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Statement submitted by Anglican Consultative Council, Church Women United, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Lutheran World Federation, Presbyterian Church (USA), Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., Salvation Army, United Church of Christ – Board for World Ministries, United Methodist Women, Women’s Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, and World Young Women’s Christian Association, 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

The submitting organisations are a coalition of Christian denominations and ecumenical organizations representing over 550 million persons worldwide and committed to advocating for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, is honored to present this statement.

Faith communities recognize that gender inequality is both a political and spiritual issue. Our commitment to gender justice is rooted in our religious teachings, which call for the inherent dignity of all individuals, the just treatment of women and men, and the protection of the vulnerable. We affirm the universal moral imperative to advance gender justice, recognizing that society cannot flourish when women and girls are marginalized.

The Context of 2025: Progress and Setbacks

We celebrate the strides made in gender equality since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action thirty years ago. Women have made unprecedented gains in education, political participation, and economic empowerment. However, despite these advancements, the global community continues to grapple with persistent inequalities that disproportionately impact women and girls.

Women's Leadership and Decision-Making

Central to the progress we seek is the full and equitable participation of women in leadership and decision-making. Women bring unique perspectives and experiences that are essential to fostering inclusive and sustainable development. Women remain underrepresented in positions of power and influence, both in political spheres and within religious institutions.

We call on all governments and civil society actors to prioritize gender parity in leadership. This includes implementing quotas and gender-responsive policies that facilitate the active involvement of women, particularly those from marginalized communities. Within our communities, we commit to advocating for the inclusion of women in decision-making roles at all levels. Diverse leadership leads to better governance, more resilient communities, and more equitable societies.

Economic Justice and the Future of Work

Economic justice remains a cornerstone of gender equality. The persistent gender pay gap, discriminatory labor practices, and the undervaluation of care work are all barriers to achieving true economic equality for women. Women, too, often find themselves in precarious, low-wage, or informal employment, without access to social protections or fair wages.

Ecumenical Women urge governments to adopt and implement policies that ensure equal pay for work of equal value, as well as comprehensive labor protections for women in all sectors. Additionally, we call for the recognition of unpaid care work as a critical component of the global economy. Governments must invest in social infrastructure, including care and health services, to alleviate the disproportionate burden of care on women.

Women must have equal access to education and training shaping the future global economy. By ensuring that women have the skills and opportunities to thrive in all sectors, we can create a more inclusive and equitable workforce.

Climate Justice and Environmental Stewardship

The climate crisis and its impacts are deeply gendered. Women, particularly those in low-income and rural communities, are disproportionately affected by the adverse effects of climate change, including food insecurity, displacement, and increased workloads related to water and energy procurement.

Ecumenical Women advocate for a gender-responsive approach to climate action. Women are often the primary caregivers and stewards of natural resources in their communities, and their knowledge is critical to the development of sustainable solutions. We call on governments to ensure that women are included in climate negotiations and policymaking processes and to invest in women-led initiatives that promote sustainable development and environmental conservation.

Education and Empowerment

Education is a fundamental human right and a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality. While significant progress has been made in increasing girls' access to education, many girls, particularly in conflict zones and marginalized communities, are still denied this basic right. Early marriage, gender-based violence, and discriminatory cultural practices continue to impede girls' access to education.

Ecumenical Women reaffirm that all girls must have access to quality, inclusive education, from early childhood through to higher education. We call on governments to remove barriers to girls' education, invest in gender-sensitive curricula, and provide the resources necessary to create safe learning environments.

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence continues and is a pervasive and insidious barrier to gender equality. Gender based violence is a cause and consequence of gender inequality and injustice. With femicide continuing everywhere, women and girls risk their lives going about their everyday business. From domestic violence to sexual harassment in the workplace, women and girls continue to face violence in every sphere of their lives. Faith communities have a unique responsibility to speak out against this violence, recognizing that our sacred texts and teachings uphold the dignity and worth of everyone.

Ecumenical Women call for a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence. This includes strengthening legal frameworks to protect women and girls, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable, and providing survivors with access to justice, healthcare, and support services. We also call on religious leaders and faith communities to take a stand against harmful cultural and religious practices that perpetuate violence and discrimination against women and girls. We ask for every state to work towards transforming concepts of masculinity where women and men are seen and treated with equal dignity, respect and equal opportunities.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is essential for women's health, autonomy, and empowerment. The denial of sexual and reproductive health services not only violates women's human rights but also perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality.

Ecumenical Women urge governments to prioritize universal access to sexual and reproductive health services. We affirm that women have the right to make decisions about their own bodies and that access to these services is critical to

achieving gender equality. We call on governments to prioritize the funding needed to meet their commitments to gender justice.

Faith-Based Advocacy and Partnerships

As faith-based organizations, we recognize that our role is not only to advocate for gender equality within our own communities but also to work in partnership with governments, civil society, and the international community. Faith leaders hold significant influence, and we must use our platforms to challenge harmful gender norms, promote the equal treatment of all individuals, and advocate for policies that uplift and empower women and girls.

We call on all stakeholders to work collaboratively in the pursuit of a world where gender justice is a reality for all.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

As we look to the future, we must commit to bold and transformative actions that address the systemic inequalities that hold women and girls back. The global community must act with urgency and resolve to dismantle the barriers to gender justice, ensuring that women and girls can live free from violence, discrimination, and oppression.

As Ecumenical Women, we stand in solidarity with all those working toward a world where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a lived reality. We reaffirm our commitment to this sacred cause and call on all people of goodwill to join us in this work. Together, we can build a better world for all.

Endorsed by Anglican Consultative Council, Church Women United Inc., Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Lutheran World Federation, Presbyterian Church (USA), Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., Salvation Army, The, United Church of Christ – Board for World Ministries, United Methodist Women, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, World Young Women’s Christian Association, Women’s Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
