

**Draft remarks**  
**Michelle Bachelet**  
**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**  
**Executive Director of UN Women**

**30th anniversary Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung New York Office**  
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Thank you. I am so pleased to be here with all of you tonight to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the New York Office of the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation. I thank the Honorary Chairperson, Anke Fuchs, and the Foundation for the important and impressive work that you have done—and continue to do—worldwide.

I had the opportunity to work with FES in Chile on strengthening social protection and democracy. I look forward now to close collaboration between our organizations, between the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and UN Women.

It is only through partnership that we can make the progress that is needed to advance women's economic empowerment, political participation and leadership.

These are top priorities for UN Women because women's empowerment and participation are central to gender equality. And having women at the decision-making table is vital for sustainable development and inclusive democracy.

Whether we are talking about crafting the agreement for Rio+20, or mending the faltering global economy, or reducing rising inequality, humanity is better served if the wisdom of half the population is fully tapped and utilized. When women and men, young and old, work together, and listen to each other's views, the prospects improve for sound decision-making.

Just last week I was in Cairo where I met with young leaders from countries across the Arab region. It was so exciting to see young men and women joining together in the transition to democracy.

To strengthen women's empowerment and participation in the Arab States, I announced a new round of grants supported by our Fund for Gender Equality while

I was in Cairo. It is our hope that these funds will support women and groups and their participation in political processes in their countries during this time of transition.

The democratic uprisings in the Arab world and the protests in Europe, Latin America, and here in the United States share a common thread. People want their voices to be heard. They want to shape their own futures and the future of their countries. Democracy depends on the active participation of women, men and young people.

When I worked with FES in Chile, our partnership was built on the ideals of equality, solidarity and democracy. These are the ideals that I also carry forward as the head of UN Women.

During the transition to democracy in Chile, the Ebert Foundation contributed substantially to thinking about the democratization of our institutions. Its expertise, together with other organizations and institutions, contributed uniquely to the configuration of the new profile of Chilean society. This was accomplished by doing precisely what it does as a political foundation: promoting the international exchange of experiences designed to strengthen the state's democratic institutions, promoting the modernization of the political system and, in particular, strengthening political parties to promote the union movement and the participation of youth and women.

So I know very well the solid contributions that FES makes, and now as head of UN Women, I look forward to continuing this partnership to advance women's empowerment and gender equality. UN Women looks forward to working with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation to advance women's participation and leadership in the areas of sustainable development and next year's Rio+20 Summit, and in countries as they make the transition to democracy.

All over the world, people are demanding justice, equality, and democracy. They are speaking out against disparities and institutions that they do not trust. They want to chart a new way forward. By listening to them and working with them, we can carry the vision of Willy Brandt forward. I thank you.