

**Presentation at the Fulbright New Century Scholars Lunch on
“The Global Empowerment of Women”
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Distinguished representatives of
New Century Scholars Program,
Institute of International Education,
Council for International Exchange of Scholars,
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the State Department,
and the National Council for Research on Women,
as well as distinguished New Century Scholars.

I would like to begin by congratulating the Fulbright Scholar Program on focusing the New Century Scholars Program on the global empowerment of women. This was a very timely focus, given the 25 year anniversary of CEDAW in 2004, the ten-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the Commission on the Status of Women last month, and the forthcoming review of

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promote gender equality and empowerment of women, but a much less clear idea of the role of the Secretariat. I will share information on what the Division does concretely; provide some examples of processes we are currently involved in; and open up to a discussion on ways in which scholars could be involved in and contribute to this policy-level work of the United Nations on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Division for the Advancement of Women is part of the United Nations Secretariat, workin

Development addressed a key aspect of globalization from a gender perspective, namely the increased movement of people, particularly women, across national borders.

In addition, the Division prepares a short publication, *Women2000 and beyond*, several times a year which has a broad dissemination around the world. This publication focuses attention on gender equality issues which the Division feels are not given sufficient visibility, for example the recent editions on widows, and on issues of nationality and citizenship. *Women2000 and beyond* are also produced to call attention to gender perspectives in issues which are before the global community. One example is the recent editions on women and natural disasters and on women and water which were prepared to influence discussions in the Commission on Sustainable Development. Another example is the issue on older women which aimed to influence discussions at the World Summit on Ageing. A new edition will be published soon on women and ICT which aims to impact on the preparations for and outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia later this year.

A further important part of the work of the Division is to facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the United Nations on gender equality and empowerment of women. This work is done in a variety of ways. One very practical way is through the registration of NGOs to attend the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and supporting NGOs who attend the sessions of the CEDAW Committee.

All of the issues raised in the plenary this morning are directly relevant to the work of the Division – including women's political participation, migration, violence against women, trafficking, citizenship, and HIV/AIDS. The work programme of the Division is guided by the multi-year work programme of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission focuses on two themes per year, which have included since 2001, poverty, ICT and media, the role of men and boys in promoting gender equality, natural disasters, and peace processes. The Commission will adopt a new multi-year programme of work from 2007.

Similarly, the work programme of the Division is influenced by the priorities and work of the CEDAW Committee. The Committee can request the Division to focus on particular aspects of its working methods to enhance its work, or on particular themes on which the Committee might want to develop a General Recommendation to guide its work and facilitate implementation of the Convention by States Parties.

Mandates for the work of the Division come also from other intergovernmental processes. For example, the division does considerable work on monitoring the implementation of gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system, by preparing reports of the Secretary-General for submission to ECOSOC and the General Assembly. There is a strong focus on human rights of women in the Third Committee of

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equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured”¹. States resolved to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable². States also resolved to combat all forms of violence against women; and implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women³.

Discussions on the process for and outcome of this important review are currently underway. The Secretary-General’s report, “*In larger freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all*” - which provides the initial framework for discussions of Member States - does include reference to the seven recommendations that were made by the Millennium Project Taskforce on the MDG focused on gender equality and empowerment of Women. These are:

1. Strengthen opportunities for post-primary education for girls while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education;
2. Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights;
3. Invest in infrastructure to reduce women’s and girls’ time burdens;
4. Guarantee women’s and girls’ property and inheritance rights; sent th cd to
5. Promote women’s and girls’ economic empowerment and entrepreneurship by increasing their access to financial services, micro-finance, and credit; and
6. Increase women’s share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies;
7. Combat violence against women and girls.

While it is an achievement that these issues are included in the report of the Secretary-General, a lot of work is needed by gender equality advocates in the United Nations, in Member States and in NGOs and other groups to ensure that these issues are fully

discussion on the two themes before the Commission which provide important opportunities for broader participation.

To give a concrete example, the themes of the 50th session of the Commission in 2006 will be women in decision-making in health, education and employment and women in political decision-making. Two expert group meetings

ways in which scholars and activists could contribute to the work of the Division; and information on critical networks with which the Division could have contact.

One challenge we face is ensuring geographic balance in our contacts with scholars and activities. The Division faces resource constraints which make it difficult to support active participation from all parts of the world at meetings and events. While we benefit from constructive contact and collaboration with NGOs and academics within close proximity of the United Nations, we need to find ways to broaden our network to cover all regions. In keeping with the principles and spirit of the United Nations, we must bring in the voices from all regions. Any suggestions you might have on how we can broaden our network in this respect would be very welcome.

I would now like to have the opportunity to listen to your views.

Thank you.