



**Executive Board of the
United Nations Entity
for Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women**

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Annual Session 2012

Closing Remarks of Michelle Bachelet, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director, 1 June 2012

Mr [President/ Vice President],

Thank you very much for your leadership in guiding this annual meeting of the Executive Board. Much has been accomplished and I thank the Bureau and all of you, as Board members, for your continued support and guidance. You have worked long and hard, and succeeded in developing decisions, which allow us to continue our work including in our regional structures. I thank you for that.

I extend deep gratitude to all Governments and civil society for your support of UN Women. We are united in our commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality, to keeping the promise in the UN Charter for the equal rights of men and women. We are committed to doing this with a focus on national plans, systems and priorities, with the ultimate aim to improve the lives of women and girls and to strengthen democracy, justice and equality.

As I said at the beginning of this session, all of us at UN Women are proud of what we have accomplished—the foundations we have laid for the future, and the results we have achieved—but we are not yet satisfied. We are committed to being the best organization that we can be—an organization that makes a real difference in the lives of women and girls, that builds national capacity through strong partnerships, and that is accountable.

Mr [President/ Vice President],

Distinguished Delegates,

I appreciate your support in building and strengthening our organization. I say this now because we are in a critical phase. You all know that UN Women inherited administrative and business systems that were less than optimal. We have been working very hard to improve this situation. I am fully committed to strengthening our systems and organizational effectiveness. And I appreciate your support as Board members for this important process.

I also appreciate the many statements of support you have made, including those which laid out the intent to assist us with our funding, which remains critical to our success. As many of you have noted, we cannot keep lowering our ambitions for the resourcing of UN Women. We have reduced our funding targets to a bare minimum, and if Member States fail to provide us with that level of support, we face a real threat of not being able to meet the goals and targets of our Strategic Plan. I will echo those of you who called on new donors to step forward, and for existing donors to see whether they can provide stronger financial contributions. All of us at UN Women and, most importantly, women and girls around the world, very much appreciate your support.

Mr [President/ Vice President],

Once again, I would like simply to thank you, for the unwavering support you have given us, for the partnership you have extended to us, and for your efforts during this session. I would also like to thank our President, His Excellency Ambassador Kim Sook, who despite being called away to other pressing matters did so much before this session to help us prepare for its success, and the Vice-Presidents of the Bureau, Mr. John Alhassan Gana, Ms. Ketlin Viimsalu, Ms. Carmen Arias and Mr Fernando Fernández Arias, both for stepping in to chair in the President's absence, and for their facilitation of the decisions made. You have done an excellent job, and I am sure I speak for everyone here when I say you have our appreciation.

Let me conclude by looking ahead. I am not thinking primarily of the work we have to look forward to at our second session, although that is indeed substantial. Instead I refer to the major intergovernmental events coming up—to Rio+20, ECOSOC, the General Assembly, and next year's Commission on the Status of Women. These meetings will further define international commitments to gender equality and what we can deliver.

Women and girls look to the United Nations among their best hopes for equality and there are high expectations for UN Women. We are working hard to support countries in advancing women's political participation and economic empowerment, in ending violence against women and girls, in expanding women's participation in peace talks and peacebuilding, and in strengthening gender-based planning and budgeting. There is no shortage of good work being done, and I can assure you that there is no shortage of women, men and young people around the world who are committed to our common cause.

I count on you to carry our shared vision forward into renewed and determined efforts to make international norms and standards ever stronger, ever bolder and ever more influential. I count on you to do all you can as our partners in equality to turn words into action. As long as 800 women continue to die every day from complications of pregnancy and childbirth, as long as girls continue to be eliminated in the womb from sex selection, as long as women and girls are denied their rights, and forced to suffer discrimination and violence, we cannot rest in our efforts. The equal rights, opportunities and participation of women are fundamental to healthy economies and societies and development that is sustainable. I can assure you that all of us at UN Women will do our utmost to achieve these goals, and we very much look forward to working closely with all of you in doing so.

Thank you.