



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

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

### Statement submitted by YWCA of Japan, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The YWCA of Japan, founded in 1905 and affiliated to the World Young Women's Christian Association since 1906, was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2019. We submitted our first ever statement to the United Nations last year, and are very pleased to submit the second one here.

We, the YWCA of Japan, believe that every individual, especially women, should be guaranteed and fully exercise their civil rights, and the voice of young women in particular should be heard and counted. We are engaged in activities such as the empowerment of marginalized people, with the aim of promoting women's social participation and realizing a peaceful world without violence, where human rights, health and the environment are protected for all. We are trying to achieve this through the empowerment of young women.

When we look at the global issue of climate crisis, we recognize it as the injustice between regions/nations, between generations and between genders. We understand if global warming accelerates, more burden will be laid upon the shoulders of women of economically marginalized nations/regions. More girls will have to give up schooling. More young women and girls will be subjected to human trafficking as well as child marriage.

Acknowledging that the cause of global warming is mostly made by the industrialized world, and the results are more heavily borne by those people who are not making the cause, we strongly feel that we cannot evade our responsibility as people of Japan.

As the following generations will face severe effects, we believe young people's voices should be rightly heard and reflected when any decision is made.

We, YWCA of Japan, believe in the importance of a human-rights centred approach when we aim at decarbonization. We strongly oppose promoting nuclear power generation as an alternative to fossil fuel. Throughout the entire process of nuclear power generation, radiation exposure cannot be avoided right from the uranium mining, through decades of operation up till the closure of the power station, meaning that this system is fundamentally premised on the existence of people who suffer health effects. Exposure to radiation is especially hazardous to female reproductive organs, making this also a sexual and reproductive health threat. In addition, the plan for the permanent disposal of radioactive waste is yet nowhere in sight.

The YWCA of Japan has opposed nuclear power generation since 1970; we had raised anti-nuclear power voice as a minority in our society, but after the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant in 2011, we feel that the majority of the grassroots citizens now share our sentiment. Especially, many women and young women have joined and led the movement calling for the abolition of nuclear power plants; we have seen women bearing the role of caretakers and nurturers in their families and communities take action for the sake of safety of children and future generations. It is vital for the society to listen to their voices.

In order to change the current structure where environmental destruction associated to energy generation/consumption causes severe human rights violation and for the worldwide humanity to truly coexist, we should shift towards renewable energy, as well as realizing that there is no power source that does not cause any environmental pollution/destruction, therefore look for ways to break away from the current level of mass energy consumption.

In this climate, environmental and energy crisis, we inevitably and immediately have to seek for better adaptation. YWCA of Japan has provided mid-long term support both substantially and psychologically to those in post-disaster areas, including areas affected by the nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima, as well as the massive natural disaster in Kumamoto. Through such activities, we are convinced that we could build back better by involving perspectives and participation of young women in the processes. Empowering young women as active agent of change for energy shift and better disaster prevention and recovery is critical in this sense.

It is critical to empower young women at the ordinary times so that they can be active agents of change for energy shift and better disaster prevention and recovery at the time of crisis.

We strongly hope these two things are taken up;

- The channel and mechanism should be made in order to hear the voice of young people, in particular young women. Young women should be guaranteed to have a say whenever a decision is made.
- Decarbonization should be achieved without nuclear power generation.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement and look forward to working with the non-governmental organization community, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the United Nations Economic and Social Council to advance these critical issues.

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