

**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
54TH SESSION**

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**H.E. MR. GAREN NAZARIAN
CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Deputy Secretary General,
President of the ECOSOC,
Under-Secretary-General,
Distinguished delegates,

I am honored to welcome you all to this 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I extend a special welcome to representatives from Capitals and in particular to Ministers and senior Government officials, to the large number of non-governmental organizations and to the entities of the United Nations system that are attending this very important gathering.

This year's session takes on particular significance as we have reached the fifteen-year mark since the adoption of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. We have gathered to review progress made; share experiences and good practices so that we can overcome remaining obstacles and new challenges; and to contribute to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

Distinguished delegates,

The Commission on the Status of Women is the premier global forum, and a reliable advocate, for gender equality and the empowerment of women. It has been instrumental in securing visibility and priority attention to these issues on the global agenda. Since 1995, the Commission has systematically reviewed progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, and provided recommendations for further action. It has highlighted new and emerging issues of concern, and has played a critical catalytic role in promoting gender mainstreaming.

The occasion of this comprehensive fifteen-year review of the status of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action gives us the opportunity not only to focus on a particular topic or issue. Rather, it enables us to highlight the interlinkages between many aspects of women's lives, and how progress, or lack of progress in one area can accelerate, or hinder, progress in another. These interdependencies have received increasing attention in recent years as we have endeavoured to meet the Millennium Development Goals. We all recognize that gender equality is both a goal in itself as well as a means for achieving all the other development goals.

Our work over the past years has shown that, while much progress is being made, inequalities between women and men persist in all parts of the world. The next two weeks give us the opportunity not only to assess progress, but also to identify the factors that have contributed to these successes, and how we can build on these experiences to overcome gaps and challenges. We should focus on the causes for delays in implementation, and identify successful strategies for tackling them.

There will be ample opportunity for dialogue to share experiences and exchange views on good practices and lessons learned in high-level roundtables and interactive expert panels. Many parallel events organized by Member States, United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders will further enrich our work. Regional review meetings have taken place under the auspices of the UN regional commissions, and their outcomes will also enhance our discussions.

The Commission should result in a renewed commitment of all stakeholders for the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action at the national level. It should jump-start the process of practical and concrete action that place gender equality and the empowerment of women firmly at the centre of the very important intergovernmental processes that will take place later this year. And in particular the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review in July; and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in September, which will focus on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

We must seize all opportunities at national, regional and global level and give new impetus to the promotion of gender equality and women's enjoyment of their human rights, and build the strategic partnerships that will help us move forward this agenda.

I thank you.