

Country Report

by
Finland

on Implementation of the
Beijing Platform for Action

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I OVERVIEW OF TRENDS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

Background

The equality between women and men is a central socio-political target in Finland. Finland's policy with regard to achieving the goal of equality rests on the so called Nordic equality model. The model is based on the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men in all areas of life. Women in politics, trade unions and NGOs have played a major role in developing the model. The important elements in the model are equal access to education, high level of participation to labour markets, individual social security system, separate taxation and public services such as child day care and school meals that support women's employment. The model is integrated within different policies and has a wide support among public (see later the description of the Equality barometer).

The equality model is closely linked to the Nordic model of welfare state; women are accustomed to seeing the welfare state as their ally. One of the most notable welfare reforms in the 90s was that in 1996 all under-school-age children were entitled a subjective right to municipal day care after the period of parental allowance. Since the Finnish social security system is based on individual and needs-related benefits instead of family-specific benefits, it has relatively efficiently levelled economic and social differences between women and men. Furthermore, apart from supporting women's employment e.g. by providing day care, public sector is also an important employer for women; a clear majority of the employees in health and social work are women (85-92% in 1995).

Considering the pursue of the goal of gender equality in relation to other public policy goals, one could approach the question by examining the resources allocated to mechanisms and public services promoting equality. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health which directs and guides policies concerning social security, social welfare and health care has the biggest budget compared to other ministries.

Demand for equality has the backing of the law. The Act on Equality between Women and Men came into force in Finland at the beginning of 1987, a year after Finland had ratified the CEDAW convention. The aim of the Act is to promote equality between women and men, to prevent discrimination on the basis of sex and to promote women's status, particularly in working life. The Act obliges the authorities and all employers to promote equality. One of the amendments made in the Equality Act in 1995 was the quota provision. The 40/60 quota principle has increased women's participation in decision making in government committees, advisory boards as well as in municipal bodies excluding municipal council. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of sex and competence has ceased, and sex is nowadays considered relevant when appointing decision making bodies.

The concept and principle of mainstreaming of equality issues have been familiar in Finland and the principle has been applied e.g. in the legislation on education. However, the Finnish policies have not been realised systematically according to the principles of mainstreaming. The baseline of the Finnish policies has been to provide equal opportunities and equal rights to women and men. The mechanisms promoting equality have been gender neutral in a way that actual gender perspective has remained hidden. For example the impact assessment on equality between women and men has not been part of the traditional Nordic equality model.

According to the commonly used indicators the Nordic equality model has brought several good results; Finland was ranked 5th in the Gender Related Development Index in 1998. However,

hidden discrimination of women prevails and gendered practices put women and men in an unequal position. There is still a strong belief in Finland that full equality has already been achieved. Therefore, the concrete actions and demands for resources are often met with a cool or doubtful response. Furthermore, the discourse on equality seems lead to the fallacy that the equality work is already taken care of by the few experts; the discourse seems to substitute for action. When the targets are not met, the impression of unchangeable structures is strengthened, as seems to be the case with sex segregation in the Finnish labour market.

In aiming to achieve women's advancement, the differences between women have to be taken into account. Some women belonging to groups such as indigenous peoples, minorities, refugees and immigrants often fall victim to multiple discrimination. Special measures to improve their situation have been taken both within the state administration as within the NGO community.

Promotion of human rights is an integral part of Finnish foreign policy, and is actively promoted in particular in all Finnish development co-operation. As stated in the guidelines for Finland's international development co-operation from 1998, promotion of equality is one of the principal objectives and preconditions in Finland's development co-operation policy along with poverty reduction, protection of environment, human rights and democracy. The rights of women, children, minorities and indigenous peoples have been defined as the main areas of focus. Furthermore, the strategy for co-operation in adjacent countries, approved in 1996 by the Ministerial Committee on Neighbouring Areas, draws attention to equality issues.

Finland has actively participated in the equality work in the international forums at Nordic, European as well as global level in order to implement women's rights all over the world. The commitments made at the international level have for their part been important tools at the national level in promoting equality. The same applies to the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA). Although several policies on equality have existed before and are promoted outside the focus of PFA, it has been a useful device in pursuing the goal of gender equality in Finland.

National Plans of Action for the promotion of Gender Equality

The very first Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality was adopted by the Council of State of Finland in 1980. The Plan of Action was prepared by the Council for Equality for a five-year period covering the latter part of the United Nations Decade for Women. The Plan was the first of its kind in the Nordic countries.

According to the obligation based on the Beijing Platform for Action, another national plan was designed to lay down objectives in line with PFA and the measures necessary to achieve them at the national level. Furthermore, it was considered essential that governments demonstrate their commitment to implement the PFA: through the Plan of Action the Government of Finland conveys to the international community its concern with the promotion of equality. The Council for Equality at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has been responsible for co-ordinating the implementation.

Drafting of the national programme began in autumn 1995 and involved some 150 national organisations and authorities. The draft of the Plan of Action was then prepared by the Council for Equality, discussed with the Ministers, and circulated extensively for comment. A working party of civil servants was responsible for drafting the final version into a more concrete form. The Council of State of Finland adopted the Government's Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality in February 1997.

The objectives set out in the Plan of Action were carried out as projects or tasks. Every branch of administration identified and committed themselves to implement concrete projects, alto-

gether 96. Part of them were new whereas part of the projects were agreed earlier and would have been completed nevertheless.

While drafting the Plan of Action it became evident that its successful implementation depends on closer co-operation among the different authorities. The need for co-operation extended to actors in regional administration, municipalities, companies, NGOs and diverse development projects.

A working party on the follow-up of the Plan of Action was appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on May 1997. It was chaired by the General Secretary of the Council for Equality and included a representative from each of the 13 Ministries as well as from the Office of the Council of State. Furthermore, the working party invited three persons to act as expert members on statistics and women's studies, and from March 1998 on a representative of the women's organisations. The working party ended its work and submitted the final report in March 1999.

In most of the ministries an internal follow-up was organised for the implementation of the Plan of Action. Furthermore, in the follow-up process an individual contact person or a person in charge was identified for each project.

The follow-up process and the constitution of the working party were themselves important steps forward in promoting equality at the government level. One of the aims of the Plan of Action according to the mainstreaming principle was to extend and divide the equality work in general more efficiently everywhere in state administration. The working party set up for the follow-up was the first ever interministerial body on equality issues including representatives from all ministries. With the follow-up process both the interministerial as well as the intraministerial contacts on equality issues increased. It was also noted that policy on equality became more visible and effective, and equality considerations reflected even to projects outside the Plan of Action.

In addition of being an instrument of the Finnish Government's equality policy, the Plan of Action was a channel through which the Government informed citizens of its principles and practices in matters of equality. The Plan of Action was published in Finnish, Swedish, English and French, the Follow-up report in Finnish, Swedish and English, and the Final report will also be published in Finnish and English.

In quantitative terms the implementation process succeeded for the most part. In February 1999 out of 96 projects 23 were completed, 65 were being launched or on going, and with 8 of the projects no measures had been taken. When no measures were taken it was due to other factors than that the ministry would have denied its responsibility. Support of political leaders, commitment of civil servants as well as the clear articulation of gender specific goals or aspects was crucial in the implementation process.

In addition to the concrete projects the Plan of Action included more general principals such as promoting equality by mainstreaming in the state administration. This kind of extensive objective has been more difficult to obtain.

Follow-up of the implementation has caused some problems. When the promotion of equality is seen as a part of normal activities, equality-promoting measures are not always reported in sufficient detail. It may then be difficult to decide whether any action has been taken to promote equality and whether the gender factor has been taken into account.

It has been acknowledged that the Plan of Action does not aim to tackle comprehensively with such big questions as reducing occupational segregation, decreasing pay difference or introducing mainstreaming to the entire state administration. For the time being, objectives concerning equality have not been explicitly articulated e.g. in economic and fiscal policy or in policies on technology.

The project approach in the Plan of Action has also been criticised for being too fragmented and superficial to attain any extensive results. Therefore it is foreseen that the framework for further actions and initiatives will be amended.

The challenges for the future are to define better the accountability structure as well as assert the administrative practices concerning equality work in the state administration. Furthermore, the monitoring and appraisal on promoting equality should be developed.

Although the focus of the Plan of Action is principally on women, several topics - such as reducing the gender segregation in education and working life, reconciling working life with family life and mainstreaming the equality principle - relate both to women and men. Furthermore, a strong aspiration on reinforcing men's role as fathers and grandfathers has been included to the Plan of Action.

Priorities and major achievements

In the Finnish context the priorities in terms of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, were (iv) violence against women as well as (viii) institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

Violence against women was a difficult subject to approach in Finland until 90s. It was considered more as a private family problem than a violation against women's rights. The issue was brought to the national political agenda by the Sub-Committee on Violence appointed by the Council for Equality in 1990. During the following year the Committee submitted a report that set the basis for diverse activities in the early 90s. The Committee made good use of the work done by the forerunners on the issue; the UN and the Council of Europe. By the time implementation of PFA was planned at the national level, the Sub-Committee on Violence had already identified critical areas to be included in the National Plan of Action.

The National Programme for Preventing Violence Against Women is considered to be the major achievement in implementing the Plan of Action. Under this programme the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health launched two five-year projects in 1998. The objectives of the Project on Violence Against Women are e.g. to strengthen public attitudes opposed to violence, to reduce the incidence of violence, and to ensure that easily accessible services are available for the victims and the perpetrators. In order to achieve its objective the project will e.g. be co-ordinating national efforts to prevent violence by co-operating with authorities, NGOs, institutions and other projects and drawing up a national action programme for the prevention of violence against women. The Project on Prevention of Prostitution gathers and disseminates information and follows up on prostitution and different forms of commercialised sex at the international and national levels. Promotion of equal, positive, and nonviolating modes of sexuality is a main goal of the project. Both of the projects are carried out at the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES).

An extensive survey on the extent of men's violence against women - the first of its kind in Finland and even in EU - was conducted by Statistics Finland in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The study has aroused great interest both nationally and internationally, as few countries have conducted such a thorough investigation of domestic violence. The results of the research were published both in Finnish and in English in 1998 ("Faith, Hope and Battering. A Survey on Men's Violence Against Women in Finland).

Furthermore, legislation has been amended in a way that it provides a better protection and support for the victims of violence. One of the major achievements is also that the issue is not considered to be as much a tabu as before

Concerning the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, the Plan of Action stresses the importance of mainstreaming as a strategy to promote equality. The objective to

develop mainstreaming strategies derives also from the obligations set by both the European Union and the Nordic Council of Ministers. A mainstreaming project for the purpose of developing methods was launched for 1997-2000 in six of the ministries. Especially the Ministry of Labour has had positive experiences concerning the integration of the equality dimension to the renewal process of the work organisation of the Ministry. The pilot scheme has effected both to the staff policy and to the accountability of equality issues and the project has generated the reinforcement of the equality organisation at the Ministry.

In regard to the achievements of the Plan of Action the support for women entrepreneurs has expanded considerably. Women entrepreneurs have been granted special loans, and tailored training and counselling has been provided to encourage women's entrepreneurship. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of women entrepreneurs in repair services and services to business. Special efforts have been made to support entrepreneurship and self-employment among women in rural areas.

Attention to gender equality

In line with the objectives of the PFA, the first Finnish gender barometer was published in 1998. The barometer is as far as is known the first extensive interview survey in the world dealing exclusively with experiences, estimates and attitudes of ordinary people on male-female equality.

According to the barometer the general climate of opinion is in favour of equality. Half of the women and men interviewed believed that there would be growing equality over the next ten years, and slightly less thought that there would be little change. Women are still responsible for the family's well being but both women and men were more or less unanimous that men should take more part than they do at present in caring for and bringing up their children. The inequality at work and to some extent also at school was recognised by the respondents.

Subsequent gender barometers will be carried out at regular interval to reflect trends in male-female relations in Finland. The gender barometer is considered to be an important tool for making the problems with promoting equality easier to see, identify and solve.

It is justified to state that the PFA and both its international and national follow-up have brought the equality issues higher on the government's agenda. The political role of the Government in promoting equality has become more central. In the four-year programme formulated by the newly appointed government in 1995 before the Beijing Conference, equality between women and men was only briefly mentioned. The new government was appointed after the parliamentary election in April 1999. In the new Government's Programme the equality dimension as well as mainstreaming principle is clearly visible. The programme includes a separate section on equality in which the Government identifies safeguarding welfare services and implementing the principle of equal pay in working life as central issues in realising equality. Furthermore, the Government states that it will in accordance with the PFA seek to implement the principle of mainstreaming in state administration and carry out equality proofing on all new law proposals.

Challenges for the future

The preconditions for equality are good in Finland. Women and men have *de jure* an equal access to education, health, employment and decision making. However, equality *de facto* is still to achieve and areas where special measures are needed are e.g. the earlier mentioned violence against women and women's status in the working life.

Jobs and professions are still clearly segregated according to sex. Only 9% of the economically active population works in sectors with an equal amount of women and men. Every third is employed in a sector where at least 90% of employees are of same sex. The situation has remained

unchanged for the last 30 years. Due to the job segregation economical changes have different effects on women and men.

For example the recession deriving in the early 90s i.a. from the fall of Soviet Union had different kinds of effects on women and men. The recession initially had most impact on men's jobs, as these tended to be in sectors susceptible to economic flux. However, as the recession spread a few years later to the services, employment among women also fell off sharply. During the recession years women lost more jobs than men in all sectors. By 1997 there were 154,000 (13.1%) women out of work. Most jobs were lost in secretarial and office work, in health care and nursing in the public sector, in sales and among unqualified women. There is less long-term unemployment among women, due to the fact that women are more likely than men to accept fixed-term jobs and also take more labour market training or other training. The women most at risk of unemployment have little education or training, and are over 50.

The number of fixed-term and other atypical employment relationships have increased as a result of widespread unemployment. In 1997, 18% of the workforce were in fixed-term jobs (women 21%, men 15%). The financial equilibrium achieved by the public sector through spending cuts has certainly played a part in increasing the employment problems of its women workers.

Furthermore, especially the Finnish textile industry has been forced to readjust to new global markets and move its production to countries with lower labour costs. Since the industry is dominated by women the structural change has effected especially women's employment.

The changes and at the labour markets, particularly the increase of fixed-term and other atypical employment relationships seem to have a special effect on young women and their family plans. The birth-rate has lowered and the average age of primigravida has gone up to 28 years. Even the amount of abortions has gone slightly up in 1998, still being one of the lowest in the world. The attitudes of the employers towards childcare responsibilities or having a family are crucial in trying to change the situation.

According to section 5 of the Constitution Act, gender equality must be promoted in social activity and working life, especially when pay and other terms of employment are fixed as separately decreed by law. Under the Act on Equality between Women and Men, the equal pay clause applies equally to private-sector and public-sector employers. Actual pay is specified according to wage agreements made by the labour market organisations. These agreements make no distinction between women and men as far as pay is concerned, though sectoral agreements may distinguish between pay grades according to, say, experience, number of years in the job, etc.

Although equal pay has the backing of the law and it has for a long time been a central target of Finnish equality policy, the wage differentials between women and men have remained unchanged and indeed increased in the 1990s. The average earnings of women wage-earners for normal hours work have been around 80% of the level for men (82% in 1997). Measured by the income level index, women's average earnings have risen somewhat faster than men's in recent years. Pay differentials can partly be explained by the distinct breakdown of jobs by gender on the labour market and the lower esteem enjoyed by sectors dominated by women. Efforts have been made to narrow the gaps through special women's and low-pay supplements in the incomes settlements concluded in autumn 1995 and autumn 1997. Though this has not proved enough to eliminate the wage gap between women and men, it means that the parties at least acknowledge the problem. Throughout the 90s, the labour market organisations have promoted the introduction of various systems for assessing job demands that can be used to made sectors typical of one gender or the other more mutually comparable. One aim of these systems is to increase pay equality between the genders.

II FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES

2. Financial measures in women's advancement

It is somewhat difficult to estimate exactly how equality and women's advancement are addressed in the national budget since there are several budget lines that promote equality de facto but are not explicitly defined as such. However, as stated before, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health which directs and guides policies concerning social security, social welfare and health care has the biggest budget compared to other ministries. Most of the welfare service such as children's day care, are essential for the equality between women and men.

Although the existing institutions have more or less stable funding, many new projects or activities have been hampered due to inadequate or non-existent financial resources. One of the very concrete positive consequences of implementing the PFA has been the allocation of funds to some new projects promoting equality. This is especially true concerning the national programme for preventing violence against women.

Apart from being involved in equality projects funded partly by EU, Finland does not receive funding from international or bilateral donors. On the contrary, Finland has contributed several equality projects and programmes as part of its development co-operation (see ANNEX I). In relation to development co-operation budget, it is impossible to estimate the exact proportion targeted to promotion of equality because the gender aspect is integrated to the implementation of projects.

3.a/b. Follow-up to the global UN conferences - implementation of the UN global agenda

Finland is committed to the implementation of the UN global agenda aiming at eradication of poverty, right to employment, social justice, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and good governance, equality between women and men, balanced population growth and sustainable environmental development. Finland stresses the importance of fully integrated implementation and follow-up of the implementation of the global agenda and recognises that national governments have the main responsibility in implementing the commitments made in the global UN conferences of the 90s.

The main responsibility for the national follow-up of the implementation of the global UN conferences lies with various sectoral ministries and the mechanisms are slightly different. There are some common principles, however:

1. co-ordination among all parties concerned (sectoral ministries and Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and
2. involvement of NGOs and other relevant actors of civil society in the follow-up process, including when preparing for the major follow-up meetings, preparing follow-up reports to the UN etc. The NGOs and other relevant actors of the civil society can be members of formal Government working groups and delegations to international meetings and conferences, they can be used as experts in the preparatory process, they can be consulted when finalising Government positions or reports etc.

Finland would welcome a continuation of the on-going dialogue on how to best achieve the goal of fully integrated implementation and follow-up both at national and international levels. In this context, Finland would welcome a discussion on implementation strategies and further ac-

tions needed e.g. on how to develop common indicators whereby progress can be measured at the country level in particular, strengthening of the governance and monitoring processes.

In addition to the description on the mechanism to follow-up to and implement the Beijing PFA, the mechanisms established for follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development as well as to the Conference on Population and Development are illustrated below as an examples.

Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action

According to the obligation based on the Beijing Platform for Action, a national plan was designed to lay down objectives in line with PFA and the measures necessary to achieve them at the national level. The Council for Equality at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health was responsible for co-ordinating the implementation. A working party on the follow-up of the National Plan of Action was appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on May 1997. It was chaired by the General Secretary of the Council for Equality and included a representative from each of the 13 Ministries as well as from the Office of the Council of State. Furthermore, the working party invited three persons to act as expert members on statistics and women's studies, and from March 1998 on a representative of the women's organisation.

A follow-up report on the Plan of Action was submitted in May 1998. The report presented the measures been carried out by the Ministries in 1997 as well as the plans for the year 1998. The working party on the follow-up completed its work in February 1999 when the final report was submitted. In addition to presenting the measures the report included an analysis of the current state of equality in Finland.

In most of the ministries an internal follow-up was organised for the implementation of the Plan of Action. Furthermore, in the follow-up process an individual contact person or a person in charge was identified for each project.

Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

There is a formal working group that meets on a regular basis co-ordinated by the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health and with participation from all relevant ministries, NGO community etc. to assist in the follow-up of the Social Summit. The main tasks of the group are as follows:

1. to participate in the preparations for CSOD-meetings (Commission for Social Development) and
2. to participate in the implementation of commitments made in the Social Summit by i.a. preparing Finland's positions for Nordic, EU and UN co-ordination, and assisting in the national reporting.

Follow-up to the Conference on Population and Development

The main responsibility for the national follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development lies with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In addition to other follow-up mechanisms ICDP+5-preparatory process takes place i.a. in a discussion group co-ordinated by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with the participation from relevant ministries, NGOs and research community.

Monitoring of human rights

The principles and strategies of Finland's human rights policy were laid down for the first time and goals set for the future in the Report by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1998 to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament on the human rights policy of the Finnish Govern-

ment. A report on the Government's action to promote human rights will be published at regular intervals, first in the year 2000.

There is an Advisory Board for International Human Rights Affairs at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, acting as a channel between the Ministry and the NGOs. The Advisory Board also monitors international human rights issues, issues statements on related matters of principle, organises seminars and promotes research and public education.

There is also a Commission Against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance subordinated to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Commission is responsible for promoting tolerant attitudes by spotlighting manifestations of racism and supporting positive action.

3.c Role of NGOs in the follow-up activities to Beijing Platform for Action

While drafting the Government Plan of Action, NGOs were asked to comment on the Beijing Platform for Action. In autumn 1997 the working party on follow-up also heard NGOs and institutes concerning the newly drafted plan of action. Altogether 93 comments were received. They reflected support for the main principles of the plan of action, but at the same time criticised its lack of uniformity and the modest resources earmarked, as well as its focus on the efforts of the authorities rather than of the women's organisations. A hearing of women's organisations was organised again in October 1997.

Some of the NGOs would have wanted to have a more central role in formulating the plan of action. Still, the NGOs were able to contribute the formulation in two ways: First, since the Council for Equality is appointed according to the parliamentary power relations, political women's organisations are represented at the Council that formulated the proposal for the plan of action. Secondly, requests for comments as well as hearings for NGOs gave them possibility to influence the formulation.

To improve the co-operation with the NGO community, a permanent representative of women's organisations was invited to the working party on follow up of the Plan of Action from March 1998 on.

In January 1999 a hearing was organised for NGOs concerning the preparation of the national report on implementation of the PFA.

Furthermore, as necessary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Equality Ombudsman's Office jointly arrange meetings with the NGO community and other relevant ministries and actors to discuss Finland's positions, strategies and further actions etc. NGOs are also represented in Finland's CSW-delegations.

II IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The measures described below are the ones identified for the National Action Plan by different branches of administration. The abbreviations in brackets in the end of subtitle of each measure refer to the Ministry responsible for the implementation.¹

Furthermore, information on some projects outside the National Action Plan is included such as the projects of the Central Organisations of Finnish Trade Unions.

Under each critical area there is first a short illustration of the situation on the respective area in Finland. These paragraphs also include some visions for women's advancement in the next millennium.

1. Women and poverty

As a consequence of women's established labour market status and the Finnish social security system that is based on individual needs, there is no evidence of significant differences in poverty risks between women and men. It seems that the situation has not changed even during the recession. However, women have slightly lower material standard of living due to the wage differentials between women and men.

One way to illustrate the poverty risk of different population groups is to contemplate the use of last-resort social welfare, income support. The need for income support is relatively high among single-parents out of which a clear majority are women; in practice every third single-parent has resorted to income support. The unemployment rate for single-mothers has also been higher than of mothers living in families with two supporters. However, risk of marginalisation is still more a problem of middle-aged men than of single-mothers.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

Marginalisation by gender (MSAH)

- The gender dimension is taken into account in the measures taken by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in reducing marginalisation. A plan of action on reducing marginality is being prepared by the Ministry and the co-operation between ministries has increased. A network of researchers of marginality has been created and research has been conducted related both to the marginalisation as well as survival of long term unemployed.

¹ The abbreviations of the Ministries are as follows: MFA - Ministry for Foreign Affairs; MJ - Ministry of Justice; MI - Ministry of the Interior; MD - Ministry of Defence; MFin - Ministry of Finance; MEd - Ministry of Education; MAF - Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; MTC - Ministry of Transport and Communication; MTI - Ministry of Trade and Industry; MSAH - Ministry of Social Affairs and Health; ML - Ministry of Labour; and MEnv - Ministry of the Environment.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

Examining the relationship between income transfers and equality (MSAH)

- The working party on the follow-up of the Plan of Action proposed that an ongoing impact assessment concerning the reform of income support system should include assessing the impacts on single parents out of which the majority are women.

2. Education and training of women

In Finland there is general agreement that gender equality has been achieved best in the field of education. Equality is one of the values underlying educational provision in Finland, and the principle is also included in the legislation pertaining to day-care and schools. The Comprehensive School Act which came into force in 1998 states that "education must promote culture and equality in society". This refers also to gender equality, which is set out in the preamble of the Act. Under the Equality Act, authorities and educational institutions must implement equality between women and men in educational provision and instruction.

Concerning literacy training, immigrants and for some part Romanies are the only groups where special attention needs to be paid to it. In comprehensive schools (compulsory education, enrolment rate 100% for both sexes), girls make up 49% of the pupils and in upper secondary schools 57%. More girls than boys continue in post compulsory education, and women under 55 years of age have more education and training than men of the same age. In vocational institutions, polytechnics and universities 51-53% of the students are women. Women's share has been on the increase among those taking post-graduate degrees being 40% of all new PhDs in 1997. However, women do not advance in their research careers as men do. Some studies have founds covert discrimination of women in the academic world.

There are still great differences between different fields of study, and the traditional gender-based subject choices still prevail. Girls tend to choose social and health care fields and languages, whereas the favourites among boys are information technology and engineering. Although attention has been paid to gender equality in curricula, teacher training, educational materials and various projects, it seems that education alone cannot change gender specific value judgements which are deeply rooted in society.

It appears that the education system does not have the tools and resources needed to bring about the desired changes. This is why it is important to encourage attitudes and measures that promote open-minded choices from the very first years of schooling. There are measures which would influence sex distribution without delay, such as quotas or less freedom of choice but the impact of such measures to the gender equality is not unequivocal. The educational system should support and develop different kinds of talent, and restrictions on options could undermine the objective of plurality.

Women are slightly more active in sports than men and their motivation for physical activity is closely linked to its health-promoting effects. Still, more money is spent on men's or boy's sports than on corresponding activities intended to girls and women. The differences between men's and women's sports is shrinking, but men tend to go in for more competitive sports.

In relation to adult education and training, the aim of the immigration and refugee programme approved by the Government in 1997 is to ensure that all adult immigrants are given training to teach them about Finnish society and working life, and if necessary vocational basic and continuing training. This is particularly helpful in the case of immigrant or refugee women who often come from families relying on a single member for their livelihood.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

Developing professional skills in the instruction of reproductive health (MEd)

- Educational material on reproductive and sexual health to be used in biology, physical education and health education at comprehensive schools has been produced by the National Board of Education.

Assessing the allocation of funds for sports and youth policy (MEd)

- The new Sports Act which came into force in 1999 states that the promotion of equality through physical education is one of the objectives of the Act.
- The Ministry of Education is funding projects in 1998-2000 that will investigate gender-related issues and promote gender equality in sports and youth policy e.g. a project on promoting female top athletes.
- The Finnish Sports Federation has adopted a Plan of Action on Promoting Gender Equality for 1998-2000. The Federation is the chair of the European Women and Sports Group (EWS) in the years 1998-2000. During its presidency the Federation will focus on women in decision making and organise the next EWS conference in Finland.
- The Ministry of Education grants every year a special allocation for gender equality work of sports organisations as well as a prize for efforts to promote equality in physical education.

Promoting women's studies (MEd and MSAH)

- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published in 1998 an investigation on ways in which equality and women's issues have been taken into account in sectoral research commissioned by Ministries and government research institutes. According to the investigation only 5% of the resources are targeted to research on equality. The investigation was commissioned by the Council for Equality.
- Eight new professorships for Women's Studies for a five-year period have been appointed to different universities. A multidisciplinary Minna Canth Academy professorship was established at the Academy of Finland in 1999 to promote women's studies.
- The Academy of Finland set up a working party in 1996 to investigate and assess ways in which women's careers; in research could be developed and to make proposals for removing obstacles to their careers; look into the effects of covert discrimination in scientific communities, and prepare a proposal for a development plan of the Academy entitled "Women Researchers 2010". The working party submitted its memorandum to the Academy of Finland in 1997. It included several proposals for measures related to developing evaluation methods, allocating the research funding granted by the Academy of Finland, improving the position of young researchers and researchers with families, and attitude training. Another working party was appointed for the follow-up

Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned

Promoting equality as part of educational objectives (MEd)

- The goal of gender equality in education is pursued according to the mainstreaming principle. However, in some cases, mainstreaming has become synonymous with haphazard and superficial implementation of gender equality. The Ministry of Education has stated that it

keeps this in mind when evaluating and monitoring local curricula and issuing instructions for drafting curricula.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

Promoting equality as part of educational objectives (MEd)

- The gender equality in education is emphasised in the Evaluation Project of Teacher-Education in Finnish Universities which is being conducted by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council.

Reducing gender bias in education and training (MEd)

- The objective of gender equality and reduction of gender bias in education has been taken into account in several development projects on education e.g. the national project "Finns' Skills in Maths and Natural Sciences in 2002". The project was set up for the years 1996-2002. A report on how the project will and could promote gender equality was produced in 1998. Several on-going sub-projects at universities and schools focus on girls' needs in developing the teaching methods of maths, physics and chemistry. The target of the project is to increase the share of girls up to 40% in the long course in maths, physics and chemistry in secondary school. Another target of the project is to increase the share of women to exceed 30% of the new students in technical fields by the year 2002. This will be done e.g. by intensifying student guidance.

A more balanced structure of sexes of polytechnics (MEd)

- The Ministry of Education is studying whether harmonising the structure of sexes could be used as a criterion when assessing the performance of polytechnics.

The early education of children (MEd)

- The educational objectives of day care centres with respect to gender equality and the revision of the objectives will be considered by a working party on the early education of children in Finland appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Developing professional skills in the instruction of reproductive health (MEd)

- According to the recent research, the human relations and sex education should be more comprehensive. The ways to improve the education are being studied by the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education.

3. Women and health

Health care services that reach entire age groups regardless of sex, place of residence and social class aim to reduce health differences. Such services include an extensive network of maternity child health centres, good school health service and fairly extensive occupational safety and health services. The national plan for the organisation of social welfare and health care services has warned against cuts that target health education, family planning and services, and counselling designed for parents.

Every two years the State of the Council submits a report on public health which also focuses on health differences between women and men.

In 1997 the life expectancy was 80,5 year for women and 73,4 for men. The clearest health difference between women and men is with the mortality which is much higher among men than among women. The biggest causes of death both among women and men are disease of the circulatory system and neoplasm. Cancer screening and campaigns have cut the morbidity and mortality rates for breast and cervical cancer in Finland.

Finnish women are pioneers on the health front and, more readily than men, they eat healthily, refrain from the use of intoxicants and practise sports. Women smoke as much as in the past, however. Health education that aims at reducing smoking and the use of alcohol and intoxicants should pay more attention to women's special needs.

The state budget includes yearly an allocation for the promotion of health. It is used to reduce smoking, prevent and lessen the use of intoxicants, promote a healthy diet and exercise, good mental health and reproductive health, encourage relationships that promote health in general as well as mental health, prevent accidents, prevent marginalisation, and carry out regional and national health campaigns. Funds are also granted for the monitoring of health behaviour.

Immigrant women should have the right to adhere to the traditions pertaining to their own religion. However, Finland cannot tolerate beliefs and practices that lead to punishable acts according to the Finnish law. One such practice is clitorodectomy (the mutilation of female genitals). It is possible to raise charges in cases involving clitorodectomy, as mutilation is a punishable act under the Finnish Penal Code.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

General public health care services. Promoting the health of young people (MSAH)

- Improving the health of young people is a foremost objective of health policy. In the health promotion the aims are to prevent and reduce smoking among the young, prevent their excessive use of alcohol, ameliorate the dietary habits of children and young people and improve their mental well-being. The sum allocated for the promotion of health has been used to fund a study on the health habits of young people and a large number of health-promoting projects for the young. Funding has also been granted to several projects for preventing the marginalisation of young people. In the studies and reports girls and boys are in separate categories, which will make it possible to target measures more carefully.

Preventing health hazards related to personal habits (MSAH)

- An inquiry into the health behaviour of the adult population is carried out yearly. The sum allocated for the promotion of health has been used to fund several projects aimed at women, for example projects to combat women's smoking habit, prevent women's use of intoxicants and encourage breast feeding.

Promoting health (MSAH)

- Yearly the sum allocated for health promotion is used to fund over 200 projects. For the year 1999 the terms of agreement on the funds used for health promotion were amended with a statement that the projects should be implemented in a way that they will promote equality.

Promoting reproductive health and well-being (MSAH)

- The funds budgeted for the promotion of health have been used for promoting reproductive health within the framework of the Family Planning 2000 project, boosting the activities of the Centre specialised in family planning and improving the qualifications of health care

teachers to give instruction in sex education and sexual counselling. The sum budgeted for the prevention of contagious diseases has been used to support projects preventing the spread of HIV.

- In 1997 all those turning 16 were sent a magazine which also included a letter about young people's sexuality addressed to their parents. A study concerning sex education in the upper level of comprehensive school in 1995-1996 was completed in 1997. The theme of the nation-wide seminar on Finnish sexuality arranged in autumn 1997 was "Young People and Sex", one of the sub-topics being boys' sexuality. A number of projects promoting young people's sexuality and sex education have received support, among them a plan to produce material for the sex education of the mentally handicapped.

*The relationship between occupational safety and health and equality
(MSAH and the Finnish Institute for Occupational Health FIOH)*

- The Finnish Institute for Occupational Health (FIOH) has conducted studies on how a gender perspective has been integrated into occupational health and safety.
- The psychology department of the FIOH has prepared a survey called "The Promotion of Equality in Working Communities" which examined the equality situation at Finnish workplaces of over 30 employees, including the readiness to draft an equality plan as part of general development measures. The survey includes instructions on how to audit equality and prepare an equality plan.
- The interview conducted as part of the project for the follow-up of working conditions and occupational health included questions on the existence of sexual harassment and conflicts at the workplace and on how women and men feel they are treated at Finnish workplaces.
- A survey "Gender and Working Conditions in the EU" has been conducted for the Dublin-based European Foundation. The study presents a cross-section of working conditions, the atmosphere at workplaces, sexual harassment, age-based discrimination, mobbing, physical violence and work-related stress in the European Community.
- A cross-disciplinary working party for the follow-up of women's occupational health and development has been set up at the FIOH.

Preventing female genital mutilation (MSAH)

- A brochure on female genital mutilation was published in 1997 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finnish, Somali and English.
- A co-operation group was formed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Labour to deal with the social welfare and health care of immigrants and refugees. The co-operation group ended its work in 1998. It emphasised the importance of staff development in services used by immigrants.

Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned

Preventing female genital mutilation (MSAH)

- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the University of Helsinki planned in spring 1997 a three-day training event for social welfare and health care staff and a three-day training event on the prevention of genital mutilation. The latter event was to deal with the cultural, social, physical and legal issues related to female genital mutilation. However, no training was arranged owing to the small number of participants.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

Continuing cancer screening (MSAH)

- Cancer screening and campaigns have cut the morbidity and mortality rates for breast and cervical cancer in Finland. These efforts should be continued and preferably intensified, and co-operation should be undertaken with NGOs.

The relationship between occupational safety and health and equality (MSAH and the Finnish Institute for Occupational Health FIOH)

- The research project "Promotion of Equality in Working Communities" will continue. The aim of the project is to elaborate a standard for an equal working place, and develop a method for working places to promote equality and evaluate the state of equality there.

Activities preventing disability in ageing women (MSAH and FIOH)

- A FIOH's "Young at Heart" programme in 1997-1999 focuses on age. The programme, which is funded by the European Social Fund, aims at improving the working ability and professional skills of the ageing and mainly female employees of small workplaces. Permanent operations models targeting age-related working ability will be created jointly between companies and occupational health service units.

Occupational safety and health in part-time work and telework and the timely rehabilitation of ageing female employees (MSAH and FIOH)

- A project for the development of occupational health service at occupational health centres will begin in 1999. It will among other topics, deal with the occupational health service provided to people in atypical employment. As part of the development project, the possibility of establishing so-called employee welfare clinics, especially for ageing employees, will be investigated. The project will take into account the equality principle and the special needs of women and men.
- The FIOH will contribute its expertise to the planning and implementation of the age-oriented programme aiming at improving the working ability of ageing female employees. The FIOH is responsible for research and development related to various forms of work and their impact on employees' health.

Improving the patients' position (MSAH)

- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has followed the implementation and consequences of the Act on a Patient's Status and Rights, which entered into force in 1993. Several studies show that some patients are dissatisfied with the information they obtain and with the extent to which they can influence their own treatment. Women especially feel that they receive too little information on their health. For example women giving birth would like to have a greater say in decisions concerning them. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will set a working party to look into issues related to a patient's status and recommend appropriate measures. A legislative project concerning the status of patients of social welfare was underway in April 1999.

4. Violence against women

The issue of violence against women was brought to the national political agenda as a problem that needs to be tackled by the Sub-Committee on Violence appointed by the Council for

Equality in 1990. During the following year the Committee submitted a report that set the basis for diverse activities in the early 90s. The services developed for supporting women and children that are victims of violence include e.g. shelters and a nation-wide crisis centre established by a NGO offering therapy and legal counselling. Because effective planning and implementation of measures to prevent violence against women have suffered from a lack of basic information about the problem and its linkages, an extensive survey on safety of women's was conducted in 1998. According to the survey 40% of adult women living in Finland have been victims of male physical or sexual violence or threats after their 15th birthday.

During the 90s legislation has been amended in a way that it provides a better protection and support for the victims of violence. As from 1 September 1995, assault is an offence subject to public prosecution even when committed in private premises (Amendment Act no. 578/1995). According to the preparatory works, the objective of this particular amendment was to emphasise that violence was not to be tolerated even within domestic situations.

The most urgent need for training concerns those whose profession is to provide people with help such as the police. These professions should learn to perceive violence and to find appropriate solutions to situations involving violence.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

Legislation on assaults and sexual offences (MJ)

- Sexual offences are dealt with in chapter 20 of the Penal Code. A total reform of the chapter entered into force in the beginning of 1999 (563/1998). For instance, after the reform the chapter contains a separate provision on aggravated rape. The general rule is that sexual offences are subject to public prosecution.
- The new Criminal Procedure Act (689/1997) entered into force in October 1997. According to the Act the court may appoint a counsel to assist the victim of a violent or sexual offence in the criminal investigation and the trial. If the victim is not a party to the trial, a support person may be appointed for her/him for the criminal investigation and the trial.

Legislation on the restraining order (MJ)

- Act on Restraining Orders entered into force in the beginning of 1999 (898/1998). Restraining orders can be used to prevent offences directed at the life, health, liberty or undisturbed peace of other person or to otherwise contact him/her. For special reasons, the approach prohibition could cover also certain location, such as the home or workplace of the protected person. A restraining order can be issued for the fixed period, not to exceed one year. Such an order is renewable. A violation of the order is an offence punishable by a fine or by imprisonment for at most one year. Restraining order can be issued by a court of law; the police can issue provisional orders. A restraining order can be applied for by the person in need of protection and also by certain authorities.

Basic statistics on violence (MSAH)

- Statistics Finland has produced basic statistics on violence and it will look into possibility of producing such data regularly.

Interviewing female victims of violence: the safety of women (MSAH)

- An extensive survey of men's violence against women and safety of women was conducted in 1998 by Statistics Finland in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The results were published both in Finnish and in English.

Training the police in issues related to violence against women (MI)

- The Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior has arranged a seminar on violence against women as part of a training for police officers. A module dealing with the problems of violence against women will be included in the basic training scheme of police officers. Different partners are currently planning the training. Experimental training has been started with a series of two-hour lectures.
- The issue of violence against women has been dealt in articles written to the magazines of police forces. The articles have focused on how to help and guide the victims of crimes to seek help from the authorities and NGOs.

Developing regional co-operation between the police and authorities dealing with preventing violence against women (MI)

- Co-operation with the police has been improved together with a family violence working group of the City of Helsinki dealing with topics relating to a healthy and safe city. Another co-operation with a project helping violent men has been started. The police participated in planning and realising the information campaign on combating violence against women in Helsinki. The campaign consisted of a poster campaign, news flashes on TV and a counselling hot line.
- At the regional level the co-operation between the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior and regional as well as national authorities dealing with preventing violence against women has been developed. A representative of the Department has participated in the planning and decision making bodies of such authorities. The Department has given financial support to a help line for victims of violence as well as to a project to treat men prone to violence.

Commercialised sex, prostitution and trafficking in women (MSAH)

- The National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES) arranged in 1997 a Nordic researchers' conference on the clients of prostitutes.
- The prevention of trafficking in women was treated jointly with the European Union during Holland's presidency in 1997. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice participated in the drafting of the Hague Ministerial Declaration on European Guidelines for Effective Measures to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation. The Ministers of Equality and the Ministers of Justice of the European Union adopted the declaration in 1997.
- The Ministry of the Interior appointed a working party to develop effective measures to prevent trafficking in women and men in 1999. The working party co-operates with the authorities of EU and adjoined countries of Finland.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appointed a working party in 1999 to prepare a program to prevent commercialised sexual exploitation of children.
- The Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior issued guidelines to the police for combating prostitution and related crime in 1997.

Assessing permit policies. Combating trafficking in people and illegal immigration (MAF)

- For several years, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Finnish diplomatic missions have tried to find ways of preventing trafficking in people and illegal immigration for the purpose of sexual exploitation. However, diplomatic missions can do little to prevent such activities, especially between countries where no visa is required. Those missions tackling with the problem of trafficking, have been informed of the resolution adopted by the EU in 1997 on

"fake" marriages. Furthermore, those handling visa applications are trained to pay attention to and notice these activities. This has increased alertness and helped uncover wrongdoing.

Study on trafficking in wives (MSAH)

- A working party set up by the Ministry of Justice detected and uprooted problems on the phenomenon of mail-order wives. The working party did not propose any legislative measures but stressed that the present legislation should be applied when combating the problem.

Project for preventing violence against women (MSAH)

- In the beginning of 1998 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health launched two national five-year projects, one for the prevention of violence against women and the other for the prevention of prostitution. Both the projects are carried out by the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES). All ministries except the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Environment are represented in the managerial team of the project
- The project for the prevention of violence against women aims to strengthen attitudes opposed to violence, to make violence visible and to make the public aware of its extent and impact on the society, to reduce the incidence of violence, and to ensure that easily accessible services are available for the victims and the perpetrators. As the first measure 12 regional multiprofessional teams have been set up in different parts of Finland to plan and co-ordinate work in their own areas. A media campaign together with the city of Helsinki was launched in 1998, the national campaign will follow at a later date.
- The project on prevention of prostitution gathers and disseminates information and follows up on prostitution and different forms of commercialised sex at the international and national levels; promotes research. A further task of the project is to produce different kinds of operative models in order to create a basis for social decision-making and to promote co-operation with authorities and NGOs in striving to prevent prostitution and to reduce the disadvantages connected to the phenomenon. Promotion of equal, positive, and nonviolating modes of sexuality is a main goal of the project.

Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned

Project for preventing violence against women (MSAH)

- In April 1999 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health was the only ministry supporting the project financially. In the future financial commitment of especially Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the project is crucial concerning launching regional pilotprojects and developing models of co-operation.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

The costs of violence (MSAH)

- The material, non-material, direct and indirect costs of violence against women will be evaluated by the Council for Equality, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Statistics Finland.

Hearing a victim without the presence of the accused (MJ)

- The Ministry of Justice plans to extend the right of a victim of an offence to be heard without the presence of the accused.

Monitoring the legislative reform (MJ)

- Evaluation of the application of the Sexual Offence Act which came into force in 1999, will be conducted by the year 2001. The Ministry of Justice has informed about the reform of the Act and will organise training on it in 1999.

Educational programme on the ill effects of sex tourism (MSAH and MTI)

- According to the proposal of the Ministry of Justice's Sex Business Committee, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Trade and Industry are preparing an educational programme to reduce the ill effects of sex tourism for the spring 1999.

5. Women and armed conflict

Infringements of women's rights in armed conflicts have spread and taken on increasingly brutal forms. In some cases, women and girls have even been made the tools of warfare. Finland underlines the importance of work to further preventive action and the need to bring those responsible to justice.

The Statute of the International Criminal Court pays special attention to human rights and humanitarian aspects. The crimes falling with the Court's jurisdiction include genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Finland was instrumental in ensuring that sexual crimes were included under crimes against humanity.

6. Women and the economy

The aim of the Equality Act is to promote equality of women and men, to prevent discrimination on the basis of sex and to promote women's status particularly in working life. The Act i.a. emphasises purposeful and systematic work for equality. At workplaces with a minimum of 30 regular employees, the employer is obliged to make an equality plan indicating practical measures by which the workplace can promote gender equality. The purpose is to reduce the differentiation of jobs according to sex, to promote individual professional development and advancement of career on an equal footing and to develop the working climate and fair pay.

Work is the basis for women's economic independence in Finland and women have always worked on an almost equal basis with men. The proportion of women of the Finnish workforce was 47,5% in 1997. Public services support women's employment and a clear majority of the women wage-earners have a full-time job. However, more women than men are in fixed term and atypical employment relationships. Out of all wage earners 10% work part time. Out of them 65% are women. It is foreseen that part time jobs will increase in the future.

Although women are organised and have higher education than men the average earnings of women wage-earners for normal hours worked was 82% in 1997 of the level for men. Difference can be partly explained with the sex segregated labour market - men dominated sectors are predominantly better paid than women-dominated sectors.

A two year incomes policy agreement is at present in force in Finland covering the period from January 1998 to January 2000. This agreement contains several elements which aim to improve gender equality, for example a special equality allowance now included in the 1998 pay increase scales. Furthermore, the promotion of equality in the workplace was recorded in the agreement as a significant objective. Both the employers' and employees' central organisations in Finland agreed that gender equality should be a central issue when the conditions of employment are being further developed.

To improve conditions for women's employment the objectives of the Finnish employment policy are to observe the mainstreaming principle in public economic policy, support for women's entrepreneurship, make child care systems more flexible and increase father participation in them, make training on information technology more interesting to girls and improve the standing of those working in atypical employment relationship.

Special measures are needed to increase the employment opportunities of immigrant women, Romany and Sami women as well as disabled women who sometimes encounter discrimination in the labour market.

In addition to the wages, economic independence for Finnish women is guaranteed with the help of social security.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

Reforms of labour legislation affecting gender equality (ML)

- The provisions on leaves of absence granted for family reasons have been renewed in 1998 on basis of the preparation work done by the Committee on the Employment Contracts Act. The new provisions are more flexible and allow parents to take part of the leaves simultaneously.
- The experiment with job alternation leaves will continue until the end of 2001. Many reports on the subject have been published in the research series of the Ministry of Labour. 70% of

those who use job alternation leaves are women, although these leaves are naturally meant for both women and men.

Removing disadvantages related to atypical employment (ML)

- The Employment Contracts Act, Study Leave Act and Occupational Safety Act have been revised in 1997 and the Annual Holiday Act 1998 to harmonise the status of persons in atypical employment and that of regularly employed persons. Furthermore, the right of persons in atypical employment to receive pension security has been improved.

Development projects related to the EU's Employment Now (New Opportunities for Women) Community initiatives (ML)

- Women's self-employment has been promoted with the support of the development projects that have sprung from the EU's Employment Now Community initiatives. All together 20 two-years or three-years NOW projects started in 1996-1998. The projects have e.g. developed new training models and gender sensitive guidance of employment and aimed to improve the employment systems for those in a weak position on the labour market. Furthermore, the projects have raised the interest to the questions on equality both locally and regionally.

Cutting the indirect labour costs imposed on small and medium-sized enterprises (MTI)

- The aim of the national policy programme for small and medium-sized enterprises has been to streamline the administrative process related to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), reforming taxation and lowering labour costs, and reinforcing the finance markets of SMEs. This in turn would increase demand for the products and services of small and medium-sized enterprises. The benefit would be reaped especially by labour-intensive companies in the service sector, which are often founded and run by women. The Ministry of Trade and Industry has set up working parties and produced reports on the implementation of the programme and on the necessary new implementation measures. According to the reports, majority of the proposals on simplifying the permit and declaration procedures of SMEs have been or are being implemented.

Supporting women entrepreneurs within the schemes of the Structural Funding of the European Union (ML)

- The Ministry of Labour has produced an evaluation on the implementation of equality objectives in the schemes financed by the Structural Funds in 1998. The amount of women in the projects financed by the Structural Fund ranges from 31-49% depending on the target program. There have been several projects promoting women's employment. Of the people involved in projects targeting to support entrepreneurship 44% have been women.
- Two out of 22 local groups implementing the LEADER II Community initiatives are targeting their activities especially to women and they aim to improve women's entrepreneurship. 60% of the executive leaders of the local groups are women. Women are also well represented in the local boards and lot of the realisers of the initiatives are women. The gender perspective is monitored when implementing schemes.
- In the programs 5b and 6 the gender aspect is taken into account in monitoring the changes in places of employment and participation to training. The application forms of the programs have a question on equality aims and on their implementation. The new follow up system was adopted in 1998. In the follow up, the projects are classified into three groups: projects led by women; projects that have women as their target group; and other projects relevant or beneficial from women's point of view.

- The guidance on how to integrate equal opportunities in the new schemes of the Structural Funds and in the regional plans on rural areas have been sent to the Regional Councils as well as to the Employment and Economic Development Centres.

Monitoring the results of women's entrepreneurship training (MTI)

- The Ministry of Trade and Industry has prepared a set of programmes, including the Ladies' Business School and a project providing training, counselling and other development services to women entrepreneurs. In 1996 the Ministry of Trade and Industry launched a project which resulted in the establishment of Women's Enterprise Agency. The primary objective of the Agency is to promote and encourage women's entrepreneurship and to encourage women both in rural areas and in towns to become self-employed, to support new viable forms of women entrepreneurship and networking among female entrepreneurs. The Agency has received lot of customer contacts and organised training and customer events, as well as a mentor project for new entrepreneurs.
- Training on entrepreneurship for unemployed with academic degree was organised by the Women's Enterprise Agency in co-operation with the Swedish School of Economics in Helsinki. The Agency has also organised network activities for the women trained in the Ladies' Business School. Co-operation with the Centres for New Entrepreneurs has been developed. The Agency has received lot of publicity which in turn has promoted the issue of women entrepreneurs'.
- The Employment and Economic Development Centres have provided training for women entrepreneurs since 1998. The plans of action for 1999 of the Centres contain specific measures aimed at promoting women entrepreneurs.

Monitoring the loans granted by Kera Ltd (nowadays Finnvera plc, a specialised financing company) to women entrepreneurs (MTI)

- Special loans have been granted for the investment and development projects of women entrepreneurs starting up or developing their operations. This special loan for women entrepreneurs will be granted during a trial period of five years, and allocation of the loans will be closely monitored. In 1997 altogether FIM 84 million and in 1998 FIM 82 million was granted as special loans for 1194 enterprises, for women entrepreneurs. It has been estimated that the loans have contributed to the creation of 1350 new jobs. In 1999 maximum FIM 80 million will be granted as loans for women entrepreneurs.

Evaluating the schemes financed by the Structural Funds (MI)

- A joint project by several Ministries has been to develop methods of assessing structural policy. One outcome of the project is a publication on the evaluation of structural policy on the basis of the equality aspect given an account on how the evaluation can be carried out with regard to the promotion of equality in programs and projects. The publication is aimed at serving as a guide for evaluators as well as administrators and elected officials dealing with regional and structural policy.
- The assessment of impact and results of the schemes related to Objectives 6, 2 and 5b are being studied. The mid-term follow-up reports are already in use in the assessment work. In the interim assessment of the Objective 5b a separate study was made from the equal opportunities perspective. The study included several recommendations on how the equality aspect can be promoted.
- The preparation work for the period 2000-2006 concerning the schemes related to Objectives 1 and 2 is under way. The Ministry of the Interior has wanted to pay attention of the Regional Councils to the principle of promoting equality in implementing the schemes. In this respect it is necessary to take into account the experiences gathered in the current program-

ming period and the evaluation results gained from the implementation of the Structural Fund Programmes. A checklist on equality dimensions has been sent to the regions.

Diversifying the activities of rural entrepreneurship (MI and MAF)

- The Rural Women's Theme Group has initiated an experimental entrepreneurship programme where loans, co-operation and training are combined in support of entrepreneurs. The program contains of four groups of women and in every group at least one woman has started entrepreneurship during the first year. The activities of the program will be expanded in the future.
- There are tens of on-going projects in Finland encouraging and training rural women to entrepreneurship. The Rural Women's Theme Group publishes quarterly a newsletter giving information on training and financing opportunities available.

Reducing sex segregation in vocational counselling and in labour market training (ML)

- The aid granted by the Ministry of Labour to projects aiming at developing working life has been directed in the same proportion to female- and male-dominated fields, all together to 280 projects. However, among the project proposals there were none aiming to develop equality. A few basic research projects dealing with equality questions has been supported. The Ministry has also supported the project "An Equal Work Community" that includes nine work places in both the private and public sector.
- The training and rehabilitation department of the Ministry sent in 1997 a letter to the job centres of Employment and Economic Development Centres concerning the principles of labour market training. The letter placed emphasis on the promotion of gender equality both when selecting students and when planning training. Efforts were also made to increase the share of women in traditionally male-dominated fields and vice versa, with respect to vocational counselling as well as other customer service and labour market training.

Training female Air Force pilots (MD)

- The objective of the project launched in 1997 is to offer women the same possibility as men to apply for Air Force pilot training. Since summer 1997, the first two women performing their voluntary military service attended successfully the Air Force reserve officers' course. One of the other was chosen upon application to the four-year air warfare branch of the cadet course, which will provide fighter pilot training that will make the students eligible for the post of Air Force pilot in 2002. From 1998 on women have been able to apply to the new Air Force reserve officers' course. In 1998 one woman was accepted. The Ministry of Defence monitors and evaluates the situation of female pilot trainees in the training process of the Air Force.

Analysis of the state's wage structure by sex (MFin)

- The guidelines for developing the wage systems applied by the State have been entered into the 1993 collective agreements. Fair, motivating and equal wages for all employees and employee groups are the objective. The State Labour Market Office reports every year on the State's wage structure and on the effect of different wage items on equal pay. The State has promoted equal pay by helping offices develop their wage systems. In the new systems everyone's salary depends both on the demand of the job and on personal competence and performance. It is important to know the respective difficulty of women's and men's work when seeking to promote equal pay.
- The relationship between job difficulty and salary, on the one hand, and sex, on the other, has been analysed in an experimental study on evaluating the difficulty of State jobs. The ex-

perimental study shows that men's work is considered more demanding than women's work in all of the branches and, with one exception, in all of the offices and public services, or evaluation groups, examined. This differs for example from the results of the study ordered by the national work evaluation group. This observation prompts the organisers of the study to ask how the State jobs have been divided, has the evaluation system failed to pay sufficient attention to the capabilities and efforts required in women's work, or are there still other reasons for the result? The matter needs to be analysed in more detail.

Equality plans of the Ministries (all Ministries)

- Ministries, offices, public services and State-owned companies should demonstrate exemplary compliance with the obligations laid down by the Equality Act. This includes drafting annual plans for the promotion of equality and carrying out the staff policy measures that have been decided on. Most of the Ministries have made equality plans and e.g. conducted an equality survey, set up a permanent working group on equality, and organised monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the plan.
- As an example the Ministry for Foreign Affairs prepared an equality plan for years 1997-1998. The working group in charge lined concrete objectives and actions as well as set indicators on how to follow up the situation. The Ministry has reported the following breakthroughs: the balanced representation of the new recruits for the course in International Affairs has been good; the number of women at higher wage levels has increased; the number of women in higher/executive posts increased from 20 in 1996 to 30 women in 1998; and the number of men taking paternity leave has increased from 10 men in 1996 to 18 men in 1998. Furthermore, a follow-up group and an "ombudsman" for equality issues were established in 1993. The body's task is to follow up the implementation of the proposed actions. The follow-up group is expected to continue its work examining possible future measures to promote equality. The Ministry has a data based information system on personnel matters which enables collection of the information on equality issues easily.

Development programme for office staff (MFin)

- The Ministry of Finance implemented a development programme for office staff. The programme was based on the principle of staff rotation among the different units of state administration and on related training. 31 office employees working for the State - all women - rotated to another State organisation. The period of rotation is 4, 6 or, in most cases, 8 months. According to the evaluation of the program e.g. professional skills were improved. On the basis of positive experiences proposals will be made for increasing staff rotation as a means of staff development.

Training for trade union members (The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions)

- The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions has developed training for trade union members in order to activate commitment to equality actions in workplaces. The objective of the training targeted at women activists at the workplaces is to provide learning methods and teaching aids which will increase the working women's ability both to work and take action. Another training module for enhancing co-operation between women and men is targeted at both male and female members of trade unions.

Supporting self-employment of unemployed women (The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions)

- The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions together with nine affiliated unions have started a two year project "Seeking new channels - the skilful women" supported by Euro-

pean Social Fund, as part of the EU's Employment NOW Community initiatives. The objective of the project is to create a self-guiding learning model which will create continuity to the self employment of unemployed women by means of training and co-operation. The target group is low educated women with quite long work experience and good workmanship. The most important objective of the programme is to improve the trainees chances to return back to the working life.

Reinforcing men's role as fathers and grandfathers, fatherhood training and parental leaves (MSAH)

- A broadly-based committee set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health worked in 1998-1999 to find ways of reinforcing the father's and grandfather's role and rights and their possibility of experiencing fatherhood to the full in different stages of their lives. The committee evaluated the current practices, status of fathers vis-à-vis changes in the family in working life and in society. It made proposals on legislative reforms as well as on research and development projects that would support the role of fathers.
- The men's division of the Council for Equality prepared together with the Nordic Council of Ministers an international conference on the theme "Following Father's Steps" in 1998.
- The sum allocated for the promotion of health has been used on a few projects that strive to reinforce men's role as fathers; this is illustrated for example by the continuing training event for health care teachers called "Supporting the Father's Role in a Family".

Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned

Development projects related to the EU's Employment Now (New Opportunities for Women) Community initiatives (ML)

- The project leaders of the EU's NOW-projects have been surprised to notice how there still are lot of prejudices against equality work in different parts of Finland.

Supporting women entrepreneurs within the schemes of the Structural Funding of the European Union (ML)

- The project-specific objectives state that each project must provide employment to women and men in proportion to their unemployment rate. However, the amount of women has been lower than their share among the unemployed in all except one program.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

Child guidance and family counselling (MSAH)

- In relation to reconciling working life with family life a working party appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has produced a memo on the state and developing possibilities of child guidance and family counselling. A development program on family counselling is prepared together with STAKES.

Reforms of labour legislation affecting gender equality (ML)

- The principal labour legislation is being reformed. The new Working Hours Act entered into force on 23 November 1996, and a committee is looking into the need to reform the Employment Contracts Act. The mainstreaming principle is kept in mind both when applying the former Act and revising the latter.

The Job Profile -project aimed at employers (ML)

- A Nordic Job Profile -project targeting employers will be applied when building co-operation between employment authorities and companies. A Nordic seminar will be arranged in 1999 focusing on gender mainstreaming principle in employment agencies, the services provided to employers, guidance, recruiting, and labour market measures.

The effect of European Community aid provisions on rural women (MAF)

- The Finnish Government negotiates with the European Commission on reforming the aid system so as to bring the conditions for granting aid more into line with the earlier national system. Finland plans to take up the problems posed by the present Community aid provisions especially with respect to rural women's status also when European acts on the structure of agriculture are being reformed.

Promoting equal pay (ML and MFin)

- The Ministry of Labour has financed a project called "A Company Undergoing Change" to gather information on low-paid employment. The labour market is witnessing the emergence of extremely low-paid employment where the salary is not enough to provide a livelihood. This phenomenon must be addressed and social security and taxation systems must be reformed as dictated by the changes in working life. A report on the project will be published in 1999

The mentoring of management-level state officials (MFin)

- Mentoring will be one of the development methods available to the pilot offices that have been involved in projects aiming at developing management methods and management potential within the offices. One of the aims of the project is to promote ways in which women can increase their competence in managerial and expert positions.
- The Ministry of Finance will start together with the Finnish Association of Local and Regional Authorities a mentoring program which would involve staff from the state and municipal offices.

Women in the Defence Forces/Evaluating the results of the 1992 study (MD)

- The study will follow up the implementation of the improvements recommended in the 1992 study on women in the defence forces and their impact on the atmosphere of the workplace. Preparations for the study have been started and it will be ready in 1999.

7. Women in power and decision-making

Although Finnish women were granted full political rights as early as 1906, the proportion of women in political decision making has grown slowly. In the last parliamentary election of March 1999, 37% of the members elected were women (corresponding figures in 1995 34%, in 1991 38,5%). Out of the 18 ministers 8 are women (44,4%). Since the amendment of the Equality Act in 1995, the 40/60 quota principle of the Act has considerably increased women's participation in decision making in government committees, advisory boards as well as in municipal bodies excluding municipal council.

The amount of women among the highest ranking officials has grown constantly in the 90s. In 1995 women accounted for 32% of the highest ranking officials in the state administration. The

criteria and method used to select top civil servants have gradually been revised. One of the aims is to increase the proportion of women in such posts.

The proportion of women in executive positions in the private sector is smaller compared to the public sector being 25% in 1995. The sex segregation of the labour market applies also to the decision making posts - women have the best possibilities to reach the top in women dominated sectors. Possible means to support women's access to decision making posts are positive action, helping to reconcile the work and family life as well as revising the recruitment and appointment criterion.

Immigrant women are in special danger of being left out of mainstream society. A priority goal of the Government is to improve the participation opportunities of women belonging to certain minority groups such as Lapps, Romanies and immigrants, and encourage them to transmit and develop their cultural traditions. The voice of minority women often goes unheard in mainstream society, as minority groups are typically represented by men. Minorities, both women and men, have particular needs that must be attended to.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

Assessing permit policies from the gender perspective (MI)

- The Ministry of the Interior has given directions for the procedure of deciding on the granting of asylum. With women asylum seekers there should be female officers and interpreters especially when women have difficulties to fully express themselves due to their past experiences of cultural background.

Providing consistent government aid to women's organisations (MEd and MI)

- The government aid for the women's organisations was slightly bigger in 1999 than in previous years, and the organisations have received project grants from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry will continue to support the activities of women's organisations.

Increasing the participation of minority women in decision-making (MSAH, ML)

- The Council for Ethnic Relations consists of representatives from both immigrants and ethnic minorities such as Lapps and Romans. According to the quota requirements, 40-60% of the regular members of the Council are women. The Council has appointed a sub committee on women's rights.

Promoting equality of the disabled (MEd, MSAH and ML)

- The participation of disabled women in labour market training and in the European Social Fund's training and employment projects for the disabled is being monitored. The equality objective has been reached fairly well in these projects and training.
 - The promotion of disabled women has been entered as a separate item in the action programme of the National Council for the Disabled under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
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Promoting gender equality as Finland prepares for presidency of the European Union (MFin and MFA)

- Among the 270 chair persons of the task forces related to the Finnish EU presidency there are 90 female chairs. Furthermore, among national representatives there are 205 women and 210 men.

Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned

Providing consistent government aid to women's organisations (MEd and MI)

- The Coalition on the Finnish Women's Association for Joint Action, were heard at the meeting of the steering group for the lottery act project in 1997 at the Ministry of the Interior. The Coalition considered that when lottery legislation is being reformed, an amendment should be made to authorise the yields from money lotteries, pools and betting games to be used also for the operations of women's organisations. The women's organisations proposed an initial allocation of FIM 5 million to be distributed. In the steering group's view, the yields from pools should not be allocated in the manner proposed by women's organisations. Aid should be granted on the basis of activities, regardless of the organisation carrying them out. In other words, women's organisations would receive aid on the basis of their activities, not because of membership structure or general goal of the organisation.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

Increasing women in decision-making in agriculture and forestry (MAF)

- The objective is to give women more power in the administrative branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and in the rural sector, and to increase their numbers in the administrative bodies of advisory organisations.

Assessing permit policies from the gender perspective (MI)

- The Directorate of Immigration has been planning internal guidance on how more attention could be paid to the applicants' culture and country of origin when deciding on granting residence and work permits to immigrants and refugees or when deciding on the granting of asylum. A researcher has been hired to develop the guidance, service of clients and availability of country information.
- The possibility of considering women a special social group as referred to in the Refugee Convention will be examined in co-operation with the European Union.

Increasing the participation of minority women in decision-making (MSAH, ML)

- The Migration Division of the Ministry of Labour has started a quality project that will be carried out in 1998-1999 to promote the education of illiterate adult quota refugees. Ethnic and gender equality is the objective, with women as a special target. The project will implement the mainstreaming principle.
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Promoting equality of the disabled (MEd, MSAH and ML)

- The evaluation of the second-level vocational training given in comprehensive school was conducted in 1995 by the National Board of Education. Following this, an action programme was drafted to develop the quality of specialised training for those who need additional support. The development measures were organised into separate projects covering 1997-2001. The programme, based on the equality principle, aims at improving the quality of instruction. These objectives concern both comprehensive school and second-level vocational training.

8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

A permanent consultative body within the state administration, the Council for Equality was set up in 1972. It aims to prevent discrimination of grounds of sex, and to improve the status of women in general.

The Act on Equality between Women and Men came into force in 1987. The post of the Equality Ombudsman was set up in the same year. The office of the Equality Ombudsman is a unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The main functions of the Ombudsman are to monitor the application of the Act and, in particular, the ban on discrimination, and provide advice and statements on the application of the Act.

Since 1987 one of the ministers of the government has been nominated to handle the duties of Minister for Equality.

The Government committed to promote equality according to the mainstreaming principle in the National Plan of Action. This principle is also put on record in the Programme of the newly elected government.

The Government recognises the important role of NGO community as well as labour market organisations and aims to work in partnership with them especially in promoting the status of women.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

Mainstreaming project / MFA, MEd, MAF, MSAH, ML, MEnv)

- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health launched in 1998 a three year project for developing and testing administrative practices in line with the mainstreaming principle. Models will be created for applying this principle to the preparation of government proposals and to budget and information control. The project is part of a larger mainstreaming project prepared by the Nordic Council of Ministers as well as of the mainstreaming projects of the 4th action program of the EU. The project was allocated 370 000 FIM in 1998 and 212 000 FIM in 1999. In co-operation with the Mainstreaming project of the MSAH five other ministries have launched sub-projects on mainstreaming.
 - The mainstreaming project of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs concerns training for Finland's presidency of the EU. One of the objectives of the project was a balanced representation of women and men as chairs and national representatives. There are approximately 80 working groups under the chairmanship of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. About 50% of the chairs and the national representatives of the working groups are women.
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- The mainstreaming project of the Ministry of Education examines youth policies in three dimensions: equal opportunity in national youth policy and youth service organisations; equal opportunity in regional and structural policies; and equal opportunity in the development of the immediate community. According to the survey conducted by MEd there were great differences in the extent to which girls were represented in national youth organisations, mostly depending on the type of the organisation.
- In autumn 1997 a mainstreaming project for the promotion of equality was undertaken at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, within the structural unit of the Department of Agriculture. The aim of the first year was to promote equality in drafting of acts as well as in other operation of the unit. A special aim has been to amend more equal legislation on the start-up support of young farmers. Another aims of the process have been to commit the decision makers and administration to take equality concerns into account; increase the expertise in equality issues; as well as systematically promote equality in the administrative sector of the MAF. According to the partial assessment made in the MAF around 50% of the targets had been met. The MAF has used a step-by-step approach as the framework of mainstreaming.
- The Ministry of the Environment will formulate a guide book for the planners and administrator involved in the environmental impact assessment procedure. The aim of the guidebook is to analyse the interaction between different parties and administrators. The methods to bring up the views of both women and men are being developed.
- The mainstreaming project of the Ministry of Labour concerns the development of the Ministry's work processes and work organisation. Along with the project the whole staff of the ML has been trained. Among those selected to the training for managers and key experts 52% were women. The renewal of the work organisation included selecting leaders for working teams and 47% of them were women. Furthermore, the ML was divided into to departments and an working group for equality will be nominated for both of the departments. In 1998 the ML produced a report on the equality work and state of the equality of the Ministry and made an inquiry in two of the units on the equality situation. The Ministry of Labour is developing methods to follow-up and monitor the state of equality in the Ministry.
- The mainstreaming project of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health aims to take gender equality into account in the development project for the staff of the Labour Protection Department. A mapping on competence and demand for training has been developed for each member of the staff of the department in 1998. The mappings will be used in the defining the need for staff training. Another aim of the project has been to include gender consideration into the training of the staff of the Department. However, the gender aspect has not been considered to be especially problematic.

Promoting gender equality as Finland prepares for presidency of the European Union (MFin and MFA)

- Prior to its presidency in 1999, Finland has highlighted a gender perspective when planning specific training and issuing instructions and recommendations related to the preparations in 1996-1998.
- Work - co-ordinated by the Ministry of Finance - in preparation for Finland's presidency of the European Union has been carried out within public administration since 1996. When choosing persons for training, Ministries have been guided by the training strategy for Fin-

land's presidency and the instructions of the Ministry of Finance; as many women and men have been signed up for training. However, the chairpersons of most of the task forces are men. Women and men have participated equally actively in training. The Ministries concerned will decide whether to integrate a gender perspective in the issues dealt with during Finland's presidency.

- The training for Finland's presidency of the European Union targets the entire staff at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, regardless of sex. Target groups provided special training are the chairpersons of the task forces. In this way the training of civil servants is linked to the present staff arrangements and internal recruiting. About 65% of the participants in staff training at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs are women.
- In 1997 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Finnish Institute of Public Management and the Council for Equality organised a seminar on equality issues in the EU's structural and agricultural policy for those being trained for Finland's presidency.

Action of the Finnish government at the EU Intergovernmental Conference (MFA)

- The Finnish government promoted actively the inclusion of gender equality into the Treaty of Amsterdam that was adopted as a result of the Intergovernmental Conference. Article 2 of the Treaty was supplemented with a provision on the promotion of equality and Article 3 with a provision on the mainstreaming principle, and accordingly the Community strives to promote gender equality and remove inequality in the activities of the Community. The Council was given the authority to take measures for example to combat gender-based discrimination on the basis of Article 6 a, which contains a general clause against discrimination. Furthermore, Article 119 on equal pay was reinforced in several ways. The new wording of the Article states that the principle concerns not only the same work but also equivalent work. The Council uses the co-decision procedure to implement equality measures, and Member States are reserved the right to take positive action.

Compiling statistics in view of gender equality (MSAH, all Ministries and Statistics Finland)

- The Statistics Finland has improved the availability of statistics on gender equality by e.g. preparing two publications on women's participation in decision making as well as a publication on gender equality situation in society.

The equality barometer and equality indicators (MSAH and Statistics Finland)

- A first Finnish Gender Barometer on citizen's experiences and attitudes about gender equality was produced in 1998 jointly by the Council for Equality and Statistics Finland. Subsequent gender barometers will be carried out at regular interval to reflect trends in male-female relations in Finland.

Training at the highest level (all Ministries)

- The aim of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health was to co-ordinate a project to acquaint the highest-ranking officials with equality issues. However, there was little demand for such training among these officials. It was considered that the hearing of Heads of Offices on the state of equality in each of the ministries organised for the follow-up of the Plan of Action substituted the training.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

Compiling statistics in view of gender equality (MSAH, all Ministries and Statistics Finland)

- Statistics Finland has decided to allocate resources for the development of equality statistics. Statistics are also being improved as the different ministries start applying the mainstreaming principle. The aim within educational administration is to continue attaining and providing sex segregated data. The aim of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is to develop statistics so that they would allow gender impact assessment.

Evaluation of the effects of the Equality Act (MSAH)

- A evaluation on the practical effects of the Equality Act commenced in 1998. The study will focus on application practices and social impact of the Act, especially in working life and social decision-making

Training users of statistics and research (MSAH)

- A user training will be developed for the experts officials responsible for the preparation of governmental decisions on how to use impact analyses, statistics and research related to equality issues.

Promoting gender equality as Finland prepares for presidency of the European Union (MFin and MFA)

- According to the initiative taken by the Minister of Equality Affairs the EU unit of the Council of State requested Ministries to report all the conferences, programs, legislation that are being prepared relating to the EU presidency and have an equality dimension. Only four out of 13 Ministries reported having several tasks with equality dimension: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Labour.

9. Human rights of women

Finland emphasises in the international forums that women's rights are an integral and inalienable part of universal human rights. This principle was also confirmed at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. In the United Nations, Finland supports the promotion of women's rights through mainstreaming and through special expertise and support for special groups. Promoting women's rights calls for special attention, and is an important area of focus also for Finnish development co-operation as well as co-operation between Finland and neighbouring countries.

Finland signed the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1980. After completing the necessary legislative reforms, Finland ratified the Convention without reservations in September 1986. Finland submitted the 3rd periodic report on the implementation of CEDAW in 1996. The 4th periodic report will be submitted in October 1999.

At the national level special attention is being paid to the status of immigrant and refugee women who need education, information of their rights as well as support in crisis in their own language.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

Promoting human rights in international organisations (MFA)

- Finland has nominated a candidate to the post of Director General of WIPO (a man), to the Executive Board of UNESCO (a woman), and to the Executive Board of IMO (a man). The Finnish delegation and expert delegation at the 52nd General Assembly of the United Nations met the quota requirement.

Including a gender dimension in the assignments of UN human rights rapporteurs (MFA)

- The issue of the human rights of women has been taken up more prominently by the UN Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women. Finland has worked actively to ensure that women's rights are considered in terms of both thematic issues and the situation in individual countries. On Finland's initiative, women's rights have been incorporated into the mandates of several Special Rapporteurs.

Optional Protocol on a communications procedure for the CEDAW and Supplementary Protocol of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning gender equality (MFA)

- At the United Nations and the Council of Europe, Finland has been actively involved in two projects aimed at expanding the human rights appeal system.
- Finland took part in the working group set up to draft an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in order to strengthen its implementation. Finland welcomes the adoption by the working group and the CSW in March 1999 of the optional protocol that establishes communications and inquiry procedures. Finland is looking forward to adoption of the optional protocol by the ECOSOC and the General Assembly and subsequently, its rapid entry into force.
- Finland has also participated actively in the preparation of the supplementary protocol which would provide for an opportunity to appeal against gender-based discrimination on the grounds of article 14 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The protocol has been prepared by the Development Committee on Human Rights (DH-DEV) under the Steering Committee on Human Rights. The proposals prepared by the DH-DEV will probably be dealt with at the meeting of the Steering Committee in June 1999.

Promoting gender equality in the co-operation between Finland and adjacent countries (MFA)

- Finland has i.a. supported the voluntary repatriation to Russia of retired Russian soldiers living in Estonia. In summer 1997 a decision was made to grant aid also to their widows. After having lost their husbands, these women and their children have lived in Estonia without receiving any social or financial aid.
 - In 1997 the Nordic Council of Ministers organised a conference called "Women and Men in Dialogue" in Valmiera, Latvia, on equality issues in the Baltic countries. This conference has clearly stimulated interest in the question. Several equality projects targeting the Baltic countries have been proposed.
 - Some examples of the individual projects in Russia would be: Management and Small Business Training for Unemployed Women and the Democracy in Russia; More and Better Jobs
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for Women in Estonia; as well as seminars Women and Business and The Status of Women arranged in 1999 in Lithuania and Latvia.

The gender dimension in development co-operation projects (MFA)

- During 1997 three training events in gender analysis were arranged at the Department of Development Co-operation simultaneously for the staff of the Department, co-operation consultants and NGO representatives. Similar type of training has been provided also in Tanzania involving local partners, consultants and NGO representatives. The training module is tested with the country in question by hearing locals and comparing how gender and equality issues have been treated in different projects and cultures.
- A study "Gender equality in the Finnish development co-operation projects in Africa" was funded by the Ministry and conducted at the University of Helsinki. Apart evaluating the gender dimension in the African projects the study gave recommendations on how to better integrate the cultural dimension - including the gender issues - into ongoing or future projects. The recommendations included sex disaggregated data, a gender balanced staff, training and monitoring project participants, and targeting women in credit schemes.

Immigrant women's status in Finland (ML)

- The Committee on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs operating within the Ministry of Labour mandated a working party to examine immigrant women's status in Finland. The focus was on unemployment, discrimination, the risk of marginalisation, the preservation of women's native culture, violence against women and the illegal importation of women. The working party presented its report and the related proposals for action in 1997
- With the help of funds from various sources, the committee edited and printed in different languages a brochure for immigrant women. Part of the sum budgeted for the committee's "Towards a Tolcrant Finland" project has been used to fund projects aimed at immigrant women. Among other goals, they aimed at preventing marginalisation and preparing immigrant women for working life.
- The Committee set up in 1998 as a Committee on Ethnic Relations operating has appointed a sub committee on women's rights.
- A project conducted at the Immigrant Department of the Ministry of Labour has studied the selection procedures of refugees in municipalities. In another report the procedures were studied from the point of view of the refugees. Both of the reports have focused especially on women. The project is due to continue.

Examples of obstacles encountered/lessons learned

Gender equality in the co-operation between Finland and adjacent countries (MFA)

- Of the more than hundred allocation applications sent in by NGOs in 1997, only two concerned directly the promotion of equality (publishing a textbook on equality and establishing a nursery for the children of single mothers). Very few projects made any mention of equal participation opportunities between women and men or their improvement. The reason for this probably is that the NGOs involved in co-operation in adjacent countries have not previously participated actively in development co-operation and related debates.

The gender dimension in development co-operation projects (MFA)

- The lack of sufficient human and financial resources has hindered the implementation of mainstreaming principles as well as its follow-up. Furthermore, although the concepts of
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gender and gender analysis are well known among the staff, integrating them into the project planning and implementation requires continual training.

- Even though the Finnish guidelines have already for some time required the use of sex disaggregated data in all project documents, this advice is often poorly followed.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

FINIPO for the promotion of import from developing countries (MFA)

- Promoting import of products manufactured by women, is concrete action in favour of women in developing countries. A decision in principle has been made to resuscitate the small-scale systems such as the import promotion programme that encouraged production by developing countries and was planned by FINIPO, which ceased operations in 1995. All comments touching on the matter have been positive. Next the organisation that will start handling the task must be chosen. It is estimated that operations will be launched in 1999.

Gender equality in the co-operation between Finland and adjacent countries (MFA)

- Statistics Finland will be assisting the committee on statistics of the Republic of Carelia in producing statistics booklet "Women and men in Carelia" in Russian and in English.

10. Women and the media

In preparing the new Act on Television and Radio Operations (744/1998) which entered into force on 1 January 1999, attention was paid to ensuring freedom of speech which guarantees, within the jurisdiction of Finland, to any person the right to express, publish and receive information, opinions and other messages without hindrance.

Women and men are equal consumers of mass media services but a clear majority of those in the public eye are men. The proportion of women in the jobs related to media and mass communication is increasing, but they still find it hard to reach the decision making posts.

Parliament requires the Finnish Broadcasting Company shall ensure equality between women and men at every level in the company's personnel policy as well as promote equality in society by broadcasting operations. The Finnish Broadcasting Company is committed to the objectives of equality and reports annually to the Ministry of Transport and Communications on the promotion of equality being done in the company's personnel policy and in Finnish society.

The rapidly growing role of information technology in society highlights the differences in education. Boys favour information technology from the very beginning of comprehensive school, and therefore master it and do well in computer-related studies later. In view of the future labour markets, such gender differences in computer skills may be decisive concerning finding a job. On the other hand, girls are becoming more active computer users. According to surveys, they use computers for more varied purposes than boys, such as communication and information retrieval.

Men do the majority of the design work of computer systems and programmes. Women mainly use ready-made application e.g. in offices and at cash desks. Since functioning of society rests by and large on information technology it is not insignificant who are developing it and on whose terms. Therefore, it is important to encourage more girls to opt for information technology. The Ministry of Education and the European Social Fund have co-operated in such a proj-

ect to encourage girls to choose information technology not only as a study career but also in in-service training.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

Gender equality in publicity and consumer education (MTI)

- The National Consumer Administration sub-ordinate to the Ministry of Trade and Industry has produced educational material "Children and advertising - advertising and equality: a course on media criticality" which is meant for analysing advertisements and marketing measures targeted at children.

Gender equality in the work of the Finnish Broadcasting Company

- A five-year project 'Image of Women and Men' (1994-98) was realised by the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE). This project focused on gender equality in YLE's programmes. It studied and analysed news, fiction, and children's programmes as well as the essence of journalism from the gender point of view. The results were aimed at supporting programme makers to strive for equality in the programmes and for ever better service of different audience groups. Launched together with institutes of communications and their researchers at various Finnish universities, this co-operation of study and education work has extended to co-operation between six public service broadcasting companies.
- In 1996 a Gender Portrayal Network was formed, pooling the resources of six broadcasting companies in Europe. Supported by the European Commission the project wanted to bring consideration of gender equality into the debate within the European broadcasting community. Toolkits of videos and printed material are prepared for training and implementation of fair gender portrayal, designed to be used in all stages of the television production process.

Gender differences in the use of information technology and the new media of communication (MEd)

- The National Board of Education has supported projects which aim to increase girls' interest towards the use of networks of the new information technologies.

The data network developing program (MTC)

- The share of women among data network users has been studied at the Ministry of Transport and Communication since spring 1997. A report on equality and data networks was submitted in 1998 and the result was that women are much more active as network users. Gender aspects will be taken into account also in the future network development programs.
- Gender dimension was taken into account in a study made on the use of networks at small and medium size enterprises. The result was that there were no notable differences between sexes.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

Research on equality in the media (MEd)

- The Ministry of Education has set a working party in 1998 to propose measures to "promote media-criticality, technical and contextual administration and equality, as well as propose research projects on media skills."
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The data network developing program (MTC)

- Women and gender differences will be given a special consideration in the future studies and programs on network development of the Ministry of Transportation and Communication.

11. Women and the environment

Surveys of public attitudes towards environmental issues highlight women's greater concern. Women seem also to be more ready than men to make pro-environmental choices as consumers.

Since public transport is especially popular among women in Finland, a well functioning public transport system is in harmony with sustainable development and gender equality. Development work in favour of public transport and, in contrast, cuts in allocations are reflected on women's and men's respective status. Public transport must be adjusted to the needs of parents with small children, and the public transport network should also extend to sparsely-populated areas. The Ministry of Transport has guaranteed the availability of public transport services by consistent funding and by improving their competitiveness in whole Finland.

Applying the 40/60 quota principle after the municipal election in 1997, increased substantially the participation of women in the earlier male-dominated municipal committees that make decisions on local land use and construction.

Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects

Stimulating local action on environmental issues (MEnv)

- A project stimulating local action "Women and the environment" was launched in one of the provinces in 1997 aiming to bring up the ideas generated by the women. The project has developed a plan of action which focuses on landscape protection, waste disposal in villages, and holiday housing and environment.

Increasing public awareness of the environment in building and in environmental changes (MEnv)

- The Land Use and Building Act came into force in 1999. The new act improves citizens' opportunities to participate in and improve planning. The Ministry of the Environment launched participation experiments on the basis of the proposals of the Act. The Ministry of the Environment has published a handbook titled "If You Want to Have Influence, Participate in the Planning of Your Environment". The handbook is meant for all citizens' groups. It also encourages women to take part in planning and decision-making affecting the environment.

Environmental quality indicator (MEnv)

- The Ministry of the Environment monitors the state of the environment and has developed quality indicators for the immediate environment. Indicators that provide a picture of the quality of everyday life are useful when assessing and monitoring the quality of the environment as a whole. Everyday life must be seen as part of a person's immediate environment. This will benefit gender equality as well. In particular, the location and availability indicators for services are representative of how well women, the elderly and people without cars get by in everyday life. In the future, indicators for residential areas will be developed on the basis

of statistics and according to residents' evaluations. The quality indicators of the Ministry of the Environment may also serve the needs of the equality barometer.

The EuroFEM project (MEnv)

- The Ministry of the Environment established Finland's EuroFEM - Gender and Human Settlements network for 1995-1998. The international network is composed of 60 projects dealing with the infrastructure of communities, environments and housing projects in 12 European countries, e.g. a project "Traffic Forum for a Better Everyday Life" aiming to realise equality principle by involving women in traffic and environmental matters.

Developing demand responsive public transport (MTC)

- Demand Responsive Transport Service has been tested throughout Finland in 1996-1998. New traffic management methods have combined commuting to and from work as well as going to shops, banks as well as social welfare and health care services. The objective has been to secure economically feasible traffic services in sparsely populated areas for everyday needs, especially those of women. Women's and men's needs have been considered separately. According to the evaluation of the project the targets have been met and the feedback has been positive. Especially for the elderly women the availability of public transport has improved their life quality.

Commitment to further action/new initiatives

Increasing public awareness of the environment in building and in environmental changes (MEnv)

- The Ministry of Environment will produce a handbook on how to promote dialogue in environmental impact assessment. The aim of the handbook is to increase the participation of both women and men of different ages in the decision making of building and planning.

Environmental quality indicator (MEnv)

- A barometer on opinions of residents concerning their immediate environment will be published in 1999. The results will be sex segregated.

Co-operation between the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MEnv)

- The Ministry of Transport and Communications has started a five-year research and development programme called "An Environmentally Friendly Community Structure and Traffic System". Harmonising the community structure and thus increasing the profitability of public transport would also benefit women and might change the attitude of drivers.
- The publication "Freedom to Move About" will be published in 1999. It will promote the building of an everyday environment where the disabled can manage. Funding will be provided by the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Labour and the National Council on Disability.

Women and public transport (MTC)

- Ways of attracting users to public transport are being tested in different cities in 1998-1999. The objective is to increase and make easier the use of public transport.
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12. The girl child

Finland promotes the rights of the girl child in international organisations and in its own bilateral development co-operation e.g. by supporting efforts aimed at eliminating child labour and sexual exploitation of children. Finland considers it essential to efficiently monitor implementation of the objectives of the PFA on the rights of the girl child.

Both girls and boys have and equal access to day care and education, and the enrolment rate for compulsory education is 100% for both girls and boys. In principle girls and boys are treated equally but in practice the inequality between sexes is often maintained unconsciously. Girls do well at school but according to studies they like it less there and have less confidence concerning their capacities than boys. In order to break the segregation in education especially girls have been encouraged to make more non-traditional choices in the fields of mathematics and sciences.

Considering the equality in health between girls and boys before puberty, there are no significant differences in suffer from illnesses or mortality. In puberty girls tend to have more psychosomatic symptoms and eating disorders than boys, who in turn become more prone to accidents than girls. In the measures improving the health of young people the aims are to prevent and reduce smoking among the young, prevent their excessive use of alcohol, ameliorate the dietary habits of children and young people and improve their mental well-being.

Research into young people's living conditions shows that most young people at risk of exclusion are boys, whereas the proportion of girls is growing in substance abuse. This has led to various projects directed at girls.

See for measures on the girl child from under the titles Education and Training of Women and Women and Health.

FINLAND'S CONTRIBUTION FOR GENDER RELATED PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE UN CONTEXT

UNIFEM		
1996	Annual contribution	500 000 FI
1996	Contribution for the programme promoting women's participation in political decision-making	1 000 000 FI
1997	Annual contribution	2 000 000 FI
	Contribution for gender advisor field networking	3 000 000 FI
1998	Annual Contribution	2 000 000 FI
1998	Contribution to the UNIFEM Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women	2 000 000 FI
	During UNIFEM Director Noeleen Heyzer's visit to Finland in September 1998, a panel discussion on Violence against women was arranged. The panel discussion held 7 Sept. 1998 was open for public, key-note speaker was Ms Heyzer.	
WFP		
1997	Contribution for gender advisor field networking	2 000 000 FI
1998	Gender Action Fund	3 000 000 FI
UNSO		
1997	Contribution for women's participation in CCD	2 000 000 FI
UNESCO		
1997	Contribution for Guidance & Counselling for school girls in Africa	2 000 000 FI
UNEPA		
1996	Total contribution (annual and earmarked)	64 000 000 FI
1997	Total contribution (annual and earmarked)	67 000 000 FI
1998	Reproductive health programme	9 000 000 FI
1998	Safe Motherhood Initiative	275 000 FI
UN Publications		
1998	The World's Women: Trends and Statistics	150 000 FI

INDICATORS FOR MEASURING DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

Unless otherwise indicated all data refer to year 1997.

Population and fertility	Total	Women	Men
Population size	5 147 349	2 638 251	2 509 098
Population aged	(thousands)	(thousands)	(thousands)
0-4	312,7 / 6,1%	153,4 / 5,8%	159,3 / 6,3%
5-14	648,6 / 12,6%	317,3 / 12,0%	331,3 / 13,2%
15-49	2537,7 / 49%	1293,4 / 49%	1244,2 / 50%
60+	995,3 / 0,01%	399,3 / 0,02%	596,0 / 0,02%
Population by urban/rural distribution	Urban 62% Rural 38%		

Population growth rate	0,2
Total fertility rate	1,8
Fertility rate for women aged 15-19	9,0

Mortality	Total	Women	Men
Life expectancy at birth	77 years	80,5 years	73,4 years
Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	3,9	3,6	4,2
Under-five mortality rate (1000 live births)	4,9		
Maternal mortality rate		3,29 (per 100 000 live births in 1996)	

Health

Population with access to health services 100%

Reproductive health

Contraceptive prevalence rate 80% (1990-95)

% of births attended by trained health personnel 99%

HIV adult prevalence rate 0,02%

Gender equality in education

Ratio of boys in primary and secondary education combined 100%

Ratio of literate females to males at ages 15-24 1:1

Economic activity	Total	Women	Men
Unemployment ratio (in 1999)	11%	11%	11%
Employment-population ratio (% of employed out of whole population)	42%	20% (39% of employed women out of women population)	22% (46% of employed men out of men population)
% of labour force engaged in agriculture, industry, and services	agriculture 6,1% industry 23,9% services 57,3%	agriculture 2,0% industry 5,7% services 33,6%	agriculture 4,1% industry 18,2% services 23,7%
% of labour force by employment status	employed 87,3% unemployed 12,6%	employed 41,3% unemployed 6,2%	employed 46,0% unemployed 6,4%

Economy

GNP	1 000 000 USD 119 086 (1996)
GNP per capita	USD 23,240 (1996)
GDP per capita	USD 22,927

Income and poverty

Household income per capita	FIM 65 071
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Education	Total	Women	Men
Adult literacy rate	99%	99%	99%
Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds	99%	99%	99%
Net primary enrolment ratio (compulsory education)	100%	100%	100%
% reaching grade 5/completion of grade 4 (compulsory education)	100%	100%	100%
Net secondary enrolment ratio (lower secondary education, compulsory education)	100%	100%	100%
Average no. of years of schooling completed (school expectancy under current conditions 1996)	17,2 years	18,0 years	16,5 years

Human security and social justice	Total	Women	Men
No. of victims of violence per 1000 people	12	5	7
No. of persons in prison per 100,000 people	58	3	55

Housing and environment

Floor area per person	34m ²
No. of persons per room excl. kitchen and bathroom	0,62 persons per room (in 1996)
% population with access to adequate sanitation	100%
% population with access to safe drinking water	100%
Arable land per capita	0,49 ha (in 1995)