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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 Zonta International, 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

Zonta International calls on the United Nations and its Member States to find effective short-term and long-term working methods to:

End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere by

- taking all appropriate measures, including legislation, as detailed in Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, and all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation by implementing:

- Preventive programs promoting gender-equal norms and violence-free environments, and programs that help men to change behaviour towards women to one of mutual respect.
- Protection of women and girls by providing medical/legal/social help for victims, by providing short-term shelters and long-term affordable housing for women and children and by providing vocational training for victims to become self-supporting.
- Prosecution of perpetrators through laws that clearly blame perpetrators, not victims, and through training of police and legal professionals to understand the issues.

Stop violence against women in conflicts and involve women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding by wilful actions to:

- Mobilize humanitarian aid to refugees, counteract stigmatization of survivors of violence and help them rebuild their lives.
- Hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes.
- Involve affected countries in serious efforts to solve conflicts.
- Strengthen the political will for implementing the United Nations Security Council 'Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security'.

Zonta International and its nearly 1,200 Zonta clubs in 67 countries support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to change the course of the 21st century, integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic, and environmental. These goals will guide world leaders and the global community as we — governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and private corporations — collectively work together to realize the human rights of all people, eradicate poverty and protect our planet for future generations.

As an international organization working to empower women worldwide through service and advocacy, Zonta International believes that Goal 5 — Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls — is a prerequisite to achieving all the other goals. Women represent 50 per cent of the world's population. True sustainable development can be achieved only with gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Equal rights and a life free of violence is NOT a women's issue. It is a societal issue that has to be solved by governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector working together.

Zonta International encourages the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to commit adequate resources to ensure that Goal 5 and gender equality targets in the other 16 goals are implemented, monitored and ultimately realized by 2030.

This statement is supported by:

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