

**UN QUESTIONNAIRE:
Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action**

NORWAY SEPTEMBER 1999

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PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF TRENDS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT	5
1 NATIONAL LEVEL.....	5
1.1 INTRODUCTION	5
1.2 METHODS AND MEASURES FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM	5
1.3 EXPERIENCE OF MAINSTREAMING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE INTO ALL POLICY FIELDS	5
1.4 COMMENTS BY THE NGO'S	6
1.4.1 THE CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY	6
1.4.2 THE MIRA RESOURCE CENTER FOR BLACK, IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN	6
2 INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.....	7
PART TWO: FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES.....	8
1 NATIONAL LEVEL.....	8
2 INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.....	8
2.1 COMMENTS BY THE NGO'S	8
2.1.1 THE CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY	8
PART THREE.....	9
B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN.....	9
1 INTRODUCTION	9
2 AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE PERIOD 1999-2001	9
2.1 Aims	9
2.2 Challenges	9
2.3 Problem sectors and choice of direction.....	10
2.3.1 ITC and girls/women	10
2.3.2 Non-traditional educational and professional choices for girls and boys.....	10
2.3.3 Women in the academic sphere / research.....	11
3 COMMENTS BY THE NGO'S	11
3.1 THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF NORWAY	11
3.1.1 Introduction	11
3.1.2 Foundation and structure	11
3.2 THE NORWEGIAN CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (LO)	12
3.3 THE CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY	12
3.4 THE MIRA CENTER	12
C. WOMEN AND HEALTH	14
1 INTRODUCTION	14
2 THE PUBLIC COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE EXISTING KNOWLEDGE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH...	14
3 THE PLAN OF ACTION TO PREVENT UNEXPECTED PREGNANCIES AND ABORTION.	15
4 WORKING CONDITIONS IN FEMALE DOMINATED OCCUPATIONS	15
5 COMMENTS BY THE NGO'S	15
5.1 THE NORWEGIAN CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (LO)	15
5.2 THE CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY	16
D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	17
1 THE PLAN OF ACTION TO PROTECT WOMEN FROM VIOLENCE.....	17

2 COMMENTS BY THE NGO'S	17
2.1 THE NORWEGIAN CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (LO)	17
2.2 THE CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY	17
2.2.1 Introduction	17
2.2.3 Alarm system for women threatened by violence	18
2.2.4 A committee on violence against women	18
2.3 THE MIRA CENTER	18
E. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT.....	19
<i>The main objective of recruiting and keeping women in the Armed Forces :</i>	19
<i>Plans and activities:</i>	19
<i>High profile in the work for gender equality in 1999:</i>	19
<i>Financial and institutional measures.</i>	19
<i>Innovative policies</i>	19
<i>Future challenges</i>	20
F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY	21
1 INTRODUCTION	21
2 THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR	21
2.1 New measures taken within conventional agriculture	21
2.2 The "Committee on Equality Issues and Recruitment to Agriculture"	21
2.3 Rural Development Measures.....	22
3 TRADE AND INDUSTRY	22
4 COMMENTS BY THE NGO'S	24
4.1 THE CONFEDERATION OF NORWEGIAN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY (NHO)	24
4.1.1 Women in Business and Industry	24
4.1.2 Equal pay agreement	24
4.1.3 Women in enterprises.....	24
4.1.4 A mentor-program	24
4.1.5 Women to the top	24
4.2 THE NORWEGIAN CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (LO)	25
4.3 THE CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY	26
G. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING.....	27
1 INTRODUCTION	27
2 WOMEN, QUALITY AND COMPETENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR IN NORWAY 1997-2001	27
3 THE SAMI ASSEMBLY	27
4 COMMENTS BY THE NGO'S	28
4.1 THE NORWEGIAN CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (LO)	28
4.2 THE CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY	28
H. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN	30
1 INTRODUCTION	30
2 THE GENDER EQUALITY OMBUDSMAN.....	30
<i>Obstacles.</i>	30
<i>Goals/plans/new initiatives.</i>	30
3. COMMENTS BY THE NGO'S	31
3.1 THE MIRA CENTER	31
<i>Gender equality in the legal system.</i>	31
I HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN	32
1 HUMAN RIGHTS IN DOMESTIC LAW	32
2. COMMENTS BY THE NGO'S	32
2.1 THE NORWEGIAN CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (LO)	32
2.2 THE CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY	32
2.2.1 Trafficking in women in the north of Norway	32
2.2.2 Arranged marriage and forced marriage	33
2.3 MIRA CENTER.....	33

J. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA	34
1 FILMS AND VIDEOGRAMS	34
2 THE PRESS.....	34
APPENDIX I	35
REPORT FROM THE CATHOLIC WOMEN’S LEAGUE OF NORWAY.....	35
<i>Women and poverty.</i>	35
<i>Education and training of women.</i>	35
<i>Women and Health.</i>	35
<i>Violence against women.</i>	35
<i>Women and armed conflict.</i>	35
<i>Women in power and decision-making.</i>	35
<i>Human rights of women.</i>	36
<i>The girl child.</i>	36
APPENDIX II.....	37
POPULATION AND FERTILITY	37

PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF TRENDS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

1 National level

1.1 Introduction

The Beijing Platform for Action has given inspiration to a continuing process and also introduced new ways of thinking and new strategies in the struggle for achieving de facto equality between men and women in Norway.

A follow-up conference to Beijing was jointly organised in Norway in December 1995 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the women's umbrella organisation, FOKUS. The women's organisations and other NGOs formed the primary target group for the conference and the objective was to transmit and exchange experiences from the official and NGO conferences in Beijing and to discuss relevant areas and proposals for national implementation

Health was one of the main topics at the NGO /Ministerial seminar arranged in Norway after Beijing. The Beijing conference has promoted the integration of a gender perspective in general health information, statistics and services. Equality in the economic field and prevention of sexual violence were other areas identified for follow-up.

A national strategy to follow up Beijing was discussed by high-level representatives, including state secretaries, from all the ministries at a conference on mainstreaming strategies in 1996. The first reports on progress in implementation of gender equality measures in the individual ministries were produced the Spring 1997 in connection with the preparation of a report on gender equality to the Norwegian parliament.

1.2 Methods and measures for promoting gender equality into the new millennium

The basic strategy for the further promotion of gender equality in Norway is to mainstream the gender perspective. This means that all ministries are expected to integrate a gender perspective and the goal of gender equality into their policies, decision-making and executive procedures at all levels and in all policy areas. In addition, all parts of the central administration are expected to follow up the Platform for Action adopted at the Beijing conference in their activities.

After the election in 1997, the new Norwegian Prime Minister established a new position in his office, a political adviser with special responsibility for gender equality. She heads a committee of state secretaries appointed to promote and monitor the political aspects of equality and mainstreaming of the gender perspective. The main responsibility for gender equality within the government is still with the Minister of Children and Family Affairs.

The first report on the progress of the implementation of gender equality measures in each ministry was debated in the Storting (the Norwegian parliament) in May 1997 and the second in May 1999. This document is a presentation of the Government's policy and gives an overview of the achievements made so far regarding mainstreaming of the gender perspective.

1.3 Experience of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policy fields

The principle of mainstreaming is incorporated in the Norwegian Act on Gender Equality from 1978. The law was a useful tool for the later mainstreaming work in the ministry, and states *public authorities shall promote gender equality in all sectors of society*. Early in the 1980s the

Ministry of Children and Family Affairs started their systematic and comprehensive work of mainstreaming a gender perspective into ordinary work in all ministries. In a report to the Storting on gender equality policy in 1985 the principle of integrating a gender perspective into all levels of public administration was presented and all political parties agreed on this goal. Two Equality Action Programmes were launched during the period from 1986 until 1994.

During the first period of the programme of gender mainstreaming the aim was to make the ministries aware of the fact that a gender perspective is relevant in most policy fields. All ministries had to make proposals and commitment, and all areas were subject to gender mainstreaming.

Awareness raising and training courses were important tools for the program, as was involvement on the political level. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs held seminars in which officials from all ministries took part twice a year, and consultative meetings with each ministry were arranged regularly. At the end of the first period a comprehensive report was presented that included a description of the gender perspective in each ministry and 500 concrete proposals. To prevent this work from becoming a project about personnel policy only, all proposals regarding personnel policy were excluded. This decision was controversial, since the majority had the opinion that equality policy is identical to a personnel policy aiming at increasing the number of women managers and promoting equal pay.

The minister responsible for equality has recently prepared a list selected from the Bills and white-papers placed before the Storting. In a letter to all the members of the Government she made a point of the gender perspective in these documents and asked specifically for a consideration also from the gender point of view.

The experience and results from the programs are under evaluation. Preliminary reports indicates considerable variation between the ministries.

1.4 Comments by the NGO's

1.4.1 The Center for Gender Equality

The lack of gender equality is a problem that affects the society as a whole. Acknowledging this lack is the first step towards reaching the goal of full gender equality. Since this acknowledgment is far from universal, the process of mainstreaming in Norway is a slow procedure. In Norway this non-acceptance produces negative impact within important policy fields of society such as industry and trade, health and regional development.

Norway has one of the most gender segregated labor markets in the Western world. In addition we have an education system where women and men still prefer to choose traditional gender-divided directions. Only 20 per cent of men work in child care and nursing professions and the proportion of women within nursing and the caring professions exceeds 80 per cent. We find that 80 per cent of part time workers are women. Among full time employees women's average earnings are 86 per cent of men's (NOU 1998:13). Such fundamental structures in the labour market contribute to the continued traditional division of labor between men and women in the domestic sphere of housework and childcare. The family's economy will often profit more if the father is working full time, and fathers of small children are one of the groups with the highest overtime rate in Norway. Women's position on the labor market is worsened by the difficult and unstable conditions for kindergartens. Compared to the other Nordic countries Norway has still fewest daycare places for very young children, and as well Norway has the fewest kindergarten facilities. Women - unfortunately more than men - need care for their children in order to be able to participate in working life. The education system and the labor market contribute to maintaining traditional patterns of gender roles.

1.4.2 The Mira Resource Center for Black, Immigrant and Refugee Women

There are about 70.000 immigrant women living in Norway today. Among them only one fourth are of a non-European origin. Nevertheless, it is this group of women who experience severe social discrimination based not only on gender but also

on their racial or cultural origin. Awareness of the specific situation of immigrant women and the shortcomings of gender equality laws in relation to ethnic minority women has increased lately, but we have yet a long way to go before we experience the full integration of minority women into Norwegian society.

There are many obstacles to the integration of ethnic minority women, especially in regards to creating equal opportunities for their participation in the labour market, education and other socio-economic and political spheres. Some of the obstacles could lie within the communities themselves, while others are due to the lack of real equality policies to integrate immigrant women's resources within society.

The traditional attitudes to education for women and girls, employment and the social and family role of women could limit minority women's participation in broader society. On the other hand, discrimination and exclusion from the labour market, lack of access to the education and no recognition of previous experiences limit ethnic minority women's opportunities to integrate on their own premises.

2 International level

In 1997 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs finished its Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation. It reflects the change from women in Development to Gender and Development, and points to the fact that the development process for gender equality is based on society's need to utilize the knowledge and experience of both women and men.

PART TWO: FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES

1 National level

The Norwegian national budget does not reveal the level of funds spent on promoting gender equality as these funds are an integral part of the budget. Only funds for specific gender institutions can be identified. The Gender Equality Ombudsman is allocated an appropriation of NOK 4.4 mill. The Center for Gender Equality is allocated an appropriation of NOK 4.8 mill. from the Government.

All the Ministries and relevant existing institutions have served as mechanisms for the Beijing process in Norway, as well as for the follow-up work. NGOs also participate in the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action. In connection with the preparation of the present follow-up report, all the relevant NGO's in the field of gender equality were invited to contribute to the report. The contributions are integrated in the report.

2 International level

The Strategy for Women and Gender Equality focuses on rights, decision-making processes, economic participation, education, health and environment. These areas are to be given particular emphasis in all forms of development cooperation. Regarding budgets, the special women's grant was increased in 1996, to meet special initiatives, such as following up on the Beijing conference and mainstreaming of gender equality process in general. The efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in all forms of development cooperation have been given priority. The contributions to education and health in the aid budgets have increased. This is also significant for the strengthening of the position of women.

2.1 Comments by the NGO's

2.1.1 The Center for Gender Equality

Lack of gender equality standards in credit and export policies.

Norway has come quite far in mainstreaming gender equality considerations into international development cooperation. However, when it comes to programs for private sector development there is still a need for more concrete measures in this field. For instance, big resources are channeled towards Central and Eastern Europe through the regional and the Nordic development banks without any focus on – or monitoring of - gender aspects. Nobody therefore knows the respective effects of these transactions on women and men. There are reason to be concerned about the increase in sexual harassment and even prostitution, and the increase in pay gaps along gender lines, and other discriminatory practices which may follow in the path of privatization and foreign investments.

Since the Beijing conference there has been a move of resources and power in favor of the private sector of the economy all over the world. There is therefore an urgent need to work on the concretization and realization of the paragraph 58 b) in the Beijing Platform of action

One concrete measure could be the requirement that gender equality plans be an obligatory element in the portfolio for each credit transaction made by international development banks. A model for this idea might be found in the way some of these banks (EBRD is a good example) now include environmental considerations in the appraisal of each and every project.

PART THREE

B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

1 Introduction

The 90`s have brought about a number of educational reforms which have influenced the opportunities for women in education.

A big educational reform in 1994 gave 16-19 year-olds new rights. All courses in the higher education sector now lead to either a vocational training or a university-entrance exam. Studies evaluating the reform show that the traditionally gender-segregated choices of vocation have been reinforced during the implementation of the reform. According to the statistics, today there are no differences in the level of education among men and women under the age of forty. Nevertheless, statistics show that girls' and boys' choice of education and occupation show the same pattern as in the 70's. Boys still choose technical subjects and natural sciences and girls choose domestic science, aesthetic subjects and the social sciences. Boys are more occupationally oriented, whereas girls choose general subjects, also in higher education.

Another reform, in 1997, implemented a new education plan for the compulsory primary school and lower secondary school. The primary and lower secondary education is extended to ten years. The evaluation of the primary and lower secondary schools work for equality (1996) shows that there is a need for further measures for equality in the school. The situation is not satisfactory. The new education plan, competence training for teachers and the new teachers' training reform, includes measures to improve the situation.

2 Areas of focus for the period 1999-2001

2.1 Aims

Forwarding equal status within the schooling and further education system is a main education-related, political goal. Training and education should aim at enabling boys and girls, women and men to have equal rights, duties and opportunities within further education, family life, employment and in other areas of public life. Training should prepare them for higher education and their choice of occupation according to their skills and preferences, independent of traditional gender role-related expectations. In the National Budget 1998-99, equal status is also included as an important social, political aim, so that society and the business world can be supplied with a broader gender-related recruitment to various professions and operations.

The training should aim at

- * visualizing the fact that persons of either gender have the same right and duty to partake in the development of society, and to take responsibility for decisions made.
- * visualizing the causes of, the types of and the impact of gender discrimination.
- * stimulating and preparing girls and boys for their choice of further education, which in turn lays the foundation for an increased level of equal status regarding choice of profession.
- * ensuring that boys and girls always have the same opportunities to participate in new sectors of development.

2.2 Challenges

Working with gender equality now faces a number of challenges, especially:

- * demographic changes
- * new technology and new types of media
- * alterations in the professional market
- * changes in social structures and values
- * internationalization and globalization

2.3 Problem sectors and choice of direction

During the period 1999-2001, the following areas will receive priority:

- * Maths, the natural sciences, technology and equal status
- * Non-traditional educational and professional choices for girls and boys
- * Women in the academic sphere
- * Equal status in the new teachers' training reform
- * Equal status in the authority reform
- * Equal status in the primary school and in secondary education
- * Equal status within the church
- * Equal status as part of the attitude-related work against violence

2.3.1 ITC and girls/women

Information technology is an area in which the Ministry is specially focusing attention, including the girls' use of ITC. Statistical consumer surveys (from 1995) show that girls in primary and secondary schools make less use of PCs than the boys do, and that more boys than girls have a PC at home. At universities and colleges one finds a similar pattern (The National Bureau of Statistics - 1995). Whereas approx. 70% of the male students had private access to a PC, the coordinating figure for the female students was approx. 55%. The recruitment to what in Norway are lengthy computer studies is in tune with the trend in general - these studies are very popular among the boys, but the girls are virtually absent. At the same time, the number of female students at the universities has greatly increased.

Among the teachers in primary and secondary school we see this gender-related difference: far more men than women teach computer science as a subject. (The correlation is 5:1 in primary school and approx. 3:1 in both lower secondary school and in higher secondary school.)

The purpose concerning equal status is to find pedagogical approaches at all educational levels, which in turn can stimulate the girls' interest in information technology and increase the opportunities of participation in this important area. Research and development measures are implemented in order to further this and will be followed up in the years to come.

2.3.2 Non-traditional educational and professional choices for girls and boys

The decline in the number of girls in the traditionally male dominated subjects, in addition to the problem of recruiting boys to the domestic and health-related subjects, gives rise for concern. Therefore, the Ministry has taken the initiative of the comprehensive three-year research and development project *"Informed Educational Choice"*, in which several county administrations and secondary schools in the country are participating. The project's aim is to contribute to motivating boys and girls to make informed and conscious vocational and

educational choices widely independent of traditional gender roles, and to contribute to the creation of a labour market that is less characterised by the traditional gender division.

2.3.3 Women in the academic sphere / research

One of the challenges within research is to increase the number of female researchers at the doctorate level. 34% of all doctorates passing their exam in 1998 were women. This shows an increase from 25% in 1993. The female quota for research fellows has also risen. The Ministry has introduced various measures in order to increase the female quota of those completing their doctorates. Universities are rewarded with NOK 20 000 for male graduates and NOK 30 000 for female graduates after they have passed exam (1998-99).

Within the category of higher scientific positions, women are still underrepresented. Postdoctoral scholarships are used to help qualify women for leading positions in the university system in general, and specifically in fields where they are underrepresented.

3 Comments by the NGO's

3.1 The Research Council of Norway

3.1.1 Introduction

In terms of the work on equality in research done under the auspices of the Research Council of Norway, a special challenge lies in ensuring transparency as well as consciousness raising with regard to definitions, grounds and delimitations related to reports on and evaluations of equal status, the women's and gender perspectives, and women's and gender research.

3.1.2 Foundation and structure

Through four major decisions adopted by the Executive Board, the Research Council has laid the foundation for the further development of its national responsibility for women's and gender research and for efforts to promote equality in research. In this context, the decision embodied in the Action Plan for Equality in the R&D Sector is of paramount importance. The decision to integrate women's and gender perspectives into the various divisions' ongoing activities is relevant, as are two decisions involving the reorganisation of the work related to women's and gender research.

The Research Council's divisions are responsible for ensuring equality in the implementation of their strategic research policies. The responsibility for providing advice and co-ordination has been assigned to the Section for Feminist Research Policy. It is the responsibility of an adviser who works 40 per cent of a full-time position.

The Administrative Working Group for the Co-ordination of Women's and Gender Research (the ASK Group) is important for the advancement of equality. The Working Group comprises representatives of the divisions of the Research Council, while the Section for Feminist Research Policy serves as secretariat for the group.

As a result of the above-mentioned re-organisation, KILDEN, the information and documentation centre for women's and gender research, was formally opened on 1 March as a peripheral institution within the Research Council. KILDEN will share premises with the Gender Equality Ombud and the Centre for Gender Equality. One task shared with the latter group is the further development of electronic directories published by the Center for Women's Research, describing the qualifications of women researchers and of women's and gender researchers.

Through the Action Plan for Equality in the R&D sector (1999-2002), the Research Council intends to help raise the priority assigned to equality work and to further sensitise the players in the sector, as well as to focus, systematise and facilitate control of the efforts of those involved. The plan allows for variations in the way it is put into practice, and few specific objectives have been laid down. This is partly attributable to the Research Council's advisory role and partly to differences in the knowledge base.

For all players in the R&D sector, the Action Plan recommends:

- *Improving the knowledge base underpinning equality policy;*
- *Ensuring more targeted efforts to promote equality in research and the integration of equality efforts into regular activities.*

The following general measures have been recommended to the various players:

- *Lay down equality policy guidelines for the R&D sector and ensure that they are followed up (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs);*
- *Evaluate equality measures and implement studies on women's participation and their working situation in the R&D sector (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, the Research Council and the university, college and research institute sector);*
- *Ensure that account is taken of equality policy objectives and measures at management level and in governing documents; (The Research Council, and the university, college and research institute sector);*
- *Ensure/establish separate equality policy bodies and positions, and build networks (university and college sector, in Norway and the other Nordic countries).*

As a link in the follow-up of the Action Plan, a template for making annual reports will be drawn up in 1999. Equality is already listed as a separate item in the Research Council's annual report, but it primarily refers to the gender composition of boards, committees, etc, and the breakdown of grants and fellowships by gender. Some of the divisions have reported having equality-related research programmes and projects, as well as other equality-related measures and activities.

3.2 The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO)

In accordance with LO's Programme of Action and annual Action Plans, LO has been focusing on Education and training for women:

1) Throughout the last decade, LO has been making efforts to secure legal rights to further and continuing education (EVU) for all employees. This is particularly important for the many women workers who are in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs with low wages and few opportunities for career development. The social partners and the State agree that a further and continuous education reform will be implemented. However, some work remains to be done before full agreement has been reached on all aspects of this reform, including the financing of study leave. Demands relating to this matter will be presented at the interim negotiations in 1999.

2) LO announced a grant for women members wishing to attend a course on Gender and Politics at Lillehammer College. Unfortunately there were not enough applicants to be able to arrange this course in 1998-99 and consequently no grants were awarded.

In this year's collective bargaining the social partners and the State agreed to introduce a further and continuing training reform which gives adults, born after 1978 and who lack higher training, a new opportunity in this respect.

3.3 The Center for Gender Equality

Norwegian gender research undertaken from a feminist perspective has achieved recognition on an international level both when it comes to the organization and the scientific work itself. Research on men from a gender perspective is almost completely absent in Norway today. Men's privilege has always been an escape from a gender analysis of themselves. Women's studies have been labeled "gender", while men have been the social norm. Norway needs a directed effort towards more research on men, to better understand men in the gender context and what kind of role men can play in the struggle for gender equality.

3.4 The Mira Center

The MiRA Center would like to draw the attention of the authorities towards specific gender discrimination of ethnic minority women in relation to education and employment. We are aware of the fact that the traditional gender equality discourses define gender discrimination mainly on the basis of sexuality, undermining the race and class issues. However, in the everyday life of several thousand women these factors play a central role. The ethnic minority women face difficulties related to work permits, type of jobs available, and the lack of recognition of previous academic qualifications.

We feel that the policies that aim to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women must go beyond securing equal entitlements, and must address the problems of segregation in the employment, housing and education sectors. It has to be considered that the poor living conditions of ethnic minority women in Norway are usually a result of both gender discrimination and structural disadvantages. The policies ought to combine the fight against structural causes with specific

group protection against discrimination and elements of affirmative action that allow women to develop their own potential for overcoming the effects of gender discrimination and social exclusion.

C. WOMEN AND HEALTH

1 Introduction

The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has, in the years since 1995, undertaken various projects relevant to the questions raised in the Beijing Platform for Action. Prevention and rehabilitation from stress-related diseases have been areas of close attention during the 90s through plans of actions and through pilot projects, but a specific female perspective has not been targeted. Nevertheless, women have been target groups within these projects. Some of the initiatives have been taken in fields where women form the majority within particularly vulnerable groups, or where the conditions of women's health has been of explicit concern, such as smoking during pregnancy. In addition, improved measures to prevent accidental pregnancies have been taken.

2 The Public Committee to review the existing knowledge on women's health

The need to strengthen remedial action in relation to women's health has been recognised. To put the review of existing knowledge on women's health, diseases and living conditions on a better foundation in order to make improvements, the Government appointed a Public Committee in 1997 to review the existing knowledge on women's health in Norway. The Committee suggests to the Government how efforts in different sectors can be prioritised and co-ordinated to improve women's health and consider whether and how the gender specific knowledge can be taken care of. The Committee's mandate has among its terms of reference the Beijing Platform for Action.

HIV/AIDS is referred to as an item which has to be given special attention due to the fact that the development and consequences of this disease illustrate the whole specter of problems linked to power/powerlessness, gender and health. It concludes that it is necessary to use a gender/age sensitive approach in relation to this question.

The report was presented on 28 January this year. It reveals the particular importance of strengthening the gender perspective in statistics and in factual knowledge that is used as a basis for decisions and priorities in health matters. The report refers to the lack of information in several areas concerning women's health, illness and living conditions. The report also discusses of central concepts and definitions that form the foundation for the analytical work of the Committee. On the one hand, the Committee has chosen a practical approach, based on the diseases and ailments that are most relevant to women's health. On the other hand, the Committee has given importance to showing how the medical profession, its institutions and traditions sometimes base descriptions of sickness and health on particular female images – or absence of female images – and in this way affect women's health.

The proposed actions are mainly linked to decision-making processes, development of knowledge and information, practises in health services, violence, social security arrangements as well as occupational life. Finally gender equality is proposed as a measure to improve women's health.

All the proposed activities in the report should take care of the intentions of the Beijing Platform for action. The report is to be subject to broad official hearings which lay the basis for the follow up measures proposed in the report and the further work of integrating the

gender perspective within the areas of responsibilities of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

3 The Plan of Action to prevent unexpected pregnancies and abortion.

The terms of reference for «The Plan of Action to prevent unexpected pregnancies and abortion 1999 – 2003» build on the results from recent research, the increase in abortions, and empirical findings from the preventive projects during the 1990s. Adolescence and adults being exposed to special risks for unexpected pregnancies and abortion are the main target groups for the work. The main areas of effort will be:

- To motivate children and adolescents to gain awareness of on their own bodies and sexuality.
- To educate young people about cohabitation and sexuality, with a view to preparing them for life choices in this matter.
- To improve access to prevention of conception as well as information on prevention.
- To secure the information with regard to abortion and to offer guidance to women or couples who wish to follow this course of action.
- To support research and evaluation concerning unexpected pregnancies and abortion.

Prevention of unexpected pregnancies is an integrated part of primary health care.

4 Working conditions in female dominated occupations

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development has since 1995 allocated 16 mill NOK to a research program the main focus of which is on working and health conditions in female dominated occupations. One of the most important research areas has been muscular- skeletal-diseases. The Ministry will continue to support this program in the years to come. The research projects in this program have provided very useful information about women's work related health.

Obstacles:

We face a major challenge in trying to put the knowledge into practical use.

The Norwegian Labour Inspection runs several campaigns each year based on risk assessment analysis. Some of these campaigns have targeted working conditions in female dominated occupations (for example hairdressers and health and social care). These campaigns provide useful information for inspection priorities.

We are also in the process of improving our statistics on gender and work related accidents and diseases.

5 Comments by the NGO's

5.1 The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO)

In accordance with LO's Programme of Action and annual Action Plans, LO has been focusing on Women and health:

1) LO is taking part in the Ministry of Social Affairs' working environment project on women and absence due to illness. The project has not yet been completed.

2) A working group comprising representatives of LO and the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO) has been established to consider «The costs of absence in connection with pregnancy». The project has not yet been completed.

3) LO focuses continuously on women and stress injuries. This is a difficult political process and this matter has not yet been settled. In general, we can say that it is useful to participate in joint projects with the authorities and between the social partners in order to reach a common understanding of problem areas that should be focused upon and solved.

5.2 The Center for Gender Equality

In 1999 a public committee has evaluated and written a report on women's health in Norway. Their conclusion is that Norwegian women, compared to other countries' demographic figures for women, have good health and a favorable health service. The committee does however point out a few important areas that ought still to be considered insufficient: the use of resources and research on both women's diseases and insurance and health policies.

D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1 The Plan of Action to protect women from violence.

In June 1998 the Norwegian Government appointed an inter-departmental Committee to develop a Plan of Action to prevent violence against women. The Plan will be presented to the Government in 1999. The Committee consists of State Secretaries from several Ministries. The terms of reference are as follows:

“The target group for the work will be women who have been victims of violence and intrusion. The plan will in particular concentrate on preventing intrusion in private homes and in situations where victim and offender have a personal relationship (i.e. in health institutions, churches, workplaces, and in prostitution). Emphasis will be placed on women from all walks of life and in all situations, such as women in health institutions, women as asylum seekers, women with different ethnic backgrounds, women from different age groups etc.”

2 Comments by the NGO's

2.1 The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO)

In accordance with LO's Programme of Action and annual Action Plans, LO has been focusing on Abuse of women in the following areas:

1) The Action Plan Against Sexual Harassment has been revised. A manual on sexual harassment has been prepared for use in training union representatives to deal with these matters. There is a general impression that cases of this type represent a serious problem in working life, and they are regarded as difficult to address and solve. LO hopes that these measures will lead to more focus on this problem so that it will be easier for individual women to have their cases heard.

2) An initiative has been taken to build networks for immigrant women members of LO so that members who wish to do so have the opportunity of establishing contacts in order to identify relevant issues and receive help to solve problems that they regard as being specific to them. LO can only establish contacts with working women. Responsibility for follow-up rests with the county organisations, and networks are being planned in five counties.

2.2 The Center for Gender Equality

2.2.1 Introduction

The issue of violence against women is closely connected to the equal rights and equal value of men and women. Violence against women is an extreme expression of the oppression of women in society. The fact that many women are exposed to gendered violence and sexual assault, limits to a very great extent their possibilities for active participation in society on grounds equal with men.

Several positive measures have been taken by the government. However, we believe that much more remains to be done. Much remains to be done in the area of prevention as well as in the area of providing services and support to those who have been exposed to violence and sexual assault. There ought to be a general strengthening of gender equality work. Greater resources ought to be invested in this work.

It is difficult to give any exact figures as to the extent of gendered violence, or the numbers of women being exposed to violence. Shelters in Norway report that about 2.500 women and 1.800 children seek refuge at shelters for battered women in the country each year. Experts maintain that ca. 100.000 men in the country which have a total population of ca. 4 million people, use violence against their partners. We feel that a documentation of violence against women in the country is sorely needed. This would give better insight into the forms, incidence and extent of the violence women are exposed to.

We wish to point out here that special consideration needs to be paid both to the short term and long-term mental and physical health consequences to those women who have been battered, raped and/or sexually assaulted.

2.2.2 Shelters for battered women

It is important to point out here that shelters for battered women, as well as the support centres for survivors of incest are run by non governmental organizations and are financially supported by the government. The government recognizes the importance of the work done by women's organizations in exposing and combating violence against women.

NGOs and women's organizations working in the area of equal rights ought to be strengthened and their financing secured and guaranteed by the central government. The financial support to shelters for battered women ought to be ensured. As of today, the central government does provide 50% of the shelters' budget. However, the security of the shelters for battered women is dependent on the municipalities or local authorities which approve the shelters' budget. Recently, some municipalities have been cutting down on their budgets for shelters, which means that the central government also cuts down on its share of the financing. This creates an unstable and insecure situation for the shelters.

2.2.3 Alarm system for women threatened by violence

The initiative for this project was taken by the Gender Equality Council.¹

2.2.4 A committee on violence against women

We propose that a committee on violence against women be established that would be responsible for getting an overall insight into the problem and for proposing a co-ordinated approach to combating this kind of violence. As violence against women has consequences on several aspects of women's lives, the committee could find ways in which the different instances could cooperate in providing their services. Exposing all the aspects of the problem is an important part of the process of combating this particular form of violence. In the judicial area, a Violence Against Women Act, as the one initiated by the government of Sweden could be proposed that would regulate all aspects of these forms of violence. Greater effort and attention needs to be paid to the training, and the sensitizing of police in dealing with violence against women and in assisting and supporting those who have been exposed to gendered violence. Greater effort needs to be placed also on the training and sensitizing of health care personnel. Both the police and the health care system ought to find methods that would encourage and support more women to lodge complaints against their abusers. For example, the police and health care personnel could assist the woman in gathering the evidence she needs in court. There ought to be a co-ordinated approach to providing support to those who are getting out of abusive relationships. This is necessary, if they are to have a realistic chance for a fresh start free from violence

2.3 The Mira Center

A number of women today are forced to stay in violent relations due to the lack of legal rights. The immigrant women who join their husbands under the provision of family reunion, do not automatically have an independent residence permit until three years after their arrival in Norway. This means that women who are subject to grave violence and abuse often either must stay with their abusive husbands or face deportation from Norway.

The MiRA Center, through its crises and counseling services to the victims of violence, has for the past twenty years gathered valuable data on the forms of violence ethnic minority women are exposed to. It is our experience that the police and the immigration authorities most often believe the man's testimony, rather than the woman's. A woman is seldom given the opportunity of a trial separation period, which is a matter of course in all other divorce cases. If the woman in this separation period completed the three-year period, the immigration authorities would find it difficult to deport her. This situation and a general lack of legal protection contribute in perpetuating violence against ethnic minority women and empower men to keep them in subordinate positions.

In order to prevent violence against ethnic minority women one has to empower the women themselves. One measure could be to strengthen the self-organisation of minority women, and provide them with the necessary financial support. The women themselves must become the predominant source of finding solutions for the prevention of violence.

¹ In co-operation with the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Police has developed an alarm system for women who are threatened by violence. The violence alarm is offered to women who have been seriously threatened or have proved to be in a vulnerable position.

E. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

The main objective of recruiting and keeping women in the Armed Forces :

- 7 % female officers and enlisted personnel within the year 2005.
- 13 % women, civilian and military, in leading positions within the year 2001.
- 40 % civilian women in certain groups of employees.

Plans and activities:

- The strategic plan of gender equality, approved by the Norwegian Ministry of Defense in 1993 is still valid. The four main objectives in this plan include competence enhancement, marketing, family policy and real career opportunities at various stages.
- The action plan for recruiting women, launched by the Norwegian Ministry of Defense in 1995 is also still valid.
- The Armed Forces completed a new pattern for personnel policy and fundamental values (FV) in June 1998. FV appreciates among other values, human values, gender values and gender equality.
- A consequence of the FV is policies within areas of gender equality, recruiting, leadership and career. In 1999 an action plan will be launched in order to reach the main objectives.

High profile in the work for gender equality in 1999:

- Norway chairs the Committee on Women in the NATO Forces in 1998-1999, and hosted the annual meeting of the committee in the summer of 1999.
- The Norwegian Chief of Defense has mandated a group to create an exhibition on the history of women in the military at the Norwegian Defense Museum. The exhibition is scheduled to open for the public in the year 2000.
- Women officers are participating in civilian mentoring programs with results planned for 1999. A military mentoring program will be established in order to increase the number of female officers in higher positions. A self mentoring program for cadets graduating from the military academy will be developed.
- The armed forces are participating in the project “ Women leads the Way 1999”, an event which took place in Norway in August 1999. The objectives are to profile the Armed Forces in general and the possibilities of women in particular in co-operation with civilian institutions. This event will also focus on the female civilian working in the armed forces.
- The Armed Forces continues to support the network of female officers.
- In 1999 an action plan will be developed for the purpose of increasing the recruiting of female civilians in general and in leading positions in particular.

Financial and institutional measures

The Norwegian Ministry of Defense has earmarked 2.4 mill NOK in the budget for activities regarding gender equality in the Armed Forces. This earmarking will continue.

Innovative policies

Increasing women's participation in power and decision- making positions is a part of the new personnel policy in the Armed Forces. This is also an aim for the civilian organizations.

Future challenges

The average age of the employees in the Armed Forces will rise in the years to come. At the same time, the birth rate will result in a decrease of young employees. The competition in recruiting young people will therefore be harder. The challenge will be to get more women into work outside their homes and be able to recruit them into the organisation.

A special challenge for the Armed Forces will be to educate women officers to the highest ranks to show that women also have capabilities and rights to reach the top and thereby show these possibilities to the other female officers.

The main challenge in recruiting female civilians will be to show them that they are wanted as employees when new positions are free.

F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

1 Introduction

The government, partly in cooperation with labour organizations, has so far contributed a great deal to improve the knowledge of equal pay, for instance the reports of The Technical Reporting Committee of Wage Settlements.

The Ministry of Labour and Government Administration will produce a report to show the research-results in the field «women in the labour market by year 2000». This report will be based upon research in different areas, such as participation in the labour force, causes of wage-differences and working time.

2 The agricultural sector

Since the Beijing Conference in 1995 developments in achieving gender equality within the agricultural sector have mainly taken place within the areas of employment and economic equality. Achievements have not been gained by means of a national action plan. Instead, certain measures have been taken within the field of conventional agriculture, as well as within the field of rural development.

2.1 New measures taken within conventional agriculture

The effort to promote a more comprehensive inclusion of women in conventional agricultural activities has been increased. There is a great need for providing new impacts and widening the repertoire of innovative ideas and solutions in conventional farming. New policy strategies aim to enable women to continue and increase their contribution in this field.

The Allodial Act (Odelsloven) gives relatives preference with respect to farm property and priority to the eldest child (until 1974 the eldest boy) in taking over the farm. But research shows that parents much more frequently encourage boys than girls to exercise their allodial rights and take over the farm. It is a challenge for agricultural policies to motivate girls to make conscious choices and utilize their allodial rights.

2.2 The “Committee on Equality Issues and Recruitment to Agriculture”

In the summer of 1997 the “Committee on Equality Issues and Recruitment to Agriculture” was nominated to analyse the situation within the agricultural sector. The Ministry of Agriculture has been in charge of the work of the committee, which has revealed the following circumstances:

- The migration rate from rural areas is alarming
- there is a long way to go to have an acceptable number of girls take over farms
- in the period 1983–1992, 17 per cent of all farms on the market were taken over by women
- 1 out of 10 farmers is a woman,
- ¼ of all labour input is carried out by women,
- women receive 9 per cent of all state support available to the farming sector,
- women are 11 years older than men when they take over a farm,
- few women are represented in agricultural and forestry organisations,
- the recruitment to farming seems to be decreasing.

To sum up the report's message very briefly, the position of agriculture in economic life in Norway in the future will depend upon:

- the successful recruitment of young farmers
- the successful recruitment of female farmers
- the successful building of know-how and skills in farmers of both genders

The Equality and Recruitment Committee has proposed very precise objectives to achieve equal opportunities:

- Women and men are to have real equal opportunities in making a living within conventional farming and forestry, as well as within new business lines developed in or linked to farming and forestry.
- Income and ownership of capital is to be evenly distributed between men and women.

To assess the results, the Committee has proposed the following:

By the beginning of the year 2005...

- 30 % of all agricultural properties must be transferred to women
- 35% of all applicants for direct payments (i.e. support given on the basis of land area, number of animals held and direct support to milk production) must be women
- 35% of all members and representatives of councils and organisations must be women
- 30 per cent of all man years within agriculture must be carried out by women

As a result of the work of the Equality and Recruitment Committee allocations from the take-over grant has been increased. An extra direct payment per year for farmers below the age of 35 has been introduced.

Before the end of the year 1999, the Ministry of Agriculture will forward a White Paper on agricultural and rural development policies.

2.3 Rural Development Measures

In 1993, the Government had the Rural Development Support Scheme (the RDSS) established. The RDSS is an incentive to farm family members to increase their incomes by adding alternative activities to the traditional ones. The RDSS offers grants and loans for diversification purposes as well as for investments within conventional farming. Funding is available for both female and male applicants, but women are given priority. Regulations drawn up for funding ascertain that initiatives promoting jobs for women must be emphasised. Also, in certain cases, support intensity is higher for female applicants than for males. Evaluations and reports show that about 50 per cent of the total number of grants given to entrepreneurs were received by women. Support sums received by women were small, so were the risks they ran. Women tend to start their business as on a small scale and build it up gradually. Surveys also show that female entrepreneurs lead their businesses into bankruptcies to a lesser extent than men do. Reports show that about 25% of total RDSS funding is awarded to women. It is an objective within rural development policy to increase the share of total support granted to women.

3 Trade and Industry

According to the Ministry of Trade and Industry 10 mill. NOK has been allocated on the national budget for 1998/99 for a project which is to be introduced at the Norwegian

Industrial and Regional Development Fund (SND) within a short time. The project focuses on the advancement of women in private sector positions, and has two objectives: The first is to increase the number of women in top positions within the private sector, and the second is to encourage female entrepreneurship.

The target group of this program is mainly highly qualified women, or women within the educational system who are expected to enter into higher positions in the private sector some time in the future. Since training and education are instrumental in achieving this goal, several of the measures under consideration will focus upon the educational system.

Some of the measures under consideration in order to achieve this first goal, which is to increase female leadership, are the following:

- Various efforts to qualify and motivate women to leadership, for instance adjustments within the curriculum at certain Universities and (technical) colleges, in order to make these fields more attractive to women
- Initiatives in co-operation with organisations within the private sector that can contribute to an increase in female leadership, for instance by making efforts to assist companies to find qualified candidates for managerial- as well as board-positions (for instance by establishing databases)
- Up-grading courses for female professionals, with focus on issues of special interest to women in managerial positions
- Measures focused on improving recruiting/hiring procedures in the companies
- Research on the coherence of organisational structures and the possibilities of combining work with family responsibilities

The other part of the project aims to improve the framework conditions for female entrepreneurs. According to our experience, women tend to have greater difficulties in exposing themselves to financial risk than men do. Female entrepreneurs have also experienced that they do not qualify for funding under the existing schemes at the financial institutions. This can be due to the lack of an acceptable collateral (many women are not willing to mortgage their houses in order to establish their own company), or it can be due to the nature/segment of the company being established. Some women have also encountered the problem of applying for amounts that are below the bank's minimal level of interest. Statistics show however, that companies owned by women tend to be more credit-worthy than those owned by men, but still women seem to meet discriminatory attitudes when seeking financial funding at the financial institutions. Measures therefore have to be taken with regards both to men and women in order to help overcome some of the barriers to female entrepreneurship.

We are also looking at the educational sector within this field, and considering how to attract more women to the university and college courses in entrepreneurship. This could, in turn, contribute to increasing women's level of professionalism in this field, and thereby assist in overcoming both social and cultural barriers to women entrepreneurs.

4 Comments by the NGO's

4.1 The Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO)

4.1.1 Women in Business and Industry

In 1995 NHO started a program called "Women in Business and Industry".

The main goal of the program is to increase the number of women in high level executive positions. NHO has a good relationship with the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), in tasks concerning equal rights and equality issues, briefly presented later in this document.

The challenge of The Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry hence lies in putting to use both women and men as resources in a constructive collaboration whose goal is the formation of values. We mentioned that diversity is an absolute advantage for Norwegian enterprises, if they are to compete in today's market situation.

In order to ensure that gender equality be given top priority, a solid base at the top of management is needed. Statistics tells us that the numbers of women in leading positions are increasing in NHO member enterprises. In 1995 3.3 % of the top leaders in NHO enterprises were women and in 1997 the figure has risen to 5.2 %. The group of women in recruit positions increased from 17.7 % in 1995 to 19.9 % in 1997.

We can see that development has occurred more rapidly in the last few years, something that can be attributed to a more conscious commitment to projects in companies who put more of an effort into motivating and encouraging women towards higher positions. Women compose an increasing number of those who are more highly educated. The competition in the market is increasingly becoming more demanding. One of the advantages available to Norwegian enterprises is the access to competence; so far this has been little developed.

NHO is a driving force in this process and through Women in Business and Industry it has undertaken the task of increasing the number of women in leadership positions. The program is based on different projects, which are briefly presented here.

4.1.2 Equal pay agreement

A common project has been established to secure the implementation of a ten-point program, which both employers' and employees' organisations have supported. Here the parties agree that equal status is a leadership responsibility, which must be placed at the top of the enterprise organisation. Another point is that gender equality involves much more than the question of wages, it is also involves attitudes and norms.

4.1.3 Women in enterprises

Through «Women in enterprises» NHO offers counseling and opportunities and exchange of experience between enterprises that are organised into groups. NHO's role is to offer competence where it is sought: in the anchor process, in a surveying-phase or by resolution and implementation of an action plan, as well as providing lectures on current issues such as work environment/organisational culture and working methods and systems.

4.1.4 A mentor-program

The program is based on the mentor/adept concept where top level executives (mentor) transfer ideas and expertise to employees (adept) who have leadership potential. The mentor-ship program is designed to help a company identify and develop leadership among its own employees. It creates an environment for producing high level executives from within the company. In this way the company benefits from the diverse talents and resources of its employees, women as well as men.

There are three obligatory plenary meetings – first, at the outset, then in the middle and finally at the end of the mentor-ship program. In addition, a five-theme day per year is arranged where couples from all on-going mentorship programs are invited. Mentor and adept ideally meet two or three hours per month over a period of 12-14 months. Both adept and mentor must be committed to the program and its goals, and make active participation a top priority.

4.1.5 Women to the top

The project has sub-projects running all over the country. They are based on collaboration between enterprises and components of the athletics organisations, with the focus on detection of female talents. Yearly «Women to the top» hands out a development scholarship.

4.2 The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO)

1) Equal pay is an important goal for the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). Although the participation rate of women is among the highest in the world (75% of the 16-66 age group), the Norwegian labour market is still highly gender segregated. Women are in lower-paid jobs to a much higher degree than men, and thus there is a strong correspondence between striving to increase lower wages and striving for equal pay for men and women. LO has placed priority upon the lowest paid in the collective bargaining in recent years, and this has benefitted women as well. Extra increments were directed towards sectors where many women were employed. This was done to strengthen further the equal pay profile. Besides collective negotiations LO has projects both alone and together with the employers' organisations to promote gender equality.

In Norway the Technical Reporting Committee on the Settlement evaluates the economic situation and prospects twice a year. The committee is headed by the public statistical bureau; as well ministries and employer- and employee organisations are represented. Progress towards equal pay has been a separate issue in the reports for some years now. This is an example of mainstreaming in Norway.

The committee has identified the form for the awarding of central increments, and it has aimed this toward the branches with a high density of women employees. These moves constitutes important features for promoting pay equity in pay settlements. Extra amounts to the low-paid and nominal (instead of percentage) increments are the current forms used in the process of seeking equal pay.

For LO, the wage settlements in the latest bargaining period (1998-1999) have included these elements. Still the statistical reports on full-time employees vary. In retailing, manufacturing and transportation branches some progress has been. Women get paid from 84 to 95 percent of what men get on average, and they are catching up. However, in banking, the municipal and governmental sector there is a backlash.

Compared to men, women in 1996 earned 80,6% of the sum earned by men per hour. Less overtime worked by women, and more part-time work explain some of the difference.

2) LO took part in the Ministry's study on gender-neutral work evaluation and has supported the implementation of trial schemes in its response to the consultation paper. LO has been awaiting an Governmental bill setting out principles for a national job evaluation system.

3) The Equal Status Agreement was revised in connection with the negotiations between LO and NHO on the Basic Agreement in 1997. Strong principles were also laid down in the part-time Agreement. In connection with the settlement on the Basic Agreement in 1998, it was agreed that LO and NHO should renegotiate the ten-point-programme on equal rights in working life. The parties agreed on a new programme which is more concrete as to the equal rights work at the enterprise level. A proposal for the renewal of the LO/NHO Ten Point Programme will be submitted at this year's interim negotiations. Since we are working in a joint committee, there are good chances of achieving positive results on the basis of a common understanding.

4) LO and NHO are considering the possibility of reforms to introduce more flexible working hours. One of LO's objectives is to enable individual employees to combine work and family life more easily. The process is well under way. The women's perspective is a central feature of the discussions.

5) LO took the initiative for amendments to the Working Environment Act in order to reduce the use of part-time and temporary employment, etc. so that those wishing to work full-time should be able to do so. The Act was amended in accordance with LO's proposals.

6) LO has proposed extending parental leave entitlements in connection with childbirth. In order to avoid discriminatory effects against women and persuade fathers to take more responsibility for the care of their children, LO has proposed that a greater proportion of parental leave in connection with childbirth be reserved for the father, and that fathers have individual rights to accumulate paternity pay. LO and the other social partners who submitted responses to consultation papers warned the Government against introducing cash support for parents who do not use publicly-funded day care centres, among other things because they fear that this will have negative effects on women's equal access to working life and will also affect the rate of provision and cost of places in day-care centres. No extensions of leave entitlements or individual rights for fathers to accumulate paternity pay have yet been introduced. The cash support reform was introduced. The rate of provision of places in day-care centres and the funds provided for supervised leisure-time activities in schools have been reduced.

7) LO is making active efforts to reduce the job qualifications required for membership of various collective pension schemes, to improve pension schemes for part-time employees, and to maintain existing schemes, such as the agreement-based pension (AFP). The national unions are also making continuous efforts in this area. A great deal of work must be done to retain the existing schemes. LO has further developed the agreement-based pension arrangement which has proven as well to have a positive effect on women. LO is also working actively for the revocation of the Government's decision that only workers earning more than NOK 57.000 a year shall be entitled to sickness benefits.

8) In cooperation with the Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations (AF), LO submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs that a project be established with a view to encouraging pupils in upper secondary schools to choose studies that may reduce the differences between the genders in their choice of careers. The project has been established, headed by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, with various sub-projects in four counties. This project began in 1997 and continues for four years. It is too early to report on the results of the project.

4.3 The Center for Gender Equality

The new cash benefit scheme² will - in the opinion of the Center for gender equality - reinforce the gender segregated labor market and will in the long term prevent equality between men and women. Men often have higher salaries than women, they have no tradition when it comes to part time work, they feel more pressured to have a career and they have a strong feeling of obligation to provide for their family. Most fathers will therefore work even more if the mother quits her part time job to stay at home receiving cash benefits from the government. This will lead to a situation where the woman is the «family expert» and the man is the «economic expert». The distribution of wealth is already to a large extent unequal between men and women. Women constitute the largest proportion of all old-age pensioners with only national basic pension (Women: 58 per cent, men: 27 per cent). Women in general receive far less pension money than men. Among women with personal income, 43 per cent earn less than 100.000 NOK, and only 19 per cent earn more than 200.000 NOK.

² The cash benefit scheme was introduced in August 1998. The aim of the cash benefit scheme is to give families a real choice in what form of child care they prefer for their smallest children. The cash benefit scheme was object to a long political and public discussion before it was introduced and it is still being discussed. The cash benefit scheme is being evaluated, but it is too soon to say anything definite about how it is being used or about its consequences in general. However, we know already that more families than expected so far make use of the cash benefit scheme either fully or partially, and that many families combine part time day care with receiving a percentage of the cash benefit.

G. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

1 Introduction

Various programs for recruiting more women to positions of leadership have been initiated, in the public as well as in the private sector. A project called "Women, Quality and Competence" has been initiated to contribute to an increase in the number of women in executive positions in the public administration. The Government's goal is to increase the number of women in leading positions in the public sector to 30 % within the year 2001.

2 Women, Quality and Competence in the Government Sector in Norway 1997-2001

This is a four-year project. The aim is to increase the number of women in top- and middle-management jobs in the government sector from 22% in 1997 to 30% within the end of 2001.

A survey shows that the government aim to have gender balanced top-and middle-management teams is not reached in the government sector. The number of women in top management positions in the individual contract -based pay system has been between 10 and 12 % in the nineties, and the number of women in middle management jobs within the ministries is about 33%.

To increase this number the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration has worked with the followings measures:

- Each ministry, and its agencies, have committed themselves to increase the number of women in top and middle management positions within four years, and report annually on the results. The Ministry of Labour and Government Administration received the first results in January 1999, and the number of women in top and middle management positions in the Government sector has increased from 22% in 1997 to 26% in 1999.
- The Ministry of Labour and Government Administration decided in 1998 to give the Centre for Gender Equality the task of building a central database consisting of names of competent women, where one can search for leadership candidates and specialists. The database was opened in June 1999.
- There is, for the first time, developed a Mentoring Program for women in middle management jobs aspiring for higher positions in the governmental sector in 99. This training program started in April 99, and is operated by the Directorate of Public Management in Norway.
- The ministry has in 1998 offered net-work meetings for 7 ministries and 7 agencies in order to develop local pilot programmes to increase the recruitment of women into middle and top-management jobs. Networking is continuing in 1999.
- The ministry has also initiated research on recruitment, mobility and development of equal pay in the government sector, and this will continue in 1999.

3 The Sami Assembly

During the election period of 1997-2001 the Sami Assembly has 10 female representatives of the total of 39 representatives. This is a decrease compared with the previous election period.

The Sami Assembly is now preparing a Plan of Action for Gender Equality. One of the aims of the plan is to increase the number of female representatives in the Sami Assembly.

In the Contact Committee of Immigrants and Norwegian Authorities, the number of female immigrant representative is above the prescribed minimum of 40 per cent representation of both genders.

4 Comments by the NGO's

4.1 The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO)

1) The research report «Women in LO» is one element of the project «Women's Place and Participation in the Trade Union Movement». A survey was carried out in LO and associated national unions. The project also includes a trade union course for women. The proportion of women in most of LO's decision-making bodies has clearly improved since the mid-1980s. Five of the eight members of LO's management are women. The proportion of women in Congress and the General Council is approximately the same as the proportion of women members. The proportion of women in the elected decision-making bodies of the national unions is lower than the proportion of women members, but the differences are slight. With respect to local posts, almost as many women as men are elected, but women are under-represented in leading posts in regional and local branches. The report has been distributed through the national unions. A brief summary of the results has also been widely distributed.

2) A committee has been established at LO to consider and present proposals for how we can better integrate the gender equality aspect and the gender aspect into the activities of the trade union movement, including the training of union representatives, employment and personnel policy, and general processing of cases. The recommendation is due to be completed in the second half of 1999. The experience of LO in Sweden and others gives grounds for optimism.

3) A trial project has been established, starting in 1999, offering mentors for new women union representatives. The mentor scheme has not been implemented.

Institutional mechanisms for women's career paths and career development:

1) The research project «Gender Disparities in Occupational Life» was a cooperative project between LO and several ministries. It was proved that there are structural differences between men's and women's career development and career paths. The results have been distributed in a presentation brochure.

2) The research project «Restructuring and Internationalisation» is a follow-up to the above and is intended to provide new information about the situation of women in relation to restructuring and internationalisation. It studies four different enterprises. The project is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 1999, after which a guidance manual will be prepared for use in enterprises that are being restructured.

3) The guidance manual «Men and Women Must Have Equal Opportunities» was prepared in cooperation with the NHO. The guidance manual was well received and there is much to indicate that it is used actively.

4.2 The Center for Gender Equality

In connection with a two year program conducted by the Ministry of Labor and Government Administration, the center has been given the task of building a database for women experts. Every field of competence will be covered. The database will, in addition to other measures implemented by the ministries, contribute to increase the number of women in leading positions, not only in public service but also in private businesses. We also consider the database as an important tool for the recruitment of women to boards, councils and committees in the public service and the private sector. A last point about the use of the database is the media and organizations. In the database you will of course find women who can give statements to journalists and hold lectures and speeches for different NGOs. The database project has a trial period of three years and it will be developed and updated continuously.

Projects like this are clearly needed. One example from the ministries shows that we are facing a retrograde step. In 1995 we had four female Secretary Generals in the ministries, today only one out of 16 is a woman. For the rest of the Civil Service the numbers are even more disturbing. 14 out of 100 Director Generals are women, and in addition 7 ministries do not have female Secretary Generals nor Director Generals.

In the private sector we find that 78 percent of the businesses have zero women within the management level. In 8 out of 10 businesses, fewer than 5 percent of managers are women. Portion of women in top management has increased from 3.3 percent in 1995 to 5.2 percent in 1997, but we are still facing major difficulties in this area.

In addition, the Centre has sent a list of proposals to the Ministry of Trade and Industry. A list of measures to be taken promoting gender equality for businesses. One example is the certificate of gender equality. Companies can receive such a certificate if they fulfill certain criteria such as: equal pay for equal work, possibilities to combine family and career within the company, integrated goals for gender equality in the company's workplan (for example one goal could be an increase of women in management positions to the double of the existing situation) and so on. This certificate could then be used by the government (central, regional and local) for tender. The companies that do not have this certificate cannot for example, submit a tender for the products the government wants to purchase. This certificate could be compared to the standards that companies need to comply to like e.g. ISO 9000 and environmental standards already integrated into government tender. In addition such a certificate will either promote negative or positive PR for the companies involved.

The gender equality act should be extended to include boards and management for companies partly or wholly owned by the state. The 40 % rule should also apply in this field.³

³ The Gender Equality Act is currently undergoing an overall revision which will be presented to the Norwegian Parliament probably early next year. The present Act bears the marks of being drafted and adopted at a time when gender equality was less widely observed and more controversial than it is today. The proposal will include a new rule for representation of both sexes in different boards etc.

H. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

1 Introduction

The Centre for Gender Equality, together with the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the Gender Equality Ombudsman, constitutes the national machinery for ensuring gender equality. The Gender Equality Ombudsman is established for the promotion and enforcement of the Gender Equality Act.

2 The Gender Equality Ombudsman

The Gender Equality Act and the Ombudsman are important tools in reaching gender equality. The enforcement of the Act by the Ombudsman has shown that discrimination does happen in Norway. The Ombudsman gives visibility to discrimination. Visualizing issues is important. The fact that the Ombudsman has concrete cases documenting occurrences of discrimination, proves the need for continued work against gender discrimination. In this way the focus shifts away from the woman, making discrimination as an issue for society as a whole.

Obstacles

One obstacle to reaching gender equality is people's attitudes towards gender equality in general. It is a tendency that people believe that we already have achieved gender equality in Norway. Young people in particular seem to believe this. Attitudes, traditions and stereotypes are difficult to change and it is obvious that we need more than legislation and an Ombudsman to make changes happen.

The work for gender equality depends on adequate financial support in order to be efficient. From the Ombudsman's points of view, working within small budgets, and the constant lack of money are serious obstacles to reaching gender equality.

Goals/plans/new initiatives

The Gender Equality Ombudsman has suggested several amendments in the Gender Equality Act. One suggestion is to strengthen the Act and make it more efficient. For instance the Ombudsman needs better sanctions in the Act, which the Ombudsman is given power to enforce. As it now stands, the provision containing liability for damages is especially weak.

One specific goal should be to establish a better and more efficient local machinery for gender equality. The Norwegian Gender Equality Machinery is to a large extent based on a centralised structure. In order to reach a dynamic, active and efficient environment for working for gender equality it would be of great importance to strengthen the local machinery.

The Ombudsman is also experiencing an increased demand for information about the Act. But at the same time there is a great need for more information about the law than what the Ombudsman and her staff has the capacity to give. The small budget is, as already said, of course an obstacle. One of the needs, in the Ombudsman's point of view, is an extended budget in order to increase the traveling of the Ombudsman and her staff in order to be more visible.

3. Comments by the NGO's

3.1 The Mira Center

Gender equality in the legal system.

The Norwegian gender equality act that was enforced in 1979 is currently undergoing revision. There are plans for an overall revision of the act. It is The MiRA Center's experience that at the time the gender equality act was enforced, Norwegian society was still considered more or less a mono-cultural society. The specific legal situation of immigrant women was thus seen as part of the immigration legislation. Therefore, the gender-based discrimination which ethnic minority women faced, which in some accounts would be different from the majority women, was not given sufficient emphasis by the gender equality act. It is therefore necessary that the specific situation of minority women be included in the gender equality act.

There is an urgent need to take affirmative actions to promote gender equality for minority women, particularly in the field of education and employment. The differential treatment of men and women is already seen in accordance with the act if it promotes gender equality in accordance with the broader purpose of the act. Preferential treatment is also given to men in certain professions associated with child care and teaching. To include minority women in this category would be in accordance with the broader purpose of the act. The preferential treatment of minority women will lead to the establishment of role models for the younger generation and combat gender segregation of ethnic minority women.

I HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

1 Human rights in domestic law

A committee of experts appointed in 1989 by the Norwegian government was given the task of proposing the necessary constitutional or statutory provisions in order to strengthen the position of human rights under Norwegian law. A new general provision (Article 110c) was included in the Norwegian Constitution in 1994 in accordance with a proposal set forth by the committee. The new provision reads: "It is incumbent upon the authorities of the State to respect and ensure human rights. Further provisions concerning the implementation of treaties thereon shall be laid down by statute." In October last year, the Norwegian government presented a Bill to the Parliament, proposing a "Human Rights Act". The Act will incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights and the international covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and their protocols into Norwegian law. The Act stipulates that the conventions shall take precedence over domestic provisions which afford the same rights and freedoms weaker protection. The Government has stated that the incorporation of additional human rights conventions will be considered in the future. The Parliament adopted the Human Rights Act in the beginning of 1999.

2. Comments by the NGO's

2.1 The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO)

1) Gender equality is an important and integral element of all the work on international solidarity and projects in which LO is involved. LO focuses particularly on highlighting the gender equality aspect in the organisations to which it belongs at Nordic, European and global levels. By drawing attention to the gender and gender equality dimensions in its international activities, LO contributes towards strengthening human rights.

2) In cooperation with the Russian trade union movement, LO arranges special courses for women in Murmansk and Archangel. These are important contributions towards the development of the trade union movement and thereby contributions towards building democracy in Russia.

2.2 The Center for Gender Equality

2.2.1 Trafficking in women in the north of Norway

In Norway's most northern county, Finnmark, a severe problem with trafficking in Russian women is taking place, organized from the Norwegian, as well as the Russian side of the border. The trafficking started about five years ago, initially limited to some few camping sites. Now these camping-sites have become intermediaries for a sex-based traffic all over the county. The traffic is quite visible and does much harm both to the small communities in this area and of course to the image of Russian women who suffer from the hardships of life in their own country.

There is an urgent need for the Norwegian Government and local authorities to address this problem. It has to be undertaken in a twofold way: The authorities must find legal and other measures to stop the trafficking on the Norwegian side. In these effort the Government may draw on the knowledge of the local network against prostitution which is composed of both Russian and Norwegian women's organizations. And – not less important – Norwegian/Russian cooperation must to a greater extent focus on the welfare, working and living conditions of women in the neighboring Russian areas. One suggestion that has been raised is to channel parts of the foreign humanitarian aid through local women's organizations.

We recognize that the Norwegian authorities intend the amendment of the Immigration Act, No 64 of 24 June 1988, to have a preventive effect on cases involving trafficking in women. However, we believe that it is unfortunate to relate the problem of trafficking in women, to illegal immigration, and to see trafficking in women as a problem involving illegal immigration. By doing so, the Norwegian authorities are focusing on the women in prostitution and trafficking as the prime

agents in the activity of illegal immigration, and as such are placing the blame for this activity on the women. It focuses on the women who are trafficked as illegal immigrants, implicating them as 'criminals', as responsible for the criminal activity of illegal immigration, rather than as persons being exploited and victimized through the criminal activity of trading and trafficking in women, as persons who need support.

2.2.2 Arranged marriage and forced marriage

In recent years we have seen examples of marriages entered into under coercion in Norway. Consequently, we believe that there needs to be a better clarification between the practices of »arranged marriage» and »forced marriage». We see that it could be a problem for young people growing up in Norway with parents from other cultural backgrounds, that they are expected to marry a partner chosen by the family. However, we find that there is an unfortunate confusion in the report between the practice of arranged marriage, which is the norm in many cultures, where the marriage is most often arranged by the parents or other family members, and in principle involves the consent of all the parties involved, and, forced marriage, which involves the use of coercion, where young people are forced into marrying people chosen by their parents or other family members, against their will. Such marriages entered into by coercion are forbidden by law in Norway. Spouses who have been coerced into marrying may take legal action and have the marriage declared invalid. We would like to point out that this is a complicated issue and that the boundaries distinguishing force and consent are not always easy to draw. It can be difficult at times to draw a clear line between marriages that are forced, and those that are arranged with the consent of the young people concerned, and that it can be sometimes difficult to determine whether, in a marriage that has been "arranged", "force" has been used.

2.3 Mira Center

The MiRA Center feels that it is unfortunate to connect the trafficking in women with illegal immigration. We would like to state that the trafficking in women is a much more serious crime, and would need to be looked at separately, and not in connection with the mere need of the Norwegian authorities to control immigration. We would also like to express our concern with the fact that the Norwegian government in its 5th report to CEDAW focuses on women who are trafficked as illegal immigrants, implicating them as 'criminals', as responsible for the criminal activity of illegal immigration, rather than as persons in need of support who are being exploited and victimised through the criminal activity of trading and trafficking in women.

J. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

1 Films and videograms

The legislation on film and video (Act of 15 May 1987 No. 21 and Regulations of 7 December 1987 relating to film and video) regulate the commercial screening, sale and rental of films and video in Norway. The purpose of the legislation is among other things to prevent the marketing of videotapes containing violent or pornographic material prohibited under Norwegian law.

Any film or videogram intended for commercial screening must be inspected by the National Board of Film Classification prior to screening. The National Board of Film Classification must not approve pictures that “violate public decency or have a brutalising or morally corruptive influence.” This prohibits screening of explicitly pornographic material.

Videograms intended for commercial sale or rental must be registered and labeled prior to marketing. The National Board of Film Classification may require that a videogram be assessed prior to the registration. A videogram which is in contravention of the provisions on violent or pornographic material in the Penal Code may not be registered.

2 The Press

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Norway funds a management training programme for women in the press. The programme is arranged by “The Press Leadership Programme” which organises various Norwegian press organisations among others. the Norwegian Publishers Association. The Programme receives an annual public grant of 500.000 NOK.

Appendix I

Report from The Catholic Women's League of Norway

Women and poverty.

1. WUCWO members everywhere raise their voices on behalf of the poor of the world.
2. WUCWO members together with women of all faiths campaign during the next four years for an examination of the whole question of the cancellation or substantial reduction of the international debt which threatens the future of many nations.

The Catholic Women's League of Norway follows up this resolution by joining and supporting campaigns for the cancellation of the debts, e.g. that of CARITAS Norway.

Education and training of women.

Literacy

WUCWO members remind their governments that a country's development rises as the level of education rises; should consider offering their services as educators and should raise awareness of the dangers inherent in the lack of education; should ask that there be no gender discrimination in the provision of education; should support the efforts of organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and Caritas to increase their budgets involved in improving literacy.

Human rights on education.

WUCWO members urge their governments to secure and stimulate the basic Human Right to Education for Women. Governments should see to it that religion and culture be not misused to withhold from women their basic right to self-determination in the fields of education, nutrition and health care.

Women and Health.

WUCWO members urge their governments to ban the export of pesticides, medicines and means of birth control which have passed their sell-by date and to promote ethical responsibility to business export practice.

"Women and Health" is one of WUCWO's three chosen priorities and the Board of WUCWO has established a working party to examine the subject and propose measures. The working group, however, has not finished its work yet.

Violence against women.

"Violence against women" is one of WUCWO's three chosen priorities and the Board of WUCWO has established a working party to examine the subject and propose measures. The working group, however, has not finished its work yet.

Women and armed conflict.

This Assembly urge all member organisations of WUCWO to campaign for a complete ban on the production, stockpiling, export and use of all types of anti-personnel mines.

Progress: Signature of the Ottawa Treaty.

Women in power and decision-making

"Women in decision-making" is one of WUCWO's three chosen priorities and the Board of WUCWO has established a working party to examine the subject and propose measures. The working group, however, has not finished its work yet.

Human rights of women.

WUCWO members promote and support the provisions of palliative care for terminally ill persons and the frail aged;

WUCWO members actively work against the decriminalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide wherever their governments attempt to introduce such legislation, and

Through the work of WUCWO commissions, steps be taken to confirm the right to life of all persons from conception to natural death, and provide support for those most at risk from the decriminalization of euthanasia such as the frail elderly and the terminally ill.

The Catholic women's League of Norway has sent the text of this resolution to the Minister for Health and Social Affairs to make it known to the public committee which examined the questions in relation to palliative care.

The girl child

The Church increase its effort to counteract the killing of girl foetuses and girl babies.

WUCWO members request their governments to take measures to counteract the killing of girl foetuses and live born girl babies by seeking to better the living conditions, education and health of women. and by informing people of the harmful effects, especially for future generations, of depleting the female population who are the future bearers of children.

This resolution was proposed by the Catholic Womens League of Norway, first to the Norwegian Government before the Beijing Conference and afterwards to the WUCWO General Assembly in Canberra in 1996.

Appendix II

Common Data Sets/Indicators for Measuring Development Progress in Norway

Population and fertility

Population 1998 (number)

Population size: Total: 4 417 599. Males: 2 185 106. Females: 2 232 493.

Population aged 0-4: Total: 302 797. Males: 155 524. Females: 147 273.

Population aged 0-14: Total: 872 919. Males: 448 183. Females: 424 736.

Population aged 15-49: Total: 2 177 894. Males: 1 111 586.

Females: 1 066 308.

Population aged 60+: Total: 865 273. Males: 371 800. Females: 493 473.

Population by urban/rural distribution 1997 (number)

Densely populated areas, total: 3 259 418. Under 2 000 persons: 466 141 (11 per cent.) 2

000 persons and over: 2 792 968 (64 per cent.)

Sparsely populated areas: 1 122 386 (26 per cent.)

Population growth rate 1997

0,6 per cent

Total fertility rate 1997

1.857

Fertility rate for women aged 15-19. 1997:

12.7 live births per 1 000 women

ATTACHMENT MANIFEST 1.0

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1	NOTE		
2	FILE	untitled.dat	-1

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