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Statement submitted by International Network of Liberal Women, 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

A call to action to achieve Agenda 2030's success by accelerating progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

The 2030 Agenda cannot be achieved if half of the world's population is not resourced to partner in creating, managing, and caring for our world. We are living through an increasingly polarized world, with racism, gender discrimination, and xenophobia on the rise everywhere, undermining progress and holding our rights and equality hostage. Governments must recognize the vital work of feminist and human rights groups and make concerted efforts to shift power and decision-making to the people to lead the change they seek.

Climate crisis is a "threat multiplier", exacerbating social, political, and economic tensions already present globally as well as issues related to "one health" (the hyper connection among physical and mental health of humans; animals and planet), but specifically in fragile and conflict-affected settings. We are living through a triple planetary crisis; climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Those most disproportionately affected are women and girls, and in particular those belonging to indigenous communities, Afro-descendent, South Asian and other women and girls of colour. This is an intersectional and intergenerational issue affecting women, girls and minorities and those with disabilities, migrants, refugees and those living in rural, remote, conflict and disaster-prone areas. Gender justice is an integral part of climate justice. Women and their local communities are the custodians of 80 per cent of the planet's biodiversity and have ancestral knowledge of the land and seas near them, so it is essential to involve all women and girls in decision-making processes. Ultimately, they are the group most affected by climate change. When it comes to climate action, the inequity in women representation has led to a glaring gap in climate-solutions geared towards those most affected by the climate crisis.

First, the gender employment and salary gap remain a significant concern, as women still face challenges in accessing new job opportunities on an equal footing. Moreover, it is important to consider the effects of the digital, AI leadership, and sustainability transitions in the labour market and on requested employee profiles, given the revolution brought about by AI and recent research that points to women and girls' particular vulnerability to job loss due to their overrepresentation in administrative assistance sectors and lack of ITC training. While AI has the potential to enhance productivity, it also sets the scene for considerable employee reskilling/upskilling needs, exacerbating gender divide, if misused and not properly regulated.

The rise and warfare, fuelled by the interests of those holding the most power and their transnational allies, has led to widespread human rights violations and the dismantling of essential social services for basic human needs, creating new layers of vulnerability, especially for women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

The world can no longer afford to ignore the flawed systems of unlimited growth that prioritize private profit over people and the Planet, exacerbating the catastrophic impact of the triple planetary crisis for Global South populations.

As the world recovers from the COVID-19-created economic recession, we as members of the International Network of Liberal Women urge member states to rethink and reform the international financial architecture to ensure full and sustainable socio-economic recovery in fragile countries. We, the International Network of Liberal Women, acknowledge that there are persistent systemic racism that continue to perpetuate structural and systemic inequalities, and we believe that it is imperative to work towards a more inclusive and equitable economy that benefits

everyone. The effects of the ongoing global poly-crisis continue to have a disproportionate impact on women and girls in all their diversity by further exposing, exacerbating, and reinforcing these structural and gendered economic inequalities. It particularly harms women, girls, and those structurally excluded on the basis of gender, race, class, caste, sexuality, ability, religion especially in low and middle-income countries.

The International Network of Liberal Women calls upon the UN Women and The United Nations and its member states to:

Prevent, avert, and end conflict. Ending violence is the most effective means to protect the rights of women and girls in all conflicts and crises. As enshrined in the United Nations Charter, it is the primary responsibility of the Security Council to maintain peace and security.

Adopt a gender-transformative approach addressing the intersection between conflict and climate change, including the impact on refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons by: a) integrating climate justice to women, peace, and security, and to youth, peace, and security frameworks in the overall peacebuilding and climate-related agendas; b) enhancing climate action to prevent conflict by promoting transboundary agreements over shared resources and incorporating climate priorities in current political settlements and peace agreements such as water management and resolution of land disputes; c) investing directly into peace efforts and climate finance for adaptation, resilience, and mitigation through the reformed integrated agenda.

Defend women's human rights. Women's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as enshrined in international law and Security Council resolutions, are the foundation of the INLW International Network of Liberal Women agenda. The Security Council must therefore centre human rights, especially the rights of women, girls and minorities and those with disabilities, migrants, and those living in rural, remote, conflict and disaster-prone areas, in all peace and security discussions, processes and decisions; take coordinated action to counter gender backlash; and reject any outcomes that undermine women's rights. Council members must also consistently, and publicly, demand that warring parties and other relevant actors immediately abolish any laws, policies or practices that prevent or restrict the full enjoyment of women's human rights in accordance with international standards.

Insist on women at the table. Women have the right to full and equal representation. Politically and financially support the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation and leadership of diverse women at all levels and stages of decision-making, with the target of 50 per cent. In particular, we urge you to prioritize women's direct participation informal or high-level peace and political processes, especially the meaningful representation of women human rights defenders, peacebuilders and feminist movements. Women must be able to influence the outcome and implementation of negotiations, across all issues.

Ensure explainability and safeguard against bias by setting inclusivity standards and preventing conscious Algorithmic Impact assessments throughout the AI product lifecycle from design to deployment and unconscious prejudice in AI algorithms, as well as establishing mechanisms for users to report anonymously biased AI systems that may disproportionately impact women, girls and minorities in all their diversity, by implementing common global policies, drawing on expertise from diverse backgrounds (STEM, humanities, and creative fields), encompassing diversity and inclusion AI programs alongside risk evaluation frameworks to assess their related risks.

Demand justice and accountability. All violations of women's rights, including all forms of gender-based violence, conflict-related sexual violence and attacks against women human rights defenders, must be publicly condemned, thoroughly and swiftly investigated, and perpetrators held accountable.

Respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, including compliance with provisional measures of the International Court of Justice (ICJ); upholding the obligation to prevent genocide; and ending impunity, are paramount obligations of Member States and essential for securing justice for survivors.

We urge you to pursue accountability strategies that centre gender, including by considering codifying gender apartheid, supporting prosecutions of gender persecution at the International Criminal Court, and ensuring accountability for violations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) at the ICJ.
