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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 Global Interactions, Inc., 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

Over the past three decades, global progress has undoubtedly improved conditions for women. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that significant challenges persist worldwide, and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues. The urgency to prioritize gender equality is underscored by the 2021 UN report, “Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2021,” which provides key findings:

- One in five girls under 15 lives in extreme poverty.
- Only 1 in 10 senior managers in the rapidly growing renewable energy sector is a woman.
- Women face job restrictions in certain industries in almost 50 per cent of countries.
- In the first year of the pandemic, an estimated 1.4 million additional pregnancies occurred in lower and middle-income countries.
- Women are inadequately prioritized in achieving the SDGs, including Climate Action, with only 64 out of 190 Nationally Determined Contributions referencing women.
- Women chair just 18 per cent of government committees on foreign affairs, defense, finance, and human rights.
- At international ocean science conferences, only 29 per cent of featured speakers are women.
- Women, who are overrepresented in urban slums in many countries, are at elevated risk of COVID-19 infection and fatality rates.

Despite these formidable challenges, it is crucial to recognize that women have the potential to achieve gender equality, social justice, and human rights on par with their male counterparts. Existing resources and strategies align with the United Nations’ objectives, with the primary impediment being a lack of effective leadership.

This is a compelling call to action for individuals and organizations to collaborate and empower women worldwide to lead lives characterized by dignity, self-esteem, and equality. The “leadership in action” approach is advocated, providing women with access to expertise, networks, relationships, and cost-sharing opportunities. Empowering women is not only achievable but also essential for a sustainable and equitable global society.

To expedite progress, leaders, governments, communities, and organizations must wholeheartedly embrace these values. A historical legacy of controlling women’s education, bodies, and economic opportunities has perpetuated their lower status. Effecting change requires a fundamental shift in these deeply ingrained values.

For example, the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) Human Development Report 2021-2022: Takeaways for Bangladesh, reported that Bangladesh has made notable progress, including reduced maternal mortality rates, declining fertility rates, and improved gender parity in education, particularly in the garment sector (Liller, 2022).

However, women’s access to financial support and opportunities remains limited, with challenges such as child marriages and gender-based violence persisting. International networks can provide essential resources, including financing, mentoring, business development, legal expertise, education, and leadership development, to support women leaders in regions facing such challenges.

An international network delivering and facilitating women's leadership curriculum is a proven strategy to nurture commitment, courage, and skills among young women and men, enabling them to make a meaningful impact in their communities, countries, and the world. The World Academy for the Future of Women, through the Leadership in Action model, supports university students in participating countries as they design projects aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Experienced leaders guide them through the research, planning, and execution process, fostering confidence and empowering young women to explore opportunities they might not have considered otherwise.

Confidence plays a pivotal role in achieving gender equity, as women often confront beliefs that they cannot match men in leadership and economic development. Platforms offering experiential learning opportunities and a supportive environment are instrumental in accelerating progress towards gender equality effectively.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) serves as a crucial platform for uniting global efforts to advance women's equality and leadership. We strongly urge the United Nations to enhance access to Consultancy Organizations, reducing barriers to communication, engagement, and collaboration. This will facilitate resource sharing and collective efforts to elevate women's status globally, characterized by equity, security, and fairness.

One tangible approach to fostering dialogue is to establish a special forum during the CSW68 program or introduce an online program explicitly dedicated to familiarizing participants with various non-governmental organizations and entities holding UN Consultancy Status engaged in similar issues and programs. Such a forum could continue online, periodically highlighting different groups, fostering ongoing networking and collaboration. Additionally, utilizing applications like WHOVA can further facilitate continuous networking and collaboration.

Reflecting on our experience at CSW67, we found that meeting and connecting with other non-governmental organizations greatly benefited our team. We aspire not only to sustain but also to expedite collaboration with UN Women contacts in the future.
