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Statement submitted by ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality, Promundo-US, Rutgers, and Sonke Gender Justice Network, non-governmental organizations 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

Abaad, Equipundo, Rutgers and Sonke Gender Justice, as part of a global partnership called “Generation Gender”, urge governments worldwide to reaffirm their commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The year 2025 represents a critical juncture to evaluate progress made over the past decade regarding the SDGs, especially Goal 5, to ensure that no girl or woman is left behind.

Violence against women is the most pervasive and widespread human rights violation. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) explicitly recognizes this violence as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, leading to the domination and discrimination of women, which hinders their full advancement. Governments must prioritize the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, protect and support survivors, end impunity, prosecute perpetrators, and address the structural roots of violence.

Emerging issues, intensified over the past 30 years, require urgent attention and prioritization. This includes escalating forms of gender-based violence (GBV) arising from intersecting crises and conflicts, such as domestic and intimate partner violence, harmful practises, including child and early marriages and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, and trafficking. The field of violence prevention and response increasingly falls in the nexus of development work and crisis response. It’s imperative for actors to hold these two dynamics simultaneously – by responding to GBV and VAW in crises, as well as developing long term policies, laws, infrastructure, and social norms to prevent it.

Women’s rights organizations (WROs) and women-led groups are at the forefront of emergency responses to GBV, driving systemic change. However, large-scale institutional responses frequently fail to include these organizations, leading to a neglect of the specific needs of women and girls during emergencies and crises. Marginalized women and girls, in particular, are often excluded from critical response efforts despite being disproportionately affected and sidelined in decision-making processes, even though they demonstrate courageous leadership in emergency response.

In many countries, despite facing significant obstacles, women’s rights and women-led organizations continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience, courage, and determination as they mobilize on the frontlines of crises and emergencies. They are at the forefront of advancing the peace and security agenda, actively engaging in peace mediation, advocating for human rights, providing crucial services and support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, offering training and education to communities, and organizing feminist movements to address ongoing poly-crises. It is our shared responsibility to adequately resource and support them, ensuring that they have the adequate resources and financial means to sustain and expand their critical work.

In poly-crises situations, like in Lebanon and South Africa, women’s rights organizations (WROs)—especially those operating at the grassroots level—are playing a crucial role in providing essential services to communities already impacted by multi-layered socio-economic crises. In Lebanon, since the onset of the massive displacements caused by the Israeli aggression, displaced women face increasing vulnerability to gender-specific challenges, including sexual exploitation, gender-based violence, forced marriages, trafficking, and socio-cultural pressures rooted in patriarchal norms within their communities. Another example is South Africa, where

despite a progressive constitution and advanced gender legislation, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened inequalities, jeopardizing the rights of many women and girls. Rates of gender-based violence and femicide are rising due to a patriarchal society and insufficient efforts to address their root causes.

In disaster-affected settings, such as Morocco, which was struck by the 2023 earthquake, donors and UN agencies have struggled to provide adequate support to women's rights organizations (WROs) in establishing comprehensive prevention and response mechanisms for gender-based violence (GBV). These mechanisms are crucial today for ensuring support, protection, and justice for survivors in many countries affected by similar disasters in the context of the climate change crisis.

Womens rights organizations have played a crucial role in providing essential services in humanitarian emergencies and conflict settings that have seen escalation in several regions. Despite increasing global commitments to combat and mitigate gender-based violence (GBV) in crisis and emergency settings, it continues to be consistently under-prioritized and underresourced. We reiterate the recommendations to governments and donors from numerous feminist organizations and women's rights organisations (WROs) to:

- Enhance GBV coordination during crises and emergencies, prioritizing local leadership.
- Systematically involve local actors and grassroots WROs in GBV risk mitigation and prevention efforts.
- Invest in GBV risk mitigation and prevention through long term multi-year funding.
- Cultivate an ethic of care and norms around equal care that are supported by care infrastructure and policies.

Moreover, new norms addressing GBV must encompass emerging forms of violence, such as technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), as violence against women increasingly shifts to the online realm. Such violence has a chilling effect on women and girls' participation in civic and political spaces, both online and offline, threatening progress toward gender equality and democratic participation. We call on governments and technology companies to develop clear and comprehensive laws and policies that prohibit TFGBV and ensure their effective enforcement.
