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Press Release

UN urges policies to increase employment of women and economic growth and long-term prosperity ILO Affairs Sha B Ukang.

Long-standing ILO is successful in reaching out to women, in particular in the face. Despite this, the

Survey notes there is no consensus on the impact of microcredit on empowering women. Microfinance has failed to meet the needs of women entrepreneurs in business growth and expansion. The report also points to the increasing risk to women's access to finance in the growing commercialization of microfinance.

Women's livelihood strategies in many parts of the world require access to a range of productive resources. In many parts of the world, however, women continue to face discrimination in access to land, housing and property, as well as the infrastructure, services and technologies needed to facilitate their effective use of these resources. In addition, access to the economic resources provided through social protection, many women around the world are unable to ensure themselves against contingencies arising from old age, ill-health, disability, unemployment and other factors.

The *Survey* emphasizes that even when economic rights for women exist, they may not be enforced or women may not be able to claim these rights because of socio-cultural norms and practices. Efforts are needed to make judicial systems more accessible and responsive to women and to provide legal aid to women seeking to claim their rights.

Macroeconomic analyses have not adequately addressed the structural constraints to women's economic empowerment and have failed to develop and build on the human capital of women. This has a significant impact on economic growth. The *Survey* notes with particular concern the neglect in macroeconomic policies of the unequal distribution between women and men of paid and unpaid work.

The *Survey* stresses the need for growth strategies which focus on gender-responsive employment promotion, informed by the interdependency between economic and social development, and the recognition that labour is 'produced' by the mainly unpaid work of women, who are expected to take on primary responsibility for nurturing and sustaining the workforce. Economic growth strategies should give attention to the real economy, considering the totality of economic activities – productive and reproductive, paid and unpaid, formal and informal, and including social as well as economic objectives.

Women absent from decision-making

The *Survey* notes with concern women's absence from key decision-making bodies influencing the distribution of resources in both public and private sectors, despite evidence on positive impacts of women's representation in decision-making. Equal representation of women in all areas of economic decision-making, including at the highest levels in Government ministries, international organizations, corporate boards and the banking sector, needs to be pursued.

The urgency of rethinking economic growth strategies and increasing attention to women's economic empowerment is even greater in the current financial and economic crisis. The impact of the crisis can exacerbate the chal