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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 National Alliance of Women’s Organizations, 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

Gender inequality continues to be a huge global challenge. The prospects and life chances of millions of women and girls are stunted because of widespread discrimination and inequalities based on gender. Gender equality and women's empowerment is a key prerequisite for tackling poverty and social exclusion, achieving rights for all, averting conflicts and building peace.

Global legal frameworks for promoting gender equality and women's human rights have been in place for many years. National Alliance of Women's Organizations urges that these should be fully implemented at global, national and local levels.

National Alliance of Women's Organizations also believes that the new post-2015 development framework needs to shape national agendas including civil society discourse and government plans in all countries. It is important that the voices of all women, rich and poor, are included and that national Governments set systems in place to enable participation in this process.

Across the existing Millennium Development Goals, the goals that are most off-track and least likely to be achieved are the ones that most depend on the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. Many serious issues affecting women globally have not as yet been touched by the Millennium Development Goals.

National Alliance of Women's Organizations notes the following omissions with particular concern:

- Rampant and widespread gender-based violence, including during armed conflict, revolution and sectarian violence; and in the domestic context
- The impact on women of prevailing economic development models

National Alliance of Women's Organizations notes and welcomes the concept note prepared for the expert group meeting on structural and policy constraints in achieving the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, held in Mexico City from 21 to 24 October 2013 (EGM/MDG/INF.1) and the papers delivered by the expert panellists. Globally, the economic crisis and the austerity measures taken by Governments have been a severe constraint on the advancement of women and girls and on their capacity to sustain livelihoods and access health and education services. Gender-based violence has increased, while trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation, together with the exponential rise in pornography and cyberabuse on the Internet, have become global crises of their own.

As Governments and civil society everywhere prepare for the 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, National Alliance of Women's Organizations calls upon all Member States at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to endorse a stand-alone goal in the post-2015 development framework on gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment, with a specific component on freedom from violence in all its forms.

In addition to this, National Alliance of Women's Organizations urges that the following issues be integrated into the post-2015 development framework:

- Ensure the equal right of women to own and inherit property

- Eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life, including measures to increase women's representation in parliament, in senior judiciary and on company boards
- Ensure inclusive economic development by recognizing women's unequal responsibility for unpaid care work and addressing the existing inequalities in the labour market that lead to women being overrepresented in low-paid unskilled jobs in the informal sector
- Set more ambitious targets to decrease maternal mortality rates
- Take a more robust approach to ensuring universal sexual and reproductive health rights covering women's rights to contraception, safe abortion and post-abortion care
- Ensure access for women to independent justice systems that are well resourced, and enhance the accountability of security forces, police and judiciary

National Alliance of Women's Organizations believes that robust, well-resourced systems need to be in place to monitor the newly agreed post-2015 targets and indicators. Progress towards the new stand-alone goal should clearly be achievable within a tightly agreed time frame.

In addition to the disaggregation of targets by gender, location, age, disabilities and relevant social groups, all targets should also be disaggregated by marital status (for example, young unmarried women are often prevented from accessing contraceptives and widows face multiple forms of discrimination and violence).
