

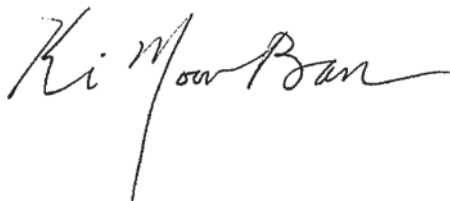
## Message from the Secretary-General

The United Nations occupies a unique position as a global storehouse of statistical information on social and economic phenomena. Numerical profiles of women and men and their status in societies are systematically collected, compiled, processed and analyzed, providing an authoritative basis for sound policymaking at all levels – national, regional and international.

*The World's Women: Trends and Statistics* was first published by the United Nations in 1991. A new edition has been issued every five years since 1995, as called for specifically in the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at that year's landmark Fourth World Conference on Women. With coverage encompassing the full range of issues and concerns, it is the only publication of its kind.

*The World's Women 2010* is intended to contribute to the stocktaking being done to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Conference. It addresses critical aspects of life: population, families, health, education, work, power and decision-making, violence against women, environment and poverty. It finds that progress in ensuring the equal status of women and men has been made in many areas, including school enrolment, health and economic participation. At the same time, it makes clear that much more needs to be done, in particular to close the gender gap in public life and to prevent the many forms of violence to which women are subjected.

It is my hope that the insights and information contained in the present publication will help Governments, researchers, scholars, non-governmental organizations and concerned citizens around the world in their efforts to ensure that every single woman achieves her full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ki-moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long vertical stroke extending downwards from the end of the name.

BAN Ki-Moon