

**As delivered**

**Opening remarks  
by  
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at  
The Fourth session of the  
Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality  
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Dear colleagues and friends,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the fourth session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. I extend a special welcome to all those who are attending this meeting for the first time as well as to colleagues who have traveled to New York from other duty stations. I would also like to introduce Sylvie Cohen, the Secretary of the meeting. I am sure many of you already know her. Sylvie joined the Division for the Advancement of Women as Deputy Director in July 2004.

Let me pay a special tribute to our inter-sessional task managers and working groups. Your work throughout the year has contributed substantially to our efforts to ensure that we can fulfill our mandate to move forward with gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of Beijing+5. I am confident therefore that it will also play a key role in our deliberations at this session.

There can be no doubt that the challenges that face us in 2005 are formidable. A High-Level panel on Threats, Challenges and Change reported to the Secretary-General earlier this year with its bold recommendations on our existing policies, processes and institutions.

We are hearing encouraging news from Copenhagen+10, where a declaration reaffirming the Copenhagen Programme of Action as well as the outcome of Copenhagen +5 was agreed.

In less than a week, we will be holding the 10-year review of the implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty- third special session of the General Assembly on Beijing+5.

These reviews will contribute to the high-level segment of the substantive session of ECOSOC on achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. The coordination segment of ECOSOC 2005 is also relevant as it will deal with the theme “Towards achieving internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.” Prior to ECOSOC, on 27-28 June, at a High-

Level Dialogue on Financing for Development, Member States will review progress made in meeting the objectives and commitments of the Monterrey process.

All these activities will culminate in a comprehensive review of the world's progress made in fulfilling all the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, including the internationally agreed development goals and the global partnerships, as well as in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

Intensive preparations are underway for various events by United Nations entities. The challenge facing this Meeting is to come up with an agreed plan of action detailing our contributions to the intergovernmental processes.

We have a heavy agenda. Encouragement can be drawn from the significant progress made in gender mainstreaming, particularly the setting of agreed approaches, standards and the development of tools. I am also encouraged by the strong political support I have received for the inclusion of gender in the Millennium Summit and ECOSOC from the Presidents of the General Assembly and of the ECOSOC, as well as Chairs of the EU and G-77 in my discussions with them. We must therefore seize this opportunity and provide our contribution through these channels.

Our collective experience in 2004 resulted in a very successful substantive July session of ECOSOC dealing with the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations. The resolution of ECOSOC on this item (E/2004/4) emphasized the progress made by the United Nations in gender mainstreaming since 1997. The work of this Network, in no small measure, contributed to the success of the ECOSOC 2004 substantive session.

In October last year, the Security Council marked the fourth anniversary of its resolution 1325. Having reviewed the Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security (S/2004/814), the Council adopted a far-reaching Presidential Statement (PRST/2004/40), in which it encouraged the Secretary-General to mainstream gender in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, in post-conflict reconstruction and in support of post-conflict constitutional, judicial and legislative reform, including truth and reconciliation and electoral processes. It also called on the Secretary-General to submit to the Council in October 2005 an action plan, with time lines, for implementing resolution 1325 across the UN system. We are currently developing, with the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security, an action plan for the system-wide implementation of this resolution. In the days to come, we will share our work with you, seeking your comments and approval. This October will mark the fifth anniversary of Resolution 1325. Consideration should be given to how it should be observed.

While proud of our achievements, we have a long way to go, particularly in the gender mainstreaming area. The same resolution of ECOSOC requested all entities of the United Nations system to enhance effectiveness of gender specialist resources, gender focal points and

gender theme groups by establishing clear mandates; by ensuring adequate training, access to information and to adequate and stable resources, and by increasing the support and participation of senior staff. It also requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all UN entities develop action plans with time lines for implementing the agreed conclusions 1997/2. We need to discuss these issues thoroughly, particularly the status of the action plans under our agenda item 7 on follow up to 2004 ECOSOC coordination segment.

More immediate tasks ahead of us at this meeting are related to Beijing+10: first, we will review the status of preparations for the 49<sup>th</sup> session of CSW, including the specific contributions of entities of the UN system in the form of side events, panel discussions and other activities.

Based on the Network's activities of the last several years, I expect that we will discuss a number of very concrete inputs that we, as a Network, will make to this process during interactive discussions. I am referring, in particular, to our work on MDGs, gender mainstreaming in CCA/UNDAF, the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming in evaluation, monitoring and programme reporting. I trust that the members of the Network would take the opportunity during the review and appraisal to showcase some of our work.

At the same time, I would like to invite the Network to give consideration to preparing a joint statement for the review and appraisal. Some of you will recall that this Network's predecessors prepared joint statements on the Platform for Action in 1995 and the outcome document in 2000, and presented them to the Commission on the Status of Women in an oral statement. Many delegations considered the comments to be very helpful. The statement may present some specific proposals for further actions that are particularly pertinent from the system's perspective.

Another issue that requires our particular attention during this meeting is our working methods. I suggest that we critically assess our agenda and make it more focused. I welcome your suggestions and concrete ideas as to how we can make our work more client-oriented, demand-driven, practical and in touch with the specific gender mainstreaming needs of programme managers and staff members. In this connection I have requested that the format of our report be modified to focus on issues, their analysis, proposals being made and identification of a lead entity for follow-up action. Your ideas for further streamlining of our report would also be welcomed.

I would also like us to focus on reactivating our work with the field through Gender Themes Groups and consider how best we can support our colleagues in the field, as well as how to enhance cooperation among themselves and with the Network; and how we can ensure the effective use of national CEDAW reporting, Common Country Assessments, United Nations Assistance Frameworks, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Millennium Development Reports and other field based information. I should report that at the last session of CEDAW the Committee was disappointed by the poor turn out of the UN agencies. It would be useful if we could find time to exchange views on this issue as well.

We will dedicate a full day to a workshop on gender mainstreaming. Wariara Mbugua, the Principal Officer for Gender Mainstreaming in my office, will conduct this workshop. Wariara, with our colleagues from regional commissions, will lead us through an exchange of ideas and in-depth discussions on selected topics. I am sure that we are all looking forward to learning more about the approaches and experiences of our colleagues during that day. However, I think that this provides an excellent opportunity to take stock of the tools for gender mainstreaming which have been developed in the system. Hopefully we shall be able to identify the gaps and come up with proposals.

Our agenda is tight and the decisions expected from us are plenty. But I am convinced that we will be able to make progress and bring the work of gender mainstreaming to higher ground. Your past record of working well together with my friend and predecessor, Angela King, is a guarantee of future success. I hope that this collegial and united approach to promote gender equality will continue in the years to come. I count on your support to meet the challenges ahead of us.

I look forward to a productive meeting.

Thank you.