

We call on Pacific governments and all UN member states to act now to ensure the United Nations is able to put in place a new gender equality and women's empowerment architecture which will effectively address the gaps and challenges faced by the United Nations in supporting Member States to implement globally agreed mandates and their own national commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment!

The majority of UN member states, who strongly support the creation of a composite gender entity, led by an Under-Secretary General and would combine a strategic field presence with a normative capacity. This entity would be best positioned to support the UN system and hold it accountable for gender mainstreaming.

It is with utmost urgency that we urge you to ensure now that the process which commenced in 2006 comes to an agreement that member states adopt a resolution to create a new gender entity based on the Composite (Option D) during the current session of the UN General Assembly (GA) – that is before September 2009.

The GEAR Working Group has welcomed the Pacific Statement delivered by H.E Robert Aisi the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations on March 30, 2009 which stated: *"..... We recognize the vital role of the United Nations in advancing gender equality in our region. We therefore welcome the report of the Secretary-General which provides further details on options for gender architecture reform. We are keen to see the establishment of a strengthened single UN entity dedicated to the advancement of women. This entity would be led by an Under Secretary General and combine normative and operational functions consistent with the proposed composite model."*

And we are therefore calling on the leadership of Pacific Island Governments and other UN member states to continue to champion the GEAR process so that the UN General Assembly will come to an effective and positive conclusion on this issue and ensure the establishment of a new UN agency for women that would dramatically improve international efforts to promote women's empowerment and gender equality by uniting the four small, under-staffed and poorly funded parts of the UN currently devoted to women's issues.

We need a gender equality structure within the UN that is:

1. Most responsive to the women of the world, but in particular the women of the global south and our Pacific region
2. Headed by an Under Secretary General
3. Well resourced so that it can effectively deliver the gender equality commitments to women including the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), CEDAW, UN Security Council resolution 1325 and UN Security Council resolution 1820
4. Will also ensure that the national women's machineries of women in our Pacific countries are working effectively to uphold and mainstream these gender equality commitments and women's human rights in the national development process of Pacific governments.

We are therefore calling on UN member states to vote 'yes' on a UN women's agency

Ensure that it is well funded and staffed at levels; t

Ensure that the structure should include strong field presence

Ensure that the new entity has a a USD1 billion budget to start and the capacity to run programmes, influence policy and bring gender experts to the joint work of UN agencies in every country.

The creation of a well-funded, dedicated UN agency to promote women's human rights and advance the worldwide struggle for gender equality has never been more urgent.

Endorsed by:

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