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**PANEL IV**

Remaining challenges in relation to statistics and indicators, building on the discussions at the High-level round table organized in the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission 2004 as well as available data from the World's Women: Trends and Statistics (2005) and the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (2005)

Written statement\* submitted by

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**Remarks by June Zeitlin**

I am pleased to be invited to discuss the use of statistics in policy implementation and advocacy. WEDO has a long history of monitoring implementation of governments' global commitments. Last week we launched our 5<sup>th</sup> report assessing implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. This report contains women's assessments from 150 countries of their governments' steps to turn the platform into action. The title of the new report, *Beijing Betrayed*, sums up our overall conclusion. The realities women document go beyond what can be measured by government statistics.

That is not to say women don't recognize advances have been made. There has been much progress at the level of legal and policy reforms—but much more needs to be done. This is particularly true in terms of implementation, to change the lives of women on the ground.

As we worked with women around the world to compile information for the global monitoring report, we were confronted by the lack of gender disaggregated data in some areas, and the lack of any systematic data at all in other areas that are of vital concern to women. Task Force 3 of the Millennium Project has extensively documented the need for better and more systematic data collection in a wide range of areas in its report, *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*. At the opening of this 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Secretary General endorsed the seven strategic priorities recommended by the Task Force. Now we need the political will to see that these are carried out by governments, as well as adequate resources for implementation and statistical indicators to measure progress in achieving these goals.

There has been a lot of discussion among women here and around the world about the critical need to define gender equality and women's empowerment in the MDGs expansively to encompass the comprehensive approach of the Beijing Platform and to make gender equality central to all of the goals. We are pleased that the political declaration makes this link. But we also know that the strength and weakness of the MDGs is that they are only measuring what can be easily counted and we all know that there are many critical aspects of gender equality that are not so easily measured. That is the challenge we face today.

I would like to offer some specific recommendations that could help to advance policy reform in key aspects of gender equality. These track the concerns that women expressed in *Beijing Betrayed* as well as the recommendations of Task Force 3 of the Millennium Project.

**Violence Against Women**—This was the most universal concern that women reported. Yet it is a major omission in the current millennium development goals. There is prevalence data from

some countries—but we know there is gross underreporting. We recommend the collection of prevalence data in every country. This could at least begin to put some numbers to the magnitude of the problem and enable countries to measure progress.

**Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**—Our global monitoring report shows that in every region of the world access to reproductive health services is limited and constraints remain on women’s reproductive and sexual rights. This is a second major omission of the Millennium Development Goals. While they include goals on maternal and child mortality and HIV/AIDS, these indicators are useful but inadequate. It is absolutely critical to look at other indicators including contraceptive demand and adolescent fertility.

**Power and Decision Making**—The Inter-Parliamentary Union collects data tracking women’s representation in national parliaments. This data has enabled us to identify those countries reaching a critical mass of 30 percent and learn from the strategies they employ. All countries that have reached 30 percent have used some type of affirmative measure—whether it is a party quota, a legislated quota or other type. This data underlies our advocacy around affirmative measures. We recommend the collection of similar data for women’s share of local offices. The United Cities and Local Governments organization has begun to build a global database and it is critical that countries provide this information for tracking purposes.

**Poverty Eradication and Macroeconomic Policies**—There is no question that gender-blind macroeconomic policies and poverty reduction strategies exacerbate the feminization of poverty. It is imperative that countries assess the differential impact on men and women of trade policies and their impact. The International Gender and Trade Network is a resource for interested countries. Women’s unpaid work, which all economies depend on—continues to be invisible in national accounts. This work must be recognized and rewarded. Better measures of gender inequality in employment are the share of women in wage employment and self-employment and the gender gap in earnings.

**Education**—In addition to measuring enrollment rates for girls and boys in primary school, these ratios should be collected for all levels of education. It is not enough to just measure enrollment but rather data should also be collected on completion rates.

**Natural Resources and Environmental Security**—Poor rural women’s livelihoods often turn on whether they have the right to own, manage and control the land they farm. The Beijing Platform and the World Summit on Sustainable Development call on governments to adopt laws guaranteeing women these property rights and the right to inherit land. Governments need to collect data on land ownership by male, female and jointly held, and similarly with housing title.

Governments also need to more systematically collect time-use data so progress can be tracked on the number of hours women spend on fetching water or fuel. This takes an enormous toll on their capacity to engage in other educational or income-generating activities.

In conclusion, I want to stress that while steps have been taken to improve the lives of women around the world, much work still needs to be done. Not only do we have to work towards more

comprehensive statistical indicators measuring progress, or the lack of progress, but it is necessary to ensure that the political will is there to fully achieve these goals.

*Beijing Betrayed*

*Women Worldwide Report that Governments Have Failed  
To Turn the Platform into Action*

**Executive Summary**

This report is the fifth in a series by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) assessing governments' progress in implementing the commitments they made to the world's women at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women that met in Beijing in 1995. It consists of reports from women in 150 countries representing every region of the world. Their realities often contrast sharply with the official reports of their governments.

*Beijing Betrayed* is a testimony to women as agents of change and gives us cause for celebration. Women everywhere have used the Platform for Action to push governments into taking action, crafting legislation and raising public awareness to promote women's human rights, peace and sustainable development.

But the title reflects powerful evidence that key government commitments to women have yet to be achieved. Here is the core of the critique: **Governments worldwide have adopted a piecemeal and incremental approach to implementation that cannot achieve the economic, social and political transformation underlying the promises and vision of Beijing.**

***Challenges***

A combination of several global trends has created an environment hostile to the advancement of women's rights:

- *Growing militarization* since September 2001 and an increase in regional ethnic and communal violence have increased the numbers of refugee and displaced people and undermined women's access to basic services and protections.
- *The dominance of neo-liberal economic frameworks and market-driven policies* have led to changes in trade and finance rules and to deregulation and privatization that have increased poverty and deepened inequalities between nations and within them, especially for women.
- *Rising fundamentalist movements* seek to roll back women's gains and to limit their freedoms and opportunities in all spheres of life, including reproductive health care.

In this climate, which constrains resources and narrows views about acceptable women's roles, few governments have mobilized the political will or high-level leadership to carry out the commitments made to women at Beijing. As a result, many women in all regions are actually worse off now than they were ten years ago.

### *Achievements*

The Beijing Platform for Action laid out goals and action recommendations in various areas of concern. Results in all have been mixed.

- **Human rights:** The UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has now been ratified by 179 countries, up from 146 a decade ago. Governments are taking notice of the global trafficking of women and children into forced marriage, prostitution, bonded labor and domestic servitude.
  - **But** the United States is still not among the CEDAW ratifying countries. Some of those countries still maintain formal reservations to the agreement and retain discriminatory laws.
  - Right-wing forces everywhere invoke culture and religion to deny women's rights.
  - Punitive approaches to trafficking dominate, while few protect the human rights of the affected women or to address the root causes of trafficking.
- **Peace and security:** Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, emphasizes the importance of women's role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building.. Many governments have adopted laws barring violence against women, and international law now recognizes rape and sexual coercion during conflicts as crimes against humanity.
  - **But** few measures address the root causes of violence or challenge cultural norms that see rape and abuse as private family concerns.
  - Public awareness of Resolution 1325 is minimal. Women are still mostly absent at decision-making levels in governments and businesses worldwide.
  - Governments have failed adequately to protect refugees and asylum-seekers.
- **Power and decision-making:** Where countries have adopted laws or programs to increase women's numbers in parliament, women's concerns have higher priority as a result.
  - **But** average representation has risen by just 4 percent over the decade: from 11.7 to 15.8 percent of elected officials.
  - West Asia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait still deny women the right to vote or hold office.
- **Poverty eradication:** Some governments have adopted laws against workplace gender discrimination and to engage men in family care.
  - **But** women are still the poorest of the poor, concentrated in agriculture and the informal economy in often hazardous work. Causes include low job growth; lack of access to resources, training, credit and services; and remaining legal barriers.
  - Women's labor is still under-valued and under-counted in national statistics, while trade and economic policies that govern their lives rarely consider their needs.
  - In most of the world, unpaid family and household care still rests on women.

- **Education:** The Beijing goal of universal enrollment in primary education for girls and boys is likely to be met in 2005, except in sub-Saharan Africa and West Asia.
  - **But** dropout and illiteracy rates remain higher for girls than boys; inequality persists at secondary and higher levels; and gender stereotyping remains in most textbooks.
- **Natural resources and environmental security:** Some governments have adopted laws to give women rights to own and inherit land, and enough women Ministers of the Environment have been named that they formed their own network in 2002.
  - **But** women remain absent from most environmental decision-making bodies.
  - Women still lack property rights in many countries, while trends like water privatization undermine their ability to manage resources and meet family needs.
- **Health:** Women worldwide are still struggling for the right to autonomy over their own bodies. Access to basic and reproductive health care continues to be problematic worldwide, especially for rural and low-income women. Women and girls are most at risk from HIV/AIDS, primarily because of sexual subordination and stigma attached to victims.

### ***Conclusion***

These reports, contributed by women in more than 150 countries, show concretely that the rhetoric of governments at Beijing has failed to play out in the reality of women's lives. Governments have displayed a lack of will in turning their commitments to women's rights into decisive action, instead adopting a piecemeal and incremental approach that cannot achieve the economic, social and political transformation underlying the promises of Beijing.

The international women's movement has had a stake in the United Nations beginning 30 years ago with the first World Conference on Women and the launch of the Decade for women. Now the United Nations is at a crossroads, undermined by the growing dominance of the international trade and finance institutions and weakened by a lack of resources and power imbalances among its diverse membership.

In the coming year, governments will be considering a series of major proposals for reform of the UN. Despite its weaknesses, women continue to challenge the UN, pushing for a stronger forum for women's mobilization and ability to influence global policy.