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The Link between Female Educational Attainment and Development

Oral Statement delivered by
Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IIMA)
And co-sponsored by
International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education, Development
Defence for Children International
Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII

Thank you,

IIMA, on behalf of the co-signing NGOs, thanks you for the opportunity to participate in such an important dialogue to promote women's rights worldwide. We believe that the realization of the right to education is the cornerstone of achieving sustainable development in all communities across the world.

Though improved enrollment rates and quality of education are universally necessary, we are particularly concerned with gender-based disparities that exist in many regions of the world. We are in agreement with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education that "achieving a girl's right to education as a priority is an absolute requirement, as [...] girls and women constitute a majority of those who remain deprived of education."

Low levels of female educational attainment are linked to other low development indicators, such as early and forced marriage, child labor, and environmental degradation. With an educated and empowered female population, communities are able to take important steps towards increased development with a more specialized workforce and greater capacity for innovation.

We would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Create the necessary legislative frameworks to ensure that education is not only universally required, but also particularly incentivized and supported for the female population.
2. Establish concrete awareness programs to make known to parents and children about the right to education, especially for girls, and provide concrete reasons why educating girls is worthwhile. Pay particular attention to addressing socioeconomic and cultural barriers to education, specifically the opportunity cost of female education in poor families.
3. Create comprehensive programs that address the most pressing causes for low female enrolment and high female dropout rates, such as gender-biased school officials, poorly equipped school sanitation facilities, prevalent early marriage or pregnancy, and other important causes linked to extreme poverty.
4. Provide mandatory comprehensive training programs for teachers and school administrators about the importance of educating girls and young women, using a human rights-based approach that emphasizes the principles of the CRC.

Thank you again.