



The Commission on the Status of Women plays a key role in moving forward this agenda. It monitors the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, serves as forum for building consensus, and agrees on new measures and further actions to be taken by Governments and other stakeholders. The Commission also acts as a catalyst for mainstreaming gender perspectives in other intergovernmental processes of the United Nations, including in the work of the Economic and Social Council. The Economic and Social Council and its newly elected Bureau are keenly aware of, and value this critical role of the Commission.

Since 2007, ECOSOC has convened Annual Ministerial Reviews to assess progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as well as other international commitments made in major United Nations conferences and summits. In this framework, ECOSOC's 2010 Annual Ministerial Review focused

holding jobs that are productive and decent, and that enable them and their households to break out of poverty and contribute to sustainable and equitable national economic growth.

Rural women constitute one-fourth of the world's population. They are farmers, traders, and entrepreneurs, construction workers and healthcare providers, all of which are essential to the economic fabric of societies. So too is their unpaid domestic and care-related work. They take charge of the maintenance of households and care for family members in contexts which many

between commitments made and women's daily realities. In that regard we look forward to the Commission findings as it considers progress in the implementation of its Agreed Conclusions of 2008, on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women is an occasion to solidify consensus on urgent actions needed to make a real difference in the lives of millions of rural women. You have the opportunity to enrich the ECOSOC's deliberations during its Annual Ministerial Review and strengthen the Council's ability to reflect gender perspectives in its work. You also have the opportunity, through your policy recommendations, to send important messages that will strengthen the commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment into other key policy fora, such as the upcoming Rio+20 conference and the preparations for the post-2015 development agenda.

I wish you a productive session, and I thank you.