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Statement submitted by United Cities and Local Governments, 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

In the context of interconnected crises, ranging from rising global and local inequalities, violations of human rights, climate injustice, nutritional insecurity, biodiversity loss and increasing conflict and violence, it is clear that radical, systemic and paradigmatic transformations are urgently needed, including rethinking our models of production and consumption, and our commons.

Feminist politics means putting care for people and planet at the center, and ensuring people of all genders, in all their diversity, can thrive. It places emphasis on ensuring equity for historically and systemically marginalized groups, including women, girls and LGBTQIA+ communities, people of color, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups, and migrants. It challenges gender norms and patriarchal cultures which limit or harm peoples' ability to be truly human, to engage with their emotions, to connect with one another. It is anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-xenophobic, anti-ablest.

Feminist politics seeks to ensure that all people are considered, their needs are met equitably, and their unique wisdom and voices are central in decision-making processes. It means recognizing the inherent value in all people, their right to dignity, to equal opportunities, to care, to co-create, with an emphasis on diversity and intersectionality. It seeks to address the underlying systems that perpetuate a patriarchal system of values, which promotes a hierarchy in which some are deemed more important than others.

Feminism is not only about women, and feminist politics is not limited to women's empowerment. Feminist politics is about shifting power, in a world where some people move across borders easily, and others must jump through hoops of fire.

As such, the Global Feminist Municipal Movement is an open and colorful collection of local leaders from around the world, with a diversity of agendas and priorities, rooted in local knowledge and community needs. It calls for a new way of leading, and a new way of doing politics – a feminist politics - which cares for and protects the essential services of all people, ensuring our cities and local citizenship are built on equity, active participation, justice, proximity, empathy and connection, in order to ensure all living things can thrive. It empowers us to be brave and bold, together.

Therefore, We, Local and regional governments, with a diversity of agendas and priorities, rooted in local knowledge and community needs, call for a new way of leading and of doing politics, and:

1. EMPHASIZE the transformative role of the Global Feminist Municipal Movement, to conceive equitably empowered women, feminist and LGBTQIA+ leaders as an integral in our work to address challenges around wellbeing, deep-rooted structural inequalities, climate injustice, or fundamental human rights, including digital rights.
2. AGREE that women, girls and diverse groups' experiences, voices, wisdom, active participation and leadership are fundamental to equitably bridge the digital divide and ensure accessibility and equitable inclusion, with particular attention to the inequalities between Global North and South.
3. REAFFIRM our commitment to the Generation Equality process and localization of the Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality, including by increasing meaningful participation and decision-making power of women and marginalized communities.

4. PROMOTE new leadership and governing models, based on equity, justice, care, commoning, solidarity, empathy, proximity, and providing equitable remuneration of all work, including the valuing and recognition of care work.
5. UNDERLINE the role of local and regional governments in building caring territories that address the systemic roots of patriarchal violence against women, children and gender-diverse groups, shifting long-entrenched social patterns of inequality and discrimination through local, gender-sensitive data collection, accessible and safe design of public space and transforming gender-norms that value care, empathy and solidarity.
6. ACKNOWLEDGE that information and communications technologies (ICTs) have allowed many of us to continue working and sustaining our livelihoods in times of disruption, and many more to access their right to education, but equally recognize that this is marked by deepened inequalities, rooted in systemic discrimination and injustices, and further provides for the perpetuation of harmful gender norms, and human rights violations, such as privacy, information access and freedom of expression.
7. CONSIDER that Digitalization can transform the way in which citizens interact with local governments and can support streamlining bureaucratic procedures, foster understanding of government processes, promote access to information and easy communication channels with public administration. Nevertheless, such processes must be designed in consultation with women and gender diverse groups, to ensure their needs are directly addressed. Moreover, it must be sufficiently regulated at all levels, and approached using a community-led, intersectional and gender-sensitive lens.
8. COMMIT to implementing user-centred principles for the design and delivery of digital public services. The accessibility, security availability and usability of services must be guaranteed so that they can be used by all in a non-discriminatory manner.
9. ENSURE that local service provision which is becoming increasingly digitized takes into account participatory, gender sensitive approaches, gender disaggregated data to foster the development of individual potentials for our citizens everywhere, young and old, promote ethical data standards, foster transparency and openness.
10. DEEM “digital first” an important principle that allows local and regional governments to prioritise contact with their citizens. As an alternative to the “digital only” option, the “digital first” principle always includes the possibility to establish other optional channels of communication, including physical or in-person contact, for and with citizens.
11. EMPHASIZE that the responsibility to realize gender equitable communities is the responsibility of all people, and that different people have different, and equally important roles to play. In particular, men can no longer take a backseat in the fight for equality, while women and gender diverse groups carry this extra labor.
12. GUARANTEE that technology does not, in and of itself, define the way forward and that all policy makers from all spheres of government need to guide it and ensure it enhances democracy, participatory policy making and open government. Furthermore, recognise that information and communications technologies also have negative social and ecological impacts which must be navigated and mitigated.

13. COMMIT to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment at the local level and foster women as political agents of change, increasing their influence over economic, social, political and cultural structures and norms.
14. DEMAND the full and equal inclusion of women, girls and gender diverse groups in all spaces. Denounce and protect against all forms of gender-based violence, discrimination, threats and disinformation including in the online sphere, and particularly targeted at leaders and activists, and which threatens their full capacity to engage in politics and undermines the foundations of democratic and open society.

In concluding, we local and regional governments appeals to the global community to pursue the radical transformation of our patriarchal systems, and to embrace a feminist politics of care, in order to enable all to thrive.
