



# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-ninth session

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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 Centre for Public Health, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The Centre for Public Health (CPH) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-political, non-religious organization in Nigeria that was founded in 1997. Working in collaboration with regional health centers, community centers, and educational institutions, CPH has been able to bring about changes for social development. In doing so, CPH has dedicated itself to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to empower the poor, particularly women by raising awareness of critical health issues like breast and cervical cancer.

In recent years, CPH has increased its efforts to reduce domestic violence within rural Nigerian communities through microloans. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant increase in the number of domestic violence cases globally. In the face of this alarming trend, CPH developed a microloan program to encourage the empowerment of women, specifically in rural communities. These loans are given to women with a 2 per cent interest rate, a fraction of the average interest rate of 30 per cent in Nigeria. Typically around one hundred dollars, the loan promotes equity and ensures women's equal access to credit as a means of furthering their advancement and empowerment.

While the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action advocate for women's equal access to economic resources, Nigeria still faces significant challenges in achieving these goals. One of the main obstacles is socio-cultural norms which limit women's control over their finances and hinder their ability to become financially independent. Even when women receive microloans to start businesses, patriarchal structures often prevent them from making those key financial decisions. This also reduces their chances of escaping domestic violence or gaining true economic empowerment. Additionally, CPH's efforts to raise awareness for diseases that primarily affect women, like breast and cervical cancer, are held back due to a lack of healthcare infrastructure in rural regions. Though women may become aware of health risks through sensitization efforts led by CPH, they often face inadequate healthcare facilities with limited tools for proper diagnosis and treatment. This leaves diseases untreated and the situations of women unchanged. Furthermore, the stigma surrounding women's health adds another layer of difficulty as it makes it hard to run effective awareness campaigns. Government support, which is often inconsistent in remote areas, needs to be more reliable to ensure lasting change. Addressing these challenges also requires education about financial and healthcare matters, improving healthcare systems, and fostering stronger cooperation with government bodies to provide women with the support they need. Without these critical actions, the goals of the Beijing Declaration will remain unfulfilled.

These goals are multifaceted and important to achieve gender equity. These strategies and programs can help break cycles of abuse and poverty and ensure that women have access to adequate resources. The Centre for Public Health plans on hosting a presentation and discussion on its efforts to promote gender equity aligned with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Experts and participants will share their experiences and processes for developing programs and systems to achieve our common goal of promoting the status of women in all aspects of society.

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