

**JOINT STATEMENT TO THE 10<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
GENERAL SEGMENT ON ITEM 8 FOLLOW UP AND IMPLEMENTATION OF  
VIENNA DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION** by Conchita Poncini  
(International Federation of University Women), 24 March 2009

International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Council of Women, Women's International Zionist Organisation, Women's Federation for World Peace International, Inter African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, International Movement for Fraternal Union Among Races and Peoples, Federation of American Women's Club Overseas, 3HO Foundation, Femmes Africa Solidarite, World Federation for Mental Health, International Alliance of Women, Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, Zonta International, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, UNESCO Extea, Women's World Summit Foundation, General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church, Worldwide Organisation for Women, International Council of Jewish Women, Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association, International Network for the Prevention of Elderly Abuse, Soka Gakkai International (SGI), Organisation pour la Communication en Afrique et de Promotion de la Cooperation Economique Internationale (OCAPROCE International), Federacion de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos,

Mr. President,

- Twenty-four (24) NGOs join this statement.
- As the CoNGO Committee on the Status of Women perseveres advocacy in the Human Rights Council to implement government commitments to gender equality and protecting women's rights, we find it fitting to remember that International Women's Day, commemorated on 8 March, is an outcome of a movement unanimously adopted in 1908 by 100 women from 17 countries for women's rights in memory of the 15,000 women who marched the streets of New York on 8 March 1857 demanding shorter work hours, better pay, voting rights and an end to child labour. Over a century, other women's conferences followed. The Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, where 54,000 participated, was the biggest ever organised world conference by the United Nations. We ask the HRC to help keep the momentum of this world movement to reach the goal of equal rights between women and men of all ages, in all spheres of life and all levels of society.
- As we experience another global financial crisis, economics of gender equality remains marginal in the quest to find solutions and models of good practices. Yet, it has been proven that in every economic crisis of recent past, women have shown capacity, if included in socio-economic planning, budgeting and entrepreneurship development, to find smart and creative solutions and models in terms of business and trade with ramifications in the protection of women's human rights. Through micro credits and women's banking systems, many women succeed in getting out of their poverty as in Bangladesh and in India; The informal economy especially in the service sector is predominantly created by women for their families to survive in Africa. Introduction of equal treatment in legislation in parental leave has given women in the Nordic countries accessibility, opportunity, and choice to reach political leadership and almost an equal level with men in wages according to a survey of the World Economic Forum and, in the Philippines powerful entrepreneurial women and government support have gained fifth rank in the latest survey on measurements of gender equality and empowerment by the WEF.
- Finally, we call on the Human Rights Council to continue systematic review of performance on gender equality and women's rights in the UPR and in reports to treaty bodies notably CEDAW which has legal provisions for temporary measures to reach de facto gender equality, as well as to the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee. We urge the HRC and financial institutions to keep abreast of each other's programmes to exchange best practices and identify gender equality gaps in women's empowerment. Thank you Mr. President.

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