

**55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women
22 February – 4 March 2011**

**H. E. Mr. Garen Nazarian
Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**Closing remarks
14 March 2011**

**Distinguished delegates,
Under-Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

We have come to the end of the 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I would like to thank all the participants for their most valuable contributions to this session, and especially the members of non-governmental organizations who brought many important perspectives and ideas to this session, as well as to the experts and panellists who have enriched our debates.

This was the first session where UN Women served as the Secretariat of the Commission. I extend my personal appreciation and that of the Bureau and Member States to Under-Secretary-General, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, for her support and that of her team, in particular Ms. Christine Brautigam, as well as the Secretary of the Commission Mr. Otto Gustafik, whose institutional memory and professionalism proved invaluable to the work of the Bureau.

This session focused on a priority theme that is crucial to women's ability to contribute fully to the development, economic growth and well-being of all societies and nations: access and participation of women and girls in education, training, and science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work. I would like to congratulate all participants on the excellent discussions we have had, the many good experiences and lessons learned that have been shared, and also the frank assessment of the many gaps and challenges that still persist in all parts of the world towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment in regard to the priority theme.

I am therefore especially gratified that the agreed conclusions which we have just adopted provide a very solid and strong basis for accelerated and focused action by a range of stakeholders. I thank all delegations for the spirit of compromise, and my particular appreciation to Mr Filippo Cinti, Vice-Chair of the Commission, who facilitated the negotiations, for the excellent and hard work that resulted in this outcome.

The summaries of the panels on the priority theme, together with the Agreed Conclusions will be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council as the Commission's contribution to the Annual Ministerial Review in July 2011 on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education.

During our session, we have also evaluated progress made in ending discrimination and violence against the girl child, where we have been able to note some significant progress, thanks to the committed action of a multitude of stakeholders. Girls are the women of tomorrow, but we need to hear their voices today. We must do everything now so that they can develop their potential to the fullest and to ensure their full and equal participation in building a better world for all. Ending discrimination and violence against girls must thus be a top priority for all Governments and other actors.

We also looked towards the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012. I am very pleased that the Commission provided an early input to the preparations for this Conference, and I encourage all members of the Commission and other stakeholders to remain engaged in this process, provide constructive advice and contributions so that gender perspectives are effectively mainstreamed in the preparatory process of the Conference. The outcome must benefit all – women and men - and should contribute effectively to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Commission adopted a resolution on gender perspectives in climate change, thus playing its catalytic role in mainstreaming a gender perspective in this particular area as well.

The Commission took a lead in helping to sustain the momentum for action to reduce and eliminate preventable maternal mortality. We are all very concerned about the lack of progress in achieving MDG 5 on improving maternal health, and I can confirm that the discussion led by Under-Secretary-General Ms Bachelet with a group of entities of the UN system and other stakeholders gave a clear indication of where we stand on the issue, but also of what needs to be done and by whom, how it can be done and who is accountable for results. I trust that we are all leaving this session with a renewed sense of urgency to act.

The very large number of Ministers and other senior officials from Government who attended this fifty-fifth session confirmed once again the very high political significance that Member States attribute to this Commission. This is clearly an indication of the leadership role which this Commission continues to play for gender equality and the empowerment of women. I am sure that this high-level participation will directly translate into follow-up action at the national level.

I commend the organizers of the many parallel events, both here at United Nations Headquarters and in other locations, for once again using the occasion of the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women to present your work, exchange ideas, network and plan and strategize for the year ahead. I commend and salute all of you for your commitment.

During this session, the Bureau of the Commission also had the opportunity to hold a first informal meeting with the Bureau of the Executive Board of UN Women. I am pleased to inform you that we had a very good exchange of views, and agreed to continue this exchange. The current Bureau of the Commission will brief the Bureau of the 56th session of the Commission on these exchanges so that the work can continue in a coherent manner.

**Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I had the privilege of chairing the 54th and 55th sessions of this Commission. I express my deep appreciation to the members of the Bureau for their guidance in the preparation of the session, for their consistent cooperation and tireless work during the session. I extend my sincere appreciation also to all Member States for their support. Together we will work for gender equality and the empowerment of women with new urgency and commitment at national and international levels.

I thank you.