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**INTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND THE
GENDER PERSPECTIVE**

**Written statement* submitted by the Federation of Cuban Women,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 January 2004]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna, for the first time, declared the recognition of the women's rights as an inalienable, integrated and indivisible part of the universal human rights. More than a decade after this Conference, the difference between the theoretical statements and the real results of their implementation proves to be alarming.

All over the world, women together with all ethnic minorities and refugees constitutes one of the most vulnerable social groups in the new economic world context. The implementation of the neo-liberal policies in the framework of a globalized process has had a negative impact in the evolution of the status of women in the whole world, and even more in the Third World countries.

The privatization in the health sector becomes this elemental human right into merchandise. The number of clinics and private insurance, to which poor women have no access, is increasing. Everyday around 1,400 women lose their lives - one per minute - due to the complications during the pregnancy or delivery, and 95% of these deaths occurred in countries with low or medium incomes. More than 150 millions of women lack of access to contraceptive methods.

Although, the women's life expectancy has increased in the developing countries, this figure has decreased more and more in the Southern African countries, as a consequence of AIDS. In this region, 55% of infected adults with the virus are women.

Woman is also discriminated in the educational sector. The illiteracy rate in Asia, Africa and Latin America is over 45%, while it is 25% for men.

Women are in a more disadvantageous position in the employment. The presence of women in the labor world is greater than it was before, but this increase is mainly concentrated in the informal sector, with precarious working conditions, part-time jobs, domestic and autonomous work, lacking of social security for pensions, maternity or disability. The best expression of the exploitation of women in this type of job is the sweatshop or "maquilas", the Latin-American version of the so-called "processing zones for exportation", which is nothing else than an imposed slavery system in the modern times. From the 27 millions of employees in this type of enterprises, 90% are women. It is added to this, the fact that women continue receiving between 20% and 40% less than men for equal job.

What type of development are we talking about while such inequalities are real?

There are no doubts about the origin of the inequalities and discrimination of women in society and family, the lack of political will, actions and resources in order to promote their potentialities for the increasing women's movement all over the world. The real causes of this disadvantageous situation on the status of women are based on the unjust social order that prevails in most countries, on the economic and political international relations, and on the unpredictable effects of imposing a world military dictatorship which acts with impunity.

Before these conditions, women from the whole planet have been mobilized and have raised their voices in all Forums in the defense of the true human rights for all, in the fight for better and fairer living conditions, for vindicating the construction of a society in which human beings full of dignity would be the main objects and subjects to the constant changes for their improvement, where the differences would not be a cause for subordination, oppression, discrimination or elimination.

Cuban women have struggled during half of a century for this society to which we aspire and are proud of the achievements we have reached in these four decades in terms of rights and privileges. Our struggle has not been easy, amid an unjust and cruel economic, commercial and financial blockade arbitrarily imposed by the USA government with the clear purpose to wipe out our people, our women and children by hunger, by lacking of needed resources for development and for life.

We demand, once again, before this Commission the lift of the blockade against Cuba, because it constitutes an inhuman form of state violence, due to the irreparable material and human lost that this blockade has brought about to our people, and especially to our women.

We condemn the terrorist acts perpetrated by the anti-cuban mafia, based in Miami, against our country that has caused the deaths of 3 478 sons and daughters of Cuban mothers.

There, where these acts are conceived, five sons of our Homeland were trying to stop these acts and to avoid more human lost. Now, they are accused of being terrorists. What a shame!

We demand the freedom of these five men, who were fighting in other place for defending the achievements that have cost the lives of thousands Cuban women and men during these four decades. They were fighting as well for the rights of Cuban women. We also ask for the rights of Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, wives of René González and Gerardo Hernández, respectively, - two of the five heroes in USA prisons – to visit their husbands as it is established in the rules of the international laws. These two women have been victims of psychological violence from the USA immigration authorities.

It is unprecedented that the USA government deprives an innocent girl from the right to see her father, to talk and hug him. How can we convince Ivette González, - René González daughter, a five year girl and USA citizen – of the fact that she can not visit her father since the USA government denies the visa to her mother to travel with her?

The United Nations has the mission of watching over the respect of human rights and the mechanisms for asking answers to the violators of them. Cuban women have the right of receiving an answer.
