

**Sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly  
Third Committee, 12 October 2009**

**Statement by  
Ms. Carolyn Hannan  
Director, Division for the Advancement of Women  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

*Please check against delivery*

Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address the Third Committee to present several reports of the Secretary-General under agenda item 62: Advancement of Women.

Under agenda item 62a “Advancement of Women,” the momentum for action on violence against women has continued to accelerate. The adoption by the General Assembly of action-oriented resolutions on violence against women and the Secretary-General’s “UNiTE to end violence against women” campaign have been critical to the increase in initiatives aimed at ending this scourge.

This year’s report on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (A/64/151) focuses on the measures taken by entities of the United Nations system. The report highlights progress in several key inter-agency initiatives which have resulted in increased communication, coordination and collaboration: including the Secretary-General’s global campaign; the joint programming initiative of the Task Force on violence against women of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality; United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict; and the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. The report summarizes a broad range of activities undertaken by entities of the United Nations system in support of national efforts to eliminate violence against women in the areas of legal and policy reform, data collection, awareness-raising, and training and capacity building. It also draws attention to the work of inter-governmental bodies on violence against women.

The report concludes that through the leadership of the Secretary-General, violence against women has become a priority issue within the UN system. Cooperation and collaboration has been enhanced which is critical to achieve sustainable impact, draw lessons learned and facilitate application of good practices. United Nations entities have expanded their support to Member States at the national level. There are, however, many areas that require increased attention, including the need to increase knowledge on the impact of measures taken and the results achieved. In addition, while the UN Trust Fund

has increased the volume of grants, the demand for support from the Trust Fund far exceeds available resources.

An update on United Nations system activities on violence against women was distributed to the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2009, and a further update in the “Inventory of United Nations system activities to prevent and eliminate violence against women.” is available on the Division’s website. A further update will be prepared for the Commission in March 2010.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

The biennial report on violence against women migrant workers (A/64/152), provides information on measures taken by Member States to combat violence against women migrant workers and protect their human rights. It also reviews the attention given to migrant women workers within the framework of intergovernmental and expert bodies of the United Nations, and presents initiatives by United Nations entities and the International Organization for Migration in support of national efforts. The report concludes that violence against women migrant workers persists, with women continuing to be subjected to violence and violation of their rights throughout every stage of the migration cycle. Undocumented women migrant workers remain particularly vulnerable.

The report emphasizes the need for continued ratification and implementation of international instruments relevant to combating violence against women migrant workers; strengthened legal frameworks and gender-sensitive and rights-based migration policies; continued awareness-raising, capacity-building and other prevention efforts; provision of support and protection for victims; and accelerated data collection and analysis.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates

Since I last had the opportunity to address this Committee, the Division for the Advancement of Women has continued to expand its work on violence against women. General Assembly resolution 61/143 called for the creation of a coordinated database on violence against women, containing information on the extent, nature and consequences of all forms of violence against women, and on the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes for combating such violence. On 5 March 2009, the Deputy Secretary-General launched the Secretary-General’s database on violence against women. The database is the first global “one-stop site” for information on measures undertaken by Member States to address violence against women.

The primary source of information for the database is Member State responses to a comprehensive questionnaire. To date, the responses from 81 Member States have been entered into the database and we encourage these Member States to continue to provide information on an on-going basis as new measures are taken. We also urge those States that have not yet responded to the questionnaire to do so. An updated brochure on the database has been distributed to delegations.

Based on the work of an expert group meeting in 2008, the Division developed a Handbook for legislation on violence against women, which provides detailed guidance to support the adoption and effective implementation of legislation to address violence against women. It is hoped that the Handbook will be of use to Government officials, parliamentarians, civil society, staff of United Nations entities and other actors, in their efforts to ensure that a solid legal basis is in place for effectively addressing violence against women. An advance version of the Handbook is available on the website of the Division in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

I am also pleased that the fifth issue of our newsletter on violence against women “Words to Action” has been issued. This is a quarterly electronic publication which disseminates information on measures undertaken by Member States and United Nations entities to address violence against women, and contains a feature article, drawing attention to a particular topic on violence against women. All issues of the newsletter are available on-line.

All of these activities are part of the contributions of the Division to the Secretary-General’s campaign “UNiTE to end violence against women”.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

Let me now turn to the report on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/64/190) which reviews activities undertaken by Member States and United Nations entities to improve rural women’s participation in public life, economic empowerment, and access to health care services, as well as measures taken to eliminate violence against women in rural areas. The report also addresses the situation of rural women in vulnerable situations, such as indigenous women, older women and women with disabilities.

The report recognizes that the current global environment poses significant challenges to the situation of rural women and notes that, while there is a growing recognition that rural women can be critical agents in the responses to current crises, little has been done to mobilize and empower rural women to contribute effectively. Women in rural areas continue to have limited voice in public decision-making and few opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills. The report notes that health care, particularly reproductive health care, remains inadequate and access to services is difficult for women victims of violence in rural areas in many countries.

The report calls for systematic consultation with, and full participation of, rural women in development, implementation and monitoring of rural development policies. It emphasizes the need for: gender-sensitive investments in both physical and social infrastructure and employment opportunities; the development and expansion of the provision of quality and affordable public health-care services in rural areas, and intensified efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against rural women. It calls for measures to promote the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural

areas, including their access to productive employment and decent work, and notes the need to ensure older women's equal access to basic social services.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

Let me now turn to agenda item 62 (b) "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly" and the annual report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/64/218).

The report outlines progress made by intergovernmental bodies in advancing the global policy agenda on gender equality and the empowerment of women. It examines the extent to which the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and their subsidiary bodies, have mainstreamed gender perspectives in their own work; and addresses the impact of the outcome of the Commission on the Status of Women on the work of entities of the United Nations System.

The report shows that intergovernmental bodies addressed a number of important issues concerning gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls during the past year. Violence against women, in particular, has continued to receive enhanced attention in reports and outcomes across intergovernmental bodies and agenda items. Considerable attention was also paid to gender equality and decent work. Concerns were expressed that women continue to be disproportionately affected by poverty, hunger, food insecurity, disasters and crises. The importance of gender mainstreaming was emphasized under several agenda items, including through improved use of sex-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive indicators and gender-responsive budgeting. It was noted that actions taken to achieve all MDGs should be designed to promote the equality of women and men.

The report shows, however, that coverage of gender equality issues in intergovernmental processes, although incorporated across a wide range of policy areas, was not systematic and content varied significantly in terms of depth of attention across agenda items and main committees of the General Assembly. The report makes a number of recommendations on the reflection of gender perspectives in documentation before intergovernmental bodies, and the need for attention to gender perspectives in intergovernmental processes, including outcomes and their follow-up.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

Allow me to also briefly mention the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (A/64/93) which is prepared on a five-yearly basis for presentation to the Second Committee. The theme of the present World Survey – "Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance" is particularly timely in the context of the economic and financial crisis, the food and fuel

crises and the challenges of climate change. The Survey is also relevant to the Third Committee because it demonstrates the interdependency between economic and social development. It illustrates the importance of examining women's access to economic and financial resources in a broad sense and of considering the interlinkages between different types of resources, including resources generated at national level through budgets, trade, and development assistance; financial services such as savings, credit, remittance transfers and insurance; employment; land, property and other productive resources; and social protection measures.

In addition to the fascicle version already available, the Survey will also be available as a United Nations publication. It will be officially launched at an expert panel presentation at lunchtime in CR 2 on Monday 26 October 2009. The World Survey will also be launched at UNIDO in Vienna at the end of October and in ESCAP in November. It is hoped that other regional commissions will also organize regional launches.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

In light of the General Assembly's critical role in promoting the incorporation of gender perspectives in policy development and the effective implementation of commitments at national level, I would like to draw your attention to a number of intergovernmental events in 2010 that will provide important opportunities for strengthening the global policy agenda and national-level action on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

- The Commission on the Status of Women will conduct the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in March 2010, and will focus on the linkages between the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
- The theme of ECOSOC's Annual Ministerial Review in July 2010 is "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women";
- A high-level plenary meeting on the MDGs in September 2010 will provide an important opportunity to assess the extent to which measures taken to achieve all MDGs promote equality between women and men; and
- In the fall of 2010, the Security Council will review progress made in the ten years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Mr Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

In conclusion, I wish you success in your important work and assure you of the full support of the Division for the Advancement of Women.

Thank you.