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Statement submitted by Confederation of NGOs of Rural India, 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

The Confederation of NGOs of Rural India (CNRI) is the national network of non-government organizations and people's organizations working for development effectiveness and democratic governance in India. CNRI strives to foster a civil society, especially at the grassroots level, in which nation-building is based on inclusive growth. CNRI works on the ideology that "it is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, it is the one that is most adaptable to change."

In India, substantial efforts have been made to promote gender equality between men and women. India is now placed 127 out of 146 nations in terms of gender parity, up from 135 last year, according to the annual Gender Gap Report, 2023. India has made progress in education and political empowerment, with a representation of women of over 40 per cent in local governance. Laws have been enacted to address issues such as dowry, domestic violence, and sexual harassment, including the Dowry Prohibition Act, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act. Various government and non-governmental organizations run programs to empower women economically, socially, and politically.

The Economic Survey 2022–2023 noted that India has made tremendous strides in promoting gender equality and has a score of 0.490 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII), demonstrating the effectiveness of national policies. India now ranks 122 out of 190 countries, a notable improvement over the South Asian region's average score of 0.508 and very near to the global average of 0.465.

In India, nearly 80 per cent of rural women work in agriculture. Rural women workers' empowerment and mainstreaming in agriculture can lead to a paradigm change in favour of economic growth. In addition to reducing hunger and poverty, it will improve food and nutrition security. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 will benefit everyone involved. According to the 2011 Census, 54.6 percent of the country's workforce is employed in agriculture and related sectors, making India an agrarian economy. Women participate heavily in activities related to agriculture and related industries. In comparison to urban women, who participate in the labour at a rate of 35.31 percent, rural women's rate of 41.8 percent is much higher.

Various schemes, such as the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), National Livelihoods Mission, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana I (PMMVY), etc. have made significant contributions in creating gender parity and socio-economic empowerment of women in India. Through government beneficiary schemes, rural women now have access to education, productive resources, capacity training, skill development, healthcare facilities, and a variety of livelihood choices.

Despite these initiatives, gender equality remains a pressing concern that requires further attention. There are many obstacles to be solved, such as deeply ingrained cultural practices, economic inequalities, and social biases. The government and civic society must maintain their commitment to progress in this area if women are to be empowered in all spheres of life.

While CNRI is committed to the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions. CNRI is committed to fostering conditions that enable rural Indian women to exercise their rights, take advantage of opportunities, and actively contribute to the growth of their communities. We truly

believe that gender equality is not only a goal but also a crucial prerequisite for rural India's development.

Through a number of activities, CNRI is dedicated to empowering women in rural areas. We provide training programs that give women the information and skills they need to be independent contributors to their families and communities. Additionally, the CNRI aggressively promotes gender-responsive policies and women's rights. In order to solve important concerns like land rights, accessibility to healthcare, and education, we closely collaborate with regional communities and governmental organizations. In order to promote more inclusive and equitable rural societies, our organization also places a strong emphasis on enhancing women's health, economic empowerment, and educational access. In order to build an environment where women may fully exercise their rights and take part in rural development, CNRI works to challenge gender conventions and stereotypes through community awareness programmes, research, and collaborations.
