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### Commission on the Status of Women

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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 Forum of Women’s NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## **Statement**

### **Women's rights in Kyrgyzstan**

The Beijing Platform for Action played a big role in Kyrgyzstan and many achievements were reached in the area of women's rights within the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action and National Plans of Actions for gender equality. Often, States, as well as donors, had good policies and strategies, but no means of implementation.

Many factors (positive and negative) in Kyrgyzstan are shaping the political and legal environment for gender equality: losses of socialism gains, increased privatization, successful introduction of temporary special measures to increase women's participation in the Parliament, a semi successful attempt to create a special gender equality mechanism in state was done, adoption of significant number of new national laws and international laws to protect women's rights. Resistance of patriarchy to progress and growing fundamentalism contributed to disenabling environment at all levels in the last years.

Women need not only policy changes but adequate means of implementation. Mainstreaming of gender equality failed in economic, and financial spheres.

Main areas of women's concern include women's participation in political decision making, economic disempowerment of women, growing violence against women. Kyrgyzstan has not reached 30 per cent of women in the Parliament, and has lost women in local decision making.

Economic losses of women led to dramatic migration of rural women who become subjects to discrimination on many grounds abroad.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights remain one of the areas of concern. Despite the political recognition of importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Kyrgyz Republic related policy and access to service are so limited that it creates an alarm zone.

Lack of coherence between policy and funding of sexual and reproductive health and rights became a challenge in the last decades. Government and a national Parliament should plan, reserve means of implementation and system of finance to ensure full respect for the integrity of the person, take action to ensure the conditions necessary for women to exercise their reproductive rights and eliminate coercive laws and practices. Nowadays, we have to state that the existing legislation doesn't fully meet women's and girls' needs. Many health-care services are not available and not affordable, which includes family planning information and services, and giving particular attention to maternal and emergency obstetric care. The most vulnerable group are rural poor women.

It is important to promote universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. However, marginalized groups find it difficult to access sexual and reproductive health and rights services. Needs of rural women and other marginalized groups, including women with disabilities, to access information and services on safe motherhood and other sexual and reproductive health and rights services are not adequately met. Service providers on sexual and reproductive health and rights in rural areas lack support and motivation to work (financial,

professional, structural), many do not have the appropriate skills and knowledge, and the medical equipment.

Maternal mortality rates have remained high in the last decades. According to the National Statistical Committee maternal mortality in 2012, was reported at 49. This figure is higher than the maternal mortality in 2000, which was reported at 45.5. Data on maternal mortality disaggregated by rural and urban residence shows women in rural areas suffer higher maternal mortality (56.4) in comparison to urban areas (35.3). Causes of maternal deaths include Edema, proteinuria and hypertensive disorders during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period. Key barriers include access to quality health services especially for women in rural remote areas. Last years' data shows a stagnation and lack of progress and reversal in the progress made towards improving maternal health and reducing maternal mortality in the Kyrgyz Republic. Significant barriers to accessing health care services by pregnant women include getting money for treatment, distance to the health facility, and absence of transportation.

Other factors include overall poor health status of women, inadequate nutrition of pregnant women, anaemia among pregnant women, early age of pregnancy, inadequate spacing of births. In addition, poverty, and lack of qualified health personnel impede women's access to health care.

Young people in the Kyrgyz Republic have difficulties in accessing services, getting information about reproductive health, youth friendly services including treatments for Sexually Transmitted Infections and reproductive morbidities, due to lack of a policy on adolescent and young people sexual and reproductive health services.

Low awareness pertaining to sexual and reproductive health and rights among adolescents and young people in Kyrgyzstan increases their vulnerability and promotes the growth of the number of cases of Sexually transmitted diseases/HIV, increases the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, increases the spread of gender-based violence, and stops the education of girls leading to unemployment and poverty.

We call to increase state budget allocation for health, invest in quantity and quality of affordable health services and in capacity development of health professionals.

We call to improve legal regulations, standards and protocols for improvement of provision of emergency obstetric care, promote the application of rules and practices that eliminate discrimination against women and girls access to education, information and Sexual and Reproductive Health services, encourage participation and responsibility of men for their sexual and reproductive behaviour; ensure full respect for the integrity of the person, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.

We call to provide and ensure funding from the state budget through compulsory health insurance mechanisms procurement of contraceptives and other Sexual and Reproductive Health services, especially for the most vulnerable and at risk of maternal death, women including the poor, young people under 18 years old, people with disabilities, women with complications that affect the quality of pregnancy and delivery.

We ask to strengthen the existing poor health infrastructure in regions. It is time to address and limit negatively increasing influence of religious groups and conservative political parties to impede access to Sexual and Reproductive Health services.

We call for:

- Political empowerment of women with full application of temporary special measures for all levels of governance bodies, including introduction of 30 per cent quota for women in all governance and local elected bodies.
- Economic empowerment with a special State program for support of women's entrepreneurship, especially in rural areas.
- Decent employment for women should be one of the development priorities.

We believe and demand that state policy changes (1) should be accompanied by the state means of implementation, including adequate finances, (2) should involve a regular result based accountability from all development actors, and (3) should be based on local women's needs.

Lessons of the 20 years of the Beijing Platform for Action implementation inform that only collective and coherent actions may improve women's lives.

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