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Statement submitted by WOMENVAI – Women and Men in Environment and Artificial Intelligence, 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

Submitted by the international network of women and men engineers and scientists advocating for a better environment, climate action and safe ethical usage of technology: WOMENVAI: calling for immediate action to achieve the Agenda 2030 in gender equality.

WOMENVAI is committed to advocating for gender equality and sustainable development. This platform provides a critical opportunity to address the pressing global challenges women face, aligning with the UN's Pact for the Future. The Pact emphasizes the importance of inclusive development and equitable resource distribution, which echoes WOMENVAI's mission of empowering women and girls as vital partners in sustainable development. Our commitment to gender justice and climate action is fundamental to achieving the goals outlined in the Pact.

The success of the 2030 Agenda hinges on fully resourcing and engaging half of the world's population—women and girls—in shaping, managing, and sustaining our world. Unfortunately, we live in an increasingly polarized world, where rising racism, gender discrimination, and xenophobia undermine progress. Governments must recognize the vital role of feminist and human rights organizations and actively shift power and decision-making to the people, allowing them to lead the change they seek.

The climate crisis is a “threat multiplier,” intensifying social, political, and economic tensions, especially in fragile, conflict-affected regions. Women and girls, particularly those from marginalized groups—such as indigenous, Afro-descendent, and South Asian communities—are disproportionately impacted. Data shows that women are 14 times more likely than men to die during disasters. Women, as custodians of 80 per cent of the planet's biodiversity, hold essential ancestral knowledge crucial for sustainable resource management. However, their underrepresentation in climate decision-making has created a significant gap in climate solutions, further marginalizing those most affected by the crisis.

Women's leadership is essential to building a better future, especially in the face of rapid technological and economic changes driven by artificial intelligence (AI). While AI can enhance productivity, it also presents challenges, particularly for women. New research reveals that women are more likely to lose jobs to automation, as many work in administrative roles without access to ICT training. The gender pay gap and barriers to new job opportunities remain significant concerns. Therefore, we must regulate AI to prevent it from widening the gender divide and ensure reskilling and upskilling opportunities are accessible to all.

To truly break the glass ceiling, we must implement the recommendations of the UN and other global stakeholders. This requires formalizing practices that promote gender equality across public and private sectors, including NGOs, academia, and local authorities. WOMENVAI is dedicated to creating opportunities for youth and women in both private and public arenas, fostering empathy and collaboration, and advocating for innovative, AI-driven work environments that embrace a gender-transformative approach. We must address the intersection of conflict and climate change, ensuring that women are central to these solutions.

We call for comprehensive fiscal, trade, and monetary policies that promote gender equity. Overcoming structural barriers to financial services, especially for female entrepreneurs, is key. This includes offering specific loans for women-led businesses, tax incentives for companies hiring women, and support for those offering STEM training for women. Additionally, AI tools must be designed with gender sensitivity, ensuring inclusivity by preventing biases in algorithms. Regulatory

frameworks should be established to audit AI systems for compliance with human rights and gender equity standards, with mechanisms in place for reporting biased systems.

Water access is another critical issue linked to gender inequality. Women and girls are primarily responsible for water collection in many households, a burden exacerbated by climate change and dwindling water sources. Gender-based violence also remains an urgent reality for millions of women and girls, deeply affecting their health, freedom, and potential. Harmful practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriages must be eradicated, and women must have access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities that protect them from exploitation. Legal reforms are essential to support survivors of violence, with men and boys encouraged to become allies in this fight.

WOMENVAI reaffirms its commitment to advocacy, policy guidance, and on-the-ground action. We believe that by empowering women and girls, we can create a more just and sustainable world. Our dedication to gender equality, climate justice, and innovative solutions will continue to drive our efforts in collaboration with global stakeholders. Together, we can achieve meaningful and lasting change through empathy, collaboration, and adaptability.

Key Recommendations

- Governments must adopt gender-transformative approaches to address the intersection of conflict and climate change, integrating climate justice into women, peace, and security frameworks.
- Immediate and urgent action is required to end harmful practices such as FGM and child marriages and to ensure access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities.
- Scale up women’s leadership in water and sanitation sectors, aligned with the UN Pact for the Future’s emphasis on sustainable and inclusive water management.
- Fiscal, trade, and monetary policies must promote gender equity, including financing for female entrepreneurship and tax incentives for companies hiring women and organizing STEM training.
- Implement inclusivity standards for AI to ensure gender-sensitive, bias-free tools, with regulatory frameworks to audit compliance with gender equity and human rights standards.
- Build a pipeline for women and girls in AI, addressing systemic barriers and ensuring co-development of AI tools by women.

WOMENVAI was founded in January 2018 with its headquarters situated in Paris, France. It is a unique global platform gathering women and men together in Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM) to build and bring sustainable solutions for a better world, aligned with the SDGs. Our goals are (a) represent the interests of women in STEM globally (b) strengthen their role in society in a sustainable and inclusive way (c) build diversity and create innovative synergies, in areas with high technological added value, to benefit sustainable development and environmental issues (d) enable intl cooperation between national organizations of women engineers and scientists, (e) promote a balanced and modern life for all, respectful of professional equality between women and men.