

Statement submitted by Interregional Dialogue Policy Institute and International Alliance of Women, and Women's Intercultural Network, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

Statement

UN Women's Circle Campaign

1. The majority of the world's grassroots women still do not have a voice in the United Nations. Because of this their voices are not adequately heard in developing policies, program development and funding allocations. Their increased participation is essential in bringing about equal participation of women and men in power and decision-making in UN Women's Circle Campaign seeks to bring grassroots women and girl's leadership, that has long been otherwise in communication, to the United Nations.
2. We commend the recent decision of the sixty-fourth General Assembly to merge the four gender entities of the United Nations into UN Women. We welcome with gratitude Michelle Bachelet and her staff and pledge our support to work in partnership for gender equality and the development of women and girl's leadership and participation.
3. The UN Women's Circle Campaign, initiated by Circle Connection and supported by a parallel alliance of organizations and growing, is offering women and girls around the world an interactive circle workshop that is free, downloadable and written for successful utilization by both women and girls. The circle workshop provides an egalitarian setting where circle participants and facilitators empower women and girls to stand for themselves and to bring their voices to all levels of governance.
4. The UN Women's Circle Workshop is determined to access and tap the potential of grassroots women and girls and to extend their leadership and confidence to serve as leaders in their own communities regardless of their level of education, social status, culture, race, color, religion, gender or age. The program teaches listening without judgment, with communication, sharing leadership, consensus and other skills and processes that lead to full participation, respect for differences, community organizing and unifying efforts. In circle each woman and girl learns to find her own voice and to fully participate in discussing community problems and creating solutions. Women's way in thinking, leadership, initiative and organizing are honored as well as all life-giving indigenous and traditional practices related to preserving the land, medicine, culture, health and nature.

5. Women are committed to their families and community welfare. They know best not only the problems in their communities, but also the solutions. UN Women's Circle workshop and additional trainings of experiential learning are often in a nurturing environment, providing women and girls with the self-confidence, skills and courage to use their knowledge to become community organizers who help one another to claim their rights and access to education, training, financing, and employment and decent work, work together and work apart, from community leaders and others they learn how to address their issues in stopping violence against women and girls, sex trafficking and domestic and agricultural slave labor, child marriage and treatment, and to transform poverty and environmental destruction through education, advocacy and social entrepreneurship. They become empowered to catalyze change within their communities.

6. This workshop forms a community and guides the formation of working groups. Through the learning process they gain access to education and training, both formal and on-the-job training as community organizers and facilitators. Our targeted groups are those that are most marginalized, women in minority groups, women with AIDS, informal women workers, rural or urban poor women, and women who have been victims of violence.

7. The circle is both ancient and modern. In the women's movement in the United States in the late 60s and 70s began with consciousness-raising circles that led to large demonstrations. In the 1980s and 1990s became support and action groups that have grown in numbers throughout the world. Through the power of the internet, cell phones and other forms of communication, UN Women Circle Campaign can reach women in the most remote areas. Through these connections UN Women Circles and other women and girls' circles will become a powerful, global practices and actions of solidarity that have the greatest potential of becoming the largest people's movement in history.

8. We are dedicated to bringing women and girls and their grassroots organizations, not yet connected to the United Nations, into a working relationship and seek a two-way communication system with the Commission on the Status of Women and UN Women. We are dedicated to making our services and work accessible to all women and girls. We are dedicated to partnership building and providing mutual support to all efforts related to grassroots women and girls. The UN Women's Circles declaration is: *Committed to making an essential contribution, UN Women's Circles are forming around the world to discern issues and solutions that matter to marginalized girls in a more visible manner. We pledge our support to grassroots women and girls leaders to work in partnership with UN Women in making the Platform for Action, CEDAW, MDGs living documents.*