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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 Institute of Asian Culture and Development, 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

Analysis of violence against women and girls and solutions

Since its foundation, the Institute of Asian Culture and Development has been striving to bring about understanding and development of Asian countries and their culture. Our organization has been actively providing medical care and educational opportunities to underprivileged tribes in Afghanistan and refugees in, among others, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Syrian Arab Republic, where there is significant inequality in social roles between women and men. We believe that social inequality is a form of violence that is just as severe as physical abuse.

Although more than 10 years have passed since the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghanistan is still ranked as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for women. There is a dire need for greater global awareness of and attention to social inequality and violence against women in Afghanistan. A greater response to victims through a variety of services is needed. If we can oppose the Syrian military in the name of human rights for Syrian citizens, then we should be able to raise our voices against oppression, immorality and homicide of women in Afghanistan in a peaceful way. Women are strictly restricted from going out of their homes without a male accompanying them, while women living outside the major cities still wear burkas when they go out. The current female illiteracy rate is 80 per cent owing to the deprivation of educational opportunities during Taliban rule. More social restrictions can be observed in other areas, such as lack of medical attention or arranged marriage at an extremely young age.

These forms of violence do not only take place at the individual level, but also at the national level in a cultural context and structure. We believe that we should first encourage Afghan women to find their voice and endeavour together to make changes to the country's cultural paradigm with regard to women. The Institute has been focusing largely on providing education and medical care in order to prevent and respond to violence against women. From 2002 to 2007, we operated preschools and schools for Afghan women to prevent illiteracy and provided free medical care by female practitioners in poverty-stricken areas. Also, we have been helping Jordanian women to find their voices in the social realm by teaching quilting in women's centres since 2006. We believe that this will increase women's participation in the labour market and in politics and eventually contribute to bringing about social reform. We have created various programmes to aid women in many different fields of expertise, such as computing, English language studies, cosmetics and music, and have been dispatching experts to, among others, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Our aid has largely been focused on equipping women to solve problems on their own and to work towards a just and peaceful community, rather than providing immediate relief. We are well aware that violence against women and girls is one of the top priority issues that the international community is facing in the twenty-first century and that it demands immediate action at the international level. In response, we have been making contributions in Eurasia along the Silk Road. We believe that, once the equal sharing of social roles between women and men is acknowledged in the nations mentioned above, they will play leading roles in working towards the prosperity and happiness of humanity. We will continue to strive towards humanity's goal of a peaceful global community through our contributions.