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Statement submitted by Project 1948 Foundation, 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

Project 1948 Foundation would like to express our deepest gratitude to UN Women for the opportunity to provide a written statement to the Commission for the Status of Women 2018. We want to help shape global standards on gender equality, in which both women and men are empowered to live up to their fullest potential. We believe that achieving gender equality requires the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, where institutional transparency is demanded and governmental representation is intersectional. At Project 1948 Foundation, we are committed to cultivating an environment dedicated to fulfilling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights including the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women.

The 2030 Agenda is a remarkable achievement. However, envisioning its realization through the lens of empowering marginalized and vulnerable women proves difficult until all affected groups are internationally recognized. We believe that in order to coordinate women's needs, they must be approached in both a resource-based and response-based manner.

In order to eradicate poverty; address climate change; improve adolescent and maternal health; we must first, achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Unfortunately, gender equality simply doesn't happen without a cost, and it will cost more than the already existing budget. With joint efforts and increased budgets, gender equality can be achieved by governments, member states, subsidiary bodies with pressure from the public and private sector. Gender responsive budgeting gives women a tool to hold governments accountable and yields greater results.

It is impossible for women and girls to continue to believe in a vision of their own empowerment, when that empowerment is, in fact, a pose and a policy problem. When our organization provides a donated camera to a young woman or girl in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we give a camera as an empowerment tool for access to media, information and communication technologies. The camera serves as an instrument for the advancement of women. First, women's experiences are magnified in a therapeutic art form through photography. Secondly, our organization serves as a civil society platform for amplifying the voices of women as they express community concerns.

Women are deeply interested in opportunities such as status, influencing others, and leading organizations. Our non-governmental organization creates avenues for resource accessibility and empowers young women to create an international dialogue in order to hold officials and institutions accountable at all levels of government further propelling young women to become community leaders, effectuate change, and strengthen their institutional representation.

At Project 1948 Foundation, we use our photo-voice program to identify, represent, and enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women. Stakeholders and our partnerships with United Nations Volunteers and Data Scientists Without Borders are responsible for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation. In partnership with Photographers Without Borders, our photo-voice program is documented through media to tell the story of our grassroots organization and to help our global community see through a new lens.

Clearly, we see obstacles in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where our organization conducts much of its work for the successful implementation of gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide. We recognize that globalization presents

both challenges and opportunities for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. Research shows that grassroots women's movements are the best guarantee of securing and protecting women's rights, more powerful than national wealth, progressive political parties, or even the number of women in government. We express our deep-rooted concern that there is a need to make broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity, to ensure globalization is fully inclusive and equitable for all, including rural women and girls. We must ensure gender parity as an increasingly positive force for our global society.

We urge the United States Mission to the United Nations to vastly improve their approach to Gender Mainstreaming, to be a leading example resembling Canada, and put the equal protection of all women into full force.

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy is comprised of comprehensive action areas, which encourages inclusive decision making so that a wide variety of women's voices are taken into account. It is critical that diverse experiences are taken into account when following the 2030 Agenda's targets and goals, especially in environments where the health and well-being of marginalized women is threatened. Like Canada, we must engage the international community to create equal opportunities for multicultural leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.

We urge the United Nations, governments, civil society, and the private sector to move forward with joint efforts in challenging the status quo or business as usual when it comes to gender equality. We must commit to not only invest in gender equality, we must understand how imperative it is to budget for it. We must adopt and strengthen sound policies with enforceable legislation in every member state for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels in every nation across the globe.

Lastly, Project 1948 Foundation would like to reaffirm our commitment to creating global policies for gender equality collaboratively with changemakers at all levels of government and with United Nations leaders around the globe. When an injustice is committed against one woman, all women are affected. When we challenge said injustices with pointed calls to action, sustainable development becomes accessible for every woman and every man, for every generation, crossing borders and further encourages both women and men to break the glass ceiling from the outside and within.