



International Advocacy Reports and Statements

**ORAL STATEMENT TO THE
12TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
by Conchita Poncini (IFUW)**

Item 8: Annual discussion on the integration of gender perspective in the Council's work (with focus on UPR)

Mr. President,

I speak on behalf of the International Federation of University Women and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women and as president of the Geneva NGO Committee on the Status of Women (of the Conference of non-governmental organisations CoNGO). We welcome this year's discussion on integrating gender focussed on the Universal Periodic Review. As we have stated, we have great expectations that this innovative mechanism would be an institutional process that could bring light to particular gaps in the impartial and equal treatment between women and men of all ages and status. Due to uneven national economic, social and cultural situations, some governments have suggested UPR risks being a selective process. We believe however that if there is genuine goodwill, commitment and systematic accountability, UPR could enhance a state's performance towards full implementation of international principles and standards on gender equality, enjoyment of women to human rights and their access to decision-making positions. To take effect, it is essential that the UPR should include a gender equal perspective as a prescriptive concept and test for gender bias by asking the question "Does a woman have an equal opportunity, access, treatment and choice to develop in a given situation?" In this regard, UPR should include gender-specific awareness and sensitivity factors, impact assessment and evaluation measures with time lines.

Much of the failure to redress gender inequality is primarily due to absence of systematic sex and age disaggregated national statistics that identify characteristics and practices of human rights violations specific to or primarily directed against women or to which women are particularly vulnerable. It is essential that all international treaties and conventions be the basis of analyses, from the Bill of Human Rights, CEDAW, Vienna Declaration and the Platforms of Action of Beijing, Cairo and Copenhagen. CEDAW is particularly relevant to introduce temporary measures to eliminate direct and indirect discriminations in national legislation and practices. Special Procedures could review existing gender-disaggregated data, national gender budget allocations and verify whether States have capacity-building institutions that address gender imbalances resulting from globalisation.

Lastly, civil society and individuals from the ground are valuable in validating allegations of gender-based violations in the UPR and to inform Council of models of best practices to advance women's status in countries under review.

Finally, we strongly endorse the creation of one gender entity in the UN just adopted by the General Assembly, for a stronger and more coherent UN delivery on gender equality. The Human Rights Council must establish a synergetic relationship with this Body, the UN Commission on the Status of Women Review Process on Beijing +15 and a regular interchange with the CEDAW Committee..

Thank you Mr. President.

Delivered by Conchita Poncini
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