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**at the panel on:
“Transforming the mainstream: New goals and strategies”
Organized by the Korean Women’s Development Institute**

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President of KWDI, Ms Suh, Myung-Sun
Distinguished participants

It is my pleasure and privilege to participate on this panel. I would like to begin by extending my congratulations to the Ewha Women’s University for organizing the 9th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, as well as to the Korean Women’s Development Institute for taking the initiative for this important panel on “Transforming the mainstream: New goals and strategies”. It is a pleasure to continue collaboration with the Korean Women’s Development Institute.

The Congress comes at a very important moment in time. The ten year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the first United Nations World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 was recently carried out in the Commission on the Status of Women. It is critical to now focus on directing attention and resources to accelerated and effective follow-up. In 2006 the Commission on the Status of Women will hold its 50th session. We should both celebrate the achievements of this important international institutional mechanism for gender equality and empowerment of women and consider ways to enhance its role in the new millennium to more effectively address the challenges ahead. These reviews and commemorations need to be placed in the broader context of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations and the achievement of the vision in the United Nations Charter, including on the equal rights of women and men.

In September this year, world leaders will gather in New York for a momentous global meeting, the 2005 World Summit, to reach agreement on critical issues of development, security and human rights. At this critical juncture the stakes are high: more than one billion people live in extreme poverty and 20,000 die from poverty each day; terrorism affects the daily lives of peoples in all regions of the world; weapons of mass destruction represent an increased threat; and more than forty countries have been scarred by violent conflict over the past five years. Achieving the international agenda on development, security and human rights requires holistic solutions which address all three

areas and the linkages between them. Women are disproportionately affected by many of the problems demanding world attention, including poverty and conflict, and a strong focus on women's needs, contributions and priorities in the commitments to be made at this historic meeting is critical to ensuring effective and enduring solutions to the huge challenges facing humanity.

A great deal of attention was directed to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at global, regional and national level, and in some cases even local levels, to assess achievements, highlight gaps and challenges and identify effective and sustainable ways forward. The 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women was strongly focused on national level implementation, in particular through high-level roundtables and interactive expert panels. The high profile of the session, with over 80 Ministers attending, and significant levels of participation (more than 1800 government delegates, and over 2600 representatives of non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of United Nations bodies and other international and regional organizations) was an important achievement and indication of the continued importance attached to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as the global policy framework, and of continued critical role of the United Nations, particularly through providing a critical space for bringing together all stakeholders on promotion of gender equality.

In assessing achievements, as a result of reviews carried out at national level, many Member States noted progress over the past decade in terms of policy reforms, legislative change, and institutional development. Positive developments included the establishment of national policies and strategies for gender equality in almost all countries. Countries also reported increased diversity in the mechanisms at national level promoting and monitoring attention to gender equality (such as gender equality commissions, ombudspersons offices and parliamentary networks and caucuses); increased attention to resource allocations through gender-sensitive budgeting; and efforts to engage men and boys more actively in promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

Many Member States in their responses also recognized the critical role of NGOs in awareness-raising, advocacy, monitoring and programme delivery and called for increased collaboration. Women's groups and networks have played a very strategic role in moving the global agenda on gender equality forward. Non-governmental organizations have energized the debates on critical areas and contributed to increasing the visibility and recognition of the importance of gender equality for development. A great deal of the sustained attention and the achievements made over the past decade has been due to their efforts. Their role in advocating for and monitoring implementation of the commitment made by Governments has been particularly significant. The increasing partnerships between Governments and civil society on the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality is a positive development, which needs to be built upon strategically.

Analysis of the responses from Governments clearly indicated, however, that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains far from being fully achieved. Progress has been uneven within and across regions. While some gains had been seen in relation to each of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern in all regions, serious obstacles and challenges were also reported in every area.

Persistent gaps in all regions included low levels of women's representation in decision-making positions; stereotypical attitudes and discriminatory practices; and discrimination in employment, including occupational segregation and wage gaps. Violence against women, including domestic violence, was noted as a major challenge worldwide. In some regions, Governments noted disproportionately high poverty levels among women, and their insufficient access to or control of economic resources. Governments also noted the serious effects of conflict on women, particularly sexual violence. In many countries, women's health, in particular lack of access to reproductive health services and high levels of maternal mortality, continued to give cause for concern. Countries reported high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women and trafficking in women and girls was of concern to many Governments.

There were two important learnings which emerged from the review and appraisal. Firstly that there is a huge gap between policy and practice which needs to be explicitly addressed as an urgent priority. And related to this, Government responses illustrated that attitudes towards the gender equality and empowerment of women among the general public and within Government bureaucracies have not changed at the same pace as policy, legal and institutional frameworks. Explicitly addressing persistent stereotypical attitudes and discriminatory practices is critical to the full implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session.

Many gender equality advocates were concerned that it was not possible to achieve explicit formulation of new policy directives as an outcome of the review and appraisal process. However, gender equality advocates had also recognized early on in the preparation process the risks involved, in the current political context, of negotiating outcomes. In addition, there was heightened awareness that the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly - together with the outcomes of other intergovernmental processes, such as Security Council resolution 1325, as well as the articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, remain the valid global framework for promotion of gender equality. There was also recognition that so much of the existing policy and legal framework has not yet been implemented and that an immediate policy priority must be full implementation of these policy commitments and legal obligations.

In the follow-up to the review and appraisal process it is important not to undervalue the Declaration adopted by the Commission, and its policy implications. In addition to unequivocally reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the Declaration emphasized that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is essential

to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. It also stressed the need to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in the 2005 World Summit.

Importantly, the Declaration recognized that the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) are mutually reinforcing in achieving gender equality and empowerment of women. This is critical since the policy frameworks of Member States and the United Nations and other international and regional organizations must build on both instruments.

The declaration called upon the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, all sectors of civil society including non-governmental organizations, as well as all women and men, to fully commit themselves and to intensify their contributions to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. This provides an important mandate for the renewed and accelerated efforts at national level to implement the existing policy framework.

The challenge facing us is to ensure accountability for implementation of existing policy recommendations - in order that the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the fulfillment of obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women will become a reality in the coming decade. A critical element will be working quickly to build on the momentum of the review and appraisal process before it is overtaken in terms of attention by other processes, and to take full advantage of the other opportunities, particularly at global level, for increasing attention to implementation.

The topic of this panel today is extremely relevant. It focuses on the need for transformation – change and renewal, and for working in the mainstream. I would like to address these issues further in this presentation. As the focus in this panel indicates, it is critical to reassess, and to redirect as necessary our strategies, approaches, methodologies and tools. The important issues for gender equality have been well known for the past decade – the challenge is with how to most effectively address them. There are a number of critical questions to be addressed: What underlies the pervasiveness of discrimination in all its forms? In what ways are gender inequalities reproduced within societies - through which norms, practices and institutions and how can these be addressed? Why is attention to gender inequality in public policy and programmes ad hoc and selective and how can we achieve more systematic and effective implementation across all areas of public policy? How do we secure accountability at all levels?

The understanding of the structural causes for the persistence of the discrimination that women and girls face has increased greatly over the past decade. New approaches are, however, needed to directly address these causes, rather than focus on the symptoms and consequences of inequalities as they are reflected in the lives of women and girls.

A major identified problem is the “separateness” or marginalization of work to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. Ten years after the Fourth World Conference many specific policies have been put in place and in turn led to development of processes and mechanisms focused specifically on gender equality – such as strategies, action plans, guidelines, training programmes and monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Too often these policies and accompanying processes and mechanisms have not been well integrated into or had sufficient impact on existing mainstream policies, processes and mechanisms. One of the learnings from efforts to promote the mainstreaming strategy over the past decade is that we have not managed to make a sufficiently strong impact on the mainstream discourses and policy development on development, security and human rights, and have certainly not managed to bring about the transformative process which is an integral part of real mainstreaming. Efforts to promote gender equality and empowerment of women remain marginalized, and thus ineffective. Some of the gains made have proven not sustainable because the changes are not institutionalized.

Gender mainstreaming remains an essential strategy for gender equality and empowerment of women as it is the means by which critical policies, strategies, plans, and resource allocations in all areas of development – political, economic, social, cultural and environmental - can be influenced from a gender equality perspective. Like any other strategy, gender mainstreaming can, however, only be as good as the efforts made to implement it. There is clearly a need to invest greater resources to ensure enhanced understanding of the strategy and the ways in which it should be implemented.

Gender mainstreaming has mainly been given attention at the level of programmes and activities. There is a need to enhance the focus on gender mainstreaming in policy formulation, including at global level. The increased focus at policy level is important for achieving full implementation of the Platform for Action and CEDAW as gender perspectives are still not seen as essential for achieving the goals of all policy areas. Many Governments and organizations continue to base their work on the assumption that certain policy areas, for example macro-economics and technical areas, are in principle “gender-neutral”. Even where gender analysis is relatively well developed, for example in the social sectors, there has been limited success in using this analysis to bring about needed changes at policy level, and impacts on programmes and activities on the ground are limited as a result.

A key focus in the coming decade must be to ensure that gender analysis is the basis for policy development and decision-making in all areas - which was an essential element in the Platform for Action. Capacity to effectively utilize this analysis must be developed as required competence at all levels in organizations and accountability for implementation and outcomes must be strengthened. Innovations in approaches have been developed over the past decade which could be further built upon to support gender mainstreaming. These include incorporating gender perspectives in budget processes; making gender analysis mandatory, particularly in planning routines and review processes; and carrying out gender audits. These approaches could make significant

improvements to enhancing the enabling environment for promoting gender equality. Others speakers will discuss these approaches in their presentations during this panel.

Change and renewal are also needed in institutions working to promote gender equality and empowerment of women to create a more enabling environment for incorporating gender perspectives in policy formulation. Gender equality advocates in many different contexts - in Governments, in the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, in civil society and in academia - are concerned to find new ways to ensure conducive institutional environments for policy change. This includes critically assessing and re-evaluating institutional mechanisms and processes and identifying new modalities. In the context of the United Nations it will be important to ensure that attention to the institutional mechanisms and resources for gender equality are given adequate consideration in the United Nations reform process. One challenge facing the United Nations is ensuring greater involvement of civil society in its work. This includes, in keeping with the principles and spirit of the United Nations, bringing in the voices from all regions, including in policy making.

The need for change and renewal also applies to non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations. Many participants at the review and appraisal in the Commission on the Status of Women this year noted that the review and appraisal process had illustrated the continuing importance and strength of the women's movement. However, many also acknowledge the need for change and renewal and the continuing tensions which need to be addressed, including the issue of intersectionality and differences arising from the divergent analyses of women in different political, economic, social and cultural contexts, which has implications for policy development. Many groups and organizations want to further address issues of identify, representation, power and accountability.

An important aspect of this movement for change should be galvanizing new broad-based coalitions, including outside the existing women's movement, to address in a broader context the challenges facing the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. This could include stronger interaction with the vibrant movements on social development and the environment, which can strengthen women's voices, provide access to new resources, and lead to strategic alliances in advocating for policy change. There is a need to reinvigorate the interaction with academia, particularly since the constraints to effective policy formulation include lack of data and under-researched areas where anecdotal evidence is not sufficient basis for policy discussions.

I would like to raise three challenges in relation to policy formulation at global level in the follow-up to the ten-year review and appraisal. *Firstly, there is an urgent need to more effectively directly influence mainstream policy-making in all areas, through active involvement in these processes.* This should be a priority focus for the future and new approaches need to be developed. It will be particularly critical to develop new and innovative ways for gender equality advocates from different contexts - United Nations, Member States, NGOs, academia - to work together and build on the comparative advantages of each group.

The most critical opportunity for moving positions forward on promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, which need to be fully utilized, is the 2005 World Summit to be held in September this year. This global meeting will set the global agenda on development, security and human rights for the decade ahead and it is critical to influence the process from a gender equality perspective.

The Secretary-General's report, "*In larger freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all*" - which provides the initial framework for discussions of Member States - does include reference to the recommendations that were made by the Millennium Project Taskforce on the MDG focused on gender equality and empowerment of Women. The recommendations of the taskforce are: strengthening opportunities for post-primary education for girls while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education; guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health and rights; investing in infrastructure to reduce women's and girls' time burdens; guaranteeing women's and girls' property and inheritance rights; eliminating gender inequality in employment by decreasing women's reliance on informal employment, closing gender gaps in earnings, and reducing occupational segregation; increasing women's share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies; and combating violence against women and girls.

Considerable work is still needed by gender equality advocates in the United Nations, in Member States and in NGOs and other groups, to ensure that the outcome of the 2005 World Summit - which is negotiated by the Member States of the United Nations - gives adequate attention to gender equality throughout the areas of development, security and human rights.

An important learning from the process is the value of having a set of clear recommendations around which gender equality advocates from Member States, the United Nations and civil society can mobilize joint efforts. This enhanced the effectiveness of efforts and provided increased potential for impact.

The second challenge is to more effectively utilize the gender equality policy recommendations already adopted to influence mainstream policies. Many excellent policy recommendations have been adopted in a wide variety of areas which have not had a significant impact. The Commission on the Status of Women over the past few years has adopted important policy recommendations on ICT, natural disasters and poverty which have had relatively marginal impact on mainstream policy processes in these areas. For example, the outcome of the Commission on ICT did not have optimum impact on the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003. Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security has led to significant changes but has not yet had the full desired impact at all levels and should be utilized much more effectively.

New approaches for effectively utilizing policy recommendations on gender equality in mainstream processes need to be developed. The 50th session of the

Commission on the Status of Women provides a unique opportunity to move forward on this issue, in the context of the discussion of the working methods of the Commission and the development of its new multi-year programme of work. The Division for the Advancement of Women will initiate a consultative process to get inputs in preparation for these critical discussions in the Commission.

The third challenge for global policy making, is to further develop specific gender equality policies in a number of critical areas. Important opportunities will arise in intergovernmental processes during the coming year for further development in two key areas - women's political participation and violence against women.

The ten-year review and appraisal of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action clearly shows that, despite political recognition of the fundamental right of women and men to participate in political and public life, the gap between de jure and de facto equality in the area of power and decision-making remains wide. While the proportion of seats held by women in legislative bodies is the highest world average reached to date, and continues a trend of gradual but sustained growth, the pace of change is clearly far too slow. Only 14 countries have at least 30 percent representation of women in parliament, which had been established as a target for 1995, and is still not achieved ten years later. One encouraging development is the fact that a number of post-conflict countries have highlighted and addressed the importance of including women in reconstruction processes, and of their participation in new democratic institutions.

Increasing women's representation in parliaments was identified as one of the indicators for achieving Millennium Development Goal Three: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women. The indicator is the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. The recently released report of Taskforce Three of the Millennium Project, "Taking action: achieving gender equality and empowering women", included the increase of women's share in national parliaments and local government bodies as one of its recommended seven strategic priorities.

The themes to be considered by the 50th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2006 are "Enhanced participation of women in development; an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and for the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work", and "Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels". This provides an opportunity to further develop recommendations to ensure full and accelerated implementation of this critical area of concern.

The second issue to be addressed in the coming year - violence against women - was also established as a critical area of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action, and has subsequently been addressed in the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly. Further policy recommendations are essential to ensure elimination of violence against women.

In December 2003, the General Assembly of the United Nations requested the Secretary-General to prepare an in-depth study on violence against women. The study will be completed by June 2006, and submitted to the General Assembly for consideration. The goals of the study are to: highlight the persistence of all forms of violence against women in all parts of the world, and the unacceptability of such violence; strengthen political commitment and joint efforts of all stakeholders to prevent and eliminate violence against women; and identify ways and means for better and more sustained and effective implementation of Government commitments and obligations to combat all forms of violence against women, and increase accountability.

The process of preparation of the study is as important as the product. It is an opportunity to raise visibility of and political commitment to tackling the issue of violence against women, enhance accountability and strengthen monitoring mechanisms in the study's follow-up phase. For this reason, efforts are being made to establish broad consultation within the United Nations and with Member States, NGOs and experts in academia. Briefings and consultations will be held, for example, in conjunction with ECOSOC, the General Assembly and the CSW. These consultations serve as opportunities to discuss key issues and strategic recommendations to be addressed by the study. (Further information on the study is available at the back of the room).

In conclusion, the overall vision and concrete global commitment made in the First World Conference 30 years ago: Gender Equality – Development – Peace, continues to guide us today and the importance of the integral links between equality, development and peace is increasingly highlighted, as illustrated most recently in the focus on development, security and human rights in the 2005 World Summit. The World Conferences set in motion an important process, involving a continuous cycle of research and analysis; goal-setting; reviewing progress to identify achievements as well as gaps, challenges and obstacles; and renewing and expanding commitments. It is clear that 2005 is a time for reflection, assessment and redirection and we should utilize the opportunities presented to the fullest.

There are many different actors working for gender equality and empowerment of women at many different levels - within the United Nations, within Governments, in civil society, in academia, and in the private sector. We need to find new and innovative ways of working together and building on our comparative strengths. Much will depend on the actions of gender equality advocates over the coming year and the manner in which they are able to influence key processes.

Equally critical is, however, the need for strong and explicit leadership from others than gender equality advocates - in Governments, in the United Nations and other international and regional organizations and in civil society, to ensure the needed political will and allocation of resources. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations has emphasized in the past - gender equality is not the responsibility of women; it is the responsibility of all of us. It is time for stronger explicit leadership and accountability on gender equality and women's empowerment from top political leaders in all countries and within all international and regional organizations. It must be our hope that the 2005

World Summit will provide the impetus for such leadership in the future to ensure full implementation of the commitments in the Platform for Action and all obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.