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**GENDER MONITORING GROUP URGES UN SECRETARY GENERAL TO ENSURE  
RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS NOT IGNORED AT WORLD SUMMIT**

*September 23, 2005, New York, NY—* The **Gender Monitoring Group of the World Summit**—an alliance of three leading non-governmental women’s rights and development organizations-- Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), The Center for Women’s Global Leadership and the Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)— sent a letter to Secretary General Kofi Annan and President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Jean Ping urging them and their colleagues “*to stand firm on the commitments to the human rights of women and girls, as outlined in the August 5 draft Outcome Document for the World Summit.*”

The organizations, which represent and work with women from around the world, have been actively involved over the past six months in advocacy on behalf of women and children in preparation for the World Summit. The Summit will run from September 14-16. The letters which were delivered Secretary General Annan and Ambassador Pings’ offices late yesterday were signed by hundreds of international organizations including: Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Canada and International Planned Parenthood Federation.

The letter reads in part: “*As we enter the final days of consultations, and no matter what form the final text takes, we urge you to maintain the language on gender equality and women’s empowerment included in the August 5 draft. In particular, we urge you to maintain the full content of paragraph 36 on gender equality, paragraph 35 on health and HIV/AIDS and paragraph 2 on reaffirming the outcomes of past UN world conferences.*”

The letter comes at a difficult time for the World Summit. At the eleventh hour US Ambassador John Bolton is proposing last minute changes to the draft plan, which would undermine the draft Outcome Document. Bolton’s proposed changes would weaken proposals for development, debt relief, Official Development Assistance (ODA), disarmament, and the environment. The Gender Monitoring Group argues that the United States’ demands for line-by-line negotiations on the whole text, or alternatively, a short summary text, will in fact inhibit a successful outcome at this late stage, and could even unravel the entire Summit process.

What’s at stake for women are all the promises of equality, empowerment and women’s human rights contained in CEDAW (the “Women’s Rights” treaty), the Beijing Platform for Action, Cairo Programme of Action and other government agreements of the 1990s. Women are concerned that their voices will not be fully heard and their perspectives will not be fully incorporated into the proposals that come out of the World Summit

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