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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 Campaign Life Coalition, 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

Campaign Life Coalition welcomes the theme for the 65th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and believes that the intentions presented within this theme can only be achieved when the primary attitudes, agendas and goals are driven by the core of what true women's empowerment entails.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in a fuller, more meaningful dimension, a refocusing of global efforts and agendas surrounding the creation of more flexible job options and provisions, development of clean water solutions and food production, job training, as well as access to reliable energy are all pathways to creating credible, safe and sustainable labour market access for women and girls worldwide.

The 64th Commission on the Status of Women adopted a political declaration on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women stating, we “recognize that 25 years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, no country has fully achieved gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, that significant levels of inequality persist globally, that many women and girls experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, vulnerability and marginalization throughout their life course”. We believe that inequality and discrimination will continue to prevail unless the global community takes adequate measures towards ending one of the most blatant forms of violence against women and girls - the ongoing practice of sex-selective abortion. Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly states that, “States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life” and this right belongs to every girl child born or unborn. If Article 6 is not reinforced by the 65th Commission on the Status of Women, and this barbaric practice is not condemned, gender equality will never be achieved.

There is no right to abortion, and disguising it as sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's rights, or reproductive justice, does not make it a human right.

The Beijing Platform for Action, quoting the International Conference on Population and Development, reminds member states and UN implementing agencies that:

In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning;

Any measures or changes related to abortion within the health system can only be determined at the national or local level according to the national legislative process;

Every attempt should be made to eliminate the need for abortion.

The 2020 World Population Report issued by the United Nations Population Fund states that 1.2 million girls are intentionally selected for death by abortion for the simple fact that they are girls. This sex imbalance leads to heightened levels of rape, coerced sex, sexual exploitation, trafficking, child marriage and overall violence against women and girls worldwide. Countries have a vested interest in rejecting the harmful practice of sex-selective abortions, both for the safety of its women and girls, but also for the benefit in the areas of development, production and healthcare.

When women's and girl's primary right, which is their right to life, is defended by the global community, it sends a direct message to proponents of sex-selective abortion that the lives of women and girls, before and after birth, must be protected. Women and girls are powerful agents of change both locally and internationally and the world needs more women and girls, not less. Their active roles in the family, the community, the workforce, and the culture at large, produce higher levels of economic

growth, increased health among members, and a brighter future for the sustainable development of societies.

Structures seeking to normalize abortion, which is the intentional violence committed against our world's most vulnerable populations, not only goes against sustainable empowerment but instead communicates that women do not possess the qualities, nor abilities, necessary for achieving the same, if not greater measures of success, in comparison to the world's male populations. Abortion promotion, which envelopes sex-selective abortions, does not lend to the furthering of women and girl's peace and security but opens them up to further exploitation. There must be a refocusing of global efforts away from obsessive abortion promotion and towards credible means of empowering women and girl's unique abilities and qualities whether they are with, or without, child.

Campaign Life Coalition calls for:

Enriching social policies regarding women's empowerment when implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, to be focused on the entirety of her well-being to include her security, practicing of her faith convictions, full access to the public sphere and promotion of women's achievements both from within and outside of her home.

Discouragement of anti-women policies, agendas and ideals that degrade women's and girl's empowerment through the promotion of abortion as a woman's right, including the barbaric practice of sex-selective abortions.

Remembering that Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights do not enshrine a right to abortion.

Campaign Life Coalition defends women's and girl's inherent dignity from the earliest stages of development, and understands that the most effective policies surrounding women's and girl's empowerment must address their fundamental right to life. Reinforcing policies that contribute to the entirety of women and girls will ensure neither is left behind but uplifted in her opportunities to create a more equal, peaceful, secure and sustainable world.
