



REPUBLIC OF POLAND
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The 52nd session of the Commission
on the Status of Women
Financing for gender quality
and the empowerment of women
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S T A T E M E N T

by

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in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
of the Republic of Poland**

New York, February 27th, 2008

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all let me congratulate you Mr. Chairman and other members of the Bureau on assuming this important work during the 52nd session of Commission on the Status of Woman.

Mr. Chairman,

In the fast changing modern world gender inequality may occur as a result of many overlapping factors, including economic, political, social and cultural conditions of any given country, as well as its position on the global scene.

Depending on the time and place the importance of any particular combination of those factors has to vary and therefore the answers and solutions we choose also have to be both modern and flexible.

Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me to present to you a few examples of how the Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Policy addresses the problem of gender inequality.

Our legal efforts focus on the adjustment of Polish law to the requirements of the European Union. They include i.e. passing the bill against gender discrimination and establishing an office of the respective spokesperson, as well as changing and amending the Polish Labor Code. The purpose is to ensure and protect women's participation in social, political and economic life, including the protection of pregnant employees, mothers, etc.

Our major economic goal, for the near future, is to safeguard gender equality in the new retirement and pension programs. The fundamental concept underlying the reform is that the security comes from a diversification of pensions sources. That is why *security through diversity* became the main mission and message of the transition.

It needs to be stressed that Poland belongs to a group of European countries, where the retirement age is lowest. The average age of retirement for women is around 56, while among men it is 58. Men in Poland statistically live much shorter lives than women. As a consequence of this fact the institution, which makes the payment, will have such a high rate of female participants that it poses a risk to its solvency. The system of benefit payment should therefore contain a mechanism for the compensation of

contributions between respective institutions making payments. For gender equality the mechanism should take into account the gender structure of their customers.

We also desperately need to continue our efforts in giving women a much stronger position on the labour market, both in terms of finding employment and in terms of satisfactory wages for their work.

In order to create a social and political atmosphere that is conducive to gender equality and involves all forces which can add valuable help and experience to our collective endeavors, my Ministry has been actively advocating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), encouraging NGOs working in the area, as well as implementing many programs aimed at raising social awareness to the problems of inequality.

Mr. Chairman,

Given the shortage of time I would like to mention just a few of those programs:

- *Active Women Academy* addresses the issues of stereotypes and reality of equal opportunities for women and men in rural areas.
- *Between Family and Work* focuses on how to combine the various social, personal and professional roles in women's lives.
- *Wanted. At 45+* raises public awareness to the dual gender and age discrimination.
- *Fulfilled as an Entrepreneur* encourages women to participate more actively in the labor market.

Further information on these programs may also be found in a leaflet entitled "Who we are" which are available to all delegations.

While undertaking all the above mentioned endeavors, we seek to achieve a difficult dynamic equilibrium between equality and diversity, which would enable us not only to create open civic society but also to forge our new identity.

Mr. Chairman,

Please be assured of Poland's commitment to the full and swift realization of the agenda of this Session. We are looking forward to working with you and other delegations to achieve our goals.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.