

Statement submitted on behalf of the global campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform in the United Nations by Amnesty International, Asia Pacific Women's Watch, Association for Women's Rights In Development, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, African Women's Development & Communication Network, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Women's Environment and Development Organization, WIDE - Globalising Gender Equality and Social Justice non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

Building a United Nations that Really Works for All Women

The global campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform welcomes consideration of “financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women” as the priority theme for the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

We also welcome statements by the Secretary-General and member states in support of strengthening the UN’s gender equality architecture.

The campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform now comprising 82 organizations in over 35 countries believes that the creation of a stronger UN entity for women will greatly advance gender equality, the empowerment of women and women’s human rights throughout the world.

For the past three decades, the UN has been a galvanizing force in efforts to define a comprehensive global agenda for peace and security, human rights, gender equality, women’s empowerment, poverty eradication and sustainable development. As a result, there have been significant advances for women, including through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Millennium Declaration and Development Goals. Various UN agencies have done important work on specific aspects of gender equality.

However, the UN still lacks an effective mechanism to deliver on many of the essential commitments made. It has several small under-resourced agencies focused exclusively on women’s issues. Other larger agencies make critical contributions to women’s human rights and gender equality, but this is usually a small part of their mandate, and often receives low priority.

As the Secretary-General has already stated on 25 November 2007, a stronger United Nations entity for women should be able to “call on all of the United Nations system’s resources in the work to empower women and realize gender equality worldwide” and “mobilize forces of change at the global level, and inspire enhanced results at the country level.”

The campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform therefore calls on member states of the UN, with the support of the women’s movement, to act now to create a stronger UN entity for women with the following essential requirements:

- Headed by an Under-Secretary-General to ensure representation and decision-making at the highest levels in both policy-development and program operations at the global and country levels. The new Under-Secretary-General post would provide higher level leadership than exists at present to more effectively drive the gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda.
- Extensive field presence and a strong policy and programmatic mandate essential to effectively improve the lives of women on the ground.

- Substantial and predictable resources to ensure the capacity to meet expectations and deliver results at all levels. It must be funded initially at a minimum level of \$500 million to \$1 billion USD with increases over time.
- Accountability at both national and international levels, including through meaningful involvement of civil society, particularly women non-governmental organizations.
- Promotion of gender mainstreaming by the integration of gender equality and women's human rights throughout the UN and especially in the UN Country Pilots and in all UN reform processes.

Strengthening the UN's gender equality machinery is a crucial part of financing for development. It will better enable the UN and governments to deliver on promises made to advance gender equality and women's human rights at the global and country levels.

Let us build a United Nations that really works for all women!