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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 International Relations Students’ Association of McGill University, 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

We, the International Students' Association of McGill, are a federally incorporated non-profit organization based out of McGill University in Montréal, Canada. We are the only active, fully student-run organization with Economic and Social Council consultative status on the global stage. The International Students' Association of McGill is an independently run student group at the university, and directly represents a diverse cohort of McGill students. All of our programming is led by full time students who volunteer their time and effort to promote student engagement in global affairs, both within our university and in our respective local and international communities. The Commission on the Status of Women 60 will mark one decade of International Students' Association of McGill participation at the Commission on the Status of Women and consulting with permanent missions and civil society organizations.

We believe that International Students' Association of McGill participation at the Commission on the Status of Women allows us to form a crucial link between student experience and international diplomacy, enabling discourse and inspiring engagement. As the only student-run organization actively involved in the commission, our presence not only provides students with the opportunity to directly engage global leaders on key topics in development but also creates a venue for leaders to draw upon the youth perspective. Our diverse delegation draws youth from all walks of life and academic backgrounds united in the goal of analysing and making progress in the complex challenges and issues around gender equality. Ultimately, International Students' Association of McGill provides a uniquely direct and tangible connection to a diverse, politically aware student body free of interference from any larger organization.

While female empowerment was a key feature of the Millennium Development Goals, the 2015 progress report highlighted more work remained to realize gender equality. While the 2015 progress report emphasized that some regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean have achieved parity in the enrolment of girls in primary school, other regions, such as Oceania, have made fair progress but have not quite reached parity in the amount of girls and boys receiving primary education. While women in Northern Africa maintain a low share in paid employment, women in Eastern Asia have achieved the opposite. Although female representation is low in national parliaments in Southern Asia, women are moderately represented in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Findings from the 2015 progress report reveal that no region addressed in the report has achieved parity in access to primary education, ensuring a high representation of females in national parliament and ensuring that women hold a high share in paid work. Latin America and the Caribbean was the closest as it has achieved high parity in primary literacy, high female share in paid employment, but has only seen a moderate increase in female representation in national parliaments. While there has been considerable progress to realize the vision outlined in the third Millennium Development Goal, progress has been uneven across the world's regions, and many gaps remain. The newly adopted post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals must work to bridge these gaps. The Sustainable Development Goals list gender equality and empowerment as the fifth global goal. Prioritizing the discussion at the Commission on the Status of Women 60 on how the empowerment of women relates to sustainable development will enable us to unpack the newly

established targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Commission on the Status of Women 60 will also be an important forum to discuss how the Sustainable Development Goals can further visions of gender empowerment and equality set forth by the Beijing Platform and the Millennium Development Goals.

As we transition into the era of the Sustainable Development Goal's, it becomes startlingly clear that no goals on the global stage can be achieved without the participation and co-operation of all demographics in all regions of the world. More than ever, we are seeing young people at the forefront of civil movements, inspiring not only other youth, but entire nations. The future we are looking to build cannot be laid on a foundation in which the youth are not invested in, and as such, it is of paramount importance that youth continue to be engaged in the development and pursuit of these goals. The International Students' Association of McGill has and will continue to engage and represent the youth, and inspire them to continue working towards the development of an equitable global society for all.
