



Former Chilean President Appointed Under Secretary General to Lead United Nations Women (UN Women)

AUSTRALIA

The all-party Australian Parliamentary Group on Population and Development celebrates the appointment of former Chilean President, Dr. Michelle Bachelet to lead the newly established UN Women.

Dr. Bachelet comes to the position of Under Secretary General with a strong track record of advancing women's rights and empowerment. Dr. Bachelet is a physician and as former Health Minister and then as Chile's first female President she stood strong on the issues of sexual and reproductive health rights, signing legislation which called for the no-cost distribution of emergency contraception.

Dr. Bachelet was selected from a distinguished short-list of 25 candidates to lead the newly established UN Women, announced by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in June 2010. UN Women will become fully operational in January 2011 and will become the focal point through which the United Nations will advance gender equality in all its programs.

Senator Claire Moore, Convenor of the Australian Parliamentary Group on Population and Development said, "It is a promising sign to women everywhere that such a distinguished applicant has been appointed to this important role."

With the international community just five years away from the target date for achievements in development including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Programme of Action (PoA) arising from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Beijing Agenda it is more important than ever that we ensure issues that affect women receive the attention they deserve. MDG5--improve Maternal Health has made the least amount of progress of all the MDGs and it is critical for the achievement of all development aims.

Senator Moore said "The announcement of Dr. Bachelet to this position is a strong indicator that the Secretary General of the United Nations, and the development community as a whole recognizes the critical importance of making strong progress in advancing development targets for women, including maternal health and particularly sexual and reproductive health and access to family planning."

The Australian Parliamentary Group on Population and Development congratulates Dr. Bachelet and looks forward to working with UN Women.

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