

"I warmly welcome the UN General Assembly resolution on System-wide Coherence (A/63/L.103), passed by consensus on Monday, September 14, 2009. This resolution marks a critical milestone in the road to creating a new gender entity at the United Nations, which will strengthen the world body's work on gender equality and women's empowerment, and will address the weaknesses of the fragmented gender architecture which currently exists in the UN system.

I have consistently promoted gender equality and women's empowerment and stressed the importance of strengthened gender architecture at the global level. This is a pivotal moment for the UN; the gender entity must be realized strategically and creatively. Given that it aims to merge and combine the skills and experiences of each of the four existing UN gender entities (UNIFEM, OSAGI, DAW, INSTRAW), the new entity must clearly meet this goal, and must, above all, be more efficient, more transparent, and more coherent. The new entity must be a center of excellence and a catalyst for gender mainstreaming within the entire UN system.

The new UN gender architecture must be accompanied by funding commitments that will ensure the launch - and continuation - of its work, primarily on the ground in UN member states. This funding, and the gender entity itself, has the potential to improve the lives of millions of women and girls worldwide, but the level of its impact will depend entirely on the funding that is pledged. Financial support by UN member states for the new gender entity is not merely a suggestion; it is a necessity.

It is my hope that the new gender entity will bring about much-needed improvement to the way the UN protects women's rights and promotes women's involvement in development and peace-building. Increasing the participation of women in key policy and decision-making processes, particularly with regards to conflict and security negotiations, ensures that an invaluable range of knowledge and experience is heard. Integrating the gendered perspective is not only essential to addressing modern-day security threats and to achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals, but also to guaranteeing the protection, participation, and empowerment of women."

*-Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission*