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Commission on the Status of Women**Fifty-fifth session**

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Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*

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"; implementation of strategic objectives and action lines identified as areas of concern and further actions and initiatives; access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work

Statement submitted by the Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Governmental organizations 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.

A new and more effective role for education in our world

"More than ever before, the essential task of education seems to be to make that all people enjoy the freedom of thought, judgment, free inquiry and imagination to develop their talents to the maximum. This is the true purpose of education."
Jaques Delors

Education, recognized as a fundamental tool for the development of human capital, and more specifically for the future of young generations. Education, the most important tool for the development of a better society, must be of high standards. It is only through this manner that the quality of life, the access to opportunities and the social environment may be improved. All of this in order to achieve the sustainable development of our world. A world free from violence, drug abuse, environmental degradation, social and economic inequality, and AIDS, among other diseases.

It is well known that the right to education is a scenario or circumstances for boys and girls and teenagers and adults, as it submerges them into the comprehension of the world in which they live. It enhances their faculties and provides their social and incursion. "Education for All" was the motto of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, April 2000ⁱⁱⁱ, where it was stressed that the right to education is not just the access to it (which is great achievement), but an education to life, which should also include the teaching of behavioral skills and abilities that enable young people to assume responsibilities in the social context and contemporary world.

On the same note, the *Beijing Platform for Action* adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women acknowledges the need for women to have full access, in equal conditions to men, to education and training as one of the 12 spheres of concern that demand the taking of urgent measures by the governments and the international community.

In its 41st period of sessions, celebrated in 1997, the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on the promotion of gender equality perspective in all educational programs and policies of the educational sector.^{iv} From then on significant efforts were made to push the total inclusion of women into the educational sector issue. The results have been considerable, in most of the countries especially related to literacy rates which are now significantly balanced between genders, according to the latest available OECD research, in the countries affiliated to it, more women get college degrees than men (46 and 30% respectively).^v

Regarding other subjects, the terminal inefficiency in basic education puts into notice that while the improvement in the coverage has been achieved, the same cannot be said about the quality and permanency. As an example of this, in Mexico more than half of the young people between 15 and 18 years old drop out of school, finishing studies for 98% of boys who will start elementary school and begin middle school, only 62% will see their education finished.^{vi} A consequence of this are the millions of teenagers that leave school, drastically retarding the opportunities arising from psychosocial tasks that affect and change their environment.

Male and female teenagers leave the classroom to go to work and balance the economic load in their family, in order to contribute to build a better future that would come about with the finishing of their studies. The ICLAC sustains that at least 11 to 12 years of formal education are required to avoid poverty and all suffering associated with it.

The problem is disturbing to both sexes. For that reason, gender equality must be integrated in the educational system, for both men's and women's. It is important to make emphasis in the need of a promotion of a gender perspective which integrates the problems of women, but also those which affect them in education. Men, all the same, must be part of this process, because they are the ones that what it "means to be a man". Among other things, those models include the glorification of violence, criminal behavior, the promotion of traditional tasks or the perpetuation and even justification of stereotypes.

The consequences of this crisis of masculinity are reflected in the gendered nature of the social and economic situation as well. For that reason it is urgent to address issues such as the increase in the number of men unemployed, represented by the increase in unemployment and raise of poverty, which have reduced the authority of the man in the family. Men's traditional role as the head of the family, has suffered a blow with his feminization and his authority. As result, he frequently resorts to exert violence towards women and children. In doing so, he takes advantage of the possibility of abusing his control over her, and thus repeating the stereotype of what "being a real man" is understood to be. Being it so, it is also highly necessary to research and understand the roots of violence against women through male perspective in a gender perspective.

Regarding other aspects, it is because of the lack of economic and recreational opportunities, that women as well as young men fall back to using sexual intercourse as a way of gaining respect and status in a society that now finds itself in many contexts is related with the sexual risk behavior, which generates an increase in the venereal diseases, which affects men as much as it does to women.

If gender is relational and women's issues as well as the issues regarding men, have a strong impact in social development; why does gender remain being only a synonym of women? The gender equality approach in education must be inclusive, as it is an issue that involves and regards the whole.^{vii} It is true that the male population, especially in rural areas, continues to be in disadvantage in several areas. Nevertheless, it is also true that interventions planned under the perspective of women's situations, will hardly be effective, or sustainable, if men are not involved, as coworkers, responsible for their actions.

True development will not be achieved longer as the idea that "men are women's greater problem" persists. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that in many occasions men are the ones who deny evolving in his pre-conceived ideas of masculinity. Being this so, it is in this area where the hardest work with young men should be done.

Along with the promotion among young women and men of equality between men and women, which both sexes is the importance to promote positive views about men's involvement in the caring of children, the protection of the environment and family needs such as responsible leadership, able to get all the components of the social and corporate dimensions of teenagers and young people. Educational programs which involve young men have proved to be more effective when they allow them to recognize pain suffering in a peaceful way, without developing violent behaviors towards women or other.

In different social contexts changes have been made in the way men perceive towards women. Individuals tend to agree with the importance of women's preparation and development. The approach to gender which認為 that both women and men reproduce gender roles makes an emphasis on the importance for getting them both involved in the development of their relationship. This kind of relationship will help to build a more specific and equal society. Our previous arguments allows to conclude that it is absolutely necessary to ensure that resources be destined to the achievement of gender equality in order to encourage an integrated perspective. Such a perspective should help in comprehending that gender issues between young men and women matter. These results will have effects in the way those young people socialize, inside their family and in their social context.

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ⁱ International Conference on Education for the Twenty-first Century, *The World Conference on Education*, UNESCO, Paris, 1996.

ⁱⁱ United Nations General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948.

ⁱⁱⁱ UNICEF/UNESCO. *A Human Right: Children's Education*. New York, 2007.

^{iv} Commission on the Status of Women 14th Session. *Entwining the world Conference on women: Review of*

Mainstreaming in the Organizations of the United Nations System. "Programme of Action." United Nations, 1995.

achieved in the following the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995.

(E/CN.6/1997/2). March 1997.

^v Hausmann, Ricardo (2010). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2010: Why women are still behind men*. Stanford University.

^{vi} *Highlights from Education at a Glance 2010*. OECD.

^{vii} Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa México. INEE. 2009: indicador AT02b-A

^{viii} Vélaz, Consuelo de Medrano Ureta (2005). *Retos de la Educación Básica en América Latina*, Fundación para el Desarrollo Social y la Paz.

^{ix} Barker, Gary. (2005). *Dying to be Men: Youth and Masculinity and social exclusion*. Oxford, U.K.. Routledge.

^x Basu, Sanjaya (2006). *The Other Half: Global youth issues in development*. World Bank, Washington D.C.

^{xi} Some examples of this program: MÁXIOS- Misión Mujer project on teenagers in Mexico; "Men Make a Difference" Campaign (UNESCO); White Ribbon Campaign (Canada); Men and Gender (Mexico); Conscientizing male Adolescent (Argentina); Stop Violence (Brazil).