



United Nations Commission for Social Development 61st session, 6-15 Feb 2023

Oral Statement of Soroptimist International

Supported by the International Presentation Association, Red Dot Foundation, Salesian Missions

(Madame/Mister) President,

Excellencies, UN Officials, esteemed delegates and all stakeholders present here today.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at the 61st session of the Commission for Social Development.

My name is Despoina Afroditi Milaki and I am the UN representative for the International Presentation Association. I am delivering this statement on behalf of Soroptimist International and the three co-signatories International Presentation Association, Red Dot Foundation, and Salesian Missions.

The combined effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, and violent conflicts have intensified the long-term crisis of socio-economic inequities, resulting in a globalized crisis of Inequality, and a real existential threat to vulnerable communities everywhere. Economic inequalities are magnified by these crises and in turn make them harder to solve.

Soroptimist International, along with the International Presentation Association, Red Dot Foundation, and Salesian Missions, as organizations dedicated to the Education and Empowerment of Women and Girls, would like to impress upon this audience the idea that it is only through Education and Decent work conditions, with no violence and harassment for any reason for all workers of any gender everywhere that these crises can be solved. But the depth of inequality and the combined shocks of disease, pandemic and war have exposed that the present social contract, what we owe to each other and to the planet we live in, is unraveling. There is therefore an urgent need to redefine and renegotiate the relations within and among societies, between the haves and the have nots, and with Nature.

This new Social Contract needs to be based on solid principles the United Nations has enshrined in its main early documents and the more recently agreed upon Agenda 2030 but have so far been only partly respected and quite often only paid lip-service to. Namely:

Respect for all Human Rights: political, social, economic, and cultural.

Gender Justice and Equality

Human Solidarity

Non-violence and

A Contract with Nature.

As we move forward into the Future, we must ensure that the new Social Contract is based on a vision of justice, equality, and sustainability, and that all decisions are made with the direct participation of people, taking into account the health of planet Earth.

Decent work, Social Protection for all, Social Rights including access to food, water, housing, health, and education; sustainable economic growth, employment creation in the green economy, and social dialogue should provide the basis for a long-enduring, just and green Social Contract that, once and for all, leaves no one behind.

This is our vision and we are here to work toward it in unflinching and committed solidarity, to find common and durable solutions among all stakeholders.

I thank you!