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

Statement submitted by China Family Planning Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative 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 development and protection of women's rights in the area of population and family planning

The mission of the China Family Planning Association is to uphold the right to reproductive health, promote gender equality, and raise the quality of life. Following the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994, the Association launched nationwide programmes related to women's development and the protection of women's rights, effectively improving the conditions of family planning and reproductive rights protection for women, promoting gender equality, and raising the social and economic status of women.

1. Major accomplishments

Improving the social and economic status of women is an effective way to safeguard women's rights. Beginning in 1994, the Association launched the "Happiness Project", aimed at helping impoverished mothers by combining income generation and health maintenance, while at the same time coordinating periodic health examinations by grassroots health workers and propagating information about women's health maintenance and contraception. Some thirty million women have benefited from the Project, which has led to a clear improvement in their socioeconomic status and physical health.

China has a vast territory, with clear imbalances of economic and social development. A large number of educational, publicity and service programmes have been launched to address the family-planning and reproductive-health needs of women in remote and ethnic-minority regions. In 1999, the Association began to launch a broad range of publicity and advocacy programmes primarily concerned with promoting health standards and showing concern for reproductive health in Muslim areas; supported by the clergy, these programmes have raised health-maintenance awareness among the Muslim population and improved the health of pregnant women and mothers in those areas.

In the 1990s, the Association began to implement sexual and reproductive-health programmes for youth between the ages of 10 and 24, promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people, especially adolescent girls, through participatory life-skills training, partner education and publicity and advocacy activities. Tens of millions of youth have benefited from the creation of the famous "Adolescent Health"-branded sexual and reproductive health programme. Through publicity and advocacy, the concerns and relevant policies of Government organs and all sectors of society regarding youth sexual and reproductive health have been adjusted and improved. By means of initiating youth health work, the rates of awareness of information about reproductive health, the knowledge and sense of participation regarding reproductive-health rights, and the willingness and ability to receive education and seek further development, of girls and young unmarried women have all been improved; and the willingness and ability of Government organs and the family-planning health services to provide services to youth have also undergone a marked increase.

In 2011, the Association established a Fertility Care Fund. Capital collected under this Fund is to be used for family-planning and reproductive-health

consultation and services for women and adolescent girls, providing an effective guarantee for the realization of their family-planning and reproductive-health rights.

Through publicity and promotion, the Association's "Democratic Participation and Supervision of Family Planning" programme has raised the standard for protecting the human rights of the broad masses of women and promoted the formation of rights awareness, thereby effectively fostering the development and empowerment of women.

We can observe a clear improvement of the awareness and overall situation of rights for Chinese women and adolescent girls in the area of family planning through the development of the range of programmes outlined above.

(a) *Enjoyment of the right to information is continuously being enhanced*

Fully satisfying the right to information can ensure that the masses have a timely understanding of the relevant policies of the State. For example, around 90 per cent of women are aware of the incentive and assistance policies now in effect. The proportion of women making informed choices regarding contraceptive methods exceeds 90 per cent.

(b) *Privacy rights of service recipients are protected, and confidentiality awareness and practices of service providers are being continuously improved*

The privacy of as many as 92 per cent of gynaecological inquiries by women of child-bearing age is protected. The great majority of records are strictly managed, ensuring the safe and secure confidentiality of service information.

(c) *Safety and amenity rights of service recipients have been greatly enhanced*

Safeguards have been applied with regard to the safety rights of the recipients of family-planning services. Effective follow-up visits are increasing the safety of contraceptive measures. More than half of the recipients of these services can obtain a follow-up appointment within a month.

(d) *Service recipients are universally respected*

Respect is universally accorded to the recipients of family-planning services. More than 90 per cent of such persons were asked for their input by service staff prior to receiving contraceptives, and 98 per cent feel that service staff listen carefully to what they say.

2. Areas needing improvement

(a) *Expanding services coverage to include unmarried women*

Although the Chinese Government has introduced comprehensive and effective policies providing married women of child-bearing age with accessible, high-quality family-planning and reproductive-health services, those policies do not as yet cover the related needs of unmarried women. The problems of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions among unmarried adolescent girls have greatly increased in recent years, and adjustments and improvements of the State policies in this regard are urgently needed.

(b) *Promoting services capacity-building*

The ability of service staff to provide services needs to be improved. Service staff lack communication skills. Moreover, current service modalities designed for married women of child-bearing age are inconsistent with the characteristics and needs of young people.
