



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
8 December 2021

Original: English

---

### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-sixth session

14–25 March 2022

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 Forum of Women’s NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, 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

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) played a significant role in advancing women's rights and gender equality. The SDG framework plays a catalyst role in bettering implementation and accountability of the BPFA. Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment still remains a major challenge for many women. Social and economic development programs in many countries still leave many rural women behind, ignoring needs on adequate means of implementation.

Rural women's economic empowerment now needs development actors' focus on strengthening a complex enabling environment that assists rural women to overcome multiple discrimination. Lack of sustainability is rooted in the disabling environment comprised of low level of the access to resources, lack of capacity, accountability, of local ownership of mechanisms to protect and advance rural women's rights in the economic development, and it require special attention.

An enabling family environment for rural women's economic empowerment needs serious attention of States, donors, private sector, civil society organizations. Rural women's unpaid care and domestic work, is still not adequately recognized and addressed. Patriarchal stereotypes in rural areas are strong and hinder sharing of family responsibilities. This leads to losses of women in creating their own business and also leads to women going more to the informal economy sector. In rural areas of Kyrgyzstan preschool education coverage in 2020 was 19.4 percent only; Women have to close their business 1.7 more times because of lack of time to manage business. Gender inequalities in the labour market are reproduced in the informal economy. Rates of informal employment are particularly high in Rural Egypt.

Creating a safe work environment is another aspect of an enabling environment, it facilitates women's economic empowerment. Many women point out the need for action to prevent sexual harassment at work.

Missing of strong accountability for women's rights and gender equality is another factor leading to weak enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. To ensure economic security for women there needs to be an adequate level of accountability by all development actors, including Governments, private sector and donor agencies.

Weak level of investments into women's rights and gender equality agenda in many developing countries require attention of the State; there are no working mechanisms for tracking budget resources allocation for women's empowerment/SDG indicator 5.c.1, for example, in Kyrgyzstan it is not possible to measure the entire amount of public expenditure (both annual and planned) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality.

Rural women have limited access to assets, skills and information, as well as professional contacts needed for business growth. For example, in Egypt, the agricultural sector is gender segmented, and women are more likely to hold low-wage, part-time, seasonal jobs in comparison to men who occupy more rewarding and higher skilled positions.

Women's collective voice, leadership and decision-making will change the development paradigm. But now data on small/medium and large enterprises in Kyrgyzstan demonstrates women's low representation in the top management of large, medium and small businesses. Only 20 per cent of women in 2020 are heads of agricultural farms in Kyrgyzstan, women are minority among rural business people.

Consequences of poor attention to rural women's and girls' economic challenges are serious. They include for example early marriages, domestic, family and kinship group violence, decreased rate of sustainable development in general.

Strengthening the role of the private sector in women's economic empowerment is essential. Increasing the number of women in small and medium business and supporting women's entrepreneurship is one way to increase economic security for women.

Women's rural entrepreneurs face multiple challenges to expand and build sustainable businesses. Women face more challenges than men when starting up their own business, especially in relation to access to finance services and capita. For example, in Egypt, women are less likely to receive a loan to open business than men for various reasons, including lack of bank accounts. Being less informed about investment opportunities, women entrepreneurs in rural areas often end up working in marginal retail micro-trades or service activities.

In many countries rural women lost opportunities and stopped their business development without effective national and local mechanisms with easy access to financing and investment opportunities, new technologies, tools of trade, business development and training. For example, in Kyrgyzstan male individual entrepreneurship increased for the last ten years on 100 thousands men, number of female individual entrepreneurship almost has not changed.

Despite commitments there is low level of investments that are earmarked for women's economic empowerment to close resource gaps. There is lack of mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation, the full implementation of official development assistance commitments towards women's rights and gender equality. Unfortunately, external assistance is not fully tracked, so the amount of input from development partners to women's empowerment is difficult to measure today, even roughly in many countries. It is urgent to solve problem of the weak access to adequate financial resources for poor and rural women to develop their own business.

It is important to ensure that women have access to large loans that will provide opportunities for wider-scale women's entrepreneurship. To achieve this, special lending products with lower interest rates and smaller collaterals are required.

Women's groups have expertise to participate in the work with the private sector to assist and watch if a gender perspective is taken into account.

Forum of women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan on behalf of the Global Feminist Sector of the civil society platform for development effectiveness expresses a concern about weak level of the enabling environment for the advancing rural women's economic empowerment in developing countries.

We urge governments and the United Nations to strengthen accountability for realization of all women's rights gender equality in the economic sustainable development, including rural women and girls. Accountability and means of implementation of the SDG commitment on women's rights need much more attention now.

We call for governments, private sector and civil society to:

- Strengthen an enabling environment for rural women's economic empowerment in all developing countries.
- Urgently design and apply comprehensive national and local mechanisms that encourage and facilitate rural women's entrepreneurship development,

including business development education, improving access to financing and investment opportunities, new technologies, tools of trade.

- Optimize fiscal expenditures for gender -responsive social protection and care infrastructure, such as equitable, quality, accessible and affordable early childhood education, childcare, elder care, health-care, and care and social services.
- Strengthen women’s collective voice, leadership and decision-making to ensure that gender equality needs are up front and central in the national sustainable development plans of action in all countries of the world.
- Strengthen women’s economic empowerment through increasing investment into small and medium women’s business in rural areas. Scale up and speed up effective strategies to support women’s small and medium business and supporting women entrepreneurs.
- Women’s groups must be encouraged to participate in the work with the private sector to assist and watch whether a gender perspective is taken into account.
- Undertake gender budgeting and increase budget allocation for women’s economic empowerment at all levels.

We urge States:

- Set up effective means of implementation, including access to the adequate finances with integrated regular results based accountability from all development actors, based on national and local women’s needs.
- Undertake reforms to ensure equal and effective access to financial, technological and trade resources for rural women.
- Increase investment into rural kindergartens.
- Set up a strong gender indicators framework for the implementation commitment on rural women’s economic empowerment at national and local levels and data disaggregation so that no one is left behind.
- Set up annual reporting on access of rural women to decent work and business ownership.
- Set up multi-stakeholders partnership with women’s groups at national and local levels.

This statement is endorsed by:

Beyond Beijing Committee,  
Network for Women’s rights in Ghana

---