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Statement submitted by Befa Women and Child Care Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special 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.



Statement

Women's empowerment is an important goal in development efforts

Recognizing that women and children suffer disproportionately from poverty, and that this situation presents a major challenge to social development, there is a need to place a special emphasis on working with women to create permanent change.

Change, which in this case means improvement in the physical, economic, political or social well-being of people, will not be strengthened or sustained unless individuals, structures and relationships change.

Individual change

Women become actors for change, able to analyse their own lives, make their own decisions and take their own actions. Women gain the ability to act by building awareness, skills, knowledge, confidence and experience.

Structural change

Women, individually and collectively, challenge the routines, conventions, laws, family forms and kinship structures, as well as the behaviours, that are taken for granted and that shape their lives. They challenge these accepted forms of power and the manner in which they are perpetuated.

Relational change

Women form new relationships with other social actors, shape conditions and develop mutual support in order to negotiate, become agents of change and alter structures and, as such, realize rights, dignity and the security of their livelihood.

There is a clear need to develop multifaceted programmes and partnerships to tackle the underlying causes of such defects in development as poverty, and place special emphasis on working with women and girls to create lasting social change. Such initiatives as education, health, advocacy, skill acquisition, exchange programmes and sports will advance gender equality, promote health education and the development of life skills, provide psychological support and ultimately strengthen development.
