

Report on the GEAR (Gender Equality Architecture) workshop

During the CSW (Council on the Status of Women) in 2006, many women start querying the results that can be reached in the field of gender equality in the current UN structure.

The UN still lacks an effective mechanism to deliver on many of the essential commitments made. It has several small under resourced agencies (like UNIFEM and DAW) focused exclusively on women's issues and other larger agencies make critical contributions to women's human rights and gender equality, but it is usually a small part of their mandate, in addition, often receives low priority.

The conclusion they have reached is that the current structure does not facilitate the necessary progress.

The basis question should be: How is the UN working towards women's rights?

The result of several discussions during the last 2 years is the launch of a GEAR Campaign: GEAR UP.

We were wearing buttons throughout the CSW 52 meeting to promote and advance the campaign.

The structure that carries the GEAR campaign has got five working groups based at the UN in New York and five regional representatives.

During the workshop the representatives of the different regions told us, what they currently do and what their plans are. The representatives all emphasise the delivery on the ground.

Strengthening the UN's gender equality machinery is a crucial part of financing for development. It will better enable the UN and governments to deliver on promises made to advance gender equality and women's human rights, which are essential components of development at the global and country levels.

The major requirements for the new entity are:

1. An Under-Secretary-General should head this entity for women
2. Extensive field presences and a strong policy and programmatic mandate are essential for a strengthened UN entity for women to effectively improve the lives of women on the ground.
3. Substantial and predictable resources to ensure that the new entity for women has the capacity to meet expectations and deliver results at all levels.
4. Accountability within the new entity for women, at both national and international levels, including through meaningful involvement of civil society, in particular non-governmental organisations for women.
5. The new entity should also promote gender mainstreaming by the integration of gender equality and women's human rights throughout the UN and especially in the UN Country Pilots and in all UN reform processes.

For more info: www.wedo.org

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