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Statement submitted by Asociación de Federaciones y Asociaciones de Empresarias del Mediterráneo, 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.

* E/2012/100.



Statement

We would like to put special emphasis on Millennium Development Goal 3: to promote gender equality and empower women. The achievement of this goal's related objectives is crucial for economic growth and poverty eradication in States Members of the United Nations.

As the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women states and several research papers show, enhancing women's economic options boosts national economies.

A way to facilitate the access of women to decent work and to enhance their economic options is to promote self-employment.

Particularly now that the current financial crisis is affecting women severely, actions to motivate and support women to start small businesses are highly required.

Gender-related international organizations, national women's business associations and other organizations are already implementing useful programmes aimed at overcoming the barriers that women face in starting and growing their businesses, especially difficulties in accessing finance, information, networks, markets and training.

We want to appeal to the States Members of the United Nations to strengthen more than ever their support to local, regional, national and international initiatives aimed at breaking down the barriers that prevent women from seizing economic opportunities by promoting women's entrepreneurship. In order to provide responses that are tailored to the particular needs of women in each country, States should rely on the expertise and the know-how of organizations that work closely with women within the field of their economic empowerment, such as women's business organizations.

There are lots of non-governmental organizations working on this issue by providing information, training and other important tools, but sometimes a lack of funding and/or institutional support for these kinds of initiatives makes it difficult to improve them or to reach a wider target. By integrating and coordinating the efforts of different stakeholders, it will be possible to develop effective and needs-oriented programmes.
