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### Commission on the Status of Women

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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 DESSI International, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **Social Protection through Applique Arts & Crafts Entrepreneurship for Gender Equality and Rural Women Empowerment in Pakistan**

The situation of rural women in Pakistan is most vulnerable because of it is typically based on the patriarchal society and tribal system. This is most likely male-dominated society where rural women are treated like sub-humans and most of them are confined in the walls of houses. They don't have even right to get education or contribute in income generation activities for the household. In the society, it is considered that educated girls or income generated by women do not keep honour of the family, but they involve in the vulgar activities which cause defaming family; so they are kept in the homes. In the family, boys are given priority over girls. Not just this, they are also married in early ages and are expected to procreate children and up-bring them. In most of the cases, women and girls are not consented by parents while making decisions about their marriage and education. The violence and discrimination with women will be found in most areas of Pakistan. They are subject to all kinds of violence in terms of physical, mental, sexual or structural means.

Deficiencies in Pakistani rural women which needs to overcome are: Lack of technical, vocational, soft and life skills; Lack of training and participation opportunities; Lack of financial and marketing linkages/access; Inadequate systems and techniques to support rural women micro enterprises; Lack of awareness and poor implementation of government initiatives; Lack of capacity building, advocacy and strong community-based institutions; and Lack of monitoring, proper feedback mechanism and its quality follow-up.

Rural women in Pakistan are deprived and marginalized and their conditions are rather appalling as they are living in the worst conditions by socially, economically and politically. The female literacy and participation in economic activities is very low. Since they live in a traditional tribal society structure, they are bound not to go out for economic activities. However, a lot of them are semi-skilled and they stitch cloths semi-finished and do some embroidery at their homes. Rural women artisans are making applique rilli work, needlework and other hand-made items which they preferably use for personal or family use. But there is huge demand of handmade appliqué rilli items and hand embroidered items locally and nationally as well as globally. For which they can be supported with latest technology, research, advocacy and provision of Technical and Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) related capacity building initiatives. If they would produce quality in-demand items then they can surely earn huge amount for their dignified livelihood through establishing self-help enterprises directly from their own homes.

Rural women need to be supported in further enhancing their skills especially in terms of making their quality hand-made products more marketable and also linking them with proper marketing strategies so their income earning options can be increased. Their skills can be more finished and their golden hands can more be polished with motivation, Technical and vocational, education and training and other skills. Presently, Applique arts & crafts are the part of new fashion industry trends and making bed covers only have now been changed in the women wear and home decorations globally. Therefore, demand of hand-made items has recently been increased and its supply has been decreased accordingly. If we focus on creating more quality rural women artisans then we have to make their proper capacity building and provide them with technical knowledge and international market trends up-to-date information. So that they can properly plan, make and produce relevant market demanded items.

Technical & Vocational, Education & Training (TVET) and skill development definitely increase abilities to innovate and adopt new market trends and advanced technologies for recognition of skilled rural women. There is huge gap in the needed skills and available resources. If Pakistan wants to reach global market then it has to produce quality supplies which are in-demand so that long-term income generation source can be streamlined for the poverty eradication and respectable image of women artisans. For the women entrepreneurship, producing applique arts & crafts items is the ideal category for which they can be easily permitted as well as can adopt instantly in the short span of time without any problems.

Hence, this statement has been in black by the DESSI International to reach women's voices at global level so that some potential income generation activities and projects of capacity building can be implemented at grass-roots level to eradicate poverty from the rural communities of Pakistan. Through such activities, women's capacity building can be achieved through imparting Technical & Vocational, Education & Training, soft and life skills as well as it can create social and financial entrepreneur's society with idea of self-employment in living with dignity for long-term sustainability solutions.

Rural women entrepreneurship in applique arts & crafts will create a privileged resourceful communities in Pakistan which can further make social changes like: Entrepreneurship promotion; Skills development and skills Enhancement; Market understanding and linkage/access; Reach at local, national and international markets; Skills and psycho-social outcomes; Business creation, business survival, degree of formalization; Sustainable income generation source; Enhanced Earnings; Promotion of handmade cultural items; and Creating a soft, technical and respectable image of Pakistan.

Promotion of rural women entrepreneurship in applique arts & crafts and hand-made items is also the solution to reduce rural migration and rural women's disrespect in societies. Government of Pakistan and international communities have initiated many free skill development initiatives but in spite of these, Pakistan has been considered among industrially undeveloped country. These local and international free Technical and vocational, education and training and advocacy initiatives must have focus on raising awareness among rural women semi-skilled artisans and provide them platform and advocacy to promote their social and economic entrepreneurship in producing quality applique arts & crafts and hand-made items. So that they can easily earn their dignified livelihood as well as create respectable recognition globally.