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## Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-ninth session

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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”

### Statement submitted by Criminologists without Borders Unchained at last, Red Dot Foundation and Soka Gakkai International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Submitted on behalf of the NGO  
Committee on the Status of  
Women, New York

## Statement

This Written Statement is submitted on behalf of the Red Dot Foundation, Soka Gakkai International, Criminologists without Borders and Unchained at Last, organizations whose representatives serve as Executive Committee members of the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women, New York, along with our member organizations, to address the priority theme of the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women: the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, including an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Commission on the Status of Women's 69th session and the 30th anniversary of Beijing +30 affords us a stock-taking opportunity to assess global challenges and pertinent issues facing women, girls, and youth including lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and gender non-conforming persons. In particular we focus on the Commission on the Status of Women revitalization as an opportunity to move forward with meaningful engagement on the part of civil society to drive improvements in implementation, commitments, accountability and resourcing.

This moment of multiple global anniversaries on women's rights, gender justice and social development demonstrates how action and resourcing in certain areas remain woefully lacking and inadequate, despite some advances in gender equality. At the recent United Nations Summit of the Future, we heard that ending extreme poverty among women could take one hundred and thirty-seven more years. With the 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals just six years away, not a single indicator under Goal 5 for Gender Equality has been fully achieved. And according to a United Nations Women report, "no country has all relevant laws to prohibit discrimination, prevent gender-based violence, uphold equal rights in marriage and divorce, guarantee equal pay, and provide full access to sexual and reproductive health."

We underscore that immediate and transformative action and ambitious investment are needed to shift the current trajectory to accelerate progress on women's rights and gender equality.

We point to the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women's informative survey to "collect input, ideas and views on how to transform the Commission on the Status of Women to increase its value and potential to accelerate the advancement of gender equality in countries worldwide." Analysis of more than 600 responses revealed that overwhelmingly, civil society organizations find the Commission on the Status of Women a crucial and effective space for advancing gender equality and that the evolution to a hybrid Commission on the Status of Women (a combination of virtual and in-person) has vastly improved inclusion and relevance. It also highlighted three consequential areas of reform that are in high demand:

Increase accountability of all Commission on the Status of Women stakeholders— Governments, United Nations Organizations and regional commissions, civil society organizations and others—by:  
establishing concrete and resourced mechanisms for local preparatory and follow-up processes to ensure more active and strategic engagement from civil society organizations;  
significantly strengthening regional and global non-governmental organization coordination mechanisms for the Commission on the Status of Women;  
streamlining and focusing the process of reaching agreed conclusions;  
producing ambitious, evidence-based agreements that can be communicated in a one- or two page document and assessed annually to increase effectiveness;

recognizing that gender inequality and the pushback on women's rights is at crisis levels. Respondents suggested that the Commission on the Status of Women could operate more like the Conference of the Parties on climate change with a rotating host country and an agenda that assesses progress, sets goals, negotiates strategies and policies, and shares proven and promising practices and research.

Enhance inclusion of diverse constituencies by:

urgently reforming the process of the Economic and Social Council accreditation by making it more transparent, expeditious and also creating more pathways for the participation of non-accredited non-governmental organizations;

investing far more in publicizing the existence, agenda and outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women. Survey respondents asserted that the Commission on the Status of Women is 'the best kept secret' for work on gender equality and extensively disseminating its deliberations and outcomes would be more beneficial. More information and consultations in local languages are also in high demand.

focusing on those who are most excluded or inadequately represented at the Commission on the Status of Women, including young people, older women and widows, men and boys of all ages, grassroots organizations, indigenous women and girls and people with disabilities.

Enhance the effectiveness and relevance of the Commission on the Status of Women by: systematically and regularly providing a global overview of discriminatory laws and practices against women. There was overwhelming support for having a regular annual review of discriminatory laws and practices against women and girls akin to a universal peer review process; having a standing item on ending gender-based violence against women and a regular focus on discriminatory laws would allow a comprehensive review and shed light on the challenges that women and girls face worldwide. It would provide an opportunity to showcase successful strategies and best practices for addressing and eliminating discriminatory practices. By highlighting both the problems and solutions, the Commission on the Status of Women can contribute to the advancement of legal reforms and the promotion of gender equality globally. incorporating the Women, Peace and Security agenda and the utilization of reports by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and the Working Group on Discriminatory Laws against Women; incorporating a regular focus on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to gender equality rather than a singular focus on the thirty-year old Beijing Platform for Action. We underscore the results of this survey as the beginning of a consultative process that we will undertake to ensure that women's and feminist views are substantively and systematically represented in ongoing deliberations about a revitalized Commission on the Status of Women. We emphasize the critical importance of an intersectional approach to drive meaningful and systematic change. Future consultations should be organized to amplify and expand this input with constituencies that need to form part of the Commission on the Status of Women revitalization. In conclusion, the Commission on the Status of Women has great potential to be a game changing platform for gender equality in the twenty-first century and to accelerate the advancement of gender equality in countries worldwide.