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entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by Manavata, 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

Empowering Women through Value Education

Manavata has committed to furthering the rights of women and active in providing equality, through our education programs, workshops, and women specific career opportunities particularly in developing nations – we hope to encourage both a mentality shift and a tangible professional empowerment.

Women play a key role in sustainable development and to make this world healthy with right practices. It is only possible for women as mothers, to educate the next generation with the right knowledge and right practices. So women must equip themselves with necessary life skills like handling family health with nutrition, healthy food, natural medicine, emotional intelligence, psychology, patience, better motherhood and creative teaching. So Manavata is doing skill development and life skill training for women.

Remember, I have a voice ...

A voice to speak my mind,

A voice to say I want to be educated,

A voice to say I want to be cared and loved,

A voice to say I have feelings too.

When everyone is equal in front of God,

Why am I treated unequally?

It breaks my heart to say this, as even in the twenty first century, women are nowhere considered close to men. In some countries and places, they are still considered slaves in this very patriarchal society. Today I read in the news of a 3 day old girl child found buried in a pot in a rural town of India, a typical case of female infanticide. Who are you or me to decide her fate?

Manavata, a charity that aims to create a happy, healthy and harmonious world has been actively trying to support women in a number of ways and aiming to give her a voice and identity. To date over 40,000 women and girl children got benefitted through Manavata women empowerment programs.

Empowerment is when an individual or a group of people are given power and/or the authority to control one's own life and make their own decisions. Women have never had as much freedom and as many rights as they have in the present day - however they still do not have the same status as men throughout the whole world. Many countries still do not give women the same authority as men.

Women's empowerment is about giving women a voice and power around the whole world.

Below are some of the areas that Manavata is focusing on to help empower women:

Education

Women's and girls' education used to be unheard of, fortunately some girls have been given the chance to be educated fairly and in equal treatment with boys. However, in some countries around the world, female education is still not being accepted or carried out (especially in rural areas of India, areas in and around Burkina

Faso, Mali, Afghanistan, Niger and many other developing countries). Education is still not free for everyone and wars and conflicts (such as in Syria) are preventing students from being able to go to school. In countries such as Pakistan, people who do not believe in female education are still trying to prevent it (as shown in Malala's story).

Unlike the modern education system which focuses only on bookish knowledge and aiming for financial stability, Manavata focuses on providing value based education, which teaches life skills and livelihood skills. So far it has been trying to work in different projects in various chapters across the globe especially in India, United Kingdom, United States and many other countries around the world.

We could see the girls were more confident and able to take on the challenges boldly and also be a role model for the society. These are the girls who will become the ambassadors of change in the future.

Manavata prepares them for the challenges ahead in the bigger world and also helps them to lead with confidence and courage to face the real world through these value education programs.

Health

Manavata recognizes that health is wealth and is working hard to promote its mission of creating a healthy happy harmonious world and believes that the health of the family lies in the hands of the mother.

Manavata has been conducting yoga sessions and trainings for nearly 30 years along with introducing healthy eating habits to establish healthy lifestyles in 1000's of families and helping over 30,000 old age women with sustainable health services. It also trained many women to complete yoga teacher training programs and help them spread the benefits of yoga practices to wider community.

Manavata has also been conducting several free weekly rural medical camps through alternative medical systems like ayurveda, homeopathy, yoga therapy and naturopathy treatment curing many ailments.

It also helps the working women to balance work and home life by living a stress free life with accessible meditation practices which can be practiced in the comfort of their homes. Numerous healthy living workshops and meditation workshops has also been conducted on various events.

Manavata recognises the need to support working women and as part of this introduced online yoga session and special sessions concentrating for women's health as a woman is the backbone of the family and we believe that a healthy happy mother can create a healthy happy family.

Social and economical

Many women are not financially independent or self-reliant around the world. This is also caused by the huge number of countries which have passed laws forbidding women to work.

The majority of women do work in developed and urban cities/towns, however, in poorer areas, it is not very common. If women are educated to start their own small-scale industries (using their talents) and earn money independently in rural and poor areas, they will start earning money for their families.

Manavata believes in making women self sufficient . As a part of this we have initiated many self employment programs like making eco-friendly bags, eco friendly healthcare products (like homemade tooth powders, bath powders, selling organic products etc).

Conclusion

Women's empowerment is a huge factor for our world to become a better place.

Recently, Samskara Vidya project has been initiated to implement yoga in schools, training the teachers and children especially in rural area schools focusing on younger girls health.

We are also trying to create a sustainable model of health care system where we are trying to help maintain the health of the healthy person and help cure illness of suffering patients by natural methods, especially women's health which often goes unnoticed. We also take special care to girl children who are in secondary school helping them cope with teenage hormone changes and exam pressures, taking special attention for pregnant women and helping the mother and newborn child have the best health. Many women suffer from menstrual related problems, reproductive organ problems and cancers. Most of which are caused by lack of peace and harmony in body and mind.

When modern medicine and technology is trying to add more side effects and adding more stress to women, Manavata is trying to help that woman be close to nature by encouraging everyone to consume wholesome organic foods, educating about the benefits of taking natural foods. As we believe that charity begins at home we encourage women to start healthy practices at home.

Manavata acknowledges and understands that all the above mentioned programs and initiatives are only the tip of the iceberg and more needs to be done to bring about a big change in the society. On this occasion, it proposes that various organizations and non government organizations join hands together to make this movement bigger so that we are able to reach the remotest parts of the country where atrocities against women are still considered normal and instil that voice in every woman, so that next time no girl child is killed in the womb, where no other woman is harassed for dowry and any girl can think about following their dreams and think about becoming the next Kalpana Chawla, Malala or Mother Teresa!
