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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 International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations, 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

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations welcomes and affirms its priority theme on 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.

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, gender disparities are still evident in both everyday life and among the new challenges faced as a result of the pandemic. International Federation of Medical Students' Associations recognizes the importance and immensity of the progress made in women's rights in the past 25 years. However, as no country today has fully achieved gender equality, we must highlight the gaps to be addressed, as well as crucial measures that should no longer be delayed.

Outdated social norms and gender stereotypes continue to disrupt the fulfilment of progressive policies and laws aimed at accelerating gender equity. Women and girls globally face adversities in all areas of life - limited access to education, participation in public life and decision making and equal pay. Even though a majority of the health workforce is comprised of women, they are represented in only a third of the decision-making positions. Even though a majority of the health workforce is comprised of women, they are represented in only less than a third of the decision-making positions. The Covid-19 response reflects this as well, with women acting as first-responders while policies fail to address the unpaid care, socioeconomic hardship, and the increase in violence they face.

As future healthcare providers, we are committed to supporting gender equity within and outside of medicine as it is a prerequisite to fulfilling The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is well known that without women's representation in decision-making spaces is intrinsic in achieving true equality and growth.

Therefore, International Federation of Medical Students' Associations calls for Member States to:

- Develop policies that enforce equal gender representation in specialties, leadership, and research positions;

- ensure working conditions which enable all people to have equal career options and possibilities;

- ensure that staff employed in the health workforce receive equal remuneration for equal work, irrespective of their gender.

Even though ensuring women's representation is an essential step in reaching gender equity, it is also vital to emphasize abolishing gender-based violence as a necessity in achieving true equality. Gender-based violence is one of the most prevalent violations of human rights globally, as women and girls are at the highest risk of experiencing it at least once in their lifetime. All over the world, women and girls are still exposed to multiple forms of gender-based violence, including physical and mental abuse, sexual assault, forced marriage and many others. Long term consequences follow, ranging between a spectrum of physical and psychosocial impairments that have a lasting and pervasive effect. Even now, as humanity fights the immediate effects of the pandemic, violence against women and girls has increased. Alarming rates of domestic abuse, while the victims are forced to isolate with the perpetrators and have little access to shelter or legal aid.

Elimination of violence against women and girls is indispensable in achieving gender equity. We must stress the importance of accelerating progress in reaching the

goals of The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, especially in these unprecedented times.

Therefore, International Federation of Medical Students' Associations calls on Member States to:

Recognize gender-based violence as a public health issue that affects all areas of society and prioritize its elimination in the current global context;

develop strategies, policies, and legislation to address and prevent violence against women and girls;

provide support, including but not limited to legal support, access to shelter and targeted healthcare services, for victims of gender-based violence;

work on identifying factors that contribute to and influence the type and extent of gender-based violence and thereby focus on prevention campaigns.

As future healthcare professionals, we emphasize the need for taking immediate action in finally closing the gaps preventing gender equity from being fully achieved. The answer in reaching our goals lies within all of us - within the dedication of the Member States, the strength of our partnerships and the undeniable resolve of youth.
