

# MALTA



## **Statement by H.E. Mr. Saviour F. Borg, Ambassador Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations**

### **UNGA 66, Third Committee, Statement on Advancement of Women (Agenda item 28 "Advancement of Women")**

**Wednesday 12 October 2011  
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Mr. Chairman,

May I offer you and the other members of the Bureau my sincere congratulations on your election and also thank the Secretary-General for providing comprehensive reports on such an important subject.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Malta is continuously working to improve gender equality and enhance women's participation in society. Various measures and initiatives have contributed to developments in many areas related to gender equality and the advancement of women. In fact, several legal developments and initiatives have taken place in Malta throughout the years which have enhanced protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender and family responsibilities.

Gender mainstreaming in Malta is considered to further safeguard and promote gender equality and the inclusion of both genders in the social and economic spheres. In this regard, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) in Malta is incessantly working with relevant stakeholders to:

- produce tools for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming;
- provide training and highlighting good practices on gender mainstreaming; and
- encourage such good practices in order to enhance the implementation of this principle.

Equal opportunities for men and women and for persons with caring responsibilities in the labour market contribute to the advancement of women within the economic sphere. Indeed, in Malta various developments were evident in relation to equal opportunities in employment and education. In the last years, the number of persons in the public sector who made use of family friendly measures increased considerably. In addition, the female employment rate increased by 6%. Similarly, the rate of female graduates in Malta has increased as more women have

successfully completed tertiary education. Women also outnumber men in their participation in tertiary education, as 58.02% of the students of the University of Malta are female.

Mr. Chairman,

The advancement of women is a multifaceted issue. In this context, particular attention must be given to the situation of older women in our societies, who unfortunately are often marginalised and forgotten. Gender based roles in society, high rates of unemployment, and deficiencies in health systems and limited education opportunities are factors that negatively affect them. This vulnerable group often experiences inequalities that are not always specifically addressed by resolutions or reports. Therefore, Malta welcomes the consideration given by CEDAW to the situation of older women in its General Recommendation no. 27 on older women and the protection of their human rights.

The promotion and protection of the well-being and improvement of the situation of older women is one area where the International Institute on Ageing (UN-Malta), which Malta has been hosting for the last 23 years, has been playing a very active role. Indeed, the Malta-UN Institute has been recognised worldwide as playing a key role in the development of national capacities in different countries to address the implementation priorities identified during the review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing which we will be marking 10 years of its adoption next year.

Another area where the Government of Malta, as part of its system of offering free delivery of health care to its population, is that which offers comprehensive obstetric services ranging from antenatal care through delivery to the postpartum period. In such procedures and others relating to the sexual and reproductive health of women, Malta upholds principled positions that these do not take place outside the framework of one of the most fundamental of human rights – the right to life.

The Government of Malta is continuing to invest further in advancing its healthcare system. For example, since 2007, a Breast Screening Programme has been set up with the aim of enhancing early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. This Programme provides free breast screening every three years for all women aged 50 to 60 years.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Malta will remain committed to the efforts to mainstream gender equality in all policies and measures, as well as raising awareness on equal rights and responsibilities in order to further promote gender equality and the advancement of women in Maltese society.

Thank you.