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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 Women's Federation  
for World Peace International, International Alliance of  
Women, Soroptimist International, Zonta International, non-  
governmental organizations in general consultative status,  
Coordination Francaise du Lobby Europeen des Femmes, 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.

[23 May 2025]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



# **The Solution to Poverty is Prosperity: Invest in Women and Girls**

## **Introduction**

Distinguished members of the United Nations Human Rights Council, it is an honor to submit this statement on behalf of the Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI). Our organization and partners are dedicated to promoting peace, human rights, and the empowerment of women across the globe. As we address the interplay between poverty and women's rights, we reaffirm our commitment to advancing gender equality and eradicating poverty as critical components of sustainable development and peace. Designated number one of the 17 SDGS, poverty interfaces with all the others. We join others in moving forward with the compelling paradigm, the solution to poverty is prosperity.

## **Understanding the Nexus of Poverty and Gender Inequality**

Poverty is a multifaceted issue that affects millions worldwide, with women disproportionately bearing the brunt of its consequences. Gender inequality exacerbates poverty, while poverty, in turn, entrenches gender disparities. Women often have less access to economic resources, education, healthcare, and decision-making opportunities, which perpetuates cycles of poverty and marginalization.

Globally, women are more likely to work in low-paid, insecure, and informal employment. They often shoulder the majority of unpaid care work, limiting their ability to pursue education and formal employment opportunities. Furthermore, women face barriers to accessing financial services, land ownership, and inheritance rights, which hinders their economic empowerment and independence.

## **The Feminization of Poverty**

The feminization of poverty is a global phenomenon that requires urgent attention. Women, particularly in developing countries, are more vulnerable to poverty due to systemic discrimination and socio-cultural norms that limit their opportunities. Single mothers, widows, and elderly women are particularly at risk, often lacking social protection and support networks.

Economic disparities are further compounded by intersecting factors such as race, ethnicity, disability, and migration status. Women from marginalized communities face heightened challenges in accessing resources and opportunities, leading to deeper and more pervasive poverty.

## **Empowering Women as a Strategy to Eradicate Poverty**

Empowering women is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic approach to eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. When women are empowered economically, socially, and politically, they contribute significantly to the economic growth and stability of their communities and nations.

## **Education as a Catalyst for Change**

Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering women. Educated women are more likely to participate in the labor force, earn higher incomes, and have fewer and healthier children. Education also equips women with the knowledge and skills needed to advocate for their rights and make informed decisions about their lives.

We call on member states to prioritize education for girls and women, ensuring equal access to quality education at all levels. This includes addressing barriers such as child marriage, gender-based violence, and cultural norms that discourage girls from attending school.

## **Economic Empowerment and Access to Resources**

Economic empowerment is crucial for lifting women out of poverty. Women must have equal access to financial services, land, and property rights, as well as opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment in diverse sectors. Supporting women's access to credit and capital is essential for enabling them to start and grow businesses, contributing to economic development and poverty reduction.

Policies and programs that promote women's participation in the formal economy, provide vocational training, and enhance their skills are vital. Additionally, efforts to recognize and redistribute unpaid care work are necessary to ensure women have the time and resources to engage in economic activities.

## **Social Protection and Healthcare**

Social protection measures play a critical role in reducing poverty and supporting women's well-being. Universal access to healthcare, including reproductive health services, is essential for ensuring women's health and economic participation. Social protection systems must be gender-responsive, providing support for women in vulnerable situations, such as single mothers and elderly women.

Healthcare access should include comprehensive services that address women's specific needs, including maternal health, family planning, and support for survivors of gender-based violence. Investing in women's health is an investment in the health and prosperity of entire communities.

## **Addressing Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence is both a cause and consequence of poverty. It undermines women's autonomy, limits their economic opportunities, and perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality. Combating gender-based violence requires a multifaceted approach, including legal reforms, education, and support services for survivors.

We urge member states to implement and enforce legislation that protects women from violence and discrimination. Public awareness campaigns and community-based programs can help change attitudes and norms that perpetuate gender-based violence.

## **Conclusion and Call to Action**

In conclusion, the Women's Federation for World Peace International calls on the international community to prioritize the eradication of poverty and the empowerment of women as integral components of sustainable development and peace. We urge member states and international bodies to:

1. **Ensure Equal Access to Education:** Prioritize education for girls and women, addressing barriers that limit their access to quality education.
2. **Promote Economic Empowerment:** Implement policies that enhance women's access to financial services, land, and employment opportunities.
3. **Invest in Social Protection:** Develop gender-responsive social protection systems that support women's health and well-being.
4. **Combat Gender-Based Violence:** Strengthen legal frameworks and support services to protect women from violence and discrimination.

5. Foster Inclusive Development: Recognize and address the intersecting factors that exacerbate poverty and inequality for marginalized women.

Let us work together to create a world where every woman has the opportunity to live a life free from poverty and discrimination, contributing to a more just, equitable, and peaceful society for all.

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