

Tenth Triennial Conference of Pacific Women
New Caledonia, 27 May - 2 June 2007

Message from Carolyn Hannan
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Excellencies
Friends and colleagues

BACKGROUND

The **goal of promoting equality between women and men** has been on the agenda of the international community since the founding of the United Nations. The UN Charter declared faith in "the equal rights of men and women". At the Millennium Summit in 2000, it was recognized that gender equality is a precondition for the achievement of development that is truly sustainable. World leaders assembled at the 2005 World Summit at the UN in New York affirmed that "Progress for women is progress for all".

Over the past six decades, strong **global policy and legal frameworks** for gender equality have been put in place – the Platform for Action adopted in consensus in Beijing in 1995 and the human rights treaty, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979.

annual Directory of National Mechanisms. I welcome the opportunity to update the information on mechanisms for gender equality in the Pacific for the directory at this meeting. opportunity to

At its 52nd session in 2008, the Commission will focus on the priority theme: "*Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women*". It will also review progress in implementation of the recommendations it adopted in 2004 on "*Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post conflict peacebuilding*". The emerging issue will be decided on at a later date.

At its 53rd session in 2009, the Commission will focus on: "*The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS*." as its priority theme. It will also review the recommendations on: "*The equal participation of women and men in decision making at all levels*", adopted in 2006.

THE VALUE OF THE ANNUAL SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

Attending the Commission on the Status of Women provides a **unique opportunity to meet and discuss with gender equality experts** at different levels, including Ministerial level, from all parts of the world. The interactive events organized by the Commission are addressed by experts on the different themes the Commission is considering the priority theme, the review theme and the emerging issue. Following these introductory presentations by experts, the discussions are opened up to Member States, UN entities and non governmental

In most regions, **opportunities for face to face meetings between national machineries** are infrequent. In Africa, for example, the national machineries of the region normally meet only once a year in Addis Ababa. Some countries may of course meet again at meetings at sub regional level, such as this one, but such meetings also tend to be infrequent. Many countries participating at the CSW sessions therefore take the chance to organize regional or sub regional meetings for general discussions on the work on gender equality in the region or sub region.

Such meetings may be also used to develop **regional or sub regional positions** on the issues being discussed at the CSW, in order to be able to effectively influence the development of the recommendations (agreed conclusions) on the priority theme.

For many countries, attendance at the CSW provides important potential for **meeting with representatives of donor organizations**, both bilateral and multilateral – to discuss existing support or seek new support. All of the countries providing bilateral development assistance are represented at the Commission. Many of the critical UN agencies have their headquarters

take place in mid June this year. The report will be made available on the website of the Division and will be distributed at the Commission.

To gain in depth access to the experience of researchers, activists and other stakeholders working with the girl child at national, regional and international level, and support the preparation of the Commission, the Division organizes an **Expert Group Meeting** on the theme, about six months before the session. Around 10-12 experts from all regions meet to identify the key issues, assess progress in implementation and formulate recommendations. Last year, the Pacific region was represented at the Expert Group Meeting on the *Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and*

greater networking among national machineries in the region. It consists of an information portal (website) for the national machineries which provides information on all national machineries in Africa. The national machineries update this information as new developments occur – such information is available on the APF website.

information on the Commission on the Status of Women both before and after the annual sessions.

It might also be useful to consider the possibility of setting up a portal on the national machineries