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Chair,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues and friends,

number of women in political office and public life. To reinforce this commitment, an extraordinary group of women heads of state and other government leaders joined with Ms Bachelet in a call for increasing women's political participation and decision-making across the world, which is a key area of work of UN-Women. The leaders signed on to a joint statement on ways to advance women's political participation, and we are committed to helping translate those into concrete results.

As we have seen from the events of the "Arab Spring," women have been actively involved in organizing and demanding political freedoms and dignity. Women from all walks of life are joining the calls for democracy. They are working to achieve full parity in the assemblies and bodies that are shaping the future of their countries. Their contribution makes clear that democracy will remain incomplete as long as half the population does not enjoy full and equal participation and citizenship rights.

And we all rejoiced when the winners of the Nobel Peace Prize were announced last Friday, awarded to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work. This award is a ringing acknowledgement of what women have been demanding for years: the equal involvement of women in all peace, security and democracy decisions. Women's involvement is central for achieving lasting peace and stability and yet, too often, they are excluded from the negotiating table. As Ms Bachelet said in her message celebrating this achievement, UN-Women stands beside women around the world who are demanding that their voices be heard and they have equal participation in decision-making.

At the same time, it is with deep sorrow and sadness that all of us at UN-Women grieve the loss of Wangari Muta Maathai, an environmentalist, politician, professor and human rights activist.

We join people in Africa and around the world in mourning her death, and celebrating her life, as a remarkable leader who was the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Professor Maathai took a courageous stand, enduring harassment and brutality, to protect the environment and advance the rights of women, combating desertification, water shortages and rural hunger.

Chair,

There is enormous excitement and an explosion of expectations about UN-Women. The Entity has fully assumed its leadership position and is working together with the UN system, and with Government and civil society partners around the world to seize the opportunities generated here at the United Nations and around the world. Much progress has been accomplished in UN-Women's institutional consolidation, also thanks to the action taken by this Assembly late last year and by the Executive Board of UN-Women in early January on our 2011 budgets. We have aligned our staff resources, especially here at Headquarters, and are now turning our attention to strengthening our field presence.

We have devoted significant efforts to positioning UN-Women as a catalyst for change. We are focusing on building partnerships, cutting edge analysis, strategic presence and high level advocacy and leadership. We chose to focus our first flagship report on the important subject of women's access to justice because we recognize that effective systems of justice are a foundation for gender equality and women's full enjoyment of their human rights. Reforms to bring legislation into compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Fo

and economic issues. Inequalities between women and men, however, permeate all sectors and subject matters, and should therefore be a visible part of analysis and action everywhere.

The report's recommendations highlight the need to:

Fully mainstream a gender perspective into all issues considered by intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations and into all United Nations summits and conferences;

Ensure that reports of the Secretary-General to intergovernmental bodies systematically include a gender perspec