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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to
achieve sustainable development for all**

Statement submitted by Women's Board Educational Cooperation Society, 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

We are all anxious and ready to act in favour of poverty eradication and achieve sustainable development. These ideals will remain a dream unless we have a favourable climate and the necessary factors are put in place that will aid our steps towards the promised land of integral development — a type of development that does not leave individuals or communities behind. Complete poverty eradication and sustainable development therefore pre-supposes certain indicators that move the environment and people in the right direction.

These conditions are many and varied but we will concentrate on just a few that are urgent and sets the right environment in which to speak about holistic development. One factor is peace. We need peace in our communities in order to dream of development. Where there is no peace the little development achieved in any community disappears. It is obvious that at present we really need to work hard at resolving conflicts so that communities and individuals do not break up. There is a lot of war, strife and unrest in many parts of the world. Unity and peace are important for development.

We need to go back to the drawing board and investigate the sources of the lack of peace everywhere. It is an obvious fact that many families do not have peace, as the state of the families is reflected in society. For there to be peace in the broader community, families, which are the smallest unit of any given community, must be supported and promoted. In the 55th paper of the International Federation for Family Development released in July 2016, it was noted that, “As basic and essential building blocks of societies, families have a crucial role in social development. They bear the primary responsibility for the education and socialization of children as well as instilling values of citizenship and belonging in society. Families provide material and nonmaterial care and support to its members, from children to older persons or those suffering from illness, sheltering them from hardship to the maximum possible extent. The very achievement of the development goals depends on how well families are empowered to contribute to the achievement of those goals. Thus, policies focusing on improving the well-being of families are certain to benefit development.”

There is so much unrest in the world, and as peace continues to elude us, the possibility of reaching the promised land of complete poverty eradication remains only a figment of our imagination. We will make sure we take off on the right path and that no one is left at the margin of development if families are empowered and they enjoy a well-being that is real and not fictitious. Any form of unrest even at the domestic level is a major setback to sustainable development. People function better in a clime of love and understanding, and as families disintegrate so do communities. Disintegration does not aid development and women are mostly affected during strife and wars.

The first two Sustainable Development Goals are obviously the closest linked to the family but in the long run all the goals would be influenced by the strength of families. Bogenschneider & Corbett in Family Policy say that becoming a field of inquiry and a sub field for social policy. They observed for example that, families contribute in promoting their members’ academic success, economic productivity, emotional well-being, and social competence among other outcomes of interest.

For development of any sort, we need peace in the world and peace is a consequence of healthy and peaceful homes. The more we support families the more likely development will come as a consequence of these strong family support systems. This point was highlighted during the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 and in all the subsequent celebrations.

For this reason, families should be protected under the law through policies that encourage work-family balance which, in turn, will improve family well-being. These policies should be in the areas of accommodation and comfortable housing for all, affordable, accessible and quality healthcare provisions, social security, quality education, care services for children, persons with a disability and their dependents, leave schemes, employment facilities, flexi work patterns etc.

Processes that help to analyse programmes that impact the family should be implemented as well as supporting research on the family. This will lead to policies that address and mitigate causes of family disintegration as well as those that facilitate reduction in household poverty by enabling families to receive support especially in difficult situations whether financial or emotional. All government agencies, local and national should also take seriously the responsibility to implement and monitor family policies.
