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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 Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, Agricultural Missions, Alliance for Africa, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Association des Badinga du Congo, Association for Progressive Communications, Association for Women’s Rights in Development, Association of War-Affected Women, Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication, BAOBAB for Women’s Human Rights, Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid, Center for Women’s Global Leadership, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, Engender, Equality Now, Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie Van Homoseksualiteit — COC Nederland, Forum for Women and Development, Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, International Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, ISIS International (Chile), ISIS: Women’s International Cross-Cultural Exchange, Loretto Community, Madre, Movimiento Manuela Ramos, National Council for Research on Women, Pacific Women’s Watch (New Zealand), Peace Boat, Salamander Trust, Soroptimist International, Tandem Project, Tlachinollan: Grupo



de Apoyo a los Pueblos Indios de la Montaña, United Methodist Church General Board of Global Ministries, United Nations Association of San Diego, Urban Justice Center, US Human Rights Network, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, Women against Rape, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, Women for Women's Human Rights: New Ways, Women's Health in Women's Hands, Women's Intercultural Network, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women's Welfare Centre, World Young Women's Christian Association, Worldwide Organization for Women and Zonta International, 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.

Statement

We, the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University and women's and human rights organizations dedicated to gender equity and the elimination of gender-based violence, welcome the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women and States' consideration of the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls as its priority theme.

In 1991, the Center launched an international campaign entitled "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence". Since then, it has mobilized thousands of activists and organizations worldwide to increase awareness of gender-based violence and call upon Governments to respond by protecting women and preventing such violence. Women's security and well-being are compromised by both the threat and experience of violence, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations. Over the last three years, the campaign has worked to highlight linkages between gender-based violence and militarism, including political violence against women, the proliferation of small arms and their role in domestic violence, sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings and the role of State actors as perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence.

In 1993, Member States adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, asserting that gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation were incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person, and must be eliminated. Since that time, States have reaffirmed their commitment to ending violence against women through the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the agreed conclusions of the forty-second and fifty-first sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010).

Despite these commitments, violence against women persists as a widespread and pervasive human rights violation. States have clear and concrete obligations to prevent such violence, prosecute and punish perpetrators and provide redress and relief to victims and survivors of violence. We, the members of civil society organizations worldwide, call upon Member States:

- (a) To pursue, by all appropriate means and without delay, a policy of eliminating violence against women and strengthening the rule of law and the capacities of civilian and military justice systems to address gender-based violence;
- (b) To recognize that a culture of militarism promotes and reinforces a culture of violence and to take the measures necessary to facilitate disarmament and promote peace, including through the ratification and implementation of the arms trade treaty, when established;
- (c) To invest in those programmes and projects that promote human security;
- (d) To respect, protect, promote and fulfil all human rights and to take urgent and concrete measures to secure gender equality.

We call upon the Commission on the Status of Women to facilitate leadership to support States in fulfilling their human rights obligations. We remain committed to working with women's organizations and the United Nations in building a more peaceful world.