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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 Forum of Women’s NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, 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 empowerment and women's rights must be part of the development agenda.

In Kyrgyzstan, political and financial attention to the issues of concern to women has been lacking. Despite the commitments made, neither the State nor donors have approached women's needs as development and priority goals.

With regard to Millennium Development Goals 3, 4 and 5, there is a lack of financing of women's rights and women's needs, a lack of State and donor financing of plans of action for reaching gender equality and a lack of financial resources for programmes and projects by women's organizations. State commitments and obligations are not translated into financing. For example, in the health sector, the State has not financed the \$47 million programme adopted in 2008 for prenatal improvements aimed at reducing the maternal and child mortality rates.

Women's empowerment is not widespread. Political empowerment is limited only to representation in the national parliament. The Millennium Development Goals related to women's needs have not been fully achieved in Kyrgyzstan. While the number of women in the national parliament has increased, we wish to draw attention to the fact that, in local elected bodies and in high-level posts, women's representation is far from constituting a critical mass to make women's voices have an effective and visible impact on development. Political and economic empowerment has been limited to a few projects and is not part of the political and financial agenda of the State or donors. A reduction in the representation of rural women in decision-making bodies inhibits the inclusion of women's issues in local political agendas. This has had a strong negative impact, as manifested in the disappearance of the majority of village kindergartens. Furthermore, women have been left without access to decent jobs.

With regard to education for girls, since 1991, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of children going to school. In 2009, 66,000 children were not enrolled in school; there are no gender-disaggregated data.

With regard to Millennium Development Goal 8, partnership has not proved accessible to women's organizations, leaving women behind in the decision-making process regarding the country's development; there has been no capacity-building for women and women's organizations as equal partners in development.

As to violence against women and girls, existing laws and State orders intended to protect women from violence have not been enforced. No State crisis centre has been set up in Kyrgyzstan. The State has not created an environment where women feel safe and confident that their claims will provoke appropriate action.

There is no sustainable and well-funded programme or mechanism to stop bride kidnapping. Victims of bride kidnapping have no access to free legal consultations and psychological rehabilitation. Laws are rarely effectively used against perpetrators.

Standards that regulate punishment for sexual harassment have not been incorporated into Kyrgyz legislation.

Polygamy is an act punishable by law, but it has become widespread and there are no cases of criminal punishment being imposed.

Women's access to justice is a growing challenge. Barriers in the form of bureaucracy, corruption, stereotypes and a reluctance of law enforcement bodies to deal with women's rights issues limit women's access to justice.

Women with disabilities have limited access to justice. Facilities are not accessible to persons with disabilities.

Poor women and girls in rural areas remain outside the reach of mainstream programmes, agendas and budgets of the majority of development stakeholders.

There is a patriarchal culture. The majority of State civil servants and law enforcement officers exhibit patriarchal patterns of behaviour in dealing with women's rights. Violence against women in the villages of Kyrgyzstan is being exacerbated by growing religious fundamentalism.

We call for strong and well-financed commitments with a strong monitoring framework and clear indicators to ensure the implementation of women's rights and strengthen women as agents of change in Kyrgyzstan. Women and their organizations should be involved as development partners.

We call for temporary special measures to empower women at all levels of government, including the introduction of a 30 per cent quota.

A special State programme to support women's entrepreneurship, especially in rural areas, is needed. Women must be recognized and supported by State and financial institutions. Decent employment for women should be one of the development priorities. Women's participation in economic and financial decision-making must be ensured.

Women's organizations should be better recognized, supported and empowered by all development partners.

Women's empowerment and women's rights should be part of the post-2015 development goals.
