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In historic move, UN creates single entity to promote women's empowerment



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (left) and GA President Ali Treki at meeting which approved UN Women

2 July 2010 – In a bid to accelerate the empowerment of women, the General Assembly today voted unanimously to create a dynamic new entity merging four United Nations offices focusing on gender equality, a move hailed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other senior officials.

"The newest member of the UN family has been born today," Mr. Ban **told** the Assembly after it passed the resolution setting up the new UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as UN Women.

"This is truly a watershed day," he declared.

The new body will merge four of the world body's agencies and offices: UN Development Fund for Women (**UNIFEM**), the Division for the Advancement of Women (**DAW**), the **Office** of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (**UN-INSTRAW**).

"By bringing together four parts of the UN system dedicated to women's issues, Member States have created a much stronger voice for women and for gender equality at the global level," said the Secretary-General.

"It will now be much more difficult for the world to ignore the challenges facing women and girls – or to fail to take the necessary action," he added.

UN Women is the result of years of negotiations among Member States and advocacy by the global women's movement. Set to become operational next January, it will drive the world body's efforts to promote women's rights.

UN Women is set to have an annual budget of at least \$500 million – double the current combined resources of the four agencies it will comprise.

Mr. Ban acknowledged that many Member States are facing resource constraints due to the global economic downturn, but expressed confidence that the new office will receive strong financial support.

"Today's action will do more than simply consolidate United Nations offices," Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro [told reporters](#) earlier today. "It will consolidate the United Nations strengths."

She noted that while the UN has made significant strides, it has also faced serious challenges such as inadequate funding and fragmentation.

One of the main goals of UN Women will be to support the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and other inter-governmental bodies in devising policies.

The new body will also aim to help Member States implement standards, provide technical and financial support to countries which request it, and forge partnerships with civil society.

Within the UN, it will hold the world body accountable for its own commitments on gender equality.

"UN Women will give women and girls the strong, unified voice they deserve on the world stage," Ms. Migiro said, calling today a "positive and exciting moment" for the entire UN family.

Set to be based in New York, UN Women will be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, to be appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The UN, said General Assembly President Ali Treki, is "uniquely placed" to take the leading role on the issue of promoting women's rights, expressing his delight at the creation of UN Women.

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