

12. The Mexican indigenous expressed their disagreement to the Salinist counter-reformation to the 27th constitutional article where it was claimed the unprescriptive, unalienable and non-impoundable character of their communal lands.

13. Likewise, they also expressed their will (Nurío Indigenous National Congress and P'urhémpecha Nation,s pronouncement) to recognize the San Andres, Agreements signed up as minimum agreements between the National Liberation Zapatist Army representatives and the Federal Government signed up on February 16th, 1996 in San Andrés Sacam,chen de los Pobres, Chiapas; and the will to recognize the Pacification and Concord Commission (COCOPA) proposal about Indigenous Culture and Rights. The Union's Council when approving a Constitution's modification that doesn't include the San Andres' Agreement has betrayed this one.

14. With that constitutional law it could have been possible to formally stop the abuse and greed, non consulting them anything, command them always without even knowing who is commanding and why, imposing them a development that only benefits and strengthens other ones, everything that denies them a place for being different, for not submitting to the actual health system that doesn,t accept and even condemns their traditional medicine, the urge to turn everything into merchandise, to the system that judges and commands their lives with written laws that they are ignorant of, to the selfishness that interferes the cooperation and diversity in which they live their communal lives.

15. And denying them their rights they are denying and reminding everyone that beyond the colours and signs, against the Indians ore the different ones, against the ones who fight and resist for a better place for all, the power of money and pride will always be joint and ready to deny any right, respect, place where to grow in, be an example or get rid off their dominion.

16. Been this facts exposed, North South XXI asks the Mexican Government to respect the agreements signed in San Andrés (COCOPA's initiative)



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Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

**Joint written statement* submitted by Association Bharathi
Centre Culturel Franco-Tamoul, "ECO-FAWN"
(Environment Conservation Organization - Foundation for
Afforestation Wild Animals and Nature), "Women and
Modern World" Social Charitable Centre, ABC Tamil Oli,
Abibimman Foundation, Action of Human Movement
(AHM), Action pour la protection des droits de l'homme en
Mauritanie, Africa Unite, African Agency for Integrated
Development (AAID), African Centre for Advocacy and
Human Development, African Citizens Development
Foundation, African Network of Young Leaders for Peace
and Sustainable Development, Agence pour les droits de
l'homme, AIMPO, Alliance Creative Community Project,
Alliance for Development and Population Services (ADEPS),
Alliance internationale pour la défense des droits et des
libertés, Aman against Discrimination, Amis d'Afrique
Francophone-Bénin (AMAF-Benin), Amman Center for
Human Rights Studies, Arab Society for Academic
Freedoms, Asabe Shehu Yar Adua Foundation, Asociación
Española para el Derecho Internacional de los Derechos
Humanos AEDIDH, Association pour les Droits de l'Homme
et l'Univers Carcéral, Association Aide aux femmes et
enfants, Association Burkinabé pour la Survie de l'Enfance,**

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Association Congolaise pour le Développement Agricole, ASSOCIATION CULTURELLE DES TAMOULS EN FRANCE, Association des étudiants tamouls de France, Association des Jeunes Engagés pour l'Action Humanitaire (A.J.E.A.H.), Association des jeunes pour le développement humain et la protection de l'environnement, Association des jeunes volontaires au service du monde environnemental, Association Elmostakbell pour le Développement, Association femmes solidaires au Togo, Association Malienne de Savoir Construire (A.M.S.C.), Association mauritanienne pour la promotion des droits de l'homme, Association nationale des partenaires migrants, Association pour la Défense des Droits de Développement Durable et du Bien-être Familial (ADBEF), Association pour les Victimes Du Monde, Association Solidarité Internationale pour l'Afrique (SIA), Association Thendral, Autre Vie, Blessed Aid, Center for Africa Development and Progress, Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment, Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy, Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Genero, Change Human's Life, CIRID (Centre Independent de Recherches et d'Initiatives pour le Dialogue), City2000 Youth Action International, Comité des observateurs des droits de l'homme, Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, Community Restoration Initiative Project, Conseil International pour le soutien à des procès équitables et aux Droits de l'Homme, Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience, Corporación Red Nacional de Mujeres Comunes, Comunitarias, Indígenas y Campesinas de la República de Colombia, Coup de Pouce, Dayemi Complex Bangladesh, Edfu Foundation Inc., EG Justice, Elizka Relief Foundation, Excellent World Foundation LTD/GTE, Families of the Missing, First Modern Agro. Tools - Common Initiative Group (FI.MO.AT.C.I.G), Foreningen for Human Narkotikapolitikk, Freann Financial Services Limited, Fundação de Apoio a Pesquisa Científica, Educacional e Tecnológica de Rondônia, Fundación Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social, Fundación Lonxanet para la Pesca Sostenible, Giving Life Nature Volunteer, Global Vision India Foundation, Goodness and Mercy Missions Common Initiative Group, Haitelmex Foundation A.C., Hamraah Foundation, Hape Development & Welfare Association, Idheas, Litigio Estratégico en Derechos Humanos, Asociación Civil, Inter-

Action Globale (I.A.G.), International Career Support Association, International Centre for Environmental Education and Community Development, International Federation of Medical Students' Associations, International Movement for Advancement of Education Culture Social and Economic Development, Jeunesse Etudiante Tamoule, Lazarus Union, Le Pont, Lebanese American Renaissance Partnership, Inc., L'observatoire mauritanien des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie, L'Organisation Non Gouvernementale des Cercles Nationaux de Réflexion sur la Jeunesse - ONG CNRJ, Mandala Transformation Foundation Inc., Mijoro Mandroso (Mi.Ma.), Murna Foundation, Nobel Laureate Mother Teresa Charitable Trust, Northern CCB, Ocean Lifeline Inc., Otro Tiempo México, Asociación Civil, Paz y Cooperación, Pirate Parties International Headquarters, Planetary Association for Clean Energy, Inc., The, PLURIELS, Centre de Consultations et d'Etudes Ethnopsychologiques pour Migrants, Project 1948 Foundation, Rassemblement des frères unis pour le développement socio-culturel (RAFUDESC - BENIN), Reachout and Smile Initiative for Social Empowerment, Safe Campaign LLC, Shirley Ann Sullivan Educational Foundation, Society for Development and Community Empowerment, Solidarité Agissante pour le Développement Familial (SADF), Stichting Global Human Rights Defence, Stichting Spanda, Tamil Uzhagam, Tourner La Page, Trilok Youth Club and Charitable Trust, Vadodara, United Zo Organization (USA) Inc., Vision GRAM-International, Vision Welfare Group, Women Watch Afrika, Inc., Yayasan Pendidikan Indonesia, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 February 2019]

Genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka

Genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka

This resolution provides an overview of the evidence demonstrating successive Sri Lankan governments' genocide against Tamils. We respectfully request the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Investigation on Sri Lanka to investigate the claim of genocide and recommend appropriate investigations and prosecutions by the International Criminal Court.

Sri Lanka's genocide against Tamils began with the island's independence. Since then, Tamils across Sri Lanka, particularly in the North-East, have been subject to gross and systematic human rights violations, culminating in the mass atrocities committed in 2009. Sri Lanka's historic violations includes over 60 years of state-sponsored anti-Tamil programs, massacres, sexual violence, and acts of cultural and linguistic destruction perpetrated by the state. These atrocities have been perpetrated with the intent to destroy the Tamil people, and therefore constitutes as genocide.

From 1948, the Citizenship Act has stripped citizenship from the Tamil community and rendered them stateless, successfully perpetrating further genocide against Tamils. This extensive evidence demonstrates that these acts constitute four of the five enumerated genocidal acts in the Genocide Convention.

Historical Genocide

A series of anti-Tamil programs, fabricated rumors about Tamil violence against Sinhalese, began with the passage of the Sinhala Only Act, and the Official Language Act (1956). At the urging of Sinhalese nationalists (June 5, 1956), a Sinhalese mob attacked Tamil demonstrators protesting peacefully the Sinhala Only policy, and pillaged Tamil businesses in Colombo. When the news reached Gal Oya (June 11–16), Sinhalese mobs, who were galvanized by false rumors about Tamil-initiated violence, injured over 100 Tamils, killed circa. 150 and destroyed Tamil-owned properties. Police passively chose to not intervene and stop violence; thus illustrating the government's intent to destroy the Tamil people.

Nonviolent, protests by Tamils increased over the next two years. In May (1958), Buddhist monks and other Sinhala nationalists organised anti-Tamil programs throughout Sri Lanka (May 22–27) in the North Central Province, Central Province, along the west coast, and eventually the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The Prime Minister spread false information about Tamil-initiated atrocities to incite violence against Tamils in Sinhalese dominated areas. Estimates indicate that 300 Tamils were killed, over 1,000 were injured, and 200 women were raped in the 1958 program.

From August 12–20 (1977), innocent Tamils were attacked on the train as a result of false information. Approximately 300 Tamils were killed, over 1,000 were injured, and 25,000 were displaced within the time Prime Minister Jayewardene took office. He stated that the deaths were regrettable but a natural reaction to separatism and furthermore arrogantly issued a challenge to Tamils (August 18): "if you want to fight, let there be a fight; if it is peace, let there be peace." (Hansard, Vol. 23, No. 2, Col: 246.) Jayewardene's victim-blaming furthers the argument that the government intended to commit genocide in response to the increasingly popular Tamil resistance.

The most horrific anti-Tamil programs, known as "Black July" (July 23–30, 1983) involved state-sponsored Sinhalese mobs attacking Tamils and destroying their properties across the country. False rumors that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam infiltrated Colombo resulted in the massacre of Tamils by Sinhalese mobs who wanted to sure there was no LTTE presence. The mobs targeted and located Tamils using voter registration lists, damning evidence of the government's instigation of these attacks. Over 3,000 Tamils were killed, 500 women were raped, 8,000 homes and 5,000 businesses were destroyed, and

about 500,000 Tamils fled the country. In addition, as part of this program, over 37 Tamil political prisoners detained at Welikada Prison were killed by Sinhalese prisoners on July 25. The survivors say that the prison officers facilitated these murders by letting the Sinhalese prisoners have their keys.

Just prior to Black July (July 11), President Jayawardene stated: “I am not worried about the opinion of the Tamil people. ... now we cannot think of them, not about their lives or their opinion ... Really if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy.” (J.R. Jayawardene, President of Sri Lanka, Daily Telegraph, July 1983.) This statement by the head of state clearly indicates the government’s intent to destroy the Tamil people through any means necessary.

We note that the spread of false rumors to incite violence against a group is an act of genocide as exemplified through historical events Nazi Germany, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia. The Sri Lankan government has used false information as a tool to organize Sinhalese mobs in committing genocide against Tamils.

Black July is marked as the beginning of war in Sri Lanka. This Council notes that the ethnic conflict had however already begun. Both overt and covert acts of state terrorism by successive government regimes, often pursuant to the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act, translated into systematic and widespread extrajudicial killings of Tamils. The atrocities against Tamils include over 50 separate massacres of civilians before 2008: targeted assassinations of political, civil and community leaders; enforced disappearances; torture; use of sexual violence as a tactic of war; severe restrictions or bans on food and basic medicine; and forced displacement, including coastal communities from the NorthEast Provinces.

The Vanni genocide (2008-09) had previously been rehearsed in the Eastern Province. On 28 August 2006, the Sri Lankan military began a multi-pronged offensive against the LTTE’s administered region stretching from Sampoor to Vaharai. This heavy shelling forced civilians to move towards Vaharai. The UN reported that the Sri Lankan government first restricted international aid agencies and journalists from entering the area, and completely barred food and medical supplies from reaching the IDPs. Presumed safe areas such as schools and hospitals also came under heavy gunfire resulting in thousands of Tamils killed due to the shelling, their untreated wounds and/or starvation. On 19 January 2007, the Sri Lankan military entered Vaharai with little resistance and began the process of colonizing the entire region.

During the war, government military forces engaged in deliberate aerial, artillery, and naval bombardment of civilian areas and also used prohibited weapons and ammunitions, such as cluster bombs. According to UN estimates, 70–100,000 Tamil civilians were killed over the course of the 27-year-long war. The large scale and severe nature of the genocide also forced many Tamils to flee the North and East Provinces and seek refuge in Tamil Nadu and Western countries.

Recent Genocide

The Sri Lankan government intentionally corralled Tamils into the so-called No Fire Zones (2009), in a calculated and deliberate attempt to destroy as many Tamils as possible. According to the U.N. Report of the Secretary-General’s Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan government: “[S]helled on a large scale in three consecutive No Fire Zones, where it had encouraged the civilian population to concentrate, even after indicating that it would cease the use of heavy weapons. It shelled the United Nations hub, food distribution lines and near the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) ships that were coming to pick up the wounded and their relatives from the beaches. It shelled in spite of its knowledge of the impact, provided by its own intelligence systems and through notification by the United Nations, the ICRC and others. Most civilian casualties in the final phases of the war were caused by Government shelling.”

At the end of January 2009, government forces were killing approximately thirty-three Tamil people each day, with these casualties increasing to 116 people per day by April 2009. According to the Permanent People's Tribunal on Sri Lanka, this toll surged, "with an average of 1,000 civilians killed each day until May 19, 2009." In a submission to the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, the Bishop of the Mannar Catholic Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, stated that according to the Government Secretariats, the population in the Vanni region in early October 2008 was 429,059. However, only 282,380 people emerged from the Vanni into government-controlled areas, according to UN OCHA 2009 statistics. Thus, over 146,679 people in the Vanni are not accounted for after the 2009 atrocities.

Resolved that,

We call The obligation to prevent and punish genocide under the Genocide Convention is not a matter of political choice but a binding custom under international law. We urge the Human Rights Council members to seek a resolution for refer Sri Lanka to the Security Council.

The UN Security Council should refer the situation in Sri Lanka to the International Criminal Court for prosecutions based on war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

This Council urgently calls upon the international community to create conditions suitable and sustainable to protect the Tamils of the NorthEast Provinces in Sri Lanka from genocide.

It is accordingly vital that Sri Lanka's historic violations against Tamils, in addition to the 2009 attacks, are addressed through an international mechanism in order to combat Sri Lanka's institutionalized impunity. This international intervention, coupled with action to promote the respect of human rights, is necessary to ensure a sustainable future for self-determination, peace, and justice, in Sri Lanka and for the Tamil people.

This Resolution is an Resume of the Resolution taken on 22 February 2015, by Nothern Provincial Council in Sri Lanka, which was administred by Justice Canagasabapathy Visuvalingam Vigneswaran.

Tamil Movement And more than 3000 NGOs across the world NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.



General Assembly

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ENGLISH ONLY

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Sub-Commission on the Promotion and
Protection of Human Rights
Fifty-eighth session
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Written statement submitted by the Japanese Workers' Committee for Human Rights (JWCHR), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[4 August 2006]

* Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 entitled "Human Rights Council", all mandates, mechanisms, functions and responsibilities of the Commission on Human Rights, including the Sub-Commission, were assumed, as of 19 June 2006, by the Human Rights Council. Consequently, the symbol series E/CN.4/Sub.2/_ , under which the Sub-Commission reported to the former Commission on Human Rights, has been replaced by the series A/HRC/Sub.1/_ as of 19 June 2006.

** This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Title: Japanese Extremely High Tuition fee¹

All-Japan Federation of Student Unions is a national federation of student unions that are constituted of every student in each college or university or department. Approximately 160 students unions and 500,000 Students are its members.

High tuition fee is one of the biggest concerns for Japanese students.

Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides, “Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education”. The Japanese government hasn’t accepted this, and have increased tuition fee. The tuition fee of national universities is 9.5 times, and that of private universities now is 3.5 times on average compared to 1975. Since the consumer price index of Japan has risen only 1.8 times during these 30 years, the high tuition fee critically violates human rights.

The total price which students pay in the first year as the tuition fee and admission fee of national universities exceeds 800,000 yen, while that of private universities exceeds 1,300,000 yen on average. It is 30% of the parents’ income for the private university students, causing one quarter of them to fall into debt. Our questionnaire to Japanese students shows that 92% of the students think the tuition fee is ‘expensive’, while only 0.7% thinks ‘suitable’ and 0.3% think ‘inexpensive’. The questionnaire shows that 42% think, “part time jobs are obstruction to their student lives.” Students are forced to cut down their cost of living. Board of students living apart from their parents has decreased 20% in ten years. Some students cannot pay the tuition fee and are forced to drop out.

The most serious problem is that there are many high school students and young people who cannot go to universities because of the high tuition fee. The questionnaire gathered many voices concerning the matter: “My family was so poor that my little sister couldn’t enter a university.” “Tuition fee of the medical department is extremely high, so I gave up my dream to be a doctor.” A survey to guidance counselors in high school showed that 70.7% of them think that restriction of family finances is severer than that of academic ability for entering university.

Learning is fundamental human rights and indispensable for human life. Income of students’ parents must not determine their occasion to go to universities. Japanese scholarship system is insufficient in the quality and quantity. Many students owe more than 5,000,000 yen for the scholarship when they graduate, making them anxious about the payment even in their school life. Taking the actual situation stated above into account, Japanese scholarship system is not sufficient enough to ease discrimination generated from the tuition fee. Only 5% of the whole students receive reduction of school tuition.

The Japanese government insists that “payment burden” must be equal between people who enter universities and those who do not, and that there is enough scholarship system and that they keep formal equality. However, the formal equality isn’t actually making

¹ All-Japan Federation of Student Unions also shares the view expressed in this statement

equal opportunity for Japanese students, as we see the circumstances of Japanese university students and high school students.

In the 21st century, making sustainable societies will surely be the universal fundamental issue. We have to overcome international disputes and environmental destructions. To cope with this issue, the higher education will become even more important. Japan, as one of the most developed countries in the world, must perform its duty to take the initiative in enriching higher education. The disbursement to the higher education from Japanese government is only 0.4% of Japanese GDP, which is a half as much as OECD average. If Japanese government improves this rate, the reduction of the tuition fee will surely be possible.

Only Republic of Rwanda, Madagascar, and Japan reserve the Article 13. We demand that the Sub-Commission make a greater effort to make Japanese government accept the Article as soon as possible to play an international role as one of the most developed countries.

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Economic and Social Council

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Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-seventh session

6–17 March 2023

**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 IT for Change, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

In the epoch of expanding data capitalism, there is an urgent need for a feminist re-evaluation of how digital technologies are transforming economic and social relations. Digital technologies signify a techno-social paradigm wherein data and Artificial Intelligence (AI), as the means of production, become the ordering tool par excellence, conferring social power and privilege on those who control them. Digitalisation has overhauled global value chains, unleashing a new epoch of colonisation, marked by gendered exploitation.

The COVID-19 pandemic only intensified the digital juggernaut, enveloping hitherto excluded people and places into the extractivist paradigm of Big Tech corporations. This paradigm augments global inequality and injustice, ‘adversely incorporating’ (Heeks, 2022) women of oppressed races and castes (Gurumurthy et al., 2021). It exacerbates gender-based violence, thwarting women’s ability to participate as equal citizens, and bringing new risks in the age of the metaverse (World Economic Forum, 2022).

Against this backdrop, IT for Change calls for a gender-transformative re-structuring of the digital society and economy based on values of redistributive justice, egalitarianism and equal participation.

Theme 1: Economy and Labour

1.1 Data must be recognised as an economic and social resource that needs to be governed towards fair and just economies and societies, with foundational data rights (enshrined in a global, multilateral treaty) to advance individual and collective autonomy. The current status quo in global governance fails to recognise data as a social commons. Global standards for data and Artificial Intelligence need to protect all three generations of human rights, including the right to development, environment, and self-determination, especially of marginalised women, whose co-option as data subjects into digital value chains represents the pernicious frontiers of surveillance capitalism.

1.2 Concentration of market power in the hands of a few transnational corporations must be addressed to enable women’s participation in the digital economy on an equal footing. The binding treaty process to truncate the powers of transnational corporations acquires accelerated importance as global platform companies monopolise and control digital spaces, and techno-imperialism undermines data sovereignty of peoples and nations, distinctively impacting women of the Global South (Gurumurthy et al., 2019). Big Tech tax evasion through base erosion and profit shifting impacts the ability of developing countries to raise fiscal resources for social and care infrastructure.

1.3 Investment in public digital infrastructure, financing mechanisms, and social and solidarity economy alternatives are urgently needed to explore the promise of entrepreneurial opportunities for women in the platform economy, without individualising the steep costs of participation for women, who tend to lack the socio-economic capital needed to survive in the entrepreneurial marketplace.

1.4 Governance of global to local digital public goods and infrastructure must be done through democratic mechanisms rooted in principles of equity and gender justice. Digital public infrastructures are crucial to ensure equity and universality of benefits from innovation. At the same time, such ecosystems – including in governance and public services – need to be fostered through gender-intentional frameworks, ringfenced from private capture.

1.5 Right to decent work must be redefined to include civic-political and economic claims of women workers in data, so that women are able to challenge data harms at the workplace and claim their rights to access, audit, and benefit from data they co-generate as workers.

1.6 Corporations must be held accountable for upholding women's human rights in downstream value chains. Due diligence guidelines like the proposed European Union Directive must ensure that multi-national corporations protect women's workers' data rights in host countries – with accountability for the harmful consequences of bias, discrimination and human rights violations caused by their Artificial Intelligence-based models. This must include adverse impacts on indigenous knowledge, and sustainability of traditional livelihoods.

1.7 New rules are needed to recalibrate international regimes in intellectual property, taxation, biodiversity, health, competition etc., to urgently remedy the gender injustices perpetuated by the data and Artificial Intelligence paradigm.

Theme 2: Mitigating Online Gender-Based Violence

2.1 Online gender-based violence must be recognised for the harms to women's rights to public participation and citizenship. The form and virulence of online violence is shaped by the identity and social location of the targeted women such as their race, religion, caste, class, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation as well as presence in public-political life.

The coercive de-platforming of women due to online violence severely curtails their participation and representation in the public sphere, virtual workplaces and the digital economy and society, in general.

2.2 Online gender-based violence should be recognised as a corporate human rights abuse. The logic of the attention economy underpinning the operation of the social media platforms prioritises virality and sensationalism, resulting in the amplification of abusive and hateful content.

The architecture of corporate impunity that permits social media companies to shrug off responsibility for the human rights abuses on their platform must be dismantled. While the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights provide the much-needed baseline for responsible corporate conduct, digital society and its gendered discontents unequivocally argue the need to call out corporate complicity in violating women's human rights, and to actively restrain corporate impunity through the rule of law. Corporations must be held accountable and legally liable for the civil or criminal offences arising in the human rights violations they perpetuate through their systems, policies and practices that prioritise profit interests over the safety and rights of their users, especially women users, who disproportionately bear the costs of vulnerability and harm.

2.3 Social media companies must invest in capabilities to arrest the algorithmic amplification and viral spread of misogynist content and take pre-emptive measures to prevent high-speed virality on their platform, encouraging users to reflect on the content that they post. The issue of misogynistic trolling is not just about the content of abusive speech, but also the volume and frequency of such messages that contribute to their potency and toxicity (Gurumurthy & Dasarathy, 2022).

Social media platforms should improve their content moderation systems by investing in human moderators who are aware of regional language, context, and cultural nuances. Transparency in platform governance, especially with respect to content moderation and algorithmic recommendation systems, and accessible

grievance redressal mechanisms, are indispensable to an effective platform response to counter online gender-based violence (Gurumurthy & Dasarathy, 2022).

2.4 Special comprehensive national laws, rooted in notions of privacy, equality and dignity, must be enacted to deal with online gender-based violence.

In many countries, provisions to deal with online gender-based violence are scattered across laws, inadequate to deal with the peculiar nature of online violence, and often couched in patriarchal notions of modesty, decency or public morality, that fundamentally misrecognise the harm caused by such online violence to women's agency and free expression (Gurumurthy et al, 2018). Legal and institutional responses must move away from such protectionist stances and shift to an autonomy-enhancing model. Such a shift should also be reflected in judicial thinking, as our recent study offers proof that when courts understand the harm perpetrated by online violence on the foundation of established rights, rather than on social, moral, and patriarchal norms, there is a glimmer of justice for the survivors (Rajkumar and Sen, 2022).

Theme 3: Role of the United Nations

3.1 The United Nations system needs to respond with alacrity to effectively tackle the threat and harm of gender-based exclusion and exploitation in the digital society and economy through bold and timely action to promote an egalitarian, just, and participatory digital society capable of creating public and social value to further gender equality. Building on the human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations needs to envision global digital cooperation as the unfinished mandate of the World Summit on the Information Society process for a brave new multilateral system, to "build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society." This goal needs an honest recognition of the ills of corporate capture of the digital commons, and equally, a resolute commitment of all governments to gender justice as a non-negotiable cornerstone of global to local democracy.

3.2 The Global Digital Compact must be rooted in feminist visions of data and Artificial Intelligence governance, paving the way for digital sovereignty of peoples and nations and the dignity and autonomy of women as an essential ingredient to democratise the opportunity to create and benefit from digital innovation.

3.3 The Global Digital Compact must envision clear commitments through Official Development Assistance for the financing of digital innovation ecosystems and institution development in the Global South, to strengthen gender-equality outcomes, including in public services, local livelihoods, and women's public participation.



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English only

Human Rights Council

Sixteenth session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by the Indian Movement Tupaj Amaru, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 February 2011]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Protection of cultural and intellectual heritage of indigenous and aboriginal peoples

I. Background

1. After over 500 years of irrational exploitation and appropriation of cultural heritage, in particular the traditional knowledge (TK) and cultural expressions, belonging to the ancestral civilizations, the indigenous peoples have the moral duty to protect, develop and preserve the past, present and future manifestations of their cultural values, traditional customs, languages and expressions of folklore, which constitute an integral part of the cultural and intellectual heritage of humanity.

2. As to protection and preservation of cultural and intellectual property owned by indigenous peoples, national legislation and international instruments have developed without taking into account the ancestral heritage and age-old traditions, philosophical conceptions and customary laws that govern the social relations of the aboriginal world.

3. Intellectual property is a western concept which has been changed only within market economy and without regard to the traditional practises and collective rights protecting and ensuring the cultural identity of indigenous peoples and not recognizing the holders of traditional expressions as subjects of the laws.

4. Traditional knowledge and folklore, such as popular legends, songs, tunes, musical instruments, dances, and designs or models were the product of a slow process of creative development and incarnated a spiritual value, the soul and the memory of historical communities.

In contrast with western world, in the indigenous vision, such expressions had spiritual value, reflected the identity and were the living memory of indigenous peoples.

II. Need for international standards for protection against piracy

5. Since the conquest and colonization of indigenous territories, traditional expressions have been exposed to the voracity of market laws and have not been protected by Intellectual Property Rights. By its very nature and the sphere of its application, Intellectual Property law has proved to be insufficient to protect the traditional knowledge and cultural expression which has been transmitted from generation to generation.

6. Under the globalization of market, capital and enterprise were fatal to the survival of indigenous peoples. In this context, the piracy and bio-piracy at national and international level take a great proportion, plundering undertaken with impunity trafficking of cultural and artistic property, of which the true owners had been deprived, representing an irreparable loss to their cultural and spiritual heritage. Many traffickers disguised as anthropologists had illegally violated spiritual and religious principles of indigenous societies.

7. In the light of the revelations and complaints made by indigenous peoples, it was known that in 1976 a number of aboriginal tribes in Australia had protested that certain photographs that had appeared in a book on anthropological studies represented objects which had a secret and sacred significance for those communities

Another example was that of the traditional ceremonies of North American Indians filmed in secret and in violation of their spiritual beliefs, by foreign ethnologists for commercial purposes.

8. In the global world, the large multinational companies exploit the genetic resources and an infinite number of varieties of medicinal plants, discovered by indigenous peoples, without the authorization or consent of their true owners.

9. In accordance with the report prepared by Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing (2008), the following (10) pharmaceutical transnational corporations playing a decisive control of global market of pharmaceutical industry: Pfizer (USA), GlaxoSmithKline (UK), Novartis (Switzerland), Sanofi-Aventis (France), Johnson & Johnson (USA), AstraZeneca (UK), Merck & Co (USA); Roche (Switzerland), Abbott (USA) and Amgen (USA).

10. They are now omnipresent everywhere, in particular in indigenous lands and territories, spoiling irrationally their biological and genetic resources, including an infinite number of living organisms and constituting the material and spiritual source of the survival of humanity.

11. The aboriginal and local communities – victims of their wealth – stated the absence of legal protection of cultural heritage, in particular their spiritual values, religious beliefs, identities and living memories.

However, the States failed to establish a binding international instrument or instruments in order to put a stop to national and international piracy.

12. In accordance with same studies, today more than before, artistic property, including symbolic manuscripts and even the human remains of ancestors, continued to be subject to piracy and formed part of private and public collections in Europe and America that were frequently the subject of speculation on the world's antiquities markets

13. In its historical and social dimension, artistic creation was constituted by humanity, its memory and its image of the past, present and future. Owing to the destruction of the cultural and intellectual heritage, in particular TCE and TK that incarnated the view of social, political and religious life, indigenous peoples, who were natives from the Inca and Aymara, Maya and Aztec civilisations had lost their memory, soul and identity.

14. The cultural property owned by indigenous peoples, considered one of the invaluable contributions made to past and present civilizations, was exposed to the attacks of time and the white man of the technological era, and ran the risk of total extinction unless the international community took steps to preserve it.

15. Taking into account these violations of secret sacred values there is an urgent need to adopt the appropriate legal instruments in order to preserve and protect effectively the ancestral intellectual creations of indigenous communities and nations in the world.

The States and international community have the responsibility to ensure the legal protection of traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and genetic resources with purpose to safeguard as a common heritage for humanity.

16. Why was a binding instrument a matter of urgency? In the global world where transnational corporations constituted super States within national States, in a world where was crushed humanity in terms of the appropriation of natural resources in violation of the principle of national sovereignty, a global response was required to the plundering use and unlawful appropriation of cultural expressions and genetic resources

17. As far as the legal protection of cultural heritage in various regions and different countries was concerned, a multitude of relevant definitions existed, different legal systems have different definitions on the subject and material to be protected, and this followed from economic and political interests of each country

18. However, there was an increasing need for an international framework that would harmonize domestic legislations and provide a coherent and universal definition acceptable to the international community and given a legal protection, especially for the tangible and intangible of cultural expressions that was sacred and secret for aboriginal peoples.

III. Intergovernmental committee on intellectual property and genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore

19. The Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual property and genetic resources and traditional knowledge and folklore had received a mandate by General Assembly of WIPO to elaborate and present an outline international legal framework and achieving the adoption of an international instrument or instruments centred on protecting TK, TCEs and GR.

20. The indigenous representatives stated that after 10 years of discussions and rhetoric statements, the Committee has been unable to achieve tangible results neither the progresses in the sphere of protection of the traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and genetic resources, due to the obstruction of the western developed countries.

21. The absence of significant progress toward the expected consensus on the negotiation of the standard-setting process is the result of the absence of the political will of the States.

However, after long a process of the negotiation and informal meetings, we observed a confrontation between, on the one hand, developing countries of South, which hope an international instrument to protect traditional knowledge and genetic resources and, on the other hand, the systematic opposition made by developed and western and rich countries of North, which did not support a legal instrument to protect the cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples.

22. It is urgent that the Committee include aboriginal communities and indigenous peoples as legal subjects with full powers, with concrete, specific proposals and with substantive contribution to the negotiation process.

Concerning the Traditional Cultural expressions or Folklore, the Observer Tupaj Amaru had proposed the following amendments to several articles of the draft document.

Article 1: subject matter of protection:

The protection of traditional cultural expressions/folklore against any piracy, shall apply to:

1. Verbal expressions, such as folk and legends, folk poetry, popular stories, epic poems riddles, other narrations, words, signs, sacred names and symbols;
2. Musical expressions, such as songs and indigenous instrumental music, music on percussion instruments and woodwinds;
3. Expressions by action, such as dances, plays, ceremonies, ritual expressions and other folkloric interpretations and executions;
4. Tangible expressions, such as art, drawings, paintings, sculptures, pottery, terracotta, mosaic woodwork and jewellery, basket work, needlework, textiles, glasswork, pencil, clothing, handicrafts, and
5. Traditional music instrumental and architectural works.

Article 2: Beneficiaries

The juridical protection of the traditional cultural expressions or expressions of the folklore, while national and universal heritage, is essential to ensure a just benefit to the indigenous peoples, local communities and social groups, holders of this patrimony culture,

- (a) In whom the custody, safeguard and protection of the traditional cultural expressions (ECT) are entrusted, in conformity with the national laws, including the practices of customary laws and the international instrument in matter of intellectual property;
- (b) And who maintain, preserve, develop and use the ECT and expressions of the folklore as being expressions of their authentic, cultural, social and historic identity.

Article 3: Scope of protection

The prohibition will be applied to the following illicit acts stipulated in the present article:

- (a) The reproduction, publication, adaptation, broadcasting, interpretation or execution in the public, translation or interpretation, making available or communicating to the public, putting at the disposal of the public domain, including the static photo of the ECT and expressions of the folklore, without the free and informed consent of their holders.
 - (b) Any use of the expressions of the ECT and of the folklore or adaptation of the same to the detriment of the interests of the indigenous peoples or local communities that are the legitimate owners of this cultural heritage.
 - (c) Any distortion, mutilation or modification or offense and actions with the intention of damaging, offending or hurting the reputation of the community, the identity and cultural integrity of the indigenous peoples or local communities which will be the region where they living.
 - (d) Any acquisition by fraudulent means and violent actions of the intellectual property rights on the ECT or the folklore.
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Economic and Social Council

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Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-seventh session

6–17 March 2023

**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 IT for Change, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

In the epoch of expanding data capitalism, there is an urgent need for a feminist re-evaluation of how digital technologies are transforming economic and social relations. Digital technologies signify a techno-social paradigm wherein data and Artificial Intelligence (AI), as the means of production, become the ordering tool par excellence, conferring social power and privilege on those who control them. Digitalisation has overhauled global value chains, unleashing a new epoch of colonisation, marked by gendered exploitation.

The COVID-19 pandemic only intensified the digital juggernaut, enveloping hitherto excluded people and places into the extractivist paradigm of Big Tech corporations. This paradigm augments global inequality and injustice, ‘adversely incorporating’ (Heeks, 2022) women of oppressed races and castes (Gurumurthy et al., 2021). It exacerbates gender-based violence, thwarting women’s ability to participate as equal citizens, and bringing new risks in the age of the metaverse (World Economic Forum, 2022).

Against this backdrop, IT for Change calls for a gender-transformative re-structuring of the digital society and economy based on values of redistributive justice, egalitarianism and equal participation.

Theme 1: Economy and Labour

1.1 Data must be recognised as an economic and social resource that needs to be governed towards fair and just economies and societies, with foundational data rights (enshrined in a global, multilateral treaty) to advance individual and collective autonomy. The current status quo in global governance fails to recognise data as a social commons. Global standards for data and Artificial Intelligence need to protect all three generations of human rights, including the right to development, environment, and self-determination, especially of marginalised women, whose co-option as data subjects into digital value chains represents the pernicious frontiers of surveillance capitalism.

1.2 Concentration of market power in the hands of a few transnational corporations must be addressed to enable women’s participation in the digital economy on an equal footing. The binding treaty process to truncate the powers of transnational corporations acquires accelerated importance as global platform companies monopolise and control digital spaces, and techno-imperialism undermines data sovereignty of peoples and nations, distinctively impacting women of the Global South (Gurumurthy et al., 2019). Big Tech tax evasion through base erosion and profit shifting impacts the ability of developing countries to raise fiscal resources for social and care infrastructure.

1.3 Investment in public digital infrastructure, financing mechanisms, and social and solidarity economy alternatives are urgently needed to explore the promise of entrepreneurial opportunities for women in the platform economy, without individualising the steep costs of participation for women, who tend to lack the socio-economic capital needed to survive in the entrepreneurial marketplace.

1.4 Governance of global to local digital public goods and infrastructure must be done through democratic mechanisms rooted in principles of equity and gender justice. Digital public infrastructures are crucial to ensure equity and universality of benefits from innovation. At the same time, such ecosystems – including in governance and public services – need to be fostered through gender-intentional frameworks, ringfenced from private capture.

1.5 Right to decent work must be redefined to include civic-political and economic claims of women workers in data, so that women are able to challenge data harms at the workplace and claim their rights to access, audit, and benefit from data they co-generate as workers.

1.6 Corporations must be held accountable for upholding women's human rights in downstream value chains. Due diligence guidelines like the proposed European Union Directive must ensure that multi-national corporations protect women's workers' data rights in host countries – with accountability for the harmful consequences of bias, discrimination and human rights violations caused by their Artificial Intelligence-based models. This must include adverse impacts on indigenous knowledge, and sustainability of traditional livelihoods.

1.7 New rules are needed to recalibrate international regimes in intellectual property, taxation, biodiversity, health, competition etc., to urgently remedy the gender injustices perpetuated by the data and Artificial Intelligence paradigm.

Theme 2: Mitigating Online Gender-Based Violence

2.1 Online gender-based violence must be recognised for the harms to women's rights to public participation and citizenship. The form and virulence of online violence is shaped by the identity and social location of the targeted women such as their race, religion, caste, class, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation as well as presence in public-political life.

The coercive de-platforming of women due to online violence severely curtails their participation and representation in the public sphere, virtual workplaces and the digital economy and society, in general.

2.2 Online gender-based violence should be recognised as a corporate human rights abuse. The logic of the attention economy underpinning the operation of the social media platforms prioritises virality and sensationalism, resulting in the amplification of abusive and hateful content.

The architecture of corporate impunity that permits social media companies to shrug off responsibility for the human rights abuses on their platform must be dismantled. While the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights provide the much-needed baseline for responsible corporate conduct, digital society and its gendered discontents unequivocally argue the need to call out corporate complicity in violating women's human rights, and to actively restrain corporate impunity through the rule of law. Corporations must be held accountable and legally liable for the civil or criminal offences arising in the human rights violations they perpetuate through their systems, policies and practices that prioritise profit interests over the safety and rights of their users, especially women users, who disproportionately bear the costs of vulnerability and harm.

2.3 Social media companies must invest in capabilities to arrest the algorithmic amplification and viral spread of misogynist content and take pre-emptive measures to prevent high-speed virality on their platform, encouraging users to reflect on the content that they post. The issue of misogynistic trolling is not just about the content of abusive speech, but also the volume and frequency of such messages that contribute to their potency and toxicity (Gurumurthy & Dasarathy, 2022).

Social media platforms should improve their content moderation systems by investing in human moderators who are aware of regional language, context, and cultural nuances. Transparency in platform governance, especially with respect to content moderation and algorithmic recommendation systems, and accessible

grievance redressal mechanisms, are indispensable to an effective platform response to counter online gender-based violence (Gurumurthy & Dasarathy, 2022).

2.4 Special comprehensive national laws, rooted in notions of privacy, equality and dignity, must be enacted to deal with online gender-based violence.

In many countries, provisions to deal with online gender-based violence are scattered across laws, inadequate to deal with the peculiar nature of online violence, and often couched in patriarchal notions of modesty, decency or public morality, that fundamentally misrecognise the harm caused by such online violence to women's agency and free expression (Gurumurthy et al, 2018). Legal and institutional responses must move away from such protectionist stances and shift to an autonomy-enhancing model. Such a shift should also be reflected in judicial thinking, as our recent study offers proof that when courts understand the harm perpetrated by online violence on the foundation of established rights, rather than on social, moral, and patriarchal norms, there is a glimmer of justice for the survivors (Rajkumar and Sen, 2022).

Theme 3: Role of the United Nations

3.1 The United Nations system needs to respond with alacrity to effectively tackle the threat and harm of gender-based exclusion and exploitation in the digital society and economy through bold and timely action to promote an egalitarian, just, and participatory digital society capable of creating public and social value to further gender equality. Building on the human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations needs to envision global digital cooperation as the unfinished mandate of the World Summit on the Information Society process for a brave new multilateral system, to "build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society." This goal needs an honest recognition of the ills of corporate capture of the digital commons, and equally, a resolute commitment of all governments to gender justice as a non-negotiable cornerstone of global to local democracy.

3.2 The Global Digital Compact must be rooted in feminist visions of data and Artificial Intelligence governance, paving the way for digital sovereignty of peoples and nations and the dignity and autonomy of women as an essential ingredient to democratise the opportunity to create and benefit from digital innovation.

3.3 The Global Digital Compact must envision clear commitments through Official Development Assistance for the financing of digital innovation ecosystems and institution development in the Global South, to strengthen gender-equality outcomes, including in public services, local livelihoods, and women's public participation.



General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 February 2011

English only

Human Rights Council

Sixteenth session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by the Indian Movement Tupaj Amaru, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 February 2011]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Protection of cultural and intellectual heritage of indigenous and aboriginal peoples

I. Background

1. After over 500 years of irrational exploitation and appropriation of cultural heritage, in particular the traditional knowledge (TK) and cultural expressions, belonging to the ancestral civilizations, the indigenous peoples have the moral duty to protect, develop and preserve the past, present and future manifestations of their cultural values, traditional customs, languages and expressions of folklore, which constitute an integral part of the cultural and intellectual heritage of humanity.

2. As to protection and preservation of cultural and intellectual property owned by indigenous peoples, national legislation and international instruments have developed without taking into account the ancestral heritage and age-old traditions, philosophical conceptions and customary laws that govern the social relations of the aboriginal world.

3. Intellectual property is a western concept which has been changed only within market economy and without regard to the traditional practises and collective rights protecting and ensuring the cultural identity of indigenous peoples and not recognizing the holders of traditional expressions as subjects of the laws.

4. Traditional knowledge and folklore, such as popular legends, songs, tunes, musical instruments, dances, and designs or models were the product of a slow process of creative development and incarnated a spiritual value, the soul and the memory of historical communities.

In contrast with western world, in the indigenous vision, such expressions had spiritual value, reflected the identity and were the living memory of indigenous peoples.

II. Need for international standards for protection against piracy

5. Since the conquest and colonization of indigenous territories, traditional expressions have been exposed to the voracity of market laws and have not been protected by Intellectual Property Rights. By its very nature and the sphere of its application, Intellectual Property law has proved to be insufficient to protect the traditional knowledge and cultural expression which has been transmitted from generation to generation.

6. Under the globalization of market, capital and enterprise were fatal to the survival of indigenous peoples. In this context, the piracy and bio-piracy at national and international level take a great proportion, plundering undertaken with impunity trafficking of cultural and artistic property, of which the true owners had been deprived, representing an irreparable loss to their cultural and spiritual heritage. Many traffickers disguised as anthropologists had illegally violated spiritual and religious principles of indigenous societies.

7. In the light of the revelations and complaints made by indigenous peoples, it was known that in 1976 a number of aboriginal tribes in Australia had protested that certain photographs that had appeared in a book on anthropological studies represented objects which had a secret and sacred significance for those communities

Another example was that of the traditional ceremonies of North American Indians filmed in secret and in violation of their spiritual beliefs, by foreign ethnologists for commercial purposes.

8. In the global world, the large multinational companies exploit the genetic resources and an infinite number of varieties of medicinal plants, discovered by indigenous peoples, without the authorization or consent of their true owners.

9. In accordance with the report prepared by Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing (2008), the following (10) pharmaceutical transnational corporations playing a decisive control of global market of pharmaceutical industry: Pfizer (USA), GlaxoSmithKline (UK), Novartis (Switzerland), Sanofi-Aventis (France), Johnson & Johnson (USA), AstraZeneca (UK), Merck & Co (USA); Roche (Switzerland), Abbott (USA) and Amgen (USA).

10. They are now omnipresent everywhere, in particular in indigenous lands and territories, spoiling irrationally their biological and genetic resources, including an infinite number of living organisms and constituting the material and spiritual source of the survival of humanity.

11. The aboriginal and local communities – victims of their wealth – stated the absence of legal protection of cultural heritage, in particular their spiritual values, religious beliefs, identities and living memories.

However, the States failed to establish a binding international instrument or instruments in order to put a stop to national and international piracy.

12. In accordance with same studies, today more than before, artistic property, including symbolic manuscripts and even the human remains of ancestors, continued to be subject to piracy and formed part of private and public collections in Europe and America that were frequently the subject of speculation on the world's antiquities markets

13. In its historical and social dimension, artistic creation was constituted by humanity, its memory and its image of the past, present and future. Owing to the destruction of the cultural and intellectual heritage, in particular TCE and TK that incarnated the view of social, political and religious life, indigenous peoples, who were natives from the Inca and Aymara, Maya and Aztec civilisations had lost their memory, soul and identity.

14. The cultural property owned by indigenous peoples, considered one of the invaluable contributions made to past and present civilizations, was exposed to the attacks of time and the white man of the technological era, and ran the risk of total extinction unless the international community took steps to preserve it.

15. Taking into account these violations of secret sacred values there is an urgent need to adopt the appropriate legal instruments in order to preserve and protect effectively the ancestral intellectual creations of indigenous communities and nations in the world.

The States and international community have the responsibility to ensure the legal protection of traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and genetic resources with purpose to safeguard as a common heritage for humanity.

16. Why was a binding instrument a matter of urgency? In the global world where transnational corporations constituted super States within national States, in a world where was crushed humanity in terms of the appropriation of natural resources in violation of the principle of national sovereignty, a global response was required to the plundering use and unlawful appropriation of cultural expressions and genetic resources

17. As far as the legal protection of cultural heritage in various regions and different countries was concerned, a multitude of relevant definitions existed, different legal systems have different definitions on the subject and material to be protected, and this followed from economic and political interests of each country

18. However, there was an increasing need for an international framework that would harmonize domestic legislations and provide a coherent and universal definition acceptable to the international community and given a legal protection, especially for the tangible and intangible of cultural expressions that was sacred and secret for aboriginal peoples.

III. Intergovernmental committee on intellectual property and genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore

19. The Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual property and genetic resources and traditional knowledge and folklore had received a mandate by General Assembly of WIPO to elaborate and present an outline international legal framework and achieving the adoption of an international instrument or instruments centred on protecting TK, TCEs and GR.

20. The indigenous representatives stated that after 10 years of discussions and rhetoric statements, the Committee has been unable to achieve tangible results neither the progresses in the sphere of protection of the traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and genetic resources, due to the obstruction of the western developed countries.

21. The absence of significant progress toward the expected consensus on the negotiation of the standard-setting process is the result of the absence of the political will of the States.

However, after long a process of the negotiation and informal meetings, we observed a confrontation between, on the one hand, developing countries of South, which hope an international instrument to protect traditional knowledge and genetic resources and, on the other hand, the systematic opposition made by developed and western and rich countries of North, which did not support a legal instrument to protect the cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples.

22. It is urgent that the Committee include aboriginal communities and indigenous peoples as legal subjects with full powers, with concrete, specific proposals and with substantive contribution to the negotiation process.

Concerning the Traditional Cultural expressions or Folklore, the Observer Tupaj Amaru had proposed the following amendments to several articles of the draft document.

Article 1: subject matter of protection:

The protection of traditional cultural expressions/folklore against any piracy, shall apply to:

1. Verbal expressions, such as folk and legends, folk poetry, popular stories, epic poems riddles, other narrations, words, signs, sacred names and symbols;
2. Musical expressions, such as songs and indigenous instrumental music, music on percussion instruments and woodwinds;
3. Expressions by action, such as dances, plays, ceremonies, ritual expressions and other folkloric interpretations and executions;
4. Tangible expressions, such as art, drawings, paintings, sculptures, pottery, terracotta, mosaic woodwork and jewellery, basket work, needlework, textiles, glasswork, pencil, clothing, handicrafts, and
5. Traditional music instrumental and architectural works.

Article 2: Beneficiaries

The juridical protection of the traditional cultural expressions or expressions of the folklore, while national and universal heritage, is essential to ensure a just benefit to the indigenous peoples, local communities and social groups, holders of this patrimony culture,

- (a) In whom the custody, safeguard and protection of the traditional cultural expressions (ECT) are entrusted, in conformity with the national laws, including the practices of customary laws and the international instrument in matter of intellectual property;
- (b) And who maintain, preserve, develop and use the ECT and expressions of the folklore as being expressions of their authentic, cultural, social and historic identity.

Article 3: Scope of protection

The prohibition will be applied to the following illicit acts stipulated in the present article:

- (a) The reproduction, publication, adaptation, broadcasting, interpretation or execution in the public, translation or interpretation, making available or communicating to the public, putting at the disposal of the public domain, including the static photo of the ECT and expressions of the folklore, without the free and informed consent of their holders.
 - (b) Any use of the expressions of the ECT and of the folklore or adaptation of the same to the detriment of the interests of the indigenous peoples or local communities that are the legitimate owners of this cultural heritage.
 - (c) Any distortion, mutilation or modification or offense and actions with the intention of damaging, offending or hurting the reputation of the community, the identity and cultural integrity of the indigenous peoples or local communities which will be the region where they living.
 - (d) Any acquisition by fraudulent means and violent actions of the intellectual property rights on the ECT or the folklore.
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Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-sixth session

14–25 March 2022

**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 Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The ecological crisis has put the future of our planet and all living beings that call it home at an existential crossroads.

This crisis is a symptom of – and driven by – interlocking systems of oppression that serve to prioritise profit over people and planet. Systems of oppression of militarism, capitalism, racism, patriarchy, and colonialism place all forms of life as objects to be owned, controlled, colonised, and consumed. Women, Indigenous peoples, and poor communities in the Global South and Global North are exploited and disproportionately impacted.

In the face of an escalating crisis, States, the United Nations, and the international community have failed to address these systems and their grave impacts. Instead, States have continued to fuel militarism and military activity, which in turn are significant causes of climate change and environmental destruction, as well as of human insecurity, violence, and inequality. Conflict and war fuel environmental degradation, creating a vicious cycle of war economies.

Militaries are among the most carbon-intensive institutions in any state. Military activity directly contributes to environmental degradation through pollution of land, air, and water, which contributes to higher incidences of illnesses such as cancer and can lead to birth defects in both humans and animals. It has devastating impacts through its greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, land grabbing, the extraction of rare earth minerals and fossil fuels for use in the arms industry, the development and production of nuclear weapons, and much more.

Militarism also has profound consequences for the Earth's biodiversity. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons supports excessive hunting and poaching and enables crimes against wildlife. In the oceans, which are warming at alarming rates, abandoned ordnance sickens or destroys marine life and marine habitats, including coral reefs.

The devastating impacts of militaries' environmental footprints are also racialised and gendered. For example, most nuclear weapons in the US and Europe have been tested on the lands of Indigenous peoples with alarming health consequences, especially for women and children, which can last for decades.

Military vehicles like tanks, warships, and fighter jets are notoriously energy inefficient, yet they are excluded from carbon reduction plans. In fact, states are not required to reveal their military emissions in their greenhouse gas inventories and Nationally Determined Contribution plans. States have also not been required to explain how they will offset military emissions to achieve net-zero by 2050, a standard set out in the Paris Agreement. Military alliances, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, continue to be a major catalyst for the perpetuation of militarism; by extension, they exacerbate the ecological crisis.

The often-overlapping impacts of armed violence and the climate crisis disproportionately affect women and girls and are directly harmful to the fulfilment and protection of their human rights, exacerbating already existing gender inequalities. Globally, women represent 70 per cent of people living in poverty and a significant majority rely heavily on land, water, animals, and plant life for their livelihood. This vulnerability further reduces their capacities to adapt to the impacts of disasters, meaning that women are also disproportionately represented in forced migration patterns. The climate crisis also has detrimental impacts on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on maternal health.

Women are leading in conservation, agriculture, natural resource management, and environmental peacebuilding to protect our planet. Women from Indigenous communities and grassroots organisations are at the forefront as environmental defenders, standing up to corporations' extraction and destruction of their homes by mobilising entire communities to defend land and forests. However, these women are facing an alarming rate of assassination and targeted sexual and gender-based violence, often exacerbated by militarisation and arms proliferation. Women environmental and human rights defenders face ongoing, multifaceted, and often state-sanctioned and military-backed threats to their and their families' lives and livelihoods, frequently with impunity for the perpetrators. Further, patriarchal power structures prevent marginalised populations, including women and Indigenous peoples, from being equal partners in climate-related decision-making.

Despite these profound consequences – for women, for all living beings, and for the very future of our planet – each year governments around the world spend nearly two trillion dollars on conflict and violence. This is almost equivalent to the amount of money that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has said is needed to meet the Paris Agreement targets to decarbonise energy systems. Furthermore, high-income countries have also failed to meet their climate financing commitments to spend \$100 billion per year to the Green Climate Fund.

The nexus between gender equality, peace, and the environment is critical for the achievement of human rights. This is why the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action recognised the links between gender equality and the need for reduced military spending and disarmament for social development and environmental protection. United Nations Security Council Resolution [2242 \(2015\)](#) highlighted the impacts of climate change as a cross-cutting issue for the women, peace, and security agenda. The UN Secretary-General's 2020 annual report on Women, Peace and Security addresses climate change and environmental degradation as major drivers of conflict; takes note of the socioeconomic and gendered impacts of climate change and environmental degradation as well as the need to integrate gender analysis into all climate-related policy making; and highlights the role women activists have played in demanding climate justice. The report also underscores the need for linking the agenda with the sustainable development goals to prevent future conflicts and achieve sustainable peace.

Environmental justice can only be achieved through feminist peace – an understanding that sees security not as predicated on patriarchal norms of weapons and militarism, but on societal well-being and care. Practices of feminist peace promote the right of all people to live life free from violence, persecution, environmental destruction, and economic exploitation.

The international community must take urgent action to address these root causes of the climate crisis, which is having differential impacts on women, Indigenous peoples, people living in poverty, and other marginalised communities.

Recommendations

Recognising the direct and massive contributions of militarism to the current climate crisis, and the differential impacts of militarism and the climate crisis on women and marginalised populations, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is issuing the following recommendations.

Agree to transformative principles and commitments which guarantee protections of planet and people over profit by addressing and transforming systems of inequality and oppression.

The direct, full, equal, and meaningful participation of diverse women must be a non-negotiable requirement in all decision-making spaces.

States should replicate initiatives such as the Escazú Agreement, a landmark treaty guaranteeing the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters.

States should recognise the gender-specific impacts of the climate crisis, especially in conflict-affected states, including increases in sexual and gender-based violence, and impacts on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to include these considerations meaningfully in climate mitigation and conflict prevention policies.

All relevant actors should ensure participatory, intersectional gender-conflict-environmental analysis that includes assessments of and responses to environmental and climate change; structural and root causes of conflict and gender inequality; power, including corporate power; and colonial histories.

The United Nations must create a plan for ending armaments and reducing military spending, including by agreeing to a concrete programme for military divestment, demilitarisation, and disarmament.

States must reduce military spending, stop arms trading, eliminate nuclear weapons, and work for full disarmament. Funds must be redirected from weapons and war towards building systems of solidarity and care, mitigating the climate crisis, building green energy, ending poverty and hunger, environmental stewardship, and investing in gender equality.

Government funds must be divested from corporations that produce weapons and also divested from fossil fuels.

States must strengthen the public sector to enable the protection of economic, social, and cultural rights, and the right to a clean environment. International financial institutions should ensure that their funds reach the most vulnerable and provide universal, equitable, and gender-responsive access to essential services, including healthcare, food, housing, water, sanitation, education, and sustainable livelihoods.

States must honour their commitments to invest \$100 billion each year in the United Nations Green Climate Fund to help lower income countries – those least responsible for the current crisis – address the impacts of climate change.



Economic and Social Council

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Commission on Population and Development

Fifty-first session

9–13 April 2018

Item 3 of the provisional agenda¹

**General Debate 3 (a): Actions for the further
implementation of the Programme of Action of the
International Conference on Population and Development
at the global, regional and national levels**

**3 (b): Sustainable cities, human mobility and
international migration**

Statement submitted by Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council²

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.

¹ [E/CN.9/2018/1](#).

² The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Fifty-first session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD)

The Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights, representing more than a thousand organizations and individuals worldwide working to realize the full sexual and reproductive health and rights of all people, welcomes the fifty-first session of the Commission on Population and Development, focusing on sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration. The Women's Global Network would like to draw the Commission's attention to the issue of limited access to sexual and reproductive health and rights experienced by migrant women worldwide, impacting their personal freedom, mobility, and bodily autonomy. Women in all their diversities — no matter their nationality or citizenship status — must be able to fully enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights, as part of realizing their human rights and wellbeing, and as essential to the contribution to the sustainability of cities across the globe.

According to population projections, the number of people living in cities will nearly double between now and 2050, reaching 6.4 billion people. In the world's rapidly growing urban spaces, international migrants represent a critical mass ranging anywhere from one-third to one-half in global cities such as Dubai, London and New York. As women take more active roles in the global paid workforce, the concept of the "feminization of migration" has become increasingly more common. However, women in all their diversities, have always been present in migratory flows, often accompanying male migrants and working informally and often more vulnerable to economic, physical and sexual abuse by employers, spouses, and government officials, among others.

As economic trends continue to push viable work opportunities to cities, women continue to migrate across international borders. Today, women represent 48 per cent of the 244 million migrants worldwide. Pervasive gender inequality in the labour market limits many migrant women to work in low-paying jobs with little upward mobility in labour-intensive sectors, such as domestic work, child care, cooking, garment factories, piece work — where they work long hours for low pay and are subject to exploitation. Domestic work presents women with distinct challenges when they are often isolated and sometimes abused, with no benefits or recourse. The many risks migrant women take in seeking and engaging in work are often accompanied by little to no additional benefits and a lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services. Workplace benefits such as flexible hours, family or maternity leave and access to healthcare coverage are rarely encountered by migrant women.

Migrant women engaging in sex work experience constant challenges and violations in relation to their human rights, including little to no access to public services, high instances of sexual assault and threats to their personal safety, and are frequently persecuted within their communities and by law enforcement. These challenges coupled with women's unrealized autonomy over their sexual and reproductive health and rights can perpetuate difficult circumstances and cycles of poverty, while violating women's human rights.

For many migrant women, the fundamental right to access public health services such as sexual and reproductive health information and services is often limited or withheld completely. Although sexual and reproductive health services are more accessible in cities than in rural areas throughout the world, inequality contributes to limited access to contraception and safe and legal abortion, particularly for migrant women. The likelihood of a migrant woman successfully navigating a foreign

healthcare system to fully realize her sexual health and rights is low. This is due to barriers including fear of disclosing immigration status, language barriers, high healthcare costs, women's restricted mobility and the criminalization of abortion services in many countries. Globally, the unmet need for contraception and access to safe and legal abortion severely limits and violates migrant women's human rights, specifically their sexual and reproductive health and rights. This issue impedes the global realization of gender equality and is detrimental to migrant women's human rights to health, bodily autonomy and integrity, hindering their ability to exercise meaningful decision-making power in defining their own lives.

When women and girls are able to fully enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights, it contributes to the fulfilment of their rights to health, privacy, and information and also positively impacts their families and communities. It is thus imperative to respect, protect, and fulfil the sexual and reproductive rights of women in all their diversities, including immigrant and migrant women, sex workers, victims of sexual assault and human trafficking, women identifying as LGBT, indigenous women, young women and girls, among others.

Therefore, the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights recommends the inclusion of the following in the conclusions of the fifty-first session of the Commission on Population and Development:

- Uphold and accelerate the implementation of all sexual and reproductive health and rights-related commitments under the 2030 Agenda. Expand the provision of all forms of contraception, safe and legal abortion and post abortion care within cities across the globe. Ensure these services are accessible, affordable, confidential, and high-quality for all women regardless of immigration status, nationality, ethnicity, age, religion or economic status, among other identity markers. Take into account the different realities and barriers migrant and immigrant women face in accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights in urban settings.
- Ensure the provision of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services at all phases of the migration cycle and facilitate the establishment of linkages and referral networks with migrant-friendly healthcare providers. Governments from origin and destination countries must work together with civil society and other stakeholders in creating an enabling environment for migrant workers to make meaningful choices regarding their body and sexuality, and to fully exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Recognize migrant women as active agents in the development of sustainable cities, entitled to their full human rights, including access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Put an end to the criminalization of migrants and migration enforcement schemes that deny due process and basic human rights. Enforce policies at the national level that enable migrant women to access public services, join unions, and seek legal recourse. Expand investments in women and girl's empowerment and their education, including their comprehensive sexuality education. Accelerate the development of safe workplace policies especially within industrial sectors with large concentrations of poor, migrant female workers. Address existing gender inequalities in the workplace, allowing for more women to enter formal channels of work.
- Prioritize and enact comprehensive and fair immigration policies with special consideration for developing inclusive public health systems, including full access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for immigrant and migrant women. Above all, prioritize women's universal human rights especially their sexual and reproductive health and rights, in order to strengthen the

sustainability of global cities and contribute to the wellbeing of migrant women worldwide. Ultimately, migration issues must be structurally addressed through just global socioeconomic policies that enhance sustainable development, and make migration a choice rather than a necessity.



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Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-fourth session

9–20 March 2020

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and
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entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”

**Statement submitted by Christian Aid, Oxfam International,
Public Services International, Society for International
Development, and Womankind Worldwide, 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

According to the World Bank, there have been 274 reforms to laws and regulations at the national level, leading to an increase in gender equality in 131 countries in 2019. However, despite all the important progress, women continue to be left behind by both residual (or pre-existing) and new challenges, such as the growing role of multinational corporations and the financial sector. Globally, the unpaid care burden remains very unequally distributed as women do 4.4 hours of unpaid work per day, while men do only 1.7 hours. There are many good policies on women's rights and gender equality, but these are frequently not resourced nor are institutional mechanisms established for their implementation. Most countries only give women three-quarters of the rights given to men. Women's insertion into the economy is too often predicated on their exploitation, entering at the bottom of the global value chain. Too often, the outcome is the instrumentalization and exploitation of women as cheap or undervalued labor. In fact, gender parity may be shifting into reverse, also due to the unequal position of women in society and where their rights are rarely fairly represented through unionized labour or adequate justice systems.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, approached from an intersectional feminist perspective, provided an improved and strategic framework that put women's rights front and centre to enforce the 1981 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women Convention. It identified 12 priority areas for changing the situation of women in the world, establishing the methods by which all actors are to eradicate the persistent and increasing burdens of gender discrimination and poverty on women by addressing many of its structural causes, ensuring equal rights for all.

We have concluded that to achieve progress and to reverse the policy and systemic repercussions, the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women should focus on the following entry points: (1) development with gender equality and human rights front and centre; (2) developing and adopting mandatory regulation and enforcement of regulations and laws to bring to an end gender discrimination in business practices; (3) ensuring policies on financing and budgeting to take into account the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action requirement that all contextual factors relevant to specific forms of gender discrimination take all multiple and intersectional forms of disadvantage into consideration; and (4) guaranteeing gender equality in tax laws and all related fiscal policies.

The growth-based model often traps women and other individuals who are marginalized in poverty, affected by austerity cuts, in unequal power relations, and subject to abuse and violence. More importantly, global economic power is held in unrepresentative and neoliberal institutions – e.g., World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – where wealthy men from majority groups from the global North dominate in power, while economic power is not distributed to the global South or to institutions where women are likely to participate in an equal manner.

In Engendering Business and Human Rights it is argued that we need a new model of development that puts gender equality and all other human rights front and centre to transform the current macro-economic model. It recommends explicit participation of feminist and women's rights groups to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action tools of gender-based analysis and gender budgeting to achieve full gender mainstreaming of gender equality in all laws, policies, and practices.

Activities by corporate actors have different and disproportionate gendered impacts on local populations where corporations operate. These interlocking forms of

discrimination include gender discrimination in pay and access to opportunities and representation, high risks of gender-based violence, erosion of women's control over resources and productive assets, and other irresponsible corporate practices that pose serious human rights risks into virtually all aspects of human existence.

In gender lens to the UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights, the Act Alliance argues that to ensure respect for human rights, in particular gender equality, we need binding rules on at all levels, including respect for human rights, the conducting of mandatory gender-responsive human rights due diligence, which includes gender impact assessments and adequate reporting, as well as access to remedy for rights holders affected by gender discrimination and other human rights abuses.

The 2018 Kathmandu Declaration on curbing illicit financial flows and restoring justice for human rights establishes the principle that illicit financial flows should be defined, analyzed, and tackled on the basis of their human rights impacts. This means a broad definition based on abuse and harm is needed. At the same time, human rights monitoring and accountability bodies, together with other processes, should provide access to remedy for those harmed by illicit financial flows, recognizing differentiated and gendered impacts and the duties – including extraterritorial duties – of those harmed by illicit financial flows. Recently, a joint Financial Transparency Coalition members' report, *Trapped in Illicit Finance*, estimates that illicit financial flows cause tax losses of \$416 billion in the global South, enough to go a long way in realizing universalizing education, healthcare, and social protection for all.

A 2014 report entitled, *Taxing men and women: why gender is crucial for a fair tax system*, affirms that fiscal policy has an important role to play in rebalancing gender inequalities. It also argues that a “fiscal revolution” is needed in both raising and redistributing revenue with gender equal laws and ensuring that tax and related fiscal policies do not overburden sectors and areas where women are more present, while spending budgets in such a way that effectively tackle gender and other intersecting inequalities. Moreover, while there has been some progress in reducing discrimination against women in tax laws and policies, evidence from South Africa finds that implementing more equitable fiscal policy to increase social spending and redistribute income and wealth is essential to meet the goals.

The burden of care work ensures that the ultimate economic burden of such taxes also falls upon those who provide care, domestic, and unpaid productive labour – predominantly women, girls, and retired women, who tend to have shorter paid work lives than men. Countries in the global South are heavily dependent on these regressive taxes due to pressure from those with high incomes, investors, and international financial institutions to reduce, flatten, or eliminate personal and corporate income and wealth taxes because those revenues can be “efficiently” replaced with consumption taxes.

In light of all of the above, we recommend the following:

- Promote new model of development that keeps gender equality and all human rights front and centre, including a United Nations Treaty on Business and Human Rights that centers on women's rights.
- Develop and adopt mandatory laws capable of eradicating gender discrimination of all forms in business practices.
- Create financing and budgeting models that take into account the full range of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and recognize that illicit financial flows factually violate contextualized gender equality and human rights laws.

- Establish a transparent and democratic intergovernmental United Nations tax body that can create international rules on taxing transnational corporations, wealth, trade, and investment that produces gender-equal outcomes.
- Define the issue of illicit financial flows to include tax avoidance and tax abuse as integral components and focus on tax losses that have the most immediate impact on the enjoyment of all aspects of gender equality and human rights.
- Create government and civil society funding, data resources, and institutional mechanisms capable of supporting the great need for fully contextualized gender impact analysis of all tax, tax/benefit, and related fiscal systems, with open access to all empirical studies.
- Increase efforts at the global level to refine comparative and longitudinal indicators and data on gender equality in domestic laws and transnational/international tax abuses capable of providing, e.g., gender disaggregated data that accurately documents the gender impact of all forms of fiscal policies.
- Define and establish normative standards for taxes and regulatory policies that progressively collect the full costs from fossil fuel producers and consumers (transnational corporations and individuals), while providing for access to renewable and sustainable energy to remediate all climate, ecological and environmental damage, and the disproportionate burden of fossil fuel production and consumption on women and girls.

Signatories:

Christian Aid

European Network on Debt and Development

Public Services International

Womankind Worldwide

Society for International Development

Oxfam International



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Statement submitted by Center for Global Nonkilling, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Nonkilling gender-responsive adaptation to climate change

There is not a thing that will not be affected by climate change. Tackling climate change needs to be done with every sustainable development goal in mind. One area that is sensitive for the changes in climate is gender equality. While the past decades have seen significant advancements and improvements, the challenges brought by climate change can not only stop this shift towards increasing equality but bring it backwards, leading to higher level of violence and killing of women and girls, if there are no adequate responses. Those responses require strong gender aspects on both prevention and enforcement.

The Center for Global Nonkilling has argued on its previous statements how violence against women and girls should be tackled through different Sustainable Development Goals, which are essentially interdependent. In addressing climate change, we wish to specifically point out the synergies between Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and Sustainable Development Goal 13 on climate action, and urge Member States and all relevant actors to take the progressive threat for violence against women in serious account when tackling climate change.

Climate change affects most crucially those groups that are already in vulnerable situations. Often, such groups are women and girls. Women already do most of the household-chores and use more time on doing unpaid work compared to men. This affects women's possibilities to take part in economic and social activities and in many cases stops girls from going to school. Within the Millennium Development Goals timeframe the global school enrollment rate for girls got higher than ever before, and this rate needs to be increasing during the Sustainable Development Goals as well. Girls receiving education is one of the most effective ways to tackle forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, child marriages and other kinds of violence.

In many societies, women are those who gather the firewood and water for their family, and the time spent on those trips will most likely be higher as women need to look for the water further and further. These trips expose women to the threat of violence, especially sexual violence, putting women's bodies and lives at risk. The effect of climate change on farming can already be seen through weather changes that make seasons too dry or too rainy for successful farming. In certain areas, when families do not get enough money from agriculture, selling their daughters for marriage or sending them away while exposing them for human trafficking is seen as a solution.

Climate change increases the amount of extreme weather events. In natural catastrophes the mortality rate for women is 14-times higher than for men. After such disasters violence against women has been reported to increase. Rapes, human trafficking, and child marriages have increased immediately after disasters. Furthermore, living in a stressful situation without daily routines bursts often out in domestic violence. This is why preparation for climate change regarding disaster and emergency response and relief must incorporate a gender perspective to effectively protect women and girls in vulnerable situations.

Shifting climate conditions has not only enforced ongoing armed conflicts but could become a major driver for future conflicts if these are not adequately prevented. Climate change affects poverty and access to life-sustaining resources that are often key factor in the emergence of armed conflicts. Past and ongoing conflicts have shown us the heavy consequences conflicts have on women and girls as many of the wars are being fought over women's bodies. Sexual violence is used as a tactic of war, as a way to torture, and/or for ethnic cleansing. Conflicts also exacerbate child

marriages, human trafficking, female genital mutilation, and so-called honor killings. Furthermore, conflicts, particularly those involving indigenous communities, have targeted women through rape and sexual violence in levels reaching genocidal dimensions.

Different conflicts have pushed millions of people to flee their homes and home countries. The amount of refugees will most likely increase due to climate change, and some studies have shown many so-called economic migrants are in fact climate refugees, considering how local economies and livelihoods have been struck by shifting climate conditions and pressure from extractivist violence. Draughts, higher temperatures or natural disasters, with associated crop failures and other economic impacts, force people to move into safer places. In many cases, most refugees are women and children, and the state of vulnerability will expose women to different challenges from health care issues to all kinds of violence. Some of these challenges we cannot even know yet. In order to be prepared and thus focused on preventive measures, more resources need to be directed into the gender-responsive research about climate change.

Climate change is not only a threat for the future; it is already a threat every day in many countries. Actions cannot wait any longer and strong decisions need to be made now. In order for these decisions to be gender-responsive, women need not only to be on board but in all levels of decision-making across the spectrum of agents, which are to tackle climate change: non government organizations, parliaments, ministries, the United Nations system and other organizations. Women's rights will not be covered in the decisions or action plans if women are not part of the decision-making process. As active agents in current struggles on climate change and gender issues, women's knowledge must be taken in account when creating new solutions and thinking alternatives.

Some of the effects of climate change on gender equality can be already seen, some of them are predicted, and the rest of the effects remain unknown. Taking this into consideration, the deteriorating impacts by climate change on gender equality will be even harsher than what is known now. The Center for Global Nonkilling urges all Member States and the United Nations to include gender-responsive factors in their action plans for tackling the climate change. Stronger focus is needed on preventive action that is based on specific research focused on climate change impacts on gender equality. Violence against women already represents a huge burden, with killings representing the tip of the iceberg. We cannot allow this burden to increase for any reason, including the likely effects of climate change.



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Statement submitted by Zonta International, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Zonta International, a leading global organization of more than 28,000 professionals in 62 countries pledged to empower women through service and advocacy, presents to the 65th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women the following statement for consideration of the Commission in its deliberations on women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

For more than 100 years, Zonta members have been working toward our vision of a more equal world – a world in which women's rights are recognized as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential, a world where women have access to all resources and are represented in decision-making positions on an equal basis with men, a world where no woman lives in fear of violence.

Today, that vision seems further away than ever. The world is facing unprecedented challenges, including a global pandemic, widespread gender inequality and climate change. While these challenges are felt by communities across the globe, they uniquely impact women and girls. The effects of COVID-19, in particular, have had devastating consequences for women and girls and threaten progress already made in the movement for gender equality.

The economic impacts of COVID-19, again while significant for everyone, are felt more harshly by women, who generally earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs and are more likely to work in the informal sector. With more than 1.52 billion students out of school at the height of the pandemic and increased healthcare burdens put on families, women have been forced to take on greater care demands at home, while also facing potential cuts and layoffs. Women also have less access to social protections and lead most single-parent households. The situation is even more dire in developing economies, where 70 per cent of women are employed in the informal sector with few protections against dismissal or paid sick leave.

Women's health is also negatively impacted when resources and priorities, including sexual and reproductive health services, are reallocated during times of crisis. Women and girls have unique health needs, but they are already less likely to have access to health services and adequate insurance, especially in rural and marginalized communities. As a result, there has been an alarming increase in the number of teenage pregnancies, as resources have been shifted from routine reproductive health services to respond to COVID-19.

Additionally, women may be more at risk due to occupational gender-segregation. Women are 70 per cent of the world's health workforce and are more likely to be on the front lines, especially as nurses, midwives and community health workers. They are also a majority of health facility service staff, including cleaners, laundry and catering.

Violence against women and girls has also increased exponentially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally, 243 million women and girls aged 15–49 have been subjected to sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner in the last 12 months. That number surged as social and economic stresses combined with measures to restrict movement and outside contact. In countries with reporting systems in place, increases of more than 25 per cent in cases of domestic violence were reported.

Widespread income loss and economic insecurity among families are also likely to increase rates of child marriage. As schools closed, girls not in school became at greater risk of child marriage. If they are away from school too long, they may not return.

The COVID-19 pandemic will have a lasting impact for many years to come, and a sustainable recovery will require changes in laws and policies to ensure an equitable recovery for women and men. Women are heads of state in only 21 countries; yet, despite women's underrepresentation, their leadership and response to the COVID-19 crisis has proven to be more effective and resulted in fewer deaths than their male counterparts. More women need to move into leadership positions where they can influence and change policies and laws to ensure an equitable and sustainable recovery that benefits women and men, girls and boys.

Zonta International calls on Member States and the United Nations to address the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and ensure women and girls' full and equal participation and decision-making in public life by:

Addressing barriers to girls' education, including strong cultural norms that favor boys' education and delegate household obligations to girls, inadequate sanitation facilities in schools, unsafe school environments, gender-based violence and child marriage.

Ensuring girls' access to quality education at all levels, improving retention rates, supporting interventions that encourage girls to enroll in school and make the transition from primary to secondary school, and addressing the unique needs of young married girls to allow them to return to school and complete their education.

Recognizing and elevating the voices of adolescent girls through formal and informal educational opportunities and community initiatives.

Providing educational and leadership opportunities to women and girls to ensure that there is equal access to positions of power and influence.

Ensuring equal representation in decision-making bodies at all levels of government, as well as in the private sector, where decisions about employment, working conditions and advancement to upper management are made.

Creating enabling environments for gender justice activists and women human rights defenders to achieve significant, sustainable change.

Addressing cultural norms so that women, given the opportunity, can engage in paid work, be empowered economically, and contribute to the well-being of their families, communities and society as a whole.

Guaranteeing adequate and equal remuneration for women's work and equal access to social services and protection policies.

Creating working environments that facilitate women's participation in decision-making positions.

Abolishing laws that restrict the types of jobs that women can do or that allow husbands to object to their wives working.

COVID-19, however, is not the only crisis impacting women and girls. Climate change also disproportionately affects women and girls, from natural disasters to food security, access to clean water, health and migration. Like the response to COVID-19, studies have found that greater female representation in national parliaments leads countries to adopt more stringent climate change policies, which are greatly needed if our efforts to curb the effects of climate change are to be successful. Zonta International calls on Member States and the United Nations to address the immediate and long-term effects of climate change on women and girls by:

Including women and prioritizing women's health and responses to gender-based violence in disaster preparedness and response plans.

Acknowledging and including women's voices about the harmful impacts of climate change, as well as listening to and learning from their attempts to mitigate and adapt to those impacts.

Developing policies and frameworks to address climate change that recognize its gendered impacts and integrating gender equality into all approaches to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Recognizing the importance of women as decision-makers, educators, caregivers, community leaders and experts across sectors and utilizing their unique perspectives and expertise to develop successful, long-term strategies to address climate change.

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls will not be realized without the elimination of violence against women and girls. Zonta International calls on Member States and the United Nations to address gender-based violence by:

Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child so that women and girls are protected from discrimination and violence.

Ensuring that violence against women and girls is criminalized and appropriately punished and that excuses on the grounds of culture, tradition, religion or so-called "honor" are not regarded as a justification for any form of violence against women.

Developing, adequately funding and implementing national-level plans to end child marriage.

Providing training and support to all those who interact with and assist victims of violence, including police officers, medical personnel and judges, so they can better recognize, understand and respond to all forms of violence against women.

Dedicating specific resources to essential services for women and their families escaping violent situations.

Including community leaders, and men and boys, in efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls.

Supporting the African Union's call for a treaty to end violence against women and girls.

We can see the potential to lose ground in our efforts to achieve gender equality reflected in the lack of female faces amongst politicians, health experts and economists leading the charge against the global crises facing our world, including COVID-19. The need to ensure women's full and effective participation in decision-making and to eliminate violence against women and girls has never been more urgent. It is vital that women have a seat at the table and that their efforts are included in recovery initiatives and long-term solutions across all sectors of society.

This statement is endorsed by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC:

Associated Country Women of the World

CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage

Graduate Women International

International Federation of Business and Professional Women
Soroptimist International
Women for Water Partnership.



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Statement submitted by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact and Forest Peoples Programme, 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.



Statement

Introduction

We welcome the attention being given to the theme “Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls” chosen for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women. In this submission we focus on violence against indigenous women and girls, drawing on the experiences of indigenous women in Asia. Indigenous peoples in Asia are gaining increasing recognition of their status as indigenous peoples, but many continue to face a lack of recognition by their own Governments and others. In this statement we refer to peoples who may be known by other terms in their own countries, such as “ethnic minorities”, or “hill tribes”, or “adivasi”; we include all peoples who choose to be considered “indigenous”, regardless of national Government terminology.

Violence against indigenous women

Violence against indigenous women (as distinct from violence against women more generally) is used here to mean violence which is enacted against the collective rights of indigenous women, or violence which disproportionately affects indigenous women due to their status as indigenous persons. As noted by the International Indigenous Women’s Federation (known by its Spanish acronym, FIMI), among others, gender-based violence against indigenous persons is “shaped not only by gender discrimination within indigenous and non-indigenous arenas, but by a context of ongoing colonization and militarism; racism and social exclusion; and poverty-inducing economic and ‘development’ policies”.

The multiple human rights frameworks and challenges involved must be met in a comprehensive and holistic fashion. In the context of indigenous women, this means that investigation of human rights violations must take into consideration the basic human rights of women and also the collective rights of indigenous peoples. A key document is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which provides the international legal context for such a multidimensional approach.

Land acquisition and alienation

Forced removal of indigenous peoples from their lands and resources triggers the “urgent action/early warning” procedure under the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a procedure designed to be used to avert the most egregious forms of racial discrimination. It is accepted that the loss of lands and resources threatens the very survival of the affected people as a people, i.e., as a collective, culturally cohesive group. Such displacement entails not only physical but economic and social dislocation. Loss of general collective rights can result in specific loss for women, as highlighted by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: “the introduction by dominant outsiders of institutions of private property [led to] indigenous women progressively [losing] their traditional rights to lands and natural resources”.¹

¹ United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, “Gender and indigenous peoples”, Briefing Note No. 1, p. 2, available from social.un.org.

For indigenous peoples, land is the material and spiritual basis that provides food and health, security and cultural survival. In many indigenous communities women are the main food producers, knowledge holders, healers, and keepers and transmitters of culture. When lands and access to traditionally used resources are lost, indigenous women can lose their traditional teaching roles and their abilities to use and maintain traditional knowledge. As traditional knowledge about the use of local resources is weakened, so is the ability of a community to respond to climate-driven changes in their environment. In Mindanao, the Philippines, serious droughts have resulted in deaths as communities resort to eating wild foods, which they have lost the knowledge to effectively process, thereby poisoning themselves.

As societies increasingly engage in low-wage labour, women can become economically more dependent on men, and vulnerable in the forms of labour available to them. In Kalimantan and Sulawesi, Indonesia, replacement of forests and agricultural land by oil palm plantations has had adverse impacts on the indigenous communities, some of them felt disproportionately by women. The expertise of women in managing natural resources and supporting their families has been jeopardized by loss of access to traditional crops, and they become poorer as their families become poorer. In the plantations they are paid lower wages than men. Women who travel for migrant labour are particularly vulnerable.

Exclusion from social services

Denial of permanent ownership over lands and resources, in some places combined with a lack of recognition of basic political rights, results in denial of basic services in a manner that disproportionately impacts indigenous women and children. In countries where indigenous peoples are denied even citizenship, access to social services is constrained.

Exclusion from social services is a form of what can be termed “structural violence”, where the structures of society have resulted in wide disparities of wealth and power, causing generational poverty, forced labour migration, bonded labour, human trafficking and other serious rights violations. Examples of structural violence against indigenous persons include the *Kamaiya* (agricultural workers) and *Kamlari* (female domestic servants), both forms of enslavement, in which servants are bound to specific individuals or families to pay off debts incurred by them or by previous generations. In Nepal this form of bonded labour is specifically tied to ethnic and cultural backgrounds — violence tied to indigenous status.

Lack of social services is exacerbated by other factors: the remote locations of indigenous communities and lack of Government access, security problems in these areas and social discrimination. Social discrimination can include rejection by the hospitals and inadequate treatment by the health professions. Loss of traditional healing systems due to loss of land and resources, limited national health budgets in many Asian countries and emerging social, economic and political changes in indigenous communities can adversely affect the health conditions of indigenous women.

Violence in the name of tradition

Indigenous women recognize and are responding to the existence of discrimination and violence within their own societies. Violence exists within indigenous communities, as it does elsewhere, and some forms of violence against

women and girls are defended with reference to tradition. These forms of violence may include bride price, dowry and child marriage. Rather than being inherent to the cultures concerned, however, these result from the interpretation and reinterpretation of culture through traditions and/or practices of gender discrimination, and such violence can only be effectively fought from within the cultural framework.

In Asia some of the causes of the discrimination and violence that indigenous women face within their societies stem from patriarchal attitudes. In many indigenous societies, politics and public affairs are dominated by men and women are only marginally involved in the customary decision-making institutions such as village or tribal councils, although they may play complementary roles in a traditional setting. Where these institutions have been replaced by State administrative systems, differential power relationships can develop or be exacerbated.

Physical and psychological domestic violence are increasing in some indigenous societies partly as a result of loss of land and resources and increasing poverty, and the adoption of external values that are more discriminatory to women. In Jharkhand, India, the dowry system practised by the wider Indian society has also become part of the customary practices of some of the indigenous communities. This often results in heavy debts for the bride's family, the harassment of women and other violations.

Recommendations

To address violence against indigenous women effectively, both sets of rights must be respected: the collective rights of indigenous peoples are part of protecting the individual rights of indigenous persons. Human rights treaties concerned with individual rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, should be interpreted and applied with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Responses to violence against indigenous women that undermine the self-governance of indigenous peoples are not sustainable, nor are they long-term.

Responses to violence against indigenous women need to seek proactively to strengthen the other rights of indigenous peoples as a means to support and empower women as members of indigenous peoples. States must take measures to address the systematic discrimination and widespread violation of the rights of indigenous peoples by recognizing their status as indigenous and their collective rights to lands and resources.

States must work to strengthen the legal framework for recognition of the rights of women under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and develop appropriate systems to address violence against the individual rights of women through information and education campaigns and capacity-building of relevant Government agencies. Specialized bodies at the national or subnational level may be needed to specifically address the situations of indigenous women, and should be designed with the full and effective participation of indigenous women.

National censuses and data collection for socioeconomic indicators should include disaggregated data on the situation of indigenous peoples and indigenous women.

The role of indigenous women in the transmission and maintenance of traditional knowledge and their roles in sustainable resource management should be recognized and respected along with recognition and respect for their rights to their lands, environment, livelihoods and resources. The full, informed and effective participation of indigenous women in consultation and decision-making processes that impact on their lands and resources should be assured.



Economic and Social Council

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Substantive session of 2008

New York, 30 June-25 July 2008

Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Annual ministerial review: implementing the
internationally agreed goals and commitments
in regard to sustainable development**

Statement submitted by Legião da Boa Vontade, 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 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2008/100.



Statement

INTRODUCTION

In contribution to 0074he Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and to the Forum for Cooperation and Development, the Legion of Good Will (LGW), a Brazilian Organization in general consultative status since 1999 with ECOSOC, presents its innovative practices to all the participants of the Substantive Session 2008 in the High Level Segment Meeting in New York City.

Since the Rio Earth Summit — the most important international conference on environment and development, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil — world leaders and civil society have met to discuss the promotion of sustainable development. In addition to this historical aspect, Latin America holds a strategic position in this crucial topic, particularly in regard to the territory occupied by the Amazon rainforest. Brazil has progressed as a world reference in the production of renewable energies while also promoting national economic growth policies both in social and infrastructure areas. Nevertheless, to reach the balance between progress, protection of natural resources and human security much more is yet to be done in the educational area — in all levels of society. As the LGW's President, José de Paiva Netto has said: "The urgent need to widely expand the ecological consciousness of the people before the decrease in quality of life becomes irreversible is justified. This has been the challenge faced by many pragmatic idealists. However, greed is at times stronger than reason. Carelessness in the preparation of certain communities in order to prevent that the soil does not turn sterile appears to be superior to the survival instinct".

While pursuing its mission to "Promote Education and Culture with Spirituality, so there may be Food, Health and Work for everyone, to form the Ecumenical Citizen", the Legion of Good Will works hard to reach all the Millennium Development Goals. It assists over 6 million children, teenagers, adults and elderly people under social vulnerability every year — an expressive target that has been exceeded year after year. With independent offices in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Portugal and the United States of America, the LGW is very active in the 7th MDG: "To Ensure Environmental Sustainability" while transversally working on ecological awareness in its network of community centers, schools, and in all its social and educational programs. The immediate results observed in families' attitudes are potentialized as years go by. A good illustration of this are the income generating activities, starting from the use of new techniques that allow the utilization of products that would be discarded and the reutilization of materials, showing that by protecting our environment we can also promote development and poverty eradication.

In Social Communication, the LGW organizes public awareness campaigns that reach millions of people through television, radio, internet, magazines, flyers, etc. Under the motto "The destruction of nature means the extinction of the human race" this special

campaign created by Paiva Netto at the LGW propagates by various means, among them thematic forums, musical clips, parades, educational and cultural programs, debates, besides documentaries put together in partnership with experts on the issue.

Another impacting strategy is the Solidary Society Network that mobilizes hundreds of civil society organizations, the academia, private sector, the media and government to share information and take joint action in the promotion of Human Rights and sustainability. In March 2008, under the guidance of the NGO Section of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Legion of Good Will organized for the 5th consecutive year the Latin American Civil Society Forum. The conferences took place in the cities of Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Brasília, São Paulo, Salvador, Porto Alegre and Manaus, in addition to Buenos Aires, Argentina. The event was widely covered by the Brazilian and Hispanic press.

Conservation of energy and water resources, climate change, environmental education, management of solid waste and health were topics discussed according to local peculiarities. Considering the wealth resources of the Amazon rainforest and the role it plays for the sustainable development of the Planet, the present report will emphasize innovative practices presented at the Manaus conference on forest protection and management.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FOREST

The Amazon Region holds in its territory approximately 33% of the rainforests still existing in the world, and 12% of all superficial fresh water on the Planet — natural resources that determine the strategic position of this region in the 21st century.

Covering over 5.2 million square kilometers, the Brazilian portion of the Amazon Region also stands out for its under soil mineral wealth — its geodiversity — as well as for its history built and kept by the populations of the forest and of the waters. Brazilian Amazon population exceeds 23 million people and is scattered along river banks or consolidated at urban centers, such as Manaus, Amazonas State; Belém, Pará State; and Porto Velho, Rondônia State.

The rainforest, in terms of Amazonian diversity, is the provider for major environmental services. These services include not only the use of wood and non-wood resources, such as rubber, nuts, oils and essences, medicinal herbs, but also the conservation of such biodiversity through carbon storage in trees and by the balance of weather conditions and water cycles locally, regionally, and globally.

It is crucial that public policies are promoted to value the standing rainforest rather than the logged one. For that purpose, a number of laws have been enacted in Brazil in recent years both at federal and state levels aiming at reducing logging activities.

An additional major result from the combination of regional development and environmental preservation is the Manaus Free Trade Zone¹, a model for economic development implemented by the Brazilian Government on Western Amazon (Acre, Amazonas, Rondônia and Roraima States, as well as urban centers Macapá and Santana, in Amapá State). Such model, based on fiscal and technological incentives, has the Manaus Industrial Center (PIM) as its mainstay, with its 450 high-tech companies, over half a million jobs — direct or indirect — and over 25 billion dollars billing in 2007.

Scenarios of PIM sustainable development programs are demonstrated by changes in energy matrix (by the use of natural gas) and results from ongoing projects at Amazon Biotechnology Center as of 2006 as part of the Molecular Ecology Brazilian Program for the Sustainable Use of Amazon Biodiversity to qualify our biodiversity-based production processes — the bioindustry (cosmetics, drugs, and food products, among others). To offer local populations the opportunity to work and to live on industrial projects, with special focus on those associated to the sustainable use of natural resources has been a relevant tool to preserve the rainforest.

However, data from the United Nations Development Program portray the Amazon contrast: natural wealth and one of the lowest levels in the human development index. Naturally, one of the drivers to logging is poverty. The National Institute for Space Research shows a 16% loss of forest coverage in Legal Amazon.

The lack of economic opportunities in Amazonian rural areas also drives migration flows to major urban centers (rural exodus), thus leading to crowded towns and cities, inadequate space use, and loss in environmental quality standard. The result is the occupation of banks and beds of *igarapés* (waterways); *igarapés* that are polluted and obstructed; the destruction of ciliary vegetation; and the absence of basic infrastructure for sanitation.

Some actions are illustrative of the challenge faced by Amazon towns and villages in their search for sustainable urban development. The Social and Environmental Program for the Manaus' *Igarapés*² consists of urbanization proposals through the revitalization of urban river basins, integrating sanitation, dredging, and the rational use of soil on the banks of the *igarapés* with the construction of popular housing projects and leisure areas. The project integrates a partnership between Amazon State Government and the Inter-American Development Bank.

The Urban Ecological Corridors Project³ developed by Manaus Municipality aims at protecting the remaining ciliary vegetation along the *igarapés* that flow through the city. The Mindu Ecological Corridor Project integrates two Conservation Units: the Mindu

¹ Sources: www.suframa.gov.br and www.fieam.org.br

² Information at: www.seinf.am.gov.br

³ Additional information at: www.manaus.am.gov.br

Municipal Park and the Honda Private Reserve of Natural Patrimony, on the Eastern, Northern and Central-Southern zones. Its implementation aims at: regulating soil use and occupation along the Corridor protection zones; safeguard existing vegetation coverage and the recovery and maintenance of fauna and flora; contribute for the improvement of surrounding microclimate; stimulate ecotourism in Manaus; and raise local population's awareness for ecology and conservation.

In the Brazilian Amazon Forest the actions carried out by research institutes as well as research financing agencies and educational institutions have yielded major results to human resources qualification, to the feasibility of scientific research, as well as the production of knowledge and technology for the region. A wide number of products and processes developed by researchers of the National Institute for Research in the Amazon⁴ now have a patent and are being used in Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, in some African countries and China. Among them, some should be pointed out: the technology for fish production in small water channels; *piranha* dehydrated soup; fish flour; *pupunha* palm flour; granola; furniture built with *pupunha* wood; solar drier for wood and natural products; oils and essences used to treat cancer, HIV and for the diagnosis of Leishmaniasis; besides shoes, purses and clothing made of fish and reptile skin.

The legacy of forest and water populations is a heritage to be identified through a number of actions and participating institutions, as occurred at the LGW's 2nd Forum — Solidary Society Network Innovation Fair.

The booths and the decoration of the fair were made out of recycled materials by the Project "Recycling to prevent polluting"⁵, developed by a group of educators and artisans that live in needy communities in the Eastern region of Manaus.

Activities carried out by the Amazonian Studies Center and the Water and Environment Committee⁶ that are part of a network of organizations involved in developing educational and cultural projects to stimulate environmental and social responsibility, as well as the work developed by the Brazilian Court specialized on Environment, the Civil Court for Environment and Agrarian Issues⁷, linked to the Amazonas Judiciary Power, are major sites of participation for an integrated analysis of environmental issues.

The challenge of sustainable development in the Amazon lies on the construction of a broad participation of the Amazon natives, sharing their valuable stories in the chapters that we want to write for the future of humanity.

⁴ Additional information at: www.inpa.gov.br

⁵ E-mail for contact: projeto.reciclar@gmail.com

⁶ Additional information : <http://portalamazonia.com.br>

⁷ E-mail for contact: vemaqa@tj.am.gov.br

CONCLUSION

Therefore, to protect the Amazon demands investment in education, science and technology. The results of these investments in producing Amazon knowledge will guarantee its territorial sovereignty by an ecological consciousness revealed in actions in all sectors of society. In this process, not only the role of the Government of Brazil but also of the civil society and particularly the NGOs, are of extreme importance. In this context, the work of the Legion of Good Will consists mainly in the field of education and reeducation with ecumenical spirituality, strengthening the foundation of a new collective consciousness that begins in the transformation of the individual.

In his article “Eight Millennium Goals”, published in the magazine *Globalization of Fraternal Love*, the President of the LGW highlighted a remarkable extract from the Preamble of the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defenses of Peace must be constructed”. And Paiva Netto still adds: “It is necessary to point out the proposals of real understanding; another path for the peoples will be that of bitter remedy (...) There are multiple issues, but this one is extremely serious: we are breathing death. We are facing a type of progress that at the same time spreads ruin — Our own ruin. To clean up any urban or rural area should be part of a courageous platform of actions of politicians who really love that area. One cannot expect that to happen only when it becomes a profitable subject. Nothing can be more rewarding than to take care of the citizen, the Capital of God”.



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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 *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir*, 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

Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir [“Catholic Women for the Right to Decide”] is a non-profit civil association in consultative status with the United Nations, dedicated to promoting and defending the human rights of women in Argentina. We are part of the Latin American Network of Catholic Women for the Right to Decide. As such, we hail the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

In this context we hope that at the 58th session of the Commission, in addressing the issue of “challenges and achievements in implementing the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls”, the member country delegations represented will consider the various realities and contexts of women, young people and girls, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, where there are the widest gaps in terms of access and equity with respect to sexual and reproductive health, resulting in very high rates of adolescent pregnancies, unwanted pregnancies, and maternal morbidity and mortality associated with unsafe abortion. In the particular case of Argentina, this reality means that our country is not going to meet the MDG 5, which is to reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio by the year 2015.

In this respect, we deem it important during this session that the Commission should consider the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, dealing with the issue of abortion, in which he specifies: “Criminal laws penalizing and restricting induced abortion are the paradigmatic examples of impermissible barriers to the realization of women’s right to health and must be eliminated. These laws infringe women’s dignity and autonomy by severely restricting decision-making by women in respect of their sexual and reproductive health. Moreover, such laws consistently generate poor physical health outcomes, resulting in deaths that could have been prevented, morbidity and ill-health, as well as negative mental health outcomes, not least because affected women risk being thrust into the criminal justice system. Creation or maintenance of criminal laws with respect to abortion may amount to violations of the obligations of States to respect, protect and fulfil the right to health” (see [A/66/254](#)).

Consequently, we ask that during this session the Commission should also consider the latest steps agreed by the States of Latin America and the Caribbean in the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development adopted at the first session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Montevideo, 2013), which promoted in our region the full recognition and advancement of sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality as human rights essential to the international development agenda.

The Consensus expressed concern “at the high rates of maternal mortality, due largely to difficulties in obtaining access to proper sexual health and reproductive health services or to unsafe abortions, and aware that some experiences in the region have demonstrated that the penalization of abortion leads to higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity and does not reduce the number of abortions, and that this holds the region back in its efforts to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals.”

In particular, we wish to stress that States agreed, in paragraph 40, “to eliminate preventable cases of maternal morbidity and mortality, including, within

the set of integrated benefits of sexual health and reproductive health services, measures for preventing and avoiding unsafe abortion, including sexual health and reproductive health education, access to modern and effective contraceptive methods, counselling and comprehensive care in cases of unwanted and unaccepted pregnancy, as well as comprehensive post-abortion care, where necessary, on the basis of a risk- and harm-reduction strategy.”

We reaffirm the importance of considering the document agreed by States at the 12th Regional Conference on Women of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the 2013 “ Santo Domingo Consensus”, which specifically calls upon states (in paragraph 78) to “ensure, in cases where abortion is legal or decriminalized in national legislation, the existence of safe, good-quality abortion services for women with unwanted and unaccepted pregnancies” and (in paragraph 95) to “guarantee that all victims and survivors of violence against women (including the victims’ children and dependents, if any) have immediate access to comprehensive care services, psychosocial and mental health support, treatment of injuries, shelter, and care following instances of rape or sexual assault, and access to emergency contraception, prophylaxis for sexually transmitted infections and safe abortion services in cases of rape.”

We are also asking for progress on the agreements adopted in this area during the 57th session of the Commission, in which explicit reference was made to access to abortion services as a means of eradicating violence against women, in the following terms: “Address all health consequences, including the physical, mental and sexual and reproductive health consequences, of violence against women and girls by providing accessible healthcare services that are responsive to trauma and include affordable, safe, effective and good-quality medicines, first line support, treatment of injuries and psychosocial and mental health support, emergency contraception, safe abortion where such services are permitted by national law, post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection, diagnosis and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, training for medical professionals to effectively identify and treat women subjected to violence, as well as forensic examinations by appropriately trained professionals” (see [E/2013/27](#)).

Lastly, we want to stress the importance of the secular State for achieving greater gender equality and recognition of human rights, in particular sexual and reproductive rights, as was made explicit in the two regional consensus documents: “A secular state is one of the elements fundamental to the full exercise of human rights, the deepening of democracy and the elimination of all forms of discrimination” (see the Montevideo Consensus), and “a secular state and the implementation of participatory forms of government are guarantees for the effective exercise of human rights and the consolidation of democracy, transparency and governance” (see the Santo Domingo Consensus).

We recognize the ongoing support of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in opening debate and moving forward toward greater gender equality in the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights among all players involved in this process.

We highlight the distinguished role of the Argentine delegation in the negotiations for moving forward with the regional documents from Montevideo and

Santo Domingo, which demonstrate the commitment, the achievements and the remaining challenges facing our country in the area of sexual and reproductive rights, especially with respect to unsafe abortion.

We hope that this process will have a global impact for further progress in the recognition of women's human rights. Moreover, in pursuit of the post-2015 agenda, we want to guarantee mechanisms for monitoring, which will include objectives, targets and indicators for evaluating impact, applicable to all players involved, disaggregated, sufficient, pertinent and timely, in which sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality will be considered as a primordial theme and as a fundamental part of human rights and development of the individual.



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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-seventh session
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND ALL FORMS OF
DISCRIMINATION**

Written statement*/ submitted by the Asian Legal Resource Centre,
a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 December 2000]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Caste-based Discrimination in South Asia

1. Caste is an entrenched form of discrimination still practiced widely throughout South Asia. From an Indian progenitor, caste systems spread and perpetuated a form of human degradation with few parallels. In essence, caste discrimination limits one's employment to ancestral calling and prohibits inter-marriage, permanently and absolutely dividing social strata. In practice, discrimination is extended to all aspects of life; its physical and psychological effects on "untouchables" and "lower" castes constitute gross human rights abuse. Caste discrimination is absolute, as it nullifies social mobility. It is also a political ideology; a means of violently oppressive social control by which the largest sections of society are denied their basic rights to free speech, assembly and participation. It not merely denies equality but considers inequality ideal. Caste discrimination violates all human rights norms on which United Nations instruments are founded, as enshrined in the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world". Under the influence of caste, humane treatment of all people is impossible.
2. Though in many respects caste discrimination is worse than slavery and apartheid, the international community has not taken any significant position against it. The Commission is obliged to address caste via the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, just as previous international fora have addressed apartheid and slavery. For many millions suffering in South Asia, the Conference will be a failure if the caste system is not adequately held to account.
3. The Asian Legal Resource Centre appreciates the comments on caste made by the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism in his January 1999 report (E/CN.4/1999/15); the recommendations on themes of the World Conference outlined in the Bellagio Consultation document (A/CONF.189/PC.1/10); and the recent written statement submitted by the World Council of Churches (E/CN.4/2000/NGO/102) on the current situation of Indian Dalits. The Asian Legal Resource Centre also welcomes the resolution on "Elimination of Racial Discrimination" at the 52nd session of the Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, held from 31 July to 18 August 2000, which declared that discrimination based on work and descent is prohibited by international human rights law. As caste discrimination is based on work and descent it is therefore prohibited by international human rights law.
4. Inhuman treatment of a vast South Asian population, including people in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh, has been justified on the basis of caste. But by far the largest number of people suffering its extremes are in India. Presently, India's Dalits and other so-called "untouchables" constitute around 17% of the population. Along with other "minority" groups, including tribal peoples, Sikhs and Muslims, they constitute roughly 85% of Indians. To this day, the level of violence against Dalits and other lower castes is atrocious.
5. In 1936 the foremost Dalit leader, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said, "My quarrel with Hindus and Hinduism is not over the imperfections of their social conduct. It is much more fundamental. It is over their ideals." Under the caste system, an ideal society is unequal. In every respect, caste rejects the notion of human equality and justifies discrimination on the basis of graded inequality. Principles of common good exist only within each caste group. The question of balancing interests between groups does not exist, for the simple reason that each caste is a world unto itself. Caste

prevents the possibility of associated living among people; it is the most extreme division of social and political power. Its enclosure is complete, to the extent that direct contact between castes is prohibited, in order to avoid “pollution”. It means total segregation, whether in temples, at wells, on roads, in schools and in marriage. Thus, while caste discrimination bears some similarity to that of slavery, it is in many respects more dehumanizing. The very term “untouchable” means one with whom no social contact of any sort should be held, under threat of punishment. It degrades beyond all comparison.

6. In this century, some constitutional and legal provisions have been enacted in several countries to negate the influence of caste, however these legal measures have failed to significantly impact the caste structure and influence social dynamics. Some laws, such as those prohibiting atrocities against Dalits, have not been implemented. Claims that these legal provisions are evidence of the eradication of caste are untrue, as extreme forms of discrimination are perpetrated on hundreds of millions of people every day. The Constitution of India, for example, accepts the principles of equality, fraternity and liberty; it outlawed all enclosed units by implication. However between this legal position and reality lies a vast gap. Despite legal safe guards, official Indian figures show that caste crimes against ‘untouchables’ average over 10,000 a year; the world’s largest democracy has failed to develop beyond a mere formal democracy. No amount of criticism about the conflict between constitutional principles and practice can be of any impact on ethical principles and practices based on the opposite ideal. Ethically, there is unity of theory and practice, as inequality is accepted both as ideal and is practiced. Legal confusions have no bearing on the ethical foundation of caste-based societies. Constitutional declarations of equality or acceptance of international covenants founded on the principle of equality may create legal obligations, nonetheless they do not change the ethical foundations of a given society.
7. Caste lies behind many social crises in South Asia. Caste society does not recognize the right to dissent as a valid ethical principle. The right to expression is based on recognition of human equality. To deny the right to dissent is to deny the right to freedom of expression, and further, to regard expression of opinion as futile activity. Caste boundaries are fixed; no change can be brought about by any expression of opinion.
8. Caste society has no absolute prohibition of torture. The caste system can be maintained only through indifference to cruelty. Cruel treatment of lower castes, such as in preventing them from drinking water out of the same wells as upper castes, is normalized. Under the rules of pollution and purification, those breaking with such unjust practices commit a wrong.
9. The lack of agreement on ethical principles against cruelty has a direct bearing on such practices as extra-judicial killings, disappearances, forced confessions and other human rights abuses. In South Asia these are now regarded as legally wrong, however morally they are not widely condemned. An underlying culture of impunity remains fundamentally unchallenged; there is little outrage.
10. The number of persons who to some degree have broken intellectually from the grip of caste has increased to millions. The consciousness of vast masses has begun to change. Modern pressures, such as increased interaction through travel and communications, make many practices of pollution and purification hard to maintain; open and conscious defiance more difficult to prevent. The conflict of inner rejection and outer compliance gives rise to many forms of hypocrisy and cynicism. Thus, willingness to accept equality as the ethical foundation of society has grown among many. In response, upper castes try to re-invent themselves in new forms, and develop

many more subtle ways to keep their system alive. Repression of those who reject caste is much more intense and violent. There are even movements working towards withdrawal of constitutional guarantees of equality and the various kinds of affirmative action provided to improve conditions for Dalits and lower castes.

11. However these days, when democratic jargon is widely used, sometimes there is no way that discrimination can be openly justified. That caste hierarchy is no longer easily legitimised has in itself contributed to the emergence of a broadly acceptable public discourse about caste status coded as cultural difference. Because people cannot readily speak of castes as unequal, they describe them as “different”. In this case, difference is another name for inequality. Thus, when for the sake of international relations the proponents of caste enter into dialogue accepting equality as the basis of discussion, they engage in such discourse only artificially. Their real position remains outside the discourse.
12. Claims to a “special religiosity” are also often made internationally by the South Asian caste elite in defence of their system. Yet what have passed as religious views in India are often mundane theories and rules of social control that have been deemed sacred by controlling agents. When caste discrimination was developed, religious and judicial notions followed to justify it. To make this purported special religiosity “Indian”, the views of Dalits and lower caste Indians were excluded, and have been since.
13. Elitist claims that Dalit concerns are merely historical matters of backwardness and society’s functional bases are equally fabrications that aim to perpetuate their subjugation of lower castes. The Special Rapporteur recognised caste as falling within the scope of Racial Discrimination and Related Intolerance in his January 1999 report (para. 100) and cited articles from the Indian Constitution and views of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in reaching this conclusion. The Bellagio Consultation likewise recognised caste as a form of racial discrimination and intolerance. Thus caste is categorically a concern for the World Conference.
14. Yet in terms of what the international community must do to eradicate discrimination, caste presents a difficult problem. The caste system is one in which doors to other castes are closed. To open the doors cannot be a decision of just one caste. It has to be a decision by consensus, because the breaking of caste boundaries involves an exit as well an entrance. While one caste may make a decision to exit from its boundaries, entering into boundaries held by others requires their consent. When the most socially and politically powerful castes want to remain enclosed, lower castes’ decisions to break open can have little effect. Emancipation lies in destroying caste enclosure from all sides. The international community must help to achieve this by examination and exposure of the ethical foundations underpinning caste-based societies.
15. The Asian Legal Resource Centre therefore urges the Commission to:
 - a. Reaffirm Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that all persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and deplore all principles and practices rejecting the basic notion of universal human equality;
 - b. Recognise all forms of caste discrimination as falling within the scope of the Conference, and explicitly equate caste with slavery and apartheid;

- c. Pursue the recommendations of the Bellagio Consultation, particularly for the formulation of national plans of action against racism, which in the South Asian context must include elimination of caste; establishment of a United Nations inter-agency task force on racism and a semi-autonomous body to promote research and training on related issues; with assistance from the High Commissioner for Human Rights, creation of operational units within regional bodies to focus on combatting racism, which pertains specifically to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC); and the establishment of a United Nations voluntary trust fund to give a platform to Dalits and lower castes;
 - d. Examine in particular the issue of Dalit women and children, who suffer the most extreme forms of caste discrimination and have the fewest avenues available for social advancement; and,
 - e. Establish specific indicators to monitor measures for the advancement of not only civil and political rights but also social, economic and cultural rights, targeting the elimination of caste-based discrimination. The existence of mere legal provisions should not be taken as a guarantee of protection for victims of caste systems. All areas of administrative practice and implementation need to be regularly reviewed.
 - f. Implement a set of standards, norms and guidelines must be developed to abolish existing discriminatory practices based on work and descent under international human rights law. The states concerned must be held responsible under international law for these violations in these countries.
16. The elimination of caste is a much-belated human rights concern. After a few thousand years of practice, gigantic efforts to break the system open have as yet failed. That discrimination so gross as caste has survived to this day is not only an indictment against the countries where the practice exists but also against the international community itself. Fifty years of United Nations' instruments are of no significance to the millions continuing to suffer this most perverse form of intolerance. In South Asia, little regard will be paid to the outcome of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance if it does not effectively address caste. The solution to caste discrimination does not lie in tolerance among castes; it demands nothing less than the elimination of caste itself. The Commission must facilitate effective international action towards that end.



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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

**Joint written statement* submitted by Europe – Third World Centre,
a non-governmental organization in general consultative status, and the American
Association of Jurists (AAJ), a non-governmental organization in special consultative
status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 February 2005]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

"FIGHTING POVERTY" : ALIBI OF THE GLOBALIZERS¹

1. In 1980, the World Bank estimated that there were 800 million people living in absolute poverty in the developing world. In its first big report on poverty in 1990, its estimate of the number of people in absolute poverty was 633 million (1985 figures). Its most recent statistics, published in Spring 2004, show 1482 million people living in absolute poverty in 1980. These figures, and above this kind of reasoning, says a lot about the ambiguity in the discourse on poverty.

2. With its multiple definitions and countless methodologies for measurement and study, the concept of poverty is open to all kinds of abuse. World Bank statistics are certainly no more incorrect than those of other institutions. It is clear however, that the World Bank did not have solid empirical data when it launched its "Fight against Poverty" in 1990. Later, keeping in mind the Millennium Development Goals to reduce extreme poverty by one half by 2015, it prefers to "correct" its old figures in order to be able to present a slightly positive picture.

3. According to the Bank, poverty has decreased by half since 1981 (from 41% to 21% of the population in developing countries). This is highly improbable, but what needs to be understood, is that poverty is a double reality. First, it is a painful reality for hundreds of millions of human beings in the world who lack the means to live decently. Second, it is a social construction, a discourse which is always subjective on what poverty is and who the poor are. There can be no 'correct' figures on poverty because each definition and each measure reflects the values of its authors.²

Economic and social development: still a priority?

4. Today, "the fight against poverty" has become the major priority of all international, multilateral development organizations. The fight against poverty has some very particular characteristics confirming it as a historical constant. Today, like yesterday, the discourse on poverty has a political function and is completely dissociated from the reality that is lived by the poor. By way of proof, we take the 1990 World Bank proposal for a strategy to fight poverty without empirical foundation and introducing a discourse on globalization which reinforces and extends the "Washington Consensus". Poverty has never been absent from the discourse of international organizations in the past: the solution that was offered was development. Today, the solution that is offered is the 'Fight against poverty' and development has disappeared.

5. Analysis of World Bank and UNDP discourse reveals that economic and social development no longer has a *raison d'être*. For these organizations, the economy has become part of nature, an external reality outside the realm of state intervention. Like nature, it is essential to our survival, but we cannot change its laws. All we can do is observe it in order to better

¹ This declaration has been written in collaboration with Mrs Francine Mestrum, PhD, Social Science, specialist in research on development in the Third World at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium).

² To appreciate the difficulties involved in addressing poverty, see Simmel, G. *Les Pauvres*, Paris, PUF (1908) 1998. Simmel is considered the 'father' of the sociology of poverty. For current research, see Oyen, E. et al. (Eds), *Poverty: A global Review: Handbook on International Poverty Research*, Oslo Scandinavia University Press, 1996.

understand and respect it and create the conditions which allow optimal functioning of markets. Today we need strong states with effective institutions to attract foreign investment, to protect property rights and to encourage competition. 'Good governance' means that public powers seek a consensus with civil society - including private companies - to achieve this objective. The State has no further need to intervene in economic life, except to fix rules which favour markets, including the labour market .

6. As for social development, it is defined differently now. The fight against poverty is conceptualised in such a way that traditional social protection can be discarded. Social protection only protects privileged workers in modern sectors and penalises the poor by raising barriers to their entry into the labour market. *"Social security may not be a good use of available funds for developing countries. Social security payments tend to go to those in formal sector -not the poorest people"*³. *"Poverty reduction still tends to be identified with social security or social protection ... starting perhaps from good intentions but ineffective."*⁴ Today, minimum wages should be eliminated because they are too high for the poor. Furthermore, social security allows workers to establish themselves and offers no incentives to take risks. If social protection today is located in a context of risk management, this is also a production factor to encourage.

7. As a consequence, the security net must become a trampoline allowing poor people to seize market opportunities and take themselves in hand. Poverty is defined as multidimensional, which allows income to be eliminated as a possible solution. The fight against poverty is presented as something that is in the common interest of the international community in such a way that allows international organizations to deal with and control the internal politics of poor countries, in their entirety. As for social development, for the World Bank, this has become societal development which targets social arrangements - the institutions - which allow people to contribute to and benefit from, growth. Protection mechanisms are not tackled but societal institutions, which support development and growth.

SAPs and PRSPs

8. The practice of PRSPs (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers)⁵ confirms this analysis and illustrates even better than the discourse does, the coherence of the project of the fight against poverty. In fact, PRSPs are above all an extension of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). The policies of the Bretton Woods institutions have not changed. They continue to promote macroeconomic stability, elimination of budget deficits and the fight against inflation, liberalization of exchange rates, privatization, deregulation and free circulation of capital. Today these conditionalities are legitimized because they are imposed in the name of the fight against poverty. The social policies of PRSPs are limited to education and health care, often provided by the private sector, because public powers *"are not in a position to keep their promises"*. What is found rather rarely in PRSPs is any explanation of how the poor might acquire an income. Income, in fact, is no longer the responsibility of public powers. Of course, growth has to be

³ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1991*, Paris, Economica, 1991, p. 50.

⁴ UNDP, *Overcoming Human Poverty*. UNDP Poverty Report 2000, New York, UNDP, 2000, p. 39,42.

⁵ PRSPs are documents which poor countries must submit to the Bretton Woods Institutions - and they must be approved by them - in order to obtain a reduction in debt or a concessionary loan.

better distributed which means that the poor must be able to contribute to it. Redistribution of income is not on today's agenda; nor, by the way, are social rights.

9. As for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) we know that they will not be achieved by 2015. Furthermore, the link between PRSPs and MDGs is almost non-existent. The MDGs are far from ambitious and if they cannot be achieved in the medium term one asks oneself in what time scale might PRSPs be expected to yield a first result. As for the action plan of the Copenhagen social summit (1995) even if it was reaffirmed during the Social Summit + 5 in Geneva (2000), it has been practically forgotten. The references today are Monterrey, Doha and Johannesburg, There will probably be no Copenhagen + 10.

Unchanged dogma at the top of the international financial and commercial institutions

10. Through analysis of the discourse on poverty and the practice of PRSPs, the coherence of the project of the fight against poverty is revealed. It is a neoliberal globalization project, which is as political as it is economic. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) aided as always by the World Trade Organization (WTO), strive to construct and develop a global market where competition is free and where nations can offer the most advantageous conditions to multinational corporations. The fight against poverty replaces social citizenship, the source of collective empowerment, and keeps intact or restores a social order which is deemed natural. Just like structural adjustment, the fight against poverty targets above all the middle classes - the privileged - and makes the poor potential allies of the globalized classes. The fight against poverty, a consensual theme *par excellence* makes development disappear as a national project of modernisation and emancipation and eliminates national elites, unions as well as entrepreneurs. The poor, communitarized, living on their social capital, become actors of change which is limited to consolidating a dual society of rich and poor.

11. The fight against poverty allows development to be presented as integrated at last, as if it brings together economic and social dimensions of development in a balanced way. Development becomes 'holistic' although in reality, it has become a synonym of growth. The fight against poverty, in such a context, is the social alibi, the soul of economic globalization.

12. The World Bank has appropriated for itself all the concepts of progressive movements for the third world. The fight against poverty, empowerment, participation, social development... Today it is starting to look at inequality. Many NGOs are taken in, believing that the meaning of words is immutable. In fact it is through analysis of the dynamics of meaning that policies which promote the triumph of markets, to the detriment of society, can be unmasked and denounced. The fight against poverty and against inequality is necessary, of course, but through economic and social development, through engaging the solidarity of the rich world.

Integrated poverty, total inequality

13. As a result, the fight against poverty is neither development nor a fight against inequality. It is important to make the distinction between these three policies, each of which are as necessary for the North as they are for the South. It is impossible to have similar policies for situations which are completely different. The fight against poverty in a country with a 50% poverty rate is not possible using targeted policies. For these countries, there must be

development; growth which is favourable to the poor, and policies of redistribution at national and global level to limit inequality. Poverty is not just a development deficit, it is also the consequence of the extreme concentration of wealth. This is why growth can never be enough. In the Northern countries, development will have to be, above all, sustainable, that is to say, ecologically responsible. Here it is less a matter of growth than of development of activities which halt the depletion of natural resources. The fight against poverty will be targeted, of course, but without forgetting that prevention remains essential. For example, in Belgium, a substantial proportion of the population would fall under the poverty threshold were there not an efficient and redistributive welfare state. Furthermore, even if the fight against poverty can, and must be, multidimensional, poverty itself, is above all, a question of income deficit. If we forget that, we run the risk of ending up with 'psychologizing' and cultural approaches.

Conclusion

14. Poverty is a reality which is both extremely simple and extremely complex. Simple, because it can be defined as an income deficit which is relatively easy to solve. Complex, because the non-poor - the rich even, - seek to define it in ways which do not threaten their own privileges. In this way, poverty has become a theoretical concept, the scope of which is infinite, and which make the poor unidentifiable. Perceptions of poverty depend on social constructions. The political perspective on poverty depends on the major preoccupations of the epoch, and these are not the preoccupations of those who are most deprived. Poverty is like a mirror, an instrument of political thought to reflect one's ideals. This is why it only appears on the political agenda for very specific reasons.⁶ According to the founder of the sociology of poverty, George Simmel, the fight against poverty always responds to the needs of the non-poor⁷.

15. In this context, making a distinction between 'extreme poverty' and poverty not only solves nothing, but confuses matters, because this kind of reasoning disguises the contradiction which exists between wealth and poverty. It does not allow the root causes of the problem - the imposition of neoliberal policies and unjust and unequal economic and social arrangements, to be addressed. This is why, it is more than urgent - as a priority - to reform the financial and commercial international institutions, notably the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization to review their policies and programmes and to submit them to the recommendations of Copenhagen and the UN Charter.

⁶ Sassier, P., *Du bon usage des pauvres. Histoire d'un thème politique XVI-XX siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1990.

⁷ Simmel, G., *Les pauvres*, Paris, PUF, 1999.



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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, the Women's International Democratic Federation, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Union of Arab Jurists, the Arab Lawyers Union, the General Arab Women Federation, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, North-South XXI, the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation, the Indian Movement “*Tupaj Amaru*”, the Asian Women Human Rights Council, the Organisation pour la Communication en Afrique et de Promotion de la Coopération Economique Internationale - OCAPROCE International, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, the International Educational Development, Inc., a non-governmental organization on the roster

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* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The destruction of Iraq's education system**

** The BRussels Tribunal, Arab Lawyers Association-UK, Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), Association of Humanitarian Lawyers (AHL), The International League of Iraqi Academics (ILIA), The Iraqi Commission on Human Rights (ICHR), Women Will Association (WWA), Organization for Widows and Orphans (OWO), Ikraam Center for Human Rights, Belgian Peace Movement, Ligue camerounaise des droits de l'homme, Monitoring Net of Human Rights in Iraq (MHRI), Women Solidarity for an Independent and Unified Iraq, Geneva Global Media Centre, International Coalition against War Criminals (ICAWC), Medical Aid for the Third World, Association of Iraqi Diplomats (AID), The African Association of Human Rights (AAHR), Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Arab World, Moroccan Association for the Right to a Fair Trial, Americans Against the War (France), General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW), The International Action Center (IAC), American Worker, Association of Iraqi Intellectuals and Academics, The International Network of Arab Human Rights NGOs, America In Solidarity, Federacion De Mujeres Cubanas, Association of Victims of American Occupation Prisons, International Anti-Occupation Network (IAON), International Lawyers.org, International Society of Iraqi Scientists, The Perdana Global Peace Foundation, Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War, Spanish Campaign against the Occupation and for Iraq Sovereignty- CEOSI, Arab Cause Solidarity Committee, Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm, El Taller International, World Courts of Women, Center for Development Studies- India, Wariscrime.org, Action Center for Justice, 1% A Peace Army.org, A Bigger Tent.org, Agir contre la guerre (France), American Voices Abroad (Berlin, Germany), American Voices Abroad Military Project (Europe), Anti War Fair, Arizona Christian Peacemakers, Armbands for Peace, Arms Against War, Artists Against the War, Backbone Campaign, Be the Change, Become Active, Bike for Peace (Germany), Bill of Rights Defense Committee, Bird Dogger Org., Children of Iraq Association (UK),Bloomington Peace Action Coalition (IN), Blue State News Only, Boston Mobilization, Bring Democracy Back, Bring Them Home, Butterfly Gardeners Association, Citizens for Accountability on Iraq, California for Democracy, Camp Casey Blog, Camp U.S. Strike for Peace Campaign, Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran, Canada Watch, Carolina Peace Resource Center (SC), Cartoon Free America, Catalysts of Hope, Central Colorado Coalition on the Iraq War, Chester County Peace Movement (PA), Cindy Sheehan Org., Cities for Peace, Citizens for Legitimate Government, Citizens for Peace & Justice, Human Rights for all-Morocco, Christian Clergy For Impeachment.com, Clothing of the American Mind, Coalition Against Election Fraud, Coalition for Impeachment Now (COIN), Code Pink, the Iraqi Association for Human Rights (IAHR), Al-Basa'er Media Association, Consumers for Peace.org, Dhafir Trial.org, DC Anti-War Network.org, Democracy Action, Democracy for America Meetup (Birmingham, AL), The Democratic Activist, Democracy Rising.org, Democratic Underground, Human Resources (Tbilisi, Georgia), Democratic Renewal, Democrats.com, Earth Day.org, Earth Island Institute, East Cobb Democratic Alliance (Cobb County, GA), Eastern Long Island Democracy for America (NY), ECU Peace and Justice NC, Election Solar Bus, Environmentalists Against War, Envision a New America, Foundation for the Development of Fox Valley Citizens for Peace and Justice (IL), Global Exchange.org, Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, Global Resistance Network, Gold Star Families for Peace, Grandmothers Against the War, Grandmothers for Peace, Grass Roots Impeachment, Grass Roots Impeachment Movement, Grassroots North shoreWI, Green Delaware, Hawaii CD-01 Impeachment Action Coalition, Historians Against the War, Honk to Impeach, Idriss Stelley Foundation, Impeach Bush Cheney, Independent Progressive Politics Network, Impeach Bush Coalition, Impeach Bush TV.org, Impeachbush-cheney.com, Impeach Central, Impeach for Peace - Marshall, TX, Impeachable Treason, Impeach Duh, Impeachment Sunday, Inform Progressive Virginia, International Socialist Organization, Impeach Bush Cheney Net, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Iraq Veterans Against the War - Kansas City, Justice Through Music, Lake Merritt Neighbours Organized for Peace (Oakland, CA), Latinos for America, Leader of the Free Word - a great screen saver, Liberal Democracy Alliance, Liberal Kids, LIBERTY TREE Foundation for the Democratic Revolution, Los Angeles National Impeachment Centre, Louisiana Activist Network, Marijuana Policy Project, Massachusetts Impeachment Coalition, Men's Project for Peace, Michael Moore Online.org, Michigan Peace Works, Military Families Against the War (UK),

"The Education system in Iraq, prior to 1991, was one of the best in the region; with over 100% Gross Enrolment Rate for primary schooling and high levels of literacy, both of men and women. The Higher Education, especially the scientific and technological institutions, were of an international standard, staffed by high quality personnel". (UNESCO Fact Sheet, March 28, 2003)¹

As a result of U.S. Invasion and occupation of Iraq, today Iraq is more illiterate than it was twenty-five years ago, because the occupying power began its occupation by destroying every aspect of Iraq's education.

Military Free Zone, Stop the War Coalition (Bedford, UK), Million Musicians March, Mission Not Accomplished, Montgomery County Progressive Alliance (MD), Musicians and Fine Artists for World Peace, Muslims for Peace (Australia), National Lawyers Guild - Chicago chapter, National Lawyers Guild - Detroit & Michigan chapter, Northeast Impeachment Coalition, North Jersey Impeach Group (NJ), Northeast Georgia Peace Corner Group (Helen, GA), Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition, Northwest Progressive Institute (Pacific Northwest US), Not in Our Name.org, Not in Our Name (Aotearoa, New Zealand), Nyack Impeachment Initiative (NJ), Ohio Progressive Action Coalition, One Global Community, Olympia Citizens' Movement to Impeach Bush/Cheney (WA), One Million Reasons, Operation Cease Fire, Operation Impeachment, Orange County Grassroots (CA), Out of Iraq, Out of Iraq Bloggers Caucus, Patrick Henry Democratic Club, Patriotic Pulse, Patriots for Gore, Peace Action, Peace Action Wisconsin, Peace and Accountability, Peace Drum, Peace Majority, Peace Movement Aotearoa (New Zealand), Peace Reso.org, Peninsula Peace and Justice Center (Palo Alto, CA), People's Campaign for the Constitution, People Powered Impeachment, People's Email Network, People's Glorious Five Year Plan, Picnic to Impeach, Pixel4Peace.org, Playing in Traffic, PledgeToImpeach.org, Political Cooperative, Politics and Art, Progressive Action Alliance, Progressive Action Center, Progressive Avenues, Progressive Democrats of America, Progressive Democrats of Hawaii Project Filibuster, Project for the OLD American Century, Refusing to Kill.org, Rescue Our Democracy, Sacramento for Democracy (CA), St Pete for Peace (FL), Sampsonia Way, San Diego for Democracy, School of the Americas Watch, Sheehan for Congress, South Florida Impeachment Coalition, South Mountain Peace Action (Maplewood & South Orange, NJ), Springs Action Alliance (CO), Stop the War Coalition (UK), Students for Impeachment, Students Towards a New Direction (STAND), Summit County Progressive Democrats (OH), The Known UnKnowns, The Politically Incorrect Cabaret, The Rational Response Squad, Think Blue Dems, Time for Accountability, Plataforma Aturem la Guerra (Stop the War Catalonia), Toronto Coalition to Stop the War (Canada), Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, True Blue Liberal.org, Trumansburg Impeachment (NY), Truth Empowered, Truthtelling Project, UC Nuclear, Underground Action Alliance, Unitarian Universalist Peace and Justice Group (Nantucket, MA), United Blue USA, United for Veterans (Wayne, MI), United Progressives, Upbeat Defiance, US Peace Memorial, US Tour of Duty: Iraq Veterans and Military Families Demand the Truth, Velvet Revolution, Vet Gulf March, Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, Veterans for Peace, Chapter 27, Virginia Grassroots Coalition, Voters for Peace, We the People for Peace, We the People Network, We the People Now, We The People United Bangladesh.org, Peace Surge, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (WA), Stop the War (UK), U.S. Peace Council, World Can't Wait.org, World Prout Assembly, Komite Internacionalista- Basque, Asociación Paz, Igualdad y Solidaridad Internacional, Arab Cause Solidarity Committee, Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm, Málaga, Spain, Stop Fascism Action Network, The Asian Jurists Centre, Association of Human Rights Defenders in Iraq (AHRDI), The African Center for Human Rights (ACHR), Veterans for Peace, Your Declaration of Independence.org, Arab Lawyers Network-UK, Conservative Centre of Environmental & Reserves in Fallujah (CCERF), Willie Nelson Peace Research Institute, Studies Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, The Iraqi Centre for Human Rights, Association Internationale des droits de l'homme, NGOs without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

¹ http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=11216&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Destruction of educational institutes

Iraq's education system, once vaunted as the most advantaged in the region, has suffered a patterned process of degradation and dismantling. Iraqi schools and universities were bombed and destroyed. Under the occupation, according to a report by the United Nations University International Leadership Institute in Jordan, some 84% of Iraq's institutions of higher education have been burned, looted, or destroyed². Some 2.000 laboratories need to be re-equipped and 30.000 computers need to be procured and installed nationwide.³

"Buildings have been burnt and looted in what appears to be a random spree of violence aimed at Iraqi academia."⁴

Looting and burning of educational institutes

Like most higher education institutions across Iraq, Baghdad University escaped almost unscathed from the bombing. In the subsequent looting and burning, 20 of the capital's colleges were destroyed. No institution escaped: the faculty of education in Waziriyya was raided daily for two weeks; the veterinary college in Abu Ghraib lost all its equipment; two buildings in the faculty of fine arts stand smoke-blackened against the skyline. In every college, in every classroom, you could write "education" in the dust on the tables.⁵ "Looters began ransacking Mustansiriyah University on April 9, 2003, the day Hussein's government collapsed. By April 12, the campus of yellow-brick buildings and grassy courtyards was stripped of its books, computers, lab equipment and desks.⁶ Since March 2003, more than 700 primary schools have been bombed, 200 have been burnt and over 3,000 looted.⁷

Occupation of educational institutes

The US forces, the Iraqi Army and Iraqi police units occupied school buildings for military purposes. It occupied more than 70 school buildings for military purposes in the Diyala governorate alone, in clear violation of The Hague Conventions.

The origins of armed resistance in Fallujah can be traced almost precisely to April 28, 2003, when U.S. troops, who had arrived in the city five days earlier, massacred 17 apparently unarmed protesters. The April 28 protest had demanded an end to Fallujah's occupation and, more specifically, that U.S. troops vacate the al Qaid primary school, where classes had been scheduled to resume on April 29.⁸

Illiteracy on the rise

A report published in March 2011 by UNESCO confirmed the urgency of the situation currently faced by Iraqi educators and students. According to UNESCO, several Middle Eastern countries, including Iraq, are unlikely to achieve the education-for-all Millennium Development Goals by 2015 due to insecurity and conflict. Decades of war, UN sanctions,

² http://www.la.unu.edu/about_staff_reddy.asp

³ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b7aa9df5.html>

⁴ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/higher/iraqs-universities-are-in-meltdown-427316.html>

⁵ Times Higher Education Supplement 2003, <http://www.brusselstribunal.org/academicsArticles.htm#weed-out>

⁶ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "An Educator Learns the Hard Way; Task of Rebuilding Universities Brings Frustration, Doubts and Danger," Washington Post June 21, 2004.

⁷ <http://www.islamic-relief.com/ecamp/orphans-iraq/education-iraq.htm>

⁸ <http://www.worldpress.org/Mideast/2183.cfm> and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/mar/17/iraq.rorymccarthy>

insecurity and economic decline have adversely affected education in Iraq. Illiteracy levels have risen dramatically over the past years. According to data produced by the government and UNESCO in September 2010, at least five million of Iraq's almost 30 million people are illiterate.

The solution according to the US occupying authorities

John Agresto, in charge of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2003-2004, initially believed that the looting of Iraq's universities was a positive act in that it would allow such institutions to begin again with a clean slate, with the newest equipment as well as a brand new curriculum. This curriculum removed any criticism to the US policy in the Middle East, as well as any reference to either the 1991 war or to Israeli policy in the occupied Palestinian territories.⁹

The American with final authority over their appeals, Andrew Erdmann, a 36 year-old who had earned his PhD in history three years earlier, had almost no experience as a professor, none at all as a university administrator, and spoke no Arabic. He was officially U.S. Senior advisor to the Ministry of Education but, since the Minister of Education was under arrest, was effectively Minister of Education in the early days of the occupation.¹⁰ The freelance journalist Christina Asquith wrote about this situation: "Let's pause for a minute. Sit yourself down at the mahogany table with the 22 Iraqi university presidents. Men in there [sic] 50s and 60s, who all have PhD's from top universities in England, Scotland and America; erudite, accomplished intellectual men. Due to the US invasion, they had just lost their offices, libraries and research equipment. The textbooks were burned and stolen. US soldiers occupied the dormitories. The Ministry building itself was burned to the ground, along with every file, computer and desk. In May, Paul Bremer instituted the DeBaathification Policy, which forced the firing of all the top university administrators and professors because they were Baath Party members. Half of the intellectual leadership in academia was gone. Now, in a haphazard selection process, they were given 36-year old Drew Erdmann. He controlled the budgets, the staffing, the curriculum, and the physical renovation."¹¹

The scale of the attacks on academic staff, the appointment of ignorant people and the total chaos created by the occupation authorities, the inhuman debaathification policy, together with the magnitude of the destruction of academic infrastructure—crimes that have occurred under the watchful eye of the US led Multi-National Forces—has no precedent in recent history and raises serious questions about the real intentions of the US occupiers, who should be held accountable for the total collapse of the Iraqi education sector.

Chaos and mismanagement

Only in the first year of the occupation were elections held for the posts of dean and head of departments. Subsequently these posts were filled by government appointments of the ruling sectarian parties. As a result, al-Mustansriya University (to cite one example) now has three presidents (directors): one appointed by the previous minister; a second appointed by the present minister; and a third appointed by the prime minister himself. The three

⁹ Nabil al-Tikriti in "Cultural Cleansing in Iraq" p 98, <http://www.plutobooks.com/display.asp?K=9780745328126&>

¹⁰ Hugh Gusterson - http://www.brussellstribunal.org/University_At_War.htm

¹¹ Christina Asquith, "What the U.S. Didn't do in Iraq Education," Education News July 28, 2004 <http://www.educationnews.org/articles/what-the-us-didnt-do-in-iraq-education.html>

perform their duties in the same campus and each has his personal office, team of bodyguards and secretariat.¹²

Killing of educators; threats against education staff; educators forced into exile

Roughly 40 percent of Iraq's middle class is believed to have fled by the end of 2006, the U.N. said.¹³

In 2005, alone, 296 members of education staff were killed.¹⁴ An estimated 331 schoolteachers were slain in the first four months of 2006, according to Human Rights Watch¹⁵ and 180 teachers were killed between February and November 2006, according to the Brookings Institute in Washington.¹⁶ According to the UN office for humanitarian affairs, up to 100 teachers have been kidnapped and over 3,250 have fled the country.

The International Medical Corps reports that populations of teachers in Baghdad have fallen by 80%. 467 Iraqi professors and lecturers have been assassinated since 2003, according to the BRussells Tribunal database.¹⁷ The exodus of academics has dramatically lowered educational standards¹⁸. Most are fleeing systematic persecution and have no desire to return.

Insecurity prevents students from attending classes

The rapidly deteriorating conditions and a complete failure to establish a functioning education system has produced a spiralling dropout rate of almost 50%.

Violence since the U.S.-led invasion has driven thousands of students away, with enrolment off by more than half at some universities in 2006 alone, officials said. Universities in other parts of the country are open, but have become deserted. (Washington Post 18/01/2007)

"Education in my area is collapsing," said on 05 October 2006 a teacher from a high school in Amariya who quit four months earlier. "Children can't get to school because of road blocks. The parents of others have simply withdrawn them from the school because of the fear of kidnapping.

Corruption in Iraqi education

The effort to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure, including schools and higher education institutions, have been plagued by shoddy construction, corruption and diverting funds to "security".

Hundreds of health, education and infrastructure projects have been delayed because of corruption and the smuggling of oil. Education and health projects are the most affected, as hundreds of schools require repair and hospitals are hit by shortages of equipment and medicines, said the Electronic Iraq article.¹⁹ Complaints of government corruption put the ministry of education among the worst offenders.²⁰ "Haramia," or "thieves," is the new

¹² DrSaadNajiJawad. <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/Seminar/texts/en/13.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1072793.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.topsy.org/IraqiAcademics.doc>

¹⁵ <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2007/01/16/MNG2MNJBIS1.DTL>

¹⁶ <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/ArticlesOnIraq.htm#doctors>

¹⁷ <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/academicsList.htm>

¹⁸ <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=62983>

¹⁹ <http://electroniciraq.net/news/2760.shtml>

²⁰ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8055776.stm

name given to local contractors who receive money to fix up schools, then allegedly do such a poor job that they can put most of the money in their pockets.²¹

Financial hardships

In March 2010, two deans of different science colleges and one head of department, told of their academic sufferings. They reported that there had been no new financial allocation or any increase in the budgets of higher education. As a result, university laboratories had not been able to procure new equipment and supplies since 2003 (this, of course, coming on top of the already dramatic situation that existed during the sanctions), while classrooms and libraries were lacking in new books and computers. This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of electricity and other services.

More affected were the students. Even under sanctions, the vast majority of them were housed in lodgings rented by the government, and all of them were provided with suitable clothes. Those pursuing higher studies were provided with a salary. With the onset of occupation, all these things were either stopped or cut to less than half.

As the monthly food ration disappeared or shrunk, market prices more than quadrupled. In the end the educators salaries were only enough to keep them alive. Those who had suffered under sanctions suffered even more under occupation. As insecurity poisoned the atmosphere of university campuses, the spectre of bribery raised its ugly head. Corruption increased because of economic need and the lack of any supervision or disciplinary actions.

Collapse of Iraq's universities

Iraqi academic institutions, once leaders among universities and research centres in the rest of the Arab World, were instrumental in creating a strong Iraqi national identity after years of colonization. The virtual collapse of Iraq's educational infrastructure has gutted the vehicle that has served to cement a unifying history in the public mind.

The results of the policies of the occupying authorities are disastrous. Iraq's universities are now probably the worst in the Arab region, Asia and the world. The Ranking Web of World Universities is published twice a year (January and July), covering more than 20,000 Higher Education Institutions worldwide.²² On the Arab level only 3 Iraqi universities are in the top 100 of Arab universities in the ranking of January 2011. On the global level only 8 Iraqi universities figure in the top 12,000. The showpiece of Iraq: Baghdad University, doesn't even figure in the top 12,000.

The facts on the ground in Iraq show that there is no reconstruction whatsoever in Iraq's education system, there is only destruction, corruption and decline. It is well known that the destruction of the Iraqi education system is part of the plan to culturally and ethnically cleanse Iraq, to "end the state" as Paul Wolfowitz declared in 2003.

The NGOs signatories to this statement call on the United Nations in general and the Human Rights Council in particular to:

- Ensure that all human rights violations in Iraq during the sanction and the invasion and occupation be investigated by an international independent body.
- All measures must be taken to end the current state of impunity, both within Iraq, and with regard to the culpability and responsibilities of the occupying powers in particular.

²¹ <http://www.parapundit.com/archives/002699.html>

²² <http://www.webometrics.info/index.html>

- Appoint a UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights situation in Iraq.
 - Request the High Commissioner to present to the Council a detailed report on the Human Rights violations in Iraq since 2003 according to UNAMI and the civil society reports.
 - Request the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, to focus on this matter in the future reports.
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**Resources mobilization and enabling environment for
poverty eradication in the context of the implementation
of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed
Countries for the Decade 2001-2010**

Statement submitted by the International Multiracial Shared Cultural Organization, a non-governmental organization 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 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* * *

* E/2004/100.

In reply to the 50 per cent plus unemployment among black men in least developed communities like Harlem and Brooklyn, New York, around the country and world, I wish to present a different point of view for immediate release with the hope that action will be taken within the United Nations and Member States to help combat this growing trend that can only end in major conflict if left unattended.

The main and most pressing problem facing peoples in least developed countries is not obtaining aid, but rather obtaining direct links with their natural trading partners in least developed communities in developed countries.

A way forward: the good news

An African Government has allotted five million barrels (revolving) of crude oil to an African-American organization in a business exchange agreement aimed at creating opportunities in the United States of America and Africa for least developed business cultures. International Multiracial Shared Cultural Organization (IMSCO), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and its affiliate, AMRE Trade Oil, have been granted major crude oil allotments and mineral concessions in Africa. It is our hope that a large part of the proceeds from these projects will be used to help grow a sustainable business culture in the African-American communities across the United States and Africa. IMSCO officials believe that if the two communities continue to combine efforts, this and other related projects would benefit African-Americans' political and economic clout in this election year and job opportunities will continue to grow. To speed up the implementation of the projects, the United States Department of State and the Energy Department are supplying ongoing advocacy support.

One reason for the present statement and for requesting government, community and organizational support is to improve IMSCO project advocacy support to lobby the offices of senators, such as Hillary R. Clinton, in Washington, D.C., including those of select mayors, for assistance in obtaining purchasing agreements for refined products that would create the finished materials to provide additional sustainable businesses and medium-to-high-end jobs. So far, all requests for support by IMSCO to Senator Clinton, and other elected officials, with budgets of more than \$80 billion a year, have been refused.

IMSCO seeks community and media support to gain cooperation from elected officials. IMSCO asks the media immediately to contact IMSCO and elected officials to promote this aim. IMSCO requests that a state-wide community meeting be held in each state to discuss ways this and other diaspora projects might help create businesses and jobs opportunities that will benefit all Americans. IMSCO would request that banks, investors and lenders attend. IMSCO seeks to better inform the public on how this important project will help defeat attacks on American citizens, economic interests, strategic metals and supply lines.

The bad news

After centuries of attacking and attempting to oppress the African male out of existence in the United States' own back yard, it will now likely come as a shocking blow to both the national pride and the pocketbooks of Americans when they learn, by way of the "resources war" (the terrorist war), that the Russian Federation and black Africa have more complete control of the world's strategic metals, including

vast untapped crude oil and gas reserves, than the Arab States have of Middle East petroleum and gas reserves.

The British Broadcasting Corporation reports that 98 per cent of Africa's population on the continent sees no way forward and agrees with many of the enemies of the United States. Together with the seriously incapacitated Russian Federation these two combined forces control 89 per cent to 99 per cent of the world's supply of strategic minerals: 96 per cent of the chrome; 99 per cent of the platinum group metals; 98 per cent of the manganese; 89 per cent of the diamonds; 68 per cent of the gold, and uranium; and 40 per cent of the vanadium, to name just a few.

The United States Department of State and a growing number of Americans are aware that the enemies of the United States are using the fact that the United States is beggar-poor in strategic metals and are cutting our supply lines one by one, while a seemingly blind American elite brushes aside the African and African-American communities' request for cooperation in developing direct business links with each other as natural trading partners. By attacking and imprisoning a large segment of black men who have been denied a higher education to protect their families and contribute to society, it now turns out black men may be the only American citizens who are able to protect many of the jobs in the United States, the needs for strategic metals and the crucial supply lines between Africa and the United States without sending a hostile word or firing a single bullet.

If African-American men in New York and across this rich nation are massively unemployed, in need of higher educational training to obtain quality jobs, obtain health care and proper shelter for the family, so too is the rest of the United States at risk of the same. Strategic minerals and the raw materials needed by the United States and her allies and industries to make the products that American jobs depend on daily do not come from Queens, New York or Kansas; they come from dark and hostile continents few Americans dare to enter.

Good news bad news

Terrorists are aware, and the world is a witness, of the fact that the United States is dangerously vulnerable in the above-mentioned strategic minerals. But, rather than cooperate with the black man, white America blockades African foreign policy interests in international business culture, development and linkage. Would it not be a wise move for America and Europe to embrace the hands that feed them, with their vast lands and wealth, as natural trading partners, instead of foolishly promoting favouritism towards regions that produce nothing for the United States but threats to its national security? At least, there would be a kind of balance.

I hope the United States will immediately come to its senses and begin to support diaspora linkage and publicly discuss ways and local federal government and communities can combine efforts to support, for example, economic foreign and domestic policies that will ensure business and job-generating resources, skills, contracts and concessions that can be secured by all American diverse diaspora communities that have powerful links to strategic interests in troubled areas around the world before it is too late.

If Americans wish to save their jobs and protect their way of life, then I suggest we look around and ask ourselves what the many products are made of,

where the raw materials come from, what we can trade and who we can cooperate with to ensure a continued supply of these strategic materials.

I strongly suspect that brutal attacks will continue on men and women of colour in the near future because a few economically elite men and women in our fearful society “cannot handle the truth!”.
