

MALTA



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Christopher Grima, Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations**

**UNGA 67, Third Committee,
Statement on Advancement of Women
(Agenda item 28 "Advancement of Women")**

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(check against delivery)

Mr. Chair,

Malta welcomes and is encouraged by the level of engagement of the United Nations on this important issue, including through the roles played by the UNSG, the Third Committee and UN Women. All three have contributed to ensuring that the advancement of women and elimination of gender discrimination remain in the forefront of our work at the UN. Their efforts in mainstreaming gender in the UN agenda is supporting and encouraging Governments to create more gender sensitive policies.

The work being undertaken by the Special Mandate Holders, Special Rapporteurs and other bodies, such as the CSW and UNFPA also deserves our appreciation. At this juncture I would like to congratulate the CEDAW Committee for being a force of change these past 30 years. The work the CEDAW Committee has undertaken has led to measures, initiatives and legal developments which have enhanced protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender.

Allow me also to join others in wishing a speedy recovery to Ms. Malala Yousafzai, whose bravery in standing up for what she believes in should be a source of inspiration to us all.

Mr. Chair,

Gender mainstreaming is a national priority in Malta. It safeguards equal treatment for both genders in all policies and measures. Accordingly, gender mainstreaming has been strengthened within the national agenda to ensure equality of opportunity in the design, application, analysis and monitoring of all law and policies and programmes.

Malta's National Commission for the Promotion of Equality provides assistance to entities in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The Commission is also working to strengthen the knowledge and understanding in this area within the public administration; producing tools for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming; providing training and highlighting good practices; and encouraging the replication of such good practices to enhance the implementation of this principle.

Indeed it has managed to raise awareness about equality of rights and of opportunities and has also worked diligently towards moulding and shaping Maltese culture in favour of more rights and

more opportunities for everyone. The various developments in Maltese society as a result of this are evident. These include an increase in female employment and female participation in tertiary education.

In fact, the latest policy which was issued in April 2012 further encourages every Government Ministry to implement gender mainstreaming in policy-making, law-making and project/programme creation processes. It reiterates that gender mainstreaming enhances the ability of employers to make the best use of human resources and improve productivity and competitiveness whilst giving employees the opportunity to benefit equally in society. It also calls for the reassertion of gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming in the performance reviews within the public administration and to prepare a report on the measures taken and the progress achieved in the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Mr. Chair,

On Monday the European Union delivered a Statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States. While the statement mostly reflects Malta's stance on the advancement of women, my delegation would like to clarify its position, as it has continuously done, with respect to the language pertaining to the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

While strongly reaffirming our strong support and commitment to the full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Populations and Development in 1994, and the subsequent international instruments, including the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), my delegation would like to reaffirm the view that any discussion and references to rights and services in connection with reproductive health cannot take place outside the framework of one of the most fundamental of human rights – the right to life.

Malta does not consider or perceive terms or recommendations that imply or impinge practices resulting in abortion to be used in Malta as acceptable. The national legislation of Malta considers the termination of pregnancy through procedures of induced abortion as illegal.

Mr. Chair,

The advancement of women and promotion of equal treatment between women and men are not only encouraged through legislative developments, but are also complemented by various initiatives and projects that are carried out to further implement the respective legislation. The continuous commitment and efforts to mainstream gender equality in all policies and measures, together with awareness raising on equality rights and responsibilities, will be crucial to further promote gender equality and the advancement of women in Maltese society.

Thank you.