



**Media advisory**

## **Engaging Philanthropy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**WHAT:** The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will organize a special event with the participation of **representatives of foundations (corporate and non-corporate), private sector companies and civil society organizations.** The event is co-organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in collaboration with the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy (CECP). The discussions will explore collaborative opportunities to boost gender empowerment and women's equality worldwide.

The event will attract more than 300 people across sectors to discuss the third millennium development goal, focusing on the critical issue of gender equality and women's empowerment. The format will include plenary and breakout sessions.

At this high-level meeting, representatives of corporate and partnerships communities will make announcements in support of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

**WHO:** **Hamidon Ali**, President, ECOSOC  
**Ban Ki-moon**, Secretary-General, United Nations  
**Sarah Ferguson**, Duchess of York  
**Michael Patsalos-Fox**, Vice-Chairman, McKinsey.

**WHEN:** 22 February 2010, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Conference Room 2 and ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

**PRESS CONFERENCE- Dag Hammarskjöld Library at 2 p. m., featuring:**

**Geena Davis**, Academy Award-winning actor and Founder, See Jane

**Sarah Ferguson**, Duchess of York

**Morten Wetland**, Vice-President of ECOSOC, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations

**Mary P. Quinn**, Senior Manager, Avon Foundation for Women

**Inés Alberdi**, Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

**Amir Dossal**, Executive Director, UN Office for Partnerships

**Live Webcast:** <http://www.un.org/webcast>

### **Event Background**

The ECOSOC special event is the third annual meetings, in collaboration with CECP, with the goal of initiating new partnerships that would support the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

## Issue Background

Around the world, significant progress has been made towards gender equality and empowerment of women. Female participation in the labour force has increased. Women now make up for nearly 40 per cent of all paid employment outside agriculture, compared to 36 per cent in 1990.

Despite this increase in economic activity, inequalities remain with regard to the entry to work, conditions at work, and in exit from the labour market. Women are still more likely to be unemployed or engaged in vulnerable jobs in informal economies. Vulnerable jobs account for two-thirds of jobs for all women in developing countries and for 80 per cent of women in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Horizontal segregation continues to limit women's career choices and keeps them in low-paid sectors. With lack of adequate resources, approximately 75 per cent of women do not have access to credit and land ownership, and starting their own business is also difficult for women. They often face barriers in employment which forces them to remain in low-paid sectors. Women's active participation in economic policy in the public sector and in reaching upper-management and decision-making positions in the private sector is uneven worldwide, and often not a priority.

In Africa, the status of women is of particular concern. Women own less than 1 per cent of the land, while women farmers receive only 1 per cent of total credit to agriculture. African women are also the most affected by the HIV pandemic especially between the ages of 15 and 24 and, similarly, their lack of access to education and employment opportunities have negatively impacted the overall per capita growth.

Globally, major challenges impede the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including the pandemic of violence against women and girls. Based on country data available, up to 70 per cent of women experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetime. The physical, sexual, and psychological abuse of women have strong negative impact on a nation's socio-economic development.

By focusing on gender equality and empowerment of women the global philanthropy community plays an important role in society's development. The ECOSOC special event will bring together a roster of foundations (corporate and non-corporate), private sector companies and civil society representatives that have a particular interest in the areas of gender empowerment and women's equality. Top executives from Avon Foundation, Deloitte, Hasbro, Johnson & Johnson, McKinsey, and the Novo Foundation will be present.

The ECOSOC-Philanthropy Programme, the list of participants, the meeting proceedings, summaries and other official documents will be made available through: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/phlntrpy/philanthropy10.shtml>  
Live webcast: <http://www.un.org/webcast>

### **For more information, contact**

**Newton Kanhema**, UN Department of Public Information, +1 212 963 5602, [kanhema@un.org](mailto:kanhema@un.org)

**Paul Simon**, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, +1 917 367 5027, [simonp@un.org](mailto:simonp@un.org)

**Oisika Chakrabarti**, United Nations Development Fund for Women, + 212 906 6506, [oisika.chakrabarti@unifem.org](mailto:oisika.chakrabarti@unifem.org)

**Courtney King**, Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, + 212 825 2126

[CKing@CorporatePhilanthropy.org](mailto:CKing@CorporatePhilanthropy.org)

###

*This event is organized as part of the preparatory process for the 2010 Economic and Social Council's Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) on the theme, "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women", to be held during its annual session in June 2010.*

*The press will have to receive UN accreditation if they want to cover the event. For more information, please visit:* <http://www.un.org/media/accreditation/>