

## **Implementation of the Beijing Platform for action REPUBLIC OF LATVIA**

### **Part One.**

Undeniably, women have especially important role in development of the nation and existence of any society is dependent on condition of women in it. Concerning the role of a woman in Latvia today, we should take into account the considerable influence of past, but also the experience and achievements, obtained during years of independence, with regards to improvement of the status and condition of women.

There is no law in Latvia accepted on equality of gender, but the norms, concerning the gender equality principle, are incorporated in the legislation of Latvia and legal acts in separate fields.

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, the Civil Law, as well as the Constitutional Law The Rights and Obligations of Citizen and Person anticipate and stipulate equal rights and opportunities for all people, implementation of which can not be subject to any discrimination.

2. Latvia has joined several international documents, regulating issues of gender equality, including:

- The Convention of UN (1979) on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women;
- The Convention of the International Labor Organization (1951) Equal Remuneration Convention.

Theoretically, the legislation of Latvia, normative acts and documents follow and anticipate equality of both gender, but it is necessary to elaborate the national plan and purposeful coordination of these issues for the equality to be really implemented.

The following is under preparation for the political work of gender equality to be purposeful and harmonized:

- wider investigation of gender issues, by paying attention to differences of gender equality in connection with certain age group, educational level, employment group, residence of certain region or taking into account family condition, national belonging, as well as other factors;
- analysis of the legislation of Latvia concerning discrimination de jure and preparation of the political basic principles of national gender equality and activity plans, as well as their delivery to the public for discussion to provide equal opportunities in all fields.

The following measures are to be carried out in order to implement the national equality mechanism:

- to create consulting inter-ministry work group. Its task will be to accept harmonized decisions and to search for common solutions, by taking into account many complicated and different fields and issues of state institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations;
- to cooperate with the international partners in the fields, concerned with issues on gender equality.

Ministry of Welfare is decided to be responsible for coordination of these issues and elaboration, implementation and supervision of the national mechanism.

Each year, though slightly, representation of women is increasing in the Parliament and the Government. There were 18 women out of total 100 deputies elected after election of

the 7<sup>th</sup> Parliament (Autumn 1998), but out of 16 members of the Cabinet of Ministers there are 4 women. The higher the governmental level, the less women are there. The decisive word in politics and activities of parties is still with men, but women execute work of the replacer or executor. Men initiate laws, accept them by themselves, but women have to work with them.

Organization of women and joining into different groups, clubs, public organizations provide evidence about increase of activity of women exactly during last years. The women organizations of Latvia in general unite women according to interests, provide assistance to women, who are in difficulties, consult and educate women in Latvia. International cooperation with other women organizations is very essential, which promotes women organizational skills and awareness of their rights and understanding about their place in society.

The Cooperation Council of the Women Organizations of Latvia (LCWOL) was established in 1992 by joining of 17 organizations with the goal to create public opinion about correct understanding of the gender equality principle and to promote it; to develop solidarity of women, promote creation of self-confidence of women and respective behavior; to provide exchange of information between women organizations, to enlarge their educational possibilities; to formulate and express opinion about legislative acts and laws, concerning women rights, family life problems, employment of women, equality of men and women at work, in family, public and political life, social, economical and culture policy, to promote analysis of any decisions from the aspects of equality.

Among the activities, carried out in Latvia After the 4<sup>th</sup> World Women Conference in Beijing, to be considered as substantial for solution of gender equality issues, are to be mentioned. The common conference of the Baltic and Nordic countries "Women and Men in Dialogue" August 1997. One of the main goals of this conference was to pay attention of state authority institutions to gender confidence policy as an essential pre-condition for many-sided and sound development, as well as to try discuss men and women problems and search for possible solutions together to start.

Recently March 15 1999 the seminar "On Situation of Women in the Baltic Countries" within the common project of USA and Finland took place in Riga. The main themes, discussed in the organized work groups, were the following: entrepreneurship, violence, prostitution and trafficking on women.

Mass media has an important role in education and information of public about issues of gender equality. Some newspapers to maximum extent objectively demonstrate a woman as a part of society. The above mentioned of the Baltic and Nordic countries had an important role in education of journalists about issues of gender equality. The basic idea of this training was as possibly briefly and concisely provide general outlook and create understanding about actuality of gender equality also in Latvia, as well as active involvement of mass media in explanation of these issues to public.

The majority of population in Latvia are women (54%). According to different statistical data, the family and upbringing of children are mostly responsibility of women (70% of women alone bring up children, are not married or men have actually left families). However, statistical data demonstrate also, that educational level of women is even slightly higher than men's, as well as there are more women with higher education than men's. Taking into account the large number of women in universities, we should conclude, that girls and women at present are much more interested in obtaining education than men. Better education gives opportunity receive better paid work and be more independent.

There have been rise periods and periods of crisis in the socio-economic situation and development of Latvia during last eight years. The basis for market economy and good macroeconomic preconditions for development of economy have been created in the course of the economic reforms. The social reform is being implemented in the social field with the goal to provide for all inhabitants of the country at least minimum social security level, by dividing of rights and duties of the state and the individual in such a way, that the role of the individual in social protection of oneself and one's family will increase.

The norms about the aspects of gender equality have been included in the normative acts of the Republic of Latvia in order to promote economic rights and independence of women, as well as control over economical resources. The legislative base for development of the private sector in Latvia was created in 1990-ies. That has created principally new motivation for economic activity and gave opportunity to establish the common base of social and economical relations, based on private property, free entrepreneurial activity and competition. It means, that each citizen, independent on gender, has an opportunity to obtain in ownership and manage land, real estate or any other material asset under one's disposal.

The law "On Entrepreneurial Activity" was passed as of September 1990, regulating possibilities to carry out entrepreneurial activity independent on the gender of a person. There is work going on concerning promotion of women entrepreneurial activity in Latvia and to help faster and easier to start activity for the small and medium sized enterprises. The Entrepreneurial Activity Development Policy Department of Ministry of Economics in cooperation with the Association of Business and Professional Women of Latvia plans to implement the project "Integration of Women in Entrepreneurial Environment" in years 1999-2001. There are also ideas about granting of credits and elaboration of micro credit system in the rural area.

Theoretically, the legislation of Latvia, normative acts and documents follow and anticipate equality of both gender. The norms, providing gender equality principle and inadmissibility to discriminate a person, depending on the gender, are included in the labor legislation. Equal rights, possibilities and protection for all people are stipulated and guaranteed in the laws on education, the law "On Social Security". The law "On Protection of Children Rights" was accepted in 1998, where children, independent on gender, have equal rights. The legal acts on protection of children do not contain any issues concerning discrimination of girls.

The socio-economical welfare level is most closely connected with work ability of population. The Labor Law Code in Latvia regulates the legal employment relations. The new draft Labor Law is under preparation at present, where the following norms will be incorporated:

- guarantee to equal rights of employment, fair work conditions, as well as fair work remuneration.

Labor Law imposes the employer as a duty to determine equal work compensation for men and women for the same work or work of the same value.

- special women protection during maternity period or in connection with maternity;

Concerning organization of work time, Labor Law stipulates, that the employer is to determine part work time, if it is requested by a pregnant woman - during after birth period or during the whole feeding period.

The legal norms about employment advertisements and work interviews are included in the draft Labor law. It is determined, that the announcement of the employer about the vacancies can not concern only men or only women. The law will stipulates, that the questions, not concerning performance of the anticipated work or connected with appropriateness of the

candidate for this work, are not to be asked by the employer during the work interview. The questions of the employer can not offend personality and respect of the employee.

Economical and social changes in the country have promoted stratification of layers of the population. One part of the population has very high living standard, but a considerable part of the population has still low living standard. Increase of poverty observed in Latvia is similar to many other transition economies. Taking into account the demographic situation, when the divorce level in the country is very high, the women is the social group, which is subject to larger possibility to be trapped in poverty. The women, who bring up their children, are even in more difficult situation, because in the most cases a child upon divorce is left under support of the mother.

There are researches going on in Latvia about the risk groups of the population, which have the highest exposure to social and economical changes, as well as about the depth and character of poverty. These researches indicate, that there are distinct differences between poverty in the urban cities and rural area. The poverty in cities is much more visible, but also more anonymous, but in the rural area the poverty is less visible, because there are no such sharp contrasts of living conditions as can be observed in cities. Therefore one of the measures to reduce poverty in the country is to implement the poverty reduction program.

It is planned to elaborate a conceptual issue about stabilization of income level of the poor population.

Administrative or criminal responsibility is determined by law for violence against any person.

Violence against women and children in Latvia has become a serious problem. However, there is a lack of actual data, statistical indicators to be able to analyze and judge about character, development and dynamics of this problem. Women themselves very often do not report about the performed acts of violence, thus threatening themselves and creating opportunity to repeat the violence. Out of the registered cases approximately 80% are discovered.

Violence against children has been topical also earlier, but now there is much more publicity in mass media and in public in general going on about this topic. It is admitted in public, that violence against children exists and therefore the guilty ones are to have serious punishment.

There are different assistance and support centers created in Latvia, which are financed from the state and municipal budgets in order to help women, who have suffered from violence. Crises/trust telephone services are being developed, which provide psychological and legal assistance to women, who have suffered from any form of violence. There are researches made, concerning violence against women.

State and non-governmental organizations offer services of the crises/trust telephone, where the child may receive psychological assistance, information about the interested questions.

## Part Two.

Human development of the nation is basically financed by the budget funds. The required amount of funds, financed by the budget, for complete implementation of the programs in Latvia is increasing. The society feels necessity to create new programs, as well as to widen the existing once by including execution of new functions and financing in the previous programs.

The common budget of Latvia consists of the state budget and municipal budgets, which are in their turn divided into the principal budgets and special budgets.

The budget funds are distributed according to special criteria and in all fields these funds are anticipated for all inhabitants of the country, independent on gender, race or any other social or political differences. Separate programs and projects, which are financed from the state budget are elaborated within concrete fields, for instance, more active involvement of a woman into entrepreneurial activity, credit exemptions for rural entrepreneurs - women.

It is necessary to elaborate the action program of the government of Latvia for solution of gender equality issues and its implementation in real life in order implement the Action Platform of the Beijing declaration in Latvia on the governmental level and to develop concrete activity for its execution. The work is going on concerning further improvement of situation of women of Latvia - how to work with these issues and how to create state policy in this field. Activity has been just started, therefore we can not talk about concrete results and concrete future plans.

Non-governmental organizations so far have worked a lot with these issues and have indicated to the weak points in the state policy to which special attention has to be paid upon elaboration of the gender equality policy. It is important to note, that non-governmental organizations have seriously worked to attract attention of public to the gender equality issues and to accept the fact, that this inequality exists in the society of Latvia, and there are necessary concrete actions to change this situation.

Unfortunately each non-governmental organization operates independently from each other, by setting their own concrete activity principles and goals. Therefore at present they have comparatively insignificant action ability and influence on the state institutions. However, the state is interested in future to cooperate with NGOs, because they have done quite a lot in implementation of different projects exactly in the field of gender equality.

## Annex to the Third Part of the Questionnaire.

Fields of special attention	Examples for observation of the Beijing Platform for successful policies, programs, projects (indicate successful goals, strategies and achievements)	Examples of obstacles and obtained experience	Plans for future work, new initiatives
Women and poverty	<p>Stratification of layers of the society, poverty, especially poverty is topical in Latvia, because it hinders general development of the nation.</p> <p>The Central Statistical Bureau since September 1995 started on regular basis to carry out the surveys of the Household Budgets within which the data are obtained about those groups of population, which are of special risk and which have the largest probability of poverty.</p> <p>The social security system reform is carried now in Latvia, but sufficient attention has not been paid to the gender equality aspect within the reform. The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology in 1998 by involvement of UNDP, the World Bank and the International Labor Organization carried out the research "Social Assessment of Poverty in Latvia" in order to survey those people who and where in Latvia are poor, as well as to find out the conditions and strategies of the most poor people.</p> <p>The Government has started elaboration of the starting for coping prevention of poverty in the country.</p>	<p>Budget needs in order to help the poor individuals exceed the available funds.</p> <p>Women in Latvia in general work in less paid professions than men. The state statistics indicate, that women receive 78% of men's salaries, in the state sector - even less - only 73%.</p> <p>Women finish to educate themselves earlier and more often work part time.</p> <p>The above said indicates, that it is easier for men to find occasional works, but women have larger possibilities to work in the service sector, but they suffer more from discrimination due to age.</p> <p>There are distinct differences between poverty in cities and rural areas.</p>	<p>The government of Latvia as one of the principal tasks considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to accept and implement poverty prevention program, by providing availability of education and health care;</li> <li>• to release availability of credits for purchase of housing.</li> </ul> <p>Upon elaboration of the poverty reduction strategy, it is necessary to include also the gender equality aspects, among other things, to analyze macroeconomical and social policy consequences depending on the gender, social assistance sufficiency for one and other gender, female and male reproductive potential. It is necessary to coordinate activities from the government, non-governmental organizations, private sector, international partners of Latvia and others in order to reduce poverty, inequality and social isolation.</p>
Education of women and vocational training	<p>The legislation of Latvia in accordance with the international norms guarantee for each person, including girls and women, rights to education and opportunity to develop as an educated, intellectually and physically developed, free and responsible personality.</p> <p>Girls and women may obtain qualification in different fields, also in such, which traditionally were dominant by men - entrepreneurial activity, legal science, etc.</p>	<p>Though the legislation of Latvia anticipate and guarantee for all individuals equal opportunities and rights to education, the present socio-economical conditions is the reason, that many children do not have opportunity to attend school.</p>	<p>Taking into account, that limited financial resources are allocated for education in the country, the larger priority is to be given to the basic education.</p> <p>It is necessary to carry out in more detail analysis of the causes and</p>

	<p>Ministry of Science and Education in 1998 elaborated the standards of basic education, which is the state policy, the contents of the reform of basic education till year 2005.</p>		<p>dynamics of the increasing number of the children not attending school. To search for alternatives for education of children not attending school.</p>
<p>Women and health</p>	<p>Health care of Latvia is equal for women and men and there is no gender discrimination observed. Even vice versa - mother and child is health care priority. The pregnant women, who receive medical treatment services, related to observation of pregnancy and after-birth observation and course of pregnancy within the health care, are released from the patient fee.</p> <p>1996 - 1998. Ministry of Welfare and with the support of elaborated the project "Support to Creation of the Reproductive Health Strategy in Latvia". After primary data processing, these data were analyzed and commented by the Latvian experts, by expressing their own opinion and proposals. Issue and dissemination of booklets, brochures in the field of education and information of the population, as well as organization of seminars and conferences about family planning and sexual health issues for different target groups are to be mentioned.</p>	<p>Large part of the society lack knowledge about their health, healthy way of life and prevention of diseases. The law "On Reproductive Health", which would promote improvement of sexual health of men and women and family planning, was rejected after the first reading by the Parliament in 1997.</p> <p>General, qualitative education about health, healthy way of life and prophylactics of diseases, as well as issues of sexual education do not take place in schools.</p> <p>There is lack of effective coordination and important cooperation between state and non-governmental organizations. Inhabitants of rural districts and regional towns do not have the same opportunity to receive information and qualitative services, which are available for inhabitants of the capital.</p>	<p>It is necessary to implement the health care reform, based on the primary health care and creation of the network of family doctors in the whole country.</p>
<p>Violence against women</p>	<p>The legislative acts of the Republic of Latvia comply the norms, which protect rights of girls and women against any violence. The law stipulate administrative and criminal responsibility for violence against any person, also a girl and a woman.</p> <p>The Cabinet of Ministers accepted the regulations on prostitution in 1998.</p> <p>Ministry of Welfare has passed the decree on health examinations, their frequency and amount for the persons, who want to be involved in prostitution or are doing that.</p>	<p>There are no exact statistical data available about violence and sexual exploitation.</p> <p>The unfavorable socio-economical conditions are not eliminated, the dramatic consequences of which are sexual exploitation, as well as trafficking in women. The legislation is not put in order</p>	<p>It is necessary to draw attention of the society to the issues in violence against women, that the women would be aware about their own rights and would obtain information about opportunities to receive necessary assistance.</p> <p>It is necessary to promote creation of crisis centers, shelters for women,</p>

	<p>There are non-governmental organizations created in Latvia since 1998 and their goals and types of activities are connected with protection of female interests and protection of rights, provision of material, psychological and legal assistance and other activities. Services of the crisis/trust telephone are developed, which provide psychological and legal assistance to women, who have suffered from any kind of violence. There are researches made, connected with the issues on violence against women.</p>	<p>including the aspects of legal norms, which would promote reduction of immature prostitution. One a part of the offered services for women, who suffered from violence are for fee, which is very often the main reason, why women do not approach for help. Wider actualization of the problem is hindered by unwillingness of women to talk about violence, directed towards them.</p>	<p>who have suffered from violence. It is necessary to provide protection of women in cases of violence, by creation of special divisions in the police for submission of complaints, as well as guarantee of realistic investigation of the case and punishment of the guilty ones. To promote involvement of professional people in explanation of violence problems to the public, as well as to promote mutual interaction of both parties.</p>
<p><b>Women and armed conflicts</b></p>	<p>At present there is a whole range of documents, regulating status and rights of women, as well as equality to participate in the National Armed Forces of Latvia:          "Law on Compulsory Military Service" stipulates, that "Women - the citizens of Latvia - can serve in the compulsory military service on voluntary basis";          "Regulations of the military persons service" stipulates, that "Women without children, who are younger than three years of age, may involve into military service on voluntary basis in the age from 18 up to 40 years";          "Regulations of the Security Service of the Parliament and the State President" stipulate, that "... it is forbidden to use guns against women and immature persons, except the cases, if the person makes armed attack; demonstrates armed resistance or by a group attack threatens the persons to be guarded, other person life of the Security Service soldier or the object to be guarded. The same principle is stipulated in "Regulations of the Military Police", as well as in the regulations of other structural units of defense forces.</p>		
<p><b>Women and economy</b></p>	<p>The law "On Entrepreneurial Activity" was accepted as of September 26 1990, regulating performance of entrepreneurial activity independent on gender of a person.          The National Development Program of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises was accepted in 1991. The Latvia Guarantee Agency started its activity within its framework, providing medium-term and long-term guarantees for small and medium enterprises.</p>	<p>Though the norms on equality rights are confirmed in separate normative acts, there are violations of the equality principle in practice and discrimination expressions, especially concerning women, for instance, in employment</p>	<p>It is proposed to elaborate and implement in the rural areas the micro credit system within the credit program for SME development, which would provide opportunity to receive micro credits for implementation of the newly</p>



	<p>The program of the regions with special support started its activity in 1998, by creation of the Regional Fund, which provides subsidies for loan interest payments, investments into statutory capital, lump sum payments for measures of economic education.</p> <p>Export Credit of Latvia provides guarantees (insurance) and credits for export and import operations and credits in the field of energy.</p> <p>SME training and consultation system was created by the funds of Phare program - the network of Entrepreneurial support centers in Latvia. All services of the fund and consultations are offered to entrepreneurs, independent on the gender.</p> <p>Legal relations of employment in Latvia are regulated by the Labor Law Code, where the norms, which would provide the gender equality principle and inadmissibility to discriminate the person depending on gender, race, color of skin, age, religious, political or other conviction, national or social origin and material status. It is possible to see most often expressions of gender equality during hiring process. But to liquidate inequality also in this stage Labor Law stipulates special norms.</p> <p>Persons of both gender in Latvia have equal legal possibilities to work in any work place and to start any type of occupation. As exceptions such types of occupations can be mentioned, which are connected with the works to be carried out in hard conditions and dangerous for health, stipulated by the normative acts of the Republic of Latvia, which are not to be allowed for employment of women. That is based by the necessity to protect women health from influence of dangerous factors.</p> <p>To improve and develop involvement of women in the entrepreneurial activity, the Association of Business Consultants of Latvia organizes the lectures within the project "Women in Business".</p> <p>The legal norms, stipulating granting of special rights for pregnant women and mothers, are included in the normative acts of the Republic of Latvia, as well as guarantees for the persons, who bring up children without a mother.</p>	<p>announcements, where the gender of the candidate is indicated.</p> <p>It is not allowed from 1998 to indicate the gender of the candidate in employment announcements, sometimes it is not observed.</p> <p>In case, if the employee considers, that his/her rights are violated, the law anticipates opportunity to approach with the complaint to the State Work Inspection, the State Human Rights Bureau or to the court in order to protect one's own rights.</p> <p>Though the law stipulates opportunity to approach in these institutions, people very seldom use it. That is explained by the general lack of awareness about issues of human rights and that the court process is labor-consuming.</p>	<p>elaborated program "Women in Business", that is, promotion of women employment in the rural area. Ministry of Economics in cooperation with Ministry of Education and Science and other institutions have planned to create in 1999 the Innovation Fund of Latvia, which would support innovation projects, by investing the funds into the enterprise statutory capital, as well as by providing subsidies for interest rate payments and payments for development of infrastructure for entrepreneurial activity.</p> <p>Policy of the Republic of Latvia in the field of gender equality also in future is directed to promotion of economical rights of women and independence, including availability of work, respective work conditions and control over economical resources.</p> <p>As the example elaboration of the draft of the New Labor Law Code is to be mentioned, where the norms, which guarantee equal rights to work, fair work conditions, secure and healthy work conditions, as well as fair work compensation, are included.</p>
<p>Women in authority structures and decision-making</p>	<p>The law "On Civil Service" stipulates equal employment possibilities for women and men.</p>	<p>Socio-economical conditions in the state administration of Latvia have created situation as the result of which 53% of women occupy</p>	<p>It is necessary to elaborate the gender equality development program in order to increase representation of women in the</p>

<p>Institutional enlargement mechanisms of women social possibilities</p>	<p>The State Human Rights Bureau was established in July 1995 with the main tasks to investigate the situation, concerning observation of human rights in the country, especially in the fields, which are connected with the least protected groups of the society, performance of analysis of legal norms in Latvia, review of complaints about violations of human rights, information of public about human rights. The non-governmental organizations are actively working in the field of women rights since 1990.</p> <p>The Cabinet of Ministers made the decision as of December 1998 by which Ministry of Welfare is appointed as the responsible state institution for coordination of gender equality issues.</p>	<p>Women organizations, other non-governmental organizations, which are mostly managed by women or almost all of them work in the interests of women, do not have access to information of the government, including financing part, anticipated for public education and especially for municipalities and non-governmental organizations.</p> <p>There is no governmental mechanism elaborated in Latvia, which would provide equality of gender, their investigation, control and reports. Non-existence of institutional mechanisms has promoted also lack of financing for this policy.</p>	<p>average and lower level civil service positions, but men are mostly in leading positions.</p> <p>The Parliament refused the proposal to the amendments to the law in the country, which would determine 33% quota in the election lists for both gender.</p>	<p>highest level civil service positions. Sociological questioning on issues of gender equality could serve as the basis for the program.</p>
<p>Human Rights of Women</p>	<p>Article 91 of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia stipulates, that human rights are implemented without any discrimination.</p> <p>Alongside renewal of independence as of May 4 1990, the Republic of Latvia joined UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of</p>	<p>There is no separate law passed in Latvia about the gender equality. There is no control system created about the issues on gender equality</p>	<p>It is necessary to create institutional cooperation between the state and municipalities, as well as non-governmental organizations as one of the basic principles of a democratic country.</p> <p>To promote creation of different women social support centers, which would pay special attention to a woman's role in public and family.</p> <p>To organize special training programs for women and the disabled women, which would be directed to creation of such skills and abilities, that they can actively be involved in the labor market.</p> <p>To organize educational measures, including seminars, which would direct public opinion to the role of a woman, as increase in value in the society.</p> <p>It is necessary to create public understanding about problems, connected with the role of a woman in family.</p>	<p>It is necessary to create institutional cooperation between the state and municipalities, as well as non-governmental organizations as one of the basic principles of a democratic country.</p> <p>To promote creation of different women social support centers, which would pay special attention to a woman's role in public and family.</p> <p>To organize special training programs for women and the disabled women, which would be directed to creation of such skills and abilities, that they can actively be involved in the labor market.</p> <p>To organize educational measures, including seminars, which would direct public opinion to the role of a woman, as increase in value in the society.</p> <p>It is necessary to create public understanding about problems, connected with the role of a woman in family.</p>

<p>Women and means of public communication</p>	<p>Discrimination. The Labor Code stipulates special work protection norms for pregnant women and mother of small children. The decision of the Parliament as of March 14 1996 stipulates, that no direct or indirect limitation of rights is to be allowed by setting priorities for age and gender. Non-governmental organizations work with popularization of the Convention on prevention of any women discrimination.</p>	<p>monitoring. The social guarantees currently in force in Latvia do not correspond to equal opportunity principle, for instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disbursement of the child care benefit only for parents, not working full time limit the rights to employment of the child care taker or in contrary prohibits part of anticipated social guarantees for the parents in the first year of a child and thus limits possibilities to join work with family duties.</li> </ul> <p>Discrimination was allowed in the labor market, when the employers asked the possible employers about the family situation, health, reproductive plans, etc. Unproportionally low work payment in the branches, where mostly women are employed. Participation of a man in the child care is not promoted in Latvia. The law on the rights to work part time, if a woman has a child till the age of three years, actually does not work in life. Women know very little about their rights and the state institutions do not work with psychological preparation of women for awareness of their own rights.</p>	<p>It is necessary to work specially with journalists and mass media managers. By using mass media, it is necessary</p>
<p>Separate newspapers of Latvia to maximum extent objectively demonstrate a women as a part of society. The non-governmental organization - the Institute of Women Rights in January 1999 opened the training program "Woman and Mass</p>	<p>Editors and journalists still very weakly understand the essence of equality and women rights. Media of Latvia reflect issues about</p>	<p>It is necessary to work specially with journalists and mass media managers. By using mass media, it is necessary</p>	<p>It is necessary to work specially with journalists and mass media managers. By using mass media, it is necessary</p>

	<p>Media", as well as inform regularly mass media in the whole Latvia about their programs, political intentions, by specially prepared texts. The organizers of Valmiera conference in 1997 tried in positive way to solve work with journalists, by organizing special seminars for journalists and explaining women rights.</p>	<p>gender equality too little and too generally. Media do not want to talk about a woman as a person in society, is not able to reflect life and events with eyes of a woman. International women policy and practical experience are reflected very little.</p>	<p>to make more active the role of a woman in society, by paying special attention to their abilities and ability to involve into general public life, by giving their contribution to the democratization process. It is necessary to give to women opportunity to express freely opinion of a certain social group in mass information means.</p>
<p>Women and environment</p>	<p>The following documents are elaborated in concerning the issues Latvia: The Environment Protection Policy Plan for Latvia (1995). The Environment Health Action Plan for Latvia (1997).</p>		
<p>Girls</p>	<p>In order to decrease the number of undesirable pregnancy, the number of abortions in schools, there are different informative and educational measures carried out in the field of sexual education, personal hygiene, contraceptive issues. The law "On Children Rights Protection" was accepted in 1998, where the children independent on the gender have equal rights. Other normative acts, concerning children rights, also do not contain any issues, where any type of discrimination of girls may be observed. There are regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers elaborated "Procedure in Accordance with which Assistance to the Children, who Suffered from Violence, is to be Provided", where the services to be provided by the state budget funds and which are received by the children, who suffered, are to be provided. State and non-governmental organizations offer services of the crisis/trust telephone, where the child can receive psychological assistance.</p>	<p>The problem of children prostitution and sexual exploitation has become very topical, which is connected with the socio-economical problem of the transition period.</p>	<p>The health study is to be anticipated as compulsory for all in the school curriculum, where the issues about sexual education and other important factors of health are included. It is necessary to enlarge the network of psychological assistance for the persons, who have suffered from violence.</p>

<p>Women in authority structures and decision-making</p>	<p>which are not to be allowed for employment of women. That is based by the necessity to protect women health from influence of dangerous factors.</p> <p>To improve and develop involvement of women in the entrepreneurial activity, the Association of Business Consultants of Latvia (ABCCL) organizes the lectures within the project "Women in Business".</p> <p>The legal norms, stipulating granting of special rights for pregnant women and mothers, are included in the normative acts of the Republic of Latvia, as well as guarantees for the persons, who bring up children without a mother.</p> <p>The law "On Civil Service" stipulates equal employment possibilities for women and men.</p>	<p>Socio-economical conditions in the state administration of Latvia have created situation as the result of which 55% of women occupy average and lower level civil service positions, but men are mostly in leading positions.</p>	<p>(hereinafter in the text - LC) is to be mentioned, where the norms, which guarantee equal rights to work, fair work conditions, secure and healthy work conditions, as well as fair work compensation, are included.</p>
<p>Institutional enlargement mechanisms of women social possibilities</p>	<p>The State Human Rights Bureau was established in July 1995 with the main tasks to investigate the situation, concerning observation of human rights in the country, especially in the fields, which are connected with the least protected groups of the society, performance of analysis of legal norms in Latvia, review of complaints about violations of human rights, information of public about human rights.</p> <p>The non-governmental organizations are actively working in the field of women rights since 1990.</p> <p>Ministry of Welfare elaborated document "On Coordination of Sex Equality in Latvia" as of November 12 1998.</p> <p>The Cabinet of Ministers made the decision as of December 1998 by which Ministry of Welfare is appointed as the responsible state institution for coordination of sex equality issues.</p>	<p>Women organizations, other non-governmental organizations, which are mostly managed by women or almost all of them work in the interests of women, do not have access to information of the government, including financing part, anticipated for public education and especially for municipalities and non-governmental organizations.</p> <p>There is no governmental mechanism elaborated in Latvia, which would provide equality of sexes, their investigation, control and reports. Non-existence of institutional mechanisms has promoted also lack of financing for this policy.</p>	<p>It is necessary to elaborate the sex equality development program in order to increase representation of women in the highest level civil service positions.</p> <p>Sociological questioning on issues of sex equality could serve as the basis for the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is necessary to create institutional cooperation between the state and municipalities, as well as non-governmental organizations as one of the basic principles of a democratic country.</li> <li>• To promote creation of different women social support centers, which would pay special attention to a woman's role in public and family.</li> <li>• To organize special training programs for women and the disabled women, which would be directed to creation of such skills and abilities, that they can actively be involved in the labor market.</li> </ul>

			<p>▪ To organize educational measures, including seminars, which would direct public opinion to the role of a woman, as increase in value in the society.</p> <p>It is necessary to create public understanding about problems, connected with the role of a woman in family.</p>
<p>Human Rights of Women</p>	<p>Article 91 of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia stipulates, that human rights are implemented without any discrimination.</p> <p>Alongside renewal of independence as of May 4 1990, the Republic of Latvia joined UNO convention about prevention of any women discrimination. The Labor Code stipulates special work protection norms for pregnant women and mother of small children. The decision of the Parliament as of March 14 1996 stipulates, that no direct or indirect limitation of rights is to be allowed by setting priorities for age and sex. Non-governmental organizations work with popularization of the Convention on prevention of any women discrimination.</p>	<p>There is no separate law passed in Latvia about the sex equality. There is no control system created about the issues on sex equality observation.</p> <p>The social guarantees currently in force in Latvia do not correspond to equal opportunity principle, for instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disbursement of the child care benefit only for parents, not working full time limit the rights to employment of the child care taker or in contrary prohibits part of anticipated social guarantees for the parents in the first year of a child and thus limits possibilities to join work with family duties.</li> </ul> <p>The Parliament refused the proposal to the amendments to the law in the country, which would determine 33% quota in the election lists for both sexes.</p> <p>Discrimination was allowed in the labor market, when the employers asked the possible employees about the family situation, health,</p>	

	<p>reproductive plans, etc.          Unproportionally low work payment in the branches, where mostly women are employed. Participation of a man in the child care is not promoted in Latvia.          The law on the rights to work part time, if a woman has a child till the age of three years, actually does not work in life.          Women know very little about their rights and the state institutions do not work with psychological preparation of women for awareness of their own rights.</p>	<p>Editors and journalists still very weakly understand the essence of equality and women rights.          Media of Latvia reflect issues about sex equality too little and too generally.          Media do not want to talk about a woman as a person in society, is not able to reflect life and events with eyes of a woman.          International women policy and practical experience are reflected very little.</p>	<p>It is necessary to work specially with journalists and mass media managers.          By using mass media, it is necessary to make more active the role of a woman in society, by paying special attention to their abilities and ability to involve into general public life, by giving their contribution to the democratization process.          It is necessary to give to women possibility to express freely opinion of a certain social group in mass information means.</p>
<p>Women and means of public communication</p>	<p>Separate newspapers of Latvia to maximum extent objectively demonstrate a women as a part of society.          The non-governmental organization - the Institute of Women Rights in January 1999 opened the training program "Woman and Mass Media", as well as inform regularly mass media in the whole Latvia about their programs, political intentions, by specially prepared texts.          The organizers of Valmieras conference in 1997 tried in positive way to solve work with journalists, by organizing special seminars for journalists and explaining women rights.</p>		
<p>Women and environment</p>	<p>the following documents are elaborated in the Republic of Latvia:          The Environment Protection Policy Plan for Latvia (1995).          The Environment Health Action Plan for Latvia (1997).</p>		
<p>Girls</p>	<p>In order to decrease the number of undesirable pregnancy, the number of abortions in schools, there are different informative and educational measures carried out in the field of sexual education, personal hygiene, contraceptive issues.          The law "On Children Rights Protection" was accepted in 1998, where the children independent on the sex have equal rights. Other</p>	<p>The problem of children prostitution and sexual misuse has become very topical, which is connected with the socio-economical problem of the transition period.</p>	<p>The health study is to be anticipated as compulsory for all in the school curriculum, where the issues about sexual education and other important factors of health are included.          It is necessary to enlarge the network</p>

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## Indicators for measuring Development progress

	Total	Males	Females
<b><u>Population and fertility</u></b>			
Population size (1 January 1998)	2458403	1138501	1319902
Population by age			
0-4	108842	55961	52881
0-14	473337	242110	231227
15-49	1205177	598885	606292
60+	488009	167733	320276
Urban population	1697686	775548	922138
Rural population	760717	362953	397764
Population growth rate (1997)	-0,87		
Total fertility rate (1997)	1,11		
Fertility rate for women aged 15-19 (1997)	21,22		

### Mortality

Life expectancy at birth (1997)	69,99	64,21	75,88
Infant mortality rate (1997)	15,2	16,2	14,2
Under-five mortality rate (1997)	3,03	3,36	2,69
Maternal mortality rate (per 1000 live births, 1997)	42,5		

### Reproductive health

	1997	
Contraceptive prevalence rate per 1000 females 15-44	Pre-oral contraceptive	94.1
	IUD	102.6
	surgical	0.6

HIV adult prevalence rate per 100 000 population 1997 - 1.0

### Gender equality in education

Ratio of boys in primary and secondary education combined 1997/98 - 89.1% (50.5% of total number of pupils)

### Economic activity

Unemployment ratio, %	13.8
Employment-population ratio, %	50.7
% of employed persons engaged in:	
agriculture	18.8
industry	26.2
services	55.0
% of employed persons by employment status:	
employers	3.3

employees	83.0
self-employed	8.4
unpaid family members/relatives	5.1
other	0.2

Source: Labour Force Survey

Period: November, 1998

Coverage: Population aged 15 years and over

### Economy

Year, quarter	GDP			GDP		
	thsd LVL		thsd USD	LVL		USD at current prices
	at current prices	at average prices of 1995	at current prices	at current prices	at average prices of 1995	
1993	1467012	2353178	2176576	5667.29	909.97	841.68
1994	2042555	2368435	3647420	801.73	929.64	1431.65
1995	2349223	2349223	4449286	933.86	933.86	1768.68
1996	2829135	2427705	5134546	1135.83	974.67	2061.40
1997	3211188	2586679	5527002	1300.50	1047.58	2238.38
1998						
I	850411	643451	1431668	346.27	262.00	582.95
II	971792	690988	1627792	396.49	281.92	664.13
III	974319	686275	1632025	398.56	280.73	667.60

### Income and poverty

	1997	1998
Monthly average household income per capita, lats	55,45	60,91
% of population below poverty-line (under the value of crisis minimum basket per capita)	68,4	

### Education

Net primary enrolment ratio - 91.8%

Net lower secondary enrolment ratio - 81.0%

Net upper secondary enrolment ratio - 63.3

### Human security and social justice (1998)

Number of persons in prison per 100,000 people - 239

### Housing and environment (1997)

Floor area per person, m <sup>2</sup>	21.5
Number of persons per room	1.2
% population with access to adequate sanitation	
% dwellings with access to safe drinking water	78.7
% dwellings with access to electricity	99.7
% dwellings with central heating	63.4
Arable land per capita, ha	0.7