



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 Criminologists Without Borders Inc and World Society of Victimology, non-governmental organizations 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

Criminologists Without Borders (CWB) and World Society of Victimology (WSV) are committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through research and evidence-based advocacy. This statement provides a feminist approach to the priority theme of CSW 68, “Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective,” and the Review theme: “Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls” as they relate to three categories of women involved in criminal legal systems worldwide: victims/survivors, incarcerated persons, and workers in the system.

We must acknowledge the pervasiveness of violence against women and girls worldwide and how it was exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic. We must prioritize ending violence against women and girls worldwide and ensure that survivors have information on available resources and have access to services. The feminization of poverty is associated with violence against women. Economic dependence perpetuates unequal relationships that are vulnerable to abuse. Women who are economically dependent on their partners find it difficult to leave, especially since the alternatives are rarely economically advantageous for them or their dependents.

Women are incarcerated for non-violent offenses and their incarceration is growing worldwide. Poverty is often at the root of women’s crime commission and subsequent incarceration, as it creates conditions for marginalization and for less effective legal representation. Incarceration itself aggravates the feminization of poverty, as women in prison rarely make a living wage, nor do they learn marketable skills for life after release. Upon release, formerly incarcerated women struggle to find employment, given the stigma and legal barriers to do so. Additionally, as women in prison are usually caregivers for dependent minors, women struggle upon release to regain care of their children and provide economically for them. We must harness the political backing that propelled decarceration in the pandemic, as a strategy for ending the use of incarceration for non-violent offenses.

Women workers in criminal legal systems have been historically underrepresented and face steep pandemic-related losses. Pandemic-related school closures created additional childcare hours and forced millions of women to leave the workforce. In the criminal legal professions, where women are severely underrepresented, we must acknowledge the purposeful, historic exclusion of women and mainstream gender curriculum into the traditionally male trainings and education. We must invest in the care economy and call on men to take on a more equitable share of responsibilities as care providers. We must encourage the recruitment, promotion and retention of women.

Our organizations, along with the American Society of Criminology Division of Feminist Criminology, have organized NGO CSW parallel events at the past four sessions of the CSW around the respective priority themes and feminist approaches to justice. These have resulted in guest-edited special issues of academic journals: *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* (Volume 9, Issue 1, 2020), *Violence Against Women* (Volume 28, Issue 8, 2022), the *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* (Volume 47, Issue 2, 2023), and a forthcoming issue in *Feminist Criminology*. On our panels and in each issue, scholars have connected the theme relates to feminist criminology. Regarding the CSW68 review theme, we would like to highlight our special issue in the *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, which focused on the original discussion

of the CSW63 priority theme of “Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.” In that issue, experts highlighted the problems of women who are victims of sexual violence, family violence, and violence in educational settings, as well as those who are incarcerated or recently released from prison, in countries such as Argentina, Chile, the United States, Nicaragua and the United Kingdom. Feminist approaches to justice were advanced, such as women’s police stations, to provide better care for women who are the victims of crime, and better resources to help women leaving prison to remake their lives.

About our organizations: The World Society of Victimology works to advance victimological research and practices around the world, encourage interdisciplinary and comparative work and research in the field of victimology and advance cooperation between international, national, regional and local agencies and other groups who are concerned with the problems of victims. Among the WSV members’ areas of interest and expertise include the fields of social services and women’s rights.

Criminologists without Borders is a group of criminologists, researchers, professors and those working in the field who seek to apply scientific findings and ‘best practices’ to the policies and operations of crime prevention and criminal justice systems. It is a registered non-profit organization that provides objective information and research to inform policy and programs dealing with crime and criminal justice. Criminologists without Borders provides annual research input to the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the CSW.
