



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

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Statement by
Ms. Jane Hodgnes
Director

Bureau for Gender Equality

54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Mr. Chairperson,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ILO is honored to address this 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on Women. Since 1995 the ILO has been deeply committed to support its Constituents in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It has a special, but not exclusive, focus on area E on women and the environment, and area A on women and poverty.

Mr. Chairperson,

In 1999, right after his election as Director General, Mr. Juan Somavía issued the ILO's gender equality policy. This policy, which makes direct reference to the Beijing Platform for Action, states that the promotion of gender equality in the world is the responsibility of all ILO staff at all levels and that appropriate measures should be taken to allocate adequate resources and develop to meet the needs of women in the world of work. The 192 members of the ILO and its constituents have been kept informed of the results of this policy.

Mr. Chairperson,

The ILO's most ambitious and comprehensive contribution to the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women is the International Labour Conference's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted by representatives of governments, employers and workers in June 2008. The Resolution contains wide-ranging measures that the ILO and its constituents should implement to achieve gender equality in the world of work. These measures include, among others, fostering small and medium-sized enterprises and women's entrepreneurship, as a key means of generating employment and the social and economic empowerment of women. The Cairo Platform of Action for the development of women entrepreneurship in Africa, adopted by the ILO and the African Development Bank on 29 October 2009, is an important milestone in this effort especially as it takes into account the high unemployment and economic crisis in Africa, its poverty rates and its achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.



Other measures contained in the Resolution include addressing equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value through better understanding of the concept of equal pay using gender-neutral job evaluation, expanding the coverage and effectiveness of social security for all, formalizing and extending the coverage of social security coverage, introducing the social protection floor; strengthening women's participation in social dialogue by improving the representation of women in decision-making processes and in leadership positions in governments, employers' and workers' organizations and in social dialogue institutions at the international, regional, national and local levels; developing and disseminating tools; and undertaking research to assess the impact of violence against women, human and sexual trafficking, universal ratification of Convention 100 on equal remuneration and Convention 111 dealing with discrimination in employment and occupation.

Mr. Chairperson,

... in unemployment, poverty and inequality. In June 2009, heads of state and government, ministers of labour, trade union and employer representatives and other leaders adopted a global jobs pact. The Pact is designed to guide national and international policies aimed at creating new jobs, supporting existing and upgrading new jobs and providing social protection to working women and men and their families. These measures also aim at reducing the time lag between economic growth and employment recovery.

The Report also highlights the importance of giving a voice to women and men and the need for gender equality policy responses, and states that "The current crisis could be viewed as an opportunity to shape new gender equality policy responses. Recovery packages need to take into account the impact on women and men and on gender equality measures. In discussions on recovery packages, both regarding their design and assessing their success, women must have an equal voice with men."

In addition, the 2010 session of the International Labour Conference will discuss *Decent Work for Domestic Workers*. This constitutes the basis for a first discussion towards an international instrument to protect this category of workers. Women's and girls' participation in domestic work is high all over the world and its hidden nature makes them particularly vulnerable to different hazards, to verbal and physical violence and to sexual abuse. The adoption of a legal instrument to address this issue will add power to governments' efforts to address violation of domestic workers rights, to reduce violence against women and to address the gender inequality of risks and benefits of working as a domestic workers.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing again the achievement of gender equality in the work of women would ensure a sustainable and inclusive growth, sustainable development and a world free of violence against women and decisively to the *World Employment Conference*. The ILO, Mr. Chairperson, stands ready to assist its constituents in this regard.