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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 Integrated Development Services, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Intercommunity Development Social Organisation is a voluntary non-profit and non-governmental organization founded in 2004 by Peace-loving and law abiding women and youths and dedicated to peacebuilding, education, health, promotion of human rights, good governance and gender equality to improve on the living conditions of vulnerable women, youth, children and other minority groups in Nigeria. First registered in 2005 with Karu Local Government Authority and Nasarawa State Government in 2011 as Integrated Development Services, on 20th April, 2013 we incorporated with the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC/IT/No.60576) where the name was changed to Intercommunity Development Social organization. The United Nations department for Economic and Social Council at its Substantive Session of July 2013 adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and granted Special consultative status. We have submitted an application for the change of Name to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for consideration.

Our mission is to promote the fundamental rights of vulnerable women, youth, children and other minority groups through peace building, socioeconomic empowerment, health, education, promotion of democracy and gender equality in Nigeria.

Implementation of Beijing Declaration — Nigeria

- Production of a National documentary programme on the plights of youth, orphans and other vulnerable children in 2007 with support from the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development Abuja.
- Research, Design and Production of HIV/AIDS Strategic Behaviour Change Communication materials for nationwide distribution in 2009 with grants from the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social development Abuja.
- Drilling of a Community Borehole to enhance access to potable water and sanitation through Self-help at Kobusu Community (2011).
- Mobilization and training of over 1,500 vulnerable women and youth (girls) on livelihood vocational skills and provision of start-up capital through revolving credit scheme with grants from the United States of America, Ambassador to Nigeria Special Self Help Project 2010-2011 and the African Women Development Fund Ghana (2013-2014).
- Organizing of National Seminars/workshops on Entrepreneurship development, Market access, Fundraising and sustainability strategies for women, youth, civil society organisations and other informal sectors to complement the Nigerian Government efforts in realizing the Transformation Agenda, Millennium Development Goals 2015 and the Nigeria Vision 20-20:20 in Abuja, Plateau, Kaduna, Benue and Lagos states with logistic and technical support from the National Bureau of Statistic, Plateau State Government and Yaba College of Technology Entrepreneurship Centre Lagos in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.
- Advocacy visits/sensitization programs and organizing of A 3-day seminar for Northern Nigerian women activists to enhance their capacity to participate in

conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Nigeria with grant and logistics support from the Urgent Action Fund-Africa Kenya and National Human Rights Commission Abuja, 2013.

Challenges in achieving gender-based violence in Nigeria

Gender imbalance permeates every facet of Nigerian society and comes in several forms. Below are some of the gender discriminatory practices and violence against women and female children in the country.

Violence against the girl child (violence related to exploitation): This is perhaps the most terrible and widespread form and involves the engagement of school-age children into commercial activities like street hawking, house-maid jobs and prostitution to raise funds for the up-keep of the family. Causes include poverty and illiteracy by either guardians or parents. Effects include school dropouts, accidents, sexual harassment and infection with sexually transmitted diseases. Because they are minors and generally frowned upon by the society, less than 15 per cent of reported cases to the police make it to court (data from our own surveys of local police stations in Abuja; sources pleaded for anonymity). Orphans and other vulnerable children are mostly affected with an alarming data of up to 50 per cent of sexual assaults being committed against girls under the age of 16 according to United Nations report in 2012 in Nigeria.

Psychological or emotional violence: These victims are emotionally traumatized. Causes include; rape, forced marriage, widow maltreatment by deceased relatives. Effects are unwanted pregnancy, permanent disabilities, disarticulation, and high incident of divorce. Females are mostly affected by this type of violence with data of 603 million affected worldwide; women living in countries where domestic violence is not yet considered as a crime according to the United Nations Children's Fund report 2011.

Sexual harassment and violence in public space/institutions: Career women are continuously harassed by prospective employers and superiors after securing their jobs and then with school girls by their teachers. Major causes include lack of awareness of their rights and ignorance of where to obtain help, service provider's insensitivity to their plight, poverty (financial challenges limit capacity for prosecution) and high unemployment rates. The effects include loss of opportunities, imposed sexual relations to secure/maintain appointments/grades, delayed/denied justice, prolonged silent suffering, untimely termination of appointments, failing of examinations and even withdrawal from schools or school dropouts. Statistics indicate that 1 out of every 3 (33.3 per cent) Nigerian women are affected. Tribune news-paper 2/4/13.

Gender-based violence in refugee/internally displaced persons camps: Refugees and internally displaced persons face gender-based violence ranging from trafficking and sexual harassment by the military and other service providers with effects ranging from domestic works, unwanted pregnancy, abortion and school dropouts. The causes include insensitive military personnel and selfish/perverse social service providers. In addition, the number of dependents overwhelms the resources thereby exacerbating the situation. The 2010 United Nations Children's Fund report indicated that 70 per cent of women and girls have experienced physical and/ or sexual violence and 60 million girls worldwide are victims of teenage

marriage before 18 years. World Bank estimates that rape and domestic abuse account for 5 per cent of health challenges for women of reproductive age in developing countries (like Nigeria).

Economic violence: Economically vulnerable women face different forms of violence like physical harassment and emotional violence, with resultant effects such as divorce, prostitution, and alcoholism and drug addiction. 81 per cent of women worldwide reported being verbally or physically abused by their husbands with Nigeria ranking 135 out of 147 countries in the 2012 Gender Gap Index.

Effects of conflict on women and children in Nigeria

The prolonged Boko Haram Insurgents and other communal violence ranging from religion, political and land disputes in northern Nigeria has resulted to wanton bombing, kidnapping (School girls) and destruction of millions of lives and properties worth billions of Naira (N) and caused huge displacement of people in the country. Statistics indicate that over 5 million women and children have been displaced and scattered across Nigerian cities with the majority of them living in displaced people centre's located in Adamawa, Gombe, Benue and Nasarawa States while others are stranded in urban slum areas like Nyanya-Mararaba in Abuja in search of food, shelter and safety.

The worst conflict currently facing the nation is the kidnapping of over 200 school girls at Chibok and the capturing of major towns across north eastern Nigerian states of Borno, Jigawa and Adamawa by the members of the dreaded Boko Haram sect. The Nigerian Army and other security agencies presently find it impossible to gain access to the affected areas. The declaration of the Islamic caliphate state by Boko Haran in some parts of the region has forced many residents, including women and children, to flee to unknown destinations which have further increased their risks of gender based violence in the country.

Addressing the issue of violence against women in Nigeria through Capacity Enhancement

This will help in mounting pressure on the Nigerian government to ratify the implementation of international charters and conventions which sanction gender discrimination and inequality. Among such standards are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the commitment of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. Women's rights as human rights are indeed fundamental to societal growth and well-being. Gender inequality, discrimination, and violence are anathema to human existence, healthy relationships, and development. Ignorance contributes to gender discrimination and violation of rights.