

STATEMENT TO THE 12<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

By

Conchita Poncini (IFUW)

*Item 8: ANNUAL DISCUSSION ON THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER  
PERSPECTIVE IN THE COUNCIL'S WORK (WITH FOCUS ON UPR)*

Mr. President,

I speak on behalf of the International Federation of University Women and as president of the Geneva NGO Committee on the Status of Women (of the Conference of non-governmental organisations CoNGO).

We welcome this year's discussion on integrating gender focus on the Universal Periodic Review. We have great expectations that this innovative mechanism is an institutional process that could bring light to particular gaps in the impartial and equal treatment between women and men of all ages and status. Some governments have suggested UPR risks being a selective process due to uneven political, economic, social and cultural situations. We believe however, if there is genuine goodwill and systematic accountability, UPR could enhance a state's performance towards fulfilling its commitment to gender equality, enjoyment of women's human rights and their access to decision-making. To take effect, it is essential that UPR include a gender equal perspective as a *prescriptive concept* and test for gender bias by asking the question "Does a woman have an equal opportunity, access, treatment and choice to develop in a given situation?" UPR should include gender-specific awareness and sensitivity factors, impact assessment and evaluation measures with time lines.

Much of the failure to redress gender inequality is due primarily to absence of systematic sex and age disaggregated national statistics that identify characteristics and practices of human rights violations specific to or primarily directed against women or to which women are particularly vulnerable. It is essential that all international treaties and conventions be the basis of analyses, especially CEDAW and the Platforms of Action of Beijing, Cairo and Copenhagen and the MDGs. CEDAW is particularly relevant to introduce temporary measures to eliminate direct and indirect discriminations in national legislation and practices.

Civil society and individuals from the ground are valuable in validating allegations of gender-based violations in the UPR and provide Council with models of best practices to advance women's status in countries under review.

Finally, we strongly endorse the creation of **one gender entity in the UN** just adopted by the General Assembly, for a stronger and more coherent UN delivery on gender equality. The Council should establish a synergetic relationship with this Body, inject a human rights approach to the Review Process on Beijing +15 by the Commission on the Status of Women and have regular interchange with the CEDAW Committee.

Thank you Mr. President.

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