



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 December 2023

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-eighth session

11–22 March 2024

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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Social Justice in an Open World: Our Role and Our Initiatives

The rise in inequality in the distribution of income among people is well-documented and displays the characteristics of a trend that have affected large numbers of countries, from the poorest to the most affluent, during the past two decades. Income-related inequalities, notably in the ownership of capital and other assets, in access to a variety of services and benefits, and in the personal security that money can buy, are growing. There is also greater inequality in the distribution of opportunities for remunerated employment, with worsening unemployment and underemployment in various parts of the world affecting a disproportionate number of people at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. The inequality gap between the richest and poorest countries, measured in terms of national per capita income, is growing as well. Extreme poverty and the suffering it entails affect a large proportion of humankind, especially women, girls, children and minorities. Major efforts by Governments and international organizations, to reduce or eradicate poverty, have thus far failed to produce the desired results.

Do these facts and trends suggest a regression in social justice? The persistence, aggravation and very existence of extreme poverty constitute an injustice. Those experiencing dire poverty are deprived of a number of the fundamental rights invoked in the United Nations' Charter and enumerated in the Universal Declaration. Democracy is seemingly gaining, but it is being weakened by the "monetization" of social relations and social institutions at many levels. The concept of reform, so often invoked in recent years to facilitate economic deregulation and privatization, could be constructively applied by liberal democracies and other regimes inspired by liberal principles to identify the requirements of social justice and implement appropriate policies.

Wired and wireless technologies have revolutionized the exchange and distribution of information. Internet use has been characterized by exponential growth in every region of the world. The information and communication technologies revolution are often considered one of the defining features of globalization. The social, economic, cultural and political implications are enormous but have yet to be fully understood. Knowledge is also transferred through these new technologies. Distance learning, and other non-traditional options, have made education and health services more accessible to many rural locations. Globally, a higher proportion of young people from poor and modest house-holds now have the opportunity to acquire knowledge.

Harnessing the digital revolution for the benefit of public education

If harnessed properly, the digital revolution can be one of the most powerful tools for ensuring quality education for all and it can transform the way teachers teach and learners learn. If not governed properly, it could worsen inequalities and undermine learning outcomes, as the pandemic made it all too apparent. Countries should take rapid actions toward full educational connectivity to their populations. Women's Health and Education Center will continue to support country actions, and strengthen inclusive digital learning platforms and content, worldwide.

Quality education and universal health coverage are the most important investments that any country can make for its future and for its people. Investing in health and education is investing in people and in our collective future. This is a moral, political and economic imperative. Science-Policy Brief, published by 8th Multistakeholder session of Science, Technology and Innovation Forum, is submitted,

to re-confirm that, upscaling the social protection responses and supporting mutual learning through the exchange of good practices with regard to socio-economic policies, the provision of basic services and social protection measures can help in this endeavor.

Education and Health are human rights

The global movement towards education- and health-for-all, will directly facilitate the United Nations' 2030 Agenda. As an enabler of several Sustainable Development Goals, education and health can become the driving force behind poverty reduction strategies, in the service of humanity, democratization of the resources and an impetus for regional development in social and economic development – especially relevant for universal health coverage and access. Using global collaborative platforms, education and health can provide equitable access to and participation in the understanding of different cultures and customs across the world. As these platforms are now being designed and developed, the principle of equity and the diverse needs of global communities need to be built-in from the beginning. Education and health, through inter-governmental cooperation programs, strengthens international collaboration. It is the sharing and collaboration that secures increased transparency, reproducibility, and credibility of evidence-based knowledge. All these are of paramount importance to society.

We aim to mobilize humanity's collective intelligence, which involves youth, educators, civil society, governments, business, corporations and stakeholders. There is a rich diversity of ways of knowing, which relies on a broad and open process.

E-Government, e-Education and e-Health platforms to attain United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

As Governments transition towards e-Government, e-Education and e-Health throughout the world, there is growing acknowledgment of the role that the e-Government, e-Education and e-Health could play to harness for women's empowerment and gender equality. Recognizing this critical gap, Women's Health and Education Center, as a part of gender equality initiatives aims to enhance knowledge awareness of good practices of gender-responsive capacity of Governments to harness this tool towards women's empowerment. Women's Health and Education Center, through its e-Health initiative in Women's Health and Development, is serving in 227 countries and territories, with an average of 13 to 14 million subscribers every year, and it is available in the six official languages of the United Nations. e-Health can result in economic benefits and improve health outcomes. Improving Global Partnerships for Education and Health | High-Level Political Forum 2022 (un.org).

Women's Health and Education Center has a unique role to play in strengthening the health and educational systems, in rich and poor countries alike. Technology and innovation in learning are creating exciting new opportunities to accelerate progress towards health-for-all and education-for-all in every country.

We are in midst of a digital proliferation around the globe. Our Recommendations and Focus on Future Development:

- A better distribution of information and perhaps of knowledge, but a more even distribution of opportunities for quality education for women and girls.
- To encourage girls, women, and minorities in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine).
- Bridging Gender Pay-Gaps: much of gender pay-gap in health and care sector remains unexplained by those labor market attributes, that in practice should be,

the sole wage determination factors. Among women in health and care sector there is evidence of a motherhood-work-gap. It is important to emphasize that COVID-19 disproportionately affected workers at the low-end of the pay scale, many of whom are women.

- Access to Quality Education and Health: motivated by our significant achievements in expanding access to evidence-based health and education activities.
- Ensure the provision of access to the Least Developed Countries: It is provided free, publicly-privately funded, equitable primary and secondary education, of which at least 10 years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes.
- Life-long Learning Opportunities: We commit to providing and promoting quality life-long learning opportunities for all, in all settings and at all levels of education.
- Gender Equality: We are committed to supporting gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments, mainstreaming gender issues in teacher training and curricula; and eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence in schools.
