



**Oral Statement to the 60th Session of the
Commission on the Status of Women on behalf of
the Faith and Feminism Working Group**

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Delivered by Saphira Rameshfar

The sheer scale of implementation called for by Agenda 2030, prompts our recognition that no one part of society will succeed in realizing the goal of gender equality in isolation. The Faith and Feminism Working Group is a Civil Society lead coalition, based at the United Nations in New York, comprised of faith-based organizations, feminists, secular organizations and social justice movements working towards gender equality.

The Working Group seeks to foster a new discourse at the UN about the means for the transformation of structures and attitudes that sustain gender discrimination and inequality. This group commits to expanding the space for constructive dialogue among academics, policymakers and civil society and UN agencies, in order to foster more effective analysis, research, strategy and advocacy with the aim of achieving gender equality in the implementation of Agenda 2030.

The role of religion as a shaper of culture and social life has been long established and is now increasingly recognized in global politics and development discussions. Religious leaders and faith-based organizations have a pivotal role to play in addressing the profound injustices that prevent women and girls from developing their full potential and playing their rightful role in the

advancement of society. Normative frameworks, legal standards and the social sciences have unequivocally affirmed the equality of all human beings. Yet it is the beliefs and practices about the roles and capacities of women of all ages, girls, men, and boys and about the relationship among them that continue to be the most formidable obstacles to transformative and lasting change at local, national, and international levels. Such change will require, among other things, the systematic dismantling of social structures and practices that perpetuate inequality, and specifically, the marginalization and oppression of women and girls.

Equally important will be efforts to replace the often confrontational dynamic between secular and faith based proponents of gender equality, recognizing that such tensions are often rooted in conceptions of culture and are driven by broader political agendas, geopolitical realities and where religion is instrumentalized and political fragilities are exploited.

This group recommends that the United Nations, the commission, academics and civil society reflect and consult on the need for religious and secular actors to work together to create a narrative that encompasses the ideals inherent in respective worldviews—a narrative that focuses on our common humanity, on justice and the establishment of peace.