

*Statement to the GSP Interactive Dialogue*

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*16 March 2011*

Thank you, Mr. President.

Madame President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen: good morning.

First, let me join all colleagues in extending our deepest sympathies and wishes for the men and women of Japan.

Mr. President, I am honored and deeply appreciative to have been given this opportunity to take the floor. My name is Cate Owren and I am speaking on behalf of WEDO – the Women’s Environment and Development Organization – a women’s global advocacy organization, working to enhance the interlinkages of women’s human rights and justice, gender equality and sustainable development. I would like to support several of the points already made this morning – and emphasize about four.

A new course is surely needed – and the mandate for this High-level Panel is particularly timely, warmly welcomed and applauded. A paradigm shift must be multi-directional: grown from the bottom up and fostered at this, the highest levels.

Fortunately, there is another kind of paradigm shift to look to for inspiration. Quite momentarily, over the last few years, thanks to combined efforts of governments and civil society alike, climate change has become recognized as a gender issue, and gender equality issues have become recognized as inextricable to effectively, efficiently responding to this urgent crisis. The Cancun Agreements included eight references to women and gender, across all major sections. This paradigm shift signals that Parties from every region are ready to tackle this – a historically environmental or economic issue – with social dimensions well integrated.

Let’s look at climate change for another example. Building community resilience is a foundation of adaptation. It requires promoting and capitalizing on women’s leadership and innovations in areas such as preparedness and response; safe, clean and renewable technologies; agriculture and food security. Local communities are successfully bridging the three pillars of sustainable development. Their experiences should be scaled up and adapted to the national level to bridge some of the gaps in implementation.

As it was in Rio, the Human Rights Based Approach must be front and center, as an overarching guide to systemic change. It provides a framework that addresses the most marginalized and excluded in society, strengthening social, political, economic and environmental justice and equity. Human rights principles

can drive every activity, across every sector and drive the design, implementation and monitoring of sustainable development policies and programs.

The Human Rights approach coexists with many key Rio Principles, of course – including common but differentiated responsibilities, access and participation, gender equality, polluter pays and the precautionary principle – that should remain part of any new vision.

As the panel looks at the role of business and the private sector, a structure for corporate accountability needs to be incorporated. While the private sector has developed innovative sustainable development initiatives and a robust field of corporate social responsibility, programs are largely voluntary. Going forward, a question to the panel might be: can governments and civil society work together with business to create corporate accountability indicators and metrics to ensure corporate actions build upon these programs which are working, pushing a transformation of consumption and production patterns? This might help to integrate the three pillars. And women's entrepreneurialism will no doubt to be found at the heart of this transformation.

Finally, sustainable development requires the ability to adapt plans for the future and measure progress. It is now more than evident that using GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress is out of sync with the day-to-day reality of our world and the challenges we face. We require measurements which value equally the dignity of all human life and the integrity of the environment; indicators which measure quality of life for both women and men, paid and unpaid work time and leisure, political participation and rights; indicators which measure ecosystem degradation, carbon emissions, and natural resource management. Much has been done to develop these indicators which go 'Beyond GDP' and we recommend that the panel work to build upon this, forming synthesis among complex ideas and competing perspectives, and creating a new and viable set of indices which can be effectively employed at all levels.

Once again, and on behalf of our constituents, I applaud the Panel's efforts to drive a paradigm shift, and I encourage you to continue to seek bold, innovative mechanisms and to consult with civil society at all levels as you develop recommendations for the way forward.

Thank you.