

UN to establish single new agency to deal with rights of women



15 September 2009 – Four United Nations agencies and offices will be amalgamated to create a new single entity within the Organization to promote the rights and well-being of women worldwide and to work towards gender equality.

The General Assembly **adopted** a resolution late yesterday on improving system-wide coherence within the UN, and the text spells out the support of Member States for a new consolidated body – to be headed by an under-secretary-general – to deal with issues concerning women.

The resolution means the UN Development Fund for Women (**UNIFEM**), the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (**UN-INSTRAW**) will be merged.

In a statement issued today by his spokesperson, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he was “particularly gratified” that the Assembly had accepted his proposal for “a more robust promotion” of women’s rights under the new entity.

“An important step has been made in strengthening the United Nations’ work in the area of gender equality and empowerment of women, as well as in ensuring the effective delivery of its operational activities for development, which constitutes the other key components of the resolution,” the statement noted.

Mr. Ban said in the **statement** that he had appointed more women to senior posts than at any other time in the history of the UN, including nine women to the rank of under-secretary-general. The number of women in senior posts has increased by 40 per cent under his tenure.

The Assembly’s resolution tasks Mr. Ban with providing Member States with a comprehensive proposal outlining the mission statement, structure, funding and oversight of the new entity so that it can be created as soon as possible.

The resolution also calls for greater measures to harmonize business practices within the UN development system, ways to improve the funding system for such activities, and other steps to streamline practices within the world body.

After the resolution, UNIFEM – which currently operates in autonomous association with the UN Development Programme (**UNDP**) – issued a statement welcoming “the unanimous strong support” among Member States, which follow three years of extensive consultations on the structure and operational details of the new body.

“UNIFEM trusts that deliberations can resume soon to ensure an informed and swift establishment of the composite entity,” the statement said.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

South African lawyer becomes new UN rights expert on violence against women