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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Maintaining Gains for Women in Jobs Crisis**

Geneva, 17 June 2009

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As the world faces the worst global economic and jobs crisis in living memory, there are particular concerns for the employment of women, and for equality and opportunity of women and girls throughout the world. The developing and developed world is concerned that the crisis threatens gains for women in pay and opportunity, and in their engagement with work.

Employers cannot and will not allow this to occur. The current Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is examining the current state of women and men in the labour market, and progress towards greater equality.



**Maria Fernanda GARZA,**  
*Lead Employer Spokesperson, 2009  
International Labour Conference  
– Gender Discussion*

The International Organisation of Employers (IOE) is leading international efforts to further progress equality between men and women, and to navigate the global crisis without going backwards in this area.

“Employers believe that maintaining the formal economy (in which employees work legally for wages, pay taxes and enjoy labour protections) is vital”, lead employer spokesperson, **Maria Fernanda Garza** told the ILO Conference. “Formal, legal employment is crucial in advancing opportunity for women and for securing more equitable outcomes.”

Developing countries in particular need to maintain momentum towards greater formal employment and not allow the current crisis to drive people out of the legal labour market. Countries also need to take active measures, notwithstanding the impact of the crisis, to formalise the informal economy.

This means ensuring law and regulation supports employers in creating more jobs. Governments need to review and reform regulatory red tape which makes it hard to employ, review the cost of employment, and provide flexibility and adaptability in business regulation to support employers in creating jobs.

Training and education is also vital to ensuring women can maximise their participation in the labour market and take advantage of the opportunities which will come from crisis recovery. Again, employers have a key role to play in ensuring education and training provides a skilled and employable workforce – and governments need to listen to those who will create new jobs.

Employers understand that harnessing the skills of employees, regardless of their gender, will be fundamental to a successful and competitive recovery from the global jobs crisis – and they are committed to playing their part. With the support of governments and a willingness to consider recasting regulation to better support jobs, the global economic crisis will not harm the employment and participation of the working women of the world.

**Media contact:**

MARIA FERNANDA GARZA

Tel: +52 155 1353 6050

E-mail : [fgarza@mascomex.com.mx](mailto:fgarza@mascomex.com.mx)

SCOTT BARKLAMB / STEPHANIE SCHNEIDER

Communications – International Organisation of Employers

Tel: +41 22 917 68 02 / +41 22 917 68 03 / +41 79 884 30 39

Fax: +41 22 917 07 42

E-mail : [ioe@ioe-emp.org](mailto:ioe@ioe-emp.org)

***The IOE is the largest network of the private sector in the world. It is the only recognized organisation representing the interests of employers in social and labour matters at the international level. Today, the IOE represents 148 national business organisations in 141 countries.***