

Gender Equality & United Nations Reform A Resource Packet

**Section I: Current Actions & Activities
Section II: Women's Groups Statements**

**Women's Environment &
Development Organization (WEDO)
355 Lexington Ave., 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10017 USA
p: +1 212.973.0325
f: +1 212.973.0335**



www.wedo.org
www.misfortune500.org
wedo@wedo.org

Section I: Current Actions & Recent History

TALKING POINTS: Women's Demands for UN Reform

10 January 2007

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.

Key Demands

- The Gender Equality Recommendations must be adopted regardless of what happens with the rest of the Coherence Panel report.
- The high-level USG leadership is key to the success of the new agency. There must be an open, transparent and global search for a candidate who has substantive expertise in gender equality. We urge that civil society be consulted during this open search process.
- The new women's agency must be "fully and ambitiously funded" – most importantly we need to keep pressure on donors to make sure they do not short-change this. (at least \$500million – \$1billion)
- The new agency must have in-country operations/programs. 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. => There must be an efficient accountability mechanism, with the requisite authority, put in place.
- Ensure that the definition of the mandate of the new entity has a relevance to the needs and concerns of all women of ALL regions, especially those in which it will have operations. Ensure that the working group of UN officials set up an open and inclusive process to consult with women's rights groups and include their perspectives in shaping the structure of the women's entity. (This was specifically demanded by African Women's Forum)

Next Steps

- The timetable for the GA process is still not set. However, we need to be prepared for any informal discussion that could begin in February or March. The GA process is likely to be a long process: anywhere between 6 months – 1 year.

Key Actions

- **Send messages of congratulations and welcome to Ban Ki-Moon.** Show him our eagerness to work with him during his tenure to make gender equality a reality, starting with adopting and implementing the Coherence Panel recommendations. Women's groups need to flood him with messages to be really effective.
- **Find out where governments stand on the Gender Equality Architecture reforms. Also find out about broader issues within the Coherence Panel report.** Share this information with women's groups. Write to unreform@wedo.org or post information on the UN Reform wikispace <https://unreform.wikispaces.com/>. Key states and alliances on Coherence Panel issues include G77 (especially former chair South Africa and current chair Pakistan).
- **Lobby your local governments and UN officials to support this issue.** Talk to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry for Women's Issues and other relevant bodies. In addition to ensuring their support, some governments and officials are not aware of the importance of the Coherence Panel's recommendations on gender equality.
- **Engage with a variety of interest groups** – not only those in the women's movement – in order to have greater impact, more influential voices, and demonstrate linkages to more issues.

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355 Lexington Ave, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10017 USA
Tel: +1 212 973 0325
Fax: +1 212 973 0335

www.wedo.org

UN Reform and Gender Equality email: unreform@wedo.org

UPDATE:
UN Reform and the Gender Equality Recommendations
6 December 2006

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As promised, here's an update on what's been happening at the UN since the Coherence Panel released their report "Delivering as One" on November 9. Included in this email is an update of the various processes in play now, as well as several suggested actions and next steps for advocacy.

CWGL and WEDO

The recommendations from the Coherence Panel on reforming the UN's gender equality architecture incorporate many of the suggestions made by women's organizations and networks. Now the difficult work of implementation begins, including promoting their adoption during the inter-governmental processes at the UN, without having them weakened. A number of processes - both immediate and long-term - have been set into motion since the report's release, but unfortunately the timeline remains unclear and unpredictable.

The General Assembly Process: The GA is expected to review and debate the Panel's recommendations starting in early 2007, and right now the report is being translated so that it can be reviewed closely by all member states. While the informal discussions for the report now looks like it will run between late January - March, there will be a more formal process afterwards. Already some opposition is emerging to aspects of the Coherence Panel report including to the "One UN" at the country level. It is unclear how opposition to other parts of the Panel's report will affect the creation of a new women's entity with a new high level USG position.

Fast-track Initiative: Recently, there was also an unsuccessful initiative undertaken by the Secretary-General Kofi Annan to "fast-track" some of the recommendations in line with what he announced at the Nov 9 launch of the Coherence Panel Report, most importantly, the creation of the new Under-Secretary-General position to head the new women's agency. His proposal was essentially to create the position by the end of the year, with the idea that in 2007, the incoming SG Ban Ki Moon would appoint the new USG who would oversee the transition of consolidating UNIFEM, OSAGI and DAW into one new entity. Kofi Annan convened his Internal Policy Group to come up with this set of recommendations for the USG, which on the whole corresponded with what was laid out in "Delivering As One".

There has been opposition, especially from the G77, to this "fast track" initiative, and it has been scuttled even before reaching the GA budgetary committee (the 5th Committee) whose approval would have been needed to create the position. It is not clear whether the opposition was related to concerns with the gender recommendations in particular, or concerns with other parts of the report, but there was definitely a concern with the process. The creation of the USG post would have sustained the momentum to push forward the creation of the new women's agency. It looks likely now that we will enter into a long inter-governmental process next year, and a lot of work remains to be done to ensure that the gender equality recommendations go forward and are not weakened during that stage.

Meeting with the Secretary-General-elect: The SG-elect Ban Ki Moon has agreed to a meeting with women's NGOs on the Coherence Panel recommendations, probably to be held in New York in mid-December. This is an opportunity to discuss the new agency, the new USG position and gender equality across the entire UN system. Women in South Korea have also briefed him on these issues, and paved the way for the New York meeting. We will report back when we know more from this meeting.

Some of you have been involved in regional and national advocacy efforts to push for the implementation of the Coherence Panel's recommendations, and in particular the new women's agency and the creation of the USG position. If anyone has more information from these efforts or has prepared statements, we encourage you to send these to the SG-elect as soon as possible. Please copy us as we can hand-deliver these to the SG-elect in the meeting so he hears a range of women's voices from around the world.

We attach the Statement we sent in November, now signed by 121 organizations around the world. We continue to use this statement in our lobbying efforts.

Suggested Next Steps and Actions

For quick action:

1. SG-elect Ban Ki Moon meeting: Send in regional or national statements (or create them) and copy them to Lexi Lenton at lexil@wedo.org so they can be hand-delivered to the new SG. Some key messages could encourage and welcome the creation of a new women's entity, a USG position heading that entity, an open and transparent global search to fill the position, and a universal country presence with senior level staff.

For longer-term action:

2. Fact-finding: It is important to map out positions of governments, and we encourage you to talk to your contacts to see what they are planning around this or get them engaged with if they are not.

*Would they champion the gender equality recommendations, or are they opposed to them? What issues do they have with the entire report? What are their concerns, and if any, alternative proposals? As you gather information during lobbying in December and January, please share it with all of us.

News Release



For Immediate Release

Date: 9 November 2006

Press Inquiries

Anique Halliday, WEDO
+1 212.973.0325, anique@wedo.org

Jewel Daney, CWGL
+1 973.732.8782, jdaney@rci.rutgers.edu

GENDER EQUALITY MAY FINALLY ARRIVE AT UNITED NATIONS

Panel Report Responds to Women's Demands, Groups Release Statement

New York, NY – A high-level panel convened by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan will recommend the creation of a stronger agency for women in its report to be issued on Thursday Nov 9. For months, women's groups and allies around the world have actively lobbied governments and Panel members for the creation of this new agency to strengthen the UN's response to gender inequality. Over 90 groups worldwide have signed on to a statement released today praising the Panel's recommendations.

"We and our colleagues around the world are pleased that one of the Panel's boldest recommendations is for an independent women's agency that will strengthen the UN's capacity, leadership and resources for gender equality," said June Zeitlin, Executive Director of Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO). "As we told the Panel members, there is a tremendous gap between rhetoric at the UN on gender equality and the reality of women's lives. We believe that this consolidated agency will provide a stronger voice for women at both the global and country level."

The women's agency will consolidate three existing women's units within the UN—Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)—and will be headed by a newly created Under-Secretary General. The agency head will have higher status, a substantially increased budget and additional staff for its work at global and country levels.

By enthusiastically endorsing the Panel's recommendations, current Secretary General Kofi Annan could signal the importance of gender equality to the UN mission to fight poverty, provide humanitarian aid and protect the environment. The Panel's recommendations also present an unprecedented opportunity for incoming Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon to take decisive political action on behalf of women worldwide.

"These structural recommendations will only be meaningful if there is also significant political will—including financial and human resources—for their implementation" said Charlotte Bunch, Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University. "For years, women from around the globe have been calling on governments and the UN to strengthen their efforts to realize the rights of women that UN documents have codified, and this is a good move in that direction. Now the baton passes to Mr. Ban Ki Moon to ensure that the UN takes bold steps to support the Panel's recommendations in practice and not in name only."

To make this real, women demand assurances that this agency have strength at both global policy and country "on the ground" levels.

"We demand that all UN country teams include senior gender expertise including at the decision making level, with adequate resources and not just where necessary," said Bene Madunagu, General Coordinator of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). "Women's rights are not optional and should not be subject to the will of this or that donor interested only in this or that country."

The time for gender equality at the UN is now. Several global women's leaders will hold a press briefing today at 2pm in the UN Press Room (S-226) in New York. Speakers include: Bani Dugal of Baha'i International Community to the United Nations; Doris Mpoumou on behalf of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN); Cynthia Rothschild of the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), and June Zeitlin of the Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO).

- END -

Since 1990, Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) has fostered women's leadership in the area of human rights through women's global leadership institutes, strategic planning activities, international mobilization campaigns, UN monitoring, global education endeavors, publications, and a resource center. For more information, visit www.cwgl.rutgers.edu. Center for Women's Global Leadership / Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey / 160 Ryders Lane / New Brunswick, NJ / 08901 / USA / +1 732.932.8782.

WEDO is an international organization that advocates for women's equality in global policy. Working in key global forums such as the UN, WEDO advocates for and seeks to empower women as decision makers to achieve economic, social and gender justice, a healthy, peaceful planet and human rights for all. For more information, visit www.wedo.org. WEDO / 355 Lexington Ave., 3rd Floor / New York, NY / 10017 / USA / +1 212.9730325.

Section II: Women's Groups Statements

Statement on Reforming the Gender Equality Architecture of the United Nations

(CWGL/WEDO & 154 Signatories worldwide)
9 November 2006

Women's groups 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.

(Signatories follow.)

154 Signatories (as of December 22, 2006)

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, Sri Lanka
CEPIA- Cidadania Estudos Pesquisa Informaçao Aço, 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 Center For Women in Politics (ICWIP)
INFORM, Sri Lanka
Institute for Reproductive Health, The Philippines
Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales y Sociales, Argentina
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 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
Positive Women's 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

Statement on Reforming the Gender Equality Architecture of the United Nations (South Asia)

Women's groups from around the world including Nepal 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 the UN Member States and the Government of Nepal 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 Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI), Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and UNIFEM, have both normative and operational responsibilities, be better resourced, and be led by an Under-Secretary General (USG). 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 also urge that the entity retain the UNIFEM acronym as it is more widely known in all countries for its consistent work and crusade for gender equality.

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. We hope that the USG selected will represent the hopes, vision and experiences of women. 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 we urge that the entity have a strong programmatic focus with presence in every UN Country Team and is a member of the Executive Committee

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 in Nepal and South Asia 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.

Bandana Rana
Regional Coordinator
South Asia Campaign for Gender Equality

Dr. Chandra Bhadra
National Coordinator
Friends of UNIFEM, Nepal

Signatories

Aastha
ABC Nepal
Alliance Nepal
Beyond Beijing Committee
Business and Professional Women International
Business and Professional Women Nepal (BPW Nepal)
Community Action Centre (CAC – Nepal)
Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility Asia (CARAM Asia)
Centre for Policy Research and Analysis
College of Journalism and Mass Communication
Didi Bahini
Equal Access
Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association Nepal (FWEAN)
Forum for Women Law and Development
Homenet Nepal
Institute for Human Rights and Communications (IHRICON)
Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC)
Maiti Nepal
Nagarik Aawaz
National Network against Girl Trafficking (NNAGT)
Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS)
New Era
Pourakhi
Pro Public
Saathi
Shantimalika
Sancharika Samuha
WEAN Multipurpose Co-operative
Women for Human Rights Single Women's Group
Women's Studies Program, TU

H. E. Shaukat Aziz
Prime Minister of Pakistan
Co Chair UN Coherence Panel

15 November 2006

Your Excellency,

Greetings from the Women of South Asia!

We take this opportunity to extend our sincere gratitude to Your Excellency for your dynamic leadership and support in taking the voices of millions of South Asian Women before the United Nations. We greatly appreciate your valuable contribution in presenting the recommendations for an independent women's entity with substantial resources and mandate in a restructured UN. We would like to congratulate you and through you the other panel members for their hard work and dedication which we are confident will pave the way for significantly eliminating inequalities in all spheres: economic, civil, cultural, social and political.

Women's groups and allies in South Asia have expressed happiness that one of the Panel's boldest recommendations is for an independent women's agency that will strengthen the UN's capacity, leadership and resources for gender equality. They believe that this consolidated agency will provide a stronger voice for women at both the global and country level.

It is indeed heartening to know that the proposed women's agency will consolidate three existing women's units within the UN—Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)—and will be headed by a newly created Under-Secretary General. Many women's organizations from South Asia have urged that this entity retain the UNIFEM acronym as it is more widely known in all countries for its consistent work and crusade for gender equality. We sincerely hope that the USG selected will represent the hopes, vision and experiences of women. 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 Coherence Panel's recommendations with your leadership has we think signaled the importance of gender equality to the UN mission to fight poverty, provide humanitarian aid and protect the environment and to take decisive political action on behalf of women worldwide. We the women of South Asia recognize Your Excellency as an articulate and dynamic leader of the region. We have full confidence that Your Excellency will take up the leadership with other member states in demonstrating political will during the General Assembly by endorsing the Coherence Panel's recommendations on creating stronger gender equality architecture at the UN, and by establishing and adhering to a process and time frame for implementation.

Once again please accept our sincere gratitude for Your Excellency's valuable support, guidance and leadership.

With Warm Regards

Bandana Rana (on behalf of all network partners)
Regional coordinator, South Asia Campaign for Gender Equality



THE AFRICAN FEMINIST FORUM

NOV. 15-19 2006



Statement of the African Feminist Forum (AFF) on the New UN Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

We, African women from diverse women's organisations and networks across the continent participating at the African Feminist Forum in Accra Ghana, from November 15th -19th 2006 welcome the UN Secretary-General's High Level Coherence Panel's recommendations on strengthening the UN's institutional gender equality and women's empowerment architecture. We believe that the consolidated agency led by an Under Secretary-General with an ambitious country presence and substantially increased financial and human resources will enable the UN to deliver effectively its mandate for women's rights, respond to the needs of African women at country level and governments to better address the rights of African women at national and local levels.

We appreciate the establishment by the UN Secretary-General of a Policy Group to consider further the structure of the new women's organisation. We support and emphasize the Coherence Panel's recommendation for an open and transparent global search process for the recruitment of the Executive Director of this new entity.

We believe that women's rights are not optional, and that all efforts to create mechanisms within the UN system for the empowerment of women must be enabled with the necessary resources both human and financial, and with the requisite authority to effect the desired change at all levels including decision making levels. This will signal the importance accorded to women's rights and empowerment by the UN and its willingness to take bold steps to support the Panel's recommendation in principle as well as in practice.

Bearing this in mind, we call upon Member States to adopt the Coherence Panel's recommendations on the women's rights architecture within the UN system as a demonstration of their political will to bridge the tremendous gap between rhetoric and practice.

We also call upon the UN Secretary-General to do the following:

Ensure that the definition of the mandate of the new entity has a relevance to the needs and concerns of all African women.

Ensure that the Policy Group set up an open and inclusive process to consult with African women's rights groups and include their perspectives in shaping the structure of the women's entity.

Ensure that the new entity is allocated adequate human and financial resources and that these considerations should not be subjected to the will of donors, nor should they be resourced exclusively from voluntary contributions, but also from assessed contributions of Member States.

Strengthen UN Country Teams to address women's rights by incorporating senior women's rights specialists at the decision-making levels.

The UN Secretary-General and Policy Group must note that the time for the realisation of women's rights at the UN is now. We are committed to continue our engagement with the process of shaping the new entity.

Signed:



Participants at the African Feminist Forum

AFF Working Group

Ms. Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi
Ghana

Ms. Bop Codou
Senegal

Ms. Hope Chigudu
Zimbabwe

Ms. Ayesha Imam
Nigeria

Ms. Demere Kitunga
Tanzania

Dr. Bene Madunagu
Nigeria

Ms. Sarah Mukasa
Uganda

Dr. Sylvia Tamale
Uganda

Ms. Lynne Wanyeki
Kenya

Ms. Shamilla Wilson
South Africa

Ms. Everjoice Win
Zimbabwe

Burundi:

Ms. Justine Nkurunziza

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

Ms. Angelique Yohari

France:

Ms. Fatou Sow

Ghana:

Ms. Olajumoke O Ajayi

Ms. Ann Dela Amoah

Ms. Emelia Arthur

Ms. Jennifer Baffour-Awuah

Ms. Charity Binka

Ms. Rita Coker
Ms. Dorcas Coker-Appiah
Ms. Kathy Cusack
Ms. Angela Dwamena-Aboagye
Ms. Hamida Harrison
Ms. Afua Hesse
Ms. Abena Karikari
Prof. Takyiwaa Manuh
Ms. Rose Mensah-Kutin
Dr. Juliet Tuakli

Kenya:

Ms. Saida Ali Mohamed
Ms. Nyambura Gathumbi
Ms. Jean Njeri Kamau
Ms. Faiza Mohamed
Ms. Roselynn Musa
Ms. Mary Wandia
Ms. Wangari Kinoti

Mauritania:

Ms. Aminetou Mint El Moctar

Namibia:

Ms. Gladys Mutukwa

The Netherlands:

Ms. Josephine Abahujinkindi

Nigeria:

Ms. Abiola Afolabi
Ms. Uju Agbanu-Obiora
Ms. Mairo Bello
Ms. Olubunmi Dipo-Salami
Ms. Ukeme-Obong Ekong
Ms. Rosalie Gould
Ms. Ngozi Iwere
Community Life Project
Ms. Asma'u Joda
Ms. Olutoyin Mejiuni
Obafemi Awolowo)
Ms. Iheoma Obibi
Ms. Oluyemisi Obilade
Ms. Chibogu Obinwa
Ms. Emilia Okon
Ms. Theresa Okpa
Ms. Grace Osakue
Ms. Titilope Rasheedat Salaam

Senegal:

Ms. Aminata Dieye
Koumba Toure

South Africa:

Ms. Pregaluxmi Govender



THE AFRICAN FEMINIST FORUM

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