

**UN Women Statement for First Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSD (10-11 Jan)**

UN Women is pleased to participate in this meeting and would like to emphasize the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for addressing the challenges to sustainable development.

Yet social, political and economic inequalities still prevent women from being fully empowered in many regions of the world. These inequalities hinder their capacity to advance sustainable development and food security, address the challenges of climate change, and tap into opportunities of an emerging green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

We owe it to women and men around the world and future generations to fully mainstream gender equality in every aspect of sustainable development. This includes ensuring gender parity in decision-making positions and processes, and ensuring gender-responsive policy and budget frameworks. Global and regional institutional frameworks must step up to address the role of women as leaders, participants and beneficiaries of sustainable development.

Agenda 21 devoted a full chapter to "Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable and Equitable Development" and recognized women as one of nine major and critical groups for the formulation and implementation of policies for sustainable development. A few years later, the Beijing Platform for Action identified the environment as a critical area of concern for women and provided clear recommendations for promoting an active and visible gender mainstreaming policy and programmes. In 2003, the CSD adopted gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in its multi-year programme of work. In 2010—after significant advocacy efforts from gender equality advocates from civil society and UN entities—considerable progress was made at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancun (COP16). The Preamble emphasizes that gender equality is important for effective action on *all* aspects of climate change. In addition, eight references to gender equality can now be found in the Cancun Agreements on adaptation, mitigation, capacity building, and REDD. Gender parity is now an objective of the Technology Executive Committee.

It is critical that all stakeholders recognize and build upon these advances.

The Bureau of the UN Commission on the Status of Women decided to devote the emerging theme of the 55<sup>th</sup> session of the CSW to "Gender Equality and Sustainable Development". An interactive expert panel on this topic is being organized and a summary of the discussions will serve as an input to the Rio+20 Conference. An issues paper will be posted on UN Women's website in the next couple of weeks.

Issues we hope to see addressed in the preparatory process leading up to Rio+20 include gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of green governance, research, development and innovation in green science and technology, public investment in sustainable infrastructure, public procurement processes for environmentally and socially friendly products and services, ecological tax reforms and in relation to investments in restoration and enhancement of natural capital and ecosystem service provision.

Rio+20 presents a critical opportunity to ensure renewed commitments, action plans and strategic partnerships for gender-responsive institutional framework for sustainable development, and a governance structure that promotes the voice, participation and decisions of women at all levels. All of us—Governments, civil society, the private sector and UN entities—have an important role to play in strengthening our commitments to gender equality and sustainable development, and ensuring that both women and men participate throughout the preparatory process leading up to the Rio+20 Conference.