



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 with special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, present in more than 100 countries throughout the world. We welcome the theme of the 61st Commission, focusing on women's economic empowerment in a changing world of work, but for the millions of girls and women we are in solidarity with, they continue to experience 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. Empowerment within our projects is on a one to one / group by group / community by community basis. 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 goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we are doing so in isolation from national policy and frameworks, and outside of the consultative processes and partnerships called for in Agenda 2030. Reaching the furthest behind first is a challenge when those with the most experience of being left behind are not invited to be part of 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 economic, environmental, social, and political policy formulation, while recognizing and honoring the many sensitivities that make for difference and diversity. What girls and women who experience exclusion and disempowerment 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 experience of self-mobilization of girls and women to foster economic empowerment and political participation while currently excluded from the political arena 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.