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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 United Cities and Local Governments, 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

Our vision, our contribution: Local and Regional Governments leading the way towards equality

We, the global constituency of local and regional governments, stand united in our historical commitment to achieving true equality in all cities and regions. For over a century, our Municipalist Movement has championed equality, justice, and empowerment, from our cities and territories to the global stage. Our movement contributed to the processes that led to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and for the last 30 years, we have worked towards the localization of its goals, anchored in equitable local public service provision. As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform in 2025, we reaffirm our commitment to its strategic objectives and mobilize to accelerate women and girls' rights and equality everywhere.

Our vision is clear: our communities, our democracy and the resilience our planet cannot thrive without equality, and equality cannot be achieved without a radical redistribution of power. Women and marginalized groups must not only be part of policy outcomes but must also be co-creators at every stage of the decision-making process. Local and regional governments are the most responsive and inclusive level of governance, ensuring that all voices are heard. To rebuild trust in democracy, the global multilateral system must engage with local leaders as equal partners, crafting public policies that prioritize people over profits, care over capital.

Localizing the Beijing Platform for Action and SDG 5: Achievements and Challenges

Our constituency is at the frontline of sustainable development, crucial to realizing the global agendas for equality and sustainable development. Based on proximity, local public policies and service provision at local and regional levels—from healthcare to education, climate resilience to social protection—are indispensable to achieving the objectives of the Beijing Platform of Action and the SDGs. The contributions of local and regional governments to equality, although often overshadowed at the global level, are immense.

Local and regional governments are localizing the global agendas for equality around three axes:

- **People:** We protect the rights of all women and girls by advancing economic empowerment, fighting violence, ensuring access to education, culture and healthcare, and supporting lifelong learning and participation in cultural life. As the closest sphere of government to communities, we are uniquely positioned to co-create local care systems and implement gender-responsive policies that empower women and girls, in partnerships with all sectors of society. With rights and peace as our horizon, we foster social inclusion, we protect migrant women and girls, and we include men and boys in our actions towards equality.
- **Planet:** We recognize the connection between gender inequality and environmental degradation, and stand for climate justice. Women, particularly at the local level, are key to adapting to and mitigating climate change, and we support their leadership in strengthening resilience.
- **Government:** Local governments champion women's participation in political and public life, which in turn strengthens political agendas focused on equality. We challenge entrenched social norms and patriarchal power structures, and

promote institutional frameworks that enable women to hold change and lead the transformation of our territories.

Our priorities: The agenda of the Feminist Municipal Movement for the coming years

- Human rights, political participation, and women's leadership: We reaffirm that gender equality is a human right and that women's full and meaningful political participation is essential to achieving social justice and sustainable development. Without women in leadership, there can be no peace, no democracy, and no future.
- Local care systems and public service provision: As first responders to crises, local governments are committed to building care systems based on equitable public service provision. We will guarantee that all women, girls and communities, regardless of their status, thrive through the provision of essential services: housing, healthcare, water, sanitation, culture, education, care services, and food sovereignty.
- Equal opportunities for women and girls: Addressing poverty, dismantling structural inequalities in education and employment, and eliminating gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination are non-negotiable priorities. Women's aspirations and contributions to policy-making must be central to local governance in order to address the barriers they face.
- Gender-responsive climate action and resilience: Women must be at the center of our climate responses. Their leadership in shaping climate policies and solutions will ensure resilient, sustainable communities.
- Safeguarding democracy and peace: We support women's political participation as a cornerstone of safeguarding democracy and peace. In times of crisis, women's leadership strengthens social cohesion and fosters recovery.

Our call to action: Towards a new multilateralism rooted in equality

As we prepare to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2025, we call for bold action and the full engagement of local and regional governments at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and beyond. Our specific calls are as follows:

- Reshape the multilateral system for gender equality: We demand a fundamental shift in global governance structures to ensure that women are at the center, and that local and regional governments are recognized as key actors in achieving the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda.
- Reform the global financial architecture: The global financial system must be rethought from the perspective of redistribution, decentralization, and redefinition of care based on renewed public responsibility. Local and regional governments must have the fiscal power and resources necessary to accelerate the localization of the global agendas for equality.
- Power women's participation at all levels: We urge the United Nations, Member States, and the CSW to acknowledge the role of local governments and support women local leaders, as pivotal in advancing gender equality. We must be fully integrated into global decision-making and implementation processes.
- Support local policies of care and well-being: Promoting comprehensive care policies and systems emphasizes shared responsibility not only between men and women, but also involving governments. We appeal to the global community to support local governments as they lead the way toward a politics

of care, participation, and well-being. Policies centered on equality at the local level are key to building societies where both people and the planet can thrive.

The road to gender equality is paved with local action, women's leadership, and global solidarity. As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, let us recognize the transformative power of local and regional governments to localize its objectives and lead the way to a more equal, just, and sustainable world. We stand ready to partner with the global community, to ensure that no woman, no girl, no community, and no territory is left behind.
