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Statement submitted by International Health Awareness Network, 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

Peace: the foundation of human rights, justice and sustainable development

As we consider the moral imperative to strive for peace, we must acknowledge the intrinsically essential role of women in moving us forward, out of armed conflicts and towards resolving differences, sharing resources and building future generations who will nurture and maintain peace.

Women have long dared to dream of, and strive for, equality of rights and to contribute to a peaceful world.

Christine de Pizan, a French Renaissance writer, is perhaps the earliest advocate for gender equality. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, she wrote books on important women in history, portraying women as accomplished and equal to men in their contributions to society. In the late eighteenth century, a prominent French playwright, Olympe de Gouges, began writing pamphlets on issues of the day, gradually evolving to political pamphlets, demanding, in 1791, that women be given the same rights as French men. Olympe de Gouges supported the French Revolution, but was sentenced to death and guillotined for attacking government practices during the Reign of Terror.

The line of women voicing the right to equality continued in Europe. In the late eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, laying claim to the social and moral equality of the sexes. She is regarded as a pivotal figure in the British feminist movement that ultimately achieved women's right to vote in her country.

In the nineteenth century, an interesting parallel between events occurring in Badasht, Persia, and Seneca Falls, United States of America, took place in the months of June and July 1848. Participants in both meetings considered and voted upon resolutions on the subject of equality between the sexes. The majority of participants in both events were women. Wisely, female leaders in the meeting held in Seneca Falls were able to enlist a male leader, Frederick Douglass, to achieve acceptance of the most novel resolution they authored: a woman's right to vote. Only one female participant in that meeting lived long enough to exercise that right.

More than seven centuries after Christine de Pizan, women have yet to achieve equality. They still face violence in the workplace, in the home and in areas of conflict.

We must join forces to eliminate violence against women and strive to attain gender equality, with women who can join or indeed lead us toward achieving peace for all.