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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 Federación Internacional de Asociaciones de Ayuda Social, Ecológica y Cultural, 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

What can we, Federación Internacional de Asociaciones de Ayuda Social, Ecológica y Cultural, propose to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-eighth session?

How do we imagine the world of the future? How can it be better?

What will the world that we want to build be like, so that in it all MDGs, which all of us wish attained by 2015, may have been fulfilled?

At this point let us deal with the Goals related to women.

At this point let us imagine a world in which all girls, whether children or adolescents, and all young and adult women have had the education they need. Many are university graduates, many more have received quality vocational training, and all, without exception, have finished secondary education. The illiteracy rate is zero per cent among children and adults, female and male.

Achieving all that requires efforts to improve the current situation, attain the said goals and consolidate the attainments. The first objective is, as it should be, gender equality and education for all: an education based on equality, training women in managing the economy on an equal footing with men, respectful of both genders, founded on equity, targeting men and women, and offered by professors, teachers and instructors trained in education intertwined with gender equality.

In the world we want, education must also be oriented towards peace, teaching all to solve the problems, differences and difficulties of life calmly, through dialogue, negotiation and consensus or generally accepted voting, peacefully, among all persons, whether men or women, young or older.

In that world, gender violence has been eradicated by means of appropriate education from primary school through the university and in families, which have received formal education. Legal and social measures have been taken to ensure that, in all countries violence, particularly against women, constitutes, legally and socially, an aggravating circumstance; and that men who are violent towards women are not accepted until their behaviour and attitude change.

As the Commission concluded at its fifty-seventh session, discrimination and violence against women and children have no place in the world. They are therefore eradicated from the world we want.

To that end, education must focus on, inter alia, human values, respect, equality, solidarity and peace, not only at the level of teachers and the family, but also in cinema and television. In that future world, gender equality cuts across all television programmes, news reports and broadcasts as a matter of social imperative.

This new conception of society, which we all through cooperation and the United Nations are building, is a world in whose development women have played a key role by making crucial contributions to the attainment of the MDGs in terms of poverty reduction, education, gender equality and women's empowerment, children's and maternal health, HIV/AIDS and transmissible disease control, sustainability and the world partnership for development. It is through gender equality and their own empowerment throughout the world that women have played that key role.

Gender equity has tangible value because, as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) affirms, gender equity is not only a moral imperative, but also a way of promoting prosperity and well-being for all.

Let us turn this future, happy world into a reality. Let us perfect our world by building among us all a society that, with peace, equality and harmony, leads a sustainable life on a planet recovering from errors of the past.

In that world, the economy has been reformed and financial inequalities have been reduced to a minimum. Wage disparities are limited to a certain ratio (say, 1:100). Women enjoy financial autonomy in all countries: men and women form couples and help each other, cooperate as friends and lovers but maintain their financial autonomy. Women are independent with respect to their income, investments, property and occupation.

What must we do?

Much has been said in these lines and by many other persons who, all over the planet, contribute to events such as the current one and specifically advocate building correctly on what we know, on the distance travelled, as the relevant report shows. What will it take to achieve the Millennium Development Goals?

Let me select certain proposals:

- Ensuring that children have unconditional access to health, education and productive assets helps to progress on various MDGs;
- Better care for the girl child at school is connected with better health and nutrition at the family level. Improvement of reproductive and maternal health also helps to progress on various MDGs;
- It is necessary to invest more in creating opportunities for women and children and in promoting their economic, legal and political autonomy;
- Providing families with such infrastructure as alternative sources of energy, water and electricity reduces the household workload and frees children so that they may attend school and women so that they may work independently or participate in the labour market;
- Women must have access to productive assets, such as land and credit, so as to enjoy economic autonomy.

In conclusion, the above set of proposals, ideas and reforms may be recapitulated as follows: “Universal education free of charge is required in order to reduce inequalities.”

Extreme distributional disparities in the world must prompt us to question the current development model.
