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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 Socialist International Women, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The Socialist International Women welcomes the review and assessment of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. It also welcomes the proposal to look at the current challenges that affect the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and what is preventing the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It also welcomes the review of the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly and the opportunity for representatives of Member States, United Nations entities, and Economic and Social Council-accredited non-governmental organizations to contribute to the integration of the gender perspectives in the post-2015 Development Agenda.

Among all the significant events of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the positive advancement of the status of women has been the greatest peaceful social revolution. Today, a record number of women all over the world find themselves living in much more open societies with improved opportunities and greater access to education, technology, healthcare and resources. We also see tangible and positive changes of women's participation in the workplace, in politics and in the areas of ending discrimination and violence. Member States, governments, and civil society, have also stepped-up on their commitment to working for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Overall, much progress has been made and while the Socialist International Women acknowledges the improvements made so far, it goes without saying that many challenges for gender equality still persist and significant barriers still remain. On a global level, the progress made up to now has not been equal — some countries and regions are faring better than others, while some are being left behind or as it is the case in regions where there is conflict, women are experiencing a regression in relation to the progress made so far.

Twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, women are still the most marginalized in all areas of life and it is women and children who are the most affected by inequality, poverty, conflict, terrorism, violence, global warming and climate change.

For instance, there is the unequal sharing of family responsibilities as well as greater inequality in socio-economic positions. The unequal pay for work of equal value is still prevalent. Education and training for women and girls is still not fully guaranteed and the lack of expansion of access to healthcare remains a concern. Violence against women is widespread, it is not taken seriously and the protection of women in situations of armed conflict remains insufficient. The decision-making process is being held primarily in the hands of men with women in their vast majority having little or no involvement. Victims of conflict are omitted in the process of prevention and conflict management.

For the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to be a success and for gender equality to become a reality, it is a well-known fact that full participation of women in all areas of life is absolutely essential, but before this can transpire it is vital to focus on 3 key areas: 1) the elimination of violence, 2) free education and training for women and girls 3) the eradication of poverty. By concentrating on these 3 areas, the root causes of gender inequality can be tackled.

Much inclusive discussion has been held on the integration of a gender perspective in the post-2015 Development Agenda. The Socialist International Women endorses the United Nations Women post-2015 position paper that calls on: A stand-alone goal on gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women with three target areas (1. Freedom from violence, 2. Capabilities and resources, 3. Voice, leadership and participation); and the mainstreaming of gender into other goals through appropriate targets.

It is also vital to understand the different stages at which each country and region finds itself in terms of the advancement of women. By doing so, a more targeted and comprehensive approach can be applied to tackle the most pressing issues of each individual country and region as well as to prepare new strategies for less pressing issues or other evolving issues. For this reason, it is essential to establish a clear, transparent and global system for collecting, examining and analysing data which can then help make it easier to monitor change and progress as well as to hold Member States and governments accountable for their work on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and later on with the post-2015 Development Framework and Sustainable Development Goals. By creating a centralised system, it can also improve communication and cooperation as well as develop stronger ties between Member States, governments, United Nations entities and civil society. In short, it is essential to establish a viable framework for monitoring, with clear mechanisms and new simplified gender indicators.

The Socialist International Women also shares the recommendation of many other women's organizations and personalities around the world, on the need to include in the Post-2015 Development Agenda the measures proposed by the Beijing Platform for Action, by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

As for the work of the Socialist International Women — a non-governmental organization with consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council — it commits to working on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and to do its utmost to contribute effectively to the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Socialist International Women will also work to encourage its 154 member organizations, to further commit to the work of the United Nations in their respective countries, and to work for the implementation and achievement of the objectives of the Platform for Action and the results of the post-2015 Development Framework and Sustainable Development Goals.

The Socialist International Women also takes this opportunity to call upon all Member States to:

- undertake comprehensive national examinations to identify progress made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;
- continue to support the interventions and contributions of civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations and women's organizations, in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the

outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and, in this regard, calls upon them to work at all levels with relevant stakeholders to prepare for the post-2015 Development Framework, and capitalize on their experience and expertise;

- ensure that the post-2015 Development Framework and Sustainable Development Goals is a viable framework for monitoring, with clear mechanisms and new simplified gender indicators;
 - ensure that the post-2015 Development Framework and Sustainable Development Goals include a stand-alone goal on gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women; and
 - ensure that the post-2015 Development Framework and Sustainable Development Goals include the mainstreaming of gender into all the other goals through appropriate targets.
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