

**Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fourth session
1 – 12 March 2010**

**Interactive expert panel on
“Women’s economic empowerment in the context of
the global economic and financial crisis”**

Monday, 8 March 2010, 3:00-6:00 pm

ISSUES PAPER

I. Background

The international community made strong and comprehensive commitments to women’s economic empowerment at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in 2000, and other intergovernmental processes, including the 2005 World Summit and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in 2008. Recent outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women have addressed the issue within the context of its priority themes, and have focused on gender-sensitive macroeconomic policies, employment opportunities for women, and women’s equal access to and control over financial and economic resources and markets.

A number of ILO Conventions and international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, also contain provisions promoting women’s economic empowerment.

There is increasing recognition of the implications of financial and economic crises on gender equality and development. In its agreed conclusions on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS, adopted in 2009, the Commission on the Status of Women expressed its deep concern over the negative impact of the global economic and financial crisis, which could hamper progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The 2009 United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development recognized the disproportionate burden on women of previous crises and acknowledged women’s increased income insecurity and care burden during times of crises (A/RES/63/303).

In its resolution on “Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact”, adopted in June 2009, the International Labour Conference noted that the current crisis should be viewed as an opportunity to shape new gender equality policy responses. Recovery packages should take into account the impact of the economic crises on women and men and integrate gender equality concerns in all response measures. The Conference also adopted comprehensive recommendations on gender equality in the world of work, including in

regard to employment, social protection, fundamental principles and rights at work, social dialogue, and tripartism.

The General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/64/217 on

promote women's economic empowerment. Recovery measures taken by Governments can have disproportionate impacts on women and girls, possibly reversing gains made, particularly through cuts in public spending on health and education and through inequitably-designed safety nets.

The crisis should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen gender-responsive policies, programmes and strategies. Particular attention should be paid to gender equality implications of the recovery programmes and stimulus packages to ensure that previously made gains in gender equality and the empowerment of women are not reversed.