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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 Canadian International Chaplaincy Association, 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

Whereas the priority theme of the 67th Commission on the Status of Women is: Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the review theme is: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls (agreed conclusions of the sixty-second session), this representative of the Canadian International Chaplaincy Association respectfully submits this statement specifically related for consideration.

Having boots on the ground interacting among women and girls in rural areas of Africa, Bangladesh and India, it is excruciatingly evident that the number of women exposed to gender-based violence, child forced labour, human trafficking and extreme poverty is of alarming concern. As statistics show, the numbers will reach staggering levels in record time due to pandemic and post-pandemic impact.

As witnessed, women in these rural areas have no access to technological advances. Sadly, in most cases, they do not have the capacity to learn new technologies due to lack of educational access. Women (and girls) are held captive by illiteracy. While the long-term goal is to educate more women and girls and change cultural paradigms, there is an immediate solution that has (and is) tied to a proven model that is effective and sustainable. This model incorporates a patent pending technology that extends directly to rural women and girls.

This immediate solution, based on the model and technology, gives rural women and girls a voice in communities where they are culturally silenced. It elevates the status of rural women and girls who would otherwise be considered chattel or even less. It increases self-esteem in rural women and girls to give them hope in a future that is different than their past. It gives rural women and girls a safe environment to connect with the world outside the borders of their technologically disconnected villages.

This raises the question: Why isn't more being done?

This model and the technology that works with it in tandem - an immediately available solution - has proven to lift thousands of women out of poverty, oppression and abuse in six countries on three continents. Its impact is visible - and it could be massive. Yet it remains on the fringe due to the fact that not enough small organizations have access to it nor do they have a seat at the table to discuss it.

Our commission must unquestionably be to increase efforts to empower these women and young girls. Our commission must undeniably be to continue developing, augmenting and multiplying programmes that incorporate this model to teach rural women and girls economic independence through entrepreneurship. Further our commission must indisputably be to fund the expansion of the patent-pending technology that can (and currently does) meet more rural women and girls exactly where they are in their moment of greatest need - to make a difference - right now, today - and prosper them out of poverty.

For when women are economically empowered, they lift families, villages, communities, in fact, the world.
