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Written statement submitted by Action pour l'éducation et la promotion de la femme, 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.



Written statement

“Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”

Sustainable development requires decision makers to include all actors in society in discussions of strategies that can be implemented to ensure sustainable and profitable living conditions for all.

In order to empower people and ensure inclusion and equality, we must tackle the obstacles that impede access to knowledge for girls, boys, men and women, implementing egalitarian child development for girls and boys alike in the interests of equal opportunity. Without teaching, peace, education, a healthy environment and access to resources, there can be no human, social, economic or health development. It is no longer possible to envisage development without the participation of women. Women constitute 50 per cent of the world’s total population. Unfortunately, this population segment is subject to discrimination of all kinds. For women to be able to participate in development, they must be educated and have access to resources.

According to the Brundtland report, “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” For the populations of developing countries, the needs of the present are first and foremost for food. The widespread degradation of biological diversity caused by climate change has reduced the production capacity of populations. As we often say in Chad, “An empty sack cannot stand upright,” by which we mean a hungry person cannot function properly. Rural populations must be included in efforts to combat climate degradation. For that purpose, it is essential to strengthen the capacity of populations to address climate change and to lead them find the solutions to the problems of climate degradation and biodiversity themselves. Governments and international organizations must place significant technical and financial resources for confronting the challenges of the next millennium directly at the disposal of peasant men and women.

Women and girls do not have adequate access to health care and basic education and do not enjoy equal treatment in the workplace. They are subject to segregation in economic, political and social decision-making and are often victims of violence and discrimination. This situation is unacceptable, and we must use every means at our disposal to correct it. The information and communication technologies (ICTs) appear to be one of the means that we can use to foster the empowerment of women and girls. Through ICTs, women and girls can gain access to important information for their productive, reproductive and community roles and obtain additional resources. Access to ICTs enhances women’s voice in their communities, in the management of public affairs and at the international level.
