

ACTSA statement on the adoption of the 63rd UN General Assembly resolution to create a new United Nations (UN) Women's Agency

15 September 2009

Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA)¹ welcome the UN General Assembly's decision to take a crucial a step forward in expressing unanimous support for a resolution that will enable the creation of the new UN gender equality entity to be headed by a new Under Secretary-General (USG). We see this as a historic moment, which has the potential to be a start of a new era for women's rights globally.

However, we are concerned by the lack of detail in the final resolution, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 14.09.09. Specifically, we are disappointed that the references to the mandate of the new entity and concrete actions to make it operational were not part of the final resolution. This resolution, although an important sign of the global will to support women's rights, will have to be followed by swift and effective action from the UN Secretary-General, the UN member states and the whole UN system, in order to realize its potential. In this respect, we strongly support the call made by the European Union (EU) and Nordic countries respectively for the details about the function and mandate of the new agency to be decided by March 2010 and for the entity to be fully operational by the middle of 2010.

In order to effectively and expediently establish the new women's entity, we believe that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon must immediately begin the recruitment process for appointing the USG who will lead the new entity. It is also our view that the effectiveness of the future gender equality entity will largely depend on the level of funding that is made available for the work of the future entity. Therefore, donor governments should immediately make concrete and ambitious funding commitments for the new entity, which we believe must have a starting budget of \$1 billion USD. In addition, we express the importance of establishing a strong governance structure for the entity, in the form of an Executive Board, and the need for civil society participation in the entity's make-up.

We acknowledge the leading role of the United Kingdom (UK) and other EU member states in this process, and welcome the support of the UK and the EU for swift concrete action ensuring the establishment of the new entity.

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¹ Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) is the successor organisation to the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Since 1994 ACTSA has been campaigning with the people of southern Africa as they strive to build a better future, working for peace, democracy and development across the region. More info visit www.actsa.org