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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 Stevenson Holistic Care 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

Women's health, climate change and Decision-making as key to achieving agenda 2030 and sustainable development

Considering the Priority theme it is quite pertinent to note that the CSW 65 Conference organization choice of the thematic direction attracts global empathy and stirs up emotional intelligence as the requisite intervention by women in policy corridors and all relevant stakeholders to implement actionable areas in the Beijing Platform For Action because global crisis on health and climate emergencies are natural causes moving us closer to implementation of Agenda 2030.

The CSW 65 thematic focus call for implementation of actionable areas in all previous conventions with full adoption of optional protocols such as strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW1979). In response to this, Stevenson Holistic Care Foundation (SHCF) based in Port Harcourt, Nigeria has adopted it as the NGOs mantra for achieving agenda 2030. The year 2021 is perceived through progressive intellectual thought as a year for post COVID- 19 recovery era by nation-states throughout the world. And women must be prepared to manage the dispensation with more health-conscious initiatives for vulnerable social demographic groups.

Nigeria is equally impacted by COVID-19 pandemic with social and economic impacts on women and children. Children are out of school. Despite the fact that authorities responsible for National response to emergencies are not as equipped as their Western counterparts, only genuine commitment to actionable steps by state and non-state actors can stop the spread of the pandemic to epic proportions.

At same time, the impact of climate change on public health is a concern which has its own negative impact. Despite the tropical weather, the coastal areas of Bayelsa and Delta states were impacted by perennial flooding and increase in rainfall. This year's flood affected arable lands, waterfront homes and businesses, especially women in subsistent farming. They could not harvest their crops and farm produce because of the prolonged flooding which destroyed their crops and resulted in cumulative economic losses. By next year, there would be food shortage within their local economic ecosystem. Yet, the state did not initiate any economic recovery plan for these women such as small business stimulus package to enable them get back to their farming preoccupations and business.

A country where millions of hard working women are not captured in the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and don't have access to healthcare, the prevalence of maternal and infant mortality is at record high especially in rural areas where vulnerability analysis and demographic health statistics' show that reproductive health services are lacking in the Primary Health Centers and 90 percent of pregnant women don't have access to neo natal care and the absence of case managers have caused teen pregnancies to concede in alarming increase.

Comparatively, countries like the USA, UK, Spain, China, Italy and India have better Reproductive healthcare systems and better legislations to protect women's rights. Because these countries adhere to gender equality and inclusiveness, Women in healthcare and medical profession have been on the frontlines fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic and have saved many lives even at the risk of their own lives. This year's CSW 65 Convention should consider honouring these brave women and equally urge less developed countries to implement gender based inclusive policies in essential services in order to have professionally equipped women to addressing public health emergencies through decision making and providing solutions.

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The sluggish response to early warnings and the over confidence of male dominated political class downplayed on the virulence of the COVID-19 Pandemic until it affected millions of women and children and resulted in fatalities in record high numbers. The sad part of the negative impact is that it affected women, and most of the affected women are elderly and intellectually gifted whose contributions will be missed in CSW65. The Session should hold a one-minute silence for all the women (highbrow health workers, nurses and doctors) lost to this pandemic throughout the world, and statistics of women affected, and fatalities should be compiled through gender disaggregated data and presented to commission in CSW65.

Women and decision making should be seen as a priority especially on inclusive national plan of actions (POA) for health and sustainable development in all member states. This is in tandem with the actionable tents of sixtieth agreed conclusions of the commission: Strengthening women's leadership and women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development and Strengthening of gender-responsive data collection and follow-up and review processes. Decision making is where women have the power to influence the outcome of policies that equally affect their health and well-being, education and the sustainable development goals.

The sixty forth session recognizes Mainstreaming a gender perspective into environmental, climate change and disaster risk reduction policies, recognizing the disproportionate effect of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls. The impact of climate change on public health affect rural subsistent women who live areas affected by nature-based violence like, desertification in Lake Chad Basin, deforestation, dust storms, natural disasters, persistent drought, extreme weather events, sea level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification and flood in wetland Niger Delta. Furthermore, it is interesting to bring to cognitive moment that the Paris Agreement 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, that member states should take action steps: to address climate change, respect, promote, and consider gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Decision making processes help in closing gender gaps and eliminate structural barriers, Discriminatory activities and the feminization of poverty especially in Nigeria which has been declared the poverty capital of the world in 2019.

The outcomes of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women and previous CSW Conventions have changed the way countries perceive women role in society. Women in Nigeria have been more involved in Nation building, although the full expectations of equality, empowerment and inheritance have not been fully implemented. Nigerian women parliamentary caucus initiated the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill which captured key areas of women inclusion raised in Previous CSW Conventions and National gender stakeholders' recommendations. Such bill if passed will increase the significance of women in nation building and such impact will be replicated throughout the sub regions because of Nigeria's role in ECOWAS and African Union.

Girl-child development and women advancement in Africa need both regional cooperation, and domestic policy response and enabling legislation by respective

states. This will enable Non-government organizations to work and serve their communities better especially women living with poverty, HIV/AIDS. Others are rural and indigenous women, women in IDP camps and elderly women and women in distress. Government alone has not being able to tackle these challenges women are facing, and as such need collaboration with organizations focused on implementing the resolutions of CSW Conventions as it affects women.

Stevenson Holistic Care Foundation will utilize all avenues to serve and work with women leaders and women in decision making to build strategies and apply criteria already established by Ministries Department and Agencies like the National Center for Women Development and National Council of Women Societies to provide solutions.

In conclusion, SHFC supports the commissions previous Agreed Conclusions on decision making as a key to embolden the protection of women and girls in armed conflict and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all decision-making levels and at all stages of peace processes and mediation efforts, including in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts, and recognizing their leadership therein and the need for their enhanced representation in peacekeeping; The role of Non-governmental organizations as development actors with adequate financing initiatives by the United Nations Fund for Women and international operations providing frameworks to strengthen decision making will help women to become less vulnerable to these barriers to gender equality and agenda 2030 accomplishment capabilities of women.
