

**Statement of the United States at the High Level Segment of ECOSOC**  
**July 2, 2010**  
**Ambassador Frederick Barton**

Thank you Mr. President.

It has been an eventful first week of ECOSOC. Thank you Mr. President and all of our colleagues for elevating the discussion of gender equality through the many excellent activities of these past few days.

The United States has been an active and enthusiastic participant because we believe that the equal empowerment of women and men is an essential building block of social and economic progress. We welcome this week's conclusion of negotiations for a new gender entity – and look forward to the selection of a strong, entrepreneurial leader to guide the first years of UNWomen. It was an honor to be asked by Brazil, ~~Holland~~ <sup>the Netherlands</sup> and Moldova to review their thoughtful, candid and far-sighted National Voluntary Plans. We deeply appreciate the great interest in the United States' National Voluntary Plan and the constructive and insightful comments of the reviews by Bangladesh, Denmark and Tanzania. It was a pleasure to listen to the lively panel on women in troubled places and to hear ministers share their national experiences on the mobilization of popular support for gender equality at various forums.

Throughout we have been impressed by the purposefulness of all participants as we seek better ways to elevate our fellow beings. The United States welcomes the innovations and experiments that are being tested throughout the world. We applaud efforts to raise the participation of girls in school, to improve the safety of giving birth, to reduce trafficking, to strengthen women farmers, and to increase the economic independence of women. Many ideas are being shared – and the United States is listening, and, in many cases, supporting and investing.

This is the essence of ECOSOC – and we thank you Mr. President, those who have gone before you, and the many distinguished delegates who are here, for working to make this a dynamic marketplace of solutions to today's greatest challenges.

For at its heart, gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We have all seen the catalytic role women play, in guiding and uniting donor and partner countries' efforts and there is universal agreement that greater achievement of the MDGs will require a "holistic" approach in which gender equality and women's empowerment is incorporated into each of the MDGs.

There are reasons to celebrate the world's enormous progress to date. Nearly two-thirds of developing countries have met the goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary education. The goal of doing so in secondary education by 2015 is within our reach. Development gains of this magnitude are extraordinary. We must build on positive momentum to make historic breakthroughs.

We also know there is more to do. Infant mortality is much too high and reductions in maternal mortality and child under-nutrition rates are lagging. Women and girls are the majority of the

world's poor—unschooled, unhealthy, and underfed—continuing to do much of the work on the farm, but lacking access to adequate resources, support, training, and rights.

The United States' efforts to integrate gender concerns into our international programs can best be seen in two of President Obama's recent initiatives on **food security** and **health**. As we mentioned in our NVP, the \$3.5 billion Presidential Initiative on Global Hunger and Food Security, known as "Feed the Future" (FTF), includes a focus on the economic empowerment of women with a special emphasis on: equal access to assets, inputs and technology; labor-saving technologies; expanded decision making roles for women in the formulation of policy; improved access to financial services; and opportunities to engage in the investment-oriented and transformational aspects of value chain production.

The Global Health Initiative is a \$63 billion, six year investment by the US government to help partner countries improve the health of their people in more than 80 countries. GHI takes a women and girls centered approach and focuses on ante-natal care, immunizations, nutrition, water and sanitation, infectious disease control, and family planning.

We believe that these initiatives and others will bring the achievement of the MDGs closer to reality. The United States' commitment is to drive innovation, invest in sustainability, track and evaluate outcomes, and reinforce mutual accountability.

We are also looking forward to further advancements here at the United Nations. The tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 will provide an opportunity to recommit to the principles of letting women's voices be heard in resolving conflict situations and rebuilding post-conflict societies. Not only must we empower women to have a hand in shaping more stable and peaceful societies, but we must also work together to change the cultural setting which accepts violence against women. Gender-based violence does not take place only in conflict, but occurs in every country in the world. We will continue to support programs to combat violence against women and girls, working with governments and at the grass roots to not only protect victims, but also to improve accountability and prevention.

Mr. President, the United States is eager to advance human equality and we are ready to play a constructive role.

Thank you.