

**STATEMENT BY CONCHITA PONCINI, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF  
UNIVERSITY WOMEN TO THE FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE SUB-  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

**ITEM 4: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS: RIGHT TO  
DEVELOPMENT**

**3 August 2005**

**Mr. Chair,**

**I am speaking on behalf of the International Federation of University Women.**

**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 economic strategies or in setting targets or benchmarks in poverty eradication since they remain largely founded on the traditional paradigms which 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. Data in national statistics have not been disaggregated by sex and age, data which intergenerational measurements are essential in impact assessment studies underscored today by Mr. Salama.**

**While the WG had also reaffirmed Para 14 of the Resolution 56/150 on the Right to Development as regards the central 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 concept of gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective means to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development, these concepts have yet to be developed in Ms. O'Connor's paper. We agree also with Mr. Salama to approach this concept from an holistic angle taking the work that have been done by other bodies and build upon them rather than re-inventing the wheel: to cite a few, the PRSPs and the Millennium Development Goals have placed gender equality and women's empowerment and participation as principal strategies to poverty eradication, UNFPA has made a comprehensive statement on women's multiple roles including her reproductive role and, in the demographic context, their impact to sustainable development. The ECE report on demographic trends has also underscored the gender perspective to sustainable development; a 2004 report produced by the World Economic Forum on "Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap" is a study undertaken recently by two experts which provides a benchmarking tool to assess the size of the gender gap, ranking 58 countries according to the level of advancement of their female population in: economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, health and well-being.**

**We propose that the Sub-Commission look at the ECE Prepcom documents on Beijing +10 notably gender-sensitive budgeting as an emerging trend. There is a growing recognition that macroeconomic policy plays an important role in the outcomes affecting living standards and opportunities for the population in general and women in particular. It is a tool that deals directly with the responsibility of governments to international commitments to women, namely equality in the distribution, access and funding of public resources. It also serves to achieve other government objectives such as transparency and efficiency as well as addresses accountability and can work towards consolidating the effectiveness of public policies and economic growth by reducing inequalities in the distribution and the impact of public resources. Most of all it is an effective means of mainstreaming gender into almost every aspect of economic and social policy by governments for ensuring that the adequate budgetary provisions are made.**

**The importance of women’s participation in information and communication technologies and the digital divide should also be looked at. 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.**

**Finally, 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 have led to honour killings or HIV/AIDS, collective rape, school dropouts and deprivation of education especially of the girl child.**

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