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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 Young Professionals Forum, 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

Young Professionals Forum has analysed the priority theme of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls”. We believe that the Millennium Development Goals can be expanded to consider gender-related issues in each and every one of the identified goals.

This is important in order to advance the gender-related areas of global development and empower women at the global level. For instance, the Millennium Development Goal addressing child mortality should be expanded to include the women who give birth to the children as part of the protection programme. Also, in the goal of reducing inequality among women and men, there should be greater stress on enforcement of equal opportunity for both men and women in all aspects of life and social enterprise. This will ensure that growth and achievements are measured at the same level as societies adopt the new initiatives.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action offer a global vision and recommendations on how to advance the goals of women. In the Beijing Declaration, Governments agreed that one of the primary goals was to “[d]edicate ourselves unreservedly to addressing these constraints and obstacles and thus enhancing further the advancement and empowerment of women all over the world, and agree that this requires urgent action in the spirit of determination, hope, cooperation and solidarity, now and to carry us forward into the next century”.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls without all the goals focusing on women and girls is already a major challenge. Millennium Development Goal 3, to promote gender equality and empower women, and goal 5, to improve maternal health, are the only Millennium Development Goals that relate specifically to women. This makes the impact of the Goals too constricted and may marginalize other gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities. For example, in spite of the acknowledged gross feminization of poverty, most of the Millennium Development Goals are “gender blind”.

The Beijing Platform for Action Mission Statement says: “The success of the Platform for Action will require a strong commitment on the part of Governments, international organizations and institutions at all levels”. It will also require adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels as well as new and additional resources for developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources, for the advancement of women; financial resources to strengthen the capacity of national, subregional, regional and international institutions; a commitment to equal rights, equal responsibilities and equal opportunities and to the equal participation of women and men in all national, regional and international bodies and policy-making processes; and the establishment or strengthening of mechanisms at all levels for accountability to the world’s women.

In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, a total of 189 Governments adopted the Millennium Declaration, in which they pledged to eradicate poverty, protect the most vulnerable populations, foster peace and security, protect the environment and achieve human rights and democracy.

The Young Professionals Forum reaffirms that in order to overcome the challenges and achieve the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, there has to be a balanced and gender-focused approach. The Young Professionals Forum considers it essential that the General Assembly urge Governments, international organizations and institutions at all levels to reaffirm their strong commitment to uphold the Millennium Development Goals in order to empower women and advance their status.

The Young Professionals Forum recommends the initiation of a new era of international cooperation among Governments and peoples based on a spirit of partnership, fairness and gender-sensitive policymaking. This will help foster the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls.
