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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 Nor Luyce Mentoring Center for Youth, 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

Nor Luyce Mentoring Center for Youth NGO is the first mentoring organization in Gyumri, Armenia working with adolescent girls from orphanages and socially vulnerable families. We provide the girls with mentoring relationships, skill-building, career planning, and scholarships to pursue a college degree. This three-phased program promotes empowerment and the opportunity for girls to reach their full potential.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused us to quickly reorganize our program, helping hundreds of our staff, mentors, and mentees open Zoom accounts to allow for full participation in our program as well as their online studies. We continue to provide counselling assistance, organize meetings with coaches and successful people outside of Armenia, and other aspects of our program to ensure that we continue to foster the promotion of gender equality and youth empowerment.

While it may seem to many in the world that life may begin to resume some normalcy, our community is facing a second wave of panic and alarm, but this time it is worse than the pandemic. That strike faded the brightness and joy away from the girls' eyes. On September 27, we woke up to a full-fledged war. However, neither the war, nor the pandemic stopped us from our work, nor has anything else since our founding more than ten years ago. Yet, this war has shaken our very foundation, and we turn to the United Nations for guidance and understanding. This is the first time we have witnessed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically goals 8, 11, 16, being fully violated. This war is not only a violation of the SDGs, but of what they stand for in promoting the human rights and dignity of all people. International humanitarian law was violated through targeting civilians and civilian objects, targeting journalists, and using cluster munitions banned under international law (Article 51(5)(b), Geneva Convention). The targeting of dual-purpose objects such as roads and bridges may amount to International Humanitarian Law (Laws of War) violations, especially if the road is the primary route to delivering medical and humanitarian aid to civilians stranded in a conflict zone.

As of October 2020, human rights defender of Artsakh (Nakorno Karabagh) reported 22 civilian casualties, 93 wounded, and over 5800 damaged properties and key civilian infrastructures in Artsakh. Hundreds of families in Artsakh had to leave their homes. While we hope this aggression will cease, we must address our current climate and marginalization, fear, and concerns.

As we hope for a resolution to the aggressions we face as a nation, Nor Luyce will focus on the following critical areas of concern in 2021, outlined based on the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the 4th Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Our call to action, as an organization dedicated to the empowerment of women is in an effort to shed light on the critical need to acknowledge the blatant disregard and infringement of Armenian human rights by the Azerbaijani.

(Education and Training of Women): Nor Luyce is primarily involved with promoting educational opportunities for young women. Furthermore, Nor Luyce aids in giving its female mentees the opportunity to achieve a degree in higher education.

According to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) paragraph 73, Women should be enabled to benefit from an ongoing acquisition of knowledge and skills beyond those acquired during youth. This concept of lifelong learning includes knowledge and skills gained in formal education and training, as well as learning that occurs in informal ways, including volunteer activity, unremunerated work and traditional knowledge.

Nor Luyce provides higher education opportunities through scholarships, a well-rounded support system that not only allows for the opportunity of acquiring knowledge and skills gained in formal education and training, but also by engaging in community affairs through volunteering. This allows for experiential cross-cultural learning through meeting with leaders in their potential career fields.

Human rights of women: Nor Luyce is committed to the human rights of women through empowerment and education to support the human rights of women in every stage of our work.

According to the BPfA (Paragraph 9), the human rights of women and of the girl child [are] inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Declaration on the Right to Development;

Nor Luyce's program promotes an understanding of the right to work and equal pay, a right to receive education, a right to express themselves, as well as a right to an adequate standard of living as well as help if they are struggling. Nor Luyce not only educates about entitlement to human rights, but also helps participants realize them.

The Girl-Child: Nor Luyce promotes the empowerment of women to achieve their dreams.

According to the BPfA (paragraph 264), the percentage of girls enrolled in secondary school remains significantly low in countries around the world. Girls are often discouraged from pursuing scientific and technological training and education, which limits the knowledge they require for their daily lives and their employment opportunities.

Nor Luyce aids in the character development of its young women in the program. Participants learn to focus on their mental, physical, and intellectual stability. They learn that there is no limitation on the knowledge they can learn each day because they are confident, strong, and capable young women.

Conclusion

Nor Luyce is committed to the empowerment of women and girls through furthering the Beijing Platform for Action critical areas of education and training of women, human rights of women, and supporting the Girl Child in our local community, our nation, and through our commitment to global civil society at the United Nations. As Armenia continues to face aggression from our neighbours, we find uncertainty in what the near future will hold for our organization, including the impact on the physical and emotional safety and security of the women and girls we work with. Nor Luyce has continually fought to provide a program that uplifts and educates Armenian girls in the face of adversity and discrimination to achieve their career and personal goals, live self-sufficient lives and create a future of equality and empowerment.

Nor Luyce calls upon the Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women, and other relevant United Nations entities to provide recognition to non-formal educational opportunities for girls and women in the educational system.

Nor Luyce calls upon the Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women, and other relevant United Nations entities to promote the increased participation of

women as both active agents and beneficiaries of the development process, which would result in an improvement in the quality of life for all.

Nor Luyce calls upon the Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women, and other relevant United Nations entities to consider drawing upon national action plans identifying steps to improve the promotion and protection of the human rights of women.

Nor Luyce calls upon the Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women, and other relevant United Nations entities to make the girl child, particularly the girl child in difficult circumstances, aware of her own potential and educate her about the rights guaranteed to her.

By aligning with the goals of the CSW and by providing an environment that focuses on the empowerment of women and girls, Nor Luyce will continue to passionately work towards gender equality and human rights of women and girls to support inclusive and quality education and facilitate equality and empowerment for all women and girls.
