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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 Umuada Igbo Nigeria, 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

Gender disparity is a menace that must be won all over the world

Gender disparity or inequality has been an age-long menace all over the world, particularly in developing countries like Africa and Nigeria. Women suffer physical abuse or sexual abuses that are often a gender-based issues.

It is the humble view of Umuada Igbo Nigeria that women empowerment principles should be upheld all over the world. In view of this, we would start with our immediate environment in Nigeria where gender inequality is still quite high.

We sincerely believe that exploring the use of innovative intervention would help combat and reduce gender-based issues to the barest minimum.

It is very worrisome that in spite of the fact that women constitute an equal proportion of the population of most countries, they are excluded from having equal opportunities and resources with men. It is also very disheartening that in rural areas, women are discriminated against and excluded from equal opportunities with men, thereby diminishing their capabilities and choices merely because of their gender.

We are hopeful that we could combat the menace by our genuine commitment to enlighten all women, men, girls, and boys. Everyone should be aware of the inalienable rights of women all over the world, which we hope will help reduce the gender disparity.

It is our belief that the gender gap can be bridged by providing skill acquisition training for women to empower them economically and to enhance their performance in their chosen spheres of endeavour.

Skill acquisition centre

Umuada Igbo Nigeria has built a skill acquisition centre at Emene Enugu State Nigeria to help women and youth develop skills and abilities that will enable them to take care of themselves. We are soliciting for support to equip the centre. Over the years, we have played a key role in advocating for equal rights for both genders and will continue doing so. This, we believe, will enhance peaceful coexistence in the world.

We will solicit support from the government, political leaders, technocrats, stakeholders, the elites, and people in urban areas, especially the traditional rulers.

Gender disparity has eaten deep into the fabric of our society, in African and Nigeria in particular, so it is a struggle that must be won.

We hope to champion the enthronement of equality against inequality in Nigeria, this must be achieved through aggressively educating the populace and committing to the goal.

Women disinheritance in Igbo culture

In south east zone, women are denied their father's inheritance. For example, even if a woman has six daughters, her husband's brother inherits everything leaving her and her girls in abject poverty.

In April 2014, the Supreme Court, which is the highest Court in Nigeria, stated that Igbo Culture that disinherits women is null and void. It infringes Section 42 of 1999 Federal Republic of Nigeria constitution as amended. We have been going to August meetings and rallies to educate the stakeholders and women about the Supreme Court Judgement. Many are committed to adhering to the new law.

We have organizing workshops, rallies, and town hall meetings, but we need support to be able to communicate by radio, newspaper, and television. In addition, we need funding to travel to meet with stakeholders, such as: traditional rulers, president general of towns, church leaders, women leaders, governors, and national and state assembly members. In summation, this is the basic problem of gender inequality and poverty among women because they don't have access to inheritance that is the bedrock for women poverty in south east zone.

Women of South East zone are desperately seeking help for convincing key stakeholders to enact laws that will allow them to inherit their father's properties and for widowed women, without a male child, to inherit their husband's properties.
