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peace for the twenty-first century”

Statement submitted by Asociación Colectivo Mujeres Al Derecho Sigla ASOCOLEMAD, 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

Respected members of the Executive Committee of the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Asociación Colectivo Mujeres Al Derecho Sigla ASOCOLEMAD, along with our Equidad + Desarrollo De Sur-Sur Global Ecosystem, greets, shares, and embraces the principles, reaffirmations, and commitments to accelerate measures in favor of women and girls in the issues observed during the session period. In this statement, we add our contributions:

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are a call that must be addressed immediately and effectively. Inequalities in Latin American, Caribbean, and South African countries continue to exacerbate the hardship of the most impoverished, women and girls, people living in rural areas, and those belonging to peasant and ethnic communities. One aspect that worsens the situation for 2021, according to the gender perspective in the annual report on progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, is that global inequalities have increased as a result of COVID-19, notably in Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to the report, the assessment reveals that there is still a long way to go for Gender Equality. Only 1 out of 18 indicators is “close to the goal,” and there is a data deficit for some indicators. Only 2 out of the 18 indicators have sufficient data to assess progress over time and across all regions. This means that the problem of insufficient gender-focused data persists, and without addressing it, the picture of progress will remain incomplete.

As of today, gender inequality, along with climate and environmental crises, are the greatest challenges of sustainable development in our time, affecting the entire planet and all people, with disproportionate impacts on women and girls, especially those in vulnerable and marginalized situations or in conflict zones.

To achieve lasting progress, it is essential to strengthen institutions and ensure financial resources with a gender perspective. Organizations dedicated to empowering women and girls play a significant role in the fight against gender discrimination, violence, and inequality. Various Non-Governmental Organizations worldwide provide crucial support for women’s empowerment, dedicating areas of research, economic ventures, innovation, and monitoring. They are working on the development of work methodologies to contribute to the empowerment of women and girls in territories and communities in Brazil, Colombia, Central America, and South Africa. These regions share common challenges of gender inequality and economic inequity, primarily due to land dispossession favoring private companies, which disproportionately affect girls, adolescents, and women from ethnic groups (African and Indigenous).

We must work to consolidate the indigenous economies that women have practiced for generations and that have not been recognized by the macroeconomic model. This includes the house-care economy, but it goes beyond that; it also involves forms of production created and practiced by women and girls from generation to generation, which are also ecologically friendly.

That is why investing in programs and policies aimed at promoting autonomy for women and girls is an investment in a more equal future that directly contributes to the fifth Sustainable Development Goal. The lack of resources to support initiatives and programs with a gender perspective poses a danger to the progress made and the ability to address the challenges faced by communities where the Human Development Index has declined. According to international organizations, since 2020, this index has decreased in 87 per cent of countries, and in 2021, it decreased in 51 per cent (UNDP Human Development Report 2020). In other words, the

guarantee and progress towards equitable human development are shifting towards the negative side.

Poverty and the lack of economic opportunities are obstacles to equity and the acquisition of the necessary skills for human development. Specific regions with alarming HDI values include Sub-Saharan Africa with 0.547 per cent and Latin America with 0.754 per cent. When considering individual countries, Brazil ranks 87th, Colombia 88th, Guatemala 135th, South Africa 109th, and Uganda 166th, all falling within the low and very low ranges. Moreover, internal inequalities and disparities are being exacerbated negatively, further threatening territories, regional biomes, and rural areas.

Women and girls around the world face unique challenges, often stemming from deep-rooted inequalities. The lack of support for local organizations results in a lack of awareness of the living conditions of many women and girls in extremely unequal communities. The absence of access to healthcare, education, and basic services limits their ability to develop fully and exercise their rights. According to recent reports from international organizations and civil society, in low-income countries, the global population lacks access to social protection benefits. This is reflected in 53 per cent of 435 million women and girls living in extreme poverty in 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed a global humanitarian crisis with worsening setbacks due to strong phenomena and instabilities: pre-existing and new armed conflicts, environmental degradation, an increase in extreme poverty, and severe food insecurity, as reported by the United Nations Development Programme. A state of crisis and uncertainty was declared, and the existence of progress was marked by insecurity for humanity. Reports warn that the global gender gap in food insecurity increased dramatically during the pandemic, with more women and girls going hungry and lacking access to dignified living conditions.

This is why there is a call to strengthen organizations, institutions, and systems that provide social protection and sustainable infrastructure construction to raise their voices in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. To achieve this, sufficient resources should be allocated with the aim of ensuring inclusive and accessible practices for all, regardless of their social, economic, migratory, and geographic conditions. This involves the expansion of projects that ensure financial assistance, healthcare, education, and other vital services.

It is always important to emphasize support for the specific needs of women in vulnerable situations, such as those facing violence and discrimination, including migrant women who also confront rejection, lack of information, and empowerment. Women are encouraged to actively participate in the planning and decision-making of innovation and sustainable development projects with a gender perspective.

We also highlight the challenges that persist in ensuring the inclusion in development for women from the global South diasporas who have immigrated from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and refugees residing in the global North. In these regions, measures and policies contrary to international protection for humanitarian reasons are being reinforced. We urge stakeholders to remember and implement that migration is a human right, and in times of crisis, achieving equality and the development of women and girls is linked to international protection and humanitarian action, as well as to women, peace, and security. The agendas for accelerating gender equality and women, peace, security, humanitarian action, and the protection of defenders are intrinsically linked to achieving transformative and sustainable development that includes women and girls from the global South.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that this scenario, like the other stakeholders responsible for complying with the Women's Human Rights Charter and

the Gender Equality and Sustainable Development Agendas, have significant routes and indicators to guide the way. We need to reach more and include those from the peripheries, the margins, and marginalized groups. In the end, it's essential for stakeholders to put their intentions into practice in the scattered local world.
