

and the work of the Second Committee on women in development and rural women. The work of the Third Committee is critical since violence against women is a pervasive violation of women's human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality and development. An in-depth study of the Secretary-General and a General Assembly resolution (61/143) gave unprecedented visibility to violence against women and highlighted the urgency for action against it.

It is important that sustained attention is given to the work on peace and security. For this reason I am very encouraged by the fact that the theme of your Symposium is human security. Within the United Nations, there is systematic follow-up to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325. The work of the newly created Peacebuilding Commission should be followed carefully to ensure systematic incorporation of the concerns of women from the initial stages of its work.

I would also like to remind you that, at its 52nd session from 25 February to 7 March, the Commission on the Status of Women will review implementation of its agreed conclusions on "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding". This provides an excellent opportunity to address the issues of human security. I hope that you will bring the outcome of your Symposium to the Commission in February.

At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders highlighted that "Progress for women is progress for all". I look forward to continued cooperation with the National Women's Committee of the UN NGOs. Your work on human security is an important contribution since "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" are basic elements of the work of the United Nations on gender equality and empowerment of women.