

# United Nations

## Press Release

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### SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE

#### MARKS 'TURNING POINT FOR WOMEN

#### Cities New Definition of Development to Include Equal Opportunities for Women

GENEVA, 5 May (UN Information Service) -- Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today presided over a meeting of an Advisory Group discussing preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing, China, from 4 to 15 September 1995. The Advisory Group of Eminent Persons, invited by the Secretary-General in their personal capacity, met to provide advice on preparations for the 1995 Women's Conference.

The Secretary-General said "a turning point has been reached in the cause of women world-wide. Recognition of women's centrality to all dimensions of development grows -- but resources decline, and priorities become more difficult to determine".

The task faced by the Advisory Group and the Conference in Beijing was monumental, the Secretary-General said, adding that 'the cause of women lies at the heart of the cause of all humanity'. The Fourth World Conference would represent a vital continuation of the work on development issues begun during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in June 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights, held in June 1993, and to be continued with the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 5-13 September) and the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 11-12 March 1995).

The Advisory Group drew attention to the need to address gender issues at the Beijing Conference in the context of a new vision of the twenty-first century as one in which gender equality would be achieved. The participants also emphasized the need to address the issue of poverty, which continued to affect women. They also focused on the problems of rural women and the need to facilitate access to resources to improve their lives and, in turn, the lives of their families and communities.

To demonstrate that investment in women yields high returns, the participants cited success stories in which women with access to credit and

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other resources brought about major improvements in their lives, particularly when involved in setting priorities for their communities. The Advisory Group cited the opportunity presented by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, in 1995, to highlight the role of the Organization in placing gender issues on the global agenda. They noted that the United Nations Charter calls for equality between men and women, and were of the view that the Organization should provide a role model in recognizing the contribution and worth of women, including their role in peacemaking and conflict resolution.

Attending the Advisory Group meeting were: Queen Fabiola of Belgium; Victoria F. Chitepo of Zimbabwe, Member of Parliament and former Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications; Dame Ann Hercus, former Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations; Idriss Jazairy of Algeria, Executive Director, Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development; Justice A.R. Jjagge of Ghana, retired Justice of the Superior Courts of Judicature; Roberta Lajous of Mexico, Adviser to Ernesto Zedillo, presidential candidate of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional; Jack Lang, Mayor of Blois, France; General Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Chairman, Africa Leadership Forum, Barbara Simons of Germany, Member of the European Parliament; and Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, Managing Director, Grameen Bank.

Also participating were: Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women; and two past Secretaries-General of the United Nations World Conferences on Women, Judge Helvi Sipilä of Finland, and Leticia Ramos Shahani of the Philippines, Senate President Pro-Tempore.

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