



BACKGROUND NOTE

“IMPLEMENTING THE INTERNATIONALLY AGREED GOALS AND COMMITMENTS IN REGARD TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN”

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), consisting of 54 Member States that are elected for a three-year term, is the main organ and forum of the United Nations system to discuss, formulate and coordinate international development policies. Through the recently established mechanism of the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), ECOSOC focuses its work each year on one or on a set of related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 2010 AMR will explore the key challenges in achieving the international goals and commitments in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women (MDG3).

The international development agenda is defined by the internationally agreed development goals, including the eight MDGs. The MDGs are a set of development goals that all countries and all leading development institutions worldwide agreed to in 2000. The goals range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015. They form a blueprint of the global development agenda and have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poor. At the 2010 MDG Summit in New York, the international community will take stock of the progress that has been made during the last ten years and formulate a roadmap to the target date of 2015.

MDG 3 - “Promote gender equality and women empowerment”- covers strengthening the role and voice of women in societies. This goal includes the education of girls and women to support their economic independence and increased ability to negotiate and bargain. It contains the goal to overcome barriers to schooling for girls and to promote mechanisms that give women a voice in politics and governance institutions.

In a variety of events, panel discussions, national, regional and global meetings, ECOSOC will draw the attention of the international community to the gaps and neglected areas in this field and will work to strengthen the efforts and national strategies of governments. The outcomes of these meetings will feed into the draft ministerial declaration, which will be negotiated and adopted by Ministers during ECOSOC's annual substantive session in June/July 2010 in New York. This declaration provides national policy makers with a coherent and unified basis for action in the economic and social fields. The Special Event on Philanthropy will contribute to this process and its findings will be reflected in the 2010 ministerial declaration on “Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women”.