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**Carolyn Hannan, Director
Division for the Advancement of Women
United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs**

Distinguished representatives of
New Century

promote gender equality and empowerment of women, but a much less clear idea of the role of the Secretariat. I will share information on what the Division does concretely; provide some examples of processes we are currently involved in; and open up to a discussion on ways in which scholars could be involved in and contribute to this policy-level work of the United Nations on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Division for the Advancement of Women is part of the United Nations Secretariat, workin

equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured”¹. States resolved to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable². States also resolved to combat all forms of violence against women; and implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women³.

Discussions on the process for and outcome of this important review are currently underway. The Secretary-General’s report, “*In larger freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all*” - which provides the initial framework for discussions of Member States - does include reference to the seven recommendations that were made by the Millennium Project Taskforce on the MDG focused on gender equality and empowerment of Women. These are:

1. Strengthen opportunities for post-primary education for girls while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education;
2. Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights;
3. Invest in infrastructure to reduce women’s and girls’ time burdens;
4. Guarantee women’s and girls’ property and inheritance rights; promote the full and equal participation of women and girls in all spheres of political, economic and social life; and
5. Promote the full and equal participation of women and girls in all spheres of political, economic and social life; and
6. Increase women’s share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies;
7. Combat violence against women and girls.

While it is an achievement that these issues are included in the report of the Secretary-General, a lot of work is needed by gender equality advocates in the United Nations, in Member States and in NGOs and other groups to ensure that these issues are fully

discussion on the two themes before the Commission which provide important opportunities for broader participation.

To give a concrete example, the themes of the 50th session of the Commission in 2006 will be women in decision-making in health, education and employment and women in political decision-making. Two expert group meetings

ways in which scholars and activists could contribute to the work of the Division; and information on critical networks with which the Division could have contact.

One challenge we face is ensuring geographic balance in our contacts with scholars and activities. The Division faces resource constraints which make it difficult to support active participation from all parts of the world at meetings and events. While we benefit from constructive contact and collaboration with NGOs and academics within close proximity of the United Nations, we need to find ways to broaden our