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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 FEMM 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The FEMM Foundation is a knowledge-based health program for women inspired by women's right to be informed participants in their own healthcare and to make voluntary decisions based on options, information, and understanding. The FEMM Foundation is dedicated to health education, medical research, and improving reproductive health care to advance women's health.

In light of the effects of climate change and natural disasters, and even the enduring effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, women's health must not be left on the sidelines. In fact, research from the Infectious Diseases Society of America shows that women with healthy hormone levels and ovulation have improved outcomes when suffering from Covid-19.

The earthquake and tropical storm that ravaged Haiti in August 2021, brought enormous damage to over sixty medical centers and numerous roads around the country, an example of how access to medical care becomes more precarious and limited in disaster situations. Thus, a woman who understands how her body works can monitor her own health and seek help before she needs emergency treatment. Furthermore, she is able to make informed decisions about the care she receives. Even women who have not completed schooling can learn to monitor their signs of health.

Women face unique and frequently unaddressed health struggles related to their biology. They often accept symptoms such as irregular bleeding, pain, depression, mood swings, and weight gain as normal, and do not realize that these are often signs of underlying hormonal imbalances and abnormalities. Even when women do seek medical care for these symptoms, most health care providers and programs struggle to diagnose them and often can only treat the symptoms. Additionally, women combat stigma and myths associated with normal biological processes, such as menstruation.

Underlying hormonal conditions can affect women and girls' long-term overall health, sometimes irreversibly. They can also affect women and girls' ability to complete their education, engage in work, and plan their families. These may interfere with women and girls' ability to participate in all areas of their lives. Poor health hurts gender equality by undermining women and girls' ability to realize their potential and drive development in their communities. Recalling paragraph 31 of the agreed conclusions of the 61st CSW session, the right to the highest standard of health is vital to allow women to participate equally in private and public life, as well as have equal leadership in the economy. Thus, women and girls who have untreated medical conditions can be empowered through both knowledge and good, accessible medical treatment.

FEMM Foundation knows that hormones are essential to reproductive and overall women's health. Ovulation is the sign of health in women because it is the proof of sufficient hormone levels in the nine essential hormones that influence women's health. FEMM Foundation teaches women to understand this information and the signs that this presents in their body. In this way, women using the FEMM program are able to identify abnormalities as they arise, seek health treatment when necessary, and ensure that their symptoms or complaints are not dismissed.

FEMM also enables women to make informed choices about family planning. There is a right to adequate family planning and information about reproductive health that is accurate and respects cultural, religious, and ethical beliefs. Programs focused on providing reproductive health commodities often fail to ensure that women have the education needed to understand their bodies and what products they are being offered and may not always respect values. Commodities also run out, whereas knowledge, once acquired, is there to stay, and can be shared freely.

Information-based health education and medical care is uniquely suited to meet these needs while respecting individual choices and values. FEMM offers reproductive and hormonal education and helps women to understand the way various family planning methods work and their potential side effects. It educates women about the science of their bodies, how to identify when they are fertile, and how to achieve or avoid pregnancy.

FEMM has also developed an app to help women take control of their health. The FEMM App is available free of charge. It is now available in English and Spanish and on both Apple and Android devices, making it available to more women around the world, with many new downloads coming from women in developing countries. Women who use the FEMM App can track their observations and symptoms to better understand their bodies and health. Just as each woman is different, so are her observations and experiences, which is why the app is completely customizable. Women can track as much or as little as they like and add symptoms and observations. It also provides insights into what a woman is experiencing in her cycle and can flag potential health concerns and connect women with medical professionals for treatment.

Women and girls also need good healthcare to meet their needs when they do identify health concerns. FEMM's Medical Management program trains doctors to diagnose and treat reproductive health problems, with a holistic view of a woman's body that incorporates recent research on the complex hormonal interactions between different body systems. This interaction, and the delicacy of the hormonal activity in a woman's body, is essential to the experience of health in the entire female body. FEMM has developed innovative protocols that allow doctors to identify underlying problems with precision and treat them effectively. This medical support provides treatments that help women to live healthy lives.

FEMM is low-cost and meets the underlying needs of women. Comprehensive health care for women can now be provided through basic health delivery systems, making this approach to women's health more effective, cheaper to deliver, and providing better health outcomes. This makes FEMM a sustainable way of incorporating advanced endocrinological care into healthcare infrastructures. By incorporating this care into other efforts, we can ensure that women and girls get the care they deserve, and which will help them participate fully in their communities, and resiliently face the effects of climate change, global pandemics, and environmental disasters.

Empowering women in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes requires the investment in women's health and health education. We know that informed decisions lead to healthier decisions, that poor health hinders the ability to work, and that women play a key role in family and community health outcomes. The knowledge gained through FEMM can allow women to identify underlying health concerns and to achieve or avoid pregnancy. When people attain the highest level of health they can reach, they are able to thrive and partake in their communities, adapt to changes in the economy, contribute both inside and outside of the home, and resiliently face the trials of climate disasters and pandemics. FEMM is prepared to address the needs of women through accessible educational programs and cutting-edge medical support. The FEMM Foundation urges this Commission and Member States to promote healthcare that meets the needs of women.