*Check against delivery*

Sixty-Third session of the Commission on the Status of Women

**SIDE EVENT**

**Co-organised by CEDAW and UNWOMEN**

**“Women’s Rights and the 2030 Agenda:**

**40 Years of Empowering Women with a View of Sustainable development”**



**Statement by**

**Ms. Nicole Ameline**

**Vice-Chairperson**

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

18 March 2019, 10:00-11:15 a.m., Conference Room D, Conference Building

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*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

*Dear colleagues,*

It is a great pleasure to be here to discuss Women’s Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development. It is also a privilege to do so in the year when we mark the 40th anniversary since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment have been included as a stand-alone goal and mainstreamed in many other goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this holistic view of the 2030 agenda, ending discrimination and achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is considered an important way for transforming the deeply embedded civil, political, social, economic and cultural structures that impede the participation of women and girls to development.

The CEDAW Convention, with 189 States parties, remains one of the near-universally ratified treaties adopted by the United Nations and it provides an important roadmap for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). From the beginning of the process, the Committee has been a driving force of the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals and has made women’s rights the DNA of the SDGs. The Committee has contributed to shaping the methodologies for selected SDG indicators to assess the achievement of gender equality in close collaboration with UN Women and OHCHR. The Committee continues to be involved in the implementation of the SDGs by regularly assessing the realization of its goals as an essential mean to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls, in particular through Goal 5, Target 5.1 (ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere), and indicator 5.1.1 (“whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex”). The Committee has also integrated the SDGs in its procedures including by requesting States parties to provide in their written replies to the lists of issues and questions sent to States parties for the review of their periodic reports, information on the measures implemented to achieve the SDGs relating to gender equality. In addition, in its dialogues with the States parties, and in its concluding observations, the Committee systematically calls for the realization of substantive gender equality throughout the process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. CEDAW has also included a new standard paragraph on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its recommendations which calls for the realization of gender equality, both legal and *de facto*, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It often underscores the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of gender in the implementation process of SDGs, and urges State parties to recognize women as the driving force of sustainable development, and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.

Furthermore, with the support of UN Women, the Committee has elaborated new guidelines that integrate targets and indicators of the SDGs as they relate to provisions of the CEDAW Convention. The new CEDAW Guidelines are therefore critical tracking progress by States parties with respect to the SDGs. The document is therefore a guidance note to support States parties in linking the SDGs implementation with their obligations under the CEDAW Convention.

There are numerous connections between the Committee’s general recommendations and the 2030 Agenda. For instance,General Recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women clearly refers to the need to monitor the implementation of SDGs 5 and 16 thereby linking the work of the Committee to the accountability for the SDGs. General recommendation No. 36 (2017) on girls’ and women’s right to education explicitly mentions two critical targets on education to be met under SDG 4. General Recommendation No. 37 (2018) on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change, addresses women’s rights and draws a nexus to matters of particular concern to the 2030 Agenda including gender-based violence; migration and forced displacement; the right to health; the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to education and information; and the right to work and social protection.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

Women's empowerment is a leading force of change, and is critical for accelerating SDGs achievement and responding to various challenges. Equality is a right but it is also a key factor for the success of the SDGs. In this regard, I would like to emphasize that the recommendations put forward by the Committee as to the strategic and priority role of empowerment and respect for women's rights in any development strategy of a country must be reaffirmed with greater strength, and taken into account by the international community including in the framework of international development aid strategies.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

Women’s participation and equal opportunities for leadership are at the center of the Member States commitments enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular goal 5. We need to renew our vision of governance to move towards a model of “co-governance” understood as a new governance that fully integrates women, which is grounded in gender parity and women’s leadership. There is a lot of focus on the participation of women in politics and not enough on gender parity. As stated in the joint IPU CEDAW statement adopted on the occasion of the International Women Day, women’s leadership and the equal participation of women and men in public affairs and decision-making is a matter of human rights, a key element of democracy and lasting peace, and a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. Significant progress has been made in terms of women’s political participation and leadership despite many difficulties and some setbacks. However, progress has been slow and we need renewed efforts.

We, therefore, need to garner our collective strength and efforts to reach gender parity in political leadership by 2030 through the implementation of strategies that would include inter alia : a) accelerating full compliance by States of their laws, rules and practices with international human rights obligations particularly in relation to the empowerment of women and young women; b) embedding gender parity in constitutions and legal frameworks; setting out in the legal framework as an objective to be reached by 2030 a 50 per cent women’s representation in parliament and government; c) ensuring an equal number of women and men in leadership positions in all governance bodies, through transparent and fair processes, such as dual leadership and gender rotation in leadership positions; d) adopting legislation and policies to eliminate all forms of violence against women in politics; and implementing capacity-building programmes for women activists, candidates, politicians and parliamentarians.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

Regardless of a country's progress, women's rights are not consolidated enough to withstand crises. There is not one country in the world facing conflict that sees women's rights consolidated. The perception that women's rights are strategic for reconstruction, and peace, is not sufficiently highlighted and implemented. It is undeniable that women’s empowerment is a key factor for stability and state building, and that women, including women victims, are the force for lasting peace. In this regard, I would like to recall that in its resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the United Nations Security Council stressed the importance of women’s equal participation and full involvement at all levels and in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Likewise in its General Recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, the Committee reaffirms that protecting women’s human rights, during and after conflict, and ensuring that women’s diverse experiences are fully integrated into all peacebuilding, peacemaking, and reconstruction processes, are important objectives of the Convention.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We must create synergy between all the entities including through the establishment of solid and sustained coordination mechanisms. Indeed, there is a need to reinforce and strengthen the interaction between different entities. I would thus commend the composition of the panel, which is at the image of the kind of cooperation we want to promote where Member States, UN treaty bodies, UN entities and UN Officials, representatives from civil society and the private sector join efforts to create synergies on women’s rights and empowerment.

The mobilization of actors from the private sector is very important. We should engage more with the private sector to encourage the integration of the SDGs into efforts for achieving equality in the workplace. We have representatives from the economic world who committed to the SDGs. Equality in employment is not only key to women's empowerment but also important for the success of business successes and the achievement of the SDGs since some companies have integrated them into their growth indicators. For instance, companies such as L'Oreal, Danone and Orange have already committed to integrating women's rights into their initiatives aimed at achieving equality at work.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me conclude by inviting you all to collaborate with the Committee as it begins to hold events to celebrate the 40th anniversary since the adoption of the CEDAW Convention. This year provides us an opportunity to take stock of progress since the CEDAW Convention was adopted and reflect on future perspectives in relation to women’s rights and the SDGs. Finally, I wish to sincerely thank UN Women for its financial support in making this event possible. Thank you Ms. Åsa Regnér, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for the Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau at UN Women for your presence.

Thank you.