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Statement submitted by World Jewellery Confederation, 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 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

CIBJO, the World Jewellery Confederation, supports the theme of the ECOSOC 2019 High-level segment “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. As inequality grows, CIBJO is calling for economic growth and sustainable finance needed to fund the SDGs, through its leadership in the international jewellery industries and the programmes it coordinates.

CIBJO’s strategy is to leverage the jewellery industry’s position as a purveyor of luxury products in primary consumer markets, in order to initiate positive social and economic change at the supply end of the chain of distribution. This is because, while fine jewellery is a high-value, non-essential product sold predominantly in affluent markets, the components of which it is comprised are predominantly mined, farmed, harvested and processed in developing economies. Through inclusive, capacity-building programmes, CIBJO encourages the empowerment of disadvantaged populations, and in particular artisanal miners in Africa and South America, gem cutters in India, Sri Lanka and South East Asia, and pearl farmers in the South Pacific.

Furthermore, through its educational arm, the World Jewellery Confederation Education Foundation (WJCEF), CIBJO works to provide the skills and understanding to eradicate poverty and reduce the risk of social exclusion and narrow the socio-economic gap.

In January 2019, CIBJO approved a Responsible Sourcing Blue Book, which provides guidance for ethically sourcing gems and precious metals responsibly in the jewellery sector. It supports the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and references the OECD’s Due Diligence Guidance for minerals from high-risk areas and insisting on compliance with the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

In CIBJO’s opinion, a commitment to responsible sourcing through the jewellery’s industry chain of distribution is criterion for ensuring that the empowerment of disadvantaged populations takes place at the supply end. The new Blue Book provides a set of universal guidelines that enable all members of the industry to demonstrate that they are actively involved in defending the integrity of the supply chain, and that they strive to improve these efforts on a continuous basis.

CIBJO is also developing a digital platform that will educate members of the jewellery how to implement responsible sourcing due diligence, as well as providing them with downloadable tools that can be used to make this possible.

Through its work in the field, CIBJO has learned that its programmes designed to promote responsible and sustainable environmental practices, thereby mitigating the effects of climate change, are best maintained when they are coupled with programmes linked to social, gender and economic equality. For example, pearl farming provides optimal returns when it is conducted in a pristine marine environment, but disempowered pearl farming communities are not incentivised to make the investments necessary to a maintain proper environment.

Through its work in promoting empowerment in the jewellery industry worldwide, CIBJO has empowered people for a peaceful and sustainable world and supported the fulfilment of SDGs 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (global partnerships).