

Oral Statement for CSW 61

Title:

The economic empowerment of girls and women currently living in poverty.

On behalf of: Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd; International Presentation Association; Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Loreto Generalate; Maryknoll Sisters of Saint Dominic; Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary; Sisters of Charity Federation; Sisters of Mercy of the Americas; Sisters of Norte Dame de Namur; Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries; VIVAT International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
Thank you Chair.

My name is Winifred Doherty. I am speaking on behalf of 11 Congregations of Catholic Sisters and Brothers present in more than 100 countries. We bring to the Commission the voices of the millions of girls and women we are in solidarity with, and who continue to experience dehumanizing living conditions, discrimination and exclusion on multiple and intersecting levels. Girls and women living in economic poverty are generally outside the political space to impact policy, as are our organizations who work with them. We witness to many examples of good practice, which foster inclusion, human rights, gender equality, participation, economic empowerment and community building.

While the work of our organizations is aligned with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, we are often doing so in isolation from national policy and frameworks, and outside of the consultative processes and partnerships called for in the 2030 Agenda.

The challenges of reaching the furthest behind first can be overcome by guaranteeing their rights to participate in national dialogues and decision-making processes. Governments must ensure that marginalized girls, women and their communities are acknowledged, recognized and meaningfully included at all levels of decision making while recognizing and honoring the many sensitivities that make for difference and diversity. What excluded and dis-empowered girls and women want and need for themselves and their communities must be at the center of all policies. The Planet 50:50 by 2030 cannot be achieved without substantial resource allocation.

The efforts of self-mobilized women to foster their own economic empowerment is often eroded by the imposition of unjust taxes, austerity measures, the privatization of basic services if they exist, including sanitation, water, health service and education, or the total destruction and displacement of communities by corporate exploitative behaviors and criminal activity that continue with impunity – in the form of land grabbing, megaprojects, and trafficking of persons for labor or sexual exploitation.

We recommend that Governments recognize all persons living within their borders, consult and include them in policy making, and allocate the financial and technical resources that are demanded to counter the cyclic nature of deprivation, as perpetuated by impoverished and dehumanizing conditions, lack of basic services, and social protection.

Thank you.