



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

REMARKS TO INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON UN SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCENew York, 30 March 2009

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating Ambassador Mbuende of Namibia and Ambassador Yáñez-Barnuevo of Spain on their appointment as the Co-facilitators of General Assembly informal consultations on System-wide Coherence. This is timely, as we are looking forward to substantive action during the current session.

I would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Kavanagh of Ireland and Ambassador Mahiga of Tanzania for their stewardship last year.

They guided the deliberations to a fruitful conclusion -- the unanimous adoption of resolution 62/277, which paved the way for moving the System-wide Coherence process forward.

Before turning to the Gender Architecture paper, I wish to update the Assembly on a few issues raised during your last informal consultations on System-wide Coherence.

First, as stated by the Secretary-General on 13 March, we are finalizing the papers on funding and on governance of operational activities. These papers are being prepared through an extensive inter-agency consultation process. We shall revert to you as soon as they are ready.

Action on these three papers will set us on course to a more coherent UN system. It will also enable us to meet the challenge specifically set out by this Assembly that these three issues be addressed during the current legislative session.

During the informal consultations on System-wide Coherence earlier this month, Member States posed some valid questions to the Secretary-General.

Allow me to touch first on the issue of support provided by the United Nations system to countries that are voluntarily engaging in the Delivering as One process.

The UN system has always supported the development priorities of countries. Although the Delivering as One process is formally carried out by the eight pilot countries, other countries, upon request, can benefit from coordinated support by the UN system.

The Delivering as One pilots themselves are of course being kept under review, in the context of ongoing intergovernmental discussions on System-wide Coherence.

Member States also sought clarification on the difference in the pace of reform at Headquarters, versus the country level; particularly, harmonizing a set of business practices for the Delivering as One initiative.

The Chief Executives Board's High Level Committee on Management has been developing a Plan of Action for the Harmonization of Business practices in the UN system.

The Plan of Action builds on the belief that, within a system structured around a variety of mandates, increased coherence in the working modalities would enhance the Organization's ability to deliver better programmatic results.

Excellencies, Dear friends,

We have been discussing for the past two years the need for a more coherent Gender Architecture. Reforming this Architecture would enable the United Nations to more effectively support Member States to fully mobilize women's creative and productive potential.

Three things have come together to make 2009 a watershed year: an acknowledged need for change, an agenda for change, and a clear opportunity to achieve this change.

More and more, it is recognized that women are central to overcoming the challenges we face today – from the global economic crisis and climate change, to armed conflicts and violations of human rights. We will not meet many of the Millennium Development Goals without a genuine inclusion of women in our efforts.

Indeed much work has been done since the adoption of resolution 62/277. Member States have reached important agreements. Negotiations have achieved a significant degree of consensus on a number of points of substance. But much more needs to be done.

The Secretary-General has already outlined the weaknesses in the present system's capacity to support action on gender, including the lack of a recognized driver and its fragmentation.

I will therefore not repeat these details.

Excellencies, Dear Friends,

Let me turn now to our collective agenda for change. The four papers previously commissioned by this Assembly distilled the essence of intergovernmental and interagency deliberations.

These papers also outlined the gaps and challenges faced by the United Nations system in delivering support to Member States. In addition, they provide institutional options for bridging these gaps.

The latest paper, dated 5 March of this year, contains the further details requested by this Assembly regarding the institutional options for consolidating the four gender focused entities.

Those options include a fund or programme; a department of the Secretariat; or a composite entity, which would combine the features of both a fund and the department. The modalities presented in the paper highlight the key areas of governance, structure, staffing, functions and the relationship with the Commission on the Status of Women.

Resolution 62/277 requested the Secretary-General to focus in particular on the “composite entity” option when compiling this paper.

We met this request. We now have a blueprint that encompasses the Secretary-General’s vision and the functions of a new Gender Architecture.

We also provide Member States with enough details on the other options, in order to facilitate a well-informed assessment and choice on the way forward. That is the balance we set out to achieve in this paper.

We believe the clarifications provided for each option can constitute a basis for your review and decision.

As indicated by the Secretary-General in his introductory statement to you on 13 March, the analysis of the four options within the current paper came to several conclusions.

First, the status quo would perpetuate the current weaknesses. Second, a Department would not provide a robust field presence. Third, a Fund or Programme would not fully eliminate fragmentation. Nor would it link normative and operational work, or exercise the level of authority needed to hold all entities accountable for performance.

The Secretary-General therefore concluded that the composite entity -- which would not lose any of the current four entities’ functions and strengths -- remains the most promising option. In line with this analysis, and further to the mandate in resolution 62/277, allow me to focus on the “composite entity” option.

Two points were borne in mind in designing the institutional options.

First, gender equality is a cross-cutting issue that encompasses peace, development, human rights and other areas.

Second, no country can claim to have achieved full equality between women and men.

Thus, the new gender entity would cover both developing and developed countries. It would report to an Executive Board, which in turn would conduct oversight and supervision of all the entity's activities. This will be in accordance with the overall policy guidance provided by both the General Assembly and ECOSOC.

The Commission on the Status of Women would continue to provide policy guidance to all UN entities, including the composite entity. Similarly, CEDAW will maintain its current functions.

There is strong interagency consensus that the composite entity option presents significant advantages. It is the only structure that can bridge the gap between normative functions and operational effectiveness. Thereby it draws on existing expertise and institutional knowledge.

The normative and research functions now carried out by OSAGI, DAW and INSTRAW would be absorbed by a normative pillar of the composite entity. Meanwhile, operational activities, currently performed by UNIFEM, would provide the basis for its operational pillar.

In this regard, the composite entity will sensibly build on proven strategies and best practices used by all operational programmes and funds in the field, including those of UNIFEM.

The composite entity is structured to have a high-level champion at the centre, established at the same level as other UN bodies.

The composite entity's Executive Head would report to the Secretary-General. She, or he, would be a full member of the Chief Executives Board -- a status that not one of the existing gender entities currently enjoys. None is mandated to represent all existing gender entities.

Excellencies, Dear Friends,

The funding needs can only be determined on the basis of the mandates that Member States decide to give to the composite entity. We strongly believe that the entity should carry out catalytic programmes and targeted technical cooperation activities.

The composite entity would have a flexible, pragmatic approach to country programming. It would support the United Nations system's capacity and mechanisms, rather than supplanting sectoral entities with new programmes and systems. This would allow for proportionate, effective and appropriate responses to the gender needs of each partner country or region.

The entity will aim to have universal coverage on gender equality issues world-wide, while maintaining a strategic presence where necessary. Its framework for operating would be host-country-owned, output-oriented and results-based. Outputs will be country-driven and adapted for different national and regional contexts.

Again, let me emphasize that national ownership will be a core element of the success of the new entity's work at the country level.

At the regional and country level, the entity's representatives would be members of the existing United Nations Country Teams. They would provide policy and programming advice. They would ensure leadership and accountability for gender-related programmes and projects.

The composite entity would also develop solid partnerships with women's organizations, the private sector and other actors. This is vital.

We stand ready to work closely with Member States to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women become a reality within the United Nations. Equally, we are ready to advance our work on the financing and governance dimensions of System-wide Coherence.

Excellencies, Dear Friends,

Now is the time for action. Now is the time to move on those issues where we know broad consensus exists.

This Assembly needs to decide on the best institutional option and on the functions for a new gender architecture. We have very little time left to make the much needed leap forward.

Artificial deadlines should be avoided. But, equally, artificial obstacles will not be helpful. They would only reduce the political momentum that has been built up through your collective, good faith efforts on this issue of tremendous importance. We cannot afford to let that happen. Success is within our grasp.

The Secretary-General and I count on you, the Member States, to deliver.

Thank you very much.

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THE JOINT
COORDINATING
COMMITTEE

United Nations

New York



Joint Statement by G-77 and NAM on Informal consultations of the General
Assembly on United Nations System-wide Coherence
H.E. Ambassador Abelardo Moreno

(Monday, 30 March, 2008)

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

On behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement (JCC), I would like to thank you for convening this informal consultation.

Allow me to reiterate the willingness of the JCC to constructively engage in the intergovernmental consideration of the recommendations emanating from the High-Level Panel's Report and the Secretary-General's comments thereon and concerning exclusively "Delivering as one", harmonization of business practices, funding, governance, and gender equality and the empowerment of women. We are confident of your able leadership and fully trust that you will guide the process in an open, transparent and inclusive manner.

At this stage, when we are resuming the discussions on System-wide Coherence in the 63rd session of the General Assembly, the JCC reaffirms its comments recently made on 13 March, all its general and substantive comments voiced during the previous two year's informal plenary meetings of the General Assembly to consider the different aspects of the process, as well as the views conveyed in the letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the Co-Chairs of the JCC on 19 March 2007.

Through these consultations, we made clear our preference for an integrated process instead of a divided one. We emphasized that funding, development and governance are areas of priority interest for both the NAM and G-77.

We engaged in the discussions led by former Co-Chairs, on the understanding that all areas of the High-Level Panel's Report would be discussed before a final decision is reached, and at that point, we will have a single comprehensive decision.

We reiterate that the implementation of any of the recommendations contained in the Panel's report should follow intergovernmental consideration and agreement by the General Assembly and there should be no *a priori* decision with regard to when decisions will be made on the report because this should flow from the consultations. In other words, there should be no artificial deadlines.

These general positions highlighted before by the JCC in the informal plenary meetings of the General Assembly on system-wide coherence don't imply, of course, any limitation on the progress already made in this process.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

The G-77 and NAM highly appreciate that these and other important views of the JCC were considered and endorsed in the resolution 62/277 of the General Assembly.

As it is clear in this resolution, the intergovernmental work of the General Assembly on system-wide coherence will focus exclusively and in an integrated manner on the five priority areas agreed upon for the continuation of this discussion. Our principled position on a single decision at the decision point in this process was also validated in the resolution.

The JCC would like to recall that this resolution also requests the Secretary-General to provide Member States with substantive papers on the issues of funding and governance, priority areas for the JCC in the context of this process. As we stated on 13 March, we believe that these papers will facilitate our discussions on these issues and we look forward to receiving them.

We express our appreciation for your intention to convene informal consultations to discuss these documents. Taking into account the great importance of both issues and their impact and interrelatedness to all the aspects of the system-wide coherence, it would be necessary to have these papers as soon as possible. That will contribute also to the deliberations on the other priority areas. We all need to achieve parallel progress in these priority areas of work for the benefit of the whole process.

We suggest the preparation of the program of work to be presented soon to Member States in order to allocate enough and equal time for the consideration of the five priority areas of the intergovernmental discussions on system-wide coherence, so as to contribute to make necessary progress in all aspects of this process. The JCC presents this suggestion with the certainty and the hope that it will contribute to the positive future advancement of this process.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

At this new stage of the process, the JCC reiterates its expectation to have important general elements on the operational activities for development, it has been advocating for, included in the process.

For instance, we reaffirmed that sustainable development should remain the centerpiece of deliberations at the UN, and that the achievement of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs, should continue to be the over-arching framework of the UN activities. We further emphasize the need for a strengthened global partnership for development, based on recognition of national leadership and ownership of national strategies that were acknowledged by the High Level Panel.

We reiterate, as also advocated by the High Level Panel, our position that development cooperation should be demand-driven and be pursued on the basis of the national

strategies and plans of developing countries. The JCC has always emphasized that UN development cooperation should be voluntary and grant-based in nature and that there should be no "one size-fits all" approach. The nature of development cooperation should be responsive to the specific needs, priorities and conditions of each country. The JCC would not support the introduction of new conditionalities through the reform process.

For the JCC, General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the TCPR of operational activities for development of the United Nations system constitutes the intergovernmentally agreed guiding policy framework for addressing the UN operational activities for development. This resolution stresses that reform efforts should enhance organizational efficiency and achieve concrete development results and that the value of UN operational activities for development should be assessed on the basis of their impact on the recipient countries. The JCC believes that reform of UN operational activities for development should be aimed at ensuring both efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of assistance. It should not be merely a cost-cutting exercise.

The most important component for operational activities for development is an expanding and adequate source of funding based on development assistance from the UN system and other sources responsive to the national development plans and programs of countries. It will be also important to preserve and implement the fundamental characteristics of the UN operational activities for development.

The JCC reiterates that, in the context of UN operational activities for development, cross-cutting issues that are not confined only to developing countries should not be misused to introduce new conditionalities on international development assistance, which are not acceptable to developing countries.

Developing countries have a great interest in a fair, rules-based international system. The enhanced UN system-wide coherence envisaged as a result of this collective exercise should strengthen the standard-setting role of our Organization in order to reinforce its normative capacities.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

In this context, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for preparing the paper entitled "Further Details on Institutional Options for Strengthening the Institutional Arrangements for Support of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" in response to the request of resolution 62/277. We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General for conducting consultations for the preparation of this paper. Both the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirm the relevance of gender issues and their political importance in the work of the Organization and within our countries.

When the JCC supported before the request to the Secretary-General of providing non papers with answers to outstanding questions and additional information to address shortcomings in the area of gender equality and empowerment of women, it made similar requests to receive answers on other priority areas where there are outstanding questions pertaining to the system-wide coherence process. This approach was endorsed in resolution 62/277. The Secretariat needs to have then similar efficiency in providing information on these other areas to contribute to reach the necessary progress in the whole process.

We commend the great efforts of the Secretariat in explaining and detailing the various options to complement the structural changes proposed to the strengthening of the gender architecture of the United Nations system. We found that the new paper gives better justification on the matter.

While the JCC gives its general support to the strengthening of the gender architecture of the United Nations system, we look forward to deepening this discussion, engaging constructively in this regard. We think that the last paper deserves further consideration.

In this process, it would be useful a more analytical approach to the scenarios available in the document, with the support of precise empirical data and complementary and evidence-based information on the implications of the options presented for consideration, including on how these options contribute to improving efficiency and effectiveness.

We recognize and consider very positively that the Secretariat responded most of our questions. However, it would be convenient to address some questions stated before by the JCC that have not been fully addressed already by the Secretariat. That includes the importance of having further clarification, among other unclear and important issues, on:

- Funding
- the role of INSTRAW
- the proposed policy advisory and programming division and the relationship with DESA
- How the new entity will interact with CSW and CEDAW, as well as other relevant organs, funds and programmes of the UN system.
- How the inclusion of UNIFEM is going to cover the implementation of operational activities in the gender area.
- Why the Executive Director of UNIFEM is not participating in the current work of the CEB.
- What the monitoring role of the new entity, that seems to be focused only in the Country Teams, and which, by the way, are deployed in developing countries, will be.
- How the intergovernmental oversight and supervision of the proposed new structure will be conducted.

As the JCC highlighted before, the guidelines for the work on gender equality and women's empowerment should continue to be the same that have guided so far the UN on the issue, namely the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action as well as the mandates emanating from resolutions of the General Assembly and ECOSOC and their functional commissions, particularly the Commission on the Status of Women.

In this context, it is important to recognize the universal perspective of the work towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Finally, we reiterate that the JCC will continue to participate actively and constructively in this process. We are ready to follow a program of work to address the focus areas of work in the process as well as any eventual decision we are all able to agree based on an integrated approach decided in resolution 62/277. We look forward to continued engagement on this matter.

Thank you.

**Statement
on behalf of the European Union
by**

**H.E. Mr. Martin Palouš
Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations**

**at the informal consultations on
system-wide coherence**

New York, 30 March 2009

(Check against delivery)

Ms. / Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union welcomes the Secretary General's paper entitled "Further Details on Institutional Options for Strengthening the Institutional Arrangements for Support of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" in response to the General Assembly resolution on System-wide Coherence (A/RES/62/277), which will assist and promote today's discussion.

As already stated during the informal consultations on system-wide coherence on March 13, 2009, the EU believes that the discussion on the reform of the UN gender system is urgent. Especially in the current economic crisis where women face new and grave challenges, the UN needs to enhance its capacity to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women and to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Program of Action and the follow-up processes to the achievement of the MDGs by 2015. To allow the UN to do so, time cannot be wasted and substantive action must be taken during the present session of the GA as envisaged in the consensus resolution in September 2008. At the same time, the EU is fully committed to discussion and substantive action on the other areas of Funding and Governance and looks forward to these being guided by the documents expected in due course.

The Secretary General's paper on Gender offers a way forward. It reflects the desire of the broad UN membership for concrete guidance on how to move forward in order to address the gaps and challenges of the current gender architecture, and it gives further clarification on the various options previously discussed. It identifies the option with the most potential to meet the gaps and challenges of the new UN gender system. It is now time to make decisions.

We welcome the call to choose one of the options presented in the document in order to move to a discussion on its criteria. A strong structure is needed to consolidate parallel functions and create synergies. We believe that a composite entity, for which the Secretariat indicates a comparative advantage, should be the option of reference, in order to fulfill the mandate of the UNGA resolution 62/277. In this regard, we agree with the conclusion of the Secretary General's paper that a composite entity has "the greatest potential to consolidate the strengths and experiences of the four existing gender-specific entities and create synergy between operational work and normative and policy development functions". In this regard, and as we have stated before, the "status quo" is not an option for the European Union.

Now it is crucial to focus on these criteria or functions of a composite entity. In this regard, we look forward to exchange further views with the Inter Agency Working Group on Gender, in order to further define and develop more precisely the outline of a truly integrated future composite entity.

In our view, a composite entity should have a strengthened function at the central level, must build on the strengths of the current structure, deliver better and improve accountability for gender equality in the UN system's policies and practices. It must

work more visibly, more coherently and more influentially, also with respect to other UN entities as far as gender issues are concerned.

It should increase coherence by bringing together the normative and analytical functions of the existing architecture with its technical, policy, programmatic and operational role. A new entity must be better equipped to assist all States to address gaps in the implementation of international commitments on gender wherever they request such assistance. Furthermore it must improve channels to provide essential feedback from operational levels and have the ability and capacity to translate this feedback in policy guidance and operational support at a wider scale. It must also explore institutional arrangements and mechanisms with a view to combining a universal mandate with a lean operational structure.

In our efforts to reform of the gender architecture we have to bear in mind that the new system needs to be comprehensible and manageable for its partners inside the United Nations system, within the international community and in the targeted civil societies.

Effective gender mainstreaming throughout the entire UN system has to be strengthened. While all UN entities bear responsibility for delivering on gender, we also believe that we need a central driver with the authority and ability to coordinate, guide and support the work of the UN system in this area. The appointment of a dedicated high level official, at the USG level, would contribute to achieving this objective. A strong gender entity is necessary to ensure - to the maximum possible - delivery of the goals and commitments set by the international community. It is understood that this entity would not assume sole responsibility for delivering gender equality across the UN system. All parts of the UN system are critical to delivering on gender, especially at the country level and on the ground where results are most necessary.

To sum up: The EU looks forward to the upcoming discussion to reach swift consensus on the concrete criteria of a composite entity with a view to its establishment. This entity should consolidate the strengths and experiences of the four existing gender-specific entities and create true synergy between operational work and normative and policy development functions.

Finally, let me reiterate that it is in our common interest to reach a prompt conclusion on this important issue during this 63rd General Assembly. The clear link between the empowerment of women and the achievement of the MDGs as well as the effective continuation of the Beijing Program of Action and its follow-up processes does not allow for further delay in strengthening the UN in its delivery on gender issues.

Thank you, Ms. / Mr. Chairperson.



NORWAY

General Assembly
Sixty-third session

2nd meeting of the informal consultations of the plenary on system-wide coherence. Focus on gender.

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STATEMENT

By

H.E. Mr Morten Wetland
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
On behalf of the Nordic countries
(Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway)

New York, 30 March 2009

Co-facilitators,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries; Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden – and Norway. We all greatly appreciate the way the two of you have vitalized the work on System Wide Coherence, providing the membership with confidence that agreement can be reached and decisions made as soon as possible.

While all three dimensions of this process are equally important, we do recognize that the work on reforming the gender architecture has recently taken a great leap forward, not least thanks to the Secretary General's paper presented earlier this month, in response to General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/277.

I would like to thank in particular the Deputy Secretary General, present here today, for her valuable guidance and contribution to this process.

The Nordic countries welcome the Secretary General's paper. It presents the pros and cons of the various four alternatives.

While the paper is somewhat short on detail, we are convinced that outstanding issues - inter alia with regard to governance, funding, location and autonomy - can and should be ironed out through consultations in the weeks to come.

Meanwhile we appreciate that the Secretary General's paper does indeed provide a clear direction with regard to the ultimate objective and result of this reform process:

- A single UN gender entity, combining the normative, the analytical and the operational functions of the UN system in an integrated fashion.
- Such a new gender entity should be headed by an Under-Secretary General with mandate to coordinate gender issues throughout the system.
- Among the four alternatives discussed, the paper leaves no doubt that the so-called "composite entity" is the option that best can meet these objectives.

The new entity must be a centre of excellence and catalyst for gender mainstreaming within the entire UN system and must not be seen as a replacement for the gender work which falls within the mandate of other parts of the UN system. All actors in the UN system should be accountable to the new entity for gender results within their respective area.

The main focus of the new entity must be to support Member States in their endeavour to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women.

This is a question of justice and human rights – but also vitally important for economic growth and development. No country can reach its full potential unless it provides equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

The entity must thus be *universal* in its normative work and underpinnings, relevant to all Member States. However, its operational activities should give priority to meeting the needs of developing countries.

Dear colleagues,

The Nordic countries are strong supporters of United Nations development efforts, in all their dimensions. This also includes gender.

In fact, the Nordic countries combined provide substantial financial contributions annually to UN's work on gender equality and women's empowerment through relevant funds and programmes such as UNIFEM, UNFPA and UNDP. Regarding UNIFEM, the Nordics provided more than 40 percent of the fund's core budget last year.

Against this background, let me underscore the following: The Nordic countries do not consider UN reform, neither the overall reform, nor reform of the gender architecture, to be a cost-saving exercise.

On the contrary, we believe that a new, consolidated and more effective gender entity – as envisaged by the Secretary General and supported by the President of the General Assembly – will be worthy of increased financial resources.

Co-facilitators,

As pointed out by the President of the General Assembly in his excellent statement to the Commission on the Status of Women earlier this month, "no issue needs or deserves the leadership of the General Assembly more than the pursuit of gender equality".

The President has committed himself to preside over the establishment of a new UN gender entity.

The Nordic countries share this ambition, and we know it is do-able. We would thus encourage colleagues to join us in making sure a decision is taken during this session of the General Assembly - on the watch of His Excellency Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann.

To this end, we look forward to seeing a draft resolution as soon as possible.

Thank you.



Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania
to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY MS. JOYCE KAFANABO,
CHARGE D' AFFAIRES OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

ON INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE
COHERENCE - GENDER

MONDAY, 30 MARCH 2009 – NEW YORK

201 East 42nd Street, Room 1700, New York, New York 10017
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**STATEMENT BY MS. JOYCE KAFANABO, CHARGE D'
AFFAIRES OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA ON INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-
WIDE COHERENCE - GENDER**

MONDAY, 30 MARCH 2009 – NEW YORK

Co Chairs,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

At the outset let me congratulate the Co Chairs on System Wide Coherence H.E. Kaire Mbuende of Namibia and H.E. Juan Antonio Yanez Barnuevo of Spain for organizing this important consultation on Gender. My delegation has full confidence in their skills and capacity to lead these discussions and will support their work in the 63rd Session of the General Assembly consultations on system wide coherence.

The delegation of Tanzania aligns itself to the joint Statement of G77 and NAM.

Co Chairs,

We particularly wish to thank the Secretary General and his team for his commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and also for his resolve to heed the call to provide a way forward on reforms of Gender Architecture as was requested in Resolution 62/677. We welcome the discussion paper entitled "Further Details for Institutional Options for Strengthening the Institutional Arrangements for Support of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" and the recommendations contained therein provide a good basis for our discussion. We commend the leadership role that the Deputy Secretary General is undertaking in the reform of the gender architecture.

Co Chairs,

From our point of view, the paper before us is concise and has further clarified the different options for reforming the gender entity. The paper has also taken on board various interests including those of my delegation. The paper further builds on the previous discussions and has further elaborated the different modalities for the Gender Entity. My delegation thus hopes that the paper will be thoroughly discussed so that we can emerge with a consensus on the optimal Institutional arrangement for the Gender Entity.

Co Chairs,

We have studied the different options before us and my delegation is of the view that the composite option presents a more viable solution to strengthen the United Nations response to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The composite option will meet the needs for operational work and normative and policy development work and will have a strong field presence to support national efforts. As we had indicated in the previous discussions, a strong field presence is very important for us. Country ownership through the UNDAF is another key advantage for the composite option. This option will allow for coherence within the UN system as at country level for better advancement of the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women. . At the same time the composite option presents us with an opportunity to be innovative in developing the gender structure and allows us to also take bold decisions that will lead to the strengthening of the gender architecture.

Co-chairs,

We all share a common understanding that gender equality and the empowerment of women is pivotal to development, peace and security. In this regard we should we give the opportunity for the General Assembly consultations on gender to culminate into a best consensual agreement. We have been able to converge into many challenging deliberations. Some examples include the consultations

on Tri Annual Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) of which member State positions were far apart, finally the process culminated to a resolution A/62/208 that was approved by the membership. Similarly, the resolution on system wide coherence A/Res/62/677 is another demonstration that whenever there is a political will there is a way, and our shared commitments on gender should thus provide us with the thrust for reaching an agreement.

To conclude, we are looking forward to open and transparent discussions on this matter hoping to achieve consensus as soon as practicable. We also wish to request delegations to give these discussions a chance to stand amidst divergent interests across the membership.

I thank you Co Chairs.



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.

STATEMENT

of

H.E. Mr. HILARIO G. DAVIDE, JR.

Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines
to the United Nations

at the

Second Meeting of the Informal Consultations of the Plenary
on System-wide Coherence, Focusing on
the Gender Architecture Reform

30 March 2009
3:00 p.m., Conference Room 3

Thank you distinguished Co-chairs for giving the floor to the Philippines. Thank you for convening this meeting.

- The Philippines commends and congratulates H.E. Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary General, for the paper which painstakingly elaborates on the different options for the institutional strengthening on gender at the United Nations. The Philippines appreciates, in particular, the clear manner in which the paper describes the main elements for a composite form of gender architecture.
- The composite form combines what could be the best of both worlds. When the normative and secretariat support branch in New York has a direct link to the operational branches on the ground, we can expect that our efforts on “walking the talk” will be better. Also, this setup will provide a mechanism by which the operational actors can give expeditious and coherent feedback on the status of gender equality efforts. This would mean that the UN Headquarters will be able to have a better survey of the global

situation of women, and thus be able to report more effectively, comprehensively and credibly to Member States which will, in turn, be better guided on their policy responses or directions.

- Our observation is that, generally speaking, the composite option seems to be well-supported as a basic framework of a new and revitalized gender architecture. After several papers and a number of general discussions, now, and not much later, may be the best time to consider specific concrete next steps by which the Member States can move forward, without cease, in this process of gender reform. It must be stressed that we cannot just endlessly talk about the reform process. We need to start seeing the shape of this new gender entity so that we move closer to reaping the benefits it will bring. Because the new gender entity can deliver better outcomes for women, the longer we delay the concrete steps, the longer we deny timely opportunities for women to enjoy their rights and realize their development.
- In this regard, the Philippines strongly suggests that Member States consider having a **general timeline** for the gender reform

process. If we can have specific time-bound targets for the different stages that the gender reform will entail, we will be better able to assess the needs and issues associated with these stages. A **timeline** will breed a political will that will help us ensure a continuously progressive momentum and allow us to examine the issues and requirements associated with each stage of the reform. Of course, we could agree to exercise a necessary degree of flexibility to respond to any adjustments that would have to be made along the way.

- I thank you distinguished Co-chairs.



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**STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF GUATEMALA DURING THE
INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON UNITED
NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE
(March 30, 2009)**

Distinguished co-chairs,

Thank you for convening this meeting, which, in the framework of system-wide coherence, focuses on the "institutional options to strengthen United Nations work on gender equality and the empowerment of women". We also appreciate the Report presented to us by the Deputy Secretary-General – the fourth Report on this matter – in response to the mandate contained in operative paragraph 5 of Resolution 62/277.

In the first place, we would like to align ourselves with the statement just made in the name of the G-77 and NAM through its Joint Coordinating Committee. However, we would like to go a bit deeper into the specific topic object of today's consultation; namely, gender equity and empowerment of women.

On this matter, I would be somewhat less than frank if I did not share with you, distinguished co-facilitators, our misgivings on this subject. We do so without wishing to put obstacles in the way of our work; rather, our aim is the contrary. But the fact is that, notwithstanding that, in adopting Resolution 62/277 we – i.e., the General Assembly – put in motion the identification of a specific topic, such as strengthening the work of the United Nations regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women as part of our broader on coherence, my delegations finds a certain contradiction in, on the one hand, searching for system-wide coherence, and, on the other, singling out a specific subject such as the one object of our consultations, without being able to evaluate how internal coherence for the specific subjects is made compatible with system-wide coherence.

Allow me to explain myself. One of the ways in which to interpret the term "coherence" is through avoiding of mitigating the enormous instances of overlapping and duplication that exist in the System. In large part, those overlaps and duplications are the result of addressing certain topics in different ways or through separate vantage points. Thus, as the years passed, the programmatic division of the work of the United Nations in its development pillar have been complemented with geographic divisions – national, regional, global, landlocked states, small island developing states – a division by sectors – agriculture, industry, education, health, energy, water – a division by disciplines – economic, social – and, among other aspects, a division by subjects, such as children, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, the elderly, etc. We also integrated into our work cross-cutting issues, such as the environmental concerns, the respect for human rights, and gender equality. With each International Conference, and with important events which gave rise to General Assembly resolutions, new approaches were juxtaposed on previous ones, giving origin to the complex

web of mandates and institutional arrangements which led to the situation that was found by the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence installed in 2006, and whose recommendations form the basis of the Secretary-General's Report A/671/836 of April 3, 2007.

Therefore, our first concern on the direction that our discussion is taking regarding strengthening the work of the United Nations regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women is that far from contributing to greater coherence, any decision that we take in an isolated manner on this particular subject will add to the juxtaposed approaches I have alluded to, worsening rather than improving the existing situation.

I would like to clarify that I am not questioning the importance of the topic, nor the significant achievements obtained, thanks in large part to the United Nations, in making the world aware regarding the objective of reaching gender equality and the empowerment of women. From my own country's perspective, we are fully committed to said objective. But our doubt arises from the different alternatives which have been presented to us in the Note of March 5 of the Deputy Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, and especially in the fourth alternative – the so-called composite entity – which could contain the risk of converting the matter of gender in a relatively self-contained subject, which would go against our search for greater coherence and also goes against the grain of the somewhat abused phrase of “gender mainstreaming” in all of our activities.

I am aware that this argument, taken to its ultimate consequences, would end up supporting the option of the “status quo”, leaving things as they are simply to avoid potentially making them worse. But that does not reflect our position. What we are suggesting is that in considering the other three options proposed in the Note of the Deputy Secretary-General, we should very much take into account the indirect effects of a partial solution to a problem of duplication or overlapping of functions on our broader goal of introducing greater over-all coherence to the work of the United Nations System.

For example, the option for a composite entity as the system of governance for the topic of gender equity and empowerment of women is the one that could have the largest repercussions on an approach that seeks system-wide coherence, by placing under one sole responsibility all activities – analytical, normative and advocacy typically carried out under the jurisdiction of the Secretariat, and those of an operational nature which tend to be carried out under the jurisdiction of a programme or a specialized agency. This alternative is not without its attractiveness, and we would be willing to study it carefully. But it should be pointed out that under the same logic we should examine whether it is desirable to merge the analytical and normative activities of the Secretariat with the operational activities of the United Nations Development Programme; for example, subordinating UNDP to DESA, or, perhaps, transferring DESA as part of the institutional structure of UNDP.

There has always been considerable overlapping between the work of both entities, since the Secretariat engages in operational activities and UNDP engages in analytical activities and also plays an advocacy role. Hence, the basis for a division of labor is not always clear. Indeed, some years ago it was not uncommon to hear – with some hyperbole, without doubt – of there being two different United Nations promoting development: one, the Secretariat, the other, UNDP. Fortunately, in the intervening years, considerable progress has been made in the coordination and complementarities between the work of the Secretariat and the programmes, including UNDP, a trend that could also be applicable to the topic we are discussing today, with improved coordination between two entities related to the institutional arrangements or the governance of gender equality in the United Nations: one, at the level of the Secretariat, through the merging of OAAGI, DAW and INSTRAW, and the other in UNIFEM, which translates into something close to the third option contained in the Note that I have

referred to repeatedly. That, in fact, would be our preferred option for now, although, as stated, we would be willing to explore the other options, always bearing in mind that any short-term agreements on this matter could jeopardize medium-term agreements on system-wide coherence.

I used the phrase “that would be our preferred option” in a very tentative tone. In the first place, because, in our judgment, the Note of March 5 of the Deputy Secretary-General does not contain too much value added to the proceeding Notes (of August 1, 2007, June 5, 2008 and July 23, 2008), which makes us doubt whether the Note rises to the aspirations contained in Resolution 62/277 of “provide a further, detailed modalities paper” regarding the different options. In the absence of more solid basis to take informed decisions, member countries might reveal certain reluctances to do so, opening the way towards the first option – the “status quo” – not as the result of a deliberate decision, but rather as a function of the lack of agreement on any of the other three alternatives that are on the table. In the second place, the institutional arrangements of governance are only one of the criteria we have to keep in mind. The other refers to the budgetary implications on each of the options, and neither is that part clear to us from reviewing the aforementioned Note.

Finally, under any of the alternatives that should finally be chosen, we see an important role for the Commission on the Status of Women as a point of contact between the Secretariat and the inter-governmental organs.

Distinguished co-chairs,

I trust that the foregoing reflections do not confuse even more an already complex panorama, but we understand that the reason for this informal consultation is precisely to put forth our doubts and concerns, and then to move on, combining our different points of view, to look for sensible and convenient solutions in support of the greater system-wide coherence of the United Nations.

Thank you.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Confederaziun svizra

Mission permanente de la Suisse
auprès des Nations Unies à New York

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United
Nations in New York

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63^d session of the General Assembly

2nd Meeting of the Informal Consultations

System Wide Coherence

**Statement by
Mr. Peter Sidler**

**Permanent Mission of Switzerland
to the United Nations**

New York, March 30th 2009

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

As this is the first time we take the floor in the context of your leadership of the system-wide coherence process, we would like to thank you for taking on this important task and assure you of our full commitment and support.

We heard last week in the JCC statement that the group is in favour of a system wide coherence process, which deals with its different components in a single approach. While we understand that the issues related to funding and governance are interrelated, we are not convinced that the linkages to gender architecture are sufficient to justify such an approach. We would therefore caution against creating artificial links which would prevent us from moving ahead towards a more coherent and efficient operational system.

We are looking forward to receiving the reports on funding and governance which we hope will build on existing instruments, such as Resolution 62/208 (QCPR). OP 29 of this resolution is a good example of concrete guidance from the membership to the system with regard to funding. We hope that the Secretary General will seize the occasion to appraise us on measures he has taken to implement this request of Member States.

With regard to gender, we would like to thank the Deputy Secretary General for her report. We very much appreciate all the work and effort that has been put into writing this document in response to Resolution 62/277.

Last year's consultations have clearly shown that the membership is unanimous in its support for a system which maximizes the efficiency of gender related operations at field level and has a measurable impact at the global level. We are of the opinion that these two goals would best be served by opting for the composite model. As underscored by the Secretary General in his speech on the 13th of March, this model stands out as the only possible option. It also ensures that existing agencies are accountable for their gender related activities. Furthermore, it has the significant advantage of not creating a new institution which would inevitably compete with other existing entities in terms of resources and mandate.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

On the basis of the four reports that the secretariat has submitted to the membership, we feel that it is now time for Member States (at expert level) to further discuss the detailed modalities of this composite entity.

The funding of this entity will without doubt be an important topic of our discussions. Several options could be envisaged, one of these could be financing a certain percentage of the resource base of this entity through assessed contributions from the Funds and Programmes and specialized agencies that implement gender related activities. In turn, these bodies would have the possibility to participate in the operational guidance of the gender entity.

In terms of governance, we endorse the Deputy Secretary-General's proposal to use existing structures rather than creating new ones. Such precedents actually exist in the system: The Board of UNDP/UNFPA has for example recently asked that UNOPS report directly to the board.

As for the links of the gender entity with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), we believe that we can also draw lessons from existing models. UNFPA for example is accountable to the UNDP/UNFPA Board, but it is guided thematically by the work of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD). A similar mechanism could be adopted with the CSW for the gender entity.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

We believe that the time is right for member states to constructively discuss the exact modalities of this composite gender entity. As these discussions will be quite technical, it would be advisable to hold them at expert level. On the basis of their work, we could then take decisions in plenary meetings.

We look forward to engaging in the further discussions and are confident that this work will help Member States to agree, in the course of the 63rd General Assembly, on the new gender architecture.

I thank you.



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Statement by HE Ambassador PARK In-kook
Permanent Representative
Plenary Informal Consultations on System-wide Coherence
March 30, 2009
New York

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Mr. Co-Chair,

At the outset, since this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor since the appointment of Co-Chairs, the Republic of Korea would like to express its sincere congratulations to Ambassador Mbuende, Permanent Representative of Namibia, and Ambassador Yanex-Barnuevo, Permanent Representative of Spain, on their appointment as Co-Chairs to lead this important process. The Co-Chairs can be assured of our full support in the consultations.

I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement and her personal commitment to and engagement in the system-wide coherence process, in particular, the strengthening of the UN System Gender Architecture.

Mr. Co-Chairs,

We started this process of strengthening the gender architecture two and half years ago with the sincere recognition that the current UN System has not effectively fulfilled its commitment to gender equality and women empowerment within the system as well as throughout the world. In the meantime, a Concept Note was submitted in 2007. As part of the second step, gaps and challenges were identified. Then the Institutional Options to address those gaps and challenges were presented as the third step.

Based on these exercises, the Assembly has adopted a resolution to take substantive action to create a stronger and more effective UN entity during this session and requested that the Secretary General develop modalities of institutional options to facilitate the decision by member states.

Now we have the fourth paper on Gender Architecture as a result of wide consultation among various UN organs. We appreciate the efforts of Deputy Secretary General Mm Migiro, ASG on Gender Issues Ms. Mayanja and her team in conducting extensive consultations and producing the common denominator to meet all gender related mandates of various entities.

We have not only a modality Paper in front of us but also a historic opportunity to reform the UN system to meet its commitment to gender. This is a very rare and precious opportunity for us to build a new architecture.

The next step we should take is to specify the option we would like to further explore. As self-evident in the paper, neither Department Model nor Fund/Program Model can fully address the identified gaps and challenges. The new architecture should be the most desirable one in terms of its potential to deal with all challenges in an effective way. It is clear that both the Department model and Fund/Program model have inherent limitations in addressing the gaps and challenges, namely: coordination and coherence; authority and positioning; accountability; resources; country-level support; and country-driven demands and ownership.

As it is clear that those two options are not able to effectively address the problems, and the Composite model has the greatest potential to achieve this goal, it seems natural that the logical choice would be the Composite Entity Model.

Mr. Co-Chairs,

As you emphasized at the opening remarks, the purpose of this meeting is to carry forward the work done during the last session and to achieve substantive progress. In order to do that, we should make a clear request to the Secretary General to further develop the modality of the Composite Entity in a more detailed manner in order to facilitate better informed decisions of member states. The paper submitted gives us a brief sketch on the governance structure, staffing and funding of the Entity but lacks details.

As to the governance, according to the Paper, the Executive Board would have features that are well known and yet provide opportunity for innovation. Since the functions of the Composite Entity are

broad, covering both policy and normative support functions and operations on the field, the existing mechanisms of other entities would not fit perfectly. Therefore, the governance structure should be further developed in an innovative way and carefully examined.

In addition, a staffing plan and organizational charter (organic diagram) should be presented. Furthermore, a summary of the financial implications for the reform and a concrete funding proposal are also expected. We understand that developing such a detailed proposal is not simple work; rather it is a complicated task which requires time and human resources. On top of that, the task requires serious input from and concerted efforts among various UN entities including gender entities and other relevant bodies such as the UNDP, UNICEP and UNFPA. But we are confident that the Secretary General will introduce a comprehensive proposal which will serve as an excellent basis for our substantive decision, as he has done with his proposals for the creation of DSF and strengthening of DPA.

Mr. Co-chairs,

Besides Gender Architecture, we have two other important areas where we are to agree on substantive actions. We look forward to substantive discussions on them soon since it is necessary to achieve progress on all elements of the Resolution 62/277.

However, we would like to remind that during the negotiation of the Resolution, two aspects on how to address three different elements were considered; namely, the need to achieve substantive actions on all important elements as the entire system-wide coherence process on one hand, and the need to address each respective issue from its own nature and perspective and with a different tempo on the other hand. As a result, we resolved to take stock of all of prior actions at the end of the entire process in the form of a single resolution. In other words, the consensus resolution allows us to take actions on three major areas respectively, though not necessarily simultaneously, according to which ever is ready to take an action on. All the actions will ultimately be incorporated as stock taking in a single resolution at the end.

Mr. Co-Chairs,

In conclusion, my delegation is confident that under your able guidance, we will certainly reach a consensus on Gender Architecture during this session, in parallel to or in advance of the other important areas, depending on the overall tempo of the consultations. In this spirit, the ROK delegation pledges its full cooperation to the Co-Chairs and constructive contribution to the consultation process. Thank you for your attention.



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General Assembly
Informal consultations on system-wide coherence;
gender reform

30th March 2009

Statement by the

United Kingdom

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Honourable Ambassador of Spain, Honourable Ambassador of Namibia, Mr Secretary General

I would like to thank you for your statement and I am very pleased to have an opportunity to discuss gender reform. The UK fully aligns itself with the EU statement given earlier by the Czech Republic, however I would like to add some comments from a national point of view.

Excellencies,

The PGA has already stated that this year is an historic opportunity to make progress on a new UN entity for women. And making progress is even more crucial in the current climate. The global economic downturn represents new and unprecedented challenges for the world's women. They will struggle to contribute to the economy, and put food on the table in the household. They will be disproportionately affected by cuts to public health services, as a result of tighter fiscal purse-strings affecting maternal and infant mortality directly.

Political upheaval and economic crisis may make it harder for women to get their voices heard in public policy and influence decisions that affect them. And the incidence of conflict is rising –we already know that it is often more dangerous to be a woman in a conflict situation than a soldier. The scale of the task at hand is enormous- but achievable.

Most member states already committed to making gender equality and women's empowerment a reality, including through the Beijing Platform. But we need the UN's support if we are to live up to those commitments in practice. Now is when we need the UN to be at its most effective in delivering for women.

The UK would like to thank the Secretariat and the Working Group for the valuable paper examining options. We especially welcome the efforts at analysing existing models within the UN system, and the consultative manner in which the exercise was conducted. We were encouraged last year by the vocal support from many member states from different regional groupings for these reforms. It is clear what the problems are. Our consultations do not need to look at this again. What we need now is to focus on the solution.

The options to establish a new agency or department (options B & C) have their merits, but, in our view, neither can tackle the problems of duplication nor achieve the vital combination of normative and operational functions, operational flexibility, system-wide reach and authority to ensure gender mainstreaming and accountability, and in-country capacity that is needed. Option A (status quo), in our view, is not acceptable, as it will not lead to an improvement of UN's work.

Based on the analysis contained in the paper, the UK remains firmly in favour of the composite entity option. We believe this represents the best means to address the gaps identified in DSG Migiro's July paper. Option D, by merging the normative and operational functions of the UN system, will ensure a stronger and more coherent policy capacity and support to the field. And by drawing from experience on the ground, the gender entity will be better able to support the deliberations of member states in forums such as CSW and ECOSOC. Better support to the field and stronger regional and country presence will enable the broader UN system to respond to unmet demands by partner governments for support in gender empowerment.

The UK also welcomes the proposal that the entity be led by an Under Secretary General. A strong leader can encourage the rest of the UN system to take women's needs into account in their activities and will hold UN partners accountable to ensure effective gender mainstreaming.

Excellencies,

I can assure you of my government's commitment to participate in a constructive way with other member states in these gender reform discussions. We hope to draw some tangible lessons from the field, building on successes that exist. We will also work with others to demonstrate how these reforms will help accelerate progress towards the MDG's. The UK

stands ready to provide financial resources to the reformed architecture to help it address gaps and challenges most effectively.

The UK also places great importance on the dialogue that is about to start on funding and governance of the UN. We are confident that reforms in these areas will help to make the UN more effective at delivering on the MDG's. We look forward to building on our discussions in the TCPR context. We do hope that when the gender reform discussions become ready for action we do not impose artificial boundaries on ourselves to delay the process. It is evident how urgent and needed reform is in order to allow the UN to better meet the demands of women world wide and move forward in the achievement of the MDGs. We would urge the co-chairs to facilitate further discussion with a view to reaching agreement in the 63th session of the GA. We look forward to continued discussions in the coming weeks to agree the main criteria of the new composite gender entity.

Thank you your Excellencies.