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Statement submitted by the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW), co-signed by Soroptimist International, Zonta International, Graduate Women International (GWI), Widows For Peace Through Democracy, Women's Intercultural Network, Women NC, NC Committee For CSW/CEDAW (NC=North Carolina), Associated Country Women of the World, United For Equity and Ending Racism and Women's Federation For World Peace International, non-governmental organizations 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

According to reports from the 78th UN General Assembly on women, gender equality, project achievements, and institutional and economic roadblocks, efforts in poverty reduction have been harmed by further environmental disasters, political tension, war and violence, social and financial gaps, and inequalities.

To challenge this, we need to have focused discussions and take positive action on gender equality and women's empowerment that address the causes of poverty. These include strengthening institutions, finances, safety, and opportunity, including economic empowerment for all women and girls. We support the review of challenges and opportunities for collaborative actions in achieving goals and the empowerment of marginalized groups with particular attention to migrants, widows including girl widows, victims of violence, women in conflict, women with disabilities, indigenous and aging women.

Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda 2030 is seriously lagging: on average, it is only 12% on track. To advance, intersectional developments are necessary: education and training are central to the achievement of Agenda 2030. Fighting illiteracy (2/3's of illiterate people are women, unchanged since 2000) and raising the educational level of women is essential to eliminating poverty. IFBPW is dedicated to accelerating gender equality and empowering women and girls through education and training with a lifelong learning perspective. Female leadership is pivotal in achieving these goals. UNESCO's new Strategy for Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2022-29) is responsive to the current global context in an integrated approach to development.

The global gender gap in labour force participation must be addressed. There are high estimates of labour underutilization of women in the labour force, particularly in least developed countries, pointing to difficulties in finding jobs and lack of training. Gender disparities in income reportedly are as low as 29 cents per dollar for women compared to one dollar earned by men in low to middle-income countries. Support for working mothers that includes childcare is also needed to have more women in the workforce.

We urge Member States to consider ratification of and, for those who have done so, implementation of fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization: Violence and Harassment Convention 2019, C190; Social Protection Floor Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202); Transition from Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), as well as the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), on decent work for domestic workers to contribute to women's access to social protection.

Access to digital technologies is also a major barrier for girls and women, with two million women offline worldwide. We must empower girls and women to acquire digital skills and participate in the increasingly digitalized world of work, including participation in policymaking in digital technologies. However, rapid technology is not without its dangers. We acknowledge technology increases societal predispositions to crime and corruption. It must not be used to exacerbate inequalities, dismiss accountability, or be allowed to harass, violate, oppress, and victimize women and girls. In the current digital environment, AI (artificial intelligence) is being used by cyber trolls and organized crime to promote sex and labour trafficking by exploiting women and girls in extreme poverty intensified by climate disasters, migration, war, and widowhood, perpetuating transnational criminal activities against women and girls globally.

Giving priority to projects geared to providing girls and women with basic needs and freedoms, including transportation, energy, digital connectivity, opportunities for economic growth, and poverty reduction, will foster women's economic security. We must prioritize supportive infrastructure developments by governments and institutions in impoverished and underserved regions. Addressing gender disparities in women's employment, financial institutions, markets, infrastructure, health and well-being, peace-making, and security

requires all areas to prioritize and concurrently advance poverty reduction. UNESCO's new Strategy for Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2022-29) is responsive to the current global context in an integrated approach to development. Objectives must eradicate poverty in all forms, combat inequality within and among countries, preserve the planet, create inclusive and sustainable economic growth, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, and ensure full gender equality and social inclusion.

The goal of equality in wealth distribution and access to assets needs democratized engagement via technology to amplify women's global narratives, including marginalized groups' activism and support for actions of self-determination that will decrease poverty. Rising violence, insecurity, conflicts, and disasters require preparation to address emerging gender gap trends in economic institutional spaces. Access to financial services must be increased, predatory lending practices must be eliminated, consumer protection ensured, and gender-sensitive budgeting adopted. Donors and sponsors need to revisit how grants and financial disbursements are awarded because they rarely reach local groups of women.

IFBPW believes there is potential for priority collaboration and aggressive action of governments, financial institutions, private sectors, civil society to promote greater equity measures through legislation and private sector regulation. Actions will remove discriminatory prohibitive practices to include women in financial, political decision-making bodies with equitable leadership influencing economic securities as enabling environments for full social development of women and girls.

Cumulative negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and previous fiscal adjustments due to high levels of indebtedness drive additional need for public resources to respond to health and social protection requirements of the population. Concerned solutions will increase the ability of low, middle-income countries to mobilize sufficient resources to invest in essential public services and ensure realization of human rights, including rights to health, social security, and food, all of which are guaranteed under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Reallocating taxing rights based on revenue provided is likely to reduce the tax base and decrease public support program funding. This tends to increase tax evasion and illicit financial flows, limit the realization of human rights and increase poverty. Further, implementation may constitute retrogressive steps in implementation of rights if it results in reduced tax revenues for developing countries. Alternatives for consideration are the G-24 proposal on Significant Economic Presence 11 and others which may not result in reduction of revenues, thus, avoiding potential retrogressive measures. Note tax challenges may arise from digitalization of the economy; taxation solutions need the maximization of benefits for developing countries to strengthen institutional access and financing with gender perspective circumventing institutional strengthening without gender financing.

Global poly-crises impact health and extreme climate events such as droughts; floods can contribute to short and long-term physical and mental disabilities. Globally, 108/191 countries, home to 3.7 billion women and girls, or 94 percent of the world's female population, face very high exposure to floods. 53/191 countries, home to 1.5 billion women and girls, 37.2 percent of the world's female population face high exposure to droughts, UNDESA 2022. Global synergy guides reinforcement to unlock economic and societal benefits but has to consider Access to health and mental health help fight poverty, environmental degradation, restorative justice and support gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

We reiterate the need to eliminate occupational segregation by addressing structural barriers, gender stereotypes, and negative social norms to promote women's equal participation in labour markets, educational training, and in emerging fields: science, technology, engineering, mathematics, communications technology.

Equality in wealth distribution, access to assets need democratized engagement via technology to amplify women's global narratives, include marginalized groups' activism, and support actions of self-determination empowering against poverty. Rising violence, insecurity, conflicts, disasters require preparation to address

emerging gender gap trends in economic institutional spaces. Increase universal access to financial services, regulate predatory lending practices, ensure consumer protection, employment, financial inclusion of women and girls, adopt gender-sensitive budgeting for plans, policies. Donors, sponsors revisit ways grants and other financial disbursements since they hardly reach local groups of women (< 1%). IFBPW and partners will publish recommendations for this later this year.

IFBPW is dedicated to promoting activities accelerating gender equality and empowering women and girls, through education and training in a lifelong learning perspective, addressing poverty, and fostering financing with a gender perspective, in policy, governance, and disparities. Female leadership is pivotal in creating a more sustainable, just, democratic world, while advancing women's rights, especially amid conflicts, and disasters.

Advancing gender equality through inclusivity reforms gender disparity policies and leadership roles, ensuring equitable access to resources, opportunities to empower women in decision-making positions.

We condemn all forms of violence and exploitation against women and girls and focus on persons disproportionately affected by the environmental, conflict and migration crises. Member States must agree on policy, resources, institutional practices, and regulations for cessation of violence and exploitation against women and girls. Calling on behalf of Indigenous, marginalized communities of harmful practices, we advocate for protective measures and sanctions.

The IFBPW mission confronts enduring gender disparities and historical inequalities in various policy domains and leadership roles. We advocate addressing gender disparities and historical inequalities with inclusive policies as rectifiers ensuring equitable access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making positions. Violations of racism, discrimination, xenophobia, including environmental racism in migration, affect Black, Indigenous and marginalized populations and exacerbate environmental degradation and inequality. IFBPW stands against all discrimination, advocating for equitable resource distribution, gender-specific social protections, remedial justice, climate and economic actions to combat the disproportionate impact of perpetual poverty on vulnerable communities, specifically women and girls. Making possible resilience through inclusive decision-making that addresses climate change, infrastructure insecurities, environmental unsustainability, and economic instability mandates integration of all stakeholders and consideration of natural resources. Vulnerable groups disproportionately affected by historical injustices must have voices in shaping policies and actions.

Our commitment to empowering vulnerable women and girls extends to multilateral efforts aimed at safeguarding human rights, ensuring water and food security, and promoting global stability in climate change. Active democratic multilateralism, guided by ethics, cooperation, and intergenerational, intragenerational equity, is instrumental in addressing multifaceted challenges posed by poly-crises, health, threats to widows, aging women in the population, climate change and environmental degradation.

We urge Member States and non-state actors to join coalitions for environment, health, and infrastructure advancements as in UNESCO- WWAP Call for Action to Accelerate Gender Equality in Water Domain (M1) and for gender equality in water and sanitation domains. We highlight IFBPW projects advancing SDG Goals through Pakistan Club Projects in providing housing, alternate energy, and green and clean continuous plantation activities combating air pollution, waterborne disease and climate change.

Adopt International Codes of Ethical Practices, ensuring human rights of victims' survivors in all matters of conflict, violence against women and girls, and oppression to prevent inherent risks of poverty resulting from crimes against humanity, including sanctions for protection and commitment to funding institutions with Survivor Leadership (OSCE-ODIHR ISTAC).

Accelerate multilateral efforts promoting global stability in poly-crises to include climate resilience and inclusive decision-making initiatives of multi-partnerships and multi-stakeholders to accelerate gender equality and empowerment of girls and women.

IFBPW reaffirms the request to the Secretary-General (A/Res 76/6) to inform and to facilitate women and girls' meaningful participation in all stages of planning and policy development on environmental impacts, innovation, and health advancement to address the elimination of poverty by taking differentiated needs into account while developing solutions and preventions in concise action-oriented recommendations.

The practical consultations of The Summit of the Future to be held in September 2024 on preparation modalities must prioritize contributions to women's access to social protections and poverty reduction as part of the reforms of the international financial architecture for strong institutions.