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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 Nadam 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

The Nadam Foundation is a non-governmental organization holding consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. In 2010, the foundation began its work in Kerala, India, taking stern strides toward securing gender equity, children's rights, environmental protection, and nuclear disarmament. The foundation has initiated many programmes within their community including planting trees, child rights seminars, and human rights seminars. Regarding women's rights, one of the Nadam Foundation's goals is to create awareness of gender inequity and provide tools for women to speak up, especially those who are isolated in rural communities and in developing countries. In order to achieve their mission, the volunteers and staff extend emotional and financial support to low-income students, senior citizens, children, and women. More specifically, in the past, the foundation has deployed resources in schools to educate girls about their personal rights through empowerment. Additionally, the foundation holds awareness programs for rural women throughout Kerala emphasizing women's rights.

In rural areas of India, women are often confined to the home and lack a sense of community. In more traditional groups, men utilize oppressive behaviours to keep women in low positions, which often goes unquestioned because of selective religious justification for maintaining communal order. These women will go their entire lives not understanding their personal rights as they have little means of learning about them or communicating with other women. In India and other underdeveloped nations, most women do not have access to technology, which limits the comprehension of their fundamental rights. Yet, technology is becoming increasingly valuable for women in conflict areas to reduce gender-based violence and inequality. The Nadam Foundation seeks to empower women and increase their access to a supportive international community by providing women in rural areas with free cell phones and internet.

The Nadam Foundation recognizes the importance of providing women with technology as a resource for expanding their community connections and education. Throughout the Kerala and Tamilnadu states of Southern India, the Nadam Foundation has distributed free mobile phones and internet access to 125 rural women. This initiative has generated an enormous impact on women's lives. Access to information allows them to learn more about their rights while connecting them with other women in similar situations. There are five active WhatsApp groups with 25 women in each. Every group has a leader, selected by the Foundation, to facilitate an orientation that explains how to use their new device and WhatsApp messaging platform. As a result of the increased communication and accessibility of information, many rural women now have the courage and opportunity to share their stories and raise their voices against gender discrimination. Additionally, women have the option to contact the Nadam Foundation through WhatsApp to disclose any problems or concerns they are experiencing in their homes or community. The Nadam Foundation receives 10-15 calls per week. Depending on the call, the foundation provides each caller with legal aid or contacts the police on their behalf. Many women who called the hotline received help and were able to move to a safe location.

The Nadam Foundation is committed to spreading awareness of gender equity and providing restorative actions to rural women in developing countries with the help of technology and the interconnections it provides. The Nadam Foundation encourages other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to undertake similar initiatives in other developing countries, citing how the phone plan firmly demonstrated greater health, well-being, and security for women. The international community has a tremendous role to play in ensuring the safety of happiness for women.

The Nadam Foundation urges the Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women, and other relevant United Nations bodies to acknowledge the value of technology in providing agency, community, and security to women in conflict-affected countries. Each United Nations entity contributes significantly to expanding resources for women in impoverished populations where gender discrimination is prominent.

In conformity with the Commission on the Status of Women, the foundation confirms its commitment to eliminating gender disparity. We think that women are critical, transformational leaders and acknowledge the critical need for women's empowerment in order to accelerate the UN Sustainable Development Goals and champion UN Women's principles. Technology plays a significant part in providing a platform for women to organize supportive communities and learn from one another's experiences. This increased awareness empowers them to advocate for their own rights and seek help from trusted professionals.
