

**Statement**

by

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at the

**NGO Consultation on *CSW at 50: Glancing Back, Moving Forward*  
NGO Committee on the Status of Women  
Panel discussion on “Forward Looking Issues and Advocacy Strategies”**

**Sunday, 26 February 2006  
New York University (NYU)  
Farkas Auditorium**

Dear participants,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Colleagues and friends,

It is a great honor for me to address this consultation on *CSW at 50: Glancing Back, Moving Forward*. I would like to thank Jackie Shapiro and the NGO Committee on the Status of Women for inviting me. I would also like to thank your Committee for your strong commitment to the advancement of women, and your support and cooperation with my Office and the Division for the Advancement of Women.

Tomorrow, the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will open at the United Nations Headquarters. We have come a long way since June 1946, when a resolution of the Economic and Social Council established the Commission on the Status of Women as one of its full-fledged functional commissions. The foundations of many of the successes that women have achieved to date in the international arena were laid by a group of dedicated women, among them the first Chair of the Commission Bodil Begtrup (Denmark), the first Vice-Chair, Jessie Street (Australia), members Amalia Caballero Ledon (Mexico) and Isabel Urdaneta (Venezuela), participated as part of their national delegations in the United Nations founding conference in San Francisco. Later, in the early years of the United Nations, they fought relentlessly for the recognition of women's equal rights in the Organization's founding documents. Between 1946 and 1948, the original 15 members of the Commission worked tirelessly with the Commission on Human Rights to ensure that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed, not just the inalienable rights of all men, but of all human beings. As Devaki Jain recalls in her recently published book titled *Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice*, this was by no means an easy task; when the

United Nations was founded in 1945, only 30 of the original 51 Member States afforded women the right to vote.

The Commission discovered very early in its establishment that allies were essential to the success of its mission and at that time, that legislation was an important

The report proposed further reforms necessary to fulfill the United Nations' role in advancing, with equal determination, inter-related goals of security, development and human rights across the world. As he eloquently stated in that report, "humanity will not enjoy security without development, development without security, and it will not enjoy either without respect for human rights." The very same message which women were articulating at the first Conference on women.

The Summit Outcome of September 2005, endorsed the bulk of reforms proposed by the Secretary-General in his report, and gave him a clear mandate to move ahead on some of the most pressing ones.

One of the first tangible outcomes of the reform process to date has been the establishment, by the General Assembly on 20 December 2005, of a Peacebuilding Commission. The cs7al0.078 Tc (a) Tj 5ae Tc -egae Tc -egae TSummit either Tw (tTD 0mit ) Tj 6.007 -

Both processes, the creation of the Council and strengthening of the Office of the High Commissioner, offer new opportunities to promote women's human rights and stop abuses and violence against women. For decades, women across the world tirelessly and valiantly fought to have their rights treated as fundamental human rights. These efforts culminated at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993, when women's rights were fully recognized as human rights.

Given the centrality of women's human rights to the mission of this Organization, we are working with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to place women's rights at the centre of the Organization's work on human rights. This work includes an enhanced role and impact of the CEDAW Committee in the new institutional structure of human rights in the United Nations.

During the 2005 World Summit, the leaders further considered vital, the reform of the Security Council so as to be more broadly representative of the realities of today's world. An authoritative and more representative Security Council has the potential to better protect civilians, including women and children, in armed conflicts, stop mass rapes and killings and promote women's role in peace processes. Member States of the United Nations remain divided on some fundamental issues pertaining to peace and security, including on the Council reform, definition of terrorism, the responsibility to protect and on the right to use force. Dialogue on these issues continues.

Another area of the Secretary-General's proposals is management reform. The well known shortcomings in the Oil-for-Food Programme, sexual exploitation by the United Nations staff and related personnel, and procurement irregularities in peacekeeping, reflected badly on the image and credibility of the Organization.

The Secretary-General is moving swiftly to address these shortcomings and enhance integrity, efficiency and accountability in the Secretariat. Let me mention in this regard, the establishment of an Ethics Office in December 2005, new policies on whistleblower protection and financial disclosure, zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation, and a Management Performance Board to systematically assess the performance of senior managers. My Office advocates for new affirmative measures to achieve the 50/50 gender balance in the Secretariat and works with the Office of Human Resources Management to update the existing instructions on prevention of sexual harassment.

A management reform report of the Secretary-General will be presented to the General Assembly next month.

Also in response to the Summit Outcome, all mandates of the United Nations Secretariat that are older than five years are currently under review, in order to refine the Organization's focus and renew its objectives. The review would provide an opportunity for Member States to reassess the mandates for women's advancement and empowerment with a view to strengthen them and to

ensure coherence, collaboration and coordination, and avoid duplication of efforts.  
A related report on this issue is being finalized and will be published in the next issue of ET gitt