

**Oral Statement by the Women's Federation for World Peace International
Opening Plenary of the 26th Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right
to Development
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Civil Society Leadership for the Protection of the Right to Development,
with a Special Focus on Women's Rights Organizations

Introduction

Our organization is dedicated to fostering peace, human rights, and the advancement of women worldwide. As we discuss the critical role of civil society, especially women's NGOs in advancing the right to development, we see a win-win paradigm.

WFWPI, with chapters in over 120 nations, has held training and advocacy courses in working with the R2Dev with enthusiastic response, not to learn to demand more, but to explore improved collaboration and participation with their governments and peers for mutual benefit.

Understanding the Right to Development

The right to development aims at improving the well-being of individuals and communities and enabling people to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. It is unfortunate that a right to development has become divisive, and perhaps women-led NGOs can help to improve by demonstrating substantively its mutual benefit?

The Role of Civil Society in Advancing the Right to Development

Civil society organizations (CSOs) act as catalysts for change, advocates for policy reform, and bridges between communities and decision-makers. CSOs are instrumental in identifying development challenges, mobilizing resources, and implementing grassroots initiatives that drive sustainable development.

Challenges Faced by Women's Rights Organizations

Despite their critical contributions, women's rights organizations face numerous challenges in their efforts to protect and promote the right to development- including limited access to funding, restrictive legal and policy environments, and socio-cultural barriers that hinder their work. Additionally, women human rights defenders often face threats and violence, calling for increased protection and support.

Empowering Women's Rights Organizations

Empowering women's rights organizations is essential to enhance their capacities to lead and advocate effectively for the right to development. This involves; prioritizing resources; facilitating knowledge

exchange and capacity building and creating enabling environments including legal and policy frameworks for women's organizations to operate more effectively.

The Impact of Women's Rights Organizations on Development

Women's rights organizations have made significant contributions to advancing the right to development by addressing gender disparities, advocating for policy reforms, and implementing grassroots initiatives. Their work has led to improvements in areas such as education, healthcare, economic empowerment, and political participation.

Call to Action

In conclusion, the Women's Federation for World Peace International reaffirms its commitment to promoting the right to development and the empowerment of women worldwide. By supporting and empowering women's rights organizations, we can create more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development outcomes for all. Let us work together to ensure that the right to development is realized for every individual, regardless of gender or background.

Thank you

In light of these contributions and challenges, the Women's Federation for World Peace International calls on member states, international organizations, and donors to take the following actions: (written statement version)

- 1. Prioritize Funding for Women's Rights Organizations: Provide flexible, long-term funding to support the work of women's rights organizations and enable them to address development challenges effectively.*
- 2. Strengthen Partnerships and Networks: Foster collaborative partnerships between women's rights organizations and other stakeholders to enhance their capacity and amplify their advocacy efforts.*
- 3. Create Enabling Legal and Policy Environments: Eliminate legal and policy barriers that hinder the work of women's rights organizations and ensure the protection of women human rights defenders.*
- 4. Recognize and Support the Contributions of Women's Rights Organizations: Acknowledge the critical role of women's rights organizations in advancing the right to development and support their efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.*