

55th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

**Ms. Michelle Bachelet
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women**

**Closing Remarks
14 March 2011**

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentleman,

The 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women convened to share innovations, best practices and successful experiences; to discuss gaps and challenges in implementing commitments and to agree on new ways for overcoming these obstacles in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

I congratulate Member States, as well as representatives of civil society and the UN System, on the interesting discussions that took place during the session. In these two weeks you considered issues of access, quality, and outcomes of education, as well as access to science and technology.

It is clear that the transition from education to the world of work remains fraught with challenges. The continuing weaknesses in the global economic and financial situation exacerbate these challenges, making gender-sensitive and targeted action especially urgent.

I welcome the focus in the agreed conclusions on the following six key areas:

- strengthening national legislation, policies and programmes;
- expanding access and participation in education;
- strengthening gender-sensitive quality education and training, including in the field of science and technology;
- supporting the transition from education to full employment and decent work;
- increasing retention and progression of women in science and technology employment; and
- making science and technology responsive to women's needs.

As noted in the agreed conclusions, quality education and equal access and participation in science and technology for women of all ages are not only imperative for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women – they are also an economic necessity, providing women with the knowledge and understanding necessary for lifelong learning, employment, better physical and mental health, as well as full participation in social, economic and political development.

