



Milestones

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Women 2000

The fifty-ninth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women was held in New York from March 9-20, 2015. At this session, and in the context of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, a review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcomes of the Conference and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly was undertaken, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”. The Political Declaration of the session, while welcoming the progress made towards achieving gender equality, however expressed concern that progress had been slow and uneven and that major gaps and obstacles remained in the implementation of the twelve critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action. It committed to achieve measurable results by 2020 and to fully realize gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls by 2030.

While the Political Declaration was a milestone for the UN Commission on the Status of Women, it attracted strong criticism from civil society organizations (CSOs), who issued

a joint statement in this context. Signed by nearly 1000 CSOs, the statement asserted that “At a time when urgent action is needed to fully realize gender equality, the human rights and empowerment of women and girls, we need renewed commitment, a heightened level of ambition, real resources, and accountability. This Political Declaration, instead, represents a bland reaffirmation of existing commitments that fails to match the level of ambition in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in fact threatens a major step backward.”

The statement proceeded to outline CSO expectations of an effective Political Declaration, necessary to achieve the full realization of the human rights of women and girls.

The Declaration is available at: www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015/session-outcomes

The CSO critique is available at: www.awid.org/eng/News-Analysis/59th-Session-of-the-Commission-on-the-Status-of-Women/CSW59-Declarations-and-Statements2/Statement-on-the-Political-Declaration-on-the-occasion-of-the-20th-anniversary-of-the-Fourth-World-Conference-on-Women ❏