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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 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

Women in power and decision-making

Taking action dedicated to helping marginalized people worldwide to improve basic human rights, address issues of violence against women and ensure equitable access to health care is key in promoting gender equality. Furthermore, encouraging leadership training for women and women's participation in decision-making and peacebuilding promotes well-rounded policy implementation, transparency in government and equal representation for men and women.

Implementing policies mandating equal gender perspectives, specifically in regions where peacebuilding and conflict prevention are in effect and necessary to stabilize the community, should be a key goal. Mandating equal gender perspectives entails developing policies and initiatives with the help of both men and women, incorporating a gender-balance quota for government employment or any other decision-making and policymaking positions. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country. Mandating a policy that ensures a woman's right to engage in decision-making provides a balance that needs to exist. This has been a goal for years, with some improvements noted, but it is suggested that Governments adopt and support this perspective and mandate.

Providing leadership training for women and gender-sensitive training for men, in particular in regions where accessibility to microloans for women exists and where women have access to education but are not encouraged to attend school, and in workplaces that employ both men and women, in organizations with decision-making capabilities and in all government departments, should be strongly considered and implemented as an initiative. Education is key in creating equality. Leadership training for women can both empower and educate women who, before such training, did not think that they could, or were allowed to, have a voice in their Governments or political parties, etc. Educating men and boys regarding the importance of including women in decision-making is just as important as educating women regarding how to become leaders. Educating both men and women in areas where there is a lack of equality creates a space for acceptance, respect and accountability, which will then lead to protecting and promoting equal rights.

In the case of any conflict resolution or peacebuilding actions, it should be required that there be equal representation of women and men at the table, especially given that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and development. Women have historically been peacekeepers in many cultures. Bringing women to the peacemaking table brings equality to human rights protection and allows for sustainable peacebuilding. The implementation of policy of this nature coincides with the suggestion that women be trained in leadership so that they are equal to men and that men be educated about the importance of bringing women to the table.