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## **New UN-managed fund announces over \$9 million in grants to empower women**



11 January 2010 – A new fund managed by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (**UNIFEM**) today announced over \$9 million in grants to support initiatives in 26 countries to empower women, ranging from boosting their political participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina to assisting those denied inheritance and property rights in Afghanistan.

The Fund for Gender Equality is a \$68 million multilateral initiative, currently funded by the Governments of Spain and Norway, designed to promote innovative programmes focusing on women's economic and political empowerment at local and national levels.

"This new Fund has tremendous potential to bring about concrete and sustainable changes in women's lives. Very impressive efforts to advance women's political and economic empowerment are underway in every corner of the world," said UNIFEM Executive Director Inés Alberdi.

"Yet this work is critically under-funded. It is important that the Fund supports both governments and civil society organizations – and very significantly, partnerships between them as well."

The activities of the 27 initiatives which will benefit from the initial grants range from supporting women in the informal sector in Cameroon, Egypt and the Philippines to

increasing greater political participation by women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic, Uganda, Morocco and in the Pacific Islands.

Initiatives also focus on indigenous women and those in high-risk groups, such as women affected by HIV and AIDS, as well as on assistance to women farmers facing food insecurity and climate change and those who are systematically denied inheritance and property rights such as women in Afghanistan.

The new grants fall into the Fund's Catalytic Grant category – one of two types of high-impact grants aimed to accelerate efforts of dozens of initiatives on the ground. The second category of Implementation Grants will be announced in June and will focus on the implementation of already-ratified national laws or policies.

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