



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

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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 The Sant Nirankari Mandal, Delhi, 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

### **Spiritual awakening rules out gender discrimination**

Sant Nirankari Mandal, Delhi heartily thanks the NGO Committee on the Status of Women for a friendly mail, seeking a written statement on the thematic issues considered by the Commission on the Status of Women in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 1996/31. Decidedly, the United Nations Economic and Social Council is earnestly paying the attention that this matter deserves.

It is worthwhile mentioning that Sant Nirankari Mandal, Delhi was granted special consultative status by the United Nations in 2012 and considering its performance, the status was reclassified as general consultative status in 2018. Ever since, we have been submitting written statements on the given subjects and getting opportunities for our delegates to participate every year at the United Nations Headquarters, New York. They not only contributed but also gained good experience.

The status and empowerment of women has been a subject of concern for every right-thinking person in the world. It is an irony that the most meaningful and the longest social movement pertaining to empowerment of women still continues. Reviewing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations created the Platform for Action requiring a strong commitment on the part of governments, international organisations and institutions at all levels. For mutually re-enforcing components of sustainable development to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. The status of women has advanced in some respects but that progress has been uneven, inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remain with serious consequences for the well-being of the people. Female foeticide marks the climax of crime against women and girls.

In the Indian context, studies have shown that ‘patriarchy’ makes women powerless in many ways by convincing them of their inferiority to men; by making them conform to certain stereotyped roles and behaviours; by denying them control over their own bodies; by limiting their access to resources; and by restricting their opportunities to participate in decisions which affect their own lives.

The level of male-response to women varies in degrees in various zones, cultures, societies and religions. In a study conducted and published in UNDP HD Report 1997 it was suggested that “gender equality cannot come about only through changes in women’s conditions; it requires transformation of the structures and systems which lie at the root of women’s subordination and gender inequality”.

Though attempts have been made to follow the guidelines and decisions taken in earlier declarations and conferences, there still remains much more to be done. Legal enactments have not proved sufficient to contain violence against women. Economic development also does not exclusively provide base for change in the situation. To illustrate, the example of the State of Haryana in India is worth quoting. The economic development which this State has seen during the last about 40 years has not brought about any radical change in the status of women there. On the other hand, the example of Kerala is cited to prove that the economic development affects the condition of women only if it is supplemented by the level of literacy and education. This means that primary aim of education is to educate the soul for transforming the nature of the people. That can greatly help in fulfilling the dream of gender equality and solving the consequential problems. The violation of innate qualities of human soul such as love, mercy and equality has led to the violations of natural law and order. We are in a way missing the basic instinct of equality which disturbs our mind and creates difference of relationship between men and women. This gap has essentially to be abridged by evolving innermost feeling of spirituality

and divine character. We need to have broader inclusive understanding of spirituality that makes us realise the equality of humans and leading life of propriety.

In relation to the Commission on the Status of Women communication procedures call for communications, Sant Nirankari Mandal sent its encompassing written statement, “Cubing Injustice and Violence against Women”. The Sant Nirankari Mandal, Dehli did not appeal for any redressal about injustice to women but tried to share our practical experience that while dealing with the problem to eradicate this evil from the society, we should aspire for a society whose thought process is purified and refined to the level that they start treating one and all with humility and equality. Here in the mission, we have resolved this issue by treating poisonous roots of the problem and processing them with a tinge of spirituality, “Respecting woman at the root of entire universe. If we make this pivotal figure - the woman, unstable, the world may get destabilised”.

We humbly submitted to the esteemed Commission on the Status of Women to consider our view point *ibid* for the purpose of policy formation and development of strategies for promotion of cherished gender equality. This written statement, with photos, was sent by mail to UN Women’s Commission on the Status of Women communications procedure on 30 July 2015 and acknowledged by the United Nations on 17 August 2015, as “Thank you for your submission on the Commission on the Status of Women communication procedure.” This revealing statement may kindly be perused.

When the Honourable Secretary General of the United Nations received the above mentioned written statement of Sant Nirankari Mandal, Delhi, it was circulated by the United Nations Economic and Social Council No. [E/CN/6/2016/NGO/113](#) dated 7 December 2015, in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution 1996/31 for use in sixtieth session, 14–24 March 2016. During the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Sant Nirankari Mandal, Delhi team was permitted to host a parallel event in partnership with UN Women on 21 March 2016 to discuss the interfaith role in women’s empowerment. Earlier, celebrating International Women’s Day on 8 March 2015 about 400 Sant Nirankari Mandal, Delhi devotees from New York participated in the martial parade and 75 volunteers of the mission helped the participants. Holding aloft the slogans “Gender Equality, Through Spirituality” and “Enlightened Woman Is Empowered Woman” The enthusiastic volunteers and devotees of The Sant Nirankari Mandal, Delhi mission were seen the back bone of the March.

Sant Nirankari Mission believes and preaches that same divine light dwells in every human being, male and female. Thus one shuns the feelings of hatred, superiority, vengeance and lust on discovering that same string of soul passes through all human beings. The spiritual awakening brings about basic changes in one’s thoughts and actions resulting in feeling of oneness that wipes out all differences including socio-economic and gender. There remains only a human being, not a man or a woman. This is that fundamental truth around which the Sant Nirankari Mission has knit its world of love, mercy, compassion, peace, tolerance and above all, equality.

Sant Nirankari Mission is a global mission and its teachings help in the empowerment and advancement of women, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, thus contributing to the moral, ethical, spiritual and intellectual needs of women and men, individually or in community with other and thereby guaranteeing them the possibility of realizing their full potential in society and shaping their lives in accordance with their own aspirations.

Physical poverty is a curse and spiritual deprivation is worse. Enlightened family is a blessed family where parents, while fulfilling the material needs of children, equip them with divine virtues. Young children find paradise under the feet

of parents and, in turn, aged parents feel safe in the hands of enlightened children. Woman plays a pivotal role in the family. It is rightly said by a wise man, “if you educate a boy, you educate an individual and if you educate a girl, you educate a family.” Woman may be one person for the world but she is the whole world for every member of the family. Realising the potential of women, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Prime Minister of India said, “To awaken the people it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves”. In fine, all reformations start happening with spiritual awakening. “If you do not raise the women, who are the living embodiment of the Divine Mother, do not think that you have any other way to rise” says Swami Vivekananda.

An anecdote: men and women essentially supplement and complement each other. Woman is so sought after by man that it reminds me of a debate in college on the theme, “Let all woman on earth be sent to moon.” The first prize went to the girl who concluded, “Let all women on earth be sent to the moon, but rest assured that if this takes place in the morning, all men on earth will be seen on the moon by evening to meet the better half.”

Women have a critical role to play in all the Sustainable Development Goals, with many targets recognising women’s equality and empowerment as both the objective and part of solution. Sustainable Development Goal 5 is known as the stand-alone gender-goal because it is dedicated to achieving these goals. To sort out the challenges and opportunities in gender equality, we need to make a dramatic change in our attitudes and awareness to recognise it as a spiritual issue, a challenge that goes to the core of who we are as human beings. In such a situation, awareness is important, warmth is important, where spirituality has a game changing role to play.

The Sustainable Development Goals are inherently meant for pro-bono-publico. Though imparting Divine Character to society does not find mention in the Sustainable Development Goals related to global challenges, such as poverty, hunger, education and climate change, yet, it is, in fact, the key to accelerating progress towards the entire spectrum of Sustainable Development Goals. A global platform on gender equality and religion was launched at the sixty second session of the Commission of the Status of Women at United Nations Headquarters in March 2017, where it was desired that we all need to work across differences to advance the entire Sustainable Development Goal agenda. The Sant Nirankari Mandal, Delhi believes that the problem of exploitation of women should not only be treated merely in terms of social, economic, political or cultural evils, but in terms of soul’s psychological arena of divinity that deals with influencing the entire human thinking process.

As a spiritual Head of the International Sant Nirankari Mission, Her Holiness Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj is a unique example of Women Empowerment in the spiritual domain of history. She is spreading Divine Knowledge globally and says, “The world needs to be united as a family tolerating, accepting and loving each other, keeping in mind the watchword, “God-fi-dence, having complete faith and confidence in God, truly proving our image of God.