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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Written statement* submitted by Federation of Cuban Women, a non-governmental organization in
special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[1 February 2003]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Children's rights.

Today neoliberal and globalized world excludes more than $\frac{3}{4}$ parts of the world population from all human rights and sinks people into the poverty and indigence. At the same time, the great political and social uncertainty, very seriously affects children and adolescents, depriving them from a happy childhood and their enjoyment of fundamental rights, including the right to dignified life. During the last decade, 2 millions of children died in armed conflicts; 3,8 millions more died due to the pandemic HIV/AIDS, 500 thousand are definitively blind because of the lack of Vitamin A. It is inadmissible that the world continues tolerating this situation!

We Cuban women join our voices of concern and indignation to the voices of women all over the world, for the growing deterioration of the childhood in our planet. Our children, instead of growing in a world of peace, are born and grow surrounded by wars and conflicts, unprotected, without access to education and health. Many boys and girls lose their childhood victims of the traffic of organs, sexual commerce and prostitution, victims of child labor that sends millions of children to the street. What will be the world in 30 years, when those children will become adults and will have to take decisions and set policies in their countries?

It is a shame that in the XXI century not viable solutions and measures to solve these survival problems have not been set yet. It is shame that governments don't take into account the international conventions and agreements that call for the respect and work for the full realization of children's human rights.

While 11 million of children in the world, under 5 years, die due to avoidable causes, in Cuba 100% of them are protected against 13 illnesses. This small island of the Caribbean, a country blockaded and besieged by the irrational politics of the government of the United States, ended the year 2002 with 100% of schooling index of education and an infant mortality rate of 6,5 x 1000 born alive. Cuba is in the first place of the American continent because of this figure and sometimes is under the rate of many first world countries. During the latest 18 months, were created and opened in the country 4 thousand 453 new classrooms with capacity for more than 90 thousand students. Cuba is the country that is pretended to be seen as violator of human rights, when in fact, it is an example for the countries of the Third World and even for many developed countries, for its project of social justice, in benefit of the most vulnerable people, especially children.

In Cuba, in spite of the unjust blockade that has caused economic damages for more than 70 000 millions dollars, no one school has been closed, no one child is without teacher. On the contrary, educational centers continue to be constructed and national educational programs enlarge, including those for children with special needs. On the other hand, the budget devoted to education and health systematically increases. In Cuba there is no one child that dies for the lack of medical assistance, our universal and free health system guarantees a happy and healthy life to our children.

The respect for the children's rights in our country constitutes a priority and it is a strategy that allows to put into practice programs and policies in favor of the well-

being of the children.

The Federation of Cuban Women, an NGO that works with women and children in the communities, has played a fundamental role in the promotion of the rights of the Childhood and Adolescence. The community movement Mothers and Fathers Combatants for the Education is an initiative that, undoubtedly has contributed to the development of the educational system in the whole country.

The right to the survival, to the well being, to the development and the participation of all children, and adolescents, is a priority and a condition for the socio-economic development of the Cuban society.
