

Mrs. Eeva Koskinen
Executive director of UNIFEM Finland

Dear Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon

Thank you for taking the time today to come and meet with the civil society organisations.

My name is Eeva Koskinen and I am representing the National Committee for UNIFEM in Finland. (We have been functioning since the beginning of the 80's when we were founded by the late Mrs. Helvi Sipilä.)

- Our main duties are to support the United Nation's Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in promoting women's human rights, participation and leadership.
- We work by raising funds through our active local committees – the funds are channelled to our chosen projects run by UNIFEM in Afghanistan.
- We also provide expert opinions and aims to influence Finnish decision-makers for a comprehensive inclusion of gender-awareness specifically in the field of development co-operation as well as in politics and the society in general.

The United Nations naturally has a large role in the global promotion of women's human rights today. Developments have come to the point where the re-organizing of the gender architecture within the United Nations is at hand. Three institutions that promote women's rights, one of which is UNIFEM, are to be compiled into one. The possibilities of strengthening the institutions that promote women's human rights is a positive development, but the changes in the gender architecture also raise our concern. UNIFEM has for a long time been known internationally as a trustworthy actor in the field of development cooperation, now the changes in the UN system makes us worry that the strong brand and reputation that UNIFEM has achieved might suffer from the reform.

So my question is Mr. Ban:

What do you see as being the best and most efficient way to promote gender issues and women's human rights within the United Nations system?

How will women benefit from the restructuring of the gender architecture?