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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 African Action on AIDS, European Union of Women, Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas, International Alliance of Women, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of University Women, International Inner Wheel, Pax Romana, Servas International, Socialist International Women, Soroptimist International and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations 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

We the undersigned international and national non-governmental organizations in consultative status with The Economic and Social Council, members of the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women, present for the information of and consideration by the participants of the 60th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women the following statement on the theme: Empowerment of Women for Sustainable Development.

After the Second World War, when the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were adopted, the primary goal was to create a world where people could be free from war and free from fear.

Seventy years later, the General Assembly of the United Nations decided on Sustainable Development Goals, a plan that should enable all the countries of the planet to develop in a sustainable and democratic way, which should lead to a world of peace, free from war and exploitation.

At this time, a renewed political will is required, a move from commitment to accomplishments: a new paradigm of accountability and participatory monitoring that can make the entire process of sustainable development more transformative and responsive to the people's needs.

The greatest threats to sustainable development are war and armed conflicts, as they result in destruction and losses for everyone involved. Women suffer the most in war and armed conflict, subjected to systemic violence based on religious fundamentalism and ethnic discrimination, and violence based on the outdated concept of women as the property of men, leading to rape and murder of women and girls as a means to humiliate the enemy.

In order to achieve real impact worldwide, the Sustainable Development Goals based on human rights and equality; in particular Goal #5 on Gender Equality, and Goal #4 on Education for all, must be respected in their totality. Progress can only be made when all of the goals are achieved.

Seventy years after the end of World War II, peace and respect for Human Rights remain the priorities on the global agenda. In order to achieve sustainable development, respect for the natural environment has been added. War and armed conflicts are still raging around the world and are the worst threats to sustainable development.

In too many countries, women and girls do not have the same status, access to education and resources, and citizen's rights as men and boys. Gender equality underpins sustainable development and permits not only full participation of all citizens, but also full use of the intellectual and creative potential of society. Therefore the Sustainable Development Goal on Gender Equality is the prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.

We congratulate the participants at the 2015 General Assembly of the United Nations and the Member States for their decision on the Sustainable Development Goals and would like to remind them that dedication and commitment are necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Therefore we urge the Member States to:

- support human rights as individual and universal rights everywhere and for everyone
- work to achieve real gender equality in all parts of the world as the basis for sustainable development and democracy
- use adequate means, adequately financed, to empower women and girls and ensure their equal access to resources, so that they can fully enjoy their rights and contribute to sustainable development of their societies
- use all possible constructive means, first and foremost diplomacy, to end armed conflicts and begin peace processes involving all stakeholders, both women and men, according to Security Council Resolution 1325 and the following Security Council Resolutions concerning the Women, Peace and Security agenda
- ensure that refugees, in particular women and girls, are protected during their flight and in refugee camps, which should be safe and secure places for all
- take all necessary steps to ensure that gender-based violence — specifically rape — is never used as tool of war, and that women and girls in conflict-affected areas are fully protected
- implement the Beijing Platform for Action without delay
- call on parents, educators, administrators, law and policy makers to increase the level of non-discriminatory education for all in order to support women and girls' access to decision-making positions
- establish and utilize robust systems to collect reliable data and statistics, disaggregated by sex and age, to allow monitoring and evaluation of all indicators and targets agreed for the Post 2015 Agenda, in particular the stand-alone Goal for Gender Equality, so that all stakeholders can work more effectively to achieve gender equality
- create robust accountability mechanisms at national, regional and global levels that clearly state the responsibilities of all stakeholders and hold state and non-state actors, including multilateral institutions, to account for their role in perpetuating gender inequality and violations of the human rights of women.
