

**STATEMENT BY CONCHITA PONCINI, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
UNIVERSITY WOMEN TO THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP
ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

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International instruments of development such as the CCA, UNDAF, CDF and PRSPs are evidently the most important elements in the process and rules of conduct to the right to development. These forge the establishment of national laws, policies, mechanisms and model practices. However, there are shortcomings in the conceptual stage of decision-making, be it in setting macro economics strategies or in setting targets or benchmarks in poverty eradication since they remain largely founded on the traditional male paradigms and have often ignored the gender perspectives that have exacerbated inequalities or have couched women's rights in concepts of welfare and vulnerability, rather than agents and beneficiaries of sustainable developmental changes. They have not focused on the unrecognized and unvalued contributions of women's unpaid work to economic growth over her life course, which disaggregated data and other gender and intergenerational measurements could highlight.

In spite of Resolution 56/150 on the Right to Development which affirms under Para 14 the role of women in the process of the realization of the rights to development as active participants and beneficiaries to development and in Para. 15 affirms the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective means to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development...hardly anything was mentioned in the papers and discussions except sporadic mention of the word "gender". Despite the fact that the PRSPs and the Millennium Development Goals have placed gender equality and women's empowerment and participation as principal strategies to poverty eradication, the statements and discussions so far have not mainstreamed these perspectives except UNFPA who made a comprehensive statement on women's multiple roles including her reproductive role and, in the demographic context, their impact to sustainable development.

Barely anything was said about the importance of women's participation in information and communication technologies and the digital divide. The World Summit on Information Society is an event that would have gender equality implications especially since women particularly in developing countries do not have the capacity, the voice nor the right to self expression and intellectual property, hence the critical importance of the process of participatory development, equity and empowerment principles in bridging this digital divide.

Lastly, war, ethnic and religious conflicts have many negative ramifications to women's human rights and their right to development: violence against women, primarily in family and domestic settings emanating from customs and harmful traditions leading to honour killings or HIV/AIDS ,collective rape, school dropouts and deprivation of education especially of the girlchild.

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