

UN Under Secretary General and Head of UN Women Addresses Major Women's Conference on Anti Racism in Dublin

Conference Title: Diverse Voices of Women Today, breaking the silence on racism

When and where: Today Tues 2 Oct, 10.30am – 4pm @ Wood Quay Venue, Dublin 1.

Michelle Bachelet, Under Secretary General of the United Nations and Head of UN Women, (the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) today called on women from minority backgrounds in Ireland to be leaders and to send a clear message to policy makers and society at large that racism, discrimination and violence against women from minority backgrounds comes at a cost to society.

Formally opening (through video link up) the Irish Network against Racism's Women's Conference in Dublin today and attended by over 130 delegates, Ms Bachelet stated that, "Relative to other women, those of minority backgrounds seldom reap the benefits of economic growth. Policies that may benefit some or most women in society may not benefit all women in society and most is just not enough" she said. "In difficult times women of minority ethnic backgrounds generally pay the highest price" she added.

"This conference is about bringing women together to discuss the human rights issues which are affecting the lives of thousands of women in Ireland to-day" said Rachel Doyle, National Women's Council of Ireland and convenor of the Network's women's committee. "We are calling on Government today to take the necessary steps to address ongoing racism and to deal with core issues such as trafficking of women, labour exploitation, the treatment of women asylum seekers and discrimination and racism against Traveller and Roma women" she said.

"Today is about building a strong voice for women from minority ethnic backgrounds." said Catherine Lynch, Director of the Network. "The human rights concerns of the women here today must be brought out of the shadows and into the light of day" she added. "We know that racism experienced by women often goes unnoticed. As the national organisation coordinating racist incident reporting across the country we find that women are less likely to report racism. If racism is not addressed, we cannot expect women from minority backgrounds to be able to integrate or participate as equals. Today, we are striving to place these issues on the political agenda and work together for change. This is the message coming from the conference of 120 women from all backgrounds including migrant and Traveller women."

Further information: Catherine Lynch, Director, Irish Network Against Racism (ENAR Ireland), Tel. 087 2507942, enarireland@gmail.com.

Notes to the editor: The Irish Network Against Racism (ENAR Ireland) is a national network and the Irish Coordination for European Network Against Racism. www.enarireland.org ENAR Ireland coordinates the independent mechanism for reporting racist incidents, <http://enarireland.org/racist-incident-reporting-form/>

Conference speakers include: Fakhra Salimi - Director of the MiRA Resource Centre for Black, Immigrant and Refugee Women; Anastasia Crickley - Member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Maria Joyce - National Traveller Women's Forum; Nobuhle Ncube - Akidwa; Mariaam Bhatti - Domestic Workers Action Group, Migrant Rights Centre.