

Réseau de Développement et de Communication des Femmes
African Women's Development
Communication Network
Africaines



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To: African Ministers of Foreign Affairs
Cc: African Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs
Permanent Missions of African States to the UN

African women's analysis on UN Secretary-General's "Comprehensive proposal for the composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women"

Greetings from the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) Secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya.

The UN Secretary General submitted the above referenced proposal on the new UN gender entity to Member States in December 2009. We believe the proposals made by the Secretary-General represent significant progress compared to the existing UN gender equality mechanisms. However, we are disappointed with the scale of ambition and ambiguity on key issues including funding, civil society participation, and operational capacity.

We urge African member states to come out strongly in support of:

- **Universal coverage:** The entity should have its own programming capacity to deliver gender equality agenda at country-level. Emphasis for universal coverage should be on developing countries first and foremost, where women show very poor health, economic, equality and other indicators. Further, there have to be well targeted efforts to decrease the level of bureaucracy that currently exists at the country-level of UN bodies.
- **Ambitious funding:** The Secretary-General's proposal sets a funding benchmark of USD 500 million for the new entity, which is only 2% of the UN's expenditure based on 2008

figures. GEAR¹ has been advocating for a minimum of USD 1 Billion for the new entity, with progressive increments in the entity's budget.

- **Accelerated appointment of the Under Secretary General:** Strong leadership is critical in the process of establishing and operationalising the new entity and its expanded mandate. Appointment of the USG to lead the new entity should be prioritised, to avoid any delays in the process. This year is a review year for the Beijing Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals, among others, and delays could impact UN work in these areas.
- **Civil Society participation:** African women feel that the new entity should formalize mechanisms for collaboration between civil society and the entity, from the regional level to the national level, to ensure the entity remains in touch with and responsive to women's needs on the ground.

We need African voices to come out strongly in favor of establishing the new entity as African women stand to gain substantially from its broader and better-resourced mandate.

Thank you for your time and attention. We look forward to continued collaboration with you in promoting the rights of women in Africa.

Sincerely,

**African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
GEAR Regional Focal Point
Africa**

¹ The Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign is a global campaign of over 300 organizations in over 50 countries that advocates for stronger gender equality architecture within the United Nations system.