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Statement by
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Mr. Chair,

The ILO's most contemporary and comprehensive contribution to the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women is the International Labour Conference Resolution on Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work, unanimously adopted by representatives of governments, employers and workers in June 2009. This *Resolution* calls upon the ILO to promote gender equality as a cross cutting issue in all four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda, namely employment, social protection, principles and rights at work, and social dialogue and tripartism. The topics examined in the resolution include, among others, equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value, work-family reconciliation measures, the need to increase the share of women participating in social dialogue, and women's entrepreneurship development.

The resolution also highlights the role governments, employers' and workers' organizations have to play in achieving gender equality in the world of work. In particular, Governments can contribute to create a conducive environment through the ratification and implementation of the ILO equality Conventions, the adoption of non-discrimination legislation and gender-sensitive labour laws, and the development of gender equality policies and programmes, with special attention to the most vulnerable women in society, including indigenous, migrant, minority, young and rural women.

Given the serious prospect of a prolonged global increase in unemployment, poverty and inequality, the ILC in June 2009 also adopted a *Global Jobs Pact* designed to guide national and international policies aimed at stimulating economic recovery, generating jobs and providing protection to working people and their families. Both the *Pact* and the *Resolution* recognize that recovery packages need to take into consideration the different impact the crisis has on women and men to guarantee the efficacy of the recovery measures.

Moreover, the *Pact* explicitly recognizes the importance of giving equal voice to women and men and the need for gender equality policy responses, and states that *"The current crisis should be viewed as an opportunity to shape new gender equality policy responses. Recovery packages during economic crisis need to take into account the impact on women and men and integrate gender concerns in all measures. In*

discussions on recovery packages, both regarding their design and assessing their success, women must have an equal voice with men."

Mr Chairman,

This June, at the 99th session of the International Labour Conference, the ILO discussed for the first time the issue of Decent Work for Domestic Workers with a view to the setting of new international labour standards regarding this so far largely unprotected group of workers. This years' discussion was based on a comprehensive report on domestic work and replies from over 90 member States to a detailed questionnaire. A second discussion on this topic will take place during the 100st session of the Conference in June 2011. 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 setting of new international labour standards to address this issue will add power to governments' efforts to address violation of domestic workers rights, to reduce violence against women, and to give girls working as domestic workers a better chance for their future.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that the achievement of gender equality in the world of work would give visible results in poverty reduction, sustainable development and the achievement of the MDGs. The ILO, Mr. Chairman, stands ready to assist its Constituents in this regard.

Thank you.