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*Statement by  
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General Segment*

*Agenda Item 7(e): Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the  
United Nations system*

*Agenda Item 14 (a): Advancement of Women*

*25 July 2006, Geneva*

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Colleagues and Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council on agenda items 7 (e), ***Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system and 14 (a), Advancement of women.*** Before doing so, may I express my sincere appreciation for the very useful and interesting discussion held during the high level segment on gender aspects of creating an environment conducive to generating full and productive employment for all. It is encouraging that at this first post-World Summit session of the Council, three out of four segments took gender equality issues into account. First, the High-level Roundtable on “Innovation at work: national strategies to achieve gender equality in employment”, provided a solid preparation for the high-level segment. The Ministerial Declaration emanating from it reaffirmed Member States’ determination to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, recognizing that these are critical for achieving sustainable development and for efforts to combat hunger, poverty and disease (E/2006/L.8). Second, the humanitarian segment discussed various dimensions of gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies. And, now, the final “general segment” takes up gender mainstreaming and advancement of women.

Mr. President,

The 2005 World Summit marked a new step forward for the United Nations, by challenging Member States, United Nations entities and civil society, to turn to implementation of global commitments for gender equality made by world’ leaders at the Summit. The ultimate goal should be enhanced capacity of Member States and the United Nations system to turn gender equality commitments into reality so that individual women and girls see a real difference in their lives. In this respect, the World Summit and the on-going reform of the United Nations offer fresh opportunities to intensify implementation of global commitments.

The World Summit reaffirmed that the full and effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of Beijing +5 is an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed goals (IAG).

It underlined the importance of women having the opportunity for equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security.

It encouraged the Secretary-General and all decision-making bodies to take further steps in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the policies and decisions of the Organization.

Since then intensive efforts have been undertaken both at the intergovernmental and interagency levels on how to move decisively to translate the Summit consensus into reality, build on women's gains in the past five years while confronting pressing challenges in gender equality including attempts to roll back achievements to date.

Dialogue on reform of this Council and its role in development and poverty eradication, and in particular the high level Development Cooperation Forum offer fresh opportunities to enhance the work of CSW and demonstrate increased responsiveness, to women's needs and aspirations and provide leadership in the full and accelerated implementation of the global commitments.. The reformed Council must fully integrate a gender perspective in all its work.

The Commission on the Status of Women, at its last session continued with the reform of its working methods to increase its focus on implementation at the national level, enhance its catalytic role in gender mainstreaming, and establish itself as a global forum for exchange and sharing of national-level experience. The Commission reduced the number of themes on which it adopts agreed conclusions from two to one and increased its focus on reviewing implementation of previously adopted commitments. It also prepared a new multi-year programme of work for the period from 2007 with an enhanced emphasis on interactive panels, roundtables and dialogues and less focus on negotiated outcomes. It agreed to more regularly utilize the emerging issues agenda item. The themes proposed for 2007-2009 are: "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child," "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS" and "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women."

The latter theme is of special importance. It has become increasingly clear around the world that investments in women pay off many-fold. When women are given opportunities for education, access to resources, and a place at the political table, not only is their quality of life improved, but economies are strengthened, health care is enhanced, and policies that benefit all women, men and children are given more attention. Plus, as primary caretakers of the next generation, investments in women provide returns for decades. We must seize the opportunities offered by the Summit and exceptional global economic growth to correct the world's current unacceptable social and gender inequalities. Implementation of the Summit Outcome and Beijing Platform for gender equality require financing. Yet, only an insignificant portion of the total amount of ODA is earmarked for gender equality - in 2003, only US\$2.5 billion or 3.6 per cent had gender equality as a significant or principal objective out of a total of USD 69 billion. According to the 2006 Global Monitoring Report 'Millennium Development Goals: Strengthening Mutual Accountability, Aid, Trade, and Governance,' prepared by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, about 130 billion per annum would be available as Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2006-2010. To enhance aid effectiveness, aid transfers need to be increased, made more predictable, less fragmented, more closely aligned with women's needs and targeted to where the aid can be productively used.

Recognizing these needs - and particularly the strong proven links between gender equality and poverty reduction - a recent biannual meeting of the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality which I chair, and the Network on Gender Equality of the OECD/DAC held in January 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya, has moved financing for gender equality to the top of its priority list. The meeting responded to new initiatives to enhance the quality of aid and increase its impact, including the "Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonization, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability" and recent decisions of the European Union to considerably expand ODA by 2015. Both Networks examined the implications of the new aid modalities for the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women. They agreed to work together in the lead-up to the Ghana High Level Forum on Aid Modalities in

2008, among other steps by ensuring that all development cooperation programmes mainstream gender.

Mr. President,

You have before you two reports of the Secretary-General on gender mainstreaming: document E/2006/65 responding to ECOSOC resolution 2005/31 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes with a focus on training activities and document E/2006/83 responding to the World Summit mandate encouraging the Secretary-General to take further steps in gender mainstreaming.

Although considerable efforts on capacity building, largely through conventional training, have been made in the United Nations system, gender equality is not fully integrated into the work of the Organization. Lack of knowledge and understanding of gender equality and gender mainstreaming calls for a mandatory capacity building to improve capacity of United Nations staff for gender mainstreaming, including both generic gender analysis and mainstreaming training, and training specifically tailored to sectoral areas to develop awareness, knowledge, commitment and capacity. The report provides concrete examples of training provided by United Nations entities and recommendations for consideration by the Council.

Capacity-building is one of the critical elements of the system-wide policy and strategy for gender mainstreaming which were established through interagency consultations within the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality at its meeting on 22-25 February 2006. Following this meeting, I briefed the High-Level Committees on Programmes and Management of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) on the outcome. The High Level Committees endorsed the elements of the system-wide gender mainstreaming policy and strategy. The CEB will discuss the system-wide strategy and policy at its meeting in October 2006.

A decade of action since Beijing has produced significant results in gender mainstreaming policies, methodologies, tools and activities within the United Nations system, but the systematic practical application of gender mainstreaming by United Nations entities remains a challenge. Insufficient accountability, low capacity for gender mainstreaming, lack of coherence in planning, programming, measuring of progress; monitoring and reporting, particularly at the country level, impede successful gender mainstreaming. System-wide resources for gender mainstreaming are woefully insufficient.

The policy and strategy are consistent with intergovernmental mandates, including ECOSOC Agreed conclusions 1997/2 and its resolution 2005/31. They are not meant to be a substitute for entity-specific policies and strategies. Indeed entity-specific policies and strategies are critically essential and they should be accompanied by time bound action plans. At the system level, policy and strategy are expected to strengthen gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes through a more coherent approach; enhanced system-wide capacity and accountability; setting system-wide minimum standards that all entity-specific policies and strategies should aim for; systematic knowledge sharing; undertaking joint initiatives; monitoring and reporting; encouraging peer reviews of gender mainstreaming efforts; and providing for commensurate financial and human resources. I appeal to this Council to support of the Secretary-General's initiative to establish the system-wide policy and strategy for gender mainstreaming.

The interagency consultation process on the system-wide policy and strategy will continue as their various components and elements are elaborated. This consultative process is also informed by Member States' review of all mandates older than five years And eagerly awaits the recommendations of the High Level Panel on System-wide Coherence. We are also planning to hold a complementary review of the capacity of the United Nations system on gender

mainstreaming to be carried out in cooperation with the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. We are aiming at not only bringing coherence and coordination in the work of the United Nations system but also ultimately to develop a system-wide action plan for gender mainstreaming, similar to the System-wide Action Plan on implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).

Mr. President,

The 2005 World Summit has generated a new momentum and strong quest for concrete action on gender equality. While the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform remains our ultimate goal, a fully implemented and engendered Summit Outcome will usher us into a new era for the empowerment of women – one built on concrete action and increased cooperation with Member States in many critical areas of vital interest to women, including development, peace, human rights, protection from violence, enhanced accountability and responsibility for gender mainstreaming, and more coherent and coordinated interagency cooperation.

The UN system is increasingly working in an integrated and coordinated way. The Secretary-General has designated his Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women to work with the UN system in response to the World Summit. In line with this mandate, system-wide progress made in gender mainstreaming, including in the development of the policy and strategy, will be reported to ECOSOC by my Office in cooperation with the Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality. This way, the Secretary-General will ensure a coordinated and coherent approach to gender mainstreaming and reporting thereon.

Mr President,

Gender inequality is the pressing challenge of our times. The Beijing and Summit consensus beckon. Let us all rededicate ourselves to that consensus positively and constructively. On behalf of my Office, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality I pledge our full cooperation. We look forward to the Council's guidance and advice.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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