



1 March 2007

Excellency,

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Member States for their interest in participating at a high level in the informal thematic debate of the General Assembly on the Promotion of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on 6 and 7 March 2007.

There are now more than 70 speakers inscribed in the speakers' list for the debate in the morning of 6 March, in the General Assembly. Given the large number of speakers, I have decided to extend the debate to the afternoon session in order to give Member States the opportunity to make statements.

However, I should appeal to speakers to make their statements as brief as possible, preferably 3 minutes each, and not to exceed 5 minutes, so that all delegations inscribed in the speakers' list have the opportunity to be heard. Given the time restrictions, I should also encourage delegations that may not have the opportunity to speak during the debate to circulate their statements and actively participate in the panel discussions.

The panel discussions will take place in the Economic and Social Council Chamber. A final programme is attached at Annex 1. There will be open seating in the Economic and Social Council Chamber and delegates are invited to obtain their respective country name plates for the seating of their choice (one plus one). I have also invited a number of ECOSOC accredited non-governmental organizations, which are listed at Annex 2, to actively participate in the informal thematic debate.

To enable other representatives, media and interested personnel to follow the panel discussions, seats will be available in the balcony of the ECOSOC Chamber. Conference Room 4 has also been designated as an overflow room for the afternoon of 6 March and the morning of 7 March.

I look forward to welcoming you all to the thematic debate.
Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Haya Rashed Al Khalifa

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations.
New York

Annex I

Informal Thematic Debate of the General Assembly Promotion of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 6 and 7 March 2007

6 March

Debate on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women

10 a.m. – 1 p.m. General Assembly Hall

- President of the General Assembly H.E. Haya Rashed Al Khalifa
- Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon

Panel discussions on women in decision-making:

3-6 p.m. Economic and Social Council Chamber

- Ms. Beatriz Paredes, Fundacion Colosio
- Ms. Srilatha Batliwala, Board Chair Women's Environment and Development Organization
- Ms. Pregaluxmis Govender
- Mr. Anders Johnsson, Secretary-General, Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Ms. Mary Robinson, Ethical Globalization Initiative
- Ms. Mallika Dutt, Executive Director, Breakthrough (moderator)

7 March

Panel discussions on empowerment of women including microfinance:

10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Economic and Social Council Chamber

- Ms. Diane Elson, University of Essex
- Mr. Sam Daley-Harris, Director Microcredit Summit Campaign
- Ms. Gisele Yitamben, Founder and President, Association pour le Soutien et l'Appui à la Femme (ASAFE)
- Mr. Mohamed Chafiki, Director Financial Forecasts, Ministry of Finance and Privatization, Morocco
- Dr. Juree Vichit-Vadakan, National Institute of Development Administration, Bangkok (moderator)

Annex II

Non-Governmental Organizations invited to the thematic debate of the General Assembly, to be held on 6-7 March 2007

Baha'I International Community

Ms. Bani Dugal

Center for Women's Global Leadership

Ms. Charlotte Bunch (or) Ms. Cynthia Rothschild

Hague Appeal for Peace

Ms. Cora Weiss

International Women's Tribune Center

Ms. Mavic Cabrera-Balleza

MADRE

Ms. Monica Aleman

WEDO Women's Environment and Development Organization

Ms. June Zeitlin (or) Ms. Doris Mpoumou

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ms. Samantha Cook

Women's World Banking

Ms. Michaela Walsh (or) Ms. Mary Ellen Iskenderian

Zonta International

Ms. Jacqueline Shapiro