



Advocacy Update

Sent October 20, 2010

Last Thursday, October 14th, I was fortunate to attend “Advancing a Woman’s Agenda: the New UN Women Agency,” a meeting convened by the UNA-USA Council of Organizations. Two speakers, Charlotte Bunch, founding director and senior scholar, Center for Women's Global Leadership, and Moez Doraid, deputy executive director, Organizational and Business Development Services, UNIFEM (now part of UN Women), addressed the group.

UNA-USA’s Council of Organizations invited representatives of non-governmental organizations affiliated with the UN’s Department of Public Information to become informed about UN Women. Founded by a historic unanimous vote of the UN General Assembly on July 2, 2010 to advance efforts to meet the needs of women and girls throughout the world, UN Women will be operational in January 2011. The appointment of Ms. Michelle Bachelet, former president of Chile, as its executive director and as under-secretary-general for UN Women, was announced on September 14th by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

In her introductory statement at the 65th Session of the General Assembly, Third Committee, on October 11th, Ms. Michelle Bachelet said, “The quote that we heard so often at the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals just three weeks ago — that gender equality and women’s empowerment are goals in their own right and central to all the other goals — must be more than a mantra. It must become a lived reality for women and men and boys and girls in all countries.”

UN Women brings together the following four separate important women’s agencies in the UN system, which will enable them to work more effectively towards gender equality and women’s empowerment by merging resources and mandates:

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW, established in 1946);
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW, established in 1976);
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI, established in 1997); and
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, established in 1976).

WRJ congratulates Under-Secretary General for UN Women Michelle Bachelet on her historic appointment and lauds the UN General Assembly for its wisdom in establishing this crucially needed new agency.