

Statement
by
Ms. Rachel Mayanja
Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and
Advancement of Women
at the
International Conference and Expert Meeting on
THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS - IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN
Haifa, Israel
8 – 12 November, 2009

Her Excellency Ms. Gila Gamliel, Deputy Minister for the Advancement of Women,
His Excellency Ambassador Haim Divon, Head of MASHAV,
Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and pleasure for me to join in welcoming you to the International Conference and Expert Meeting on “The Global Financial Crisis – Implications for Women”. I wish to extend my deep appreciation to MASHAV (Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center for organizing this conference in cooperation with my office, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. My deep gratitude to my friend Mazal, and her team for handling the logistics and making it possible for all of us to be here.

The meeting is timely as the multiple global crises – financial, economic, food, energy and climate change converge to accentuate gender inequality and its repercussion for women as well as society as a whole. Experience from the past has shown that financial and economic crises have different and unequal impacts on women and men and their potential to respond and develop effective coping strategies. Long-standing inequalities in the gender distribution of economic and financial resources have historically placed women at a disadvantage with respect their ability to participate in, contribute to and benefit from broader processes of economic development. Some have highlighted the fact that the financial crisis has weighed heavily on men who experienced large initial job losses. Many others insist that the current economic downturn has put a disproportionate burden on women because they tend to be concentrated in vulnerable employment and are therefore more likely to be unemployed than men, to have lower unemployment and social security benefits, and less control over economic and financial resources.

Women are also normally the prime caregivers and this role has expended and become more difficult with the financial crisis. How are women faring then, in a world of multiple crises? How are they coping with reductions in government expenditure, particularly on social services? How about the rising cost of food and fuel? What impact would these have on their complex roles? How should we respond? I have no doubt that like

me, all of you have questions. We look forward to having some of these questions answered here.

Looking at the programme, I am satisfied that we have a number of experts to steer us through this maze of challenges. I encourage you to share any interventions which you might have successfully instituted. But equally important would be the lessons you can share on failed initiatives. Let us leave Haifa energized, rejuvenated and ready to enhance gender equality and empowerment of women even as we tackle the global crises. I thank you for your attention and wish you a successful and productive conference.
