

**Joint Statement
on behalf of the
United Nations Regional Commissions**

**UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)
UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)**

**to the 52nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
(New York, 25 February - 7 March 2008)**

**Delivered by Ms. Sonia Montano
Women and Development Division
ECLAC**

Mr. Chair,
Distinguished delegates,
Representatives of NGOs,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address the 52nd session of the CSW on behalf of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA).

I would like to congratulate the Bureau and all the delegates for selecting the priority theme of the session. *Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women* is of key importance in implementing the commitments to gender equality reflected in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, included the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The discussion of this theme at CSW in 2008 is also very timely, as it can provide inputs into the preparatory process for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha in November 2008.

Regional dimension

A regional dimension is vital for UN work as it provides a link between national and global levels and translates global commitments and processes into region-specific contexts and priorities. It also facilitates measuring progress and monitoring the implementation of the major commitments by Member States.

In the context of a globalized world, there is an increased interest of Member States in taking advantage of a regional dimension, including in particular the platform provided by the Regional Commissions, to improve the effectiveness, accountability and results-based delivery of the UN system, and to strengthen the development pillar of UN work.

This interest is reflected in several resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2007, in which the Regional Commissions are requested to continue to strengthen their efforts to address regional and interregional aspects of the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, and to undertake specific regional consultations in order to provide inputs to the Doha Conference.

The consultations will be held in all five regions in the first half of 2008, with the support of regional development banks and other relevant entities. These consultative processes will be an important channel to voice concerns and recommendations related to gender aspects of financing for development and to provide the context of specificity for each region. The outcomes of regional consultations will draw on recommendations of the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women and recommendations of the joint meeting of the IANGWE and the OECD/DAC Gendernet, held in Paris in January 2008. We believe that this synergy will

substantially contribute to strengthening key messages on what has to be done to fully integrate a gender perspective into the financing for development process.

Financing for Development

The Regional Commissions have been supporting Member States in the implementation of the recommendations of the Monterrey Consensus related to gender included in the chapters on mobilization of domestic resources and systemic and institutional changes.

This has been done through promoting women's employability, including women's entrepreneurship, micro-financing and support to women in rural areas, in addition to work on gender budgets and gender-sensitive public investment, socially and gender-responsible business, and mainstreaming gender into development policies.

From a regional perspective, progress has occurred in some of these areas such as gender budgets, but gender is still not part of public finance discussions and economic policies. These remain largely blind to gender, due also to the fact that decision makers are not provided with sex disaggregated data that can help informed policy decisions. National development plans such as the MDG-based National Development Strategies (NDS) or Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) address gender in general and often in areas related to social development, such as health and education. However, the critical areas of NDS/MDGs or PRSP related to economic policies remain gender neutral and are not associated with budgetary commitments.

The Regional Commissions could be particularly effective in contributing to progress in mainstreaming gender into financing for development processes, through, e.g.:

- Using the regional platforms to promote dialogue between ministries of finance and gender economy machineries;
- Exchange of good practices and providing policy recommendations on concepts, mechanisms and tools for financing gender equality;
- Tracking ODA resources for gender equality in the regions' Member States.

Violence against women

All Regional Commissions stand united with the rest of the UN system behind the Secretary-General's Campaign to End Violence Against Women (VAW).

The Regional Commissions in the past have provided technical assistance to Member States in order to advance the global commitments of addressing and eliminating violence against women as a violation of human rights and an impediment to development. Our commitment will increase in the future, building on "a deep and broad partnership, bringing in all society to take us to the end of violence against women and girls everywhere", as the Secretary-General stated at the launch of his campaign.

UNECA continues to raise awareness on violence against women through monitoring the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and the roll-out of the African

Gender and Development Index (AGDI). The Index seeks to find out what African Member States are doing in addressing violence against women.

In addition, UNECA will be developing a methodology to collect data on gender-based violence to be used by Member States in Africa. UNECA is also Co-chair with the African Union of a Network on the Prevention of Gender-based Violence and Violence against Children, made up of a number of Member States, UN agencies and NGOs based in Ethiopia. The network aims at supporting and strengthening regional initiatives on gender-based violence, as well as consolidating the efforts and impact of the UN Campaign on VAW and anchoring this initiative in the African agenda for better and profound impact.

UNECE plans to continue its work of leading a Task Force on violence against women that operates under the framework of the Conference of European Statisticians. The Task Force focuses on the improvement of survey methodology and the development of common indicators and instruments for measuring violence against women.

UNECE is planning to inform a broad range of interested parties on definitions and methods to measure gender-based violence and to disseminate analytical products and available statistical data, with the launching of a website on the measurement of gender-based violence, presenting statistical data from 11 countries in a unified framework.

ECLAC is launching a regional observatory on gender parity with emphasis on political participation of women, women's contribution to development through unpaid work and violence against women. This will be an interagency and intergovernmental initiative aimed at improving gender policies and strengthening national capacities.

UNESCWA focuses on violence in the context of wars and conflicts since women in Iraq, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as women displaced to third countries in the UNESCWA region, are subject to violence as a result of armed conflict and instability.

The UNESCWA Centre for Women, established in October 2003, continues to expand its work on the situation of women in Arab countries that have been subject to wars and conflicts, showing how women are impacted differently than men. The Centre disseminates country-specific studies and video documentaries on how UN conventions and treaties may be used to protect and advance the status of women.

UNESCAP continues to develop research studies on harmful traditions and cultural practices in the South Asia and the Pacific subregion, which constitute or perpetuate violence against women, and has provided gender analysis on child sexual abuse and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, particularly the girl child and young women. UNESCAP has worked in partnership with UNICEF and ECPAT International, women's research institutes and NGOs.

Through a joint initiative, DAW, the Statistical Commission and the Regional Commissions are committed to advancing the monitoring of violence against women. This initiative aims to build the capacity of national statistical offices and national machineries for women to use VAW indicators for data collection, monitoring and informing Member States on the impact of their policies and programmes on VAW.

I thank you for your attention.