



## Economic and Social Council

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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 special session of the General Assembly entitled  
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for  
the twenty-first century”**

### **Statement submitted by Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 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.



## Statement

In every city and village of the developing world, women make an enormous and quiet contribution. Women have to struggle every day to be noticed in order to achieve their goals and have to continuously keep running to secure their rights. It is very promising that the global movement is there to empower women. There are so many targets to be achieved for the betterment of women, children, the environment and society. There is no nobler a task for world leaders than to provide resources to achieve these targets, especially those that benefit women in every way.

In countries such as Bangladesh, private sector engagement in trade and investment are the real ways out of poverty for the poor. The entrepreneurship of men and women will naturally bring benefits to our families, our community, our people and our democratic nation. Entrepreneurship for women in Bangladesh is more than just income generation, however. It is about working to build a more prosperous country. It is about achieving economic independence and empowerment for women. It is about striving for the emancipation of women and creating a better future for generations of women to come. Entrepreneurship is therefore a useful vehicle that can transform a neglected woman, a victim of some injustice, into a human being with dignity and aspirations who can hold her head up in her own society with confidence and joy.

The economic empowerment of women is a prerequisite for sustainable development, pro-poor growth and the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals. At the same time, it is about rights and equitable societies. Achieving the economic empowerment of women requires sound public policies, a holistic approach, a long-term commitment and the integration of gender-specific perspectives at the design stage of policy and programming. Women must have more equitable access to assets and services. Infrastructure programmes should be designed to benefit the poor, both men and women. Employment opportunities must be improved, while increasing recognition of women's vast unpaid work. Innovative approaches and partnerships include increased dialogue among development actors, improved coordination among donors and support for women organizing at the national and global levels.

The Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry works for and with women who enter into business and form an important part of the private sector. It is a non-profit and non-political organization that was established in 2001 to provide support to women entrepreneurs of Bangladesh in undertaking business and trade activities. The organization is a strong community voice, lobbying for women entrepreneurs at all levels and providing programmes, services and benefits to assist the growth of its members.

To address the issues of women entrepreneurs, the organization developed the first-ever business agenda in Bangladesh (the women's national business agenda). Since its establishment, the organization has been providing support to women entrepreneurs through policy advocacy, training, market linkages and access to finance, networking, business awareness and capacity-building. Taking an integrated approach for the overall development of women, the organization is now also working with distressed communities such as minority groups, indigenous groups, persons with disabilities and marginalized people. The organization is continuing its work to build a prosperous Bangladesh through progress and the economic

empowerment of women. With this vision, it is committed to implementing “2020: Empower 5,000”, to develop 5,000 women into entrepreneurship and leadership roles by 2020 with a focus on the following thematic areas: capacity development, product development, marketing, research and development, leadership development, export market promotion, facilitating access to finance, advocacy, information and communications technology, e-commerce and digitalization, environmental conservation, reducing gender disparities, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

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