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Statement submitted by Associated Country Women of the World, Casa Generalizia della Societa' del Sacro Cuore, International Council for Adult Education, International Presentation Association, IOGT International, National Alliance of Women's Organizations, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Soroptimist International, Widows Rights International, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and World Association of Industrial and Technological Research Organizations, 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

Twenty-five years on from the ground-breaking Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, organizations like the Associated Country Women of the World are still required to campaign on the issues that they were founded on. Twenty-five years on, not one of the 12 critical areas of concern is resolved. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development mandates governments, business, and civil society to work for genuine sustainability. Five years on from the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is already clear that we will fail. Governments cannot in good conscience stand at the United Nations General Assembly, High-Level Political Forum, and the Commission on the Status of Women and convincingly declare they intend to leave no one behind.

There have been achievements and progress, and these should be acknowledged. However, the road ahead is long and it is clear that many of us will not make the full journey. Whilst our organization primarily advocates for women in rural communities who we know are at the bottom of every system, we stand with our sisters around the world in highlighting the current reality for diverse groups whose oppressions are just as intersecting as the conditions in which they are forced to live. No woman alive, young or old, single, married, or widowed, in the most or least developed world, can be identified as suffering only one form of discrimination. The basic human rights of all, enshrined and agreed by this very body, are not too much to ask for women. The realization of these basic rights should not require encouragement, congratulations, or celebration, nor should it be in doubt.

Like so many civil-society organizations, the Associated Country Women of the World comes to this meeting with an agenda. We seek to amplify the voices of rural women, so that the problems they face and the solutions they raise are heard and acknowledged by representatives of States Parties. All countries have a rural population. All rural populations face unique challenges as recognized by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and many sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. Despite this recognition, our members in more than 80 countries report the same challenges, the same obstacles to progress, and the same discrimination they faced when our organization was formed 90 years ago. We are proud to work with other civil society organizations and to support their calls for action as they support ours.

In order for United Nations States to achieve the commitments they have made to their peoples, particularly rural women, we implore governments to pay more attention to the voices of rural women, collaborate more closely with civil society organizations already present in rural contexts, and allocate suitable funds to working with and for rural women to ensure their human rights. Institutional national mechanisms are the mandated, preferred, and best system for raising the voice of women within each state, and we call on all State parties to support and, where necessary, found and fund such mechanisms.

We acknowledge and appreciate the critical value of the United Nations system as a table at which the decision makers of the world can sit. We acknowledge and appreciate the hard work of activists within that system and in every nation around the world. Their work must be supported, and their causes championed by States Parties, caucuses, and alliances to ensure success. When we meet to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, ensure that we are celebrating its achievement, not merely the passing of time.

Signed by:

Associated Country Women of the World

Casa Generalizia Della Societa del Sacro Cuore

IOGT International

International Council for Adult Education

International Presentation Association

Soroptimist International

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

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