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Commission on the Status of Women

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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 Centre for Public Health, 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 Centre for Public Health (CPH) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-political, non-religious organization in Nigeria that was founded in 1997. Working in collaboration with regional health centers, community centers, and educational institutions, the CPH raises awareness of health issues facing rural Nigerians.

As CPH begins the process of expanding to neighboring countries, they are also integrating clinics to provide young men and women with the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines. Recent studies indicate that 80% of new HPV cases occur in low- and middle-income countries like Nigeria. Cervical cancer is one of the leading causes of death in Nigerian women. Every year roughly 9,000 women die in Nigeria from cervical cancer, and 15,000 new cases are diagnosed. Since cervical cancer is greatly linked with Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the CPH emphasizes the importance of the HPV vaccine to rural women in an effort to combat cervical cancer and breast cancers linked to HPV. By advocating for preventative care, such as the HPV vaccine, CPH seeks to bring awareness to this preventable disease and promote the health and well-being of all Nigerian women.

Increased access to the internet has allowed information about women's health to spread faster than before. The CPH has held virtual panels where methods of constructing reusable sanitary napkins were shared to allow girls to continue their education while menstruating. The CPH provides educational training seminars, radio broadcasts focused on health education, advocacy campaigns for cancer prevention, mobilization through social media, and more. Moreover, the use of telemedicine virtual doctor visits, the CPH has been able to provide free health care to rural people who would otherwise not have access to medical professionals. The CPH has also used mobile platforms to build a network of organizations dedicated to improving women's health. Especially the establishment of "CPH Ten Million Voices" Networks with over 4,000 volunteers in 23 countries. Although the COVID-19 pandemic made traditional methods of collaboration more difficult, it also allowed for a new wave of activism and advocacy that the CPH is proud to help pioneer.

CPH is dedicated to reducing the mortality rate from infectious diseases and tackling the burden of cancer in Nigeria through creating awareness and providing education for preventative care and early detection. In recent years, the CPH has begun expanding into other African Countries, working with over 500 volunteers in 60 different communities. The partnerships and growth of the CPH have helped work towards reducing the mortality rate from infectious diseases and tackling the burden of cancer and HIV/AIDS. Although virtual communication has allowed for more information to spread, there is concern that many people that are most vulnerable are without internet access. The CPH is also concerned about the rapid spread of misinformation, especially as it relates to reproductive health and vaccination.

We call upon the Commission on the Status of Women and fellow NGOs to step up action in the adoption of technological innovations in this digital era that will help in the mobilization and empowerment of women. The advocacy for gender equality should be inclusive. Furthermore, we call on the Commission on the Status of Women and fellow NGOs to facilitate extensive networks and collaborations so that no group is left behind.