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**Statement by Mr. Raphael Crowe
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**Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session**

Chairperson,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ILO commitment to the theme of this session of the Commission on the Status of Women is threefold.

First, decent work in science and technology fields should involve good jobs, with working conditions equal to that of male colleagues in terms of equal remuneration for work of equal value, social protection, and coverage of maternity protection so that women can pursue their careers without discrimination based on family and care responsibilities.

Secondly, science and technology are changing at ever-increasing speed, which makes it difficult for scientists to re-enter these fields after taking time out for their families, as their knowledge may become out of date after even short periods away from work. Therefore, as ILO member States have stressed in different occasions, the school-to-work transition has to be supported by policies on technology and scientific training throughout the lifecycle, especially for women and girls.

Thirdly, ILO is convinced that to achieve quality education, the status of teachers, and particularly that of women teachers, must receive more attention. There cannot be quality education unless there is decent work of women and men teachers themselves.

Yet some post-crisis policy choices risk reducing access and opportunities for women, making their achievement of decent work even harder.

In 2008 the Conclusion of the International Labour Conference on Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development, emphasized that: "Training policies and programmes that aim to improve productivity and employability (...) need to ensure equality of opportunity, be free from discrimination and take into account family and household obligations. (...) A life-cycle approach has to be adopted to overcoming the challenges that confront women in gaining access to education and training and in utilizing this training to secure better employment. This includes: improving the access of girls to basic education; overcoming logistical, economic and cultural barriers to apprenticeships and to secondary and vocational training for young women – especially in non-traditional occupations; taking into account women's home and care responsibilities when scheduling workplace-based learning and entrepreneurship training; and meeting the training needs of women re-entering the labour market and of older women who have not had equal access to opportunities for lifelong learning".

The 2009 International Labour Conference Conclusions on Gender Equality are equally clear on the critical nature of learning for earning and broader contributions of women to economic growth. ILO constituents - governments, employers' and workers' organisations - continue to give high attention to this critical link of gender equality across the continuum of quality education, vocational training, life-long technical skills and upgrading, productive employment and Decent Work.

Upgraded skills or re-training increase the ability of women, in particular women entrepreneurs, to apply new scientific technologies, thus enhancing their employability as well as the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises. In order to increase productivity and diversify into higher value-added activities, women entrepreneurs need to be empowered to access and apply new scientific processes and technologies. Promoting women's entrepreneurship to help close the technology gap thus contributes to more decent and productive work. For example, reducing barriers to women's entrepreneurship development by ensuring access to business administration and information technology (IT) training and facilitating networking and market information sharing (e.g. through social networks), is crucial. But education and training are not enough: to be fully effective, these need to be part of integrated, gender-sensitive national economic empowerment policies and strategies.

The educational system, beginning at the primary level and continuing through college and university, must develop curricula to encourage girls and boys, women and men, to investigate all academic areas. Teachers and educational materials must facilitate the training of girls and women in math and science as well as in languages and social sciences and every student must have the intellectual foundations and social encouragement to enter all potential career fields. Moreover, educational and training programs must offer women the opportunity for full participation. Government, business and industry must fund diverse programs which actively recruit women to train for higher-paying positions, roles in senior technical and management areas, varied career-path opportunities and non-traditional occupations.

At the same time equal opportunity legislation can have significant effects on the participation of women in science, by preventing and sanctioning discrimination based on sex, but also by having an impact on gender balance in public bodies and scientific committees. Ratification and full implementation of ILO C. 100 on Equal Pay, 111 on Discrimination (employment and occupation), 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities and 183 on Maternity Protection is therefore crucial in this regard.

Finally, I would like to share with you the work the International Training Centre of the ILO continues to do to support the development of national capacities to address gender-based discrimination and promote gender equality. In relation to the theme of CSW, the Centre is currently working on a European-Commission funded project that aims at implementing structural changes in a group of selected scientific organizations of excellence in order to overcome the factors that limit the participation of women in research, despite their excellent departure conditions in terms of educational attainments and talent.

Chair, ladies and gentlemen,
ILO stands ready to assist its constituents in this regard, and to cooperate fully with UN Women and the whole UN family so that women and girls have genuine equality of opportunity to contribute to national development.
Thank you.