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Asia Pacific Caucus Statement

55th CSW Session, 2011

Chairperson CSW, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, sisters from the women's movement and friends:

We are **privileged** to make the statement on the behalf of Asia Pacific Caucus. We welcome first of all the creation of the **UN Women** and the appointment of the former Chilean President **Michelle Bachelet** as the first Head of the body. **She shall be our voice on the UN Table.**

We welcome the priority theme for the 55th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women on **“Access and Participation of Women and Girls to Education, Training, Science and Technology, including for the Promotion of Women's Equal Access to full Employment and Decent Work”** which is pre- requisite to the realisation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

We note with concern that even after 15 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and 10 years of the MDGs, insufficient progress has been made with regard to commitments on education and scientific training , information communication technology in particular. While we acknowledge that in some of the countries in our region, girls are out-pacing boys in levels of higher education we still have a large part of the region where access to education and education levels were still far from equal. In addition, 60 per cent of school drop outs were girls (where?) Preventing girls from finishing even basic education burdens their chances to determine their own future.

The Expert Group Report and other documents clearly reveal that there are major gaps that need to be addressed. Given the insurmountable challenges that women are confronted with

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in the current economic crisis, education system will sustain severe damage and children marginalised by poverty, gender and ethnically stand to bear the brunt. It would further accentuate the crisis of female unemployment and push more women to vulnerable employment.

We urge the States to adopt and implement policies that prohibit employment discrimination, workplace harassment and all forms of exploitation of women and girls.

We call upon the States to recognise right to education as a fundamental human right and critical tool for the empowerment of women and gender equality. The quality of education is equally important and it should be free of gender bias and stereotypes. Negative stereotypes concerning the perceived suitability of women in science and technology careers must be tackled at all levels.

We call upon the States to address the socio cultural factors including violence that disadvantage women and girls from entering and pursuing careers in science and or technology. Mentoring to encourage women and girls to go into career in science and technology should be provided.

The Asia Pacific region which has the 60 per cent of the female population of the world, is also the region which is conflict ridden, which has high percentage of internally displaced persons and also a region that has suffered both natural and human made disasters. We call upon the States to formulate policies and programmes to see that women and girls affected as such are also provided opportunities and access to education and technology. Girls from marginalised sections, minorities and rural communities need special attention.

Gender and age disaggregated data is imperative for assessing and enhancing opportunities for education and science,

Last but not the least, we look forward with great hope and expectation to the **UN Women** is not only giving priority to addressing the economic and social rights of women and advance women's human rights but also to evolve mechanisms that include meaningful civil society participation in UN Women at the UN as well as regional and country level.

Thank You Excellencies

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