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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 Egyptian AIDS Society, 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 status of women in Egypt is showing both positive and negative signs. The positive includes the elimination of discrimination and violence against women, gender equality, women's empowerment and participation in political and financial life. The negative includes early marriage and female circumcision.

Discrimination against women and girls is at very low levels. It still exists, but the overall status of women and girls has improved.

Gender equality has also improved during the past 15 years. Many opportunities are now available to women, just as they are to men, in such areas as education, health-care services and sexual and reproductive health.

One of the main improvements is the involvement of women and girls in political life. Women and girls actively participated in the referendum on a new constitution and the recent Egyptian presidential elections in 2014. They have positively affected the political evolution in Egypt. The new Constitution of Egypt contains many clauses that stress the rights of women and girls. Recently, the number of women holding higher positions in governmental and non-governmental institutions has increased.

The Government of Egypt has recently taken further measures against violence and harassment aimed at women and girls, and all people convicted of harassment are strictly punished by law. Women and girls who are subjected to any sort of violence or harassment receive all the necessary care (health, psychological and gynaecological). The Government and civil society organizations also provide hotlines to answer any inquiries from women, girls and children and deal with what they are subjected to, focusing on violence and harassment.

Although there is progress, there are still major problems, such as early marriage, which still occurs in the countryside and in poor neighbourhoods as a result of the culture against women that exists in these areas. In addition, female circumcision is still an issue in poor neighbourhoods, owing to the lack of education and awareness.

Overall, there has been a noticeable improvement in the status of women and girls in Egypt, who can now exercise many rights that were not available to them in the past, and ongoing improvements are being made by the Government and non-governmental organizations. Women have also helped to strengthen the role of civil society organizations through their support of general human rights.
