



# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-eighth session

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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 Nadam Foundation, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The Nadam Foundation is a non-governmental organization holding consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 2010, the foundation began its work in Kerala, India, taking stern strides toward securing gender equity, children's rights, environmental protection, and nuclear disarmament. The foundation has initiated many programs within their community including planting trees, child rights seminars, and human rights seminars. One of the Nadam Foundation's goals is to create awareness of women's rights and provide tools for women to speak up, especially those who are isolated in rural communities and in developing countries. In order to achieve their mission, the volunteers and staff extend emotional and financial support to low-income students, senior citizens, children, and women. More specifically, in the past, the foundation has deployed resources in schools to educate girls about their personal rights through empowerment. Additionally, the foundation holds awareness programs for rural women throughout Kerala emphasizing women's rights.

In rural areas of India, women are often confined to the home and lack a sense of community. In more traditional groups, men utilize oppressive behaviors to keep women in low positions, which often goes unquestioned because of selective religious justification for maintaining communal order. These women will go their entire lives not understanding their personal rights as they have little means of learning about them or communicating with other women. In India and other underdeveloped nations, many rural women are illiterate and are prisoners of these customs and cultural beliefs, which limits the comprehension of their fundamental rights. Women do not have the confidence to fight against acts of domestic and gender-based violence. The Nadam Foundation seeks to empower women and break conventional barriers to increase the quality of life for rural women in India through addressing institutional issues of education, banking, and business.

The Nadam Foundation recognizes the importance of the ability for illiterate women in rural India to gain independence and confidence. The Nadam Foundation has been working hard for the past 13 years to advocate for gender equality and empower women. One example is the creation of 25-member groups in the Kerala region. Within these groups women can learn sewing and stitching skills that can be used to earn their own income. Connecting these women with manufacturing units in India has provided the opportunity for women to become more autonomous. Volunteers of the Nadam Foundation have been teaching illiterate women basic primary education, such as reading and writing. We are working alongside the Saksharatha Mission, which is a governmental initiative to educate the illiterate.

In addition, the Nadam Foundation is committed to helping women run successful businesses. Successful catering services run by rural women have blossomed with the foundation's support. Encouraging women to utilize loan services from the Nationalised banks in India and helping women open their own bank accounts is an important goal in Nadam's mission. Nadam's initiatives encourage women to fight against domestic violence as they are more confident and independent. These member groups have decreased the prevalence of gender-based violence in the rural Kerala region.

The Nadam Foundation is committed to spreading awareness of gender equity and providing restorative actions to rural women in developing countries by breaking conventional institutional barriers in banking and education. The Nadam Foundation encourages other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to undertake similar initiatives in other developing countries, citing how educational groups decrease

domestic violence in the household. The international community has a tremendous role to play in ensuring the safety and happiness for women.

The Nadam Foundation urges the Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women, and other relevant United Nations bodies to acknowledge the value of institutional change in providing independence, safety, and security to women in conflict-affected countries. Each United Nations entity contributes significantly to expanding resources for women in impoverished populations where gender discrimination is prominent.

In conformity with the Commission on the Status of Women, the foundation confirms its commitment to eliminating gender disparity. We think that women are critical, transformational leaders and acknowledge the essential need for women's empowerment in order to accelerate the UN Sustainable Development Goals and champion UN Women's principles. Institutional structures and financing play a significant part in providing a platform for women to find their independence and confidence in fighting for gender equality. This empowerment allows women to advocate for their own rights and seek help from trusted professionals.

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