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Statement
by H.E. Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of
Kazakhstan to the United Nations
at the Thematic Debate on System Wide
Coherence: Gender

16 May 2008
New York

Distinguished Co-chairs,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for conveying these long awaiting debates on gender equality and allow me to pay tribute to you for devoted coordination of the attempt to make the UN system more coherent and stronger.

Please, allow me, to thank Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his adherence to keeping gender balance in his office by appointing Ms. Angela Kane as Under-Secretary-General for Management.

It is notorious that gender equality means women and men have equal opportunities to realize their individual potential, to contribute to their country's economic and social development and to benefit equally from their participation in society.

Indeed, historically, women have always had lower status than men. Therefore, often gender equality comes along with women empowerment but the latter shouldn't prevail over genuine equality between men and women because the extent of the gap between the sexes varies across cultures and time.

Distinguished Co-chairs,

We all recognize that the United Nations organization should be a driving force for the world progressive evolution in achieving development goals set up by the Millennium Development Summit. Moreover, attempting to achieve MDGs without promoting gender equality would both raise the costs and decrease the likelihood in achieving the other goals. The United Nations has to be a role model for the governments in stirring development processes globally.

In the meantime, as it has been recently debated, we are all witnessing fragmentation and disconnect within the system emanating from the lack of governance and coordination, as well as insufficient and unpredictable funding. These aspects are even worsening when gender structures are concerned.

At the central level, there are 4 institutions that have explicit gender related mandates and number of development agencies that are implicitly deal with the mainstreaming of gender dimension into their specific programmes. This kind of labor division is not assembled into one coherent mechanism that can produce tangible product, at the end of the day.

This gap is even wider in the countries, where the UN country team is unable to provide high quality expertise and policy advice to the governments in addressing gender issues. There is also number of evidences that in many countries, gender

thematic groups and focal points either not functional or failed in forwarding their specific agenda towards implementation.

Tiny core resources that are stretched among different gender entities undermine the synergy that supposes to exist among in-system stakeholders to have an impact on peoples' life. In contrary, these units are tending to compete for donors' additional funding to implement their entity specific mandate or satisfy donors' conditions rather than meeting the needs of the countries in gender equality development.

Distinguished Co-chairs,

Almost 2 years passed after the report of the High Level Panel on system-wide coherence recommended new gender architecture that would be able to bridge the system's gap between policy and implementation and be accountable for the outcome. Panel's proposal to consolidate mandates of OSAGI, DAW and UNIFEM into one entity led by the Under-Secretary-General that would assume full responsibility for strategic planning, normative and operational functions still a proposal on paper.

However, during that period few new offices headed by the Under-Secretaries-General were set up within the Secretariat to respond the needs of certain groups of population. While one of the most flashing issues that concerns 50% of the world population is still beyond the Secretariat's action.

In this regards, my delegation would like to request Secretary General to get finalized the negotiations with the Member States on the structure and working methods of the new Gender entity that would play leadership role to assist the governments in reaching gender equality worldwide and commence running of the entity.

At the country level, the coherence could be reached through the strengthening of the Resident Coordinator office by staffing it with a full time Gender Advisor that would be responsible for synergy and coordination between agencies and ensuring translation of the global development policy into concrete country actions.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate you that my delegation is ready to consider concrete proposal of the Secretary-General on strengthening gender architecher, as soon as possible, so the United Nations would become central point for Member States on reaching gender equality as a driving factor for achieving other development goals.

I thank you all.