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## Commission on the Status of Women

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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 Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## **Statement**

Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan is committed to advancing gender equality, empowering women and girls, and fostering sustainable development, we wish to emphasize both the progress made and the ongoing challenges in achieving the objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the goals of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).

This submission addresses key themes of gender equality, development, and peace for the twenty-first century, with a specific focus on rural women and girls. Drawing on our grassroots experiences, particularly in rural Rajasthan, we highlight the successes and challenges in critical areas including education, economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, health, and the prevention of violence against women.

### **Progress since Beijing and “Women 2000” – Achievements and Positive Developments**

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, there has been substantial progress in advancing gender equality. India has made significant strides through the adoption of laws promoting women’s participation in education, employment, and political representation. Efforts such as the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign, and Reservation of Panchayat seats for women have empowered women to take on leadership roles and improve their socioeconomic status.

Through Pathshala: A Value-Based Education School—an Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan initiative—we have witnessed how education can unlock opportunities for marginalized rural girls. Girls from underprivileged communities, once excluded from formal education, are now attending schools, developing life skills, and contributing meaningfully to their families and communities.

Another notable success is in the field of economic empowerment. Our “Build Bright Future for Marginalized Girls” project has enabled rural women to build sustainable livelihoods. Through the provision of beautician, garment making, handicraft etc skills, women have improved family nutrition and enhanced income security. Also the Plant a Grafted Fruitful Tree Program have demonstrated that environmental sustainability can be integrated with gender empowerment to achieve socioeconomic development and strengthen climate resilience.

### **Persisting Challenges to Gender Equality and Development**

Despite progress, there are significant barriers that continue to hinder the achievement of gender equality and sustainable development, particularly for women and girls in rural and marginalized communities. These challenges are interlinked and require comprehensive, coordinated efforts at the local, national, and global levels.

#### **A. Gender Disparities in Education:**

Although access to education has improved, rural girls still face challenges related to poverty, cultural norms, and inadequate infrastructure. Many girls drop out of school due to early marriages, domestic responsibilities, or a lack of menstrual hygiene facilities. The digital divide has further widened during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting opportunities for girls to participate in online education.

**B. Economic Marginalization and Lack of Employment Opportunities:**

Economic empowerment is critical to achieving gender equality. However, women in rural areas often remain confined to informal sectors, with low wages and limited access to credit, markets, and training. The absence of gender-responsive policies and structural inequalities continues to restrict their participation in the formal economy and decision-making processes.

**C. Environmental Vulnerability and Climate Change Impacts:**

Climate change disproportionately affects women, especially those from marginalized communities. As primary caregivers and agricultural workers, rural women are vulnerable to environmental shocks such as droughts and floods. Yet, women's voices remain underrepresented in environmental policymaking, despite their role in preserving biodiversity and ensuring food security.

**D. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG):**

The prevalence of violence, including domestic violence, trafficking, and child marriage, remains a critical concern. Legal frameworks to protect women exist, but their implementation is uneven. Lack of awareness, fear of social stigma, and limited access to justice prevent many survivors from seeking help. Additionally, harmful practices rooted in patriarchal norms continue to perpetuate gender-based violence in both public and private spheres.

**Recommendations for Achieving Gender Equality, Development, and Peace**

To fully realize the commitments outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Women 2000 agenda, we urge the Commission and Member States to take the following actions:

**A. Ensure Inclusive and Accessible Education for All Girls**

Increase investments in rural education infrastructure, including sanitation facilities and digital connectivity, to ensure a safe learning environment for girls.

Promote gender-sensitive curricula that empower girls with life skills, financial literacy, and leadership training.

Strengthen efforts to eliminate child marriage and other barriers that limit girls' education through awareness campaigns and community involvement.

**B. Promote Women's Economic Empowerment and Participation**

Create gender-responsive policies that ensure equal access to financial services, entrepreneurship training, and markets for women.

Develop social protection programs for women working in informal sectors to ensure income security and decent working conditions.

Support women-led cooperatives and community-based enterprises to foster economic independence and collective growth.

**C. Strengthen Environmental Sustainability through Women's Leadership**

Recognize and integrate women's knowledge in environmental conservation and climate adaptation strategies.

Promote green entrepreneurship and agroforestry initiatives that empower women to build sustainable livelihoods.

Include women as key stakeholders in climate governance and decision-making processes at all levels.

D. Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls through Prevention and Protection

Implement community-based programs to challenge harmful gender norms and promote gender equality.

Strengthen legal frameworks and enhance law enforcement efforts to address all forms of violence against women and girls.

Increase access to safe spaces, counseling, and legal support for survivors of violence, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.

**The Role of Peace in Advancing Gender Equality and Development**

The achievement of gender equality, development, and peace is interdependent. Conflict, instability, and social exclusion disproportionately affect women and girls, disrupting their access to education, health, and economic opportunities. It is crucial to integrate a gender perspective in peacebuilding processes and promote the participation of women in conflict resolution and governance.

Our experience at Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan shows the transformative power of peace education. By fostering values of tolerance, non-violence, and cooperation through community engagement, we have contributed to building a culture of peace in rural areas. We urge Member States to invest in peace education initiatives and ensure the meaningful participation of women in all stages of peacebuilding and development processes.

**Conclusion**

The commitments made during the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Women 2000 session remain critical to achieving gender equality, development, and peace in the twenty-first century. While progress has been made, much work lies ahead, particularly in addressing the unique challenges faced by rural and marginalized women.

Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan reaffirms its dedication to advancing these goals through grassroots action, advocacy, and collaboration with national and international stakeholders. We call upon the global community to renew its commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and ensure that the promises made are translated into tangible progress for all women and girls.

Together, we can build a more just, equitable, and peaceful world where every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive.

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