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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 Business and
Professional Women, Soroptimist International, Soroptimist
International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Limited,
Soroptimist International of Europe, Stockholm Environment
Institute, and Women for Water Partnership, non-governmental
organizations 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 for Water Partnership is a network managed by women and for women's organisations working on water - and sanitation related issues in over 100 countries. The network assists with knowledge exchange, research, vocational training and mentoring, advocacy and fundraising. Membership encompasses grassroots' women, academic and professional women. A large majority of work is done on a voluntary basis. Women for Water connects Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 5 and 6. Our most recent activities as a network include the Flash Mobs, connecting young female professionals and employers and the newly published report on with women better results on water management.

Inter alia, Women for Water is a member of the Call for Action to Accelerate Gender Equality in the Water Domain initiative.

We address access to technology, bias toward women handling technology and education issues.

For women and girls who do not have access to technology, due to poverty, technological illiteracy, their rural location or other causes like cultural bias, the gender gap has widened inexorably. A lot of technology is designed for and by men so their size, weight and other attributes making it functionally inaccessible for many women. Technology and innovation are never gender neutral – they contribute to existing social and economic challenges and create new ones. Technology is a tool which can enable women and girls, but it must be designed, implemented and regulated in a way which fully recognises impacts technology can have on all women and girls. Innovation is not just about technical solutions but also about better governance concepts and ensure women have a voice.

We strongly believe that if policymakers do not motivate women to feel comfortable with using technology, we will all stay behind.

We strongly believe that innovation needs to incorporate a change in our educational system and curricula and not just what we teach, but also whom we teach.

So we recommend:

- Support the use of (new) (appropriate, affordable and accessible) technologies and involve women in design
- and harmonize modern technologies with traditional and indigenous knowledge for sustainable rural development.
- Develop programs to educate parents and teachers to motivate their young women to join science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) related studies and jobs at every level and stop thinking it is “not for them”.
- Give women and girls better access to technology related education by setting quota and change language and criteria – educate the educators.
- Join the call for action to accelerate women's roles and equality in the water domain.
- Acknowledge earlier acquired skills (certification) through experience
- and open the “door” to women for education also at middle level and vocational education and the labor market.
- Get money directly to the women groups to ensure they can do their thing.
- Government to facilitate to have a real conversation with universities/Technical and Vocational Education and Training on how they conduct their work/design

their curricula and incorporate the “other half” of the world’s population (women).

- Ensure water and sanitation to be part of the equitation.
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