

24 February 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Official Launch of UN Women**

Mr. Secretary General,
Madam Under-Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,

It is an honor to welcome you to the General Assembly and to celebrate with you the official launch of UN Women, just a few days before the 100th anniversary of the International Women's Day.

When our Organization was founded, in 1945, Member States expressed their strong determination to advance the status of women worldwide. The Charter of the United Nations was the first international agreement to state the principle of equality between men and women. In the preamble of the Charter, Member States very explicitly "reaffirm ... the equal rights of men and women." Over the years, the United Nations has been committed to empowering women through the adoption and implementation of numerous resolutions, conventions, strategies and programs.

The General Assembly resolution to establish UN Women, adopted in July 2010, lives up to this promise. It marks a fine moment in the history of our Organization. This is a great instance of the UN system coming together to maximize its impact, and it is an example of UN reform for greater efficiency that could be followed in other areas.

Through the unanimous support expressed in July of last year in this hall, governments around the globe have reaffirmed the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and decided that now is the time to get serious about giving women equal power and rights in any respect. For the future of humanity, now is the time to get serious about gender equality.

The creation of UN Women is an expression of the growing realization that we cannot address the world's most complex problems without the wisdom and full participation of women. Complex challenges like conflicts, global warming, migration, pandemics or financial crises will only be solved through true global partnership where men and women both have a voice.

In uniting to establish UN Women, Member States acknowledged that the United Nations is uniquely placed to take a leading role in advancing the status of women. They signaled their willingness to advance the gender equality agenda and, to that end, to tap into the expertise that UN Women will provide.

Carrying out its work, UN Women will have the strong backing at the highest level in the UN: It is now my pleasure to welcome UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon - the man behind UN Women.