

**Panel discussion to mark the first observance of
the International Day of Rural Women**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York
15 October 2008**

**Introductory remarks by the Moderator, Carolyn Hannan
Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women**

worldwide, who are also celebrating International Day of Rural Women, I wish you a successful and valuable meeting”.

Since its establishment more than 60 years ago, the Division for the Advancement of Women has worked on the issue of rural women. In recent years, the primary attention to rural women has been on a biennial basis in the context of the General Assembly, under the agenda item in the Third Committee and through the consideration of women in development in the Second Committee. The Commission on the Status of Women also includes attention to rural women in relation to the priority themes under consideration. Ambassador Belle, the Chairperson of the Commission, will provide more information on the role of the Commission.

Rural women play a critical role in the rural economies of both developed and developing countries. In most parts of the developing world they participate in crop production and livestock care, provide food, water and fuel for their families, and engage in off-farm activities to diversify their families’

enhance rural development outcomes. Effectively addressing emerging issues such as climate change and the food crisis require the full involvement of rural women.

To commemorate the first observation of the International Day of Rural Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women is launching a publication in its Women 2000 and Beyond Series – entitled “*Rural women in a changing world: Opportunities and challenges*”