

UNIFEM Welcomes the Creation of UN Women — the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Dear Friends and Partners,

Today is a historic day. This afternoon, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously decided to establish [UN Women](#), the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The creation of a strong UN organization that will be a champion to promote and advance the rights of women and girls worldwide has been a goal we have been advocating for many years, and I know that you will join me in celebrating and embracing this momentous achievement.

As you will know, UN Women will merge UNIFEM with its three existing sister UN entities working on gender issues — the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). For many years, we have effectively worked with national, regional and global partners to generate a stronger public policy response to previously under-recognized women's rights issues, such as ending violence against women, increasing women's political participation, and prioritizing women's leadership in forging peace and security.

At the same time, we have faced serious challenges in our efforts to support countries to implement commitments to gender equality, in part because of inadequate funding and because there was no single recognized driver to lead the UN response for gender equality support. This is why we wholeheartedly joined UN Member States and women's rights advocates in the call to strengthen the UN system to render even stronger support to the advancement of gender equality.

Today marks a great new beginning, not an end. The kind of work that UNIFEM has supported will continue as we merge into an institution that will be more robust and coherent, better positioned and resourced than the sum of its constituent parts. I count on all of you to continue to be with us on this exciting journey. Your support throughout the years and your tireless engagement on behalf of the world's women has made this success possible.

UN Women will become fully operational on 1 January 2011. It is important to note that until then we will continue to be fully operational as part of the new entity. Agreements made with UNIFEM, whether in the context of partnerships, programmes or funding arrangements, will then be transferred to and honoured by UN Women.

Over the past decades, there have been many achievements in advancing the women's rights and gender equality agenda, yet much still needs to be done. We now know that we will be stronger in pursuing our joint efforts for women and girls globally. Let's seize this moment, and the momentum, and work with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

Inés Alberdi
UNIFEM Executive Director



Statement by the Secretary-General on the Creation of UN Women

I welcome today's vote by the 64th General Assembly to merge the four gender entities of the United Nations into [UN Women](#) — the United Nations



Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. I am grateful to Member States for having taken this major step forward for the world's women and girls. I thank Ambassador Tiina Intelmann of Estonia and Ambassador Ghazi Jomaa of Tunisia for their determination and skill in guiding the negotiations to this positive outcome.

Today's action does more than consolidate United Nations offices, it consolidates United Nations strengths. UN Women will significantly boost UN efforts to promote gender equality, expand opportunity, and tackle discrimination around the globe. It is also an important step in our wider effort to strengthen UN system-wide coherence to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

UN Women is a recognition of a simple truth: Equality for women and girls is not only a basic human right, it is a social and economic imperative. Where women are educated and empowered, economies are more productive and strong. Where women are fully represented, societies are more peaceful and stable.

That is why I have made gender equality and the empowerment of women one of my top priorities — from working to end the scourge of violence against women, to appointing more women to senior positions, to efforts to reduce maternal mortality rates.

Our challenge now is to make UN Women fully operational. I will continue my outreach with Member States and civil society in seeking a dynamic Under-Secretary-General to lead UN Women. I commend the leadership and staff of DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM for their commitment to the cause of gender equality; I will count on their support as we enter a new era in the UN's work for women.

Once again, I salute the General Assembly for its action. Women of the world look to the United Nations for leadership — and Member States have delivered.

Ban Ki-moon
UN Secretary-General

Joint Statement by DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM

We enthusiastically welcome the unanimous decision by the General Assembly to establish the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as UN Women.

UN Women will be a dynamic and strong champion for women and girls around the world, providing them with a powerful voice at the global, regional and local levels. Its establishment will boost the United Nations' ability to support and work with Member States in accelerating progress towards achieving the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, expanding opportunity and tackling discrimination against women and girls. UN Women will work with the entire UN system, and will forge effective partnerships with all stakeholders, including with civil society and women's organizations.

We are committed to jointly implementing our mandate and functions as UN Women, with renewed vigour to meet oncoming challenges and help fulfil the rights and expectations of the world's women and girls that this opportunity affords. We are confident that Member States will provide UN Women with the robust resource base necessary for the effective fulfilment of its mandate. We look forward to the appointment of the Under-Secretary-General to head UN Women and lead this work.

UN General Assembly Resolution on the Creation of UN Women

The following is a reproduction of the section of [UN General Assembly resolution on system-wide coherence](#) (A/64/L.56) relating to the creation of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

Strengthening the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women

Establishment of the entity

49. [The UN General Assembly] *Decides* to establish, by the present resolution, as a composite entity, a United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, to be known as UN Women, by consolidating and transferring to the entity the existing mandates and functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat, as well as those of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, to function both as a secretariat and to carry out operational activities at the country level, to be operational by 1 January 2011;

50. *Also decides* to establish an Executive Board as the governing body of the entity to provide intergovernmental support to and supervision of its operational activities;

General principles

51. *Decides* that:

(a) The Charter of the United Nations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including its 12 critical areas, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and applicable United Nations instruments, standards and resolutions that support, address and contribute to gender equality and the empowerment and the advancement of women will provide a framework for the work of the entity;

(b) Based on the principle of universality, the entity will provide, through its normative support functions and operational activities, guidance and technical support to all Member States, across all levels of development and in all regions, at their request, on gender equality, the empowerment and rights of women and gender mainstreaming;

(c) The entity will operate on the basis of principles agreed to through the process of the comprehensive policy review in its operational activities, in particular responding to the needs of and priorities determined by Member States, upon their request;

(d) The entity will work in consultation with the respective national machineries for women and/or the focal points designated by the Member States;

(e) Data used by the entity must be verifiable, accurate, reliable and disaggregated by age and sex, including information provided by national official sources;

52. *Also decides* that the establishment of the entity and the conduct of its work should lead to more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system;

53. *Further decides* that the mandate and functions of the entity shall consist of the consolidation of the mandates and functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, with the additional role of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and women's empowerment, and that any new mandates will be subject to approval by intergovernmental process;

54. *Recognizes* that civil society organizations, in particular women's organizations, play a vital role in promoting women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women;

55. *Requests* the head of the entity to continue the existing practice of effective consultation with civil society organizations, and encourages their meaningful contribution to the work of the entity;

56. *Notes* that the entity will operate as part of the resident coordinator system, within the United Nations country team, leading and coordinating the work of the country team on gender equality and women's empowerment, under the overall leadership of the United Nations resident coordinator;

Governance of the entity

57. *Decides*:

(a) That the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women will constitute the multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure for the normative support functions of and will provide normative policy guidance to the entity;

(b) That the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Board of the entity will constitute the multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure for the operational activities of the entity and will provide operational policy guidance to it;

58. *Emphasizes* that support of gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system will be an integral part of the work of the entity;

59. *Decides* that the Executive Board will carry out functions as outlined in annex I to General Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993, taking into account the provisions of the present resolution;

60. Also decides that the Executive Board will consist of 41 members, as follows:

(a) Ten from the Group of African States;

(b) Ten from the Group of Asian States;

(c) Four from the Group of Eastern European States;

(d) Six from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States;

(e) Five from the Group of Western European and Other States;

(f) Six from contributing countries;

61. *Further decides* that the six seats allocated to contributing countries will be distributed as follows:

(a) Four seats to be allocated to four of the largest providers of voluntary core contributions to the entity, to be selected by and from among the top ten such contributors;

(b) Two seats to be allocated to two developing countries, not members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Cooperation and Development, that provide voluntary core contributions to the entity, to be selected from among the top ten such providers by those developing countries, due consideration being given to geographical balance;

62. *Decides* that the above allocations should be in accordance with the list provided by the Secretary-General of the average annual voluntary contributions of Member States in the previous three calendar years to the core budget of the entity or, for the interim period, to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, for which statistical data are available;

63. *Also decides* that a Member State can be selected from only one category at any one time;

64. *Further decides* that the Economic and Social Council will elect members to the Executive Board for a term of three years, in accordance with established practice, and requests the Council to carry out the first elections not later than 31 December 2010;

65. *Decides* that the Executive Board shall report annually on its programme and activities to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session;

66. *Also decides* to include the Executive Board of the entity in the joint meeting of the executive boards of the United Nations Development Programme/the United Nations Population Fund, the

United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme in order to promote effective coordination and coherence among operational activities on gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women;

67. *Emphasizes* the need to establish concrete results-based reporting mechanisms, as well as the need for consistency, coordination and coherence between the normative and operational aspects of the work of the entity and in that regard requests:

(a) The Commission on the Status of Women and the Executive Board to work closely together to provide coherent guidance and direction in their respective areas;

(b) The Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2010 to establish appropriate and concrete linkages between the Commission and the Executive Board to ensure consistency between the overall policy guidance set by the Commission and the operational strategies and operational activities approved by the Executive Board;

(c) The head of the entity to submit to the Commission an annual report on the normative aspects of the entity's work and on its implementation of the policy guidance provided by the Commission;

(d) The head of the entity to submit an annual report on operational activities for the consideration of the Executive Board, and to report on those activities to the Economic and Social Council at its operational activities segment;

(e) That the Economic and Social Council in turn submit its report to the General Assembly;

Administration and human resources

68. *Decides* that the entity shall provide support to intergovernmental policy and normative processes and all its programmes of operational activities to support Member States, upon their request;

69. *Also decides*:

(a) That the entity shall be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, to be appointed by the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, for a term of four years, with the possibility of renewal for one term, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, the position to be financed from the regular budget;

(b) That the Under-Secretary-General/head of the entity shall report to the Secretary-General and shall be a full member of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination;

70. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to appoint the Under-Secretary-General/head of the entity to the Policy Committee, the Senior Management Group and other relevant internal United Nations decision-making mechanisms;

71. *Decides* that the entity should be accountable to Member States in accordance with applicable rules and standards;

72. *Also decides* that the Under-Secretary-General/head of the entity shall appoint and administer the staff of the entity, including for its operational activities, in accordance with the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules and that the Secretary-General shall delegate to the Under-Secretary-General/head of the entity formal authority in personnel matters, while ensuring that the entity shall be subject to the oversight bodies;

73. *Further decides* that the composition and selection of staff of the entity shall be in accordance with the provisions of Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, with due regard to geographical representation and gender balance;

74. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General/head of the entity to establish appropriate mechanisms to assist and support the realization of all the strategic objectives and actions agreed upon in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the national and international commitments stipulated in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly;

Financing

75. *Decides* that the resources required to service the normative intergovernmental processes shall be funded from the regular budget and approved by the General Assembly; the resources required to service the operational intergovernmental processes and operational activities at all levels shall be funded from voluntary contributions and approved by the Executive Board;

76. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly for its approval during the main part of its sixty-fifth session a report containing a revised proposal for the use of regular budget resources approved for the biennium 2010–2011 for the normative support functions of the new entity, in accordance with all relevant United Nations rules and procedures, including a detailed organizational chart of the entity and options for administrative arrangements for the regular budget of the entity;

77. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General to submit a report to the Executive Board, including the organizational chart referred to in paragraph 76 above, together with a revised draft strategic plan and proposal for the use of voluntary resources for the support budget for the biennium 2010–2011;

78. *Decides* that the structure of the entity as set out in the organizational chart will reflect the universal coverage of the entity;

79. *Also decides* that the operational activities of the entity shall have financial regulations and rules similar to those of other operational United Nations funds and programmes, and consistent with the United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules, and, in that regard, requests the Under-Secretary-General/head of entity to present a proposal for financial regulations, for consideration and adoption by the Executive Board, and to promulgate the financial rules;

80. *Stresses* the need to ensure adequate funding for the entity, invites Member States, when legislative and budgetary provisions allow, to provide core, multi-year, predictable, stable and sustainable voluntary contributions to the entity, and decides that reporting on funding should be transparent and easily accessible to Member States, including through the creation of an online registry that contains such financial information;

Transitional arrangements

81. *Decides*, with reference to paragraph 49 above, that a transition period will start upon the date of the adoption of the present resolution and continue until 31 December 2010;

82. *Also decides* that all the activities, including training programmes and research, of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women will continue in accordance with the operational arrangements established before the date of the adoption of the present resolution until replaced by new arrangements;

83. *Further decides* to transfer the existing mandates, functions, assets, including facilities and infrastructure, and liabilities, including contractual obligations, of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women to the entity upon the adoption of the present resolution, and requests the Secretary-General to address all staffing issues in accordance with United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules;

84. *Decides* that the process of consolidation of the institutional and operational arrangements, partnerships and brands of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women will start from the date of the adoption of the present resolution and continue under the leadership and authority of the Under-Secretary-General, once appointed;

85. *Requests* the Secretary-General to appoint the Under-Secretary-General by the beginning of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly in order to oversee the transitional arrangements of the entity before its operationalization, and decides that the position of the Under-Secretary-General will be funded from existing temporary assistance funds pending the submission of the report on the revised regular budget required to be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session;

86. *Decides* to dissolve the United Nations Development Fund for Women as of the date of the adoption of the present resolution;

87. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to dissolve the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women as of the date of the adoption of the pertinent resolution;

88. *Decides* that any expansion of the capacity of the entity should be orderly, based on a proposal by the head of the entity to the Executive Board, building on the field presence and infrastructure of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women;

Review of implementation

89. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of the part entitled “Strengthening the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women” of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions;

90. *Decides* to review the work of the entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women at its sixty-eighth session, and requests the Secretary-General to present a comprehensive report in that regard to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

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Questions & Answers

Why does the United Nations need a new entity on women’s rights and gender equality?

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women — or UN Women — was established by the UN Member States so that the UN would be better able to help Member States accelerate progress towards their goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It will merge and build on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system which focus exclusively on gender equality and women’s empowerment:

- [Division for the Advancement of Women](#) (DAW)
- [International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women](#) (INSTRAW)
- [Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women](#) (OSAGI)
- [United Nations Development Fund for Women](#) (UNIFEM)

The main roles of UN Women are:

- To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms
- To help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it and to forge effective partnerships with civil society
- To enable member states to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

UN Women will be operational by January 2011.

What will UN Women do at the global, regional and country levels?

UN Women will be the lead driver and lead voice advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment globally. It will support Member States to advance gender equality, in line with national priorities and international norms and policies. It will build effective partnerships with civil society and mobilize support, both political and financial, for the achievement of international goals for women. UN Women will provide substantive support to UN bodies on all aspects of gender equality issues.

It will work with UN partners at the regional and country levels to ensure that demand for technical expertise from national partners and regional organizations are met. It will undertake global, regional and national advocacy efforts to ensure that under-recognized and under-resourced issues receive the requisite attention. At the country level it will provide technical and financial support to national partners, helping them develop the ability to address their priority challenges. UN Women will also support UN Country Teams to strengthen and coordinate action on gender equality.

What is the budget for UN Women and how will it be funded?

UN Women will be funded largely by both voluntary contributions and the regular UN budget. At least US\$500 million — double the current combined budget of DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI, and UNIFEM — has been recognized by Member States as the minimum investment needed for UN Women.

What does the creation of UN Women mean for other offices and funds in the UN system working on gender and women's empowerment?

UN Women will enhance, not replace, efforts by other parts of the UN system (such as UNICEF, UNDP, and UNFPA), which will continue to have a responsibility to work for gender equality and women's empowerment in their areas of expertise.

Who will head UN Women and where will it be based?

Following an open, transparent and rigorous recruitment process, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will appoint an Under-Secretary-General to head UN Women, so as to ensure the necessary authority and leadership. The Under-Secretary-General will be a member of all senior UN decision-making bodies and will report to the Secretary-General. UN Women will be headquartered in New York.

Which countries will UN Women support?

Gender inequality exists everywhere. UN Women will work with all countries to support inter-governmental efforts to develop global norms and policies. It will promote good practices and foster the sharing of experiences between countries, while providing programmatic and operational support to developing countries. Technical support and advice to developed countries can be requested and provided from policy expertise units that will support all regions.

The creation of UN Women will contribute to an enhanced and coordinated UN response to country-defined needs and priorities, to enable the UN system to work in a more effective, collaborative and coherent way.

In which countries will UN Women have a presence?

Up to now, the UN has not had the capacity to meet all country demand for support and expertise related to gender equality and women's empowerment. UNIFEM is currently present in 80 countries, where it responds to the greatest needs. Initially, UN Women will continue to work in these countries. Priority for enhanced capacity will be given to country-level efforts and — over time — UN Women will scale up to support every country that requests assistance. Achieving that goal, however, will depend on the availability of human and financial resources.

How will UN Women work with UN Member States?

One of the main aims of creating UN Women is to strengthen the UN's ability to provide coherent, timely and demand-driven support to UN Member States, at their request, in their efforts to realize equality for all women and girls. It will be up to each Member State to decide what kind of support UN Women will provide in that country.

How will civil society be involved with UN Women?

Years of advocacy by the global women's movement have been instrumental in the creation of UN Women. Civil society, in particular women's organizations, play a vital role in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and strong and dynamic relationships between UN Women and civil society partners in all parts of the world will be crucial in working towards the achievement these goals. As such, non-governmental organization partners will have a strong voice in the priority-setting, policies and programmes of UN Women which, in turn, will provide support to women's organizations and networks.

What happens between now and 1 January?

UN Women will become operational on 1 January 2011. It is important to note that, until then, UNIFEM will continue to be fully operational and work according to its mandate. All agreements made with UNIFEM, whether in the context of partnerships, programmes or funding arrangements, will then be transferred to and fully honoured by UN Women. This applies even though the General Assembly resolution, for legal reasons, decides the immediate dissolution of UNIFEM.

What will happen to National Committees for UNIFEM?

National Committees for UNIFEM have been strong partners for advocacy, outreach and fundraising, and their continued support will be important for and valued by UN Women. As of 1 January 2011, National Committees for UNIFEM will be renamed National Committees for UN Women.

What will happen to the staff at DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM?

The UN's achievements for women over the last decades have been, in large part, due to the commitment and dedication of the staff of DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM. Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff receive the necessary support during the six-month transition period to UN Women becoming operational. Commitments and obligations towards staff and other personnel embodied in staff contracts will be honoured.

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