

Statement of Mr. Rene Cristobal
Vice President
Employers Confederation of the Philippines

International Women's Day Celebration
07 March 2007

~~New World Renaissance Hotel, Makati City~~

Could it be a woman's world after all?

*G2007 CO Comm.
CSR
TSP!
PIPC Magister*

It is indeed a pleasure and honor to have the opportunity to be here with all of you at this year's celebration of International Women's Day with a theme that calls for celebrating Working Women in breaking the boundaries and driving the change.

In many ways, women are leading the way in their participation in the country's economic activity. With 38% of the total country's workforce, women outnumber men in certain occupations, including professional and technical (64%), clerical (57%), sales (67%), and services (56%). Approximately 47% of research and development personnel and 52% of scientists and engineers are women, although they account for only about 23% of technicians and 40% of auxiliary personnel (Labor Force Survey 2005).

*OVERSEAS
50/50
women
but
valuable
positions*

Furthermore, the increase in female employment in the country has been one of the main driving forces of growth in the past couple of decades. Working Filipino women have contributed a lot to the country's GNP growth.

awesome (for many)
Given these monumental accomplishments of the modern Filipinas who are very well represented in science occupations, such as in medical sciences, biotechnology, natural and social sciences, it is *still a serious concern* very unfortunate that men still dominate the fields of technology, administrative, executive and management *positions* work.

Although women are generally considered equal to men academically, there continues to be an undercurrent of opinion that women are underachievers or less analytical in their capabilities than men. Gender-tracking remains, both in the

educational system and the workplace, with men and women fitting into predetermined specializations.

The Philippines Government has several progressive policies to support women's economic and political participation. Examples of such legislation include a law promoting the integration of women in national development, legislation providing women equal opportunities in military school education, a law against sexual harassment in employment, education and training, the establishment of ministerial Focal Points for Women, and the organization of a Women's Studies Consortium at the higher education level.

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) is an advocate of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR is the voluntary initiative of the business sector to engage in programs that will benefit not only the company but also its employees and the entire society. It means demonstrating the "human face" of business- which, in turn, leads to a more favorably company image, employee satisfaction, company productivity, and better relations with the community. *P MAP - People*

Moreover, CSR is a concept that underlines the private sector's recognition that it has a role in helping create a more just, more caring, more equitable society. The principles of CSR are aligned with the advocacies of international organizations, i.e., ILO (International Labour Organization) and UNDP (United Nation Development Programme) on the promotion of Decent Work and Global Compact Initiative, which centers on the protection of human rights, compliance to labor standards and protection to the environment.

In short, profit motive is no longer the sole engine of business expansion. Business leaders know the extent to which socially responsible investment funds are growing in popularity. They recognize that without respect for human rights and that includes

the equal rights of women and the special rights of our children, not only will the health and safety of employees be at risk, but also opportunities to build new markets and sustainable growth.

The business community has fully recognized the vital role of women in the workforce and in the nation building as a whole. It is in this light that ECOP promotes and implements more specific programs in the workplace for women such as the equal employment opportunity, elimination of sexual harassment and reproductive health with specific emphasis on her reproductive rights, family planning, prevention and awareness on sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, prevention and education on violence against women and children, and the promotion of breastfeeding through milk banking for working mothers. We view these women concerns as matters that impact on both the productivity and well being of our women workers.

Finally, as we move forward, it will be critical that more and more companies will continue to take the lead in developing new forms of accountability and transparency. There can be little doubt that developing strong policies that will uphold and protect women's rights and sound implementation strategies is the key for corporations to balance profit and fulfillment of its social obligations.

It is true that women still get paid less and few make it to the top of companies, but, as prejudice fades over coming years, women will have great scope to boost their productivity—and incomes. It used to be said that women must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily it seems this is not so difficult.

Thank you!]