

54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
Ms. Rachel Mayanja
Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on
Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
Closing Remarks

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We started this 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women two weeks ago, with high expectations for an invigorating meeting to exchange good practices and lessons learned. We looked forward to a meeting where stakeholders would share experiences in the implementation of the Platform for Action; one where persistent and new gaps and challenges in implementation would be considered; and where ways and means for overcoming these obstacles on the path to gender equality and women's empowerment would be identified.

On all these scores we have not been disappointed. Member States and representatives of civil society and the UN system held lively discussions on a broad range of subjects within the framework of the Platform for Action. The regional perspectives of these issues were also highlighted.

You considered how accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action contributes to the achievement of the MDGs, and provided concrete examples and constructive suggestions for improving this link. You considered women's economic empowerment in the context of current global economic and social realities, and pinpointed recommendations for preventing and addressing their adverse impact on women. You made recommendations for reorienting economic policies towards more inclusive and participatory approaches for the benefit of all -- women and men, girls and boys.

You considered the many ramifications of violence against women and what needs to be done to prevent, and adequately respond to it. You welcomed the Secretary-General's leadership through his campaign *Unite to end violence against women*.

You emphasized the role of strong national mechanisms for gender equality and underscored the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the practical realization of the principle of the equality of women and men.

There were also high expectations for the Commission to turn the year 2010 into a year of accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment. The Commission sent a strong political message of recommitment to the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action; and is shaping gender perspectives for the forthcoming high-level events of ECOSOC and the GA.

The resolution adopted this morning on the composite gender equality entity sends a powerful message which should galvanize all Member States to take action to consolidate the four women specific entities so that the United Nations can better support the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment at the country level. Action is needed where it matters most – in the lives of girls who do not have access to education or training. We must act to empower women who risk death and disability in childbirth; those who work long hours for little, unequal, or no pay. We must commit ourselves to ensuring a place for women at the peace table, on the village council and in national parliaments. By ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, we promote the progress of our entire society.

As the work of this Commission comes to an end, let us go resolved to live according to the commitments that we all made. These commitments need to be carried into the forthcoming intergovernmental processes here at United Nations Headquarters, and into ministries of finance, economy, planning, education, health, environment and others. Local and municipal authorities, Parliaments and the private sector, must also be involved in turning the commitments we have made here into concrete and practical actions.

I call on you, Member States, United Nations entities and civil society to carry the commitments from this Commission into your respective decision-making fora. And I call on civil society to do their part so that we are all held accountable.

I thank you, Chair, and the members of the Bureau, for steering the work of this Commission to a successful conclusion. To those who will be returning home, I wish you a safe journey and we look forward to welcoming you back to the United Nations in March 2011.

Thank you.