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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 **Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives en Famille**, 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

There continue to be many challenges in achieving gender equality and empowerment of rural women and girls (the priority theme). Many of these challenges could be, at least in part, addressed through the opportunities provided by media, information and communications technologies (the review theme).

Existing economic and power inequalities tend to be recreated and entrenched in new systems and technologies, however, unless specific, effective, power and decision-making structures are implemented to prevent this. The creators and owners of media and information technology enterprises set up since 2003 have not shown themselves to be more gender equal or inclusive, in many cases, than existing media and information companies; in some cases new companies are much less diverse and inclusive. The recent global depression has also had the effect of increasing, rather than decreasing, economic inequality.

When considering the participation in and access of women and girls, especially rural women and girls, to the media, and to information and communications technologies, parents and carers require to be specifically included. Those who are parenting and caring are often the most distant, both physically and economically, from the educational and participatory benefits of such technologies. Public authorities and decision-making bodies in media and information and communications technologies are insufficiently diverse, and unless this is addressed directly the exclusion of rural women, as well as the many of them who are parents and carers, will continue, if not worsen.

Technology has moved on rapidly since 2003 and the agreed conclusions of the Commission for the Status of Women (CSW47), yet the positive transformational potential of these technologies, especially with regard to women and girls, has not been realised. In part, this is due to existing legal and socioeconomic structures (and exemplified clearly in the proliferation of pornographic and exploitative material made available online in the interim): in order to ensure access, this exclusion from decision-making structures must end. Concrete proposals for diversity of inclusion on decision-making bodies, as well as impact assessments on outcomes, should be a clear part of the agreed conclusions of CSW62. Rural women parents and carers should not continue to be excluded.

The United Nations Minimum Set of Gender Indicators only includes one indicator on this topic, and it is included in Tier 3, which means there is no internationally established methodology or standards, and data is not regularly produced. Despite much positive goodwill from UN and Member State statistical bodies, progress on the provision of gender-disaggregated statistics, including on unpaid work since 1995, when this was included in the Beijing Platform for Action (Strategic Objective H.3, among others), and within Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Fédération européenne des femmes actives en famille requests that the Commission for the Status of Women

- Highlight the importance of rural women and girls, parents and carers, and provide concrete proposals for their inclusion in public policy and decision-making bodies
- Reaffirm Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective H.3 and seek the implementation of gender-disaggregated statistics generally
- Seek a focus on rural women and girls in public policy, the media and the economy from UN Member States and within relevant work from ECOSOC

- Engage with relevant UN statistical agencies to encourage Member States to implement regular Time Use Surveys which are produced according to internationally-established methodology and standards, include a focus on media and information and communications technology, and are disaggregated by gender and rural status.
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