

**Statement by H.E. Mrs. Marjatta Rasi at the opening
of the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

1 March 2004

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address the opening of the forty-eight session of the Commission on the Status of Women in my capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council. My presence here today is a clear sign of the increasing interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women and I hope that my statement will be a contribution to the already excellent cooperation between the Commission and the Council.

Cooperation and collaboration between ECOSOC and its functional commissions has steadily increased in recent years. This has enabled the Council to exercise its coordination and guidance role more effectively, which in turn has led to increased policy coherence. One important mechanism in this have been the joint bureau meetings held each year between the bureau of the Council and the bureaux of each of the functional commissions. Last Tuesday, a joint bureau meeting was held with the bureau of this commission, which provided an excellent opportunity for dialogue between the two bodies. Among the topics discussed were possible contributions by the commission to the work of ECOSOC, coordination between CSW and other functional commissions, the commission's communications procedure and the upcoming review and appraisal of the implementation of ECOSOC's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming. The exchange was frank and open and, I believe, extremely valuable.

Another way in which policy coherence is promoted has been through the meeting of chairpersons of the functional commissions with ECOSOC, an event which has been held annually since 2002. This type of meeting has proven to be very useful as it provides an opportunity for all chairpersons to come together for an exchange with the Council,

and to raise issues of mutual interest. It is my intention to hold a meeting of chairpersons again this year, during the substantive session of the Council here in New York.

Similarly as contacts with the Council, also horizontal collaboration between the functional commissions has proven to be valuable, particularly in the context of conference follow-up. The extensive cooperation which the Commission on the Status of Women has engaged in, especially with the Commission on Human Rights, is exemplary and to be lauded. Given its cross-cutting mandate, CSW is well placed to continue its collaboration with other functional commissions.

In my view, one of the key challenges for us today is to try and maximize the impact of CSW on the implementation of conference outcomes and the Millennium Development Goals. This will be crucial especially in the context of the major event proposed in General Assembly resolution 57/270B. I believe your commission has a special role notably in helping to move on the agenda of mainstreaming gender.

One way in which the functional commissions can support the work of the Council is for its policy recommendations to be taken into account in the commissions' work. To that end, I am pleased to note that the CSW has, for a number of years now, included in its agenda an item on follow-up to ECOSOC resolutions and decisions. In connection with that agenda item, you have been asked this year to start preparations for the review of the working methods of the functional commissions, which will be undertaken by the Council next year, as requested in resolution 57/270B. I look forward to the outcome of your deliberations on this important topic.

I note with interest that this session of the CSW will discuss as its main themes "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality", and "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building". The latter theme is particularly significant in light of ECOSOC's recent efforts in focusing on the links between peace and development, which has led to the establishment of the ad hoc advisory groups on Guinea-Bissau and

Burundi. For the deliberations in the upcoming session of ECOSOC's high-level segment, which will consider the theme of "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010", I look forward to receiving an input from the Commission, as has been the practise in previous years. Given the cross-cutting nature of gender equality and the clear links between the advancement of women and the eradication of poverty and development, I find the contributions of this Commission especially relevant to the work of the Council.

In general, the catalytic role this Commission has played in facilitating and monitoring gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes of the United Nations system has been extremely valuable. Since the adoption by ECOSOC of its agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming, much progress has been achieved throughout the UN in strengthening the integration of gender perspectives into all policies and programmes. We are all aware, however, that a great deal more still needs to be done. In order to assess progress made, and challenges remaining, a review and appraisal of the agreed conclusions will take place during the coordination segment of this year's substantive session. The aim of the review should be to assess the remaining gaps and to provide proposals for strengthened implementation of the agreed conclusions. The bureau of ECOSOC will do its best to facilitate discussion on this important topic, but the active engagement of all parts of the UN system is essential for a good outcome.

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In conclusion, I would like to emphasise once more the importance of close interaction between the Council and its functional commissions. Our work can and should be mutually reinforcing. I welcome this opportunity to address the Commission and wish you the best of success in your deliberations over the next two weeks.

Thank you.