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Statement submitted by Sant Nirankari Mandal — Delhi, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

It is worthwhile mentioning that Sant Nirankari Mandal — Delhi was accorded Special Consultative Status in 2012. Ever since, we have been submitting our views on the Status of Women and getting opportunity for our delegates to participate in 57th, 58th and 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2013, 2014 and 2015. They not only contributed but also gained good experience.

This is the universal version of the Sant Nirankari Mandal that spirituality has proved to be a game changing role protecting us from evils like discrimination, domination, violence and persecution of the weak. This has effectively proved a preventive as well as curative measure against gender inequality. Spiritual support in the Nirankari form of living is the basis of equality among all humans, be it male or female or belonging to any caste, religion, race, region or custom. All are equal in the eyes of God, so the Nirankari dictum says, “When the Father God treats us all as equals then no one has the right to treat any one unequal”. The Mandal holds that we have to make a society where inequality of gender becomes extinct and no one identifies any individual on the basis of gender, but treats each other as only human.

During the celebration of the International Women’s Day on 8th March 2015, about 400 Nirankari devotees from the New York Metro area participated in the Marshal Parade and 75 volunteers were deployed along the route helping the participants with directions, and hosted the days festivities. Nirankari devotees carried banners displaying slogans including, “Gender Equality Through Spirituality”, “Enlightened Woman is Empowered Woman”. After seeing these soul stirring messages and the devotion of the Nirankari devotees and volunteers, Ravi Karkara of UN-Women expressed his appreciation for Sant Nirankari Mandal in organizing and conducting the March. He said, “Volunteers of the Sant Nirankari Mandal were the backbone of the March.” Dr. Iqbaljit S. Rai, President, Sant Nirankari Mandal, USA and five other delegates were with United Nations General Secretary Mr. Ban Ki Moon in the forefront leading the March.

The Sant Nirankari Mandal believes and aspires for a society whose thought process is purified and refined to the level that they start treating one and all with humility and equality. Here, in the Sant Nirankari Mandal we have resolved this issue by treating the poisonous roots of the problem and processing them with a pious tinge of spirituality. Social balance is required to create and maintain happy and healthy society. Equality of gender prescribes mental, physical, psychological, sociological, political, cultural and economic balance to be happy. Gender biasness lead to tragic ends. Nirankari Babaji prescribes pious, pure and quality living in the society, where women are pivotal figures around whom the entire wheel of family revolves. Thus, the Mandal not only addresses the malady on the face of it, but has also attacked the roots of discrimination against women.

The Mandal plays a very sensitive role in promoting peace by preaching and practicing deeper human values.

- Creation of spiritual awareness through God’s realization and establishing relations between an individual and divinity, making an enlightened woman an empowered woman.
- Breaking the man-made barriers of inequalities in its various sullied forms including gender-inequality. This subsequently develops love for all creations of divinity and leaves an overall impact on the general health of women folk.

- Instilling a sense of belonging in human relationships by restoring human values including the feelings of togetherness within the families to stay as a unit in harmony, where women take seat of prominence and respect in the domestic affairs as well. Appreciating the fact that the poverty of thoughts and exclusion result in economic poverty of a person. The Nirankaris make women active partners in domestic economic decision-making.

God's knowledge transforms men to see women with respect and dignity. This enhances the self-esteem of women, which, in turn, breeds confidence in them. Then, they also treat men as equal partners in the affairs of the society as a whole, shedding age-old feelings of subjugation to the male dominated exploiting pattern of family living. The spiritual enlightenment unfolds the art of family as well as social living, where God's creation is seen in "Oneness" ensuring institutional and socio-economic mechanisms for the general advancement of women. While this sense of oneness acts as a source of mutual respect in day-to-day human dealings, the familial bonds also get strengthened which is the bedrock of human rights. The Mandal has opened multiple avenues for its women folk, including the girl child, in a variety of its activities, where they play important roles as community as well as organizational leaders creating an environment favourable to women.

The Nirankari Mandal humbly feel that the root lies in developing a bigger understanding whose canvas spreads beyond physical bodies, where humans are understood at the level of souls barring all discriminations which cannot ever think of violence against women, verbal or physical whatsoever. Down at the bottom, the spiritual understanding needs to play a role by giving the ability to see all as emerging from One, the Formless God. This evil of inequality needs more than social reformation. It is about enlightenment that allows people to see themselves as extensions of each other, spreading divine knowledge educating men and women alike. It is this knowledge and formidable divine commitment, which makes Nirankari men bow before women in Nirankari families. It is, again, this spiritual awareness that makes Nirankari women chair congregations we have, and His Holiness Baba Hardev Singh Ji Maharaj share the dais with his spouse most Revered Mata Savinder Ji. Hence, the Sant Nirankari Mandal's considered opinion is that the problem of exploitation of women should not only be treated merely in terms of social, economic, political or cultural evils, but in terms of the soul's psychological arena of divinity that deals with influencing the entire human thinking process. More worldly wisdom does not mean fair treatment to the weak. The wise Greeks failed to respect their women as equals. This is the divine wisdom that ensures justice to one and all irrespective of one's gender, physical strength and social status.

In view of the facts stated above, the Mandal feels it necessary to convey this message to all that if they make this pivotal figure — the Woman, unstable, the world may get destabilized. Hence, respect the existence of woman at the root of the entire world. These are the candid views of the Sant Nirankari Mandal to endorse and support your crusade for curbing injustice and violence against women. And we would happily consider the desirability of associating ourselves in such endeavours.

We convey our best wishes for the grand success of the forthcoming Conference to be organized by the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2016.