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**Economic and environmental questions:
women and development**

Statement submitted by International Federation for Home Economics, 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.



Statement

Impact of innovation and technology in home economics for realizing sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals: the role of culture

The International Federation for Home Economics acknowledges that:

(a) Individuals, families and, especially, women are important for realizing sustainable lifestyles and attaining the Millennium Development Goals because they deal with life-determining decisions and processes;

(b) Research in home economics leads to innovation in all fields, such as technology, non-technological processes and social and economic contexts, and builds awareness of the key factors for realizing sustainable development in everyday life;

(c) The cultural values and traditions of families and communities influence behaviour in everyday life, which must be taken into consideration at all levels of education, in particular for the successful implementation of innovative and sustainable technologies and non-technological processes.

Those aspects are the main subjects of home economics and especially of home economics education.

The idea that the cultural values and traditions of individuals, families and communities influence their behaviour in everyday life is a key aspect in the implementation of sustainable development and the achievement of the Goals. Home economics/sciences lead to the development of household technologies and innovation in household appliances. In implementing knowledge and technology in households to achieve sustainable development, cultural values and culture-conditioned behaviour must be taken into consideration. Two examples from home economics practice demonstrate the significant relevance of culture:

(a) *Development from traditional to clean cooking solutions.* Basic cookstoves use firewood or charcoal, which is inefficient and produces destructive smoke. Traditional technology is not queried by users, however. Cleaner cooking technologies, using gas, oil, electricity or renewable energy, can be implemented only by educating and persuading cultural leaders;

(b) *Contribution to food security, health and income generation.* In consideration of their cultural background, individuals and families in developing countries need education in sustainable home gardening, farming and food-processing technologies for sustainable production.

Women, as household leaders, are key to realizing sustainable lifestyles and to successfully implementing innovation and technology. Accordingly, they must be the focus of all measures for achieving sustainable development. In most cultural groups, women are responsible for household resource management. This means that girls and women must have access to high-quality basic education and to innovation, not only in household technologies and home economics knowledge and skills, but also in information and communications technology, so as to obtain access to information and innovation and be able to participate in regional, national and global developments. Because of their crucial role, they have to be the focus of all measures to achieve sustainable development and the Goals.