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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 Women’s Year Liaison Group, 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

Taking into consideration that the primary theme for the sixty-six session of the Commission on the Status of Women is achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes, we, International Women's Year Liaison Group would like to emphasize that climate changes have brought not only natural disasters in global scale, but also man-made disasters caused by human activities which are indifferent to the nature, to the North as well as to the South.

We are mindful of the fact that the avaricious economic activities of the North, mainly, has caused great sufferings to women of mostly the South, that the pursuance of Climate Justice necessitate that no one is left behind to achieve the sustainable development goals, that the effort should be made, more than ever, to reflect diverse views on the every stage of policy-making, decision-making and implementation to be more inclusive, in other words, our goals of gender equality and generation equality goes hand-in-hand.

In Japan, face frequent earthquakes, typhoons, floods, activated volcanoes, mudslides and enormous debris flows, and we note that these disasters and calamities have greatly affected women physically, mentally and economically in various forms and manners. The environment in evacuation centers during disasters in Japan, for example in the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, was not gender-segregated, with women sleeping in small groups and no place to change clothes. According to survey reports, "men stared at me while I was breastfeeding," "men came into my blanket at night," "a man came to sleep next to a young woman and touched her breasts," "another woman was affected in the same way and left the shelter," "I was too scared to go to the bathroom." This shows that the lack of minimum privacy vis-à-vis shower and toilet facilities at public buildings, often utilized as emergency shelters, prevented many women from going to these shelters, in spite of recognizing apparent dangers to remain at home

However, things have improved since 2011: based on our own experiences, women are speaking up and local governments are listening and changing some of the more atrocious mishaps. Now we have women-only rooms prepared and run by women where we can get feminine hygiene products without feeling embarrassment, and mothers can breastfeed their babies without being stared at by men. We continue to face many natural and not-so natural disasters. We are able, to some extent, to say that things have improved and that we are coping.

In Japan, in the event of a natural disaster or the recent outbreak of COVID-19, gender issues such as the increasing concentration of household responsibilities such as housework, child rearing, and nursing care on women and the occurrence of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual violence are magnified and strengthened, reflecting the fixed gender roles in normal times. In order to improve this situation, it is first necessary for the government to take the lead in strengthening the introduction of a gender perspective into disaster and crisis management administration in general. Also, we adamantly assert that to cope with any and all disasters and to aspire for wholesome daily lives, no decision-making nor their implementations should be made without gender equality in mind, and that equal participation of and input by women are essential.

We have learned the hard way that atomic energy is neither clean nor safe nor economically efficient. Women and youth are both concerned with our health and our reproductive rights and liberties, and deem it essential to actively commit to making and achieving clean and green energy policies, although the Government appears not to be as responsive to our wishes. We are seriously concerned that those invited to

participate in the drafting process of the most recent Basic Plan for Energy are actually representatives of vested interests and are neither green nor clean as they purported to claim. Women and youth are feeling that they are deprived of their opportunity to contribute to our future energy plan. International Women's Year Liaison Group strongly express the importance of promoting our deeply felt concern in a new and more effective manner;

At the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals, Japanese Government presented Voluntary National Review and emphasized the domestic successes of the Universal Health Coverage, green environmental policies and digital transformation of society. She was willing to assist other countries through financial and technological support to achieve the goals of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. International Women's Year Liaison Group deems it important for Japanese Government to realize its ambitious promise, and is willing to help it accomplish these goals. It would be most helpful for all of us if the Government were to publish basic gender statistics in intelligible and usable formats, not as dressings to support groundless government decisions but tools to empower any and all those concerned to analyze and understand policies based upon evidence. As half of the population is female, it is essential to take into account the differences in the impact of disasters, whether they are natural or man-made, on women as distinguished from men, and to respond to disasters from a gender perspective in order to realize a disaster-resistant society through disaster prevention and mitigation. We believe diverse views on all levels of decision-making are important to accomplish Gender Equal and Generation Equal Society as reflected in the second and third items of "Path to Equal."
