



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

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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 Nadam 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The Nadam Foundation is a non-governmental organization holding consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 2010, the foundation began its work in Kerala, India, taking great strides toward securing gender equity, children's rights, environmental protection, and nuclear disarmament in the region. The foundation has initiated many programs within their community including planting trees, child rights seminars, and human rights seminars. Regarding women's rights, one of the Nadam Foundation's goals is to create awareness of gender inequity and provide tools for women to speak up, especially those who are isolated in rural communities and in developing countries. In order to achieve their mission, the volunteers and staff extend emotional and financial support to low-income students, senior citizens, children, and women. More specifically, in the past, the foundation has deployed resources in schools to educate girls about their personal rights through empowerment. Additionally, the foundation holds awareness programs for rural women throughout Kerala emphasizing women's rights.

In recent years, Nadam has recognized that rural women, especially in traditional communities in India, are often confined to the home due to entrenched patriarchal customs. Many of these women have limited opportunities for education and economic independence. Selective religious and cultural justifications are often used to uphold these oppressive norms, leaving women powerless and unaware of their rights. Nadam seeks to break this cycle by creating safe spaces and fostering community connections among rural women. By doing so, the foundation is challenging these conventional barriers and working toward a society where women can freely express themselves, stand against domestic violence, and achieve economic independence.

In 2024, Nadam continued to build on its mission by forming a volunteer group in Kerala that includes survivors of domestic violence. These women have come forward to share their experiences, offering critical insight into the root causes of violence and the systemic challenges that prevent victims from seeking help. This group has collaborated with local government bodies such as the police and the Women's Commission to address the unique challenges that rural women face in reporting and preventing violence. A dedicated hotline was also established to receive complaints from women experiencing violence, creating an accessible and confidential platform for women to seek help.

Moreover, this year marks a significant milestone for the Nadam Foundation as it enters into a partnership with Kudumbashree, one of the largest women's groups in India, which operates under the government of Kerala. With 46 lakhs (4.6 million) members, Kudumbashree has been at the forefront of empowering women across the state. This partnership, formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), will enable the widespread dissemination of Nadam's initiatives to prevent domestic violence and promote women's empowerment to millions of women across Kerala. Through Kudumbashree, Nadam will extend the reach of UN Women's global activities, focusing on rural women who are often left behind in national and international discussions on gender equity.

## Beijing Declaration

The Nadam Foundation's work is firmly rooted in the principles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which remains the most progressive global blueprint for advancing women's rights. Adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Beijing Declaration outlines a comprehensive agenda for achieving gender equality and empowering women worldwide. The platform

identifies critical areas where women face discrimination and violence and calls for urgent action to remove these barriers.

Nadam Foundation's partnership with Kudumbashree is a significant contribution to advancing the goals outlined in the Beijing Declaration. By integrating grassroots women's groups and government bodies, Nadam is working to institutionalize the elimination of domestic violence and support for women's economic independence. The foundation's work with survivors of domestic violence is particularly in line with the Beijing Declaration's call for coordinated community responses that involve law enforcement, healthcare providers, and civil society to address and prevent violence. Moreover, Nadam's educational initiatives in rural areas contribute to one of the key priorities of the Beijing Declaration: ensuring access to education for women and girls, which is seen as a critical factor in achieving gender equality.

The 23rd special session of the UN General Assembly in 2000 reviewed the progress made five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and reinforced the need for accelerated action in several areas, including violence against women and the empowerment of rural women. The Nadam Foundation's current activities reflect this call for accelerated action. By forming community-based groups, providing educational resources, and partnering with governmental and non-governmental organizations, Nadam is taking concrete steps to ensure that rural women in Kerala have the tools and support necessary to claim their rights and live free from violence.

### **Solutions**

The Nadam Foundation has long understood the power of community-based solutions to drive social change. One of the key aspects of their work is providing vocational training and financial literacy programs to rural women. Through partnerships with local manufacturers, Nadam has been able to create employment opportunities for women, enabling them to earn an independent income through skills like sewing and catering. These initiatives are not just about financial independence—they also foster a sense of confidence and autonomy that empowers women to challenge oppressive gender norms and stand up to domestic violence.

Nadam has also partnered with Saksharatha Mission, a government literacy initiative aimed at educating illiterate women. By teaching these women how to read, write, and navigate basic financial systems, Nadam is helping them build the skills necessary to gain independence and participate more fully in society. As women become more educated and financially stable, they are less likely to tolerate abusive relationships and are more likely to advocate for their own rights.

The foundation's collaboration with Kudumbashree opens new avenues for expanding these programs across Kerala, reaching millions of women who would otherwise remain isolated and disenfranchised. Together, Nadam and Kudumbashree will work to reduce domestic violence through community-driven solutions, educational programs, and partnerships with law enforcement. This collaboration exemplifies the kind of multi-stakeholder approach that is necessary to achieve the goals outlined in the Beijing Declaration and accelerate global action toward gender equality.

### **Conclusion**

The Nadam Foundation's dedication to advancing women's rights and gender equity is a primary model of grassroots action driving real change in communities. By breaking down barriers to education, providing vocational training, and offering direct support to victims of domestic violence, Nadam is helping transform the lives of rural women in Kerala. The ongoing partnership with Kudumbashree and

collaboration with government agencies reflects a commitment to scaling these efforts and ensuring that more women can benefit from the foundation's programs, like Nadam.

As the world continues to prioritize gender equity through frameworks like the Beijing Declaration, it is essential to recognize the critical role that NGOs like the Nadam Foundation play in advancing these goals. Their work demonstrates that local, community-driven efforts are vital to achieving global progress on women's rights. The foundation urges the international community, including UN Women and the Commission on the Status of Women, to continue supporting initiatives that empower women, particularly in rural and underserved areas. By accelerating action on women's advancement, we can create a future where all women have the freedom to live with dignity, independence, and security.

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