

Statement on Reforming the Gender Equality Architecture of the United Nations

November 9, 2006

Women's groups and other NGOs from around the world welcome the recommendations on strengthening the gender equality architecture of the UN in the report released November 9, 2006 by the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel for UN System-wide Coherence. We urge member states to adopt these recommendations during the 61st session of the General Assembly and to set up a process to ensure their full and timely implementation.

We support the Panel's proposal to establish an independent women-specific entity that will combine OSAGI, DAW and UNIFEM, have both normative and operational responsibilities, be better resourced, and be led by an Under-Secretary General. These recommendations are in line with what civil society, and in particular women's groups, have been calling for to enable governments and the UN system to better achieve their goals on gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights.

We are pleased that the Panel adopted the recommendation for a USG to head the new entity, as it will guarantee organizational stature and a voice for women at the UN decision-making tables. Women's groups called for an open, transparent and global search for a candidate who has substantive expertise in gender equality and we are pleased that the report includes this recommendation. We urge that civil society be consulted during this open search process.

The dual mandate of the new entity, which will include both policy and country-level functions, will strengthen the effectiveness of the gender mainstreaming work of other UN agencies, as well as advance women's rights directly. For this entity to function as a driving force throughout the UN system, and for it to better address women's experiences at the country level, every UN Country Team must include senior-level gender equality experts with adequate resources and support who can lead the team's efforts to fulfill and promote UN and government commitments to women's human rights.

A strong and well-resourced institutional accountability mechanism that enables women's participation and addresses women's rights in activities at the country level was one of the critical needs presented to the Coherence Panel.

The time to show support for a reformed and strengthened women's entity is now. Women's groups urge governments to demonstrate political will during the General Assembly by endorsing the Coherence Panel's recommendations on creating a stronger gender equality architecture at the UN, and by establishing and adhering to a process and time frame for implementation.

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157 Signatories (as of February 13, 2007)

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Advocates for Youth
African Women's Development Fund
Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), Bangladesh
Amnesty International
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
Asia Pacific Women's Watch
Asociacion Chilena de Proteccion de la Familia (APROFA), Chile
Asociación de Especialistas Universitarias en Estudios de la Mujer, Argentina
Asociación de Planificación de la Familia (PLAFAM), Venezuela
Asociación Panameña para el Planeamiento de la Familia, Panama
Association Ennakhil pour La Femme el L'Enfant, Morocco
Association of War Affected Women, Sri Lanka
Association of Women's NGOs of Uzbekistan
Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo (AIDOS), Italy
Australian Reproductive Health Alliance
AWID
Baha'i International
Bem-Estar Familiar no Brasil (BEMFAM), Brazil
Business and Professional Women, Nepal
Canadian Union of Public Employees
Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir/Bolivia
Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir/Mexico
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Women and Development
Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)
Centre for Policy Research and Analysis (CPRA), Nepal
Centro de la Mujer Peruana "Flora Tristan"
CENWOR, Srilanka
CEPIA- Cidadania Estudos Pesquisa Informacao Ação, Brazil
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Asia Pacific
Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), Kenya
Colectiva Mujer y Salud, Dominican Republic
Communication Foundation for Asia
Community Action Centre (CAC), Nepal
Concertación Interamericana de Mujeres Activistas (CIMA), Costa Rica
Coodinacion de Mujeres del Paraguay

DAWN

Didi Bahini, Nepal

El Closet de Sor Juana, Mexico

Equal Access, Nepal

Equality Now

Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association, Nepal

Feminist Caucus of the American Humanist Association

Feminist League, Kazakhstan

Foro de Mujeres y Política de Población, Mexico

Fundacion Arcoiris, Mexico

Fundacion Mexicana para la Planeacion Familiar (MEXFAM), Mexico

Fundacion para Estudio e Investigacion de la Mujer (FEIM), Argentina

Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute, The Philippines

Gender at Work

Global Campaign for Microbicides

Global Fund for Women

Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida (GIRE)

HIVOS, The Netherlands

Homenet, Nepal

Human Rights Watch -- Women's Division

India Women Watch

Indonesian Cener For Women in Politics (ICWIP)

INFORM, Sri Lanka

Institute for Reproductive Health, The Philippines

Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales y Sociales, Argentina

InterAction

International Center for Research on Women

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

International Federation of Women against Fundamentalism and for Equality (WAFE)

International Gender Policy Network

International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)

International Planned Parenthood Federation

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

International Women's Development Agency (Asia-Pacific)

International Women's Health Coalition

International Women's Rights Action Watch - Asia Pacific

International Women's Tribune Center (IWTC)

IPAS

Isis International

Japan Women's Watch
K.U.L.U. Women and Development, Denmark
KARAT Coalition, Poland
Korea Women's Associations United
Korea Women's Political Caucus
Kvinna till Kvinna, Sweden
Kvinnoforum, Sweden
Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC), Nepal
MADRE
MamaCash, The Netherlands
Mujer y Salud en Uruguay (MYSU)
Mulabi- Espacio Latinoamericano de Sexualidades y Derechos, Argentina
Nagarik Aawaz, Nepal
National Network against Girl Trafficking, Nepal
Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS)
Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago
Network of Women in Politics, Indonesia
New Era, Nepal
New Zealand Council for International Development
New Zealand Family Planning Association
Nile Basin Initiative
Nobel Women's Initiative
North East Network, India
Norwegian Network for Women and the UN
Oxfam International
Pathfinder International
Positive Womens Network South Africa
Pourakhi, Nepal
Public Services International
Radio Internacional Feminsita (FIRE)
Red de Educacion Popular Entre Mujeres de America Latina y el Caribe (REPEM)
Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe (RSMLAC)
Red Latinoamericana de Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir
Red por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos en México
REDESS Jovenes, Peru
Rights & Democracy - Droits et Démocratie, Canada
Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre, Toronto, Canada
Rozan, Pakistan
Saathi - South Asia

Saathi, Nepal
Sancharika Samuha, Nepal
Shirkat Gah-Women's Resource Center, Pakistan
Sisters Beyond Boundaries, Kenya
South Asia Campaign for Gender Equality, South Asia
South Asia Forum of Professionals Against Trafficking (SAPAT)
SouthEast Asia Women Watch (SEAWWatch)
Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum
Stri Adhar Kendra, India
Temiksaming Native Women's Support Group, Canada
Thai Women Watch
The Center for Development and Population Activities
The GRAIL
The Open Society Institute
Toronto Women's Call to Action, Canada
Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, Canada
UNIFEM Canada
UNIFEM/USA
Union de L'Action Feminine, Morocco
Urgent Action Fund -- Africa
WIDE (Europe)
WOMANKIND Worldwide
Women & Environments International Magazine -- Editorial Board, Canada
Women and Media Collective, Sri Lanka
Women and Philanthropy
Women for Change, Zambia
Women for Human Rights Single Women's Group, Nepal
Women for Women, Bangladesh
Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)
Women in Peacebuilding Network -- Africa (WIPNET-A)
Women's Intercultural Network (WIN)
Women's Advocacy Coalition, Vanuatu
Women's Edge Coalition
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)
Women's Feature Service Philippines
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Working Women's League of Lebanon
World Population Foundation
Yellowknife Women's Society, Canada

Yukon Status of Women Council

YWCA Canada

Zene Zenama (Women to Women), Bosnia and Herzegovina