

Project Five-O-2008 Oral Statement for CSW

Thank you for giving me the floor. I am Olivia Ferry, Convenor of Project Five-O, a partnership of five women's organizations-The International Council of Women, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, the International Federation of University Women, Soroptimist International and Zonta International-together having a membership of more than a million women worldwide. For more than twenty-five years, beginning soon after the Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen, Project Five-O has been supporting programs in developing countries and countries in transition that provide women training and support for small businesses that offer opportunities to better their lives and those of their families as well as to participate more fully in the activities of their communities.

Gender equality is a fundamental strategy for achieving sustained economic growth, reducing the feminization of poverty and promoting sustainable development, but, to date, there has been limited commitment to integrating financing for gender equality into development policies, at all levels. We support the continuation of the discussion on "Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" as a central issue in the follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus to be held in Qatar and hope that all governments will integrate a gender perspective, emphasizing coherence between economic and social policies, into all their future financing for development activities.

As governments are the primary source of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, the ways governments raise money and spend money also need to be more focused on supporting conditions for achieving women's rights. Project Five-O applauds efforts of Member States to integrate gender perspectives into their national budgets to promote more consistency between national and international commitments on gender equality with resource allocation. To successfully manage this process, government needs to build gender budget capacity in government and to have well-resourced gender focal points and political will in top levels of government. Additionally, it is hoped that Member States will employ and expand the concept of participatory budgeting and analysis, with outcomes and indicators, to ensure government accountability to gender-responsive budget aims.

Women frequently achieve added stature in their family and community through their increased financial contributions to the well-being of their family, but until all discrimination against women ceases, gender equality will not be realized. We call for full implementation of articles of the CEDAW Convention that urge funding effective national machinery and publicity, allocating sufficient resources to the health sector and providing adequate resources to overcome obstacles to women's full participation in political and public life, as well as implementing Committee recommendations to provide additional resources for girls' education and for measures to end violence against women.

Finally, the United Nations has been the leader in the promotion of women's rights and the advancement of women. In this the 60th anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we trust that the United Nations will continue to support and encourage countries to fully realize their commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The gender architecture of the United Nations needs urgently to be strengthened to assume this important mission including the provision of substantial and predictable resources through core and assessed contributions, both an enhanced operational mandate and a more robust country presence, and an active partnership with NGOs.

Thank you.