

CHAIRPERSON'S CONCLUSIONS

On the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of CEDAW and as part of the Beijing +15 review, ECE member States renew their commitment to the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women and girls that restrict their full participation in development processes. Member States emphasize that the achievement of gender equality is an essential condition for sustainable economic growth, and reaffirm the centrality of gender equality for the universal achievement of all Millennium Development Goals. In this context, member States welcome the forthcoming United Nations gender entity and call for its prompt establishment including at country level.

1. As regards the ECE region, priority fields for action in the past five years have been:
 - (a) legislation to address gender-based violence, including domestic violence and trafficking;
 - (b) women in the economy, mainly through narrowing the gap between female and male employment rates and adopting specific measures to combat women's poverty; and
 - (c) the development and strengthening of national mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. Notable progress has been achieved in most countries regarding:
 - (a) women's participation in the labour market;
 - (b) women's political participation at local levels;
 - (c) new and/or strengthened legislation on gender-based violence, including domestic violence;
 - (d) institutional mechanisms on gender equality and women's empowerment.
3. The challenges most frequently mentioned included:
 - (a) the gap between legislation and implementation;
 - (b) decent work for women and measures to counteract labour market segregation;
 - (c) the gender pay gap;
 - (d) the situation of migrant women and women belonging to minority groups, who suffer multiple forms of discrimination;
 - (e) the persistence of gender stereotypes, especially in the media and in education;
 - (f) the lack of sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data, and the lack of gender-sensitive indicators;
 - (g) the role of men in advancing gender equality, for example through increased sharing of family responsibilities.

4. The following recommendations were highlighted :

- (a) Address specific vulnerabilities through:
 - (i) enforcing new legislation against gender-based violence, including domestic violence, violence in conflicts and trafficking, and developing prevention, protection and assistance measures for victims, as well as sanctions against perpetrators;
 - (ii) combating poverty of women in certain rural areas, including through facilitating ownership of land and productive assets;
 - (iii) defending the rights of women migrant workers and those working in the informal sector, especially in terms of personal safety, and working and social rights.
- (b) Engender national policies through:
 - (i) expanding the breadth and depth of gender-responsive budgeting as one of the main tools for implementing effective gender-sensitive policies;
 - (ii) fostering a mix of policies combining mandatory measures, incentives and awareness-building to accelerate the pace towards parity in economic and political decision-making positions;
 - (iii) engaging a wide range of actors, including NGOs and the private sector, as a means of implementing and monitoring progress on gender equality. This requires the collection of systematic and reliable sex-disaggregated data and statistics, as well as gender-sensitive indicators;

Dialogue and multi-stakeholder partnerships have an essential role in ensuring that gender equality remains high on the agenda, and Official Development Assistance is a key element in this respect.

- (c) Strengthen the situation of women at work through:
 - (i) ensuring that employment and social protection policies and practices take into account women's underemployment and the predominance of women in the informal sector, in precarious jobs, in part-time work and in lower paid work;
 - (ii) developing a policy mix of encouraging, enabling and obliging measures to advance gender equality in the corporate sector, including gender equality in corporate social responsibility agendas, capacity building and legal frameworks (e. g. quotas, targets, objectives, sanctions and other measures);
 - (iii) reconciling work with family responsibilities through legal entitlements such as paid leave for both parents, policy measures to encourage men to meet their family responsibilities, available and affordable quality care for children and dependant adults, and affordable training schemes to facilitate reintegration in the labour market;

(d) Mitigate the impact of the crisis on women through promoting gender-sensitive analysis of the impact of the crisis and developing countercyclical policies that place priority on job creation and retention, on social sectors such as education, childcare and health, and on protection schemes which benefit the whole population.

The financial crisis can be used as an opportunity to design gender-sensitive stimulus packages and social safety nets that involve affordable, quality childcare, parental-leave reform and efforts to close the gender pay gap.