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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 Association nationale Al Hidn, 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

Association nationale Al Hidn (ANH) appreciates the choice of “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals” as a priority theme of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The theme is of particular significance to ANH, which is concerned with the social and cultural development of women, families and children.

While we commend the efforts of the United Nations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, we believe that they are insufficient and that the Organization, acting through the Commission on the Status of Women, must promote legal mechanisms and penalties against anyone who undermines security and seeks to re-establish an age of brutality and servitude.

As Moroccan women who are fortunate to live in a stable Morocco, we remain steadfast in our commitment to ending all forms of poverty, particularly female poverty. However, despite their efforts to combat poverty and ignorance, and despite their extraordinary perseverance and endurance, women in the Arab world have been held back by the local political situation and international imperialism. Social and political events have destabilized the economy and society, exacerbating poverty, unemployment and hunger. Wars have been concocted in order to sell and propagate lethal weapons that cause great material, social and psychological damage. As caregivers for their children and the disabled, women have borne the brunt of those wars, which have undermined aloof their achievements, putting their education and socioeconomic status back years, if not centuries. As the cornerstone of the family, they suffer all of the consequences. In that regard, we note the disastrous situation in Syria, where women and children are most vulnerable to hunger, dispossession and displacement, and the events in Egypt, where an anti-democratic coup d'état has undermined the economy and the status of women and the family.

ANH strongly believes that, in order to achieve the Goals, it is critical to improve the social, material and hierarchical situation of women within the family, whether as young girls, sisters, wives, or mothers; the family is the fundamental unit for promoting human development. In the absence of good governance, that is the challenge facing the international community. Fostering the preconditions for global economic, social and cultural development will enable men and women to exercise their rights on an equal basis.

Addressing the challenges to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

Although significant progress has been made towards achieving universal primary education enrolment, particularly for girls, the quality of education has not improved accordingly. Moreover, such progress has not enhanced women's participation in the workforce, political life or decision-making.

Discrimination against women and girls is impeding the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particular Goals 1 and 2. Poor women and women in rural areas have inadequate access to health-care services, and the latter are unavailable in areas of conflict. Governments must therefore increase their budgetary allocations for the improvement of women's health. They must ensure

that all health-care centres and hospitals receive adequate and regular supplies of medicines and have qualified staff.

In the current economic and financial crisis, all States must make an effective commitment to creating full-time decent work with a view to fostering women's participation in development and poverty alleviation. We call on the United Nations to focus, in particular, on enhancing political stability and the legitimacy that ensures development and trust. It should campaign against arms manufacturers, introducing robust legislation and penalties against those whose weapons are used to kill civilians and the most vulnerable and to targeting the people instead of protecting them.

ANH is making every effort to combat female poverty through development projects that promote empowerment. We urge the Organization to support our work, promote equal opportunities and foster the equitable exchange of information among associations accredited to the Economic and Social Council so that we can improve our performance and fulfil our civil-society and humanitarian role. Consultative mechanisms should be established in order to enhance country-level coordination, implementation and monitoring and to raise awareness of the responsibilities of Governments and civil society in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
