



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
12 December 2014
English
Original: French

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-ninth session

9-20 March 2015

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

Statement submitted by the French Coordination for the European Women's Lobby, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Written statement by the French Coordination for the European Women's Lobby

The most recent figures published by the United Nations on discrimination and violence of which women are victims show that they continue to occur, and are even on the increase.

There is little chance of this situation changing significantly in the short term, for any such change involves challenging cultural tenets and stereotypes that are still firmly anchored in peoples' minds.

Thus, what is most urgent is to tackle something governments can act upon swiftly and effectively and which affects a fundamental right of every woman – the right to have control over her fertility.

In the light of the most recent world statistics showing that a majority of States lack the will to recognize the fundamental right of self-determination with regard to their own bodies:

- 222 million women in the world have no access to contraception (especially the most vulnerable among them, adolescents);
- every year, 80 million women sustain unwanted pregnancies (often following sexual violence);
- 22 million of them resort to unsafe abortions, which are totally unlawful, as a result of which 50,000 women die every year.

We call for:

- the universal decriminalization of abortion;
- the promotion of free, safe family planning services, including abortion;
- the inclusion of these rights in the charters of fundamental rights.

Lastly, we call for States refusing to recognize and apply these rights in practical terms on the pretext of cultural or religious grounds, to be regarded as committing violence against women.
