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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the special session of the General Assembly
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development
and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of
strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern
and further actions and initiatives**

Statement submitted by *Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia*, 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](#).



Statement

Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia [Women for Freedom and Democracy] is a women's association established in Barcelona, Spain, in 2001. Its main activities are inspired by the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. As its name suggests, the organization's primary objective is to ensure that women can pursue development in freedom, within a democratic environment that offers equal opportunities. In September 2000, 189 member states adopted the Millennium Declaration, which laid out a global vision for eradicating poverty, fostering peace and security, promoting environmental protection, achieving human rights and democracy, and protecting the most vulnerable population groups.

That Declaration recognized that gender equality and empowerment for women are effective means for combating poverty, hunger and disease, and for stimulating development that is truly sustainable. From that Declaration flowed the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG), together with specific time frames and measurable indicators, which have served as valuable benchmarks for overseeing and reporting on progress and on the outcomes achieved.

In light of the current difficult economic situation, *Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia* has decided to focus on the first Millennium Development Goal, which is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, with the target of halving, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day. Many countries have made significant progress against this target, increasing people's access to improved sources of water supply and to primary education. However, progress has been unequal among countries and within countries, as well as across regions. The social, political and economic exclusion of women and girls is aggravated by spatial inequalities for those who live in the countryside or in crowded urban neighbourhoods. Structural barriers in the economic, social, political and cultural spheres tend to produce and reinforce gender inequalities and they constitute obstacles to achieving the MDG for women and girls.

In the context of the recent economic and financial crisis, it is women and girls who have suffered most. As a result of economic difficulties and gender inequalities in the world, women and girls are at greater risk of dropping out of school, of seeing the quantity or quality of their food decline, of going without medical treatment, and of having to prostitute themselves in order to survive. They also remain at a disadvantage in terms of access to productive employment, and more than half the world's women are in a vulnerable employment situation.

Women and girls also bear the burden of meeting the needs of the family, and this limits their opportunities to pursue an education or to hold a paid job.

The lack of control and the lack of equal access to economic and financial resources, as well as the lack of access to social protection and to education and training, are factors that conspire to reinforce inequalities and to impoverish increasing numbers of women and girls.

In the face of this situation, *Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia* intends:

- (a) To analyse poverty from a multisectoral focus:

- Equal treatment before the law.
- Access to information.
- Access to training.
- Access to decent employment.
- Equal pay.
- Access to medical care.
- Access to housing.
- Access to decision-making positions.
- Access to resources.

(b) To strengthen data collection, to help make available information broken down by sex, age, income and location, and other indicators of disadvantage, and to strengthen systems and evaluation.

(c) To include in statistics those sectors that are not now reflected there, such as marginal neighbourhoods and the most depressed areas.

(d) To revise laws and administrative practices to ensure equality of rights, and women's access to economic resources.

(e) To guarantee women's right to have full and equal access to economic resources, including rights to inheritance, ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources, and appropriate technologies.

(f) To demand greater political will and leadership when it comes to adopting resolutions that call for application of the measures needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls will remain elusive unless the gender perspective is integrated into social and economic policies.
