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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”**

Statement submitted by Kikandwa Rural Communities Development Organization, 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

Economic condition of rural women and girls in Uganda

More than 85 per cent of women and girls in Uganda live in rural areas and the great majority of them depend on agriculture. The agricultural sector in Uganda has been significantly affected by climate change, new pests and diseases. The effects are making the sector much more expensive for the majority of smallholder subsistence women farmers, which has resulted in great poverty for rural women and poor nutrition. Given that most of the women in rural communities support their children to go to school, there is currently an increased dropout rate in rural communities, especially where girls are concerned. Evidence of this is the increased number of girls who come to our organization in Kikandwa in need of the educational support and female hygiene products that their mothers can no longer afford.

Rural African women need greater attention at this time if we are to record economic development successes, given that agriculture is the backbone of our country's economic development.

On the basis of the situation on the ground and data collected from periodic interviews that we have been conducting in three villages in Kyampisi subcounty, Mukono district, Uganda, the following aspects need to be addressed in order to assist rural women in Uganda to gain economic success:

- (a) The need for tap water in rural communities to give women a chance to have access to affordable water for domestic and agricultural purposes;
- (b) The need to design and introduce easily accessible and affordable agricultural insurance;
- (c) The need to introduce rural women to greenhouse farming systems, which are rarely affected by climate change, pests and diseases;
- (d) The need for Governments not to tax agricultural inputs such as pesticides;
- (e) The need for Governments to support the provision of education and female hygiene products for rural girls to help to keep girls in school;
- (f) The need to introduce rural women to other profit-making microeconomic activities to help to supplement their small incomes.

In conclusion, there is a need for collaboration between local non-governmental organizations on the ground and for international organizations to provide adequate support, through skills, financing and lobbying, among other things, to help to improve the economic status of women and girls living in rural communities.
