

**Speech of
Mr. Douglas Freeman
Founder of the World Diversity Leadership Summit and
CEO of Virtcom Consulting
8 March 2007, International Women's Day
Conference Room 2, 1:15 to 3:00 P.M.**

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Douglas Freeman. I represent an organization called Virtcom Consulting. I am also the founder of the World Diversity Leadership Summit. I happened to also be a man, so why am I here? Because as the Deputy Secretary-General has mentioned this is a collaborative dialogue, this is a collaborative effort, while only a small percentage of the senior management positions in the UN and other organizations are comprised of women, we have to work with men to do better. Today I will talk to a broad global and holistic view of the women's perspective and some initiatives that I have seen around the globe that have been successful. I will also layout a framework and some prescriptions along with examples of success. Our organization is in the trenches of diversity around the globe. We are based in New York, we have offices in London, and we typically perform most of our work for multi-nationals who operate in 100+ countries around the world. In many of those examples you are not just dealing with gender-based issues. There are typically six major areas of global diversity that we see on a daily basis: gender issues of course, ethnic minorities and immigration, the ageing work force, the disabled, GLBT issues and of course religious issues and the management of religion and work force is around the globe. Now, with all of those critical issues, we are talking today about the role of women in the work force and how we are going to make fundamental changes to make progress. You have to place it in a global perspective of diversity.

So, now I will speak to the infrastructure models and particularly the core areas related to gender upliftment and progression that we have seen work around the globe. I would like you to think about in this framework on women four Rs and one P. The Rs are as follows: recruitment, retention, representation and re-attachment. Those are the four Rs and the P is promotion. It is not good enough to do the previous four unless the P of promotion is integrated as well.

The World Diversity Leadership Summit typically attracts over a hundred or more of the world's leading organizations: the Shell's, the Merrill Lynch's, the Visa's of the world, the Aviva's, the HSBC's. So how are these best in class organizations actually moving the representation numbers forward? Let's start with recruitment and these are general prescriptions. This is a prescription that is applicable to the UN, government agency and NGO or corporation. In recruitment, the critical component is the diversification of the pipeline. What does it mean? It is not enough to outreach or to talk to women's groups or in universities or to try to encourage women to be a part of the recruitment process. There must be a mandate to include women in every single job opportunity in every organization. There must be a woman's resume in every competitive job placement. Now, we have actually seen this rule related to minorities in the United States and of all things in the professional sports leagues. Now some people called football, American football and so I'll try to be as politically correct and call it American football. There was a diversification of the pipeline rule implemented by the National Football League. It is called the Rooney rule. What does it mean? For the highest position that is the coach of a football team, there must be an ethnic minority included in the job pool interview. There must be, it is a mandate. And surprise, surprise, in 2007 the two super ball coaches were ethnic minorities. We should give ourselves a hand for that. That is diversification of the pipeline. It must be mandated. It can't be talked about, it can't be a policy, it must be integrated into your organization.

Now, retention. What works? There must be infrastructures of support typically in the corporations and in government agencies we called variety of names, affinity groups, employee resource groups, for women – women's networks and then not just local there at the national level and there at the global level. We must see an organization women's networks for the following reasons: We need women mentored. If you are going to work 60/70 hours a week you better figure out how to do it in 50. You better do it efficiently. You better figure out how to manage your boss more effectively. You better figure out how you actually can telecommute, whether it is official policy or not. These women's groups are mentored. They are incubators of talent. They retain women in a classic examples right here in New York. The New York Federal Reserve has a

woman of color women's group. Prior to that group, when they compared the women's turn over rate now comparing in 2007 to that group's rate, they have a very high retention rate over the last four years. And then also in promotion because a number of the women have been promoted. It is not good enough just to stay in the organization. That's not good enough. That's just representation if you are sticking around. You need to be promoted. How are we going to change the numbers particularly at the senior management level unless you are promoted. Another example on the promotion side is a program that Motorola is engaged. The promotable talent program focuses on minorities and women in the ways in which their senior leadership, not only mentors within, but identifies great talent through external outreach and builds those relationships. Because they are not going to change their representation without identifying great talent early and this is a competitive challenge. So if you are serious, you have to build relationships for promotable talent early to get those talent levels at the level of senior management in the organization.

Finally, looking to re-attachment. Work must change to adopt to the styles particularly women's life styles, and part of that question is always looked at the workforce and that is only half of the equation. What about the suppliers to the organization? Many women are self-employed. They have adjusted to their situation. Stay at home mothers who are business women. We don't have enough policies to engage and encourage corporations, the UN, government agencies to integrate women into this project, they must be integrated. There are organizations, such as HSBC, we that have entire E-learning programs educate internal buyers, not just about contracting with diverse vendors, but to take self-employed women in particular into consideration as a part of the process. It is the diversification of the supply chain similar to the diversification of the pipeline. So how does this play out from an institutional perspective. We see a standard set of structures, not just for women's efforts but for all diverse constituents. There is typically an office of diversity. There is typically an executive diversity council. There is typically a set of support groups, affinity groups, women's groups, employee network groups and their key business unit. Those four players must work together to change the numbers. When you have that, it doesn't

matter if you are a government agency in England, in Canada or South Africa. When those four structures are in place and working together, the numbers change, representation improves, and we see work life balance strategies integrated into the daily work activities.

So with that, I thank you for your time...it is an honor to be here.