

**Statement by  
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2 – 13 March 2009**

*Please check against delivery*

Mr. Chairperson.  
Excellencies and Distinguished delegates,  
Colleagues and Friends

It is an honour to address the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I extend a warm welcome to the Ministers, Heads of National Machineries, and other high-level representatives, delegates and participants. The large number of high-level participants from capitals, as well as the significant presence of civil society, once again demonstrates the strong interest in the issues taken up annually by the Commission and their relevance at national level.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Chairperson, and the members of the Bureau, for their leadership in the preparation of this session, and over the past two years.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

The Commission is considering the priority theme: “*The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS*” at this session under agenda item 3(a) and will develop recommendations to accelerate action in this area at global, regional and national levels.

The report of the Secretary-General on the priority theme is before the Commission in document E/CN.6/2009/2. The report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2009/4) on implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy also focuses on the priority theme.

[To contribute to the consideration of the priority theme, the Division for the Advancement of Women convened an Expert Group Meeting at the Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva, Switzerland, from 6 to 9 October 2008, in collaboration with UNRISD, UNAIDS and ILO. The report of the Expert Group Meeting, which contains both recommendations and proposals for indicators, has been disseminated through the website of the Division, and copies are available in the back of this room. The Division also held a four-week online discussion on the priority theme and the report is also available on the Division’s website.]

Also under agenda item 3(a), the report of the Secretary-General on “Proposals for a multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women” is before the Commission in document E/CN.6/2009/3 and E/CN.6/2009/3/Corr.1.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Under agenda item 3 (b) on Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men, the Commission will convene an expert panel (on Thursday 5 March from 3-6pm) to explore "*The gender perspectives of the international financial crisis*". An issues paper is available to guide discussions.

The Commission will also review progress in national level implementation of agreed conclusions adopted at a previous session – the agreed conclusions on "*The equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels*", adopted at its 50<sup>th</sup> session in 2006. An interactive dialogue (on Friday, 6 March from 10am to 1pm) will be introduced by keynote speakers. An issues paper is available to guide the discussions. In this context, I am pleased to inform delegates that the agreed conclusions from 2006 on this theme are available in brochure form.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Under agenda item 3 (c), the Commission has before it a number of reports and conference room papers, including the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women for the period October 2007 to September 2008, contained in document E/CN.6/2009/5, and the report on Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS (E/CN.6/2009/6).

The joint workplan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is contained in document E/CN.6/2009/7, and a Note by the Secretariat on the proposed programme of work of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women for the biennium 2010-2011 (E/CN.6/2009/CRP.2) is also before the Commission.

A Note of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2009/14) provides information on the preparation of the "*World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance.*" The World Survey will be presented to the Second Committee at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Under agenda item 4, a Note by the Secretary-General transmits the list of confidential communications concerning the status of women (E/CN.6/2009/SW/COMM.LIST/43/R and Add.1/R). The report of the Secretary-General on the future work of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women is contained in document E/CN.6/2009/8.

Under agenda item 5, the Commission has before it a letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council on follow-up to the Council's policy recommendations (E/CN.6/2009/9), as well as a note by the Secretariat on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health (E/CN.6/2009/13).

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

The General Assembly, in resolution A/RES/63/155, requested the Secretary-General to present an oral report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-third session with information provided by the United Nations bodies, funds and programmes and the specialized agencies on recent follow-up activities to implement resolutions 61/143 and 62/133, including on the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, and on the progress of the Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women.

Member States will recall that updates on activities of the United Nations system have been provided to the Commission on the Status of Women at the last session, as well as to the General Assembly at its 63rd session. The update before you in a document entitled "Preventing and eliminating violence against women. United Nations system activities on violence against women" covers the period from September 2008 to January 2009. A total of 18 offices and entities and 3 interagency mechanisms provided contributions. I would like to draw your particular attention to a new section on the Secretary-General's Campaign "UNiTE to end violence against women".

Addressing violence against women through legal reform is the topic of a joint dialogue of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, today at lunchtime in this room. The Deputy Secretary-General will make opening remarks at this panel. I would like to congratulate the two commissions on this initiative, which is a good practice example of cooperation between functional commissions of the ECOSOC.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I would like to briefly highlight some of the major activities undertaken by the Division since the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission in the area of violence against women, as follow-up to the General Assembly resolutions calling for intensified efforts to eliminate violence against women, and in support of the Secretary-General's Campaign: UNiTE to end violence against women. This has included work in the areas of legislation, strengthening of the knowledge base, and awareness-raising and information dissemination on violence against women.

On 5 March at lunchtime in this room, the Deputy Secretary-General will launch the Secretary-General's database on violence against women. The database has been developed by the Division for the Advancement of Women in follow-up to resolution 61/143 and will be the first consolidated source of information on measures undertaken by Member States to address violence against women, and on available research and statistical data. It will contain information on Member States' legal frameworks; policies, programmes and strategies; institutional mechanisms; services for victims/survivors; and preventive measures and training. The primary source of information for the database is the responses to the questionnaire on violence against women sent to all Member States in September 2008. To date, 61 Member States have responded, and I encourage those that have not yet done so to provide their inputs. I also encourage Member States to continue to provide updates as new information and documents become available, to ensure that the database remains as up-to-date and useful as possible.

[The Division, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, organized an expert group meeting on good practices in legislation, in May 2008. The meeting prepared a model framework for legislation with detailed recommendations, commentaries and examples of good practices, intended to serve as a tool for the development, adoption and amendment of legislation which prevents violence against women, punishes perpetrators, and ensures the rights of survivors of violence against women everywhere. Positive feedback has been received from a number of countries on the use of this framework. The Division plans to issue the framework as a resource kit translated into all UN languages.]

The Division has strengthened its awareness-raising and information dissemination activities in regard to violence against women. We have published and widely disseminated the first two issues of our electronic newsletter "*Words to Action*" on violence against women, which contains information on resources and events undertaken by Member States and UN entities to address violence against women, as well as substantive analyses of pertinent topics. The feature article in issue # 2 of the newsletter examines developments over time in legislation on violence against women. We have also updated and significantly revised our website to provide better access to information on this issue.]

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

[Over the past year, the Division continued to provide technical assistance to Member States, on request, to enhance their capacity at national level for the promotion of gender equality. In 2008, the Division continued its programme of support to countries emerging from conflict to implement the Convention, including Liberia and Haiti. We are pleased that Haiti presented its combined initial to seventh periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in January. We also congratulate Liberia for submitting its report last September, and we continue to provide support to the preparations for the presentation of the report to the Committee in July.]

Excellencies and Distinguished delegates

In response to the request of ECOSOC (2006/9) for broad dissemination of the agreed conclusions of the Commission, the Division for the Advancement of Women has continued to provide the agreed conclusions in a user-friendly brochure format. To date, the agreed conclusions from the fifty-first and fifty-second sessions on "*The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl-child*" and "*Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women*" are available in this format in the six official languages. In addition, the agreed conclusions from the forty-eighth session on "*The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality*", and from the fiftieth session on "*The equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels*" have also been prepared in brochure format. We hope that the availability of the agreed conclusions in this format will strengthen their use at national level and facilitate the review processes.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Division for the Advancement of Women stands ready to support you, the Bureau and the Commission in the important work of this session.

Thank you.

