



IRELAND

**United Nations System-wide Coherence
Informal Consultations in the General Assembly**

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

**National Statement
delivered by:**

**H.E. Ambassador Paul Kavanagh
Permanent Representative of Ireland
to the United Nations**

New York, Monday, 30 March 2009

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Excellencies,
Deputy Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first thank the Ambassadors of Namibia and Spain for convening this meeting to discuss this important issue.

I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary General and her colleagues in the Secretariat for her presentation and the detailed modalities paper which they have provided us on the various options which are available.

I support fully the statement read out on behalf the European Union. Allow me to make a number of additional points in a national capacity.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the last, 62nd Session of the General Assembly, there was express recognition by Member States – from all regions – of the urgent need to make progress in creating a stronger and more effective UN entity to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment across the UN System and throughout the world.

Our previous discussions on gender equality and women’s empowerment exhibited a broad, cross regional consensus on the gaps and challenges which hamper the UN’s work. There was a consensus on the critical aims

and functions which any strengthened entity should possess and which were outlined by the Deputy Secretary General in her previous papers.

Before the conclusion of the 62nd Session, the Assembly resolved to take substantive action in the current, 63rd Session.

The Assembly in its consensus Resolution 62/277 signalled very clearly the direction and pace of how it wished to proceed. The Assembly made clear that there was a widespread support for the so-called Composite option and that this was where the preponderant interest of Member States lay.

In order to uphold the Assembly's credibility, it is vital that the Assembly now move to action as we have, together and by consensus decided that we would do.

Mr. Co-Chair

For Ireland, it is very important that a new entity provides strong leadership both within the UN system and outside the UN system. The entity must show strong leadership, calling all of us to account for failing to meet our commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. It must effectively link our normative work here at UN headquarters to the operational work of the UN. The new entity must ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment is effectively mainstreamed across the entire UN System. It must make the UN System accountable so that it delivers on its commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment and so that it encourages us to deliver on ours.

It must be able to provide effective support at national level, responding to the needs and requests of Member States in their work on achieving women's empowerment. This entity must not only focus on development – it must also focus on the broad range of issues affecting women throughout the world, including those relating to women in conflict and the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, as well as the monitoring of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. This new entity must be adequately funded and resourced.

We agree with the conclusion of the Deputy Secretary-General's recent Modalities paper. The status quo will not achieve our aims. There is already a strong consensus in the Assembly on this point. We also believe that a Secretariat ^{department} will not be able to provide the necessary and urgent assistance to Member States at national level. Furthermore, we believe that a Fund or Programme will not be able to ensure the necessary link between the operational and the normative or the necessary 'system wide' influence in policy and programmes.

We support the views of the Deputy Secretary General and all of her colleagues in the System that the Composite entity, Option D is best placed to achieve a strong UN entity for gender equality. Again, by consensus the Assembly has already indicated that the preponderant interest of Member States lies in this direction. We also strongly support the appointment of a USG to lead this entity.

Mr Co-Chair

We have heard the call from the President of the Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary General to make progress on this issue. Indeed, we have heard that any further delay on this would place the credibility of the Organisation into question.

We, therefore, hope the General Assembly can agree to move the discussion forward, to focus on the critical functions of Composite Option D, as the best option for strengthening the UN's work.

It is essential that the Assembly move to action in this matter as early as feasible. There is ample time to forge, during this Session, the action which we have all agreed we will take. But we need to move ahead at pace.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Even as Ireland remains committed to moving forward on the topic of gender equality and women's empowerment, we are also strongly committed to making progress on Funding and Governance – two areas which are essential for improving the functioning of the UN System and concerning which the Assembly is also committed to taking action during the 63rd Session.

At the same time, as we outlined last week, we feel that there should be no artificial limitations to progress on any of the diverse priority areas outlined in Resolution 62/277. We must recognise that the issues on which we are to

take action, while equally important, are themselves of a different substantive nature and will proceed by their nature with a different tempo.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me, in closing, recall our view that, in taking forward our discussions on the implementation of 62/277, it will be vital for all of us to avoid the divisive trap of any North/South dichotomy in our thinking. We look forward to continuing the positive and constructive discussions on Composite entity D and we are confident that these discussions will continue in the spirit of openness and transparency and will lead to further consensus agreement in the Assembly on how to strengthen the UN's work on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, an area of the UN's work which is of great consequence to all of us – and to men as well as women worldwide.