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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 International Peace and Development Organization and Women Organization for Development and Capacity-Building, non-governmental organizations 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 following is the story of a rural farmer who moved from poverty to achievement to decision-making:

Battul al-Tayyib is a farmer in the village of Sirhan in a rural part of Jazirah State, the Sudan. She was not able to continue her studies because of her family's material situation. She married and gave birth to five children.

The local people are shepherds and farmers. Battul al-Tayyib worked as a hired labourer in the fields and, owing to her dedication and skill, was able to gain experience as well as capital. She began to take part in development projects made available by civil society organizations that combat poverty. She received a seed grant and rented a plot of land for cultivation. An abundant sorghum harvest brought her a sizeable income, which she used to buy 3 feddans of land. Once a hired labourer, she had become a landowner.

She took her project further and expanded her farmland with the help of her small family. She planted peanuts, wheat and cotton, as well as staples such as beans and vegetables such as okra. Her dedication led to increased production year after year. As an incentive for her outstanding work, she was granted easy-installment access to a tractor by the Agricultural Bank of Sudan, which helped her to develop her crops and her investment. She used the additional capital to buy land, bringing the total cultivated area to 15 feddans. Production increased year after year, and eventually she was able to acquire 2 harvesters.

This year, Battul al-Tayyib is sowing 250 feddans with wheat. The seeds and fertilizer were acquired with funding from the Jazirah Project and the Agricultural Bank of Sudan. She has made a significant contribution to providing food security in rural areas, and her considerable income from crop sales has brought her recognition in the local area and the state. She now promotes rural development by funding small enterprises, empowering local women and acting as an effective member of the farmers' union.

Since her time as a hired labourer, she has clearly contributed to her community and has been an active member of women labourers' associations. She has pioneered volunteer work in the village and gained social popularity, which led to her nomination as a women's representative to parliament. She reached that decision-making role not through academic qualifications but by promoting development and the advancement of rural women and acting as a model of a successful rural Sudanese woman.

She has been honoured at the regional level with the Women Achievers Award of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development.