



OSAGI  
Office of the Special Adviser  
on Gender Issues and Advancement  
of Women - UNITED NATIONS



MCTC  
The Golda Meir Mount Carmel  
International Training Center



MASHAV  
Israel's Agency for International  
Development Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### International Conference – Expert Meeting

### THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS - IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

*Haifa, Israel - 8 – 12 November, 2009*

### Haifa Declaration

We, women and men and international organizations, who participated in the Conference-Expert Meeting on “*The Global Financial Crisis – Implications for Women*”, co-organized by the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center (MCTC), Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV), and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) of the United Nations Secretariat, hereby note with deep concern that the current global financial and economic crisis has had major repercussions on women and girls in all regions of the world.

We reaffirm the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women, the UN Millennium Declaration (2000); the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000); the Monterrey Consensus on Financing Development, Mexico (2002), the World Summit Outcome Document, 2005 and the Doha Statement to Strengthen the Global Partnership for Financing for Development, 2008.

We express our deep appreciation to MASHAV, MCTC and OSAGI on this initiative to highlight the impact of the financial crisis on women.

We are concerned that the crisis is having serious socio-economic consequences for women, especially in poor countries, with higher infant mortality and morbidity; more girls are being taken out of school, and some are turning to the sex trade. Many women have declining incomes, even as they struggle to make ends meet, caring also for family members.

While recognizing the negative effects, we also recognize that the crisis presents opportunities to learn important lessons, and to address the vulnerability of women in national economies.

In this context we strongly emphasize the role of women as important agents of change and urge their full involvement in efforts to stimulate national economies to ensure long-term recovery.

As countries put economic stimulus packages and other measures in place to resuscitate their economies, it is important to note that ultimately the beneficiaries of those policies are the people, not solely the banks and other financial institutions that often receive these packages. By factoring in the needs of people, especially those of women and girls, we stand

a better chance of achieving not just Millennium Development Goal #3 that specifically addresses the situation of women, but also all the other internationally agreed development goals.

We emphasize that even where women's participation in the labor market has not yet been significantly affected by the financial crisis, their lack of adequate social protection leaves them highly vulnerable. Many women work in the informal economy. Few can rely on social security or other forms of unemployment insurance. Furthermore, since women do not live in isolation, but with their husbands, brothers, fathers, sons and other male family members and companions, they share the consequences of the poverty and suffering that arise from the effect of the crisis on men. The care-giving role of women, including in the context of HIV/AIDS, also places them in an even more vulnerable situation.

Recognizing that many women rely on transfer incomes, especially from family members who migrate abroad, we express deep concern about the downturn in remittances which has been reported in some countries in the context of the financial crisis.

We affirm our commitment to women and girls and resolve to use every opportunity to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to mitigate the effects of the crisis on women and girls.

We agree to work together to ensure that adequate data are available on the impact of the crisis on women and to make sure that women have better access to information and to improvements in infrastructure and services, as well as social protection systems, especially essential in times of economic crisis and recession.

Accordingly we hereby call upon Member States:

- (a) to ensure that the needs and priorities of women and girls are specifically addressed in policies and interventions to address the crisis;
- (b) to mobilize political will and determination in favor of increased representation of women in all sectors;
- (c) to encourage the full engagement of women in decision-making on how to ensure economic recovery in the context of the financial crisis. In this regard, women in all their capacities and realities must be engaged, whether as heads of households, workers, home makers, care givers, persons with disabilities; youth and older persons, rich, poor, employed or unemployed;
- (d) to affirm our conviction that providing opportunities for the education, particularly providing universal mandatory primary schooling for all girls and boys, as well as training and health care of girls and women, remains a potent tool for empowerment and for shielding them from current and future crises;
- (e) to ensure that support is available to the small scale enterprises that are often run by women and on which the survival and welfare of many depend;
- (f) to engage with women's groups and other members of civil society who work at the grassroots level, to ensure that the diverse groups of women, who are most affected by the crisis, especially the rural poor, women and girls with disabilities, and the elderly receive the help they need for both their short and long-term needs
- (g) to promote women's full and equal participation in the labour market, through relevant education programmes including technical and vocational training;

- (h) to comply with international commitments and multilateral environmental agreements, particularly in the areas of transfer of technology, capacity building, provision of new and additional financial resources through efficient and effective mechanisms, and ensure that these benefit women;
- (i) to design guarantee schemes and incentives for financial institutions promoting women's access to credit and entrepreneurship;
- (j) to increase health and education budgets and expand allowances and subsidies in education and health, linked to accountability through health checks for women and children;
- (k) to enable follow-up, research and monitoring by peer review or by women's information centers at regional and national and local levels;
- (l) to increase sex disaggregated data, leading to gender-sensitive employment creation schemes and gender mainstreaming in the economy;
- (m) to encourage public-private-civil society-media partnerships for women's empowerment, with strategic association between government, universities, civil society and the private sector and strengthening of the legal framework;
- (n) to work towards equal sharing of responsibilities through elimination of cultural gender stereotypes;

We urge the implementation of approaches that enhance intergenerational and inter-regional solidarity, recognizing that the most sustainable recovery processes must cut across generational and geographic boundaries.

We call on donor countries and international organizations:

- to ensure that adequate resources are channeled towards support of the empowerment of women to sustain them through the current crisis and to promote their involvement in its resolution
- to ensure in the context of the Paris Agreement (2005) and the Accra Declaration (2008) that gender equality and economic empowerment of women receive priority attention within development planning

We call on the United Nations, international financial institutions and regional organizations:

- to support Member States in their efforts to implement a gender-mainstreaming strategy concerning all economic and financial resources
- to create and widely disseminate information on lessons learned and best practices in tackling the financial crisis and its implications for women

We urge all governments, policy makers, UN agencies, the international community at large and civil society to join us as we pledge our full commitment to ensuring that women are at the center of actions that we take in our countries and in our communities to address the consequences of the global financial crisis.

Haifa  
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