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Madame Chair,

2010 should go down in history as a groundbreaking year for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls around the world.

We welcome and celebrate the establishment of UN Women and congratulate Under-Secretary-General Michelle Bachelet on her appointment to the post. We greatly appreciate the excellent work she has done since her speech to the Committee yesterday morning.

But this year also sees a number of other important occasions: The 15th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 40th anniversary of the UN Women's Award for Peace and Security, the 10th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. In addition, we have just completed a successful summit in Millennium Development Goals where world leaders

Now we look forward to UN Women's role in ensuring that the resolutions and commitments are finally put to use. Challenge governments and the UN system at large to deliver in accordance with their commitments and obligations. Besides higher visibility and greater political clout, perhaps the most important expectation for UN Women will be to improve the connection between the normative framework, the declarations, resolutions – and their implementation and diffusion on the ground at the country level.

We therefore look forward to seeing UN Women take a strong and active role as an advocate and provider of capacity building across the UN Country Teams, assisting the Resident Coordinators, and supporting national gender equality mechanisms and civil society activities

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about change. Norway, as always, will stand ready to lend our support, both in political, financial and military terms, because very much remains to be done.

First, we must address the root causes of injustice and inequality. Among these are cultural and patriarchal stereotypes, often with religious connotations. We need a transformation of gender roles, which is essential to involve men as equal partners and agents for change.

Madame Chair,

Gender equality is about securing fundamental human rights including women's equal rights. We therefore encourage UN Women to strengthen the links between the Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the Special Procedures and all relevant forums and mechanisms.

We welcome the recent decision by the Human Rights Council to establish a working group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice. It is paramount that all nations scrutinize their laws, regulations and practices, as to identify and to eradicate any discriminatory effects against women, children and persons with disabilities.

Madame Chair,

Gender equality is a moral issue and a rights issue, not a technical question of economic growth and development. It is well documented that gender equality contributes to high economic performance and underpins any nation's economic, social and environmental sustainability.

There is a clear and documented positive correlation between women's and girls' health, education level and women's participation in the work force - and a nation's economic development. For all nations will remain poor as long as they see and treat women and girls as second-class citizens. A conviction that at least half of their nation's intellect and half their nation's work force will lose in global competition and the fight against poverty.

The experience of Norway and other countries have proven that a country does not have to be non-religious to have policies which promote racial justice and equal opportunities.

The most crucial factor for success is an active political will - to provide women and girls with the same rights, opportunities and capabilities as men and boys.

Madame Chair,

The Millennium Development Goals Report and a number of other UN reports show that the disadvantaged and most in need parts of the world are women, children, in particular girls and persons with disabilities. Although progress has been made, it is uneven. That fact that women's access to health care services varies depending on region is an example of this. It's time now to include

mainstreaming of gender equality and disability on an agenda as concerning disability, it is however difficult to talk about women's rights. It is not women's rights, but violence against women, and we have taken several measures to prevent violence against women. We note with great expectation that also Michelle Dacke has made this one of her top priorities.

Madame Chair,

In two weeks we will mark the tenth anniversary of the Secretary-General's 1929 Women, Peace and Security. The Norwegian Government has been a staunch supporter of this resolution since the beginning. We pay special attention to women's empowerment and participation in peace processes and post conflict rehabilitation, as well as protection against sexual violence in armed conflict. Ending impunity is a high priority, as well as our contribution to prevention measures and assistance for survivors.

Madame Chair,

As Norway's Prime Minister, Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, stated at the opening of the UN Summit, Norway is a strong supporter of all the Millennium Development Goals. We have taken on a special responsibility for reducing child mortality and improving women's health, and we strongly support the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health to mobilise the necessary resources to develop effective policies for women's and children's health. Gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial in this regard. The Millennium Development Goal Report and the reports from the Secretary-General show that gender equality is the single most important catalyst for change.

Madame Chair,

Achieving full gender equality is at the top of Norway's political agenda - we are an honour to follow suit. Take steps both in national and international policies and approaches to implement all commitments in the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women in the Beijing Platform for Action and in the Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security. It is a question of political will.

...of gender equality and dignity in all spheres concerning social development. It is essential to take women's rights. It would continue to be exposed to violence. The development support of the Secretary-General's Global Campaign to End Violence against Women and have taken several measures to fight this issue - both at home and abroad. We have high expectations that also the Secretary-General has made this one of his top priorities.

...of the Secretary-General's report. In his report we will find the text annexed to the Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Norwegian Government has been a staunch proponent of this resolution. It supports efforts to women's empowerment and participation in peace processes and post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as protection against violence in armed conflict. Today, priority should be given to women's participation in prevention, response and recovery in conflict situations.

...of the Secretary-General's report.

...of the Secretary-General's report. Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, stated in the opening of the UN Summit. Norway is a strong supporter of all the Millennium Development Goals. We have taken on a special responsibility for the goal of achieving child mortality and for women's health. MDG 4 and 5 - and fully support the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's Health. Children's health is a priority for Norway. We will continue to work for the goal of achieving child mortality and for women's health. The Millennium Development Goal Report and the reports from the Secretary-General state that gender equality is the single most important catalyst for change.

...of the Secretary-General's report. We urge all countries to follow the Secretary-General's call for national and international policies and approaches. It is important to all countries to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security. It is a question of political will.