

URGENT: Action Needed to Gain Stronger Gender Equality Architecture

23 May 2007

Current Situation

To date, there has been widespread support for strengthening the United Nations Gender Equality Architecture (GEA), as recommended in the report of the Coherence Panel, including from the new Secretary General and the president of the General Assembly. This is not the case for the entire report, called “Delivering as One.” Yet, many member states are urging that the Panel report be considered as a whole, meaning that *all* of its recommendations be taken together. The result is that discussions about all the Panel’s recommendations have been stalled since governments have differing opinions about each section. Therefore, women’s groups are calling for the separation of the Gender Equality section as a separate issue that can be negotiated now, regardless of what happens with the other components of the report. It is crucial that this be done in order for action to be taken on the GEA before this session of the GA ends in August of 2007.

Actions / Strategies

- Lobby governments and Ministers of Foreign Affairs (who are responsible for sending instructions to UN missions in New York) on the need not only to support the GEA proposal, but to separate it out from the other recommendations of the Coherence Panel Report.
- Urge governments to liaise with their missions in New York and instruct them to affirm their support for the new proposal and for strengthening the existing GEA; governments should also encourage missions to engage in all relevant negotiations and to voice strong support within the country groups they are part of e.g. G77, the EU, etc. This should be a matter of country priority.
- Encourage governments to take positions on the GEA deliberations in *this* General Assembly session.
- Inform governments that ideas to strengthen the GEA within the UN were conceived and supported by women’s groups (and not donors) in order to deliver on the promises and commitments established in the Beijing Platform for Action over ten years ago – hence the recommendations contained in the report of the Coherence Panel – are focused on creating a stronger, effective, and well-resourced women’s entity. This new entity will be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the integration of gender perspectives into the work of the United Nations system, including in top decision-making positions, as well as ensuring accountability and enforcement at the country level.
- Use any upcoming regional meetings, inter governmental conferences, etc as an avenue to push the GEA agenda, including both to support the proposals and to separate them from the rest of the deliberations of the report.

- Organize informal briefings with government officials throughout various regions.
- Prepare a “GEA Kit” as an advocacy package (using press releases, endorsed papers, talking points, fact sheets, GEA Campaign statement, presentations, etc)

Where We Are

The creation of this new women’s entity is subject to the outcome of the intergovernmental process currently taking place in the GA in New York. In April, the Secretary General, in his report to the GA, expressed his support for the Panel’s recommendation to consolidate and strengthen the current structures into a single entity focused on gender equality and women’s empowerment. The Deputy Secretary General (DSG), Ms. Ashe Rose Migro was asked to spearhead the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

The president of the General Assembly has been conducting extensive consultations with member states. She has expressed her support for strengthening the GEA and has urged governments to take action on the gender architecture recommendation. But the G77 and the “Non Aligned Movement” (NAM) continue to insist on an extensive debate on the entire report rather than negotiating within separate working groups on different sections. Thus, the relatively non-controversial recommendations like strengthening the gender architecture are lumped together with all the other recommendations in the report, some of which are likely to be more controversial. Most of the discussions taking place are focused on process rather than the recommendations themselves. As a result, the process is currently stalled and the consultations continue, without any timeframe for action.

WE URGE YOU TO TAKE ACTION NOW!!

For more information please contact Charlotte Bunch at Center for Women’s Global Leadership (cbunch@igc.org) or June Zeitlin at WEDO (june@wedo.org). You can also go to the following websites: www.wedo.org or <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu>.