

**Opening Statement
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**Expert Group Meeting on “Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women”
Organized by
The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)**

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Distinguished hosts, experts and observers,

It is with great pleasure I welcome you to this Expert Group Meeting on “Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women.” I would like to thank the experts for accepting the invitation of the United Nations Secretary-Gen

the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development in Qatar in 2008 from a gender perspective. The outcome of the Commission will also provide input to the follow-up to the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness in Ghana in 2008. The Commission's consideration of this theme presents a unique opportunity for the international community to adopt concrete policy recommendations which promote greater coherence between macroeconomic policies and resource allocations and internationally agreed development goals on gender equality and the advancement of women.

This expert group meeting therefore has the potential to not only influence the deliberations and outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women but to also have a broader impact on the important follow-up processes to the Monterrey Conference and the Paris Declaration.

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There have been a number of international commitments on financing for gender equality and empowerment of women. The Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that funding had to be identified and mobilized from all sources and across all sectors

At the ten-year review of implementation in 2005, the Commission, while welcoming

on gender equality among all actors. An important challenge is ensuring full attention to gender equality in the implementation and monitoring of the Paris Declaration.

A further challenge in relation to development cooperation is measuring the resource allocations that promote gender equality and empowerment of women, including both targeted interventions and gender mainstreaming efforts. The experience of, and future plans for, the OECD/DAC GENDERNET with the gender equality marker is critical in this context.

A recent study by OECD-DAC indicated that only \$5 billion of a total \$20 billion in bilateral aid allocated to specific sectors between 2001 and 2005 focused on activities that have gender equality as a principal or significant objective, with two-thirds of this funding directed to the social sectors, mainly health and education, and limited funds allocated to promoting gender equality in the agriculture, infrastructure or finance sectors.

In addition to public finance and multi-lateral and bilateral resources, funds and foundations have been established to mobilize resources for activities promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. Private sector companies have also provided funding for development activities, including gender equality, and developed products and services specifically geared to women and girls. There are a number of innovative sources of funding which could be more systematically and effectively tapped for support to gender equality and empowerment of women.

In recent years there has been increased attention to remittances as potential sources of development financing, since in some countries remittances surpass ODA flows. Many women migrants contribute to gender equality and empowerment of women in their countries of origin

Particular attention should also be given to the resource needs of national machineries for the advancement of women. Around the world, many such machineries are uneven in their effectiveness because they are marginalized in national government structures and hampered by a lack of resources and political support. It is essential that these mechanisms receive the financial and human resources necessary to carry out their mandates in support of the implementation of policies and programmes that promote gender equality and the advancement of women. National machineries should also be encouraged and supported to play a more active role in budget processes at national and local levels to ensure sufficient attention to resource needs for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women does involve significant costs, particularly because of the nature and scope of existing inequalities in all parts of the world. The costing of required national level interventions should be based on locally-identified needs, within the framework of broader global and national goals and targets. The costs for areas where progress has been slow should be specifically assessed, such as violence against women, women, peace and security, and women's participation in decision-making.

While the costs of addressing gender inequality are significant, the means to meet these costs are available. Research has, for example, shown that increased gender-sensitive investments in sectors not specific to MDG3 have positive impacts on gender equality and women's empowerment, when designed and implemented appropriately and concurrently with more targeted interventions. While research has also shown that investing in women is affordable within existing commitments on ODA, gender equality should be funded, at least in part, through the mobilization of domestic resources to promote ownership and sustainability.

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This Expert Group Meeting can stimulate thinking on how to systematically assess resource allocations for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, and where these fall short, on how to increase resources.

The 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that reliable data, disaggregated by sex, was critical, including for gender-sensitive planning and budget allocations. Proposals for possible indicators to measure progress in implementation of each priority theme should be submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women. This Expert Group Meeting is encouraged to consider possible recommendations on indicators on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women. You may wish to set up a small working group to specifically focus on ways to measure progress in all the areas covered here, including development of possible indicators, or alternatively to ensure that all working groups specifically address the issue of measuring progress in resource allocation and propose specific indicators on the basis of the recommendations made.

We have a challenging meeting ahead, and a focused approach and much hard work will be needed to arrive at consensus on the findings and recommendations of the meeting. A concise and focused report will be essential if we are to inform and impact the development of concrete policy recommendations of the Commission as well as the follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration.

We have a unique opportunity since it is the first time the Commission on the Status of Women has specifically addressed the issue of resource allocations for gender equality. We hope to have strong policy recommendations from the Commission. Experts at this meeting have the opportunity to directly influence these policy outcomes as well as to recommend ways to systematically and effectively measure progress in the future.

At the Commission on the Status of Women in February next year, the results of this expert group meeting will be presented during an interactive expert panel on the theme of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women. The report of the meeting will be widely distributed to delegates at the Commission.

The Expert Group Meeting has brought together many of the leaders in the field of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women. I encourage you to share as many good practice examples and lessons learned from your own work. I am confident that your individual knowledge, experience and expertise from national, regional and global contexts will provide crucial insights, and guarantee the success of this meeting.

I wish you very productive discussions and an excellent outcome. I, and my colleagues from the Division for the Advancement of Women, stand ready to assist you in your work in any way possible.

Thank you.