



**WILPF STATEMENT**  
**Geneva, Switzerland**  
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## **Women's Economic Empowerment in the Time of Financial Crisis**

Madame Chair, thank you for this opportunity. I direct my question to the whole panel,

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is an international women's peace organization. We are one of the world's oldest peace organizations with sections on all continents. We've been at it for soon 100 years and our goal then is as relevant today: To make known and abolish the root causes of war. We have been working for 1325 since 1915 so to say.

In connection to the discussions on economic crises and priorities, I would like to draw the panel's attention to what budget areas are being cut and which areas are not. According to the Beijing Platform for Action, Focus area E on Women and armed conflict states are to: *Undertake to explore new ways of generating new public and private financial resources, inter alia, through the appropriate reduction of excessive military expenditures, including global military expenditures, trade in arms and investment for arms production and acquisition, taking into consideration national security requirements, so as to permit the possible allocation of additional funds for social and economic development, in particular for the advancement of women;*

For WILPF a just society is a core issue for creating sustainable peace. In some countries, the global financial crisis has resulted in a shift in priorities, with a decrease of funds to projects and programmes aimed at gender equality. Important parts of national budgets are being cut while the military spending keep breaking new records.

We all seem to agree that now more than ever, it is time to invest in women and girls. I am a young woman, daughter of a single mother, fortunate since I come from a country that provides me with free education for 17 years and I think I am a better investment than any tank or bomber.

Most women of the world are not given the same opportunity and that is a waste of resources. Investing just a fraction of the 1464 000 000 000 USD that is now invested in stealth bombers and Kalashnikovs would provide millions of women around the world with the equal opportunity that I have been given. One year's military costs would finance 24 years of the additional foreign aid required to reach the MDG by 2015.

My question to the panel is: why do you think this aspect of the key passage of the Beijing Platform for Action is overlooked in macro economic discussions on women's economical



empowerment? There is a big elephant in this room, and it's the political priorities that lead to ever-increasing military expenditures. What is it that stops you from looking at this elephant? What would it take to make this elephant visible and bring it into the conversation you are having with each other and with government leaders?

Thank you.