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Commission on the Status of Women

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and
to the special session of the General Assembly entitled
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for
the twenty-first century”**

Statement submitted by Center for Global Nonkilling, 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.



Statement

The year 2015 brings the convergence of the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the conclusion of the initial period of action for the Millennium Development Goals. Both documents have been important benchmarks against which to measure the successes and shortcomings of an increasing struggle to tackle violence against women.

Following the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women proclaimed by the General Assembly by its resolution 48/104, which highlighted women's right to life (art. 3), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action reaffirmed the signatories' determination to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, paying cross-cutting attention to this problem throughout the Platform for Action, especially regarding violence against women and women and armed conflict. The time is ripe for a detailed and careful analysis of the progress towards achieving the strategic objectives in both areas through the implementation of the actions then described and others since suggested.

The Center for Global Nonkilling, a participant in the Violence Prevention Alliance of the World Health Organization, as well as a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, acknowledges that lethal violence against women is the tip of the iceberg, both considering violence as a whole and lethal violence in itself. Although young men represent by far the largest percentage of victims and perpetrators of lethal interpersonal violence, new data reveal that women, girls and children are subject to high levels of non-fatal violence that frequently remain under the radar as far as official records are concerned. Women suffer disproportionately from sexual and intimate-partner violence, affecting their sexual and reproductive health and the health of their children and families.

The *World Report on Violence and Health*, issued in 2002 by the World Health Organization, and its follow-up, the *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention*, provide reliable data on the global burden of violence that can assist the Commission on the Status of Women in evaluating the actual numbers and trends regarding violence against women, in particular in terms of deaths from homicide, suicide and armed conflict. Significantly, both publications present violence as a "preventable disease", emphasizing different prevention strategies and recommendations that have been shown to work. The Commission will find additional support for multisectoral action in World Health Assembly resolution 67.15 on strengthening the role of the health system in addressing violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children.

In the resolution, the World Health Assembly urges member States to take steps to end the social acceptability and tolerance of all forms of violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children. Building up from the social-ecological model that characterizes the public health approach to violence prevention, the Assembly points out that "preventing interpersonal violence against children — boys and girls — can contribute significantly to preventing interpersonal violence against women and girls and children, that being abused and neglected during infancy and childhood makes it more likely that people will grow up to perpetrate violence against women, maltreat their own children, and engage in youth violence", effectively halting the intergenerational perpetuation of interpersonal violence.

The Center for Global Nonkilling joins the World Health Organization and many other organizations in affirming that we currently know enough to drastically reduce violence, in particular potential lethal violence against women and girls and against children. The confluence of the 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the definition of the post-2015 development agenda is the appropriate moment to highlight the need to take violence prevention seriously, building and expanding the social, political and institutional momentum necessary to expand and put our existing knowledge and evidence-backed violence prevention policies, programmes and strategies into practice, opening an opportunity to build safe and killing-free communities around the world.

We thus invite the Commission on the Status of Women to restate the importance of the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as a key area of concern of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to use its good offices to call for the incorporation of women's right not to be killed and the right not to kill into the form of goals for the prevention and reduction of lethal and other forms of violence against women as part of the post-2015 development agenda. As the post-2015 framework will be crucial to determining the global approach to some of the most pressing problems of our time, it represents a unique opportunity to include the prevention and reduction of violence against women as a key measurable factor in achieving the development goals and the strategic objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Seconding article 3 (a) of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the call of the late Assistant Secretary-General and first Chancellor of the United Nations-mandated University for Peace, Robert Muller, to place the right of each human person not to kill and not to be killed at the top of the list, including the prevention and reduction of lethal violence against women in the post-2015 development agenda and the measurable data on violent deaths as an indicator of its achievement will be a significant step towards recognition of the human right to life.
