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entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”

Statement submitted by Women’s World Summit Foundation, 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

Advocating A UN 5th World Conference on Women and parallel NGO meetings

We urge the UN General Assembly to support a resolution to convene the Fifth World Conference on Women, to be held within three years. Declarations and resolutions about human rights for women will not be achieved until violence toward women and children becomes morally and spiritually unacceptable with legal consequences, and until governments take responsibility for implementing their commitments. The only way these goals will be achieved is for women to become activists on their own behalf, which will support political will at the top to implement these goals. All of the Sustainable Development Goals require the empowerment and equality of women in order to be implemented. To achieve gender equality and empower women, political will to make these goals national and international priorities has to exist. Mobilization of women on their own behalf has been the most effective, and often the only reason for the gains made so far. A UN 5th World Conference on Women would accelerate this process.

Women need to become activists on their own behalf; otherwise women are subordinated to men's needs or the priorities of institutions and political parties. These were the conclusions of the 2012 study on violence against women by the American Political Science Review. The study concluded that only strong feminist movements are able to voice and organize around their top priorities as women. Women want a world fit for children. The study found astonishingly high rates of sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, violence in intimate relationships and other violations of women's bodies and psyches. The study included every region of the world, varying degrees of democracy, rich and poor countries and a variety of the world's religions. It covered 85 per cent of the world's population.

The Fifth World Conference on Women would be the first such conference in the twenty-first century, the first since the widespread use of the Internet and technologies could bring issues and solutions to every city and Internet device. As a United Nations-sponsored conference, the parallel conference of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, would meet. The focus would be on learning best practices, networking support and implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Development of the next generation of women global and local leaders, who will know one another, will grow out of this.

A world conference on women under United Nations auspices would raise consciousness and mobilize networks and circles of women at every level of society and across the world. It would energize a global women's movement, which is necessary to create the political will needed to bring about gender equality. Together, political will and compassionate action can end violence against women and girls in its many forms and further a "mother's agenda" whereby all children have what every woman wants for her own child, beginning with living without fear of violence. The holding of such a conference and the effects rippling out from it will be steps towards the creation of a culture of peace in the home and in the world.

Grass-roots efforts to mobilize support for a global conference on women gained the support of the two most important leaders of the United Nations. On 8 March 2012, the Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, and the President of the General Assembly issued a joint statement, proposing a global conference on women by the

United Nations. Their context was that women make up half of humanity and given the importance and relevance of women's issues for global progress, they emphasized that it was time that such a world conference was convened, and that it was all the more important because of the enormous changes the world was going through, with both positive and other implications for women. In their statement, they noted that this conference could tackle emerging issues since Beijing, which would include implementing UN Security Council Resolution #1325, equal access to decent work, aid effectiveness, food, security, trafficking, drugs, migration, environment, climate change and information technology, all of which impact on women.

The Secretary General and President of the 66th General Assembly's Joint request for a Fifth World Conference on Women led to a proposed resolution which was discussed informally, but it did not gain sufficient support to be brought to a vote. Any member state can bring it to the table again.

We maintain that a world that is safe for women is a world where children are safe and that a world that is safe for children will not breed terrorists in homes or in countries. For this and for peace and sustainability to become possible, women must gain equality and become empowered. Otherwise the dominator model prevails: where power and use of force over others is modelled in families and societies, female children are not important and male children are taught to dominate others or be dominated. They learn that one is either a strong winner or a weak loser and that practicing dominance through ridicule, physical means, intimidation, or acquisitions means you are respected. This is how boys and men are socialized in patriarchy. Boys who are unprotected from being bullied fantasize about getting even. They can grow into men who do to others, what was done to them (identifying with the aggressor). They can seek revenge as a group to counteract feelings of helplessness, lack of worth, or humiliation. When women are defined solely by their relationship to men, they become the means through which men humiliate other men — by raping their women.

At the NGO CSW-Geneva: UN ECE Regional Review in 2014, we expressed the hope that India brings the resolution to the General Assembly and offer to be the host country. On India's Independence Day, in his first major address (August 14, 2014), Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke of the need to stop violence against women and India's rape culture. For him to take the lead and propose this would support his words, and his party's recent successful elections strengthens his position. India has the most active grassroots women's movement in the world now and Modi has made stopping violence against women a priority. Holding 5WCW and Forum in New Delhi would provide information, inspiration and effective ways of stopping violence and empowering women that would spread worldwide. An estimated 100,000 women would attend, and their spending would be a boost to India's economy. 40,000 women came to Beijing for the Forum, they learned from each other, networked, formed friendships, mentorships, and political alliances. Relationship is the basis on which women empower and inspire each other, the means through which women's organizations and movements grow.

We also look to South America, the only major continent that has not hosted a UN World Conference on Women, where the #NiUnaMenos movement to stop violence against women has brought hundreds of thousands of women to the streets to protest violence against women in Latin American countries.

Plans through 2030 call for high-level and regional meetings to review the Beijing Platform for Action and Sustainable Development Goals, create new documents and goals. None will be able to mobilize grassroots women, or provide the

emotional and political impact of a UN World Conference on Women, which is essential to implement goals that concern women.

Women understand “mother’s agenda,” to provide for every child, what each mother wants for her own child. Research found that women have a “tend and befriend,” response to stress, an oxytocin or bonding hormone response enhanced by oestrogen as they talk over the situation and possible solutions. Stressed men do “fight or flight,” becoming aggressive or isolating themselves, which is an adrenaline plus testosterone response. Equal and empowered women contribute to peaceful solutions at home and in the world.

Stopping violence against women has a ripple effect from home to neighbourhood to world. It requires mobilizing grassroots women and political will of the leadership at the top. If the General Assembly authorizes the conference, grassroots activism and top down leadership will come together at the UN 5th World Conference on Women.

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