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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 Mothers Legacy Project, 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

Maternal mortality remains one of the most devastating and preventable tragedies of our day. It is estimated that upwards of 90 per cent of all maternal deaths are preventable. The obvious result of a woman's death is the loss of her contribution to her family and community but also this loss has substantial negative effects on the health and well-being of others around her.

However, preventable does not mean easily resolved. Governments, non-governmental organizations and philanthropic organizations are increasingly aware that solving maternal mortality requires a multidimensional approach addressing the status of women within each society. Researchers have identified many varied causes of maternal mortality, including access to appropriate training and technology, but also a connection to early marriage practices, poverty, education and domestic violence.

As we become more aware of the connections between a mother's health and the attitudes of nations towards women, we can begin to eliminate these unnecessary and tragic deaths.

We at the Mother's Legacy Project wish to build a monument to honour those women who have died in childbirth, which will stand as a tribute to their sacrifice and as a reminder of our obligation to protect the mothers of the world.

Supporting maternal mental health is an important foundation for community well-being. Keeping mothers of young children physically safe means that mentally they all will be more resilient and healthy. Discrimination, in all its forms, affects their mental health.

The right to survive pregnancy and childbirth is a basic human right. No woman, especially a pregnant woman, should be denied a facility or treatment, irrespective of her social and economic background. The inalienable right of health is inherent in the right to life and must be assured.

Some Governments are not living up to this responsibility. Each nation's courts have a crucial role to play that the rights of pregnant women are upheld and their lives preserved. Maternal mortality and morbidity through accountability combats high rates of pregnancy-related deaths and complications that undermine women's health and violate their human rights.

This is a crucial moment to address maternal mortality with an appalling historical neglect. It is important to shed a new light on mothers and the significant role that they play in the well-being of society. Global developments offer an unprecedented opportunity to refocus on maternal health and promote this vision into resources and focused action globally and locally.

Note: The statement is endorsed by the following non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Council: Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association.