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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace
for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic
objectives and action in critical areas of concern and
further actions and initiatives**

Statement submitted by Abiodun Adebayo Welfare 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.



Statement

Female genital mutilation: a concern for all

Female genital mutilation is the removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is mostly practised in Africa, particularly in West Africa. This procedure has no health benefits for girls and women. It may cause severe bleeding and urinary problems and, later, infections, cysts, complications in childbirth and, in some cases, infertility.

Female genital mutilation is mostly carried out on young girls, sometimes during infancy. A complete violation of the human rights of women and girls, it is mostly performed by traditional practitioners. Only 8 per cent of female genital mutilation carried out is performed by health-care providers.

Harmful effects of female genital mutilation

The following are the harmful effects of female genital mutilation: damage to female genital tissue, severe pain, shock, haemorrhaging, bacterial infections, urine retention, open genital sores, infertility, recurrent bladder and urinary tract infections, cysts and difficult childbirth.

Reasons for female genital mutilation

Most people who practise female genital mutilation do so for the following religious, cultural and social reasons:

- (a) In some communities, female genital mutilation is considered to be a cultural tradition, meaning that people practise it without fear or hesitation;
- (b) Some believe that the practice has some religious support;
- (c) Some believe in what their ancestors practised, making it difficult to abolish;
- (d) Some believe that it promotes sexual behaviour;
- (e) Some believe that it reduces libido.

Conclusion

The World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization passed a resolution in 2008 on the elimination of female genital mutilation. The women's wing of Abiodun Adebayo Welfare Foundation has been working tirelessly to disseminate this campaign throughout Nigeria and into those areas of the world where female genital mutilation is practised.
