



MCTC  
The Golda Meir Mount Carmel  
International Training Center



## International Women Leaders' Conference

# SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: Education and Training for Women and Girls

Haifa, Israel

29 May – 3 June, 2011

## PRELIMINARY REPORT

**MASHAV – Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem**

**The Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center, (MCTC) Haifa**

**In cooperation with UNESCO**

**The Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center's (MCTC) 27th International Conference** was held from **May 29 to June 3, 2011**, under the auspices of **MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, and in cooperation with **UNESCO**.

The topic of the conference, which celebrated **the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MCTC**, was **Science, Technology and Innovation: Education and Training for Women and Girls**, in keeping with that of the United Nation's Commission for the Status of Women for 2011.

The Conference **objectives**, as set out in the program, were to explore:

- *"the ideal of equality of educational opportunity without regard to race or sex." UNESCO's Constitution, Article 2 (b), 1945)*
- *The availability of scientific and technological education and training to women and girls*
- *Attaining gender parity for women working in the areas of science, technology and innovations at all levels*
- *Ways of strengthening collaboration among nations and international organizations through education and training, research and development in science and technology*

Participants numbered 67 high level leaders and experts, from 45 countries, including observers and representatives from international organizations. Delegates were government ministers, former and deputy ministers, parliamentarians, experts from the academic and scientific world, senior officials from international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including UNESCO, UNECE and Save the Children Norway.

#### **Sunday, May 29, 2011**

Before the official opening of the Conference, participants visited the **Technion – Israel Institute of Technology**, where they met with **Prof. Peretz Lavie**, President and **Dr. Avital Stein**, Executive Vice President and Director General, as well as **Prof. Orit Hazzan**, **Dr. Lihi Zelnik-Manor**, **Prof. Anat Rafaeli**, **Prof. Efrat Lifshitz**, **Prof. Deganit Danino** and **Prof. Gitti Frey**, women scientists in the fields of education for science and technology, electrical engineering, chemistry, biotechnology and food engineering.

The Conference Opening Ceremony took place at the Haifa Auditorium – the Rappaport Center, on **Sunday May 29, 2011**. Some 300 guests were present, including public figures in Israeli society, representatives of women's organizations and distinguished diplomatic staff from the countries of the Conference delegates.

The delegates were introduced by **Ms. Mazal Renford, MCTC Director**, who saluted *'the many thousands of women around the developing world putting into daily practice the skills they had acquired at MCTC.'*

**Ambassador Haim Divon, Head of MASHAV and Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, welcomed the assembled guests, noting the *'remarkable record of a remarkable institution'*, the Golda Meir Center, since, *'without the empowerment of women, we can only go so far'*. He described some additional activities of the Center, stressing particularly the regular seminars held at MCTC between Palestinian and Israeli women to create dialogue between individuals, break down stereotypes and build trust.

**H.E. Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz, Israel's Minister of Science and Technology**, brought congratulations on behalf of the government, noting that the only way to bridge gaps is by talking, and stating that the ultimate universal language is that of science and technology.

Speaking on behalf of the city of Haifa, *'the only city on earth with daily coexistence for more than 100 years'*, **Mayor Yona Yahav** welcomed the delegates and distinguished guests. He made a presentation to **Guest of Honor, United Nations Deputy Secretary General, Dr. Asha Rose Migiro**, on the occasion of her third visit to Haifa.

In Dr. Migiro's powerful speech she described the *'pernicious and pervasive'* problems of gender stereotyping, emphasizing their important consequences for women and stressing the increasing necessity for an educated workforce.

*'As the world economy is increasingly knowledge-driven, the future prosperity and well-being of all countries depend greatly on having an educated workforce, able to use existing technologies and to develop new applications. Women represent an important pool of talent. Forgoing their contributions means giving up on innovation itself.'*

Dr. Migiro's comprehensive *'wish list of actions'* included *'empowering girls through education'* and *'increasing the quality of education by investing in the professional development of teachers'*, *tackling gender stereotypes, focusing on women's recruitment, retention and career progression, addressing the difficulties they face in reconciling work and family life.'*

In a direct appeal to the women leaders represented in the audience, Dr. Migiro ended by saying that, *'We at the United Nations count on each and every one of you, through your networks and spheres of influence, to help overcome inequality and discrimination -- and enable women to realize their full potential and contribute to our shared quest for common progress in the sciences and beyond.'*

Amb. Divon presented **Dr. Migiro, UNESCO Director General, Ms. Irina Bokova** and **Ms. Renford** with certificates marking the planting of trees in their names in the nearby Carmel Forest.

Ms. Bokova then delivered the **Keynote Address**. Reflecting that *'empowerment and development were in the genetic code of MCTC well before they were picked up by others,'* she quoted Golda Meir's *'words of wisdom'*:

*"Trust yourself. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement...." Perhaps more than any other area - science, technology and innovation need inner sparks of possibility to be fanned into flames of achievement.'*

Describing *'the heart of UNESCO's mission'* as *'seeking to build stronger bridges between education, training, science and technology and the labour market'*, Ms. Bokova saw education as not only *'a fundamental human right and a source of human dignity, but also a development multiplier, providing individuals and societies with the tools to respond to change and make the most of it'*.

In reviewing the consequences of horizontal and vertical gender inequality, Ms. Bokova noted that the share of illiterate women in the world had stayed the same for over 20 years and asked two *'core questions'* of this *still-young century* – *'how to build more resilient*

*societies and how to pursue sustainable development*'. She felt that educating girls and women in science and technology provides answers to these questions and strongly emphasized that the importance of role models should not be underestimated.

For role models *'inspire girls and young women, by showing them what is possible. They help strengthen the bridge between education and employment'* and counteract *'the vicious circle that starts early and gathers pace'* of *'consistent gender disparities that prevail at most stages of education in science and technology and in most regions of the world'*.

The University of Haifa took the opportunity of the UNESCO Director General's presence in Haifa for the International Women Leaders' Conference, to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, *Honoris Causa* at this point in the proceedings. University President, Prof. Aaron Ben-Zeev, paid great respect to Ms. Bokova's efforts in furthering the work of UNESCO. In accepting the degree, Dr. Bokova acknowledged the value of *'building respect and dignity through knowledge'*.

The evening concluded with a celebratory Reception and Buffet Supper, hosted by MASHAV in the Hecht Gardens at the Rappaport Center.



The intensive Conference program unfolded over the next two full days, exploring the theme from varying angles, through plenary sessions and workshops. Presentations by high-ranking and expert speakers were followed by questions, answers and general discussion from the floor. Participants spoke in English, French or Spanish, and in all Plenary Sessions simultaneous interpretation was provided.

Group workshops, divided according to language and geographical region, enabled free discussion of the topics under consideration and production of many specific recommendations and proposals, which were later inserted into the final declaration.



**Monday May 30, 2011**

**PLENARY SESSION I**

***The situation of women in science, technology and innovation, with an emphasis on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through education and training.***

**This opening session** was chaired by **Conference co-Chair, Ms. S. Gulser Corat, Office of the Director-General, UNESCO**, who assured the participants that their deliberations would contribute to the ECOSOC Conference at the United Nations, as well as to the Commission on the Status of Women.

**Hon. Ms. Rasa Jukneviene, Minister of National Defense, Lithuania**, a pediatrician by origin, spoke about gender-related challenges, with particular regard to the issue of women in the military.

**Hon. Dr. Shafia Aminath, Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, Rep. of Maldives**, mentioned that, despite living in a tiny land, where everyone had to travel abroad to study, in the Maldives Islands women do have equal access to education and the curriculum is gender sensitized.

A powerpoint presentation from **Hon. Prof. Abena Ondo, Minister of Women's and Family Protection, Cameroon**, gave the statistics on gender equality in education in Cameroon. She raised the problem of girls having to help their mothers in rural areas.

**Hon. Ms. Zenebu Tadesse, Minister of Women's, Children's and Youth Affairs, Ethiopia**, explained how special attention was now being given to girls' education in Ethiopia through ongoing affirmative action.

**Dr. Ana Maria Pechen, Vice Governor of the Neuquén Government, Argentina** described how a 1991 Education Act had greatly improved the prospect for women in her country.

**Dr. Anna Zaborska, M.P and M.E.P., Slovakia**, a doctor of medicine, made some innovative suggestions for family mainstreaming.

The final speaker in the session, **Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron, President of the Open University, Israel**, demonstrated the universality of the glass ceiling.

Many questions were asked from the floor and after summing up questions and responses at the conclusion of the Session, the **Chair, Ms. Gulser Corat** thanked the panel for their *'interesting and hopeful presentations'*.

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## PLENARY SESSION II

### *The consequences and opportunity costs of continued gender inequalities in S&T and in science, technology and engineering education*

This session was chaired by **Hon. Dr. Sally Jemnetich Kosgei, Minister for Agriculture, Kenya**.

**Prof. Yang Ke, Executive Vice President of Peking University and of Health and Science Center, China**, observed the landscape of women scientists in China, looking at their progress in employment in science and technology and at gender inequalities among the top scientists.

Similarly, **Prof. Kshanika Hirimburegama, Vice-Chancellor, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka** considered the current situation and the potential in Sri Lanka *'a knowledge-based rural economy with universities'*.

**Prof. Ines Sanchez de Madariaga, Director of 'Women and Science' Division, Ministry of Science and Innovation, Spain**, provided the plenary with some cogent reasons why the Spanish government and the last Spanish Presidency of the European Union have made gender policies in science a priority, to counter the resistance faced in society.

Although **Dr. Ganira Pashayeva, Member of Parliament, Azerbaijan** was unfortunately sick on that day, her presentation, on the importance of the provision of gender equity programs in education, was distributed to the Conference.

**Prof. Roumiana Tsenkova, from Japan/Bulgaria**, took the role of **discussant** and summed up the content of the debate, questions and responses from the panelists.

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### PLENARY SESSION III

*Good practices to overcome challenges in science, technology and engineering education - explore how S&T can be more effectively embedded in education and social development strategies in order to better support gender equality*

**Hon. Dr. Saskia Nathalie Cely Suarez, Coordinating Minister of Production, Employment and Competitiveness, Ecuador**, Chair and presenter, showed that educational programs could be linked to other incentive programs, such as nutrition, as they are in Ecuador.

Medical doctor, **Prof. Larisa Danilova, Chief, Department of Endocrinology, Belarusian Medical Academy of Post-Graduate Education, Belarus**, spoke about 'Promoting Women's and Child's Health in the post-Chernobyl period in **Belarus**, through Education and Training'.

**Prof. Zhen Jiong, Vice President, Ma'Anshan Medical University, Anjoi Province, China**, reflected on the fact that boys are thought to be good at thinking and creativity, girls are hardworking and reflecting – all of which reinforces gender inequality.

**President of "Regards de Femmes", France, Ms. Michèle Vianes** stated that gender equality was part of the French Constitution and spoke about the NGO she represented, which promotes education for women and girls.

**Prof. Marcia Hiriart**, a doctor of medicine, **Director and Biomedical Researcher at the Instituto de Fisiología Celular, National University of Mexico**, discussed the social role of women in **Mexico** and the necessity to integrate women into science for the good of research and not just to make the numbers balance!

The final presentation of the session was given by **Hon. Prof. Graziela Elena Vâjială, Secretary of State, National Anti-Doping Agency, Romania**. Prof. Vâjială called for an effort to be made to include and support scientific researchers coming from countries in difficulty, where discrimination is an issue.

In questions and comments from the Plenary, several delegates gave examples of gender inequality and discrimination in education in their country.

Discussant was **Prof. Gloria Bonder of Argentina**, who pulled all the threads of the presentations, questions and answers together.

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After supper in the evening at MCTC, the delegates were entertained by the well-known Haifa choir, 'Gittit'.

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**Tuesday, May 31, 2011**  
**PLENARY SESSION IV**  
***Sharing best practices***

The session was chaired by **Hon. Prof. Maria Antonieta Botto Handal, Minister, National Institute for Women (INAM), Honduras**, who also gave a presentation on the situation for girls and women's education in her country.

**Hon. Dr. Rusudan Kervalishvili, Deputy Chairman of Parliament, Georgia**, spoke of the gender aspects found in everything and the need to motivate, or force, women's political participation in order to include them in representation on different State bodies.

Despite free education in Togo, there is a tendency not to accept women in high-level jobs, even after they graduate from university, claimed **Hon. Ms. Amedjogbe Henriette Olivia Akossiwa, Minister for the Promotion of Women, Togo**. Steps are being taken to organize woman for vocational training and legislation for company management by women.

Although New Zealand was the first country in the world to enfranchise women, Pacifica and Maori women in New Zealand are nevertheless doubly disadvantaged, explained **Hon. Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, former Member of Parliament and Assistant Vice Chancellor, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand**. She illustrated the strong role that culture plays in empowering women and girls.

**Ms. Hlonela Nelisa Lupuwana, Chief Executive Officer of SEDA, Department of Trade and Industry Enterprise, South Africa**, accepted that the development and promotion of women and girls in science and technology was '*a huge problem needing systematic intervention*'. She gave examples of programs focusing on entrepreneurship and mentoring to encourage and assist.

**Ms. Le Thi Khanh Van, Deputy Director General of the National Agency for Science and Technology Innovation, Vietnam**, noted some reasons for the statistical lag in women's achievement in science, technology and innovation and looked at initiatives her country has taken to enhance the status of women.

Comments from the floor and responses by the presenters at the end of this session reflected ideas from Costa Rica, Israel, Nepal, Spain, UNESCO and Kenya.

The Discussant, **Ms Kusum Athukorala (Sri Lanka), co-Chair of the Advisory Group on Gender Equality, World Water Assessment Programme**, reviewed the session, bringing it to a conclusion.

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## PLENARY SESSION V

*Strengthening collaboration among nations and international organizations - recommendations and solutions to accelerate the implementation of established S&T related policy commitments in favor of gender equality*

Chair was **Ms. Flaka Surroi, owner and CEO of "KOHA" Comm. Group, Kosovo.** Ms. Surroi opened by presenting the post-conflict situation in Kosovo, commenting that her voice at the conference belonged to the world of the media.

**Ms. Lois Mushonga, Country Director, Save the Children Norway (Ethiopia)** explained the work of her organization, giving recommendations to continue to implement what does work and to take a holistic approach to poverty reduction.

**Dr. Meglena Plugtschieva-Alexandrova, Member of Parliament, Bulgaria,** reviewed the situation of working women in Bulgaria, recommending among others, enhancement and support of women's networks, as well as involvement of men in top positions.

**Dr. Zarina Arslanova, Chair, Board of Directors, National Innovation Fund, Kazakhstan,** spoke of the need for women in science and technology policy planning around the world and the concomitant importance of availability of access, through grants for women to science education and development projects.

**Dr. Malinka Koparanova, Senior Social Affairs Officer and Gender Focal Point in the Office of the Secretary, Geneva,** spoke on the UNECE experience of accelerating the achievement of gender equality in science and technology through international collaboration. She saw the Beijing Platform for Action as a base from which every country must strive to do whatever they can.

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### Discussion of the Haifa Declaration

**Four parallel working groups**, where the delegates divided according to language, then gave the opportunity for close discussion of the proposed, basic declaration. This initial version had previously been prepared by UNESCO/MCTC and the groups were asked to approve it and to add and adjust it as they saw fit.

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## PLENARY SESSIONS VI and VII

### **Reports from the Working Groups and the Conclusions and Recommendations for the Haifa Declaration**

It was decided to combine sessions VI and VII into one, to make the most effective use of the remaining time available.

The combined Plenary Session was jointly co-chaired by the **Conference Chairs, Ms. Mazal Renford, MCTC and Ms. Gulser Corat, UNESCO.**



The working group recommendations were delivered by **Prof. Roumiana Tsekova, (Bulgaria/Japan) – English 1, Ms. Thenjiwue Dlamini (South Africa) – English 2, and Ms. Michele Vianes (France) - French.** The Spanish speaking group presented their requests in writing after the Session.

After a reading of the proposed Declaration it was decided by the Plenary that the major proposals held in common by the working groups should be inserted into the text and that the adjusted Declaration should be collated accordingly, before presenting it to the dignitaries in Jerusalem the following day.

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In the evening at Haifa University, **Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, President of the University of Haifa,** hosted an evening entitled *"Facing the World"*- An Evening Highlighting International Pursuits.

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### **Wednesday, June 1, 2011**

A Reception at Haifa City Hall was hosted by **Ms. Hedva Almog, Deputy Mayor of Haifa** and **Ms. Hanna Schroedek, Adviser to the Mayor on Advancement of the Status of Women.** A vote of thanks on behalf of the delegates was offered by **Ms. Daw War War Htun of Myanmar.**

The group departed for Rehovot where they visited the **Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment,** at the **Hebrew University, Rehovot Campus.** They met with the **Dean, Prof. Aharon Friedman** and heard talks by **Prof. Berta Sivan-Levavi,** from the **Dept. of Animal Sciences** and by **Prof. Naomi Ori,** from the **Robert H. Smith Institute of Plant Sciences and Genetics in Agriculture.**

At the **Weizmann Institute of Science,** one of the world's top-ranking multidisciplinary research institutions, also in Rehovot, participants heard a charismatic and inspiring talk on ways of encouragement for young women scientists, by genetic engineer, **Prof. Varda Rotter** of the **Department of Molecular Cell Biology.** Prof. Rotter is also the **Institute President's Advisor on Women's Issues.** **Ms. Pema Dema** of **Bhutan** gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the group.

On arrival in Jerusalem, a **Reception** was held in honor of the delegates at the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, celebrating the issue of a postage stamp marking the fiftieth jubilee of MCTC.** This special ceremony was held in the presence of **Mr. Danny Ayalon, Deputy Foreign Minister** and **Mr. Rafi Barak, MFA Director-General,** both of whom welcomed the participants in the Conference. In a warm vote of thanks, New Zealander, **Hon. Ms. Winnie Laban,** mentioned the generosity of spirit the group had encountered during their stay.

A past-participant from an MCTC training activity in 1978-9 and delegate to this Conference, **Ms. Stella Tamang, Founder and Principal of Bhrikuti School, Nepal,** spoke *'on behalf of all past participants... the training I received at the Mount Carmel Center was so meaningful and appropriate .... You touched the hearts and minds of millions of women all over world'.*

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### **Thursday, June 2, 2011**

On the final day of the Conference proceedings, the participants were welcomed to the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) by **Hon. Reuven Rivlin, the Speaker of the House**. The Speaker was presented with a copy of the **Haifa Declaration**, and was thanked on behalf of the participants by **Hon. Dr. Saskia Cely Suarez** from **Ecuador**. She described the Conference as *'very rich days of discussion, sharing common problems and trying to find answers'*.

**Ms. Vered Sued, Director, Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women, Prime Minister's Office**, explained the role her Office plays in the structure of the State and gave an overview of the changes in women's lives over three generations.

The final meeting was with **Deputy Minister Ms. Gila Gamliel**, who greeted the group, giving a short summary of common problems, but felt that there was room for optimism despite the great amount to do. She too was presented with the Haifa Declaration by **Ms. Gulser Corat**, who described it as an *'advocacy tool for high level advocacy'*. In her vote of thanks, **Dr. Meglena Plugtschieva-Alexandrova, Bulgaria** quoted appropriately from Saint Exupéry, saying that *'the best way to forecast the future is participate in shaping it'*.

After a guided tour of the Knesset and an explanation of its workings, the group was hosted to a farewell lunch, with parting words from **Ambassador Haim Divon**, before leaving for a tour of the holy and historical sights in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Evening dinner at Kibbutz Ramat Rachel on the outskirts of Jerusalem, followed by a visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial Museum the next morning, for those whose flight schedules permitted, brought the Jubilee Conference to a close.

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***MCTC expresses its warm appreciation to  
MASHAV and UNESCO  
for their support of its international conferences for women leaders***