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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 Medical Women’s International Association, 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 Medical Women's International Association (MWIA) is an international non-governmental organization (NGO). Women physicians in more than fifty-four countries make up the membership. The association was founded in 1919. MWIA recently celebrated its 100th anniversary in July 2019 in New York City where it was founded. For the past 100 years the mission of MWIA has been to raise the health status of the communities in which the members work, especially the health of women and children in those communities. MWIA has category II status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and is in official relations with the World Health Organization.

The executive consists of 13 elected positions encompassing President, Past President, President-elect, Secretary General, Treasurer and eight Vice Presidents representing the eight geographic regions and 6 continents. Every three years MWIA holds an international congress and the venue is one of the member countries whose national association hosts the congress. Between triennial meetings, each region holds a regional congress.

MWIA has member organizations and individual members from 6 continents. The members of MWIA provide both medical care and health education in diverse settings in urban and rural communities. As part of the services provided, MWIA has been at the forefront of efforts in promoting empowerment of women so that they can participate utilizing their full potential to advocate for women in their professional and personal arenas.

MWIA has been working across various sectors i.e. academic, non-governmental, private and public organizations both locally, nationally and globally. To illustrate this, MWIA members by their strong work commitment to their profession in various countries provide Mobile Health services in remote tribal areas for women and children, as well as conducting regular Health Camps, with vaccinations, maternity care, and training & teaching activities in the prevention of Cervical & Breast Cancer. Education about HPV vaccination is a big priority. MWIA also actively participates in various National Health Programmes of the country leading to improvement of the health indicators of SDG 3. During the current COVID crisis MWIA and its members in various countries have not only provided care to those affected by the disease but have been instrumental in supplying personal protection equipment and other medical equipment to those in needed.

In summary MWIA's goals align well with SDG 3, 5 and 17 and critical areas of concern of Beijing especially regarding women and health. MWIA has been at the forefront of addressing gender-based violence has been working to address inequalities and inadequacies in health care and related services for many years, for example C.1. Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable, and quality health care, information, and related services C.2. Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health C.3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues C.4. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health C.5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.

Relating to gender equity and violence against women, in 2013, MWIA led the way by writing a Training Manual on Gender Mainstreaming in Health for physicians and other health care professionals. The concepts covered in that training manual, namely sex, gender, sexuality, gender roles and gender equity are all relevant when we speak of Violence Against Women. MWIA has now developed an online module on Gender Based Violence for health care professionals.

The Medical Women's International Association will be well represented by members at the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2021. As NGO with Category II status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations we work to collaborate with various groups of stakeholders globally to address women's health across their life span, as well as their empowerment, and their representation in the work force.

At present due to the current COVID crisis the members have organized on-line seminars, meetings and workshops in various regions to address the CSW 65 priority themes and the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action during the 25th anniversary of this historic declaration.

MWIA recognizes the important advocacy role played by CSW and the Beijing Platform of action and would specifically like to request the Secretary General's office to prioritize Universal Health Coverage for women and the girl child as a top priority in the 2030 agenda.
