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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 Women’s World Summit Foundation, 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

Women's progress within the United Nations since 1975 is a remarkable story, with gender equality finally receiving its rightful place on the global agenda.

The empowerment of women and the gains achieved since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 are notable, but not sufficient. There is still a long way to go and the women of the world are now documenting the unfinished business.

The questions we need to ask at the upcoming 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are: why have we failed to make gender equality a reality, and what systemic changes are necessary to transform the paradigm?

According to Ambassador Chowdhury, former President of the Security Council, 2013, until women's equality is established in all spheres of human activity, the human right to peace is not possible. Without peace, development is impossible, and without women neither peace nor development is possible.

The 20-year review must serve as a turning point for a new way of dealing with inequality and discrimination. Why, year after year, must we reiterate the basic needs of women and children, when defence budgets are eclipsing the people's human rights agenda?

We ask you, how many more times do we need to reiterate the gender equality imbalances, figures that are widely disseminated and strongly acknowledged, not only by the diverse women's movements, but also by the millions of civil society change-makers committed, in partnership with Governments, to working to lower the following percentages and figures drawn from around the world?:

- (a) 95 per cent of domestic violence is against women;
- (b) 80 per cent of the world's trafficked persons are women;
- (c) 80 per cent of the world's refugees are women and children;
- (d) 70 per cent of the world's poor are women;
- (e) 66 per cent of all work, paid and unpaid, in terms of hours worked, is carried out by women;
- (f) 60 per cent of the world's hungry are women and girls;
- (g) Women hold only 21.8 per cent of the world's parliamentary seats;
- (h) Women own only 15 per cent of all property;
- (i) Women's salaries are still 20 to 30 per cent lower than those of men for the same job;
- (j) More than 200 million women worldwide do not have access to family planning;
- (k) Globally, 123 million youth (persons between the ages of 15 and 24) lack basic reading and writing skills; 61 per cent of these are young women;
- (l) If current trends continue, by 2020 142 million girls will be married before their eighteenth birthday.

At the meetings of the General Assembly in 2015, Member States will continue to adopt new resolutions and declarations on the post-2015 agenda and the sustainable development goals. Will it be business as usual, or can the women of the world rejoice and have confidence that, this time, all the promises made will be robustly implemented? We hope that 15 years from now, gender equality will no longer be considered the icing on the cake.

Given that women make up half of humanity, and knowing that their contributions to development, peace and security are key for creating a world that can work for all, with no one left behind, Governments must partner with civil society to address these questions and find solutions.
