

**Open Letter regarding Women's/Gender Equality Architecture at the UN
from the NGO LINKAGE CAUCUS taking part in the
51st COMMISSION on the STATUS of WOMEN**

TO: UN MEMBER STATES and THE SECRETARY GENERAL

March 8, 2007

Women's groups and allies from around the world welcomed the recommendations on strengthening the gender equality architecture of the UN in the final report released in November 2006 by the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence. During the 2006 session of the Commission on the Status of Women, women's groups mobilized through the Linkage Caucus to ensure that gender equality, women's rights and empowerment issues were added to the Panel's mandate. We are pleased with how the Panel addressed these issues and also welcome the statement of support for the Panel's gender equality recommendations made by the Deputy Secretary General at the opening of the 2007 session of the CSW. Women continue to be a vital constituency in support of the UN and to see it as a vibrant space for advocacy toward gender justice.

In particular, we endorse the strengthening of the gender equality architecture of the UN through the establishment of an independent women-specific entity that will combine OSAGI, DAW and UNIFEM, have both normative and operational responsibilities, be ambitiously resourced, and be led by an Under-Secretary General. This upgrading of women's equality work within the UN system is long overdue. It is imperative at this critical juncture that Member States and the UN system take bold action – and provide the leadership and resources required – to make these recommendations a reality.

We call upon UN Member States and the Secretary General to take swift actions to:

- 1) Initiate and support efforts to strengthen the architecture for women's equality in the General Assembly deliberations during its 61st session. Panel members, and some UN member states, have already noted that the recommendations on strengthening the gender equality architecture were one of its main achievements. These must now be addressed by all governments promptly and can be acted upon either alone or as part of the whole report.
- 2) Commit to significant and sustained funding of the new women's entity and the gender equality and women's rights/empowerment work of the whole UN system, including gender mainstreaming within all UN policies and programs.
- 3) Provide for meaningful and ongoing civil-society participation, particularly of women's groups, in the consideration and implementation of the Panel's recommendations at the national, regional and global levels. Structures and avenues for such participation should be built into the gender-equality architecture of the UN at all levels to ensure that women's voices, and especially those at the grassroots, are heard and that women's concerns are effectively addressed in sustained ways.

4) Ensure that in the development and implementation of the “One UN” Pilot Country Projects, gender equality and the participation of NGOs, and in particular, women’s groups, are integrated into the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programming.

5) Establish and adhere to a clear and transparent process and an expeditious time frame through which the strengthening of the gender equality architecture will be considered and implemented, and funding secured.

Signatories

Organization	Region
1. ACCESS Association of Chinese Canadians for Equality and Solidarity Society	Canada
2. Action Canada for Population and Development	Canada
3. Africa NGO Caucus, CSW	Africa
4. Asia Pacific Women's Watch	Asia Pacific
5. Afeas (Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale),	Canada
6. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies	Africa
7. Antigonish Women's Resource Centre,	Canada
8. Asociacion Ak 'teramit	
9. Association AA Irelanderes	Latin America & Spain
10. Associated Country Women of the World	
11. Association des Femmes de L'Europe Meridional	
12. Association of Presbyterian Women	Aotearoa, New Zealand
13. Association Francaise des Femmes Diplomes des Universites	France
14. Baha'I International Community	Global
15. BC Coalition for Women's Equality and Human Rights	Canada
16. Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC)	Nepal, South Asia, and Asia Pacific
17. Business Professional Women Nigeria	Nigeria
18. Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation	Bulgaria
19. Calectiva Meyer y Salud	Dominican Republic
20. Canadian Council for International Co-operation	Canada
21. Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS)	Canada
22. The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW Canada)	Canada
23. Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)	Canada
24. Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA)	Canada
25. Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women	
26. Canadian Voice of Women for Peace	Canada
27. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers	Canada
28. Canadian Union of Public Employees	Canada
29. Canadian Women’s Community Economic Development Council	Canada
30. Centro de Investigacion para la Accion Femenina	Dominican Republic
31. Center for Health and Gender Equity	USA

32.	Center for Women's Global Leadership	Global
33.	Circle the Earth-Grassroots Women Taking Action for a Sustainable Future	
34.	Collectif Feministe Contre le Viol	
35.	CONGRESS OF BLACK WOMEN OF CANADA	Canada
36.	Conseil provinciale des femmes du Québec/Provincial Council of Women of Quebec	Canada
37.	Coordination Europeenne des Femmes Pilotes des Ligne	Europe
38.	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, Caribbean	Caribbean
39.	ENLACE	
40.	The Episcopal Church	USA
41.	European Women's Lobby, Belgium	Belgium
42.	E-Quality	Netherlands
43.	Equality Now	USA
44.	Family Care International (FCI)	Global
45.	Feminist Task Force - GCAP	
46.	Feminist Journals Network.	Canada
47.	Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer and International Women's AIDS Caucus	Argentina
48.	Femvision	
49.	Fida Nigeria	Nigeria
50.	Fundacion Guatemala	
51.	Gather the Women	
52.	Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women: Canada	Canada
53.	Global Alliance for Women's Health (GAWH)	Global
54.	Gray Panthers	USA
55.	Global Compliance Research Project	Canada
56.	Global Fund for Women	Global
57.	Global Network Against Trafficking in Women and Children	Global
58.	GROOTS International	Global
59.	The Grail	
60.	Hague Appeal for Peace	Global, USA
61.	Himalayan Human Rights Monitors (HimRights)	Nepal, South Asia
62.	The Huairou Commission: Women, Homes and Community	
63.	India Women's Watch	India
64.	InterAction	US
65.	International AIDS Women's Caucus	Global
66.	International Alliance of Women	
67.	International PEN Women Writers Committee	Global
68.	International Council of Jewish Women	Global
69.	International Council of Women	Global
70.	International Council of Women	Netherlands
71.	International Federation of Business and Professional Women	Global
72.	International Federation of Women Lawyers Nigeria	Nigeria
73.	International Federation of Settlements	Global
74.	International Network of Liberal Women	Netherlands
75.	International Planned Parenthood (IPPF)	Global
76.	International Reason Group of Japan	
77.	International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	Global
78.	International Women's Tribune Center	Global

79.	International Women's Year Liaison Group, Japan	Japan
80.	Inuit Circumpolar Council	Greenland
81.	Japan Women's Watch	
82.	Japanese Association of International Women's Rights	
83.	Julie for Mother and Child Peace Initiative	
84.	Kalinga Foundation	
85.	KULU	Denmark
86.	The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center	New York
87.	La Clef	
88.	Loretto Women's Network	USA
89.	Mahila Dakshata Samiti	India
90.	Mama Cash	Global
91.	The Mercury Institute	
92.	Millionth Circle	
93.	Mouvement Mondial des Meres	Lebanon
94.	MDG Global Watch	Global
95.	NGO Coordinating Council	Zambia
96.	Nagorik Awaz, Kathmandu, Nepal	Nepal
97.	National Alliance of Women	India
98.	National Alliance of Women's Organisations	UK
99.	National Bar Association	
100.	National Congress of Neighborhood Women	Global
101.	National Council of Women of Canada	Canada
102.	National Council of German Women's Organisations	Germany
103.	National Network of Alliance on Girl Trafficking	Nepal
104.	National Organization for Women (NOW)	US
105.	National Organization of Womens Association in the Bahamas	Bahamas
106.	Netherlands Association for Women's Interests, Women's Work and Equal Citizenship	NL
107.	Nobel Women's Initiative	Global
108.	Open Coalition for Human Rights in Migration and Human Trafficking	Canada
109.	Oxfam International	Global
110.	Peace Links USA	USA
111.	POWER Camp National – Filles d'Action	Canada
112.	Presbyterian Women, USA	USA
113.	Presbyterian United Nations Office	Global
114.	Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada	Canada
115.	Public Service Alliance of Canada	Canada
116.	Public Services International	Global
117.	rabble.ca	Canada
118.	The Ribbon International	New York
119.	Rozan, Pakistan	Pakistan
120.	Saathi, Kathmandu, Nepal	Nepal
121.	Sach, Pakistan	Pakistan
122.	Sancharika Samuha, Kathmandu, Nepal	Nepal
123.	Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa	Canada
124.	Shirkat Gah - Women's Resource Centre	Pakistan
125.	Sittna Sudanese Hope Foundation	Sudan
126.	Social Watch	Global
127.	Society for Women and Aids in Africa	Africa

128.	South Asian Campaign for Gender Equality	South Asia
129.	Stree Aadnar Kendra	India
130.	Step Up	
131.	Thai Women's Watch	Thailand
132.	UFER International Movement	Global
133.	UN Association of the USA	USA
134.	United Nations Association	South California Division
135.	United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society	Global
136.	UN Platform for Action Committee Manitoba (UNPAC)	Canada
137.	UNA Suriname	Suriname
138.	US Committee for the United Nations Development Fund for Women, New York	USA
139.	Voices of African Mothers	Global
140.	Winnipeg Chapter of the Canadian Committee for UNIFEM	Canada
141.	WOMANKIND Worldwide	Global
142.	Women for Women, Bangladesh	Bangladesh
143.	Women's Environment and Development Organization	Global
144.	Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre	Canada
145.	Women's International Zionist Organization	Global
146.	Women's Network PEI	
147.	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasts (AMARC)	Global
148.	World Council of Churches	
149.	World Christian Life Community	Rome, Italy
150.	World Federation for Mental Health	Global
151.	World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)	Global
152.	World Student Christian Federation	Global
153.	Women for Change	Zambia
154.	Women's International Network	Global
155.	Women's Issues Information Centre	Lithuania
156.	UK Gender Statistics User Group	UK
157.	University Women of Europe	Europe
158.	YWCA Canada	Canada
159.	Zenab for Women in Development	Sudan
160.	Zonta International	Global
161.	3HO Foundation	
162.	5th Women's World Conference Committee	Global