

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
Monday, 8 March 2010 – 15:00-17:00
Theme: What is working for working women!
Biographies of Panellists



- ❖ **Ms Patricia Aragón Santo Tomás**, Chairperson of the Development Bank of the Philippines, former Minister of Labor and Employment of the Philippines.

Ms Santo Tomás is Chairperson of the Development Bank of the Philippines. She was Secretary of Labour and Employment in the Philippine Government from 2001 to 2006.

Ms Santo Tomás received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the Far Eastern University in Manila, her Master of Science from the University of the Philippines, Los Baños, and her Master of Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government of Harvard University.

Ms Santo Tomás first served her government as a clerk at the Philippine Senate from 1964 to 1966. She gradually rose through the ranks and was appointed Executive Director of the Institute of Labour and Manpower Studies in the Department of Labour and Employment in 1980. From 1982 to 1986, Ms Santo Tomás served as Administrator of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration until she became Assistant Minister for Human Resource Development and then Deputy Minister of Labour and Employment.

From 1988 to 1995, Ms Santo Tomás served as Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission where she initiated major reforms to improve the quality of public service. She also pursued the advocacy for equality in opportunities for female employees as well as merit principles in employment entry and selection processes.

In 2001, Ms Santo Tomás led an Executive Search Committee tasked to find qualified professionals to staff key positions in the cabinet of President Gloria Arroyo. Soon, she was appointed by President Arroyo as Secretary of the Department of Labour and Employment. In this capacity, she was elected President of the International Labour Conference in 2001.

Ms Santo Tomás has received numerous professional awards for government service and public leadership, including an award for Outstanding Woman in Government Service. She has also held several academic positions, including as Professorial Lecturer at the University of the Philippines, Los Baños.

- ❖ **Ms Maria Machailo-Ellis**, Executive Director of the Botswana Confederation of Commerce Industry and Manpower.

A Chartered Certified Accountant (FCCA) (obtained from the UK) with a B.A degree in economics and accounts from the University of Botswana. She is trained and has acquired experience in the areas of Financial Management, Management Quality Systems (ISO 9000), Subcontracting, Foreign Linkages, Export Marketing and Leadership. Maria has 26 years of working experience of which 15 years have been in working with Small and Medium size enterprises. She has held positions of Accountant, Finance Manager and Chief Executive Officer in various companies in Botswana, before she took up the position of Executive Director of Botswana Confederation of Commerce Industry and Manpower (BOCCIM).



Ms. Machailo-Ellis was elected President of the Women in Business Association of Botswana in 2003 (WIBA). Whose mandate is to promote the growth and development of Women Entrepreneurs and to create a platform for networking and marketing women's products and services.

In her current position as Executive Director of Botswana Confederation of Commerce Industry and Manpower (BOCCIM), Ms. Machailo-Ellis is responsible for policy dialogue with the government to promote a conducive business environment that allows the private sector to grow and contribute to economic development in Botswana.

Ms Machailo-Ellis' past and present Board Membership and participation in other bodies include amongst others; Local Enterprise Authority (Chairperson), Women in Business. Association-President, American and African Women's Alliance - Board Member, BOCCIM Council Member, Citizen Contractor's Funds Appeals Board Member, (All in Botswana).

She is currently a board member of the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) and a fellow of ACCA – UK and ACCA Botswana.

She has an impeccable passion for entrepreneurship and SME development. She has trained over 500 entrepreneurs in Botswana and Mauritius.

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- ❖ **Ms Maria Fernanda Carvalho Francisco**, President of the National Women's Workers Union of Angola, Secretary for International Relations of the National Union of Angolan Workers (UNTA).

Born in Malange, Angola in 1960, Ms Carvalho Francisco studied chemistry in Cuba and became member of the Students' Union there from 1977-1980. She started working at the secretariat for UNTA in the Malange province. She continued her work in UNTA as Member of Council, Director of the Press department, Director of the Literacy departments and Head of Cabinet.

Today she serves as Secretary for International Relations in UNTA, and has become President of the National Committee of Women's Trade Union of Angola. She is also Vice-President of the National Council for Social Security in Angola, and member of the Angolan Olympic Committee.

Internationally, Ms Carvalho Francisco is President of the Women's Committee to the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC). She is also the Vice President of the International Trade Union Confederation of Africa, and Vice-Chairperson of its Workers' Group. To the ILO she is known as member of the Governing Body representing workers since 2006.

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- ❖ **Ms Creuza Oliveira**, President of the National Federation of Domestic Workers in Brazil.

The voice of Ms Creuza Oliveira tells the story of more than nine million Brazilian domestic workers, mostly women, mostly black, for whom slavery is not relegated to the dust piles of history. It is also the story of the revolutionary impact unions and social movements can have on entrenched and systemic injustices.

Born in a family of poor rural workers with no schooling, Ms Oliveira began life as a domestic worker in Bahia when she was a mere 10 years old. Unable to balance work and school, she had to pick work and dropped out of school numerous times.

At work, Ms Oliveira would be beaten and taunted whenever she broke something, often called lazy, monkey, even "nigger". The physical and psychological abuse was compounded by sexual abuse from the young men in the household where she worked. To top it all off, Ms Oliveira was not paid.

"I only started to receive a salary as a domestic worker when I was 21," she told a gathering on the sidelines of the Durban Review Conference at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva. "Until that age, my payment was in used clothes and food. I did not have a right to vacations or any basic workers rights."

At age 14, her employers took her to Sao Paulo to work, without any authorization from her relatives in Bahia.

Such was Ms Oliveira's life until she heard on the radio about meetings of domestic workers fighting for their rights. She attended one meeting and thus began her evolution from a suffering young woman with low confidence into a leader in the fight for the rights of blacks, for women and for domestic workers.

"Almost half a million domestic workers in Brazil are children and teenagers between 5 and 17 years of age – working without compensation, as slaves," she said. "Domestic work in my country still carries the legacy of slavery: lack of application of relevant laws, physical and moral violence, lack of recognized rights vis-à-vis other professions, lack of union rights, and so on."

Ms Oliveira is now President of the National Federation of Domestic Workers in Brazil and active in the Unified Black Movement and the Women's Movement. She told of numerous changes in her country's policies since she attended the 2001 World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Federal departments have been established to promote racial and gender equality, the organization of domestic workers has gained visibility and there have been important victories in the recognition of property rights and on issues including domestic violence.

Domestic workers are now guaranteed, by law, rest days and vacation days as well as job security for pregnant women. Employers are prohibited from deducting housing and food expenses from their salaries and there is construction of public housing for domestic workers. Legislation prohibiting domestic work for children and teenagers under 18 years of age has also been recently signed into law by the President.

Ms Oliveira says the situation for domestic workers has certainly improved with such laws and more access to redress, but the problem lies in implementing these laws, as domestic work is carried out in private households. Article 7 of the Constitution also still explicitly excludes domestic workers from various labour standards.

She is well aware of the fact that racism is about power relations and that domestic workers for the most part have low self-esteem. Independent expert for minority issues, Gay McDougall, who moderated the discussion, noted that it was very difficult to secure the labour rights of domestic workers and that this was not a problem unique to Brazil.

Ms Oliveira also referred to broader issues causing the perpetuation of racism in her country, including the media, songs that diminish women and encourage violence, TV shows that trivialise sexual abuse and depict black women as being ignorant, and the use of sexualised images of black women in the tourism industry.

❖ **Ms Mary Chinery-Hesse**, Vice-Chairperson of the National Development Planning Commission of Ghana, former Deputy Director-General of the International Labour Office (ILO).

Former Chief Advisor to President J.A. Kufuor of Ghana, Ms Mary Chinery-Hesse has had distinguished careers in her Country's Civil Service and at the United Nations. In the UN and in numerous other organizations, she was an important voice on economic development issues, an ardent defender of women's rights and gender equality as well as an active advocate for African needs.

A graduate of London University, she holds an honor's degree from the University of Ghana in Sociology and Economics, and was awarded a Doctorate of Law (honoris causa) by her Alma Mater the University of Ghana, the first female product of the University of Ghana to be so honoured. At the University of Dublin she undertook post-graduate programs in Development Economics, and also at the World Bank Institute in Washington D.C. where she was inscribed as a Fellow of the Institute.

Her studies and experiences led logically to her appointment to the high office of Chief Advisor to the President of Ghana and to her posts as Vice-Chairperson of the National Development Planning Commission and a member of the Board of the Centre for Policy Analysis. She also serves on the Board of the famous Think Tank, Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town, South Africa. Previously, Ms Chinery-Hesse was the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Her first post at the UN was that of Resident Coordinator of the UN System and Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme, serving in New York, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, the Seychelles and Uganda, the first ever African woman to be so appointed. Ms Chinery-Hesse was then appointed as the first ever woman Deputy Director-General of the ILO, after seventy years of the founding of that UN Agency, a position with the rank of Under Secretary-General of the UN, the first African woman to attain a position of USG. She also served as Chairperson of the UN's Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions for several years, and of the Commonwealth Expert Group of Eminent Persons on Structural Adjustment and Women. At the turn of the Century, the OAU named her "African Woman of the Millennium".

Among her myriad high-level posts was membership on the Council of African Advisors of the World Bank and on the Eminent Persons' Advisory Panel of the African Union. Her activities took her to the head of a High-Level Panel to Review Progress in Implementing the Programme for Least Developed Countries. She has as well served as a Member of the Council of the University of Ghana.

Other significant appointments have included Membership of the Zedillo Commission of eminent persons on Financing for Development, and the UN Blue Ribbon Panel of sixteen wise world leaders on Threats, Challenges and Change, tasked to rewrite the global security architecture and reform of the United Nations, especially the Security Council. Her advice continues to be actively sought and valued by many governments and international organizations on a variety of themes. She as well is a Member, with several Nobel Prize Laureates, of the Board of the prestigious Global Humanitarian Forum in Geneva, Switzerland. For many years, she was a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, which she also chaired.

But it was her frank and outspoken manner when she was Deputy Director-General of the ILO that made her popular in Ghana, in Africa and throughout the developing and developed world, especially on gender issues. "Women work more but are paid less than men," she said. "Inequality of treatment marks virtually all aspects of women's working lives, beginning with wages and employment opportunities and extending to access to decision-making and managerial positions. A greater percentage of women than ever before act as the sole breadwinners for their families, contributing to the feminization of poverty. This cycle of poverty cannot be broken until women receive fair wages."

More recently, in September 2008, at a High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in the Ghanaian capital, Accra, Ms Chinery-Hesse who co-chaired the Opening Session of the Meeting told the 1,200 representatives from African governments, donor institutions, Parliamentarians and civil society "we have to admit that the pace of progress made since 2005 is too slow." Donors and recipients of aid must make a greater effort, she added, in particular reducing the lack of coordination which hinders effectiveness.

"There is a need to move forward with a new sense of urgency," she declared. "We must not merely talk about things. We must act."

She has received several prestigious decorations both nationally and internationally, including the Order of the Star of Ghana.