



# 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 Silver Lining for the Needy Initiative, 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**

It is an honor to address this esteemed assembly on behalf of Silver Lining for the Needy Initiative (SLNI), an organization committed to advancing education, health, and empowerment for vulnerable populations in Nigeria. As we commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we must reflect deeply on the significant strides made in promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls, while simultaneously confronting the ongoing challenges that continue to hinder progress.

### **Empowering Women through Education**

Education is not merely a privilege; it is a fundamental human right and the cornerstone of empowerment. However, millions of girls remain deprived of this essential right due to entrenched societal barriers, including poverty, cultural norms, and inadequate infrastructure. At Silver Lining for the Needy Initiative (SLNI), we have witnessed the transformative power of education in the lives of women.

Our adult literacy programs have empowered hundreds of women in rural communities, equipping them with the skills necessary to engage actively in their societies. We have sponsored the education of hundreds high school girls and provided digital skills training to thousands, ensuring they are equipped to thrive in a rapidly changing world. In addition, we have covered school fees and examination costs for hundreds of girls across more than fourteen states in Nigeria. These initiatives are more than just educational interventions they serve as lifelines, instilling hope, enhancing self-esteem, and creating pathways to brighter futures for entire communities.

### **Prioritizing Women's Health**

Health is vital for women to lead fulfilling lives and make meaningful contributions to society. Despite notable advancements in healthcare, many women, particularly in rural areas, lack access to essential services, this contributes to alarmingly high maternal mortality rates.

Over the past fifteen years, Silver Lining for the Needy Initiative (SLNI), has made significant strides in reaching millions of expectant mothers through initiatives such as the distribution of birthing kits, comprehensive health awareness campaigns, and free ultrasound scans across more than fourteen states. These programs not only provide necessary medical supplies but also educate women about maternal health, prenatal care, and the importance of seeking medical assistance. Our commitment to safeguarding the lives of mothers and their children ensures that every woman has access to the healthcare she needs for a safe and healthy pregnancy.

### **Ending the Cycle of Violence against Women**

Violence against women is a pervasive epidemic affecting one in three women globally, with devastating consequences for individuals and communities alike. At Silver Lining for the Needy Initiative (SLNI), we are dedicated to dismantling this cycle of violence.

Through our community awareness programs, we have educated thousands of women about the realities of gender-based violence, its root causes, and its far-reaching impacts on families and society. We work tirelessly to create safe spaces where survivors can share their experiences and access vital support services, including counseling, and mental health support services. Our skills acquisition programs and the Household Income Enhancement initiative provide financial

support to women, enabling them to start or grow their already existing businesses. By promoting resilience and offering support, we empower survivors to rebuild their lives with dignity, strength, and independence.

### **Housing: A Foundation for Stability**

Safe and affordable housing is critical to the well-being and empowerment of women. In many developing countries, discriminatory practices obstruct women's access to secure housing, leading to economic instability and perpetuating vulnerabilities. The World Bank has noted that inadequate housing, limits women's ability to pursue education and healthcare, thereby hindering their potential for personal and economic growth.

Through our Orphan and Vulnerable Children Project, we have identified thousands of women and children living in extreme poverty, lacking shelter and food, particularly in rural, semi-urban, and slum areas. By addressing housing insecurity, we can provide a stable foundation for women and their families, allowing them to access education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

As we convene for the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, it is crucial to recognize that education, health, and the elimination of violence against women are interconnected pillars of sustainable development. The review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action during this session is essential for identifying and addressing the ongoing challenges that impede gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Together, we must advocate for systemic changes that prioritize the rights and needs of women and girls. Let us commit to fostering a world where every woman and girl has the opportunity to transform their life and uplift their community. By working collectively, we can pave the way for a future where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a reality for all.

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