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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”**

Statement submitted by Institute for Conscious Global Change, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Planning. Development. Gender Equality

The Institute for Conscious Global Change realizes that planning is absolutely required to realize a developed country. Institutions such as education, health and effective governance need to be in place to ensure there is equality for everyone in each country, especially for women and the youth. Because the Institute for Conscious Global Change clearly understands the essence of youth involvement in the overall process, they created a youth arm called Youth Advocates for Sustainability. The mission for Youth Advocates Sustainability is to educate and engage youth to become catalysts for global sustainability. The Institute believes that the involvement of youth needs to go beyond the preparatory stages of high-level events and conferences and be reflected in the final decision stages.

Twenty years out since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the lives of women and girls have not changed significantly and if we do not act now, twenty years hence we will be in the same dilemma, kicking the proverbial can down the road to another “15-20 year goal,” sustainable or not. Part of the reason the Millennium Development Goals did not completely achieve the set goals were due to a lack of participation of all stakeholders from the conception phase. This is a trend that has to be changed in order for any other “declaration or goal(s),” to be created. The Commission on the Status of Women 59th Session has to not only address this, but also make a realistic plan on how to proceed.

Women make up one-half of the world’s population but yet do not make up fifty per cent of the decision-making body that affect the lives of the other half they gave birth to. Even more perplexing is that youth, especially in the least developed and developing countries make up more than 50 per cent of the overall population. More than 70 per cent of the African population is made up of youths under the age of 30. In Lowest Developed and Developing Countries, like those on the African continent, small scale farming makes up 80 per cent of the food source. Of that 80 per cent, women own and operate over 50 per cent. Such statistics make it imperative for women and youth to have a clear understanding that the men who hold power will not hand it over to them. They must cease to look to men to liberate them and realize they are already free if they would only realize who they are and the power they possess. The wisdom and subtle powers of womanhood gives the female the ability to organize and implement naturally as they represent the Creative Principle of Life. This subtle power can be used to engage and encourage the involvement of youth in determining the future they want and the country they want to leave for the next generation.

Gender equality is a world issue and not a fight against men, but an inclusive effort for the purpose of making sure we leave the world better than we found it and its wealth equally assessable to everyone. In regards to youth, they are a key part to ensuring any kind of development effort is successful. In order for sustainable development to be achieved, youth have to be at the decision tables on the highest level and be allowed to not just give their input but to actually cast their vote. It is a change that is inevitable when looking at data and statistics that indicate that in as little as ten years, leaders that have been in power will no longer be there.

An issue that gets little attention is the need for “soft development” to deal with the legacy of colonialism on the psyche of most citizens living in the least developed and developing countries. The emotional and psychological impacts of that history have left deep scars that contribute to the inability to function appropriately in designing their own futures. Many of the women living in these very patriarchal societies, where they are taught men must make the decisions for their lives based on their religious beliefs, also act as deterrents to the kind of development and change needed for the women and youth to live transformed lives.

Technology constantly creates new opportunities to change and improve the world. The Institute for Conscious Global Change has embraced current technology to create an innovative and revolutionary approach to international development. Our goal is to use Geographic Information Systems through our primary activity, The Millennium Earth Project: A Visual Framework for Sustainable Development, to create virtual development models that focus on infrastructure in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals and now the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Institute believes we can and must ‘Design the Future We Want’ or that future will continue to be a dream. Connectivity, Collaboration, Distribution and Dialogue! These are the words that describe the Institute’s technological approach to global development which makes use of a combination of several different technologies for project collaboration, spatial analysis and infrastructure drafting.

Geographic Information System and its related technologies like geodesign have as many uses as it does users, but for our organization the following uses should be noted:

Map Quantities and Query Statistics: Researchers can map information within a specific geographical area, easily analyse the data and find computational results for a particular variable or feature. For example, public health officials could map the numbers of physicians per 1,000 people in each census tract to identify which areas are adequately served, and which are not.

Map Densities within a Geographical Area: A density map lets you measure a number of features using a uniform areal unit so you can clearly see the distribution. This is especially useful when mapping areas, such as census tracts or counties, which vary greatly in size. A county map showing the number of people per census tract may reveal that some smaller tracts might have more people per square mile compared to some larger tracts.

Monitor a Geographical Area: Geographic Information System can be used to monitor what is happening inside a specific area and to take action by mapping what is inside that area. For example, a district attorney would monitor drug-related arrests to find out if an arrest is within 1,000 feet of a school and if so apply stiffer penalties.

Community Development Geographic Information System can help you determine what is occurring within a set distance of a feature by mapping what is nearby. Developers are able to build a community map by mapping the infrastructure in the neighbourhood to make it more desirable to live in.

Track Change by Mapping: Using Geographic Information System maps one can track changes in an area to anticipate future conditions, decide on a course of action, or to evaluate the results of an action or policy. By mapping where and how

things move over a period of time, one can gain insight into how they behave. For example, a meteorologist might study the paths of hurricanes to predict where and when they might occur in the future.

More specifically, the Millennium Earth Project will use these functions to:

Illustrate landscapes in their current condition;

Display planned infrastructure developments on the current landscape;

Create an engaging forum to educate individuals through the use of interactive story maps with themes including: development, culture, economics, sustainable agriculture and natural disasters.

Create opportunities for growth through partnerships that will engage all stakeholders, especially women and youth.

Centred around the concept of “equal rights and access to resources for all”, every step is being taken to ensure quick spread of our technology and resources to be made available to those who need them most.

Without a doubt, individual agendas, lack of collaboration and lack of accountability have led to a situation where a decent quality of life continues to be a far off reality. Participation is key, from the grassroots level to the highest level. A select group, whether made up of men or women cannot and should not have the final say on what the world needs in order to be sustainable without the input and support of the youth and other marginalized groups.

We welcome the opportunity to work with Women and Youth Groups to plan the future we want in every country and to ‘Put Equality on the Map!’
