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entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”**

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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

All Nations Unite To Achieve Gender Equality and Advancement for Women and Girls: The Sustainable Development Goals a Panacea.

Gender equality and women's empowerment objectives have gained world attention but have not adequately addressed how to make impact and progress in the right direction in order to bridge the gaps and overcome the herculean challenges. The 2030 development framework encapsulated in the 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets seem to offer assured hope. However, a solution has remained elusive. At the beginning, the United Nations by the Charter, in 1945, through world leaders and founding fathers and mothers spelt out the guiding principles on gender equality and advancement of women, inter alia:

“to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, ... as well as to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.”

Over the years more declarations, conventions, resolutions, development agenda, goals have been debated and adopted towards the same end, as follows:

- Commission on the Status of Women (1946) as the principal intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, effectively achieving the mandate till date.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly establishing the rights of women because women's rights are human rights. Member states agreed to enact laws or abolish those not in line.
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995 to 2015) adopted by 189 countries in China — roadmap for achieving gender equality with the Platform for Action that covered 12 critical areas of concern.
- Within that period in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals emerged to run till 2015 side by side with the above but to focus more in reducing extreme poverty, hunger, disease, gender inequality, HIV/Aids, providing for universal primary education for the poorest nations of the world; a precursor to the global Sustainable Development Goals.
- UN-Women, the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was established in 2011, harmonizing under one umbrella all organs under the United Nations system to effectively accelerate progress in handling gender issues globally. The General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution 64/289 in July 2010 to establish UN-Women.

Undoubtedly, all these efforts have yielded fruits of empowerment over the years but not significantly as revealed by the data available, for lack of quality education and training, violence against women, unwholesome cultural norms, lack of socio-economic opportunities, gender climate justice, early and child marriage, prostitution, human and sexual trafficking, unpaid care work, low decision-making positions, lack of access to reproductive health care, denial of human rights and political awareness, exposure to conflicts and discriminatory laws continue to plague women and girls.

The post-2015 development agenda, in another 15 years, humanity is looking forward to a world where there is peace, security, equality in opportunities, promotes prosperity, harmonious environment, rights, respect and dignity, good health; sounds utopia — for a sustainable future, where no one is left behind. This was unanimously adopted by the 193 member states of the United Nations on 25 September, 2015. It had unprecedented 17 goals and 169 targets for “people, planet and prosperity”. An epoch making and ambitious framework to increase economic growth, tackle climate change and environmental degradation, health, education and social needs thus bridging the gap between rich and poor and assuring prosperity for all in a secure and peaceful world. The issue of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is adequately provided for throughout the policy guidelines with a stand-alone Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls, which activists and feminists fought for and won.

The narration above shows ample evidence that the United Nations System from the onset had provided for gender equality and women and girls advancement but the situation where member states make commitments that they never bring to fruition leaves much to be desired.

Africa, should be a case study. The gender equality gap is highly significant in all fields. Where no country achieved the gender equality goal of the Millennium Development agenda.

In the words of the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, what the world awaits now is implementation. “The true test of commitment to Agenda 2030 will be implementation”.

Recommendations from a civil society point of view should be taken seriously. They worked tirelessly during the negotiation of the agenda and they are non-partisan but working for the common good of humanity. Implementation of policy guidelines for global development and the common good of everyone should be a sacred commitment. World leaders should be held accountable for decisions consciously endorsed publicly. They should have political will and provide funds and other logistics for implementation activities. Monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs should be encouraged and vigorously pursued by all stakeholders including policy makers to the grassroots, civil society, institutional mechanisms and development partners, together with providing funds for green economy.

- Every avenue for creating awareness of the sustainable development goals at all levels should be explored.
- Quality Education is key to success with incentives such as scholarship, reward for values, free school feeding for impoverished communities. Education leads to full empowerment.
- World leaders should change their attitude positively towards empowering women and girls. Gender equality is key to world progress and development. Research evidence shows where families and communities are treated with equal dignity and given equal opportunities development is more rapid.
- Equal access to basic amenities.
- Gender sensitive structures and amenities in communities and public places.

- Corruption and misplaced development priorities, unfinished projects and development agenda.
- Reduction of teenage pregnancy by keeping girls in school with wholesome curricula and gainfully occupied with afterschool program in life skills.
- Providing access to clean water, food security, adequate shelter and healthy space and reproductive health education and facilities that will not lead to prostitution and trafficking.
- Generation of dependable data information for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- Supportive laws and statutes to drive the gender equality and women empowerment goals as well as to bring defaulters to book. Role model states should be recognized and celebrated. If tissue paper has an international day, a State implementing United Nations agenda deserves celebration internationally.
- Strengthen organs that will increase women and girls participation in decision-making positions as well as give them an audible voice.
- Realization of rights cannot be over-emphasized for gender equality. Women and girls must be socialized to claim their rights.
- Recognize the potentials of women and girls by vigorously mainstreaming gender perspective in political, social and economic activities to eradicate extreme poverty and occasions that lead to gender inequality so women and girls can contribute meaningfully to global issues of peace, security and development, leading to prosperity for all by 2030.
- The impact of climate change on women and girls, and environmental sustainability, should be in the front burner as world leaders converge in Paris in December, 2015 — historic year, when everything is being turned around for sustainability for a better world, which we all will be proud to belong.

To ascertain a sustainable future for women and girls, the 2030 global development agenda — Sustainable Development Goals, the first development agenda negotiated by all member states and adopted will be applicable to all for the next 15 years. It justifies the resilience and persistence of the United Nations System and all stakeholders since 1945 to date, for tirelessly working for gender parity. The Sustainable Development global agenda has the tools to transform the world for people, planet, prosperity and peace for all. It will not be another painfully, well-crafted, well-intentioned document that will not completely fulfil its desired mandate particularly for gender equality and the empowerment of marginalized women and girls worldwide.

The spirit of 25 September, 2015, in the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda should be sustained for the implementation and better life such that “no one is left behind” in a world that should offer equal opportunity for development, peace security and fulfilment for all.