

**EGYPT**



**مصر**

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بعثة مصر الدائمة  
لدى الامم المتحدة  
نيويورك

**The 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the  
Commission on the Status of Women**

**Statement of Dr. Farkhonda Hassan  
Secretary General of the National Council for Women  
on  
Financing for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women**

**Check against delivery**

**New York, February 27, 2008**

## **Madame Chair**

■ In follow-up to the commitments of member states in Monterrey, particularly those efforts related to the empowerment of women; the National Council for Women in the Arab Republic of Egypt, which is the national machinery for the empowerment of women, in collaboration with the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), held a regional meeting in Cairo under the auspices of Her Excellency the First Lady, which brought together representatives from the Arab world and which resulted in a vision for women at the Arab regional level that affirms the importance of mainstreaming women's issues in each and every theme of "**Financing for Development**" to fulfill the goal of gender equality. We recommend that this is taken into consideration, and included on the agenda of the Doha Summit, considering that gender equality is the backbone of development and its most important component.

■ Women's participation in economic decision making at the national level is still limited in many countries, and this leads to a gender imbalance in economic decision making at the international level, which directly impacts the allocation and direction of resources for the different areas of development. We recommend here that women need to have a clear economic agenda that we can put forth with confidence to the attention of international economic institutions. We propose a group of experts to be convened by UNIFEM and be mandated to establish a general framework outlining the components of this economic agenda, with the goal of empowering women to reach and take their rightful place in decision making processes in international economic institutions. The National Council for Women in Egypt is ready to cooperate and participate in hosting the expert group.

■ The National Council for Women began its first active participation in gender mainstreaming in the national plan 2002-2007. The Council was successful to the extent that encouraged us to go ahead with the implementation of a much more ambitious project in collaboration with the UNFPA, which resulted in the success of the National Council for Women in changing the concepts of planning. It can be said that, for the first time, the National Five Year Plan for Socio-Economic Development (2007-2012) is based on the latest concepts of planning which are decentralization, participatory planning and gender sensitivity. This has had its greatest impact in directing items of the national budget to meet

the needs of both men and women with greater equality. And this, simply, is the basic definition for Gender Budgeting, which Egypt is currently adopting.

We view our experiences in Egypt, which aim at reaching national plans and budgets that are completely gender sensitive, and adopting policies that enhance equal work and economic opportunities for women through results based initiatives, in collaboration with the World Bank, with hope and confidence in their success and sustainability. This is due to the existence of a strong political will at the highest level. This strong will is clear in the President's repeated directives to the Cabinet of Ministers to monitor efforts in order to eliminate any discrimination against women in all areas of development. And we believe that Egypt will accomplish its commitments to achieve gender equality, as stated in the Millennium Development Goals, before 2015.

■ Good governance depends firstly on leadership and decision makers. The absence of women, on equal footing, from leadership and decision making positions, results in good governance losing one of its most important elements, and that is participation. And for this reason, we started an initiative to conduct various specific programs to train women in leadership and decision making capacities, and participation in political life, in collaboration with UNDP. We are currently aiming to expand these efforts by establishing a national centre to train women in leadership capacities.

■ The last, but most important point is in reference to Gender Architecture. Egypt, the Representative of the Arab League of Nations, and some Arab countries presented our point of view to the respective United Nations committee. The problem faced is that gender equality and women's empowerment efforts and programs at the United Nations are **under resourced and fragmented**. The solution may lie in consolidating these fragmented efforts in one entity, fully focused on gender as its primary concern. The expected outcome would be more coordination, more efficient use of resources, the elimination of duplication of efforts, and focusing of monitoring and evaluation in a unified body, leading to more effective performance.

Thank you.