Commission on the Status of Women
Sixtieth session
14-24 March 2016
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”

Statement submitted by Presbyterian Church USA, 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

The General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church USA and our predecessor denominations have long supported free, high quality public education through secondary school. Presbyterians welcome the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, and urge the full financing of its implementation. We remind the Commission on the Status of Women of the important role that faith-based organizations have in the advancement of women and will continue to work towards a just and sustainable future for all.

Lack of access to education hinders the ability of women and girls to engage in development and income-generating activities that contribute to sustainable growth overall. Gender discrimination, cultural prejudices, and early marriages can prevent women from taking full advantage of educational opportunities.

Presbyterians, and other Reformed Christians, have advocated for education and helped to educate the world since the mid-16th century. Our core belief that every child is created in the image of God motivated our efforts to support quality education. In hundreds of communities, we were the first to provide girls with opportunities for formal education.

Presbyterians include educators, school administrators, Parent Teacher Association members, school board members, and school volunteers. We believe God is calling our church to improve the quality of education for children around the world.

The World Bank and other international organizations recognize that primary education for young children reduces poverty, enhances health and improves the distribution of income. The Presbyterian Church USA work plan prioritizes addressing the root causes of poverty, particularly as they impact women and children as a focus of its work.

The Presbyterian Church USA is working with partners around the world to provide quality education to one million children by 2020 through:

- Strengthening communities’ capacity to provide quality education
- Elevating the quantity and quality of early childhood programs offered by and in Presbyterian Church USA churches
- Training teachers and helping develop curricula
- Providing support to build or refurbish school buildings
- Initiating enrichment opportunities for children in cooperation with local schools
- Engaging and training leaders as advocates for children’s education
- Participating in public policy debates around educational issues

The Presbyterian Church USA recognizes how strongly our work to educate one million children matches with Goal 4 and corresponding targets. We recommend governments, civil society and the private sector make financial and political commitments to:
• Remove economic barriers to women’s educational opportunities and promote an equitable sharing of authority and responsibilities in family life, work, and society, as well as equal access to economic and political power.

• Revise their measurements of success in development so they will incorporate the true costs of production and consumption and reflect the priority of sufficiency and sustainability—traditional measurements based on the Gross National Product include the monetary costs of health problems and environmental pollution as though they were benefits.

• Work toward access to full reproductive health provisions, including contraception, disease prevention, family planning, and reproductive health education.

• Oppose all forms of gender-based stereotyping, discrimination, oppression and violence.

• Increase women and girls’ access to education, especially for women and girls living in rural areas and minority populations, so that women and girls might contribute their full potential and skills in their communities, have increased confidence, and be assisted to better face challenges arising from contact with male dominated enterprises.

The importance of education is a fundamental affirmation of the Presbyterian Church USA and other Reformed denominations. The Presbyterian Church USA reminds the 60th Commission on the Status of Women that faithful women, men, and communities play a vital role in education for women and girls. Working with the faith-based community is crucial to achieving Goal 4.