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Statement submitted by Sociologists for Women in 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Sociologists for Women in Society applauds the inauguration of the Sustainable Development Goals with their lead emphasis on the eradication of extreme poverty and priority commitment to the furthest behind. We call on Member States to begin implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by focusing on targets most effective in alleviating the poverty of the most vulnerable, women and girls in precarious situations and the children who depend on them.

The first should be Target 1.3, “Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.” We call on Member States to guarantee a minimum income, shelter, and food security for all in both rural and urban settings. Hunger in a world of plenty is a disgrace that no government should tolerate. Latin America’s family cash transfer programs can serve as effective models, especially those in which women are direct beneficiaries and have control over resources such as in Brazil. To eliminate low-income food deserts, Member States should facilitate sustainable gardens and low-cost quality whole food grocers. Funding for comprehensive social protection should be obtained through diverting funds from military budgets, augmented by sustainable means such as a Maria tax or a Tobin tax on international financial transactions.

A highest priority target should be Target 2.3, “By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.” We call on Member States to recognize the key role of women and girls as food producers for the family and the market. Women farmers should be provided with training, agricultural inputs, and credit to maximize their food production and ability to provide for their families and communities. Food security is intricately linked with gender equality and cannot be achieved without the empowerment of women and girls.

Other highest priority targets include Target 4.1, “By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance,” and Target 5.a, “Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.” These two targets highlight the important role of secure land rights in the eradication of poverty. We call on Member States to prioritize land rights and access to other economic resources such as microfinance for all. Secure access to land for women will facilitate the production of food, improve food security, and promote family stability. Microfinance programs are essential in enabling women to develop their farm plots and engage in microenterprises as a valuable layer of protection against food and health emergencies.

Another highest priority target is Target 4.4, “By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and

vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.” We call on Member States to recognize that women and girls are crucial workers in both urban and rural settings. Investment in their skills development, including entrepreneurial skills, will reduce their vulnerability to poverty and provide for sustainable family security. Training programs should focus on appropriate employment skills especially for the most vulnerable women and girls in casual and informal labour.

A sustainable approach to development recognizes that all development is gendered and no program can be successful without the integration of women from conceptualization to implementation. Women and girls are seen properly as equal partners and participants in development efforts. Integrating women into development is not only giving women their rightful place but also the necessary first step in successful development. Poverty eradication and food security cannot be achieved without gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Sociologists for Women in Society is a non-profit scientific and educational organization of sociologists dedicated to improving women’s lives and creating feminist social change. We became accredited to the United Nations in 1999 following the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. Through our teaching, research, publications, and activism, we educate and sensitize the sociological profession, other scholars, and the public to the social, political and economic situation of women. We publish a highly regarded professional journal, *Gender & Society*, a quarterly newsletter, *Network News*, and maintain a website, www.socwomen.org, that publicizes resources for the sociological community and beyond. Through our Global Feminist Partnership program, we engage with a network of sister organizations on several continents.
