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**“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for
the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by Sacro Militare Ordine Costantiniano di San Giorgio, 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 Sacro Militare Ordine Costantiniano di San Giorgio has the historic mission of helping the sick, the needy and the most disadvantaged in society. Through the involvement of its 2,800 members organized in national and regional delegations operating in more than 40 countries, it provides medical and social assistance, disaster relief in the event of armed conflicts and natural catastrophes, emergency services, help for the elderly, persons with disabilities and children in need, first-aid training and support for refugees and internally displaced persons, regardless of race, origin or religion.

Gender inequality is an exceptionally complex social phenomenon. It takes many forms, involving both sexual and economic exploitation, such as trafficking in women and children, female infanticide, crimes committed in the name of so-called honour, crimes of passion, racially motivated crimes, the abduction and sale of children, dowry-related violence and deaths, acid attacks and harmful traditional or customary practices such as female genital mutilation and early and forced marriage. Trying to eradicate it is equally complicated.

The organization welcomes the various national and local initiatives, strategies and action plans aimed at advancing the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality. It emphasizes that there is no one global approach to resolving these issues; rather, governmental initiatives must be balanced and supported by more widespread moral education within national and cultural contexts. National initiatives should encompass, among other things, education, health and microfinance and be framed by a supportive legal environment with policies that protect women and girls against violence and promote gender equality. Moreover, national Governments should promote the participation of women's groups in such policy reform.

The organization acknowledges the efforts made to date in advancing and accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, but also recognizes that the goals and commitments have not been fully implemented and achieved.

The organization urges national Governments and the private and community sectors to engage in structured collaboration in identifying and assessing strategies to put gender equality and women's human rights at the centre of development and to create lasting solutions.

For its part, the organization reaffirms its commitment to promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms within its sphere of influence.
