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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 Mayama, 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

Mayama is a civil society organization with headquarters in Jalisco, Mexico. It was founded in 2008 by a group of individuals concerned about the situation of abandoned, orphaned and marginalized Mexican children. Since that time, we have focused our efforts on helping girls and boys and their families in situations of poverty, violence, abuse, orphanhood and exclusion to develop skills that will allow them to overcome the difficulties of their setting and improve their quality of life. We seek to develop the individual potential of children and their families so as to generate an environment propitious to the transformation and the social, economic and cultural development of the country and, over the medium and long term, overcome marginalization and violence. The organization works with a systemic educational model that has operated for five and a half years with children and their families to awaken their skills, and also to prevent children living in marginalized and violent zones — who are often lagging behind in their education and are at risk — from ending up in delinquency, in the street, or in shelters, and to incorporate them successfully into the school system and raise their self-esteem, thereby helping them fulfil their life plan and achieve their own goals. Mayama has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and participates actively in national and local forums to encourage public policies that will improve the situation of children in Mexico.

We welcome the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of the 70th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly. Those goals represent an important milestone for achieving sustainable development, and they recognize the need to continue moving toward a world that invests in its children, where boys and girls can grow up free from violence and exploitation, and where in particular all girls enjoy full equality with boys and all legal, social and economic obstacles to their empowerment have been removed..

According to the United Nations Children's Fund, more than half of Mexico's 40 million children and adolescents are living in poverty, and 4.7 million of them in extreme poverty. Some 6.1 million children between three and seven years of age are not attending school, and between 55% and 62% of adolescents in secondary school say that they have suffered some form of abuse at some point in their lives. Two and a half million children and adolescents between the ages of five and 17 are working, and 6.6% of children born in our country are not registered before they are one year of age, a phenomenon that is even worse in rural areas. 76% of the population to age 17 has at least one unmet social need, which is not surprising when we consider that only 14.8% of the federal budget in 2014 was allocated to programmes for children and adolescents, and only 1% of those funds was devoted to protection against violence, abuse and exploitation. Because of their historic, cultural, social and economic dimensions, all of these factors impact with particular force on Mexican girls and female adolescents.

Gender inequality, which has a disproportionate impact on girls around the world, remains one of the greatest challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, not only at the global level but also at the national and local levels. To overcome this situation, Member States must show a greater readiness to address the still-pending targets from the Millennium Development Goals and to establish ambitious and appropriate indicators and achievable national and local targets, as well as to provide more financing for programmes in support of children over the next 15 years. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

must also be communicable, transferable and open to children at all times, on a basis of full inclusion and participation. The empowerment of women and girls, which should begin at birth, will contribute significantly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, based on the recognition that these persons have a key role to play in the social, economic and environmental development of countries.

At Mayama we believe it is urgent and essential to adopt comprehensive national development policies designed to save children — and girls in particular — from the consequences of exploitation or of working in the street, or from ending up as victims or perpetrators of delinquency. Investment is needed in programmes to develop children's assertive decision-making skills and thereby break the vicious circles of poverty and violence. We advocate that such policies should be based on international human rights law, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other applicable international instruments.

Comprehensive development policies of this kind in favour of children, in the framework of implementing, monitoring and financing of the Sustainable Development Goals, must in turn ensure the full inclusion of children and young people in the processes of taking decisions and evaluating global, national and local progress under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They must, in other words, become constant, empowered agents of change in favour of social transformation.

We urge the international community to include the following specific recommendations in discussions at the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on “women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development”.

1. Guarantee, promote and respect the human rights of children, with particular emphasis on girls, without distinction as to sex, race, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnic origin, sexual preference or nationality. Such guarantee, promotion and respect must be an integral part of the adoption, implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Objectives, which in turn must have as a key feature the inclusion and participation of children in all decision-making processes and in moving forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. Recognize the importance of expanded financing for sustainable development of States and other groups of interest, in order to ensure that there are international budget items to support national and local objectives for childhood programmes to combat school abandonment, exploitation, marginalization and violence. We at Mayama believe that achieving sustainable development by 2030 will be possible only with a commitment to financing and an emphasis on local efforts, particularly those led by civil society organizations..
3. The Sustainable Development Goals must be communicable, accessible and pro-children, they must be capable of strengthening national education programmes for the empowerment, independence and creativity of boys and girls, with equality, respect and gender equity as their key pillar. In contrast to the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a unique and unprecedented opportunity for education and development, which can and must be led by all social stakeholders.

4. Invest in innovative education programmes as a way to prevent gender violence, and in systemic methodologies to combat such problems in a comprehensive manner.

Mayama reiterates its commitment to work hand-in-hand with the United Nations for a more just and sustainable world. In turn, it calls upon the Commission on the Status of Women to act as a prime facilitator in the drive to achieve gender equality in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.
