

**Remarks by Carolyn Hannan, Director  
Division for the Advancement of Women  
UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

**At the parliamentary event organized by the  
Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Division for the Advancement of Women  
On the occasion of the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women  
United Nations, New York, 27 February 2008**

Madame Chairperson, Ms Mónica Xavier,  
Speakers and Members of Parliament  
Distinguished delegates

I apologize for not being able to be with you this morning. I am delighted to welcome you to the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women and to have the opportunity to make some brief remarks.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the very important work of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

I also express my appreciation for the excellent, long-standing collaboration between my Division and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This is exemplified by the joint production of the Map of Women in Politics 2008. This is a widely utilized and appreciated tool. It would be wonderful if we had a similar tool on women's participation in all other areas of decision-making. The Map will contribute to the review next year of the implementation of the agreed conclusions the Commission adopted on "The equal participation of women in men in decision-making at all levels" in 2004.

The importance of these parliamentary events on the priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women was recognized by the Commission in 2006. This annual event provides a unique opportunity for parliamentarians to contribute to and influence the work of the Commission on the Status of Women.

I am sure you have had very useful discussions on the very important priority theme for this session of the Commission – "Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women". Through consideration of this theme, the Commission will directly address the gap between the global policy commitments and implementation at national level which was highlighted in the ten-year review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2005. Limited access to resources is clearly one of the critical elements in the persistence to this gap.

The Commission's deliberations are also well-timed to explore the gender implications of financing for development and to influence the follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus in Qatar later this year. This presents a unique opportunity for the international community to adopt concrete policy recommendations which promote greater coherence between macroeconomic policies and resource allocations and internationally agreed development goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women does require significant resources, because of the nature and scope of existing inequalities between women and men in all parts of the world. The costing of required national level interventions should be based on locally-identified needs, within the framework of broader global goals and targets. The costs for areas where progress has been slow should be prioritized, such as violence against women, women, peace and security, and women's participation in decision-making.

While the costs of addressing gender inequality are significant, the means to meet these costs are available. ODA can make a significant contribution, but it is critical that gender equality should also be funded through the mobilization of domestic resources, to promote ownership and sustainability.

Research has shown, however, that adequate resources have not been systematically allocated through domestic resources. Many excellent gender equality policies, strategies and action plans are developed without adequate attention to the resources needed for their full implementation. Evaluations and audits carried out on implementation of these policies and strategies do not include attention to the resources made available.

Insufficient budgetary resources continue to undermine the effectiveness and sustainability of both national mechanisms for the advancement of women and women's organizations and networks in civil society in their work in advocating for, supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

One area where progress has been made is gender-responsive budgeting. Initiatives to analyze budgets at national level from a gender perspective, and to more closely link policy commitments on gender equality with resource allocations, have been undertaken in approximately 60 countries. Many of these efforts have been initiated by non-governmental organizations, but in an increasing number of countries Ministries of Finance and Planning have also been involved. Parliaments have also been actively involved in these efforts in a number of countries.

Implementation of the policy outcomes of the Commission on financing for gender equality and empowerment of women will only be achieved at national level if these outcomes are well known and systematically and effectively used at national level. These agreed conclusions will be available in all United Nations languages, in a brochure format, by mid 2008.

Parliamentarians could play a critical role in this work, by bringing the outcome of the Commission to the attention of parliaments and promoting active follow-up on the recommendations. The theme has engaged a broad range of stakeholders at different levels in the preparatory process, and there is potential for ensuring that the outcomes make a significant difference to gender equality work at national level.

I hope there will be further opportunities during the Commission for parliamentarians to discuss with a broader group of stakeholders, including representatives of governments, UN entities and non-governmental organizations, how the outcomes can be used at different levels, and how progress can be most effectively assessed and documented when the Commission will review the implementation of the agreed conclusions in two-three years time.

Let me conclude by saying a few words on the launch of the Secretary-General's important campaign on violence against women at the opening of the Commission on Monday. The campaign will engage all parts of the UN system, as well as Member States, other international and regional organizations and NGOs, the private sector and media. I hope that it will also engage parliamentarians all around the world, and that we can have a close collaboration with IPU on this work.

The campaign will aim to mobilize public opinion to ensure that policy makers at the highest level work to eradicate violence against women. The Secretary-General is calling on world leaders to lead national campaigns to end violence against women. The growing commitment of men to prevent and combat violence against women will be leveraged and the campaign will encourage the active involvement of men and boys.

Running from 2008-2015 - to coincide with the MDGs - the campaign will focus on three key areas- global advocacy, strengthened efforts and partnerships at all levels, and UN leadership by example. The link to the MDGs reflects the fact that violence against women constrains their active involvement in development and is a serious obstacle to the achievement of all internationally agreed development goals.

We look forward to working closely with parliamentarians and IPU in this important campaign.

Thank you