



## Economic and Social Council

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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 twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Asabe Shehu Yar’Adua Foundation, 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 Empowerment and its link to Sustainable Development by Asabe Shehu Yar'Adua Foundation**

Asabe Shehu Yar'Adua Foundation's Statement reflects and addresses Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls in Socio-Economic and Political Development activities. This is one major focus in the current Sustainable Development Goals agenda for 2030 as declared and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in the United Nations Summit held at the United Nations Headquarters from the 15th to 17th of September, 2015.

The world appears not to be at peace with itself. Almost every corner of the world is troubled. There is resurgence of heinous crimes and armed conflicts with huge loss of lives, maiming and destruction of properties.

Neither developed nations nor developing countries are insulated from this vicious circle of "plague". Worst hit however are developing countries, where political leadership is seen as crass opportunity for personal aggrandizement. The major fallout is the abysmal and criminal neglect of creating, nurturing and sustaining institutions to guarantee an environment for self-actualization by the citizenry. The unmitigated failure of the political leadership in several countries has widened the gap between the rich and the poor leading to different shades of conflicts of frightening dimensions. Women and girls have been made the veritable sacrificial lambs. Rather than being empowered as the "Mother of Mankind", they have been killed and slaughtered, maimed, abducted, raped and treated as beasts of burden. Somehow, the women and girls still face what looks like a double jeopardy, in view of the geometric rise in cases of rape across the world. Old and young adult males have been subjecting women and young girls, including minors to rape and other forms of sexual assaults.

Education remains the real weapon against ignorance, poverty and disease. And when you educate a woman/girl, you have educated a nation and generations yet unborn. Under-developed and developing countries are believed to have the highest number of out-of-school children, coupled with this is the problem of safety and security in schools, as some experts assert that many girls have been victims of violence through sexual harassment, rape and incest, as well as early marriage. The female folk are seriously disadvantaged in such vital areas like employment, education and literacy. More than 40 per cent of men are literate against 13 per cent of women. But, employment is unarguably a major means to empower women.

Similarly, education is a potent tool in the emancipation and empowerment of women; it is an instrument to improving the status of women in any society. Education enables women not only to gain more knowledge, achieve self-esteem and self-confidence but also towards playing the critical and traditional role of nation building. Therefore, the first steps towards attaining this lays in empowering women by bringing an end to the current vagaries of armed conflicts.

It is the conviction of experts that empowering women economically can make good economic sense and engender inclusive growth, sustainable development and long-term prosperity. It will develop the economies, spurring productivity and growth. In addition, all developmental programs of government, especially of rural areas, should reflect the needs and aspirations of rural women and allocate resources

to address the importance of land to rural women's empowerment. It is a fact that a prudent and conscious investment in women through economic empowerment is sine qua non for National Sustainable Development. It is a big leap towards alleviating poverty and a catalyst for prosperity and national stability. It is a major step towards enhancing human capital and capacity.

There are other recommendations for stiffer punishments for all heinous crimes against women and girls, diligent prosecution of all cases on sexual abuses and violence against women and girls, as well as addressing issues relating to the unwarranted assault on the female folk. Women and girls empowerment programs especially the native-born should be prioritized on the development blueprints of the Contemporary Nations of the World (Developed, Developing and Under-Developed Countries). These programs should involve continuous skills acquisition training, knowledge-based mentoring programs, Information and Communication Technology programs that will usher women and girls into social and economic independence in their various communities, ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

In summary, there must be a fresh concerted effort to protect and empower women and girls to guarantee sustainable development in the land. There has to be a kind of synergy among all the core stakeholders to create greater opportunities and an environment that would benefit from their immense potential. But like the saying goes, "nothing good comes easy".

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