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Statement submitted by National Council of German Women's Organizations, 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 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2012/100.

Statement

The National Council of German Women's Organizations is the federation of women's associations and women's groups in mixed associations in Germany, representing 11 million women in Germany.

The organization attaches great importance to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, especially of Goal 3. The organization not only monitors the Millennium Development Goals but also the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in this respect.

We urge Governments to design, fund and implement action that will address structural changes to end discrimination against women and girls.

The organization, over the years, has developed good experience answering the question of why women live in poverty and why even more women will live in poverty in their old age.

We urge Governments to ensure that employment and social protection policies and practices take into account women's underemployment and the predominance of women in precarious jobs, in part-time work, in lower paid work and in the informal sector.

We urge Governments and social partners such as trade unions and employer organizations to develop salary schemes which will narrow the gap between female and male salaries. If this does not help, we urge Governments to develop appropriate laws.

Another reason for female poverty is the fact that women are caregivers for children and dependent adults. We urge Governments to develop laws with entitlements for reconciling work with family responsibilities, such as paid leave for both parents, available and affordable quality care for children and dependent adults, and training schemes to facilitate the reintegration of women into the labour market.

Women very often work in poorly paid jobs without social security. We call for Governments to develop legal provisions for a minimum salary which guarantees that women and men can live from their work. Also we urge Governments to demand contributions to the social security system beginning with the first hour of work. By such provisions, poverty in old age would be prevented.

We urge Governments to develop obligatory measures to advance gender equality in the corporate sector by quotas, targets, sanctions and other measures.

We urge Governments to guarantee the rights of migrant women and women belonging to minority groups who suffer multiple forms of discrimination.

We emphasize that decent work means decent working conditions without sexual harassment at the workplace and decent pay. This mainly concerns professions that are needed by society. We are of the opinion that a sustainable economy requires a new care ethic or social philosophy of shared and fair care. For this, it requires a new definition of work needed by society. This work must be shared fairly by the genders and generations. It is essential to incorporate women's interests and opportunities.

We need public discussion on how to shape a sustainable future. In the process, Governments, parliaments, social partners, civil society and women's organizations must strengthen civil capacities to shape society.
