



OCAPROCE INTERNATIONALE

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9th International NGO Forum on the Economic Social and Economic Rights of Women

June 2, 2017 at the UN Palais des Nations in Geneva

Main Theme: “ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: KEY FACTORS FOR EQUALITY BY 2030”

Background and Justification

The Ninth International NGO Forum is the logic of the Round-Table Interactive Dialogue on the economic social and cultural rights of women, and is the follow up of the first Forum held on 9 June 2009 at the Palais des Nations organised by OCAPROCE International during the 11th session of the Human Rights Council.

This objective of this Forum held at the Geneva UN Headquarters of the Human Rights Council is twofold, on the one hand promote the economic social and cultural rights of women, thus re-enforcing the work of the Council and on the other hand to sensitise the international community and encourage States to respect their commitments on gender equality in the whole world for economic, social and cultural rights of women. There is real progress towards equality but there is still a long way to go. In many countries and societies economic and socio-economic factors flout rights which have been “universally recognised” such as women’s rights which leads us to finding new means of action to fight discrimination.

Beside the measures taken and commitments made by states and international organisations, civil society must also present concrete proposals to encourage the realisation of women’s rights. The role of NGOs is steadily increasing at international conferences and especially after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. This Declaration was a turning point for the international community and greatly improved the status of women in ensuring Gender equality world-wide. 199 countries unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which clearly proclaimed gender equality for the empowerment of women as an essential prerequisite for development, peace and respect of human rights.

Session 1 Eradication of Poverty for an Inclusive Growth

History has proved that gender discrimination negatively affects economic and social progress of all humanity, which makes us realise the many advantages of guaranteed rights for all. According to “UN Women”, women have an enormous contribution to make to the economy in general, to all businesses, to agriculture as entrepreneurs or employees and through their unpaid work looking after their family and their home. Yet they suffer disproportionately from poverty, discrimination and exploitation. Gender discrimination often condemns women to insecure and badly paid jobs when only a small minority has access to well paid jobs. This discrimination makes it difficult for women to access economic assets such as land and loans. They also have little say in the formulation of economic and social policies. The pay gap between men and women reflects the many inequalities in the labour market which remains a very complex issue.

The elimination of poverty is closely linked to economic, inclusive and sustained growth and also to adequate social protection systems which can guarantee acceptable living conditions to the population even in crisis situations. Such systems should make access to schooling for children possible as also providing sufficient good quality food and preparing for a better future. In order to achieve the MDGs, UNDP advocates partnerships between governments, companies, civil society and the United Nations System, including committed groups from all social strata. According to the UNDP Administrator “ It is essential to unite in order to mobilise all available resources” for a bright and lasting future which must also be inclusive and freed from poverty.

Session 2 “Women’s Contribution to the Economy and to Peace”

Economy and peace are closely linked and interdependent. Resolution 1325, adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000 recognised for the first time, the essential contribution of women in the prevention and settlement of conflicts. This resolution was symbolical and a call to action, confirming that the participation of women in any peace process, enhances the hope for a lasting peace. Since the adoption of this Resolution the role of women in peace keeping has been acknowledged by International Women’s Day of 8 March. Yet 16 years later, the full participation of women in any peace process as negotiators or as simple citizens still faces social, cultural and economic obstacles although that Resolution was supposed to overcome this particular hurdle. This was confirmed by the Commission for Security, Justice and World Governance in which we have the honour to participate.

Although Resolution 1325 advocates an increased participation of women in any peace process, they are still very under-represented in UN negotiations. According to a study by “UN Women” in the 14 cases studied since the year 2000, women represent less than 8 % of peace negotiators and under 3 % of signatories. The contribution of women in any peace process is indispensable for a lasting economy and this has been recognised by the international community. Thus, there can be no lasting development without women’s empowerment.

Resolution 1820 (2008) reaffirms the important role of women on conflict prevention and strengthening of peace: it also underlines the importance of their participation on an equal footing with men: they must be fully associated in the promotion of peace and security but so far not enough women have been involved.

Session 3: “The Consequences of Migration on Women in Africa – National Policies Youth Migration – the Example of some African country”

Migration in Africa and particularly in North Africa has undergone many profound changes and it is widely underestimated both within the country and outside on account of its great diversity. The North African countries have for a long time provided many migrant and have also been transit and receiving countries from Sub Saharan Africa.

Migrations are varied, some voluntary and some forced, some within the African continent and some to other continents. According to the International Organisation for Migrations, the best way to manage migration would be for migrants to be included in the general national planning to enable them to participate in the development of the receiving country and would thus become part of any strategic plan to fight poverty. Migration and its consequences must be included in national legislation and also become part of any regional and local development strategy. Migration must become integral part of planning, development, follow up and evaluation.

The example of Morocco could also inspire other countries in human rights matters. The United Nations have commended the innovative policy approach of Morocco to integration and protection of migrants. In fact Morocco has made great efforts these last years to integrate migrants, as the values of tolerance, solidarity and dialogue are enshrined in the Constitution. This policy also contributes to social progress in sharing experiences with countries in partnership with Morocco.

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The Kingdom of Morocco is also one of the rare countries that has put into place a national migration plan based on a global strategy of integration of migrants in society. Thus Morocco favours the integration of migrants in offering them residents' permits.

Morocco can become an example for other countries in a similar situation confronted with the arrival of many migrants. This country can be congratulated on its efforts to help African migrants and also those from other regions: the migratory policy of Morocco is not selective. Since 2013 the Kingdom has regularised over 23'000 irregular migrants from Africa and Europe.

Session 4: "Pay Gap Between Men and Women: Obstacles to Equality in Women's Empowerment"

According to the "Gender Equality Index" (GEI) gender discrimination remains a major obstacle to human development. Since 1990 there has been considerable progress but without actually reaching true equality. Women and girls suffer, in particular, from discrimination in health, education, labour and political representation which reflects negatively on development and their own freedom of choice. The GEI measures inequality in three important areas of human development: (1) reproductive health measured by maternal mortality rates and adolescent pregnancies (2) the empowerment of women determined by the number of women in parliament and by the percentage of women over the age of 25 who have successfully terminated secondary education and (3) women's economic status determined by their participation in the labour market.

Wage equality, world-wide, could largely contribute to the empowerment of women; the ninth World Report on Gender Equality claims that it will take another 81 years to reach the goal of equality at the work place.

Session 5: "How to Increase the Participation of women in Government Procurement"

In order to attain the economic and social development objectives, a well-functioning public procurement system is essential. There also women have an important contribution to make, but very often they are excluded from the economic circuits. Hence we must fight above all any discrimination against women which hamper their empowerment. Not participating in public procurement has direct economic consequences.

In order to attain the MDGs by 2030, the part played by women in the economic and social development of our countries is of great importance. States must fight the marginalisation of women and make sure that markets are shared equally among men and women. It is essential for state systems to be fair to men and women if we aim at gender equality (50/50) by the year 2030.

Session 6: "Information and Communication Technologies – What Jobs for Women and Girls in ICTs?"

At a time when ICTs become ever more important in our daily and working lives, any gender discrimination influences the use they can make of such a strategically important tool. The situation is very complex in so far as women and girls in their daily occupations or in schools are assiduous users of these technologies and just as competent as their male counterparts. The knowledge gap,

visible at the beginning of ICTs is greatly narrowed as these tools are now commonly used. The digital divide has other causes not linked to gender, such as income and educational achievements. Wherever women are entitled to enter the workforce; they use ICTs with great skill and competence. The problem lies with the jobs dealing exclusively with ICTs.

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Hence the low percentage of women in ICT professions (under 20%), but why are such jobs not available to women and how can equality be fostered? There are two studies from the Foundation "Travail-University" of Namur which offer answers to these questions and also make recommendations to all those working for change, those responsible for teaching and training, social partners, job providers, recruiters, human resources staff, associations promoting gender equality. The inequalities between men and women are so obvious that no statistics are required to prove the enormous gender gap in ICT jobs, a few figures can prove the point.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME OF THE 9TH INTERNATIONAL NGO FORUM ON

“ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN – KEY FACTORS FOR EQUALITY BY 2030”

2 June 2017, Palais des Nations Room XII

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8.30 a.m.: Arrival of participants and registration

9.30: Coffee break

10:00: Official Opening of the Forum

Moderator: Dr. Christina ATEKMANGO, University of Geneva

Presentation by the Organiser: Princess Micheline Makou Djouma President/Chief Executive/Officer of OCAPROCE International to the United Nations Office in Geneva, New-York and Vienna

Orators:

- H.E. Ambassador, Permanent representative to the UN
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10.30 am - Session 1:

“Poverty Eradication of Women for Inclusive Growth” (What is women’s main contribution to the economy?)

Speaker: - Mrs. Jane Connors, Director, International Advocacy Programme, Amnesty International

12.10: - Session 2:

“Contribution of Feminine Values to the Economy and to Peace” (Women’s role in peace building and qualitative growth)

Speaker:

- **Prof. Alfred De Zayas**, Independent Expert for Human Rights and International Order to the UN Human rights Council, Geneva.

1 pm: - Session 3:

“The Consequences of Migration on Women in Africa – National Policies Youth Migration: the Example of some African country”

Speaker:

2.30 pm: Session 4

“Pay Gap in the light of the Economic Empowerment of Women” (Gender discrimination and its impact on Economic development).

Speaker:

- Mrs Simone Ovar Bruno, Chair of the NGO Geneva Committee on the Status of Women (CSWG), Main Representative of Zonta International to the UN Office in Geneva.

4 pm: Session 5 - “Public Procurement and Gender Equality: Women at the Centre of the Sustainable Development Goals:

Speaker:

5 pm: Session 6 : “The Importance of ICTs for the Empowerment of Women and Gender Equality”

Speaker:

- **Prof. Manjit Dosanjh** (IFGW), Senior Advisor for Medical Applications Accelerators and technology Sector, Director’s Office CERN Geneva.