

**Statement by
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Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

It is an honour to address the Commission on the Status of Women. I extend a warm welcome to the Ministers, Heads of National Machineries and other high-level representatives to the session, as well as to all other delegates and participants, including the large number of representatives of NGOs. I particularly welcome the girls who are attending the Commission from all around the world and look forward to your contribution to the discussions on the priority theme of eliminating discrimination and violence against the girl child.

The large number of high-level participants from capitals, as well as the significant presence of United Nations entities and civil society, are a visible sign of the importance that various stakeholders accord to the themes under consideration and of the continued relevance of the Commission's work at national level.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Chairperson, and the members of the Bureau of the Commission for their leadership in the preparation of this session.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

At its 50th session last year, the Commission adopted new working methods which place strong emphasis on the implementation at national level of commitments made at the Fourth World Conference in Beijing and the outcome of the 23rd special session of the

To contribute to the consideration of the priority theme by the Commission, the Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with UNICEF, organized an expert group meeting from 25 to 28 September 2006, generously hosted by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy. The Expert Group Meeting's report has been disseminated through the DAW website and copies are available in the room for reference. UNICEF has prepared a child-friendly version of this report, "Listen to us," for outreach to girls around the world.

The Division also held a four-week online discussion on the priority theme, with more than 500 registered participants. The report on the online discussion is available on the Division's website.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

Under agenda item 3(b) on Emerging issues, the Commission will convene an expert panel on "Elimination of all forms of violence against women: Follow-up to the

The joint work plan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is contained in document E/CN.6/2007/5. The Commission also has before it a note by the Secretariat on its draft programme of work in the field of gender issues and advancement of women for the biennium 2008-2009 (E/CN.6/2007CRP2).

The report of the Secretary-General on the situation of, and assistance to,

women, in all parts of the world. It seeks to encourage strengthened political commitment and increased joint efforts to prevent and eliminate such violence, and identifies ways to ensure sustained and effective implementation of State obligations and to strengthen accountability.

Over the past year, the Division continued its technical assistance to Member States, on request, to enhance the capacity at national level to implement the commitments made in the intergovernmental processes and obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Allow me to highlight activities in two areas.

An e-network of national machineries for the advancement of women in Africa was launched at a regional workshop organized by the Division, in collaboration with the African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in December 2006. The e-network was the outcome of a project which aimed to enhance the capacity of national machineries for the advancement of women in Africa to use information and communication technologies (ICT) to strengthen the achievement of the goals through enhanced networking. A web-based information portal (www.uneca.org/ngmafrica) is the central hub of the e-network and will be used by national machineries to share and access information and resources. Discussion lists will facilitate the sharing of information, experiences, lessons learned and good practices among national machineries in Africa. The discussion list provides an effective means for sharing information on the work of this Commission.

In 2006, the Division continued its programme of support, in collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities, to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in post-conflict countries, including in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Afghanistan. We were pleased to note that, also as a result of several workshops the Division has held since 2003, Sierra Leone submitted its combined initial to fifth periodic report under article 18 of the Convention in December 2006. The Division also continued its series of capacity-building regional and sub-regional workshops on reporting and implementation under the Convention. In 2006, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Division held workshops in Cambodia and Thailand, which included Government officials, members of Parliament, non-governmental organizations and United Nations country teams.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The Division for the Advancement of Women stands ready to support the Chairperson, the Bureau and the Commission, in the work of this session. We look forward to a productive two weeks and an outcome which moves us forward DO Tc0 ate the sharuro