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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 People’s Decade of Human Rights Education, 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

Closing the gap of dignity between women and men, one that is prevalent and hurtful everywhere in the world, is the most important promise, an imperative, and the most significant challenge for the 21st century.

We are calling on all women around the world to join in an in depth discussion on the meaning of human rights as relevant to our daily lives. This suggested effort, each in our own community, calls on women to join an ongoing process of learning about the holistic vision and practical mission of human rights as a way of life, to be guided by the fully comprehensive Human rights framework. In a newly designed and creative process women will be evoking and mentoring substantive discussions about real equality, leading to joint community planning and actions towards the full realization of the Freedom from Fear and Want.

To achieve this full and sustained equality, we women, wherever and whoever we are, must recognize our responsibility to become active partners in facilitating the implementation of this ongoing process of learning. This process, in many forms for which much experience is already available, aims to have all women, men, youth and children learn, know, and own, human rights, then plan to take the necessary actions, accordingly.

For this purpose we must join to create a global conscientiousness that will channel all people's actions to achieve sustainable economic, social and human development in full equality. It may seem impossible but it can be a dream to come true. Women, assuming in their communities the responsibility as mentors, can secure a future where all people belong in equality, in dignity, in community with others! Safeguarding a future where all community actions are guided by the interconnected, interrelated and indivisible Human rights framework; where meaningful equality is presented in a wealth of norms and standards. These are Human Rights. Inalienable. No one can take them away.

As mentors, we women, opening a discussion on human rights as a way of life, stand to bring added strength and richness to all cultures and religions and imbed the recognition of the humanity of women ... of we the "OTHER".

In this process we will give a voice to all human hopes and aspirations. We will be holding in our hands a powerful tool to break through the vicious cycle of humiliation. Away from poverty, fear and greed and the three oppressive "P"s: Patriarchy, Politics and Power. (We must realize that men need always to perform, physically and metaphorically, which out of fear enforces patriarchy in which we all participate.)

In this statement we call on women everywhere, being discriminated against merely because we were born women, to shine the light on this learning journey and to facilitate in our communities discussions to re imagine, re-cast and re-define the ultimate meaning of our lives, in equality that is so well enunciated in the human rights framework.

Women as mentors, stand to give real power to human rights; together learning to identify the difference between symptoms and causes of inequality. Through systemic analysis, we stand to create new realities for women as unquestionable full human beings, together move "power" to human rights!

To become full owners of economic and social justice, adopting positive creative alternatives available to us is a necessary dynamic. Women shape and carve the road that enables our walk towards new horizons of our own choice. These guided by the extraordinary road map offered to us by the human rights framework that unfortunately so few know.

In summation: we must learn to recognize the humanity of others as our own. We must learn to recognize women as full human beings with inalienable and undeniable human rights, and most important: women must lead the discussions on the issues we are facing, be it: reproductive rights, violence against women, education, equal pay, lesbian gay bisexual transgender human rights that are achieving equality in community with other, step by step by calling on human rights as the way to life, respect and trust one another.

We must learn to redirect our actions to effectively move on a horizontal plain towards new horizons, achieving new dreams, new hopes, using an altogether new language of hope, knowing that food, education, housing, healthcare and work at liveable wages are our inalienable human rights. No one can take them away from us.

We must break through the vicious cycle of humiliation, never again exchange our equality for survival and never abide by the injustices some call “justice”. In this process we assert and ensure our belonging in dignity, whatever the life form we choose to abide by, without hurting the other ... whatever historic memories guide our desires ... whatever culture gives us a sense of security and being.

Human rights close all gaps of unfulfilled dignity. Human rights are about real inclusion. They extricate exclusion, as an important example, provide a meaningful way to overcome poverty, people learn to claim irrevocably their human rights ... knowing that human rights violations of all kinds are unacceptable and egregious that must be eradicated by, with and for the people as a result of accepting the humanity of women.

Whoever we are, we must build trust and respect and design a new future with full equality at its centre — not “equity” which is judgmental — in full respect and positive, viable actions. Thus, for the multitudes that grew in 110 years, from 1 billion to seven billion, to own, to act and have the human rights framework guide our action is the way to go. This is a call on all women, we who stand to gain the most, join in an intense and ongoing process of mentoring that will move charity to dignity and insure our equality.

Human rights learning and mentoring must be a never ending, ongoing process — such as preventive health-care women joining to analyse how our lives affect the lives of others and together strategize how to close all gaps of unfulfilled dignity — to reinvent our lives as we choose it to be, add a new link to our past and to our historic memory. Raising human rights to the level of a true way of life and self-empowerment.

No one should be left behind. We women — half of humanity — an acknowledged source of moral authority — need to assume the day-to-day mentoring of others towards integrating human rights as a world view, the absolute truth to guide our lives.

A covenant must be made, one that assures that the sanctity of life will never be desecrated or stepped on. This step-by-step process of women mentoring

communities is a sure way to acknowledge and achieve equality. Women and men learning to participate as equals in the decisions that determine our future, yes, for all to learn human rights as relevant to our daily lives. The future of humanity is in your hands. We have no other option. Let us all join this effort: women and human rights mentors.
