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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 Family Education Services Foundation, 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

In accordance to agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session, the Commission's priority theme "Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" is instrumental in ensuring generational equality. The review theme "women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development" helps to further understand, reflect and connect the challenges in access and equality gaps.

Family Education Services Foundation is hopeful as global leaders meet to review action pertaining to the most vulnerable segments of population. We recognize that young people (24 & under) make up a quarter of the world's population and continue to face barriers to participation in public decision-making. We further recognize that international mechanisms and institutions play a key role in advancing youth participation in public life. Although the world has witnessed 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by 189 governments, young women and girls remain the most marginalized and vulnerable.

We recognize that exclusion leads to marginalization, political risks, lack of economic participation and opportunities, and lack of access to the decision-making realm.

We also recognize that although traditional barriers pose a challenge to access to participate, data-driven research shows that young adults indicate the ability, determination and desire to engage in issues of impact. Therefore, we emphasize that ensuring engagement modalities and building leadership capacities for young people is a prerequisite to achieving sustainable solutions-based approaches to current challenges (ranging from exclusion, gender-based violence, climate change, etc.). We emphasize a heightened need for a collective approach within the stakeholder's framework to include representation and voice of young people.

We recognize the outcome dialogue of the expert meeting held in October 2020 which reflected a need to further ensure representation in public spaces. And we further recognize that Resolution [2535 \(2020\)](#) is the most action-oriented of the Youth, Peace and Security resolutions providing Member States encouragement to develop and implement roadmaps with dedicated and sufficient resources.

We reaffirm Family Education Services Foundation's commitment to achieving sustainable development in Pakistan by eliminating barriers for Persons with Disabilities, especially young people. Through the stakeholder approach, Family Education Services Foundation has worked, since the 2105 adoption of Global Goals, to introduce sustainable development goals, into policy agendas at the provincial and national levels around. As a leader in advancing the reception and recognition of the Global Goals in Pakistan and as the first non-profit organization (in consultative status), Family Education Services Foundation has participated in awareness dialogues, meetings and initiatives that adopt the framework for development.

In efforts to further Agenda 2030, Family Education Services Foundation has multiple Memorandum of Understandings with local and regional partners to improve programs for Persons with Disability, particularly focusing on participation in public spaces (i.e. employment). Similarly, Family Education Services Foundation has signed agreements in partnership with government entities (Government of Sindh), educational institutions (Dow Medical University), civil society initiatives (Special Olympics Pakistan), School of the Blind and Network of Organizations working with Persons with Disability. In addition, FESF has secured appointments to government advisory committees (both regionally and nationally) to ensure a voice and

representation for Persons with Disability and marginalized young people, including women and girls. We reaffirm our commitment to the multi-stakeholder approach by continuing relationships for job training and placement for Persons with Disability with corporations such as Gul Ahmed Textiles, Liberty Mills, Kentucky Fried Chicken Restaurants, Deaf Reach teachers/trainers, Sapphire, etc.

In efforts to secure impactful solutions to today's growing challenges, we recommend Member States to adopt a more gender-transformative approach in policy-making and decision-making processes; to provide safe spaces; grassroots infrastructure; and national programs and policies that encourage advocacy tools, protection strategies and outreach platforms.

We urge, both the civil society organization community and the business community to provide youth networks for training and mentorship, especially with technical assistance and opportunities to develop partnerships, so they are able to expand networks and initiatives for social impact.

We also urge Member States to further create platforms that initiate intergenerational dialogue and bring together youth activists, civil service organizations and political leadership.
