

Concluding remarks
by
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at the
8th Meeting of the Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality
(IANWGE)
New York, 26 February 2009

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Let me start by again emphasizing the importance of the work of the Network, coming as it does before the Commission on the Status of Women.

The challenge facing this Network is to put into action the commitments made by the UN System to work in more coordinated and coherent ways. This meeting reinforced its determination to enhance system wide action in gender mainstreaming. It is vital to find ways and means to make this Network' promise a reality and to turn the UN into a more effective instrument in pursuing the priorities set forth by Member States and CEB.

Let me now turn to some of the decisions made by the Network in the past three days:

On the issue of the 15th anniversary of Beijing and Cairo we have agreed to hold an inter-sessional meeting of the Network on this theme before the Third Committee of the General Assembly to prepare a system-wide action plan of activities, events and initiatives.

The most critical issues facing the international community - the financial, economic and food crises; scaling up MDGs and climate change - was the focus of all members the network. The need for improving the Networks contribution to intergovernmental processes such as the High Level Conference on the EEC and the Kyoto Protocol in Copenhagen was emphasized. A new time-bound task force to be chaired by UNICEF was set up to include ECLAC, OHCHR, INSTRAW, WHO, IOM, Commonwealth Secretariat, UN Habitat and UNDP. Monitoring the inclusion of gender aspects in HLCP and CEB deliberations and in guiding documents, including in the post conflict environment was decided in response to the food crisis. With respect to MDGs, the taskforce would continue to exercise its role of the clearing house role.

On the issue of women, peace and security: all agencies with reporting requirements will work together to design one questionnaire to avoid multiple requests for the same information.

Dear Colleagues,

A strong call was made in the Network to discuss organizational aspects of its work: focus of its discussions, feasibility of increasing programming functions, its modalities of work, including a review of its Task Forces. Task Force membership should be revised and updated. The terms of reference and plans would be reviewed and indicators of achievement provided.

We need to focus on field based issues and challenges described by UNIFEM in its briefing on “One UN”. An intersessional meeting on government programming, country ownership, capacity building and tracking of expenditures would be helpful. System-wide initiatives on accountability frameworks, system-wide action plans, capacity building and creation of a reporting of gender mainstreaming materials need to be further discussed.

Overall, the meeting reaffirmed the commitment of the Network to the validity and importance of system wide action as the most realistic approach to gender equality problems in an increasingly inter related UN system. I think that we have no alternative to the system wide action and look forward to this being a most productive meeting of the Network.

Thank you all for your hard work and have a safe journey home.