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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Joint written statement* submitted by Women's Federation for World Peace International, Soroptimist International, Universal Peace Federation, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 May 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Facilitating the Right to Development through Civil Society Engagement

Statement submitted by Women's Federation for World Peace International, with important input from its Youth Human Rights Internship Program, and co-signed by: Soroptimist and Nobel Laureate, Maureen Maguire in her personal capacity and Universal Peace Federation.

Women's Federation for World Peace International commends the work of the Human Rights Council in engaging in an inclusive strategy with several stakeholders in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals with a special focus on Human Rights. At WFWPI, we have been prioritizing the importance in mobilizing for the SDGs with a special focus on human rights as well, beginning by promoting, protecting and learning them "in small places, close to home" (E.Roosevelt 1958). The WFWPI UN Office Geneva, together with support from ECOSOC accredited members of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women in Geneva, has engaged in the following just in the year 2022:

- Through our UN Advocacy at the UN Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development and the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development, we were able to provide constructive inputs for the protection of development and human rights and be included in the formal reports of the UN every single time.
- Reached over 200 plus youth on programs such as Youth training on UN Advocacy, Curriculum training, Human Rights Internship program, Youth Peace Conference and Youth Conference for UN CSW.
- WFWPI Youth Peace Conference III: Hosted the Youth Peace Accord with the focus on Peace in the Korean Peninsula with Young People from Korea and all over the world, delegating as world leaders who achieved a successful peace agreement and unification plan.
- Human Rights Internship program: Engaged in advocacy at the UN on serious Human Rights concerns in countries such as Nigeria, Lebanon, Jordan, UK, Canada and many more through our youth interns who researched and published advocacy journals, and submitted them to various UN bodies.
- 100% of our participants of our UN Advocacy training program at the UN in Geneva who also were provided with the opportunity to speak as a delegate of WFWPI at the UN Social Forum 2022 reported that it is their first time at such a professional program, providing both skill development and opportunity to be at the UN and voice their demands for a better world at the UN.
- Through our coalitions and engagements with the NGO CSW Geneva and other committees, we were able to organize and host several important events, in the leadership of Mrs. Carolyn Handschin, Director of WFWPI UN Relations as the President of NGO CSW Geneva working with UN Women, Global NGO Committees and other important bodies in Geneva.
- Through the NGO CSW Global Youth Conference with a main leadership of WFWPI, we were able to prepare and engage nearly 150 young people for the UN CSW 2022
- Through our event at the Geneva Peace Week, we were able to demonstrate and invite participants to engage in cooperation to build a peace zone at the DMZ, where women can meet from both the Koreas to exchange culture, peace practices and promote unity.

Particularly in this statement, we take the opportunity as Women's Federation World Peace International to highlight and insist on the mobilization of the Right to Development for all. We had attended the formal Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development (EMRTD) and the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development

(GWRTD) sessions contributing to the discussion, lobbying and debates, one among several most active civil society representatives. The statement was well appreciated by other civil society members and the next days into discussing the draft convention was in strong consensus with other civil society organizations and a few member states, naming the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Democratic People's Republic of China and other developing countries. The second and the third day was occupied with the article's debates and discussions on the preamble on the draft convention, where WFWPI reflected various thoughts and also suggested additions to the draft convention.

Our reflections were based upon the principles of prioritizing the victims of poverty, global parity and other inequalities. The statements also mentioned that as civil society, there are strong realizations and importance given to the need for more investments in the sector of education and training for children and youth, the unemployed and the under skilled to facilitate the development of various societies.

The statements appreciate the detailed and impactful work of the drafting group of experts of the draft convention. WFWPI also appreciated the suggestion to use the name "International Covenant on the Right to Development" drawing inspiration from the ICCPR and the ICESCR and to consciously elevate its status to the "international bill of human rights" for the convention which was drafted.

The statements then reinstated on the importance of Peace and Security, as it constitutes a huge part of population who are suffering the violation of major human rights. On the same line, WFWPI promoted the role of Partnership with civil society. The statements mentioned that CSOs are major focal points in address Human Rights and especially in developing and Least Developing Countries. Therefore, insisting in the need to cooperate and realise the importance of the work of CSO in the same. The work of CSO with the governments and UN needs more strategic conversation with regards to funds and closer partnership for more efficient implement of the points mentioned in the draft convention was also stressed upon.

The statements later also highlighted the need for the principle of stronger institutions facilitating the right to development, socially, economically, and politically. Developing and Least developing countries have suffered through conflicts and exploitation in the past history, which has led to instability in institutionalizing positive peace and therefore protection of Human rights. There are societies, where the institutions need strength and support to fulfill the duty of protecting Right To Development. The statement therefore insisted and suggested the inclusion of the principle of stronger institutions with inspiration and support of the Sustainable Development Goal number 16 : Peace, Justice and Stronger Institution.

Bearing all the above in mind, we commit to support member states and the human rights council who have been taking leadership in the realization of the sustainable development goals through the right to development and many other human rights instruments for the benefit of the marginalized. Our years and decades of advocacy is not simply at the UN, but over 30 years investment in over 110 countries, through the voices of women and girls who have been empowered in the hundreds of local programs that have changed communities. Twenty-one schools have been built, always with strong leadership and character- building programs, emphasizing girls and young women. Graduates have gone on to become role models, influencing their communities. Families have been pulled out of poverty, and into dignity, preventing them from fleeing and becoming displaced and vulnerable refugees: all evidence based.

As family members are educated, trained, and engage in meaningful work and cohesive relations, benefit is poured back into the villages and communities. This full circle relationship of reporting about local successes and building UN advocacy for women's leadership around it, is returned again to the youth and women with opportunities for innovative support to the SDG's, Human Rights (Right to Development, Rights to Clean, Healthy and Safe Environment), prevention, peace and human security. This momentum

has enabled us to mobilize stronger initiatives at a larger scale, close to the ground, which we humbly commit to support the initiatives of the States and the Council with. Thank you very much.
