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Statement submitted by Non c'è Pace Senza Giustizia, 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

Non C'è Pace Senza Giustizia is an international non-profit organisation established in 1994 that works for the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and international justice. NPSG aims to address situations where fundamental and universal principles are often set aside in the name of political stability and presumed cultural incompatibility. NPSG raises awareness, fosters public debate, and spurs mobilisation among advocates, decision-makers, and governments. NPSG is in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since July 2022.

Addressing the 68th Commission on the Status of Women's priority theme, "Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective", NPSG stresses the importance of equal opportunities in the access to education and the labour market as essential factors in reducing structural poverty both among women and girls globally. First and foremost, it is necessary to link gender inequality and poverty, which affects a considerable part of women's population. Second, institutional and financial support in education and the labour market are essential in reducing poverty among women and girls that are still attached to intra-family patterns that impede their self-development, economically, politically, and socially.

Poverty is a social and economic phenomenon that affects a considerable part of the population, especially in low-income countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. However, it is not spread equally across these areas: women and girls are one of the most touched groups who suffer from it. Considering that women consist of half of the world population, NPSG believes it is paramount to speak about the feminisation of poverty, the difference in poverty, or extreme poverty, between women and men. Around 388 million women live under conditions of extreme poverty compared to the 372 million men under the same circumstances. At the same time, women represent only the 47% of the workforce; for men is 72%. Moreover, women earn 23% less than men, while a 75% risk working under bad conditions. This situation is relevant worldwide but affects mostly the targeted UNDP countries: Sub-Saharan and central and southern Asian women and girls are the most affected, with very high percentages of gendered extreme poverty.

As poverty does not affect everyone equally, women and girls, who have a lower social status than men, face extreme poverty not only in economic terms but also politically and socially, given the lack of basic rights that still exist in several nations. These fewer opportunities to access resources, employment, or education are further reduced in situations of conflicts, pandemics and climate change, especially for those women, more attached to traditional gender roles, who see their caregiving roles increased, limiting their income-earning potential, and leading them to economic hardships.

The current situation in Afghanistan reflects how, under conflict circumstances, women are denied their human rights, including access to education and employment. The Taliban regime is not only hindering their right to self-develop, but rather silencing their voices and denying their human rights of movement, expression, freedom, and association. Similarly, climate change is another potential factor of gender inequality, greatly affecting women and girls in countries where agriculture is the main activity.

Among the main factors that limit women and girls' access to education and work, there are social and cultural expectations and norms that assign them the role of caregivers and homemakers. Practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Child and Forced Marriages (CFM), or sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), hinder women from having a human basic physical and mental well-being, restricting them from education and work opportunities. These practices perpetuate the lack of access of women and girls of obtaining social, economic, and cultural skills required to be considered functional by society; moreover, they hinder women presence in workspaces and the media, which are potential means for girls to see they can access the same

positions and income as boys. Consequently, many women do not have their own income and are fully dependent on either their family or their husband, having no control on the family income.

Despite the progress made in the last decades, the poverty gap between men and women keeps undermining the gender equality objectives stated in the Sustainable Development Goals by the 2030 Agenda. Following Goal 5, which aims to recognise and value care-related work and promote shared responsibility within the household, we observe that the situation is far from the desired since there is evidence on how women are still pressured to remain and take care of the household in several countries. On the same line is Goal 5.A. which aims to give women equal rights to economic resources, property ownership, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources. According to data from national institutions, this is not the case even in high-income countries. Under this context, NPSG is alarmed by how these objectives will not be reached and how women and girls endure extreme precarity, instability and vulnerability, perpetuating their lower social status in society. NPSG is strongly aware of this situation and aims, through focused projects and campaigns, to fight violence and discrimination based on gender that threaten the basic human principles of justice and gender equality. NPSG is firmly committed in exposing governments, organisations and patriarchal-thinking movements that question such core principles, but also providing women and girls with a platform from which they can express their voices and needs. For such, an intersectional approach that recognises all layers of discrimination and vulnerabilities women face such as social class, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or physical or mental abilities, has always been fundamental to us.

Given the current state of affairs, financial and institutional support is necessary, primarily from states and the private sector. NPSG aims precisely to bridge different sectors with the goal of reducing gender inequality so women and girls can enjoy the same privileges as men and boys. For that, NPSG is firmly committed in its work in the field by raising awareness, local campaigns, and capacity-building in reducing and eradicating all forms of discrimination and SGBV practices, such as FGM or CFM. However, the situation still remains deeply unequal, and therefore all parts must invest into empowering women with an intersectional approach and take responsibility for their situation.

Recommendations

Considering the above, NPSG recommends States to:

- update and align their domestic legal provisions with the highest standards of human rights set by the Treaties they have ratified, and to ratify them if they have not yet done so;
- comply or ratify the CEDAW treaty against gender discrimination in which poverty is included;
- fully implement UNGA Resolution 67/146 on “Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation”;
- ban CFM in order to allow girls to receive education and develop their own autonomy along their adolescence and adulthood;
- comply with the Maputo Protocol that protects African women from economic, political, social, and physical violence, and urge those states who have not ratified it yet to do so;
- comply with the Istanbul Convention that protects women from domestic violence, which is has not yet been eradicated
- promote parity at all societal levels to grant women and girls an opportunity to participate in sectors they have been set apart from
- pass laws that equal women and men’s salaries in order to close the gender pay gap
- pass laws in which maternity and paternity leaves are equalled, granting women the possibility of creating a family without the having to sacrifice her work life;
- remove all barriers that hinder women’s participation in economic and political decision-making at all levels, both at the institutional and private ones.

Conclusion

NPSG stands for a society in which gender equality is spread across all sectors. NPSG is highly aware of the link between poverty and gender. Eradicating poverty will not be possible without the elimination of the rest of inequalities, being gender one of the most basic. NPSG is and will battle for intersectionality: all women, regardless of their social class, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or physical or mental ability must benefit from tailored measures taken by states and public institutions, that must recognise the different layers of discrimination and vulnerabilities women endure. NPSG will not leave anyone behind, ensuring all women and girls receive and have the same opportunities. We must stand up for women and girls' rights because women's rights are human rights.