

# Annual Discussion on the Integration of Gender Perspective in the Council's Work (with Focus on UPR)

## **The Human Rights Council – 12th session Statement by the Delegation of the United States of America**

Geneva, 28 September 2009

Thank you, Mr. President and thank you to the panelists for their presentations today.

The U.S is deeply committed to the cause of making human rights a reality for millions of oppressed people around the world. Of particular concern to our Administration is the plight of women and girls, who comprise the majority of the world's unhealthy, unschooled, unfed, and unpaid. If half of the world's population remains vulnerable to economic, political, legal, and social marginalization, our hope of advancing democracy and prosperity will remain in serious jeopardy.

Secretary Clinton has noted, "[s]ocieties where women are accorded their rights and provided with opportunities for basic services – education, health, gainful employment – make progress and expand prosperity."

Earlier this month, the United States indicated its strong support for the "System-Wide Coherence" Resolution adopted at the UNGA. We endorse the resolution's call for consolidating the UN's gender bodies into a composite entity headed by an Under Secretary-General and are asking the Secretary General to expeditiously appoint a head of agency who is knowledgeable and effective on women's issues and respected within the women's movement to lead the envisioned composite entity. The unified entity will improve the situation of women in developing nations and allow the UN to better advance women's equality, empowerment and rights.

On September 30, Secretary of State Clinton will address the Security Council and preside over the adoption of a U.S.-introduced Security Council resolution that seeks to implement SC Resolution 1820. The new resolution calls attention to the horrific acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against women and girls in situations of armed conflict and strengthens the UN's ability to respond to the violence.

By supporting a new mechanism designed to help nations achieve equal opportunity for women, as proposed by Mexico and Colombia, we member states of the UN Human Rights Council have a chance to play our part in the UN system to advance the rights of women around the world. Our adoption of this new mechanism will help all states take a step towards strengthening their societies, meeting their international obligations, and promoting human rights for all. This is at the heart of what this Human Rights Council can and should be about. The United States is pleased to offer our strong support for this initiative and we hope that the rest of the Council will do the same.

Thank you.