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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 Organisation mondiale des associations pour l'éducation prénatale, 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

In recent decades, science (medicine, biology, genetics, psychology) has proven that the prenatal period of life is fundamental to human development; during that period, the human embryo forms the basic structures of its organs, systems and bodily functions and the foundation for health, emotional well-being, psychological balance, social skills, intelligence and creativity.

According to the scientific information established in international literature, life begins at conception; it is scientifically acknowledged that from the moment the first cell divides, the person exists as an individual consciousness, separate from his/her mother. He/she has senses and feelings of love and fear and can formulate thoughts, which are all induced and activated by the parents' everyday life and environment. Everything the mother experiences, the child experiences with her.

The healthy life of an informed mother who avoids stress, anxiety and conflict, keeps calm and maintains a balance in her sensations, thoughts and emotions contributes to the child's development. Furthermore, all this provides the child with information that is saved in his/her cellular memory and contributes to the expression of his/her genetic makeup, later expressed as character traits.

During the nine-month gestation period, mother and child experience complete union and the mother plays an educative role that will determine the entire life of her child, and the adult that child will become.

During that period, mothers and fathers at their side are very powerful educators as they are involved in the formation of the child's entire physiology, notably the brain. They will never have as much power once the child is born.

When the English biologist Frederic Truby King was asked by British politicians, "How can we improve the health of the people?" he replied:

"Focus on the nine months preceding and the nine months following birth" (Geoffrey Hodson, *The Miracle of Birth*).

According to the American geneticist Professor Bruce Lipton, the Canadian professor Thomas Verny and several others, "Future parents, in particular mothers, are veritable genetic engineers. They are the first very powerful educators. This is something they urgently need to know."

The World Organization of Prenatal Education Associations and the 24 associations comprising it consider that preventive measures can really change humanity or human beings at a basic level – the first preventive action is to focus on the roots of life. To give human beings in the early stages of life an education that will create peaceful, loving individuals that respect themselves and others.

That is how we can transform today's world, in which war, crime and violence on the one hand, and poverty, humiliation and economic crisis on the other, are so prevalent in all countries.

According to the report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995, United Nations, New York, 1996), it is vital to:

Promote people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth, through the provision of basic education, life-long education and primary health care for women and girls;

Ensure equal access to education and health care and the equal treatment of women and men, and enhance sexual and reproductive health;

Create the conditions that will enable girls and women of all ages to realize their full potential and ensure their full and equal participation in the construction of a better world for all;

Women play a critical role in the family. The family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It should receive comprehensive protection and support. Families exist in various forms, depending on cultural, political and social systems. The contribution made by women to the welfare of the family and the development of society is not yet acknowledged. We must recognize the social significance of motherhood and the role of parents within the family and for children's upbringing. The responsibilities involved in bringing up children must be shared between parents, women and men, and society as a whole (Appendix II, OBJECTIVES).

According to the report, the international community must:

Demonstrate its renewed will to prepare for the future – to promote a world in which every child can flourish freely;

Strengthen prevention programmes to improve women's health. Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace;

Reinforce laws, reform institutions and promote relevant norms and practices, in order to encourage both men and women to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behaviour;

Give priority to both formal and informal educational programmes that enable women to develop self-esteem and acquire knowledge;

Recognize the specific needs of young people and implement appropriate education and information programmes on sexual and reproductive health issues;

Prepare and disseminate available information so that men and women, in particular young people, are better informed about their health, notably with regard to sexuality and reproduction, taking into account the rights of the child.

Strategic objectives and measures to be taken

The session on education conducted in Geneva by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in July 2011 concluded that education was vital to the future of humanity and that school curricula should be enhanced by introducing teaching and principles that would prepare young people for life.

Indeed, we provide students with knowledge that is often less important, but they receive no education to prepare them for parenthood. Meanwhile, modern scientific developments (in biology, genetics, epigenetics and psychology) have produced the important knowledge discussed above, which indicates that the first stage of life – the prenatal period, the first living environment – creates the foundations for the human being.

The sharp increase in birth rate is problematic and, according to specialists, the knowledge gap discussed above leads to an increase in aggression and crime. The study of parenting, which was taught by Pythagoras and Plato and applied to the Thesmophoria initiation rites, was the key to and the cause of the flourishing of ancient Greek culture.

It would be useful for young people to gain this new knowledge (as well as existing knowledge) on the transmission of human life and their future role as parents under the supervision of teachers in a school environment.

We propose:

The addition of the following paragraph to article 29, paragraph 1, between subparagraphs (d) and (e), of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: “The inclusion in school curricula of studies that prepare young people for parenthood, in order to provide students with appropriate scientific information (in biology, epigenetics and prenatal psychology) on developing life and their role as the founders of future families.”

We also propose the addition of the following to article 24 of the Convention: “The provision to couples, particularly mothers, of information on their fundamental role during the prenatal period of their child’s life. The provision, by means of legislative and administrative measures, of the information and protection required for the optimum fulfilment of that role.”
