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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to
achieve sustainable development for all**

Statement submitted by RESO-Femmes, 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

Strategy for the inclusion of young trainers and female leaders to effectively combat the structural poverty affecting the most vulnerable and achieve sustainable development by 2030

RESO-Femmes — A commitment and support network for women’s organizations

RESO-Femmes specializes in the social and political empowerment of leaders. It contributes to the advancement of female leaders from the South and to reflection on the reforms expected by the United Nations system.

Through its actions and its capacity for reflection on political events and social crises, it assures the long-term viability of its programmes and contributes significantly to the building of more peaceful societies and the development of policies that promote women’s participation. To that end, it creates innovative programmes and projects that ensure the coherence and longevity of grass-roots organizations and foster their autonomy and regional, national and international reach.

The organization also works on a research programme that assesses the Sustainable Development Goals and the tools for their fulfilment worldwide. Specializing in political training for leaders, the organization works with groups at various levels, but it works primarily with multigenerational groups based on the “training the trainers” principle, as exemplified by two complementary programmes: “Gender, empowerment and parity” in Mali, and “Water, sanitation and food” in Burkina Faso. These are cross-cutting issues that are included in international strategies to eradicate poverty, and that promote sustainable development for all: women, young people and isolated populations alike.

More recently, RESO-Femmes launched a training institute in Europe that centralizes its research carried out under both these programmes. The institute specializes in the inclusion of young people, and advocates an interdisciplinary and multidimensional research agenda that prioritizes investment and collaboration in its various areas of work: education, increasing the number of elected officials, food health, socioeconomic support, the environment and combating climate change, and, especially, women’s and young people’s entrepreneurship. These are tangible and human-centric goals that it links inextricably to the broader priorities related to the rights of women, young people, older persons, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable and “minority” groups.

It seems, however, that there is some confusion regarding the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are engaged and involved in research and action, such as ours — which uses scientific research to develop tools and create specific modules based on real contexts — and that of certain partners that put forward topics such as “the environment and sustainable development” without a real understanding of pre-existing communities. In reality, these are actions that facilitate collaboration between communities of the North and those of the South, as we have seen in Burkina Faso, and although they provide a minimum income for those involved. If these actions are not well thought out, they can in fact fragment and hinder the structural long-term work of NGOs, with those partners inappropriately taking the place of NGOs. NGOs do not serve as the competition but play a complementary role through their involvement and commitment.

The tendency to want to make people forget the work of leading women human rights ambassadors and their role as intermediaries and mediators, in favour of specific economic and sectoral strategies, might shatter pre-existing networks that are built to last a long time. This creates major obstacles that divide groups and

undermine the human dimension, especially the prospects of their autonomy, since these partners often have no anthropological knowledge of specific African political communities or their pre-existing philosophies and cultures.

Despite advances in basic infrastructure, such as infrastructure to enable access to water, and sustainable measures for sanitation and the environment, as a result of the work of the international community and the efforts of communities in the North, Africa's pre-existing-network and family set-up is unique. It has recently become even more fragile due to increasing rivalries between clans and families in the face of growing insecurity caused by political, social, economic and cultural instability, and climate change.

Full employment and women's and young people's working conditions continue to be precarious; youth unemployment is constantly on the rise, and sustainable development and decent working conditions are non-existent, although substantial progress has been made through international measures. This is often why young people want to migrate to the West, and why women prioritize the survival of their families at the expense of their own emancipation and empowerment..

RESO-Femmes International, thanks to its anthropological and interdisciplinary method and its willingness to listen and take into account the real needs of the men and women concerned, using the "bottom-up" approach, has proven that it is possible to address all the development goals in an integrated and cross-cutting manner, and to guarantee that they are sustainably achieved, provided that the most vulnerable and those who still lack infrastructure and education systems that are viable over the long term, as we have seen in Mali and Burkina Faso, are not forgotten.

The "training of trainers" programme has proven valuable; it leads to conclusive results and effective development, through the training of political and economic leaders from all backgrounds and social groups, including parliamentarians who specialize in parity, who step easily into their roles and who, in turn, train socioeconomic beneficiaries who have been made aware of environmental and climatic problems.

Our recent modules on security, prevention, preparedness and resilience were created to address these problems, in a manner that fosters coherence and multidimensional and interdisciplinary collaboration, provided the solutions are also informed by the expertise of scientific NGOs with substantial expertise that could benefit the entire international community.

However, many challenges remain, because we must adapt to changing circumstances and to predators that fragment and slow our actions and render women's and young people's employment uncertain.

With this statement, we wish to encourage the fifty-sixth conference, whose primary focus will be on the human dimension, to for eradicate poverty associated with sustainable development. Above all, we wish to put forward some recommendations to help in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These recommendations are based on our programmes and actions, which are not myths, but reality, based on the experience we have been acquiring, fine-tuning and improving and the challenges we have been addressing for over 15 years.

We fully subscribe to the measures adopted by various groups to strengthen social protection, health and equitable education. However, these measures, apart from being collective actions taken by the international community, must involve local emerging female leaders from regions and political transitions, as equal partners. This is our area of specialization.

These groups, which we have been training since 2006, work as a network based on y the shared legacy of pre-colonial societies. We must therefore strengthen structural financing on the basis of their concrete proposals, which we have determined, using our approaches and analyses of their communities, to be of paramount importance, and sustainable.

The second challenge is one that we have taken on through our institute, and in response to which we are developing specific recommendations designed to support women and young people to work together, as essential pillars of development in Africa; this is necessary if we are to accelerate progress towards achieving all the goals and better adapt the 2030 Agenda.

The third challenge, which we have started to address based on our expertise in gender equality, is to develop detailed recommendations for ending the stigmatization of illiterate women, who in Africa are a genuine political force who, alongside literate young people, and new female speakers, can help in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

We declare that women and young leaders, as our analyses and approaches have shown, are important pillars for advancing regional and continental integration in Africa, stimulating local transformation and increasing the added value of natural resources. Fostering rapid expansion of national economies and increasing revenue will be impossible without their specific initiatives and innovations.

Our well-supported tools and approaches guarantee new education, vocational training and employment programmes for a majority, in both urban and rural areas.

This expertise with both regional and with ethnographic international organizations has been developed over a long period and has become a vital instrument for assessing the effectiveness of the coordination and activities of the international system committed undertaken for women and young leaders in Africa and other continents. Our institute intends to include the most effective individuals and speakers in our delegations, and ensure they are better represented in the debates of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.

In conclusion, I would say that the way forward is to preserve these pre-existing female networks and not denature them with “movements” that thwart them or that can jeopardize their progress, independence and, above all else, their safety. Female leaders who are already trained and recognized by our organization have a better understanding than external stakeholders of African priorities like the need to address the lack of clean water, sanitation services and food security.

This will determine the fate of future generations, of performances to be achieved in support of the Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the programme of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, which is also an area in which we have expertise. It should be included in the agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development.