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THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Written statement* submitted by the General Arab Women Federation,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[3 February 2003]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The General Arab Women Federation being a non governmental organization with a consultant status at the U.N, is concerned with promoting and protecting women rights in Arab countries, and incorporating her in the development process. 23 women federations are members in the GAWF from 21 Arab countries, sets great hopes upon the efforts of U.N., to incorporate women human rights on the U.N scope.

Many practices which form vile violation of women human rights are practiced in the geographical field of the GAWF activities in Arab countries.

Right from the beginning, we must refer to the fact that according to the provisions of International law, the natural circumstances of each country, its sovereignty upon its land and air zones, and respecting its national unity and regional security represent a subjective condition for the actuation of women human rights in their comprehensive perspective, stated in para eleven of the Treaty of Elimination of All kinds of Discrimination against women, which have the membership of most of Arab countries, as it states: -

Respecting national sovereignty and regional security are important conditions to achieve social progress and development, which lead to achieving full equality between man and women. Therefore any violation of national sovereignty will lead to the cessation of the subjective condition for activating women human rights, examples of this state are seen in the sufferings of Palestinian women under the Israili occupation, the Syrian women in Jolan, and the Lebanese women in South Lebanon, and the women in Iraq under the most dangerous form of violations of its land and air zone, and the right of self determination according to International Law Principles of human rights, which contain granting independence for occupied countries and nations, and the two international Conventions of human rights. U.S.A. and United Kingdom have since 1992, enforced individually and illegally air banned areas at the north and south of Iraq, without any legal or legitimate ground. The violence, the killing and torture exercised by Israili occupation, and the daily aggressions and bombings of civil institutions in north and south Iraq which result in the loss of civil citizens lives, among them women, and the resulting environmental problems and the disturbances women and children face including fear and insecurity towards future, and losing family members and friends and bombing of residence.

At the same time Palestinian women face destruction and genocide war in Western Bank and Ghazza Sector, the number of women victims reached 142 and rate of wounded women 9.2% during the year 2001-2002.

Israili authority have enforced mass sanctions policy continuos blockade, curfews, closing up, destroying houses and killing civilians.

The occupation authorities established 120 military barricades, dividing the Palestinian area by these barricades into 300 seclusion in addition mobile investigation teams, which violate any house or residence of civilians.

Moreover, our Federation is observing the consequences of structural adaptation under economic globalization upon women human rights, watching the deterioration

of the Arab women working opportunities, and the hardship faced by them as a result of decreasing the support to the limited-income sectors, and the allocations on essential social services.

Experience showed that foreign investment in our Arab area does not necessarily mean expanding work opportunities, and bringing down unemployment rates.

Globalization processes, whether to cohabitate or confront its consequences, lead to marginalize women through the division of labour markets, and increasing serious disparities in the living, health and education standards which create situations for poverty and marginality, that will be passed on among generations in a continuous cycle.

Many of the Arab countries were fields for various sanctions, but the cruellest, longest and most comprehensive one is the sanction imposed on Iraq since 1990 till now. It is important to note in this regard to the sub-committee statement No. 114/1998 dated 26/August 1998 concerning the human situation in Iraq, which referred to the great sufferings of Iraqi people, in particular the sufferings of children mentioned in many U.N. reports, concerning the consequences of the sanctions upon human rights in Iraq, and refer in this context to para. 145 of the Work Programme adopted by Women Fourth International Conference concerning the necessity of limiting sanctions consequences upon women and children. However, this para. have not been applied till now, as clarified in the valued study conducted by the sub. Committee member (Mrs. Claire Bali) on the contradiction of imposed sanctions on Iraq with the provisions of International Law of Human Rights. Also it is worth referring to the general comment No. 8 of 1997 issued by the social, cultural and economical rights committee, concerning the relationship between economic sanctions and enjoyment of social, cultural and economical rights.

The important document issued by Dr. Putrus Ghali on the appendix of the Plan towards peace, issued on 5/1/1995, had diagnosed deeply the moral crisis created by the sanctions imposed on countries, and the catastrophic effects on practicing human rights.

In addition, the General Assembly of United Nations have established consultant principles to be observed by the Security Council concerning the imposing of International sanctions, such as the goal of the sanctions must be clarified and the duration is stated, leaving no room to switch the goals of these sanctions, and emphasized that the non observation of these principles have resulted in switching the decisions of sanctions genocide crimes, which was mentioned in prohibiting and punishment of genocide crime in the essential regulation of International Criminal Court, which was adopted in Rome's Conference in July 1998.

International concern about the effect of International sanctions upon civilians have grown, and it was discussed by Security Council, which issued decision No. 1261 on 25/8/1999, concerning children and armed conflicts, and decision No. 1265 on 7/9/1999, concerning the protection of civilians affected by armed conflicts both decisions included important provisions about the International sanctions effects upon children and people.

These International developments despite their slow pace , emphasize the responsibility of Human Rights Committee in diagnosing the results of international sanctions upon enjoying and practicing human rights and the application of the related international treaties.
