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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

**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 unjust international economic order that have been imposed to the world today, the excluding character of the neoliberal globalization, the privatization of the services and the application of the structural adjustment policies, have hurtled the great majority of the inhabitants of our planet to the poverty and indigence; and women, children and adolescents have been the most affected ones.

Thousands of children live at this moment in armed conflict areas and they suffer its effects as direct victims, firstly of the wars, and then the human losses that these conflicts cause. Thousands of them become orphans due to this and some more thousands are used for the traffic, mercilessly their organs are trafficked, they are victims of the sexual and commercial exploitation, and violence

The terrorist attacks of September 11 marked the beginning of an unconscious war under false pretexts, that has put the whole humanity in serious danger.

United States continues manufacturing the most sophisticated weapons that have caused the death of hundreds of thousands of innocent children's. With the costs devoted to the weapons, all the inhabitants of the planet could survive from the hunger and misery.

A single bomb killed 2000 children that were in its refuge in Iraq. Payees of bombs without pilot murdered thousands of Yugoslavian children. Giant bombs destroyed thousands of housings with women and children inside, in Afghanistan.

In addition to these wrongs that affect the humanity and particularly the childhood, there is a pandemic that have cost a great loss: HIV/ AIDS. More than 13 million children have become orphans, and it has caused the death to 4,3 millions of children under 15 years.

The child work, one in the worst forms of slavery now day, becomes a factor of intergenerational reproduction of the poverty, due to the lack of education. In the world today 200 million children and girls work. They will receive as average, 20% less of incomes during their adult life. According to the ECLAC, only one of every four working adolescent, attends school. Only in Latin America there are between 15 and 20 million girls and children under 15 years old under working condition.

In Cuba, where population suffers the consequences of the economic commercial and financial blockade, imposed by the government of united states for more than 40 years, against all the international laws and the will of 179 states, in spite of the scarce economic resources; we have reach great achievements that place us at the vanguard of the developing countries, particularly in the spheres of health and education, as a result of a real political will and the active and conscious social participation of all our people.

The childhood in our country is a priority within the Cuban social project, where it is guaranteed a free and universal education to all boys and girls, at all levels of the system, without any distinction and under equal conditions.

UNICEF has recognized that the goals in favor of the childhood, established by the World Summit have been widely fulfilled in Cuba. Examples of this are the following:

- Infant mortality rate 6,3 x 1000 born alive
- Maternal mortality rate..... 33,9 x 100 000 thousand born alive
- Institutional Childbirths 99,9% (since 1997)
- Covering of immunization.....99,5%, against 13 illnesses that can be preventive by vaccination.

Cuba has demonstrated that, under conditions of a low level of development, it is possible to create a fair and equal society. The Prioritized Social Programs that are taking place in our country today, constitute a true revolution in the education, health and culture fields.

- 567 classrooms have been opened in 98 schools to cover a maximum of 20 students for teacher in the primary schools and of 15 students for professor in the secondary level.
- The Courses of Integral Training for youths, is an experience that puts into practice the modality of studying as an employment, with an enrolment of 107 302 students, 30 thousand of them already are in high level studies.
- The universality of the higher education has been extended to all the municipalities, 146 913 students study in 732 headquarters of the country.

More than 15 000 social workers work in the whole territory, these students together with other professionals carry out very important missions, among those are:

- The specialized attention to children with nutritional deficit,
- The attention to adolescents, from 16 to 29 years, that are out of the study and work,
- The attention to special teaching and disable people.

More than 16 000 students are studding in the school of art as instructors, as a part of the programs oriented to the development of the culture and the achievement of an integral general formation of a new generation.

But the happiness is not completed in five Cuban homes. Five families are divided, far away of their children unfairly and arbitrarily: René González, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González, Cuban patriots that were in Miami trying to stop the terrorist acts that from there are gestated against the Cuban people, its wives and children.

The government of the United States has personalized its hate and anger against them, until the point that it impedes to a small five years old girl to visit her father. Ivette González, daughter of René González, has not been able to share with her dad any moment of this beautiful

stage of her life, because the North American authorities refuse to grant the visa to her mother to accompany her. The Cuban people, as part of its campaign, demands the liberation of our 5 brothers and the possibility of their children to enjoy the love and the company of their fathers.

We want our children to grow in a better world, where they could enjoy the inalienable right to life, to education, to health, to a fairer and more equal development.
