

**Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly  
Second Committee  
14 November, 2005**

**Introductory Statement  
by  
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Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Colleagues and friends,

I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Chairperson, on your election, and to the other members of the Bureau. I pledge my full support, and that of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women, for your work during this session.

It is my privilege to present the Secretary-General's report, prepared under agenda item 56(b): *Women in Development: the impact of globalization on women's employment and empowerment* (A/60/162). Consideration of women in development within the framework of the General Assembly's work on economic and financial matters, on a biannual basis, provides an opportunity to highlight the gender perspectives in current and emerging issues, and to contribute to the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive development policies. Earlier reports have focused on macro-economic policy-making and development planning (A/50/399 and A/52/345), access to financial resources (A/56/321), and most recently, attention to gender perspectives in national-level implementation of global policies through existing planning and reporting instruments (A/58/135).

The Secretary-General in his address to the 2005 World Summit highlighted that the Summit served as "a trigger for progress on critical issues". The outcome of the 2005 World Summit reaffirmed that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and

mutually reinforcing and that that gender equality and empowerment of women is essential for advancing on each of these three pillars of the work of the United Nations. The outcome reaffirmed that full and effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, is an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. Failure to address gender equality dimensions in any area of work of the United Nations not only exacerbates inequalities between women and men but also compromises the achievement of all other goals.

As Mr. Jose Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, pointed out during his statement to the Second Committee on 3 October 2005, the World Summit reaffirmed that gender equality is essential to advance development, and produced commitments to actively promote the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and social spheres.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

In accordance with General Assembly 58/206, the present report of the Secretary-General focuses on the impact of globalization on women's employment and empowerment, using examples from the service sector. The report reviews both general trends in women's employment and the benefits and challenges faced by women as a result of the growth of the service sector. The report examines factors, such as access to assets, markets and infrastructure as well as economic activities, which affect the potential costs and benefits of trade liberalization on women. On the basis of contributions received, the report also provides examples of activities undertaken by United Nations entities to support government efforts to promote gender equality in the service sector. It concludes with recommendations for the consideration of the Assembly.

The increased presence of women in the labour force, which was estimated at 1.2 billion in 2003 - up from 1 billion in 1993, is one of the positive achievements identified in the ten-year review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. However, although the

employment of women has increased, in some areas this has been paralleled by high unemployment rates, lower wages and deterioration in terms and conditions of employment, including insecure contracts, benefits and social protection. Many female home workers, for example, receive low wages, are unprotected by labour laws and do not receive social welfare benefits. The report confirms that women represent 60 per cent of the world's 550 million working poor and are more likely than men to work in the informal sector. While there is variation in country-specific conditions, both horizontal and vertical segregation persist across the world, relegating women to certain types of work and/or preventing them from reaching managerial positions. Women dominate in part-time work as a result, inter alia, of their disproportionate share of unpaid care work. Gender wage gaps persist in all sectors throughout the world, largely owing to occupational segregation, and women's high rate of participation in part-time work. There has been a narrowing of wage gaps in some areas in many countries. However the scarcity of wage data disaggregated by sex makes a thorough assessment of gender wage gaps difficult.

The internationalization of services is at the core of economic globalization and the service sector is today the largest and fastest-growing sector of the world economy. Although most developing countries still rely on agriculture for their wealth creation, the service sector is growing steadily. The report points out that slow growth or a decline in women's share of job openings in the manufacturing sector have led women to either withdraw from the labour force or move into the service sector. The rate of female employment in the service sector varies across regions. Information and communication technology has contributed to increased employment and economic opportunities for women in many countries, including in the services sector. Women working in the service sector are mostly in community, social and personal services, for example in the health and tourism sectors, which require lower levels of skills, while men dominate in areas such as financial and business services. Female workers are often preferred in labour-intensive service industries because they are considered cheap and flexible labour. Downward pressure on wages as a result of global competition places limitations on women's bargaining power.

The report discusses the increased outsourcing of services. In some countries in Asia, business process outsourcing is the single largest technology-enabled employer of women and a field in which women are earning significant livelihoods, through, for example, medical and legal transcription work, software services, and the maintenance of daily accounts for small businesses located in other countries. The flexibility of teleworking has also opened up new opportunities for women by enabling them to work from home. However, this new organization of work has some less than positive implications for women since women telework in addition to their existing domestic tasks, which creates a double work burden. They receive low wages relative to those working in the organized sector and have insecure employment contracts (if contracts exist at all). Very often women have to make substantial investments to secure their work, including the purchase of computers and payment for electricity and Internet connectivity.

The report refers to the emerging issue of international migration that provides women access to employment including the service sector. Many migrant women work in the health sector, particularly as nurses and physical therapists, and such jobs tend to follow well-recognized gender stereotypical patterns. They also tend to have lower earnings relative to typical male employment. With many highly educated women from developing countries undertaking unskilled or semi-skilled work, the deskilling of women migrant workers has become a serious problem.

The report concludes with recommendations for the consideration of the Assembly. Policies need to be developed to enable both women and men to benefit from opportunities associated with the service sector, including through trade liberalization, and to mitigate the negative effects on women. Strategies to enhance the participation of women in managerial positions need to be developed or strengthened. Gender statistics and sex disaggregated data should be routinely collected for all sectors and at all levels of employment. Indicators and benchmarks on the impacts of new forms of employment, such as outsourcing and teleworking, need to be developed and monitored on a regular basis. National policies and practices should be reviewed in order to eliminate discrimination against migrant women in employment in the service sector. Increased attention should be given to gender-specific barriers to migration, recruitment practices, access to information, human rights protection and remittance procedures.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

The nexus between international migration and development, and the need to address the challenges and opportunities that migration presents to countries of origin, destination and transit, were highlighted in the World Summit. The *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women and International Migration* was prepared in 2004 and presented to this Committee in the Secretary-General's report A/59/287. I am pleased to inform you that the *World Survey* is now available as a United Nations publication. I hope that this publication will be of use in the preparations for the high-level dialogue of the General Assembly on international migration and development to be held next year, in order to identify appropriate ways and means to ensure a gender sensitive approach to migration. Many of the issues to be raised in the high-level dialogue were addressed in the *World Survey*, including the effects of international migration on economic and social development, remittances, and trafficking in persons.

In addition to the references to the importance of ICT for gender equality and empowerment of women in the report before this committee, two reports of the Secretary-General to the Third Committee of the General Assembly (A/60/170 and A60/165), also addressed the importance of identifying and addressing the gender perspectives in relation to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). They called for the full integration of gender perspectives in the preparations for, implementation of and follow-up of the World Summit of the Information Society in Tunis. The report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A60/165) also recommended that the Summit should address the priorities and needs of rural women, including resources to access and use ICTs effectively, and ensure rural women's participation in developing and implementing ICT activities at the national and local levels. In this context, I am pleased to share with you a report newly published by the Division for the Advancement of Women: "Women 2000 and Beyond: Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women through ICT" which has been prepared for the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

The 2005 World Summit, building on other United Nations conferences and summits over the past decade, highlighted the cross-cutting nature of gender perspectives and their relevance for development, including the for promotion of economic growth and poverty eradication. Policy agreements at the global level do not, however, in and of themselves ensure implementation. In the Declaration adopted at the ten-year review of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action during the 49<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women earlier this year, Member States welcomed progress made, but recognizing the remaining challenges and obstacles pledged further action for full and accelerated implementation. Attention has to be given to the development of implementation strategies, including the establishment of targets and indicators, and to the establishment of follow-up and reporting mechanisms.

The work of the Second Committee provides an opportunity for broadening and strengthening attention to gender perspectives in the pursuit of economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development. I wish you, Mr Chairperson, and the Committee, a productive deliberations. We look forward to working with the Committee in moving towards our common goal of enhancing the role of women in development and promoting gender equality.

Thank you.