



Swedish Presidency
of the European Union

Press Release

New York, 14 September 2009

Stockholm

Peter Larsson

+46 70 283 9597

New York

Harald Fries

+1 917 650 1857

EU welcomes decision on gender reform at UN

The EU warmly welcomes today's decision to create a new gender entity at the United Nations in order to strengthen the world body's work on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The decision follows almost three years of negotiations in which the EU has been a key driving force and was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly where all UN member states are represented.

It is part of a wider reform process called System Wide Coherence, which is aimed at making the UN's work in development more consistent and effective. The EU is convinced that the new gender entity will bring about much-needed improvements to the way the UN protects women's rights and promotes women's involvement in development and peace-building. It is widely recognised that women's involvement is key to effective work in these areas, particularly work to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Swedish Development Minister Gunilla Carlsson said *"I am delighted by the highly welcome decision taken today by the UN General Assembly to establish a new body within the UN system to strengthen women's rights and development. The work of the UN in this area has long been too weak, and too few resources have been allocated to improving the situation of women"*.

The EU recognises the essential contribution of civil society during this process, and believes it is vital to provide for its continued participation once the new entity is operational.

The System Wide Coherence reform process was initiated by the Secretary-General in February 2006. The new structure will be formed by merging four existing UN women's entities: the Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Office of the Special Advisor for Gender Issues (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the United Nations International Research Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).