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Opening Statement:

“Workshop on Gender Budgeting”

And

“CEDAW Photo Award Presentation”

**Kamal Malhotra
UN Resident Coordinator**

**10 March 2010
Wisma UN, Kuala Lumpur**

Ms. Winnie Byanyima
Director of the UNDP Gender Team,
Bureau for Development Policy, New York

Yang Berhormat Members of Parliament

Representatives from Government and Non-government Organizations,

Members of the Media

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

A very good morning to you all. It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Wisma UN both to the opening of the 2-day workshop on Gender Budgeting and the CEDAW Photo Contest award presentation. One of the winners is from Malaysia and I am happy to say that he won the Popular Vote of UN staff in the region.

I warmly welcome Winnie, an old friend from my New York days, who will be leading the workshop on gender budgeting. We are fortunate to have Winnie who is an expert on gender issues, has served on many advisory panels, been a consultant for a number of UN agencies and been an active parliamentarian for over a decade in Uganda, her country.

I would also like to convey my thanks to the UNCT Gender Theme Group members for their initiative and team work in organizing today's event.

It is good that this event is being held in conjunction with the 2010 International Women's Day which has just been celebrated with a clear message from the UN Secretary-General that the United Nations stands for equal rights, equal opportunities and progress for all women. Indeed, equality and opportunity are inalienable rights for every woman and girl. Women's empowerment is also an economic and social imperative and gender sensitive budgeting is critical to achieving this outcome. And unless women and girls are empowered and liberated from poverty and injustice, all our main goals – peace, security, sustainable development – remain in jeopardy.

The UNCT Gender Theme Group in Malaysia is organizing today's workshop with these priorities in mind and with the main objective of developing a gender sensitive approach to budgeting which prioritizes issues such as housing, employment and healthcare services.

I am confident that under Winnie's and Angela's expert guidance, the workshop will help participants contribute to key policy and budgetary reforms which prioritize women's issues in the forthcoming 10th Malaysia Plan (2011-2015).

Now turning to the award again, for those of you who are not aware, the UN Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (RCM-TWGEEW) celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the CEDAW Convention through a photo contest a few months ago. The contest attracted more than 300 entries from across the Asia-Pacific region. Among the winners was Mr. Loi Choong Kin from Malaysia who won the Popular Vote of UN staff in the region.

We are honored to have Mr. Loi with us today to celebrate his winning entry. (Congratulations to you Mr. Loi for this wonderful achievement). I would like to invite all of you to view his winning photograph and the other winning entries displayed here at Wisma UN.

Let me conclude by wishing all of you a fruitful and enriching workshop. I am particularly happy to see representatives from both Government and non-governmental agencies and Parliamentarians who are committed to supporting the aspirations and hopes of women and their families participating in this workshop.

Thank you.