



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
12 December 2021

Original: English

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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 Health and Education Center, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **Our Efforts and Projects in Achieving Gender Equality and Risk Reduction Policies: Women Belong at the Peace Table**

Peace should not be simply an ideal or a utopian dream, but rather an inspiring and driving force for action and transformation. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights came about as a result of the long-held and cherished beliefs – contained within the constitution of UNESCO – that “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”

The evidence is clear: Peace processes that systematically and meaningfully include women, and civil society more broadly, are more likely to generate broad national ownership and support. They are, therefore, more likely to lead to more sustainable peace. To create lasting peace, we need women’s voices and leadership. Women are often the first to notice rising tensions that can escalate to violence. They are also the first responders in the aftermath of conflict, taking on the lion’s share of care-work for families and stepping in to repair shattered economies. Peace is synonymous with women’s rights. Historically, women have been the most affected by wars and conflicts, yet they have also been among the most engaged in fruitful peace processes. In 1915, long before the Charter of the United Nations was signed in 1945, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, was shaped as a response to the horrors of the First World War.

This is what Security Council resolution 1325, the text that formally enshrined the women, peace, and security agenda, at the United Nations (UN) in the year 2000, is all about. The Women’s Health and Education Center’s global media, which is serving in 227 countries and territories, about 14 million subscribers, available in six official languages of the UN; advises on disaster risk reduction policies and advocacy programs. Its focus is on:

- How to promote women’s political inclusion,
- Make peace processes and prevention efforts more inclusive,
- Include a gender perspective in their political and conflict analysis.

Our advocacy programs provide support to women’s groups or women’s leaders platforms. Our projects/programs organize networking meetings, and Side Events at United Nations Headquarters. In countries where the UN is supporting a peace process, our programs provide advice on ways to include women in the process, for example, through the application of quotas or the establishment of a women’s advisory board. Women’s Health and Education Center also promotes women’s political participation in elections, including through advising on temporary special measures, such as quotas, in its electoral support.

As a general practice, we apply a gender neutral approach to all our activities. We particularly focus on addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism, which include a strong gender component. For instance, we look at different roles women and men are playing in terms of countering terrorism and fighting violent extremism. We also focus on sociological issues, such as the need to challenge stereotypes and we encourage greater participation by women in local and national decision-making.

In order to facilitate equal participation of young women and men, our e-Health and Educational platform has introduced the Women, Peace and Security Agenda as an important component of all health and educational training curriculums.

From our experience, the process on regional cooperation in India, Pakistan and the Middle East, has been very much male-driven. There is an opportunity to include more women in this process. Female engagement can bring more added value in terms of confidence-building and trust-building. Therefore, we are looking at the possibility to support the creation of a Women's Network in these regions.

Women's Health and Education Center hopes, that the engagement of men and women and equality, will become more natural. It is a challenging task, one of this project takes into consideration not only political, economic and social factors, but also cultural factors. However, the dynamic in this field is positive.

The Women's Health and Education Center has identified seven priority action areas to accelerate the progress. We are acutely aware that peace is more than the absence of war.

Our Recommendations and Areas of Future Development are:

- Make leadership accountable for implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, through improved data and gender analysis.
- Ensure women's meaningful participation in peace processes, the implementation of peace agreements and related decision-making.
- Protect women's human rights defenders and women's organizations.
- Ensure women's participation in economic decision-making in post conflict situations.
- Increase the number of women in uniformed services in peacekeeping missions and national security services.
- Finance the women, peace and security agenda and invest in women peace builders.
- The Role of Digital Technologies in Social Development and Well-Being of All.
- UN Document: [E/CN.5/2021/38](#), published by 59th Session of CSocD (Commission for Social Development).

The reality is women around the world continue to be excluded from peace and political processes in part, because of cultural discriminatory laws, social stereotypes and institutional obstacles. Even when they are instrumental in brokering and sustaining peace, the contributions of women are rarely visible. Gender-sensitive language in peace agreements is critical to setting a foundation for gender-inclusion during the peacebuilding phase. However, the vast majority of agreements do not explicitly address gender equality or the rights of women.

There is no sustainable peace without the full and equal participation of women. As the world strives to rebuild in the post-COVID era, it is time to address the root causes of gender inequality and "build back better" with and equality and women's rights lens. To do so, we need to prioritize conflict prevention and actions aimed at emerging threats to sustaining peace.

Join our efforts in women's meaningful participation in peace processes and risk reduction policies and programs. Together we care.