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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 Consular Corps and 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

Empowering Women for Global Economic Progress and Dominance in Economic Leadership – International Federation of Consular Corps and Associations’ Commitment

International Federation of Consular Corps and Associations, an ECOSOC accredited international global organization representing the interests of Honorary Consuls worldwide, acknowledges that women are essential participants in today’s complex economic landscape. Our organization is unique in representing prominent economist, lawyers, industry and business people from around the world who are diplomats by choice, voluntarily working diligently for international relations in spheres of economy, trade, law and cooperation. Its members are citizens of country A, representing countries B, C, etc, and at the same time have a busy life in the local and international economy. In this sense, the International Federation of Consular Corps and Associations on its own represents a multifaceted network of diplomats who are also business individuals from many nations and points of view and is not a localized, regional or single, organization.

Recent events, including the worldwide economic crisis and the ongoing conflicts such as the Ukraine-Russia conflict, have highlighted the need for diverse perspectives and approaches in addressing global challenges. The world is moving from a global democratic economy to an internal national oriented sphere. As a global organization we have a unique outlook on these turbulent times, and it becomes increasingly evident that empowering women economically and involving them in key decision-making processes is not just a matter of social justice – but also a pragmatic necessity for global stability and prosperity.

The economic crisis post COVID and the plight of refugees moving across Europe serve as a stark reminder of the vulnerabilities within the worldwide economic systems. “The Economist” in recent articles (“Measure for Measure”, 16 September 2023, “How Paranoid Nationalism Corrupts”, 2 September 2023) exposed the limitations of traditional models of leadership and decision-making, which often prioritize short-term gains and competitiveness over long-term sustainability and cooperation. In a world gearing for war, the search for a strong leader sometimes obscures the values of human rights and democracy.

It occurs to us that “pushing back on the push back” is no longer a term which should be used only in gender equality issues, but applied on a wider sphere.

Research in organizational psychology and leadership studies has consistently demonstrated that gender-diverse leadership teams are more effective in fostering cooperative environments and reducing the negative impacts of excessive competitiveness. Studies conducted by esteemed institutions such as the American Psychological Association, Oxford Research Encyclopaedias and Harvard Business Review, among others, have shown that when women hold leadership positions, they often emphasize collaboration, consensus-building, and long-term planning. This leadership style contributes to a more stable and inclusive decision-making process, ultimately leading to better outcomes in both public and private sectors. Women’s abilities at teamwork, open the decision making institutions to new ideas and avoids “groupthink” in which the group succumbs to the leader’s perspective and may erroneously lead the country or the organization astray. Only by joint teamwork in the economic and diplomatic worlds can we reach better solutions. These findings underscore the importance of promoting women’s leadership through cooperation in economic, industrial and political spheres.

Gender inequality in the workforce has far-reaching economic implications. It hinders the full utilization of human capital, hinders innovation, and limits economic growth. In many regions of the world, women continue to face significant barriers to entry and advancement in the workplace. These barriers include unequal pay, limited access to education and training, and a lack of representation in management and decision-making roles. Research has consistently shown that closing the gender gap in labour force participation and equalizing wages can significantly boost GDP growth. For instance, a report by the McKinsey Global Institute estimated that advancing women's equality could add \$12 trillion to global GDP by 2025.

Women also play a pivotal role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict serves as a reminder of the urgency of promoting women's participation in peace processes. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 recognizes the critical role of women in these efforts and emphasizes the importance of their full involvement in decision-making processes related to peace and security.

Women often bring unique perspectives and priorities to peace negotiations, advocating for the protection of vulnerable populations and the long-term stability of conflict-affected regions. Their involvement in conflict resolution not only helps prevent further violence but broadens and prioritizes social issues that lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.

A Call for a UN Supervisory Team

We propose that the UN Commission on the Status of Women takes a leadership role in establishing a new special task force especially for the integration of women in key positions, with diverse representation from different regions and demographics worldwide, within the UN framework. This team would be responsible for overseeing and guiding the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives on a global scale. Such a team would provide essential expertise, guidance, and accountability in advancing the UN objectives related to this matter, in light of the SDG 2030 goals, ensuring that these initiatives are effectively integrated into policies and practices across member states and international organizations.

The UN Supervisory Team for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment ("UNSGT") (a suggested name) would comprise experts from diverse backgrounds, including economics, political science, sociology, psychology, health, law and conflict resolution. Their mandate would encompass:

- The UNSGT would work closely with UN member states to develop and promote policies that advance gender equality and women's empowerment. This includes advocating for legislative changes, regulatory reforms, and targeted initiatives that address gender disparities in economic opportunities and leadership roles.
- The UNSGT would collaborate with research institutions and organizations to collect and analyse data on the impact of gender diversity and incorporation of women's teamwork capabilities in leadership and decision-making processes. This research would elicit evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and businesses.
- The UNSGT would facilitate capacity-building programs, mentorship initiatives, and leadership training to empower women with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in leadership positions. These programs would be designed to foster diversity and inclusivity in all sectors of society.
- The UNSGT would actively support efforts to involve women in conflict resolution processes, particularly in regions affected by conflict. This includes

advocating for the inclusion of women in peace negotiations, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

- The UNSGT would forge partnerships with governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector to create a global alliance for gender equality and economic empowerment. Collaboration on a global scale is essential to effect meaningful change.
- The UNSGT would report annually during the Commission on the Status of Women meetings, and will organize side events centred around the theme of diplomacy as part of its professional work. These events would serve as platforms for sharing knowledge, fostering collaboration, and promoting the importance of women's involvement in global diplomacy and economic progress.

International Federation of Consular Corps and Associations believes that it can contribute significantly to this team's objectives. Our global network and expertise in diplomacy and our individual involvement globally in the economic and industrial spheres gives us the position to provide valuable insights into economic empowerment and gender equality initiatives. We are committed to actively engage with this team, sharing best practices, and collaborating on projects that promote women's economic advancement and gender equality.

In conclusion, recent global challenges have underscored the urgency of this mission. We believe that by harnessing the potential of women and incorporating their perspectives, we can build a more inclusive, cooperative, and peaceful world.

We kindly request the UN Commission on the Status of Women's support in implementing these initiatives and fostering a more equitable and prosperous future for all. Furthermore, we strongly recommend the establishment of a supervisory team within the UN to oversee and guide the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives on a global scale.

In the spirit of collaboration, let us work together to create a world where the economic contributions of women are fully recognized and where women have an equal seat at the table in shaping the global economic landscape.

As Nelson Mandela once said, "It always seems impossible until it's done", and as Maya Angelou teaches us: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then, when you know better, do better."
