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Statement submitted by Association for Supporting the SDGs for the UN (ASD), 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

According to the International Labor Organization, approximately 500 million people lost their jobs between April and June last year due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Countless people lost their jobs and suffered from food shortages that the number of people living in extreme poverty living on an average of less than \$1.9 per capita a day increased from 8.8 million to 14 million. The World Food Program also reported that the pandemic could cause 265 million people to suffer from a severe food crisis. Workers in each production area lost their jobs, and transportation costs rose significantly during the prolonged lockdown. In 2020 and 2021 alone, at least 820 million people, including 144 million children under the age of five, are currently facing a food crisis.

The acceleration of global climate change and environmental disasters have also become major factors in the economic crisis and food shortage. Due to climate change, heavy rains caused flooding in the Middle East and East Africa in 2019, and drought and heatwaves in Australia. The great Amazon fire in June 2019 burned 29,944 km² of land, and from September 2019 to February 2020, a forest fire occurred in Australia, which turned 107,000 km² of land to ashes. Consequently, it has caused negative impacts on raw material production and supply chain management. About 22 countries have restricted or banned food exports and decided stronger protection measures in case of shortages of food supply and demand, and raw materials without lifting the border blockade.

Furthermore, industries and the job market are undergoing unprecedented difficulties. The U.S. Labor Department has mentioned that 9.95 million unemployment benefits were applied in the third and fourth weeks of the month of March last year. Since the global financial crisis in 2010, 40 per cent of the 24.8 million jobs created in the U.S. have disappeared within two weeks. During the same period, in France, about 4 million people also applied for unemployment benefits. The world has been pushed into an economic and unemployment crisis that the G20 countries also could not avoid. Most of the jobs that disappeared were in the service sector, and 60 per cent of workers working in these industries were women. It is without a doubt, that women are currently the most affected class as the pandemic continues and poverty deepens.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action marked its 25th anniversary (Beijing+25) last year, but nearly 600 million women live on a daily living expense of less than \$1.25 in underdeveloped countries and are being discriminated against in universal education equivalent to elementary and secondary schools. More than 500 women die every day during childbirth without obtaining medical facilities, and one in three women still experiences physical and sexual violence. According to the United Nations Women, most female workers around the world earn 10 to 30 per cent fewer wages than men in the same position. As the quarantine lasts, women's economic conditions deteriorated significantly, and young girls lost their educational opportunities.

It is absolutely necessary for women to 'restore economic conditions,' 'reinforce education for digital transformation,' and 'provide eco-friendly opportunities suitable for the green era.' The Association for Supporting the SDGs for the United Nations and a Korean global health and beauty company, 'CJ Olive Young,' continue to spread these kinds of efforts. The association establishes partnerships with private sectors to increase social values from these activities while CJ Olive Young supports women to achieve the SDGs in the health & beauty and cosmetics sectors. CJ Olive Young focuses on four major areas to support women and girls:

- Supporting women's health;

- providing educational opportunities for young girls in developing countries;
- clean beauty; and,
- supporting caring program for working mothers with quality jobs.

First, CJ Olive Young works on a campaign that aims to support the cotton sanitary pad which is an important necessity for women. The sanitary pad was made of clean and safe materials. It helps with the discomforts that low-income women should purchase disposable sanitary pads every month. It also launched the 'Pink Box Campaign' to deliver necessary items to women including masks, thermal packs, and sleeping eye masks in the box, and provided them to approximately 5,600 low-income female teenagers over five years. On International Women's Day, the 'For Women Campaign' was opened to provide women with female product kits comprised of organic sanitary pads, feminine cleansers, and inner beauty products, aiming to improve the health of women in their 20s and 30s.

The Girls' Education Campaign, partnered with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization since 2014, has provided learning opportunities for girls deprived of their educational needs in developing countries with a total of 1.5 billion Won (1.26 million USD) donated by CJ Olive Young, and 2.5 million customers participated in the campaign alone in 2019. When a customer purchases a certain amount or more at a campaign store, it is accumulated as a pledged donation. This campaign is considered an innovative model that has established a "life donation" culture, in which the consumption of women in their 20s and 30s, the main customers of H&B stores, leads to donations.

CJ Olive Young also has a leading eco-friendly model in climate action, greenhouse gas reduction, and plastic reduction. The Clean Beauty Campaign directly selects cosmetics that exclude harmful ingredients for women's skin health. This campaign is aligned with the 'Beauty-cycle Campaign' to collect and recycle empty cosmetic bottles. It establishes a sustainable recycling system to use plastic cosmetic containers as new resources and provides customers with opportunities to take climate actions in their daily lives. Additionally, vegan cosmetic brands are highly recommended not only for good quality but also for environmental and ethical consumption to communicate with female consumers who consider sustainability. Further, CJ Olive Young is globally going to green to save the environment by implementing specific eco-friendly plans for plastic reduction with women. In an effort to strengthen the eco-friendly movement, they participated in the Guidelines for Reducing Plastic Waste and Sustainable Ocean and Climate Action Acceleration (GRP) certification program with the the Association for Supporting the SDGs for the United Nations.

CJ Olive Young is also running a Work & Life Balance campaign to strengthen women's economic capabilities and create a decent work environment. It supports the environment by sending off children to kindergartens and schools, including the flexible work system during commuting hours, and supporting working mothers to develop themselves. In addition, a campaign for caring for pregnant women is held to helping wear a pregnant woman's badge, deliver company-level congratulatory messages along with gift sets, and gain psychological support from colleagues.

A sudden social transformation caused by the pandemic, climate change, food crisis, and the problem of jobless growth is making it difficult for women to deal with recovering economic crises, equalizing educational opportunities, and transiting to the Green Age. The Association for Supporting the SDGs for the United Nations and CJ Olive Young are striving to forge a better future for the United Nations member states, the environment, and women and children by promoting sustainable projects and activities.