

## JOINT OPENING PLENARY 2010



### **DR NOELEEN HEYZER**

UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION  
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Noeleen Heyzer (Singapore) is the ninth Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General in August 2007, she leads the organization at the level of Under-Secretary-General. Dr Heyzer is the first woman to occupy this position since its founding in 1947. As the Executive Secretary, she is responsible for all the activities of ESCAP and its administration, including ensuring that the regional commission plays a major role in the development of the region. She also chairs the Regional Co-ordination Mechanism that brings 27 United Nations entities to deliver as one at the regional and sub-regional levels.

Since taking office, Dr Heyzer has positioned ESCAP, the regional arm of the United Nations, as a powerful comprehensive platform for promoting regional co-operation among member states to achieve inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. In this regard, she has promoted regional connectivity to enhance trade, transport and ICT networks, energy security, social protection, and financial cooperation. She has improved the engagement of countries with special needs and worked with senior decision makers re-directing policies, institutions and resources to help close the development gap of least developed countries and small island developing states.



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In response to the multiple crises facing the region, Dr Heyzer has worked with heads of state and senior ministers to establish regional co-operation mechanisms that address the food-fuel-finance crises and climate change. She has championed the development of social policies and social protection measures as well as green growth, disaster preparedness and resilience as integral to the recovery efforts from the current economic crisis and to addressing climate change. The Executive Secretary has also been able to convene Myanmar's leaders to discuss difficult development concerns together with diverse local and international partners and experts like Nobel Prize economist Professor Joseph Stiglitz.

Prior to her appointment to ESCAP, Dr Heyzer was the first Executive Director from the South to head the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). She played a critical role in the Security Council's adoption and implementation of the landmark Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security - undertaking extensive missions to conflict-affected countries worldwide and transforming the peace and security work of the United Nations. Dr Heyzer was responsible for the establishment of the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, for organizing the first global interactive conference on the issue in the General Assembly, and for appointing Actress Nicole Kidman as UNIFEM's Goodwill Ambassador to campaign against this violence.

Dr Heyzer has received several awards for leadership, including the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal (2004) given to "a person who has promoted, in action and spirit, the values that inspired Dag Hammarskjöld as Secretary-General of the United Nations and generally in his life: compassion, humanism and commitment to international solidarity and cooperation", Uppsala, Sweden. In recognition of her contribution to women, peace and justice, Dr Heyzer was among the nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. She has a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Science from the University of Singapore. Dr Heyzer obtained a Doctorate in social sciences from Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

