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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**

Statement submitted by African Agency for Integrated Development, 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.



Statement

Prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls in Uganda

There are many actions taking place connected to violence against women and girls in Uganda. Though the Government of Uganda is trying to control it, there is need for other actors to intervene in the control. This proves that there is an urgent need for different stakeholders in the country, especially civil society organizations, to prevent these violations and development partners should support such initiatives.

According to the analysis of the African Agency for Integrated Development, these violations are caused by many issues, which include societal and cultural norms and the political and economic context. In Uganda, where we operate, we are facing the problems of women's and girls' rights being violated in the following ways.

Women

Women in Uganda face problems arising from societal and cultural norms; the rights of married women are commonly violated and rural men in most parts of Uganda consider women to be donkeys who have to take the responsibility of doing all the work at home, like fetching water, collecting firewood, cleaning children, cooking food, cleaning the home. Men have very few responsibilities at home; they think that housework is designed for women, as did their grandfathers and fathers. There is domestic violence, where women are mistreated by their husbands and beaten; others are killed, and when marriages break down, the properties acquired together during the marriage are not divided, though the Government has enacted a law on divorce. Most uneducated women fear using the law to sue their partners and they end up suffering; others end up as sex workers in towns, being housemaids or sleeping on the street.

Girls

Both educated and uneducated girls in Uganda are really suffering. Most violence against girls is based on the economic crisis, which is caused by lack of employment in the country for both skilled and unskilled workers. These days in Uganda there are fraudulent companies which have emerged to make money out of Ugandan girls by exporting them to Asian countries like China and Malaysia. These girls are taken there always after being deceived that they are going to get well-paying jobs but, on arrival, they are turned into forced sex workers and money given to them is taken by those companies. Another activity of those companies is to kill these girls so that they can sell their kidneys to some countries which buy them at a high price. There are many girls who have been taken from Uganda and have disappeared from Asian countries in that way. Our organization has heard rumours that the kidneys are used for some medicines, but we are not sure of the use of the human kidneys.

There is the case of girls living in Uganda who have not managed to leave and are now doing commercial sex work, especially in Kampala and small towns within the country. Most of these girls are exposed to HIV/AIDS. We have found that HIV/AIDS infection has increased due to poverty. Poverty is the biggest contributor

to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa, particularly in Uganda. The Government of Uganda has tried to control female circumcision but this practice is still hidden; there is a need for control by development partners in Uganda.

Some cultures and some faith-based institutions believe that young girls can marry at an early age. The Government of Uganda has enacted a law on such issues but the practice is still there. Some parents do not educate their girl children because they believe that girls are useless unless married for gain, such as bride price.

There are some cases where young girls are defiled by old men, hence acquiring HIV/AIDS; sometimes men defiling girls negotiate with the girls' parents, paying them money out of compassion. This has been evidenced by our organization in its area of operation in western Uganda. These cases have resulted in early pregnancies, which cause the girls to drop out of school.

Solutions to address the problems caused by violence against women and girls in Uganda

The Agency intends to:

- Carry out projects on gender equality: our organization will sensitize men about gender equality, reaching all areas with information and monitoring if men use these skills in their homes.
- Implement projects on human trafficking of girls taken to Asian countries: since the Agency is implementing a project on human trafficking on a small scale in Uganda, we plan to expand it to other areas so that all people in Uganda can receive sensitization messages. This will control girls from being taken abroad by fraudulent companies.
- Carry out projects on domestic violence: the Agency will implement projects after acquiring funding to implement the projects. We seek development partners to implement domestic violence projects in Uganda.
- Undertake joint planning on violence against women and girls in Uganda: the Agency will organize joint planning meetings with different stakeholders, especially the Government of Uganda and different civil society organizations, so that we come up with the way forward on control measures.
- Fundraise for projects on violence against women and girls in Uganda: the Agency will organize fundraising measures to get funds for implementation of control projects on violence against women and girls in Uganda. This will be done by contacting potential development partners for funding, especially United Nations organizations interested in funding these projects.

Challenges faced in order to address the above problems/gaps

- Lack of financial support to address the problems through implementation of control projects in the country. There is no special financial support either from the Government or development partners to address these problems.
- Lack of specially designed policies on violence against women and girls in Uganda. United Nations agencies should share such policies with organizations in consultative status to guide us in our grass-roots activities.