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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 International Health Awareness Network, 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

The International Health Awareness Network, a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established in 1987, supports the priority theme of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, on the challenges and achievements faced in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls. The International Health Awareness Network is also committed to assessing and addressing the review theme of the current status of access to and participation of women and girls in education, training and technology, including the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.

All of the Millennium Development Goals fall under the auspices of the mission of the International Health Awareness Network, which is committed to the empowerment of women and girls in education and health. According to the World Health Organization, in 2010, every day roughly 800 women died globally due to complications of pregnancy or childbirth. Out of that 800, 440 women were located in sub-Saharan Africa and 230 in South-East Asia. This compares to a death rate of one in four in high-income developed nations, or that a woman living in sub-Saharan Africa or South-East Asia is 25 times more likely to die from such complications than a woman living in a developed nation. The International Health Awareness Network is committed to changing those statistics, making what may seem impossible possible. Our projects in the United Republic of Tanzania (emergency obstetrical care training for rural villages), Somalia and India reflect our commitment to improving the health and education of women and children, so that they may fully participate in the economic, social and political lives of their respective nations. New projects working with the Permanent Mission of El Salvador further advance our commitment to sustainable health, education and development globally.

Health issues and access to basic survival needs are significantly important to address in looking towards the construction of a post-2015 development agenda. Today, too many women still die in childbirth when we have the means to save them. In addition, more than 2.5 billion people still lack access to improved sanitation facilities. According to the organization water.org, 32 million individuals lack access to water in Latin America and the Caribbean; 345 million in Africa and 200 million in East Asia and Oceania. In just one day, 200 million hours of work time are consumed by women simply gathering water for their families. Faecal matter in our lakes, rivers and oceans cause the majority of illnesses worldwide. We intend to promote best practices for integrated local and global health solutions.

In addition to health-related issues, education is essential for development. In an address given before the General Assembly on 25 September 2013, the Secretary-General stated that educating the poorest and most marginalized children will require bold political leadership and increased financial commitment. Despite this, aid for educational initiatives has fallen for the first time in 10 years, thus focus must be placed on forging new partnerships, creating new educational opportunities for all, but especially women and girls.

The only way that sustainable development can take place globally is to emphasize and promote quality education for all. Only then will women and girls have the same opportunities as men and boys in access to full employment and decent work.

We at the International Health Awareness Network have worked to promote literacy, as seen through our activities in South Africa with orphans living with HIV/AIDS. In a statement released by the United Nations on 5 October 2013, World Teachers' Day, it was asserted that, in order to meet the needs of educating the population of the world, 5.2 million teachers must be hired to achieve the call for universal primary education. In addition, teachers are far too often underqualified and poorly paid, with low status and excluded from education policy matters and decision-making that concerns and affects them and the children of the human family. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 58 per cent of countries do not have enough teachers in the classroom to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015.

Education, access to education as well as the link between education and marketable employment are also important elements of sustainability. The International Health Awareness Network and its supporters are directly invested in education for health and education as a tool for increased participation in government and leadership. The role of universities in creating access to education, providing mentoring and promoting leadership development among girls and women is as integral to their success as primary education. We hope to see more women, girls and children pursue higher education after earning an equitable and quality primary and secondary education.

Areas of particular focus are in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States, where, by 2030, 6.6 million teachers will be needed. Gordon Brown, special envoy for the organization Global Education, noted that education is not only the way to unlock individual opportunity. It is not the only way to break the cycle of poverty. But, it is the way that individual nations can become prosperous. Thus, the International Health Awareness Network, like our partners, actively support educational and health programmes that will serve to provide quality education and equity in health care for all, for the betterment of human society.

We ask that in order to improve lives globally in a sustainable way, we must:

- (a) Improve educational opportunities for women, girls, and children, and increase literacy rates and attendance rates;
- (b) Reduce maternal mortality and infant mortality;
- (c) Improve access to and the quality of health care for women, girls and children;
- (d) Reduce the rate of sexual assault and violence and increase safety for women, girls and children;
- (e) Increase the voice of women in public affairs so that they are best able to advocate for their needs and the needs of their families;
- (f) Increase the respect for women and girls so that they have knowledge and skill sets beyond the traditional, and encourage women and girls to seek out opportunities in science, engineering, technology and maths;
- (g) Include the teaching of the culture of peace in schools, colleges and universities from childhood to maturity.

Without peace, development is not possible; without development peace is not achievable. Peace and the culture of peace affect the attainment of all the Millennium Development Goals. Include women in peace-building efforts and decision-making before, during and after conflicts.
