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entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by Children of War 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

Children of War Foundation (COWF) was established in 2010, with a mission to save lives, one child at a time, and over the years, the organization's mission has broadened, however, the principles and purpose remain the same. Today, Children of War Foundation's mission is to deliver access to global health and education to communities affected by poverty, war, natural disaster, discrimination, climate change, isolation, and migration challenges.

In 2020, the pandemic, chaotic and devastating as it was, brought light to opportunity and new methods of reaching more children, especially for those who were unreachable before. The pandemic also amplified disparities in gender equality as connectivity and the use of technology became more of a tool to voice concerns of not only everyday suffering, but also to share with the world how women and girls continue to face discrimination and inequitable access to education.

To add fuel to the fire, the ongoing uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 epidemic meant the organization had to change mobilization and delivery methods of access to health and education. Children of War Foundation's ability to mobilize onsite lessened, however, the organization learned that connectivity was spreading, and with that, the organization used technology as a source to continue and expand on the mission where needed the most.

As Children of War Foundation's focus shifted to using digital technology to educate more youth, education across the world had also move online. Viewed from a positive perspective, this means that education is no longer constrained by time and place. It should also not be constrained by citizenship, wealth, or background. A tall ask of adding more teachers or more desks in the classroom was no longer a concern. However, as many gained accesses online, many were left behind. Unfortunately, many of the e-learning solutions being rolled out in response to the pandemic remain inaccessible to displaced communities. The average time of displacement is nearly 20 years, meaning that a solution to this problem is needed urgently, especially with recent adversity in climate change and natural disasters, further impacting girls who were already overlooked.

To address this challenge, Children of War Foundation partnered with EdTech Abwaab, an online learning platform accredited by the Ministry of Education in Jordan, in a pilot initiative to explore the full capacity of online education.

The Abwaab learning platform makes it possible for marginalized and refugee children to receive a secondary education in their country of residence, which conforms to the standard curriculum and competency testing of that country's public school system. Students undergo an initial assessment to find a suitable grade level. Upon full enrolment, they receive a Wi-Fi enabled tablet or similar, which they can use to access an ecosystem of short, engaging video lessons. With the freedom to go at their own pace, they can self-test and review their performance, all via the online application. The platform also prepares students for in person examination for their final year of secondary (high school) education.

With the financial support of Unique Zan Foundation, the Abwaab Pilot in Jordan was conceived as a proof-of-concept, with aim of demonstrating that education can be delivered effectively to displaced communities, while observing local educational standards and COVID-19 safety protocols.

Children of War Foundation plans to use this as a case study to expand beyond Jordan and persuade other governments in countries with displaced communities to adopt similar schemes for their own refugee populations.

Even as we broaden our reach, our efforts will be carefully targeted. Students will be recruited at different levels of intervention depending on prevailing needs and role in the community. The objective standards will address gender disparities, and a family's level of vulnerability - poverty, marginalization, and displacement. While the direct beneficiaries will be the students themselves, the wider objective is to empower whole families by heightening their visibility in their respective communities and building their capacity to participate constructively in society. The project is designed to be inclusive, a mandate of 50% or more female enrolment, and with the ability to create a viable platform for inter-generational dialogue.

Conflicts of the past nearly two decades have displaced millions, the impact will remain lifelong for many, especially children who are unable to continue education or receive equitable education. These conflicts are not only civil or armed in nature, but they are also a war against climate change, natural disaster, poverty, discrimination, and migration of all sorts, globally.

During the past three tumultuous years, the organization has kept the pace with an evolving landscape using the power of connectivity and technology through the Children of War Foundation Abwaab Remote Education Program (CAREP).

The organization achieved these goals from 2020 through 2022, following through this project, working to ensure that gender inequalities were addressed in providing access to the right to learn regardless of the geographical or economic challenges. The solution allows students to continuously develop and improve, preserve safety during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to leverage technology and access to wi-fi to provide high quality educational content to all students. More importantly, the solution also addresses challenges of distance and demographics constrained by political and or religious barriers preventing girls to accessing equitable education.

Amid going digital, in 2021, Children of War Foundation conferred with the special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), determined to find solutions and partners to scale the organization's work and advocate for those who are not yet reachable.

Moreover, through field coordination and dissemination of information via social networks and online platforms, the organization was and is solving for access and rights to education for girls who fall out of school in transitional periods, such as primary to secondary education. This transition is particularly a critical challenge to address sooner than later, as adolescent girls who are out of school are more likely not to return, marry early, and or end up working low skilled and low paying (if any) jobs. Data shows that girls face even more gender discrimination not being educated, and in response to numerous barriers, including cultural and social. It is evident that girls who can lift themselves through the power of education, can lift their families, their communities out of poverty as well as adapt and overcome adversity when endured.

Evidence also shows that secondary education empowers girls with the knowledge to work through adolescent challenges, communication, life skills, problem-solving, critical thinking, and thus enabling resiliency to further understand human rights, undo poverty and respond to adversity to protect and education families.

Based on successful results, the organization intends to work with additional partners and continue advocating for the use of connectively and technology to disseminate access to education, both in hybrid and purely online methods. The organization intends to continue advocating for policy change in allowing ed tech

solutions to conform to public school standard and enforcing compliance across public sectors to allow for access regardless of geographic context or ability to pay.

Progress made with more girls completing secondary education, is threatened by climate change and natural disasters, in addition to armed conflict in many parts of the world. Children of War Foundation hopes to alter the landscape of access to secondary education, especially to adolescent girls, using connectivity and online ed tech solutions. Children of War Foundation calls on our educators, policy makers, international and human rights organization to support the use of technology and spreading access to connectivity to bring access to education to youth around the world. Standardizing public school curriculum using connectivity and ed tech solutions as a solution when there are no other options. Children of War Foundation urges leadership in civil society, public and private sectors, including those in technology spaces, to become champions, leading the way to breaking barriers that prevent youth around the world from receiving equitable education.
