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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 Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, 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

Women's property rights as a basis for empowerment

Background

In many countries across the developing world, upon the death of a husband, the property title will automatically pass on to the closest male relative of the husband. Or, in the case of the death of a father, the title passes on to the firstborn male within the family.

Without being able to inherit tenure and land rights, virtually none of the other rights of women are enforceable, as property rights form the basis of any further economic development. Without these rights, women find it difficult to have access to microfinancing, however little, leaving them de facto dependent on the mercy of the males of the family. This in turn has a direct impact on their ability to provide education for their children, especially their daughters, who are consequently forced to work rather than attend school.

Giving women the right to inherit and hold property title has a crucial role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
