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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern, and further actions and initiatives; priority theme: “The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges”

Statement submitted by Associated Country Women of the World, 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.

* E/CN.6/2012/1.



Statement

“The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges”

Priority theme for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2012

While the term “rural women” refers to “non-urban” women, rural women take on many roles in society similar to those of women living in cities. We often think of rural women as being involved in agriculture and living on the land, but this diminishes their full role and responsibility to the home and society. Rural women are an integral part of efforts aimed at alleviating worldwide poverty, eradicating hunger and promoting development.

Rural women face many challenges: tending to large families; poor nutrition; lack of support; lack of ability to own property; lack of ability to make important decisions about their own bodies and the family; lack of access to good roads and transportation to ensure quality marketing opportunities; lack of health care, including health education, medical care, access to medical personnel and lack of good mental health care; lack of ability to get credit to implement new ideas or new systems; and lack of respect from Governments. However, taking all these challenges into consideration, rural women still wish for better lives for their children.

Lack of support and lack of access are the major stumbling blocks preventing rural women from obtaining a better life for their families and communities. International assistance, self-help groups, communities and Governments must accept that rural women are an important part of society. Rural women must be accepted as having an important role in helping to achieve a better tomorrow for rural peoples and rural communities in general.

Rural women do unpaid work that is essential to every country and every society. It is imperative for all levels of Government to assist and support this vital group in every society in order to move forward.
