

**Opening Statement**  
**by**  
**Angela E.V. King**  
**Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women**  
**at the**  
**Commission on the Status of Women Panel Discussion**  
**"Enhancing women's participation in electoral processes in post-conflict countries"**  
**United Nations -Headquarters, New York, 3 March 2004**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Panellists,  
Colleagues and Friends,

A warm welcome to this panel on "Enhancing the role of women in electoral processes in post-conflict countries". I would like to express my gratitude to the Permanent Mission of Norway and the Inter-Parliamentary Union for co-sponsoring this event with us.

Building on the Beijing Platform for Action, its agreed conclusions 1998/12 on women and armed conflict and on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Commission on the Status of Women included the theme "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building" in this session's agenda. Yesterday's morning interactive discussion during the Panel brought out the crucial need for women to participate fully in all aspects of peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction including in electoral processes. In this area, the discussion revealed that more work is needed in establishing legal frameworks for women's participation in elections, enhancing political representation of women in legislative and executive branches, as well as support by, and in, political parties; greater focus on voter and civic

education, and more gender sensitive election administration and election observation.

A recent expert group meeting on "Enhancing the role of women in electoral processes in post-conflict countries" jointly organized in Glen Cove in January 2004 by my office and the Department of Political Affairs showed practical ways in which support to the full participation of women in electoral processes in post-conflict countries could be strengthened. The meeting gathered excellent experts from post-conflict countries with extensive hands-on national and regional experience. Their concerted efforts resulted in a comprehensive report on practical measures to be taken to ensure the full participation of women in elections and provided a road map for women in countries on their way to holding elections such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Iraq to name a few (the report is available on our website, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi>, and as a hard copy in Conference Room 2.)

Today's dynamic panel of experts will share with you various dimensions of their work relating to these issues.

Our first speaker is Ms. Amal Sabbagh. She is the Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women, which is the national machinery for women in Jordan. Ms. Sabbagh has held positions within the Ministry of Social of Social Development in Jordan and was Director of the Regional Centre for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in the Near East. Ms. Sabbagh spoke eloquently at yesterday morning's Panel in her

capacity as Rapporteur of the meeting, and she will present some of the key recommendations of the experts.

Next, we will have Ms. Julianne Kantengwa who was among the 48.8 per cent women elected to the Rwandan Parliament last October. From 2002 to 2003, Ms. Kantengwa was the Secretary-General of the Forum for Rwanda Women Parliamentarians and a member of the Regional Executive Committee of the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace. She will present successful strategies which Rwanda used to bring about this astounding parliamentary success. Given the country's tragic history of genocide, Rwanda now has the highest percentage in the world of women in the parliament.

Our third panellist is Laila Dāvøy who is the Minister of Children and Family Affairs of Norway. The Unit of Gender Equality is part of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs which is responsible for ensuring opportunities for women and men in all areas of society. Ms. Dāvøy will discuss Norway's experience in promoting the role of women in electoral processes as well as her country's role in supporting gender-sensitive policies in post-conflict electoral processes elsewhere.

Ms. Kareen Jabre is our next speaker – she is the Manager of the Programme for the Promotion of Partnership between Men and Women of the Inter-Parliamentary Union which aims at promoting women's participation in Parliaments. She will share the experience of the Inter-

Parliamentary Union in promoting legislation to support women once they become legislators.

Finally, I am very happy that Carina Perelli could join us today. Ms. Perelli, originally from Uruguay, is the Head of the Electoral Assistance Division of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs. She and her team co-organized with my office the Glen Cove Expert Group Meeting. Ms. Perelli is a veteran organizer of many elections, post-conflict and otherwise, ranging from East Timor to Afghanistan, and most recently, was part of the United Nations Mission to Iraq headed by Lakhdar Brahimi .

Each speaker will speak for 7-10 minutes. After the final speaker has finished, I will open the floor to questions.

Ms. Sabbagh, you have the floor.

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Now we will open the floor for questions – I am sure there will be many after such interesting presentations.

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