



Milestones

Towards gender equality and empowerment

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. This is a historic step in accelerating the United Nations Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The creation of UN Women is 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); and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). In carrying out its functions, UN Women will be working with an annual budget of at least US \$500 million—double the current combined resources of the four agencies it comprises.

The main roles of UN Women are to support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), 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; to forge effective

partnerships with civil society; and to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

The year 2010 is an important time to reflect on progress, as it marks the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and the 10th anniversary of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Ten years have also passed since the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched, with a series of time-bound targets for advancing development and reducing poverty by 2015 or earlier. While goal 3 of the MDG focuses on promoting gender equality and empowering women, there is now broad recognition that gender equality is both a goal in itself, as well as a means towards the achievement of all the MDGs.

The work of UN Women is framed by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which marked its 30th anniversary in 2009. The Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men as well as an agenda for action by State parties to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights. As of June 2010, 186 countries are party to the Convention.

<http://www.unwomen.org/> 