

**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA**  
**MINISTRY OF LABOR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**  
**General Policies' Directorate**  
**Directorate of Policies on Equal Opportunities**

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Address: Rruga e Kavajës 1001 – Tirana, Albania    Info: [www.mpcs.gov.al](http://www.mpcs.gov.al)    Tel: +355 4 222 5051

No. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Protocol

Tirana, on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 2009

**Re:** Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Platform of Action (1995) and the outcomes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)

**To:** UNECE

The progress achieved by Albania in the field of gender equity for the period 2005 – 2009 is given through this report. It has been prepared based on the questionnaire on the “Implementation of the Platform of Action (1995) and the outcomes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)”. The Government of the Republic of Albania has placed the issue of gender equity in the centre of its priorities considering that the economic and social development of the country cannot be meaningful without concrete treatment and achievements in this important objective. The steps ahead towards this objective during this period reflect the legislative and administrative measures which have been taken as well as the rafting of policies which aim to improve the status of women and to achieve gender equity.

**Part I – Review of the achievements and challenges in the promotion of gender equity and women empowerment.**

a) The Government’s gender policies have had as their objective the empowerment of women’s status so that women are granted increasing continued access to the labor market as well as to opportunities for official, political or business career. The Program of work of the Albanian Government provides for the full involvement of the executive power to eliminate violence against women and girls as well as their use for prostitution or other denigrating purposes. Hence, such program is clearly oriented towards policies and measures to prevent violence against women and family crimes. The implementation of such measures also requires them to occupy an important place in all levels of governance.

Aiming to improve the situation of gender equity in the country, the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MOLSAEO), as the authority responsible in gender equity issues, engaged during the period 2006 – 2007 in drafting the National Strategy (NSGEADV) and the respective Action Plan on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence for the period 2007 – 2010. The Strategy was drafted after a comprehensive process and it establishes the most important fields of operational, political and legislative intervention at national level, adapting to the concrete conditions of the country the critical areas of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Such Strategy was approved by the Council of the Ministers through its Decision No. 913, dated December

19<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Its *scope* is to include gender issues and domestic violence in the public policies through concrete plans of action, to establish the bases for the advancement of the gender equity and for the reduction of the domestic violence in the future, based on the international documents, recommendations and instruments, but referring to the concrete conditions of Albania. This Strategy is an inter-sector one. It is accompanied by a Plan of Action, broken down in specific actions for years 2008 – 2010, as per 8 directions provided in it. The activities are covered partially by the State Budget and partially by donors in the framework of the “One UN” Program.

The Government institutions at central level (line ministries and institutions depending from them), the institutions at local level (prefectures, municipalities) and the gender workers network at both central and local level, in partnership also with academic institutions, media, civil society and international organizations are involved in the **implementation** of this Strategy and their **coordination** is carried out by the MPÇSSHB as the responsible authority for gender equity. Also, the Gender Equity National Council is the responsible authority to ensure gender integration in all fields, especially the political, social, economic and cultural ones.

The **monitoring** of the NSGEADV is actually being carried out by the Directorate of Policies on Equal Opportunities at the MOLSAEO , where the bases for setting up a Technical Secretariat on this purpose were recently consolidated. The annual report, drafted in accordance with the periodical reporting arrived from the ministries and the local power, in accordance with obligations deriving from Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in the society”, shall be presented in March before the National Council of Gender Equity (NCGE) (functions and duties of NCGE are given specifically in part III).

b) Albania has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) through its Law No. 7767, approved by the Albanian Parliament on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1993. The Convention has been translated into Albanian language and according to the Constitution of the Republic of Albania is part of the domestic legislation.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is an important instrument which leads the daily activity of the government mechanisms and the women’s associations on gender equity; based on it and on the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee, a number of initiatives for legal improvements have been taken such as: drafting and approval of the Law No. 9970, dated August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in the society”; practical implementation of the political and administrative measures; the empowerment of the institutional mechanisms; the development of awareness campaigns for better practical knowledge of the rights of women and girls, etc. Periodical reporting on this Convention is done before the respective Committee. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the responsible authority which coordinates the work for drafting the Governmental Periodical Report. The III Governmental Report has been prepared. It was approved by Decision of the Council of the Ministers in July 2008. Such report has actually been forwarded to the relevant bodies for their consideration.

Regarding the progress of the Convention, important steps ahead and achievements are noted if compared with the reporting of 2003 in legislation, drafting of new policies, its practical implementation and the increased familiarization of numerous actors with this Convention.

c) Main achievements in the fields of legislation and policies in the period 2005 – 2009.

c.1. *Drafting and approval of the Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in the society”.*

The main scope of this law is the protection of citizens from any type of discrimination on accounts of gender, the guaranteeing of equal opportunities and possibilities same for males and females, in order to achieve the highest possible standards in the field of gender equity. This will be accomplished especially through the improvement of functions in the field of gender equity, functions which will be carried out under this law, as well as through the strengthening of institutional mechanisms who will apply the legal framework in this field. New in this law:

- Introduction of new definitions such as: prohibition of discrimination on accounts of gender, in compliance with the discrimination definition given in CEDAW, gender integration, definition and prohibition of harassment on accounts of gender, definition of gender equity, definition of equal gender representation (30 %), definition and allowance as non – discriminatory of special temporary measures.
- Creation of new policy – making, executive and protective structures.
- Provision of specific temporary measures regarding the political and public decision – taking in the form of neutral quota for not less than 30 %; introduction of specific measures in the educational system and in the employment field.
- Unpaid work.
- Obligation of collecting gender statistics.

c.2. *Drafting and execution of the Law No. 9669 “On measures against violence in family relations” and of the bylaws for its implementation.*

Law No. 9669 “On measures against violence in family relations” was approved in December 2006 upon proposal of 20000 electors. Its scope is to:

- a) Prevent and reduce domestic violence in all its forms, through adequate legal measures;
- b) Guarantee, through legal measures, the protection of family members who are victims of domestic violence, by attributing special attention to children, elderly and persons with limited capabilities.

Also, important bylaws have been approved to make the above mentioned laws applicable. The different Codes such as the Penal Code, the Labor Code, etc have undergone legal improvements which aim to eliminate discrimination based on gender in the field of employment, reduction of violence against women, etc.

c.3. The implementation and monitoring of the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence, approved by the Decision of the Council of the Ministers No. 913, dated December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

Some of the *strategic priorities* of this document, which are based in the fields by it covered, are:

1. Strengthening of legal and institutional protective mechanisms in order to ensure gender equity in Albania;
2. empowerment of women through the increase of women's participation in decision – taking;
3. economic empowerment of women and increased opportunities of women for employment and professional qualification;
4. promotion of equal access of women and girls in qualitative education;
5. improvement of the social situation of women at risk through increased access of women to qualitative social services;
6. protection of the populations' health by improving the health system in function of the special needs of the population in this field;
7. improvement of the role of media for a new mentality, which corresponds to the modern development, related to gender equity in the society and the increased representation of women in this profession;
8. increased awareness against the phenomenon of violence, administrative and legal protection, as well as support for individuals undergoing domestic violence and for perpetrators.

Other indirect policies on gender equity

- Sector Strategy of Social Protection and relevant Action Plan for the period 2007 – 2013.
- Strategy of Employment and Professional Training for the period 2007 – 2013.
- Inter – sector developing document on Aging.
- National Strategy on Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Sector Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ministry of Agriculture) for the period 2007 – 2013.

d) In Albania, the drafting of budget in all levels does not take into consideration gender perspective. However, some first efforts are taking place in the framework of gender budgeting program supported by UNIFEM. During 2008, UNIFEM has organized a series of meetings and training sessions with representatives of the local power, experts and representatives of non – governmental organizations in a number of areas of the country aiming to increase awareness on the use of GRB as an instrument which adds to gender integration in local and national policies thus meaning the commitment between potential partners in the local government, the central one and the non – profit organizations. Some pilot areas at local level (some municipalities of the country) shall be used on this purpose.

f) Debate and discussions took place in the Parliament regarding the approval of the Law “On gender equity in the society”, approved in July 2008. The law was an initiative of the

Albanian Government after two years of work of the responsible structures of the MOLSAEOP, supported by UNDP and OSCE. These discussions and debate brought also some changes to the draft that the Government had presented, mostly related to the neutral quota of 30 % of women in the legislative and executive bodies as well as in the public institutions and related to the creation of new structures on gender issues. The issue of the quota was also supported by the President of the Republic and by the Prime Minister. The civil society also lobbied for it. After some changes regarding the submission of the lists of candidates for the parliamentary elections in alternative way and regarding the sanctions in case of failure to observe the law, it was approved by majority of votes. The issue of the quota was largely discussed also during the debate on the Electoral Code where it was accepted as an obligation of the political parties, to present the lists of candidates for parliamentary and local elections by respecting the quota of 30 % at least for each sex.

i) The Albanian Government points towards the improvement of the women's status and the advancement of the gender equity through direct inter – sector policies such as the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence for the period 2007 – 2010 (NSGEADV ; see point a) and c.3) above). The Government has included the following in its sector policies: support to vulnerable groups and categories of women in need regarding poverty reduction and provision of services; employment fostering programs, in the field of employment and vocational training; in the field of rural development, implementation of programs of cooperation with the local power for the promotion of rural women, especially related to her direct involvement in decision – taking, as well as the provision of financial means for the development of activities by them organized; in the field of health, regarding the promotion and protection of women's health, family planning methods, etc.

j) The drafting and implementation in close cooperation with the civil society, first of all with the organizations specialized in matters of gender equity, is one of the most important commitments included in the policies of the Albanian Government. The Directorate of Policies on Equal Opportunities (at the MOLSAEO) has as one of its main duties, the cooperation with the non – profit organizations, active in the field of equal opportunities for joint projects or activities.

Women are widely represented in their associations and non – profit organizations which offer them social services, mostly to the most vulnerable categories of the society. In fact, women non – profit organizations are the largest, the oldest and the most experienced group of civil society in Albania. It started since 1990. actually, there are almost 100 women's non – profit organizations, which are known as the most active part of the civil society which has played an important role in the democratic developments in Albania, even though it had to operate often in a very conservative environment.

In addition to the non – profit organizations, other 614 associations are registered in Albania, 112 of which (18.24 %) are managed by women, what shows that the Albanian women reacted immediately to the changes in the country by taking their role and responsibilities in these democratic developments.

Women's associations and non – profit organizations accomplished and continue to accomplish various activities related to rights of women and children, social and health care, economic development (mainly in small businesses for women and girls), fight against trafficking in human beings, etc.

On one hand, the non – profit organizations have supported some powerful representatives of theirs who, afterwards, have been involved in State structures. On the other hand, the State needed and asked for the support of the non – profit organizations since they offer good experts, whose recommendations have been useful for drafting the State legislation and policies useful to women.

During 2006 and on, even more priority was given to the cooperation between the government and the civil society. Concretely, such cooperation has led to efficiency and increased quality of cooperation in drafting policies and laws, exchanging experience, carrying out of joint activities, etc. The expertise given by representatives of non – profit organizations is particularly appreciated in the following directions:

### **Drafting of policies**

NSGEADV for the period 2007 – 2010 was drafted in a comprehensive process where the expertise given by the representatives of the non – profit organizations in this field played a special role.

### **Drafting of laws**

a) The Law “On measures for the prevention of violence in family relations” was the result of the proposal of 20000 signatory citizens and was drafted by the coalition of associations: Office for the Protection of Citizens, Albanian Centre for Children's Rights, Centre for Civil Legal Initiatives, Centre of Counseling for Women and Girls, the association ‘Reflections’, Shelter for Women victim of Violence, Legal Clinic for Minors, the Association in Favor of the Albanian Women, the Centre for Population and Development and the Centre of Gender Alliance for Development.

b) Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On gender equity in the society”: Several round tables were organized with experts, representatives of non – profit organizations, etc to obtain opinions for the improvement of the draft, with the support of UNDP and OSCE. Also, the cooperation has been intensified through the participation in different activities organized by the non – profit organizations. The participation of the non – profit organizations, as per their field of activity and theme of event, has always been at satisfactory levels.

**The Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On gender equity in the society”** marked an important achievement in the inclusion of non – profit organizations in the mechanism of gender equity in the country, providing as mandatory the representation of three members from non – profit organizations in the National Council on Gender Equity

(Composition: the National Council on Gender Equity is composed of 13 members, out of whom 10 are appointed by the Council of the Ministers and 3 by the civil society. It is chaired by the Minister in charge of gender issues.)

### **Role in the National Council on Gender Equity NCGE**

- Cooperation between the State bodies dealing with issues of gender equity and on – profit organizations.
- At central level, such cooperation shall be guaranteed by the representation of the civil society in the National Council on Gender Equity.
- At local level, the law has provided for the obligation of local bodies to cooperate closely with the non – profit organizations to achieve gender equity in different fields, in the territory they cover.

### **Part II – Information as per each field.**

#### **A – WOMEN AND POVERTY.**

It is estimated that in Albania, women are poorer than men. The deep economic reform during the transition period, accompanied by massive termination of ineffective State owned enterprises, found the Albanian society and its individuals unprepared. After 1990, unemployment grew drastically. Despite improvements in later years, unemployment and poverty are still a threat to many Albanian families. Unemployment and poverty are particularly influencing negatively the social status of Albanian women.

#### **Poverty level**

Figures show that poverty in Albania has decreased though it remains higher in rural areas compared to urban ones. According to the last observations of LSMS 2005, it results that 18.5 % of Albanians are poor. In rural areas poverty shows at a level of 24.2%. Compared to 2002, rural poverty has been reduced by – 18 %, while in the urban areas by 38 %. Referring to absolute poverty (LSMS 2005) it can be deduced that, the percentage of poor women over 15 years old in rural areas is twice higher (22 %) as that of women of the same age living in urban areas (10 %). (Data for the period 2005 – 2008 regarding poverty level may be given after the publication of LSMS 2008 which is in its conclusive process).

Gender inequity represents a serious obstacle in the fostering of poverty reduction. Traditionally, women have always carried out the main burden of family wellbeing but despite this, they have fewer chances than men to control resources and means needed to accomplish the responsibilities mentioned above. The high level of unemployment, the low educational level, the occupation of many under qualified jobs, the lack of qualification opportunities, low access and lack of freedom of use of family planning methods, the victimization as subject to violence, maltreatment or arbitrary actions inside the family, as well as the weak representation in the managerial and political public

structures, influence in deepening and feminization of poverty in Albania as well as in its prolongation.

#### a.1. Policies for poverty reduction

Poverty reduction is one of the priorities of the Albanian Government. In the framework of the **National Strategy on Development and Integration for the period 2007 – 2013**, concrete objectives are set for the reduction of poverty. There are also other strategies which, through concrete objectives, aim towards poverty reduction, such as:

#### **Sector Strategy of Social Protection and its Action Plan for the period 2007 – 2013**

Such strategy, as part of the Inter – Sector Strategy for Social Inclusion, foresees as concrete objectives on poverty reduction and offering of services for groups in need, the improvement of the quality of life for these groups and their empowerment so that they can be included in the community developments.

The economic aid programme represents an important component of the social protection policies, designed to support poor families. This programme offers a guaranteed minimum income (monthly *cash* transfers) which enables the families with no income to cope with their most elementary living needs, or families with income lower than the level established as “*the official poverty line*”. Beneficiaries are the families with many members, Roma families, families with orphan children, single parent families, families with heads of family who are over the working age and have no benefits from the social insurance system. Actually it is called Economic Aid for families in need.

#### **National Strategy on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence, period 2007 – 2013**

It aims, through concrete measures, to eliminate gender discrimination in the fields it has established as of priority and in the framework of poverty reduction, it takes concrete measures to empower women economically by increasing the number of projects and programs for encouraging vocational training, employment and businesses. In the framework of social care, this strategy provides for priority support to women heads of household, mothers with many children, women who have been victims of violence, women with limited opportunities, trafficked women or those in risk of trafficking, women from rural areas, etc. it also provides for the extension of community services for women and girls throughout the country.

#### **Strategy on Employment and Vocational Training for the period 2007 – 2013**

This strategy aims to achieve a high employment level in all sectors of economy and labor market, policies on increased employment through creating employment opportunities. Targeted groups of women experiencing social problems and special groups of women in needed are paid special attention through active employment opportunities and the programs they present such as: employment encouraging programme or professional qualifications.

**The National Strategy for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings**, which aims towards the prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings. It dedicates special importance to protective and supporting measures for victims and social categories at such risk, especially women, girls and children.

### **Sector Strategy on Agriculture and Rural Development for the period 2007 – 2013**

This strategy focuses on reducing the actual economic and social disparities between different regions of the country. It sees the role of women in villages as a priority for the creation of production cooperatives as well as the equal treatment that such women should enjoy in obtaining loans or direct payments. The involvement of a high number of women in the process of the creation of cooperatives is considered as of primary importance since their role (even though sometimes not visible) in both decision taking and inside the rural families is well-known.

### **B – EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF WOMEN**

Education is a right which guaranteed without discrimination both for girls and boys. Education can be mentioned as one of the fields in which Albania has achieved great success. No pupil, be male or female, has been denied right to education. Moreover, more girls than boys are registered in schools. This due mainly to the fact that boys emigrate abroad more, seeking employment opportunities at an earlier age. Based on the statistics of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and according to the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), the level of registration of students in the elementary mandatory education and in the higher (middle) level one as well as the level of attendance of mandatory educational level shows the following figures: elementary education 99 %, low secondary education 102 %, mandatory education 101 %, secondary education 64 %. If referred to the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), the elementary educational level and the secondary education are in the following attendance levels: elementary education 89 %, low education 98 %, mandatory education 94 % and secondary education 53.4 %.

Part of girls do not attend mandatory education and this is related mainly to matters of mentality, lack of safety of schools who are located far from the places where pupils live, as well as occupancy within their own families.

There is an insignificant difference between males and females, in favor of the first, in the other levels of pre-school education and the 8 year one.

Regarding universities, despite the higher percentage of female students, there is clear disproportion in some branches such as engineering, forestry, and sports, due to the existence of a masculine mentality for these fields. In order to facilitate and better direct maturity students towards tertiary education and also trying to eliminate gender preferences in different branches and professions, the Ministry of Education and Science (MASH) has undertaken an initiative called "*Days of college students at the university*". Based on such initiative, college students at their last year of studies pay visits to different universities and become familiar with the employment opportunities in each

branch, thus understanding also the idea that the education opportunities are equal to everyone.

The Ministry of Education and Science, in order to increase attendance of pupils in the mandatory education level and as a consequence, to increase also the attendance of female pupils, has completed simultaneously two studies, as follows:

- Study on “Collection of statistical data and clarification on the education situation of the Roma in Albania”.
- Study on the “Causes favoring analphabetism and measures to be taken in the fight against such phenomenon”.

Based on the recommendations given in such studies, the Ministry of Education and Science has prepared separate work platforms on the:

- Special training for teachers on the work with pupils coming from marginalized groups (500 teachers per year) and the improvement of the teacher – pupil relations in pre – university level.
- Differentiated treatment (payment for additional teaching hours) for teachers working with children who have abandoned school.
- Differentiated transport for children with limited abilities.

### ***Policies***

The Government of the Republic of Albania has drafted several national strategies which aim to: **a)** promote gender equity, **b)** create equal opportunities for qualitative education without gender distinctions, **c)** general improvement of the educational system and its institutions, etc. Amongst these strategies, it would noteworthy to mention:

The National Strategy for the Pre-University Education for the period 2007 – 2013. In this strategy, the chapter on “Rationalization of distribution of schools and creation of equal opportunities” says that: *“Developments related to the ratification of international documents and the approval of domestic legislation such as the law on gender equity and the amendments to the Family Code, which also reflect the related problems, should be treated with particular attention in the school materials and during the learning process.”*

The Strategy on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence. Amongst the objectives of this strategy are also the empowerment of women and the increase of their opportunities for professional training, as well as the promotion of equal access for both men and women to qualitative education. The objectives and actions to be taken under this strategy are quite ambitious. For the period 2007 – 2010 they foresee:

- 1 – Improvement of the learning programs which promote gender equity as well as improvement of women and girls participation in teaching, planning and management of education.
- 2 – Strengthening of capacities of the educational institutions to integrate issues and basic concepts of gender equity in the planning, implementation and monitoring of education.

3 – Improvement of social and cultural attitudes of communities and families which promote values and importance of the education of girls, here including the roles and contribution of women and girls to the development.

Continuously aiming towards the improvement of gender equity in the field of education, MES, in cooperation with the civil society, has carried out a number of other activities to reach this goal. Amongst the most important we could mention:

- Creation of a pool of trainers on gender integration in education – from 2004 and on;
- Organization of training courses with teachers and representatives of the Educational Directorates in different districts of the country (elementary, eight years and middle level) – 2005;
- Gender analysis of the school texts of the Elementary Level, which is an activity carried out in Albania for the first time;
- Publication of several relevant essays such as: “Gender Belonging and the Education” – 2005;
- The Analysis of the National Strategy on Pre – University Education – 2006, under the gender perspective point of view;
- Preparation, publication and inclusion of the source package on gender belonging, as part of the official curricula of the Pedagogical Universities – 2006;
- Organization of training sessions on gender belonging for teachers of elementary schools in different districts of the country, training of trainers, etc.

### **Women’s professional preparation**

The Albanian legal framework guarantees the indiscriminate right of everyone for education and professional preparation.

In some cases, the Albanian legislation pays particular attention to the education and qualification of women. More concretely, the Constitution proclaims the education of women under economical or social hardship as one of the social objectives of the Republic of Albania. The Labor Code also provides for professional qualification and training without discrimination. Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On gender equity” opens the spaces necessary to assist employees with special family responsibilities to carry out such family obligations combined with the professional ones, through specific provisions taken by the State. In the same line of thinking, the category of persons who benefit from the law “On the Vocational Education and Training” includes girls who are unemployed mothers, former trafficked women and girls, as well as the divorced women who undergo social problems. In this aspect, it is noteworthy mentioning also the Order no. 394, dated February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004, of the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs “On the fees in the Professional Training System”, which establishes that “the registration fees for categories such as: Roma community, formerly trafficked women and girls, etc are free for the professional courses offered by the Public Centers of Vocational Training”.

## **Vocational training programs**

In many regions, women are behind men regarding education at all levels. Though in their best part, the formal education systems are based on principles of equal opportunities for the participation of boys and girls, in fact, in developing countries this is accompanied by notable differences. Development opportunities are often dependant on the gender belonging. The pre – established role of women and girls is to get married and have children and as a result, education might be left out of attention or might be undesired for girls. In addition to this, many parents are more oriented towards professional preparation.

The increasing demand of the labor market for qualified people and for new professions in accordance with the actual developments of the economy, have caused the increase of training both in quantity and quality. A concrete indicator of this is the care that the Government has dedicated to the reconstruction and the functioning of the new public centers of professional training as well as the support given to build the capacities for professional training in both quantity and quality, through the development of the public vocational training system. The trend of these recent years since 2007 and on has been to open new courses for those professions which offer greater opportunities of employment upon completion of the course. Such courses are focused on professions such as plumber, electrician, tailor, cook, etc.

In the framework of encouraging the employment policies through vocational training programs during 2008, special policies have been followed regarding groups of women in need, women heads of household and former victims of trafficking, regarding their qualification. This has been done as free service at the vocational training public centers and further measures have been taken for their employment. Another reason for this is for higher chances of trafficking prevention.

Foreign donors have given and still give a considerable contribution to support the professional preparation system in Albania. Actually, professional preparation is considered as a priority by the Government which has been materialized in the assistance that Albania receives from EU in the framework of the CARDS Program, “*Support for the reform of AFP*”. The National Agency for Vocational Preparation and Training (AFP) was created in cooperation with MOLSAEO. This Agency is a very important institution in the field of vocational preparation and training and is playing a great role in the reform that has started in this direction. As part of this project, the Albanian Framework of Qualifications and the respective law are being drafted.

## **C. WOMEN’S HEALTH**

**The Albanian legislation** offers special support and health services to mother and child. Article 55 of the Albanian Constitution guarantees to everyone equal rights of social care offered by the State. “*All pregnant women receive free of charge their medical follow – up during pregnancy, pre–partum and post–partum stages, especially regarding the*

*mandatory pre-partum and post-partum examinations, established upon order of the Minister of Health”.*

Law no. 8876, dated April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002 “On reproductive health” guarantees and provides for the offering of services without distinction of gender or other demographic category; guarantees to every individual the possibility of decision taking on the exercise of reproductive rights according to his / her wish and interest, free from discrimination, violence or obligation; offers special support for the health care services for mothers and children as well as periodical medical check – up visits before and after the birth, especially mandatory checkups before and after birth. This law also foresees the rights of everyone to information, counseling, education and necessary social services for a good reproductive health.

A number of sector strategies have also been drafted by the Ministry of Health, which are based on the principles of non – discrimination and gender equity. Here we could mention:

- Ten years strategy on the reform of the health system (period 2000 – 2010), which establishes the priorities and strategic interventions for the improvement of the population’s health. Priority is given also in this strategy to the health of mother and child.
- The national strategy on HIV / AIDS, which aims to keep Albania as a low prevalence country regarding sexually transmittable diseases. The drafting of the National Strategy for the prevention and control of the HIV / AIDS spread in Albania for the period 2004 – 2010 was the result of a series of factors as: increase of evidenced cases, evolution of population behavior including trend to have sexual relations at an earlier stage, use of drugs, etc. The National Strategy for the prevention and control of the HIV / AIDS spread in Albania for the period 2004 – 2010 stresses the danger of HIV / AIDS infection in women and girls and aims towards application of preventive measures of awareness character, as well as that of contemporary methods for the treatment of infected women.
- Strategy of the Health Promotion and Education, which includes objectives and activities for the health promotion and education, regarding the health of mother and child.

### ***Access to health care***

Access to health care is equal for men and women. Based on biological distinctions, health care for women focuses more on treatment of diseases of reproductive organs, examinations such as mammography or the *Pap test*, which held the evidencing of serious illnesses.

In accordance with international protocols on health protection, the institutions of this sector in Albania have created continuously specific services for the protection of women’s health. One of these services is offered through the women’s counseling network, which operates throughout the country. The main goal has always been to pass

from the curative medicine to the preventive one, by making women more aware and more responsible for themselves and thus to contribute later on actively to the preservation of their health. In this context, of particular importance have been the measures programmed to create opportunities for the coordination of women's demands not only regarding family life but also in their working environment. The obtaining of health care information for men and women is done at the services offered by the Ministry of Health (MH) and donors who include UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), USAID, UNICEF and different NGOs.

The greatest challenge regarding the presentation of the situation and the involvement of gender issues in health stays in the fact that there are very little data, broken down into gender. For this reason, the presentation of the gender equity situation in the health sector is mainly based on the casual reporting and on the information collected not in a systemized manner by different community based or non-profit organizations.

Counseling and Voluntary Testing Centers (VCT) are a new phenomenon in Albania. The confidential Counseling and Voluntary Testing is done at the Public Health Institute (PHI) and at the Hospitalizing University Centre of Tirana (HUCT). Such centers are planned to extend in all the prefectures of the country during the period 2007 – 2008. HUCT offers also free treatment with anti – retroviral medicines (ART) for persons living with HIV / AIDS.

#### **D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

The Albanian Government, considering that human rights are also part of its political will, has set amongst its priorities also the issue of the gender equity and that of the fight against violence against women, here including the taking of concrete measures against domestic violence.

It is notable in today's Albanian society that domestic violence is exercised mostly against women and girls, children and elderly. Studies show that violence is shown in various forms: emotional violence, as the most spread form of domestic violence; economic violence, mostly in urban areas; physical violence, mostly in rural areas; and sexual violence, which is less reported. The group ages experiencing more violence are those from 18 to 23 and from 37 to 45 years old. As part of such groups, the most endangered are women and girls with limited abilities, migrant women and girls, Roma women and girls as well as the women and girls from rural areas.

In order to change this situation, the Government of Albania has drafted laws and policies, in accordance with its international obligations and the human rights principles, and has empowered its mechanisms to protect and respect women's rights.

## **Government mechanisms responsible for issues of gender equity and domestic violence**

Based on Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in the society” and on Law 9969, dated December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 “On measures against violence in domestic relations”, the authority responsible for issues of gender equity and domestic violence is the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The Directorate of Equal Chances Policies is the responsible structure to “foster gender equity as well as a wide participation of women in the economic, political and cultural life of the country” as well as the “prevention and fight against domestic violence”. The combination of gender policies and the fight against domestic violence in public policies at both central and local level is achieved in collaboration with the contact point network at ministry and prefecture line (central level) as well as municipality (local one).

The creation of the Sector on Measures against Domestic Violence as the main structure for the prevention and fight against domestic violence in January 2008, as part of the Directorate of Equal Chances Policies (DEOP), has the following objectives:

- to draft legal acts, necessary for the prevention and reduction of domestic violence;
- to prepare social, promotional and preventive programs for the reduction of family violence.

## **Policies**

In accordance with its mission and the accomplishment of its duties, one of the challenges which was more successfully achieved was the raft, by MOLSAEO of the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence (NSGEADV), approved through approval of the council of the Ministers No. 913, dated December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

## **Legislation**

The main legal act in this field is Law 9969, dated December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 “On measures against violence in domestic relations”, which entered into force on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. It is the first time that the Albanian legislation comprises a law on the prevention and reduction of domestic violence as well as the protection of its victims. The protection guaranteed by this law does not only concern marriage relations but also those of the family member. According to this law, civil courts may decide protective measures for the victims through a rapid and affordable procedure such as the protective orders.

## **Organization of awareness campaigns against domestic violence**

The Albanian Government, from November 2006 and on, has undertaken awareness campaigns to increase sensibility of the entire Albanian society regarding the phenomenon of domestic violence. All actors of the Albanian society such as the Government, the Parliament, the media, NGOs, etc have been involved in these campaigns.

The first campaign was organized in 2007 with its main theme: **“Violence kills if you are silent! – You react as well and say stop to Domestic violence”**. Posters and leaflets were distributed in all the country for the prevention and fight against domestic violence. MOLSAEO played a crucial role in the coordination of all the activities of this campaign.

During 2008, which was proclaimed by the Prime Minister of Albania Mr. Sali Berisha as the year against domestic violence, a national awareness campaign was organized for increasing the awareness on the Law 9969, dated December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 “On measures against violence in domestic relations” as well as on the prevention and fight against domestic violence. The Directorate of Equal Chances Policies at MOLSAEO was the leading actor in the campaign on violence against women.

Another campaign was the one named: “For a family and a society which is equal and without violence: for me, for you, for us: Stop Violence!” In order to accomplish the activities of the campaign, DPSHB had a close cooperation with the United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equity in Albania and especially with UNDP as well as with NGOs working in this field.

During November 2008, DEOP distributed the leaflets prepared with the assistance of OSCE entitled “Protect yourselves from domestic violence”, to all Regional Employment Directorates and to the Social Services Directorates in all the districts of the country, with the duty and responsibility to distribute it to all the institutions where the wide public has access, especially in those where the targeted group to which those are addressed mostly approaches.

### **Qualification of legal, police and health staff**

The Directorate of Equal Chances Policies at MOLSAEO, in cooperation with international organizations such as UNDP, UNFPA, OSCE, etc has organized a cycle of training sessions for the staff of police, health structures and social services. The scope of these sessions has been to strengthen capacities of the structures which offer support and protection services for victims of domestic violence.

### **Provision of well-funded shelters for women and girls who have been subjected to violence**

MOLSAEO has ensured the support of the One UN Programme in Albania to built the first State owned shelter for the rehabilitation of women who have been subject to domestic violence. This center shall enter into function within 2009.

Also, the social administrators at the councils of municipalities, districts and communes have as part of their job descriptions the held they should give to women who have been subject to domestic violence.

## **Provision of a system for the implementation and reporting of data related to domestic violence**

Upon entry into power of the Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in the society”, the mechanisms which shall guarantee the establishment of indicators and statistics according to gender are being created.

In order to continuously ensure gender statistics, which are necessary for carrying out gender analysis in special fields as well as for the monitoring of the NSGEADV as well as of the situation in Albania on any direction from a gender perspective, actions are being taken for the creation and the functioning of the Inter – Institutional Working Group to support and policies and monitor the gender equity in Albania.

Amongst the main duties of the group we could mention: the establishment of quantity and quality indicators which are necessary for monitoring gender equity and measure domestic violence, especially towards women, in all directions, as well as the review of existing data (quantity and quality ones) at national level, the identification of gaps and needs and the preparation of recommendations on this purpose.

Also, after the signing of the Cooperation Agreement between line ministries for the implementation of Law No. 9969, dated December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 “On measures against violence in domestic relations”, all ministries shall collect and report once in three months statistical data on domestic violence cases, as per the respective form.

Such data shall be made public and shall be reported continuously at government level with the aim of taking measures against domestic violence.

## **E. ARMED CONFLICTS**

During the years of democratic governance, Albania has reached further higher standards and has been able to cope with new challenges in its path of democracy consolidation, provision of peace and respect for human rights. The Government tries to bring these standards even higher through the accomplishment of priorities set on this purpose such as NATO membership and the integration of the country into the EU. Albania actually contributes with peacekeeping forces in the framework of the UN and other security organizations and is working for the increase of national capacities to help in issues of security and peace.

Albania has undertaken a full programme of institutional, economic and legal reforms. These seek to turn the country into a safe place to invest and to live and work in Albania.

Albania has ratified all the most important documents on human rights and especially regarding the situation of emergency or armed conflicts, has done efforts to include the standards of these documents in its domestic legislation. Albania is party to CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it adheres to the Additional Geneva Conventions Protocol of 12 August 1949 related to the protection of victims of

international armed conflicts (Protocol I) and to the Additional Geneva Conventions Protocol related to the protection of victims of non – international armed conflicts (Protocol II); it also adheres to the 1951 Convention related to the Status of Refugees and has signed since 1994 the “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the High Commissioner for Refugees”, etc.

Regarding Resolution No. 1325 of the UN Security Council, year 2000, the Albanian governmental mechanism – the DEOP at MOLSAEO has participated in regional activities organized on this purpose. The recommendations issued from the regional conference held in Montenegro in October 2008 have been forwarded to the line ministries (Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior) to take measures for its implementation.

Albania has never been touched by armed conflict. Though this, the internal legislation provides for measures in the treatment of refugees coming to Albania and the measures for their integration which are treated in the Law No. 8432, dated 14 December 1998 “On asylum in the Republic of Albania”, amended by Law 10060, dated 26 January 2009 “On some changes and amendments to the Law No. 8432, dated 14 December 1998 “On asylum in the Republic of Albania”. This law recognizes the right to asylum or complementary protection to all foreigners in need of international protection, be they refugees or other persons seeking asylum in accordance with the provisions of this law and with the international conventions in which Albania is a party to. The Law No. 9098, dated 3 July 2003 “On the Integration and Family Reunion of Persons granted Asylum in the Republic of Albania” provides for concrete procedures for the education, assistance, social care and family reunion of persons granted asylum in the Republic of Albania.

Year after year, considering also gender perspective, the number of female staff of the armed and the police forces has increased. Police forces have been trained mainly of gender equity problems as well as on problems related to women and domestic violence.

## **F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY**

The Albanian **legislation** forbids the discrimination in the field of employment, professional activity and social insurance benefits. This legislation has undergone continuous improvement in accordance with the changes that have occurred in the labor market. Right to work is indiscriminately guaranteed for all Albanian citizens at working age. Such right is clearly expressed in article 32 of the Labor Code. Employment is one of the most important indexes for the evaluation of gender equity. Anyhow, social non – discriminatory policies, programs and supporting services, which constitute another priority of the Albanian Government’s Programme, have a considerable impact in strengthening the role of women in the society.

The Albanian labor legislation is not only free from any discrimination against women, but contains instead favors for some categories of women such as mothers with many children, etc regarding employment. Women constitute around 51 % of the population in the country and they are mainly engaged in the following forms of economic activities: **a)**

employed in the State sector (education, health, public administration, institutions of either central or local government); **b**) employed in the private sector (small and middle companies and enterprises, services); **c**) self – employed in small or family businesses; **d**) employed in private agricultural jobs; **e**) self – employed at home. Female employees occupy a high percentage in the State sector (telecommunications, financial activities, public administration, education, health and social activities). In the private sector, the main fields where females are employed are: refining industry, clothing and textiles industry, food industry, agriculture, leather and shoes industry and collective services.

### **Programs and policies**

Employment fostering programs have been applied to increase the number of employed women. They provide for favors for women and girls and for easier fees they have to pay for vocational training in the vocational training public centers. Also, licenses have been given to companies organizing courses on professions which are more appropriate for women and girls and increase their capacities. In some districts of the country, different NGOs have opened employment centers, as well as information and intermediation centers for women and girls. Meanwhile, regarding employment problems, a number of institutions were set up such as the 12 regional and local employment offices.

The implementation of employment programs and especially of those related to on-the-job training is one of the forms for the reduction of the informal labor market. Of particular importance in this regard, is the program for encouraging the employment of unemployed female jobseekers, prepared in the framework of the objective of the Albanian Government to develop active social policies through encouraging of employment. This program aims to encourage Albanian managers to try to hire in different timeframes unemployed female jobseekers. The program was drafted under the auspices of the Employment and Professional Preparation Strategy and was approved by the Council of the Ministers through its Decision No. 67, dated 10 January 2003. MOLSAEO has treated women as a priority in its employment encouraging programs applied in the last three years.

Considering the level of employment of women as high, despite of their wide involvement in the employment fostering programs, the MOLSAEO has taken concrete steps for the implementation of policies for the employment of women. The employment encouraging program aims towards the employment of unemployed female jobseekers and towards the encouragement of employers to increase the number of unemployed female jobseekers they hire. Though this might seem as discriminatory towards men, in reality it responds to the high unemployment rate amidst women. The support given by the government consists in financing of the amount that employers should pay to the social insurance, while for hiring women over 35 years old, formerly trafficked women, women from the Roma community and females with limited abilities they are compensated for the level of salary up to the minimal wage.

Women who have settled in recent years in the main cities as result of internal migration as well as the Roma women who have often shown notable deficiency in their capacity to

increase their professional ability, have been assisted through training courses on tailoring or refining of agricultural products. A unit, part of the State Social Service, works to increase the level of literacy for Roma women and children. Supported by NGOs, these women have been able to integrate into the labor market.

**The National Strategy on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence**, in its objective “Economic empowerment of women”, foresees:

1 – Increase in the number of projects or programs which foster professional preparation and employment of women and girls, as well as the extension of these projects in rural areas;

2 – Support to initiatives for the creation of crediting programs for women and girls;

3 – Encouragement of development of small businesses, managed by women and girls, improvement of their benefits through intensive revival programs, financial counseling and marketing, training on management, improvement of products and restructuring of human resources.

### **Women and self – employment**

The principle of equity between men and women applies also in the activities of self – employed persons. Since there is no specific legal regulation for the self – employed men and women, the Albanian legislation on work relations applies. Meanwhile, to protect the category of “members of family working together with the self – employed person”, the Albanian legislation offers minimal social rights and guarantees same rights as for the self – employed.

The involvement of women in private businesses is still at a low level (women managers of private businesses were at a rate of 21 % in 1994, 16.8 % in 1996, 18 % in 1998 and 17 % in 2005). Almost 85 % of them belong to businesses in urban areas while 15 % belong to rural areas. The main economic activities in which women are concentrated are:

- Commerce, wholesale and retails;
- Services (dentists, notaries, lawyers, hair dressing, etc);
- Agro – businesses and industry (mainly products of milk, textiles, publishing houses, tailoring and handicrafts).

The highest number of businesses managed by women and / or girls is concentrated in Tirana (31 %), Durrës 8.7 %) and Elbasan (6.2 %).

Women apply for loan rarely since they are perceived to be of a supporting role in business activities. Also, the loan policies of many banks require that the applicant have some capital, which in reality very few women have. The property rights of women usually are lost when properties are registered in the name of the husband. In many cases it happens that the living residence of a married couple is registered in the name of the male spouse though both spouses have equal rights to that property. Usually, women do not enjoy the support of their husbands in taking business initiatives or in some cases

they do not have the courage to undertake such initiative. Lack of information contributes also in the disability of women to effectively use banks.

In two studies carried out by the Albanian Center for Economic Studies (ACER), it results that 78 % of the demands for loans are presented by male heads of household, while 5 – 7 % of female farmers take loans from their relatives.

During the period 2003 – 2007, in the framework of strengthening and improvement of capacities and abilities to ensure the progress of women in the economic field, around 150 training sessions and workshops have been organized throughout the country on the topic: “Women in business”. Such training sessions have been funded mainly by foreign donors. Their objective has been to create support to women, towards their development in the economic field, for obtaining basic and the most important information on the business world and its rules. These training activities have resulted in strengthening of the position of women in the economic life, thus aiming towards the increase of their abilities for taking initiatives and for managing businesses, in order to reach a fair balance in the number of men and women operating in the field of business.

### **Women in rural areas**

Population living in rural areas is not included in the unemployment figures in the country since the labor force in these areas is considered as self – employed in the agricultural family economies. As a result, the view of the exercise of rights by women of rural areas is incomplete and the statistical data is almost entirely missing.

Actually, the position and the status of women in rural areas is interlinked with a complexity of factors comprising elements of family culture, indicators of cultural and educational level, mentality related to tradition and new societal problems. In this complexity of factors, the practical exercise of women’s economic rights in the farms, the property relations, access to land and means of agricultural production take particular importance. The contribution of women in the agricultural economy and in the management of work in the family is very important for the well – being of families, provision of income and endurance of life in rural areas.

Most part of rural farms are headed by males – at a rate of 96 %, who are mainly part of 25 – 55 years old group age, while an older age, 65, is noticed for women.

### ***Social insurance and other benefits***

Regarding social insurance and the respective benefits, the Constitution of the Republic of Albania guarantees to everyone the right of benefit from social insurance upon reaching the required retirement age, or in case of disability to work, as well as benefits in case of redundancy. The Law on Social Insurance follows the same line, though it makes a distinction between payments of compensation and benefits from the social insurance in case of birth, which includes pregnancy and the period after delivery, which are applied exclusively to women.

Taking into account the family conditions and the role of women in the family, the law provides for some other distinctions in favor of women. More concretely, mothers who have given birth to 6 or more children and who have completed 30 years of work can retire 10 years in advance, therefore since they are 50 years old. Another distinction is the family pension which is given to the widowed woman when she has reached 50 years old but does not fulfill the conditions to retire and benefit pension on her own work's account. Meanwhile, the widowed man may receive pension from the work of his late wife only after he has reached the age of 60. Regarding unemployment, illnesses, or invalidity, there are no differences based on gender.

### ***Special measures***

Women who work are recognized the right for paid birth, benefits from the social insurance scheme, paid medical report periods during pregnancy, preservation of the working place during pregnancy leave, special protection after delivery such as non – exposure to places which might be dangerous for the child's health, breaks during working time for breastfeeding, etc. In Albania, pregnancy and after delivery leave is given only to the women.

## **G. WOMEN INVOLVED IN POWER AND DECISION TAKING**

### ***Participation of women in the political and public life***

Statistical data show that in Albania, the dominating political and public offices are headed by men, despite of the fact that the educational level of women is equal to men or often even higher. Women occupy 10 seats in the parliament out of 140. There are two female ministers in the government out of 14 ministers in total or 7.2 %. Also there are 7 female deputy ministers out of 21 deputy ministers in total. In prefectures, there is only one female prefect out of 12 in all the country. In local government, referring to the last local elections of 2007, there is only 1 female mayor out of 65 and 6 female heads of communes out of 291 in total.

In the public administration the woman presence is more encouraging considering the fact that they constitute 43% of the overall number of employees, whereas in the leading level (lawmakers, high rank officials and leaders group) the female occupy 27 %.

The representation of women and girls/ female in leading positions of political parties is also low. This situation is not caused by their indifferentism to be involved in political affairs and it is not an indicator of women and girls inability in this direction.

In spite of continuous efforts of woman and girls' political organizations to grow their participation in political affairs and as a consequence in decision making, it must be said that their representation in Parliament and in the government still remains low. It is noticed that women and girls are really very active participators during the electoral campaign. They are very good promoters of their political forces' programs, they carry out well indeed the commissioner's role and they're very strong supporters during the

realizations of campaigns, but this representation and this quite active part isn't appreciated from the political forces, as candidate in the parliamentary elections and especially the local ones.

Generally and in certain sections of the decision maker's process women's participation in the political and public life of the country has been growing constantly, especially in the public domain. The government mechanism on gender equity MoLSAEO in cooperation with the international organizations, has made several efforts to increase awareness on the participation of women in politics and public life. For the first time in the Electoral Code and in the Law No. 9970, dated on 24.07.2008 "On gender equity in society" it is foreseen that temporary special measures, such as the quotas in the public and political decision-making at the level of not less than 30% for both genders will be taken. In the Electoral Code, Article No. 47, point 5, it is defined that "For every electoral zone, at least thirty percent of the multi nominal list and/or 1 of 3 first names of the multi nominal list must belong to each gender. As for the election of the local government bodies, 1 of 3 names of the list must belong to each gender". The Electoral Code, in the Article No. 175 foresees also the sanctions according to the disrespect of gender equity. The electoral subject which doesn't respect the foreseen quota, is punished by CEC with fine from 30 000 leks for each electoral zone.

The 2005 elections marked new positive experiences in the field of gender equity, because for the first time in the parliamentary history of Albania a woman is elected in the position of the Chairwoman of the Parliament of Albania. For the first time in these elections, a political force led by a woman (Green Party) takes part in the political competition; a woman also is presented as independent candidate. It was also positive the signing of "Code of Behaviour" by political forces on 27 May 2005, an initiative of the President of the Republic of Albania, that shows a *de jure* approval from these political forces about support and promotion of woman/ female candidates. The last local elections as well showed a realization of political forces about the importance of participation of woman in politics and in leadership.

As for runners, all the campaigners are supported financially the same; regardless of gender belonging, because it is on behalf of a political party is that its campaigner/candidate win. As well, in some cases the NGO-s have helped women campaigning and raising funds for them, but it must be told this is not a correct/normal and systematic effort. An opinion exists that women that enter /affiliate politics can serve as a model or concrete example of participation in political and public life.

Seldom, negative opinion is spread on women who are active in politics in high level. At the level of small town and villages, women hesitate to involve in politics while in other cases, women themselves show little trust in females involved in politics.

The analysis of the situation from last elections up to now, an increase of the political forces themselves can be noted, in relation to the importance of women participation in politics and management. On the other hand, the handling of such issue by the written or electronic media shows sufficiently on the media awareness regarding the importance of women participation in political and public decision making positions.

The sealing of the quotas in the Electoral Code constitutes another result towards gender equity and especially towards increasing women representation in the highest legislative body, the Albanian Parliament. Such result comes in addition to the approval of the Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in the society” and the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence – through Decision of the Council of the Ministers No. 913, dated December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

The Albanian legislation guarantees participation of women at all levels of policies, strategies and programs preparation. It can actually be said that the model of “political woman” or “leader woman” has been created at all levels of central and local governance. The creation of equal opportunities for political participation has been always considered as part of human rights and expression of the democracy level. Also, the increasing participation of women in the political and public life of the country and in the decision making processes has offered opportunities that the interests of women be better reflected in taking initiatives for the protection of their rights.

Civil society, women political forums and the government mechanism on gender equity, supported by international organizations active in Albania, have made efforts:

- to increase capacity of elected or potentially to be elected women. In this framework a considerable number of training sessions have been organized and conducted on gender issues, communication, campaigns organization, situation management, etc.
- increase the awareness of public opinion on the positive values that equal participation of men and women in politics and decision making have for the democratization and development of the country. In this framework, the following has been organized and carried out: awareness broadcasts and spots in electronic media, reports and analysis in the written media, posters, leaflets etc on different topics focusing on women and their concerns.

The Government makes continuous positive efforts to empower women and to increase their participation in the political and public decision making. In the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence (approved through Decision of the Council of the Ministers No. 913, dated December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007), one of the main priorities is the increase of gender balance in decision making. The action plan provides for concrete actions towards such increase for women and girls in political and public decision making, the encouraging of their values and the increase of media and public opinion awareness.

The Parliament's Chairwoman, the Prime Minister and the President have also given a strong support to increase the participation of women in the political and public decision making. They have fully supported the introduction of the quotas in the Electoral Code and have given their important support to the approval of the Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 "On Gender Equity in the society", since such acts were subject to considerable discussion regarding the introduction of the quota. The appointment of many women in managerial posts in a number of important government institutions shows the increased awareness and the political support to women, as well as to their values and potential.

## **INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION**

From a legislative point of view, all Albanian citizens, without distinction between men and women, enjoy the same rights to represent their country in international organizations, provided they fulfil the criteria for the Foreign Service. According to the information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, women constitute 31 % of the Albanian representation in Albanian embassies and diplomatic missions abroad.

Albania has representatives in different international organizations such as NATO, UN, CoE and OSCE. Albanian missions in UNESCO and Council of Europe (in Strasbourg) are headed by women. In compliance with the Statutory Resolution of the European Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, approved by the Committee of the Ministers, and by Decision of the Council of the Ministers No. 855, dated December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003, two women have been appointed as part of the Albanian delegation to this Congress, in quality of vice – member of delegation. Also, a female representative from Albania, in quality of vice – member of delegation, participates in the Chamber of Local Authorities of the European Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

### **I. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN**

The Albanian Government has continuously considered women's rights as integral part of human rights and stands for the principle set in the framework of the 2005 Summit, where all UN member countries accepted that "Progress of women is progress for all" and that it is a necessary prerogative for the achievement of true equity and justice.

In such framework, Albania has ratified the most important documents and implements their recommendations. The Constitution of the Republic of Albania establishes that the international agreements, in which Albania is a party to, are part of the domestic legislation. Moreover, they have prevalence over the domestic laws contrary to them (article 122/2 of the Constitution).

In rafting domestic legislation, the Government is based on the main principles and aims to approximate the domestic legislation with the international one. Regarding the field of gender equity, it is noteworthy mentioning that the basis of the Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On gender equity in society” is to be found in the CEDAW and in the recommendations of the Council of Europe. The National Strategy (NSGE&DV) on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence for the period 2007 – 2010 is based on the recommendations and critical fields of the Beijing Platform of Action, seen in the Albanian prospective.

Albania has ratified and reports on all UN Conventions and Covenants on Human Rights. Of particular importance in the field of women, we can mention:

- **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW.** Albanian adheres to this Convention since 1993, when such convention was ratified by the Albanian Parliament through Law No. 7767. The Convention was further translated into Albanian and its text is widespread throughout the country. Actually, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Government Report has been sent to the Committee of this Convention, drafted by the Albanian Government, which includes also comments and information from the People’s Advocate (the Albanian Ombudsman) as well as from NGOs active in this field. The governmental mechanism has worked for several years for the dissemination of such convention. Publication, training sessions and articles have been in the main focus of its work. Training for trainers was organized in early 2009 in the framework of the One UN Program on the CEDAW. A training cycle on this Convention shall continue in all levels as part of the campaign “Women rights are human rights”.
- **The CEDAW additional Protocol** – ratified by the Albanian Parliament through Law No. 9052, dated April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003.
- **The Convention on the Rights of the Child**, ratified by Albania of in 1992.

Albania has ratified most of the ILO Conventions and prepares periodical reports on their implementation. Here we can mention:

- **ILO Convention No. 156** “On workers with family responsibilities” of 1981, ratified by Albania in 2007.
- **ILO Convention No. 183** “On the protection of motherhood” of 2000, ratified by Albania in 2004.
- **ILO Convention No. 111** on Discrimination (Employment and workplace) of 1958, which deals with equity of treatment and opportunities, including access to employment, as well as with work conditions.
- **ILO Convention No. 100** “On equal remuneration” of 1951, which sets the principle of equal remuneration for male and female workers for an equal value of work.

Different activities have been carried out by the structures responsible for their dissemination and for the better information on the international conventions and documents on women; a publication of international acts on gender equity translated into Albanian has been completed, containing acts of the UN, ILO, Council of Europe; training of the public administration at both central and local level has been carried out on the CEDAW and other documents; reports, articles and media broadcasting have also been made possible.

## **J. WOMEN AND MEDIA**

The Albanian media reflects up to a certain point the problems concerning Albanian women, such as opportunities for education, employment, domestic violence problems, sexual harassment, etc also when such phenomena are part of the public debate.

Often, publication of real events is subject to prejudice and events are reflected under the influence of negative stereotypes. The image of women, in most cases, is presented under the perspective of the victim and she is rarely seen and a factor that contributes to the development of the society not only because of the percentage it occupies in the population, but especially because of the values it carries.

The traditional stereotypes of women are notably present in the media, where the image of this part of society is seen on one hand as economically and emotionally dependant, weak and professionally unable, and on the other as committed housewife, family member, mother of family, worthy mother and spouse. A trend is also noted in the media. When there is a need to quote sources or opinions, reference is made to male personalities, especially in the field of politics, sports, economy, etc. Meanwhile, the voice of women as professionals is heard very little in the media.

***Percentage of male and female reporters / journalists in the media:*** The percentage of male and females reporters / journalists goes in favour of the first as higher as it goes the hierarchy of media owners and management. A survey conducted in 2006 shows that in the social field females occupied 55 % of the overall number of journalists while males 45 %; in the sports and culture 45 % - 55 %; in political journalism the percentage is 35% to 65 %; in economic analysis and reporting journalism 40 % to 60 %; as analyzing journalists 8 % to 92 %. As a total, the percentage of women working as journalists in the written media is around 40, while their percentage of females in the visual media reaches 60 % (as speakers). 68 % of them work as reporters.

*Legislative and political measures for eliminating gender discrimination in the media*

**The National Strategy (NSGE&DV) on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence for the period 2007 – 2010** has set as one of its strategic purposes the elimination of gender discrimination in the mass media. Concrete actions foreseen in it aims towards the improvement of the role of media, for a new mentality which corresponds to developments of our time, in relation to gender equity in the society and the increase of the presence of women and girls in this profession.

**The Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On gender equity in society”** establishes the principle of elimination of gender discrimination in relation to representation in the media; the prohibition of production, broadcasting and publication of announcements, materials or information which is humiliating and denigrating because of gender.

## **L. MINORS**

According to the Albanian legislation, girls and boys enjoy equal rights in all fields of life. The legislation itself has its foundation on the principle of the most important documents of human rights and the ruling principle regarding minors is always the best interest of the child.

Albania has ratified the International Convention on the Rights of the Child since February 1992 and reports regularly before the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Actually, it is rafting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Government Report on the Implementation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Other important acts ratified by Albania are:

The Council of Europe Convention “On measures against trafficking in human beings”, ratified by Law No. 9642, dated November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006;

The ILO Convention No. 138 “On the minimal allowed working age” ratified in 1998 and the ILO Convention No. 182 “On the prohibition and actions for the elimination of all forms of child labour”, ratified in 2001;

The non – obligatory protocol of the UN Convention “On the involvement of children in armed conflicts”, approved by Law No. 9833, dated November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 and the non – obligatory protocol of the UN Convention “On the trading of children, prostitution and pornography in children”, approved by Law No. 9834, dated November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007.

## **National legislation**

The Constitution of Albania, approve by the Parliament by Law No. 8417, dated October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1998 is the basic law providing the protection of the rights of children. Its article 54 stipulates the right of children to be protected from violence, maltreatment, abuse and exploitation for work an especially from work under the minimal age allowed for children to work, work that might result in damaging their health, moral, life or normal development.

Several amendments to the Penal Code were approved through Law No. 9850, dated January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008, as part of the implementation of the National Strategy on Children. They are intended to reduce the number of children who work, to guarantee the system for their protection, etc.

Law No. 9355, dated March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005 “On the social aid and services” (as changed) provides for the equal treatment of citizens, here including also children who are offered such services.

Law No. 9669 “On measures against violence in family relations” established a mechanism or coordinated net of institutions which are responsible for the protection, rehabilitation of the victims and the prevention of domestic violence.

The Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On gender equity in society” aims towards the elimination of gender basis discrimination.

National Strategy on Children 2005-2010 determines the main directions of development of the policies on the protection of the children’s rights without difference girls-boys through programs which will make possible goals’ achievement and will provide the necessary financial resources.

#### *Other undertaken measures*

In October 2007, the process of full transition of the pre-detention system under the Ministry of Justice was concluded.

According to law, it is forbidden the detention of minors in the same room with the adults or placement of the minor girls with the minor boys in the same room. The minors are put into different room and sections to give them the possibilities of a different treatment.

The adult girls are kept under supervision and care only of a female staff.

### **Part III - Institutional developments**

The progress of women and the reach of gender equality are considered as important priority policies also from the government which came out of the parliamentary elections on 2005 and the emphasis is placed again in the strengthening of the governmental mechanism. This is also in conformity with the obligations arising out of the Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee and the Beijing Platform for Action, field H. For this reason, the Directorate of Policies on the Equal Chances was created at MoLSAEO (an institution considered as responsible authority for the issues of the gender equality), after the modifications brought by Law no. 9198, date 01.07.2004 “On gender

equality in society”. This Directorate, from the structural point of view, replaced the former Committee for Equal Opportunities (Committee for gender equity – structures that have been functioning during the period 2002-2005). Another structure that was functioning until 2006 was the Inter-ministerial Committee for gender equity (dissolved by the changes to the law on gender equity).

Actually the institutional mechanism for gender issues and domestic violence in Albania is presented by several structures:

According to Law No. 9970 date 24.07.2008 “On gender equality in society” the responsible bodies for handling gender issues (and according the Law No. 9669, date 18.12.2006 “On the measures towards domestic violence in family relations”) are:

**1 – The Council of Ministers** which approves the national strategy and the action plan for the reach of gender equity in Albania and has the obligation to make an evaluation of the influences for each gender in the draft-laws that proposes to the Parliament, when it exercises its legislative competence.

**2 – The National Council of Gender Equity** – which is a consultative body on gender policies. This Council will be headed by the Minister that covers the issues of gender equity and is composed of nine deputy ministers and three representatives of civil society. The Council convenes not less than two times a year and its duties are:

a) it advises the Government for the defining of the direction of states policies on gender equality, excepting the issues that are considered from National Council of Labour. For issues of particular importance, the National Council on Gender Equity might hold joint meetings with the National Council of Labour.

b) ensures gender integration in all fields, especially in the political, social, economic and cultural ones.

c) proposes to the Council of the Ministers the main programmes for encouraging and achieving gender equity in Albania.

ç) evaluates the concrete situation of gender equity in the country, providing instruction on the structure of gender equity issues in the ministry in charge of gender equity, as well as offers proposals and recommendations to the Government on potential improvement of the situation.

d) approves the annual report on gender equity issues for the ministry in charge of this topic.

**3 – The Minister dealing with gender equity issues and domestic violence** – is the authority responsible for the implementation of the laws mentioned above and the State programs on gender issues (actually the Minister of MoLSAEO). The gender equity competences are exercised by the structure set up on such purpose – the Directorate on Equal Opportunities’ Policies (DEOP). DEOP works since 2006 as the structure

responsible for gender equity within the MoLSAEO. Its main mission is to “*formulate and develop policies to encourage equality in fields such as gender equity, equality / inequality in abilities, problems of ethnic, ethno – cultural and linguistic minorities, age disparities, racial disparities, etc*”. More concretely on gender equity, DEOP’s activity aims to “*foster gender equity in the country as well as wide participation of women in the economic, political and cultural life of the country*”. The main duties of this Directorate regarding gender equity are:

- Draft policies on equal opportunities focussed under the gender equity prospective and the protection of rights for other categories of the society, as mentioned also in its mission;
- Propose initiatives for studying and analyse in the field the entire range of equal opportunities’ policies and the use of such policies in the process of drafting development policies;
- Draft legal acts necessary for achieving gender balance in different areas and monitor the provisions of the equity law as well as the bylaws (regulations) approved for its implementation;
- Supervise the implementation of international agreements and acts in its field of competence, upon approval of the Government;
- Cooperate with non – profit organisations active in the field of equal opportunities;
- Coordinate the work for preparing National Programmes on Equal Opportunities for categories of population covered by the mandate of DEOP.

Actually, the duties that this Directorate carries out are undergoing a revision to come in full accordance with Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in the society”.

The Directorate is divided in two sectors: the Sector on Gender Equity and the Sector on the Fight against Domestic Violence. Staff covering such issues is entitled the civil servant status and is in the category of high level executive experts. The staff has a long experience of almost ten years and has received adequate training on issues of gender belonging, gender integration, gender budgeting, rights of women as per the international legislation and the domestic one, rafting and management of projects in other fields, etc.

#### **4 – State institutions at central (ministries) and / or local level (Districts, municipalities, communes)**

- Gender experts in each ministry;
- Local experts on gender issues.

At **parliamentary level**, gender issues are represented by the Sub – commission for Minors and Equal Opportunities, part of the Parliamentary Commission on Health, Labour and Social Affairs.

The financial support is given to these structures by the State Budget. Support for their empowerment is also received from different programmes funded by donors acting in the field of gender equity. Of particular importance to be mentioned is the support given by the UN agencies with expertise in this field, by OSCE, the Project of the Austrian Government “Equity in governance”, the “One UN” program, etc.

***b – Contact points.*** Aiming at the inclusion of gender issues in both central and local level, a network of contact points was set up and trained during the period 2005 – 2008 at central (14 ministries) and local level (12 prefectures and 65 municipalities), in the framework of the institutional cooperation. The contact points which served as bridges with the main responsible structure – the DEOP – were trained through different projects supported by UNDP, UNFPA, and the Project of the Austrian Government “Equity in governance” on issues such as gender belonging and domestic violence.

The approval of the Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in the society” opened new spaces for the institutionalisation and definition of functional duties for gender experts / focal points in ministry or local power level. Differently from earlier stages when the contact points were carrying out such job along with other duties, without it being obligatory part of the job description, the new gender experts who are now under recruitment shall have as their main functional duty the gender equity and domestic violence issues as well as a specific job description on this purpose. In the framework of complementation of the bylaws to the law on gender equity, MoLSAEO has drafted and is in the process of consultation for the terms of reference for these experts in central and local level (municipalities).

c) – Monitoring structures:

**c.1** – DEOP prepares the report on the monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan to the NSGE&DV for the period 2007 – 2010. The periodical monitoring reports are prepared by DEOP based on the information arrived from line ministries and from prefectures. Information is also sought from NGOs and donors involved in the impacts of activities they have carried out, in pursuance of the strategy’s objectives. In the framework of the Cooperation Plan for 2009, as part of the three years One UN program on gender equity, UNIFEM has supported DEOP with two posts of coordinators who will work to set the basis for the **Technical Secretariat** on monitoring, which is one of the duties established in the Strategy.

**c.2** – **The National Council on Gender Equity (NGEC)** through the exercise of its functions established in the law (see part III.2), in addition to its main duty as an advisory body to the Council of the Ministers in drafting gender policies, through the analysis it

carries out on the gender equity situation in the country and the approval of the monitoring annual report prepared by DEOP, has also a monitoring role.

e) In December 2007, the Council of the Ministers approved the National Strategy on Gender Equity and against Domestic Violence. In absence of a set of indicators, necessary for the evaluation and monitoring of the NSGE&DV and the reaching of the objectives established in the framework of the One UN Program on gender equity, DEOP undertook the initiative for the provision of gender statistics and the definition of gender indicators.

Based on the Article 13 of the Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in Society” is established the Interdepartmental Task Force for statistics and sensitive gender indicators, with the participation of the representatives of all line ministries and other central institutions. Its duties are:

- Definition of the qualitative and quantitative indicators necessary for monitoring of gender equity in all directions.
- Reviewing of existing (qualitative and quantitative) data in a national level, the identification of gaps and needs as well as preparation of recommendations and proposals.
- Analysis of legislation on statistics and recommendation of changes in respect of providing gender statistics.
- Suggestions and recommendations on including of gender equity’ issues in the processes of monitoring and those sectional statistical.
- Identification of needs for the raising and strengthening of capacities and tools for the improvement of collecting, processing and analyses of gender statistics and indicators in the function of coordinated monitoring of gender equity.
- Providing interdepartmental cooperation to ensure the collecting, processing and analyses of gender statistics and indicators as well as their publication.

Training of statistics offices’ specialists in line ministries is planned concerning gender statistics and in determination of gender indicators, as well as contact points in central level about gender issues.

As for accumulation and publication of gender statistics on behalf of institutional mechanism on gender equity in cooperation with INSTAT a substantial work is done, but it is noticed that there are deficiencies of gender statistics’ accumulation in formal way, work’s coordination between the institutions towards their collection, regulation and publication, as well as in undertaking of analyses on this statistics in different areas. Every year INSTAT releases the issue “Females and males in Albania” with gender statistics but with a limited number of fields.

- As regards the women' participation in labour-market there are statistics, but deficiencies exist in their employment on public sector and on high leading and managerial positions on this sector, as well as their incorporation in informal market.
- As regards the violence phenomenon, there is a lack of official statistics but with the approval of the Law No. 9690, dated December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 "On measures towards Domestic Violence" and creation of the structure in MoLSAEO work is intensified concerning the augmentation of interdepartmental cooperation as regards the statistics on domestic violence. Furthermore, the report of observation about the situation of domestic violence, supported from UNICEF in cooperation with INSTAT and MoLSAEO is in completion.
- As regards the unpaid work, about which there are materialized only several spontaneous studies and there is very few information for year 2009, in the framework of the Programme "One UN" MoLSAEO in cooperation with INSTAT will initiate the realization of a study about the time utilization on the evaluation of unpaid work.

f) Many actors are involved in the promotion of gender equity and the fight against domestic violence, such as: the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Chairwoman of the Parliament, the government institutions in central and local level, NGOs working in this field, other representatives from the civil society, personalities from the academic environment, the media, etc, in cooperation with the international organisations operating in Albania.

The Albanian society has become more sensible to the role of women in all spheres of life and especially to the increase of women's representation in the political and public decision making. More and more the issue is of a daily concern and family relations, especially the domestic and / or the gender based violence, are no longer taboos. The State and the civil society have been involved in recent years in a large awareness campaign for the promotion of the role of women, what has further been reflected in the rafting of new legislation on gender equity and against domestic violence; the rafting of a new strategy – now already in place and in its stage of implementation; different publications and broadcasting in the media; etc (see point 1.c on legislative and political achievements on gender equity and domestic violence).

### *Role of the Parliament*

The Parliament's Chairwoman is since two years in the forefront of a campaign against domestic violence and violence directed to women; the promotion of gender equity and the empowerment of women (for more on this topic, refer to the critical field D, part II).

The Parliamentary Sub – commission on Minors and Equal Opportunities, under the Parliamentary Commission on Health, Labour and Social Affairs, considers time after time matters related to gender equity, seeks reports for the implementation of programs and policies, gives opinions for the above mentioned Commission in relation to draft laws in such field.

### *Role of NGOs*

Civil society and especially women NGOs have worked continuously to promote gender equity an empowerment of women as well as against domestic violence. The cooperation between the State and the civil society has strengthened in recent years. The responsible structures in the MPCSSHBB have regularly collaborated with NGOs in this field on the drafting of laws and strategies, the organisation of joint activities and the exchange of information. The Law No. 9669, dated December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 “On measures against violence in family relations” was a civil initiative and wasrafted by a group of NGOs. The drafting of the Law No. 9970, dated July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 “On Gender Equity in the society”, which was a governmental (MoLSAEO) initiative, was largely consulted with NGOs and groups of interest. During debates in the Parliament, a group from the civil society lobbied through a petition for the approval of the gender equity law and the acceptance of the gender quotas.

The Albanian Government has taken into due consideration all analysis carried out and suggestions given by the civil society, as well as the alternative reports rafted from NGOs, in the framework of conventions where Albania is a party to and especially regarding CEDAW. During 2008, the non – profit organisations and the People’s Advocate (the Ombudsman) engaged actively in the preparation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Periodical Report. Also, during the period 2003 – 2008, NGOs active in the field have taken part actively in the implementation of CEDAW and the recommendations of the respective Committee. Publications and training sessions on the Convention have been done / carried out during this period either by the government mechanism or by NGOs, in collaboration with each other.

### **Part IV – Future Actions and Challenges**

For the period 2009 – 2010, the challenges that the Albanian Government will have to cope with, refer to concrete actions foreseen in the NSGE&DV for the period 2007 – 2010. The measures foreseen there shall be applied through the close cooperation of all government structures in central and local level, the Parliament, the civil society and NGOs in this field, and international organisations. Many of these activities are covered by the 3 years One UN Program on gender equity, signed between the Government of Albania and the UN agencies.

In the context of the country, the fields and the concrete actions to be taken are as follows:

**1. Creation of the legal framework and the respective monitoring at all levels of governance to increase the level of gender equity.**

a. Technical support for the implementation of primary and secondary legislation for the fight against domestic violence in both central and local level;

- i. Capacity building of professionals with and on domestic violence in central level, targeting all 12 districts of the Albania (social services, prefectures, police, health workers, NGOs and the educational system).
- ii. Increase of awareness on the protocols of the prevention and treatment of violence against women in the health sector (including the implementation of the program drafted by the health workers on the fight against violence on women).
- iii. Advocacy and lobbying with the line ministries for the approval and implementation of secondary legislation on the fight against violence on women.

b. Advocacy and support for the implementation of the Gender Equity Law in Albania (GEL)

- i. Coordination of activities and advocacy campaigns (support to spots, discussions on TV, round tables, etc) for the implementation of GEL;
- ii. Support for the implementation of institutional mechanisms / systems tackled by the GEL (gender equity experts, inter – ministerial working group, integration of gender issues in the work of the People’s Advocate (the Ombudsman);
- iii. Strengthening and capacity building for the implementation of the GEL for government professionals at national scale including the Labour Inspectorate, the Office of the People’s Advocate (the Ombudsman), judges, prosecutors, offices for compilation of statistics in difference ministries;
- iv. Integration of GEL’s principles in other laws, especially those related pregnancy leave and the benefits for both employed and unemployed men and women.

**2. Creation of mechanisms, sources and networks at national scale to effectively coordinate the NSGE&DV and the Law on Gender Equity (GEL).**

a. Coordination of capacities’ development of the mechanisms responsible for gender equity at all levels of governance so that the respective commitments can be effectively integrated into NSGE&DV.

- i. Institutionalisation and strengthening of the gender equity experts' network at line ministries' level and support for the coordination of work of such network;
  - ii. Creation and functioning of GEL mechanisms and development of training and information mechanisms in this respect;
  - iii. Institutionalisation and systematisation of provisions for advanced training for gender equity experts, main policy makers, the office of the People's Advocate (the Ombudsman) and the Members of the Parliament for the implementation of GEL, CEDAW and Gender Budgeting .
- b. Improvement of implementation of CEDAW as well as respective domestic legal framework by the courts, in accordance with EU standards.
  - i. Publication and distribution of CEDAW version in Albanian to the line ministries, the judiciary and the Magistrates' School.
- c. Better integration of NSGE&DV in the National Strategy for Social Protection (NSPS) by using the national process of gender budgeting.
  - i. Evaluation of the NSPS on the basis of the gender equality
  - ii. and the identification of three pilot districts for applying Social Protection Interventions in accordance with specifics of women.
  - iii. Training of MoLSAEO, line ministries, social services and municipalities in three districts on gender matters, social protection and gender budgeting.
  - iv. Technical support and expertise for the review of legislation on social security / assistance by guaranteeing the harmonisation with the revised Gender Equity Law – stressing on the support to the unpaid work of women.

**3. Improvement of monitoring of commitments in relation to gender equity in all levels of governance.**

- a. Provision of support for the set up of coordinated inter – governmental processes, raised up to a system level, for monitoring the implementation of SKBGJ in all levels of governance.
  - i. Creation of capacities and instruments for using data based on gender and quality indicators to provide information for policies' development and implementation (for e.g. support for the monitoring of the NSGE&DV implementation).
- b. Provision of support for harmonising the collection and analysing of quality and quantity data on the status of women and the expansion of gender equity.
  - i. Preparation of checklists for quality and quantity data required for monitoring the Government's commitment on gender equity.

- ii. Preparation of the 2009 annual report on “Status of Women and Gender Equity”, by expanding the existing analysis of the Government on gender issues and the status of women.
- iii. Carrying out of a pilot survey for the use of time and advocacy for the inclusion of the part time use in the 2011 Population Record.
- iv. Support the gender analysis in the framework of the Survey on Population and Health (by introducing in it the women component) and the provision of development of links with wider instruments of gender equity monitoring.
- v. Provision of links with instruments already in place and the 2011 Population Registration.

#### **4. Coordination of actions towards violence against women at local level**

- a. Support for the development of referral services on violence against women at local level in four pilot regions – Korça, Durrës, Kukës and Tirana.
  - i. The development of a strategy about the referral services at the municipality level to ensure that leading agencies use similar strategies, instruments and approaches.
  - ii. The actual implementation of strategy about the referral services (abovementioned) at local level – including local coordinated answers for the creation of “Decision-taking District Councils” to facilitate elaboration of Referral Services.
  - iii. As subordinate of such councils in the districts, a Working Group on the “Referral Services for Fighting Violence against Women” should be created. It may also be created upon the existing mechanisms (such as for e.g. the Children Protection Units).
  - iv. Capacity building for local authorities, psychologists, teachers, police officers and agents, judiciary and health local system on the services for victims of violence against women.
- b. Pilot creation of the first official national shelter in a certain district and support to the NGOs offering services.
  - i. Creation of a functional centre, here including the respective referral services.
- c. Coordination at local level of public awareness campaigns in relation to violence against women, focussing on the dissemination of information, prevention and potential support to victims.
  - i. Carrying out of a survey for the density of violence against women in Albania (second survey on domestic violence) as well as its publication and distribution.
  - ii. Development of harmonised advocacy messages on the fight towards violence against women at national level and increase of awareness on the referral services.

- iii. Coordination of awareness activities at both national and local level.
- iv. Study on the expenses that the State has to cope with due to€ the occurrence of violence against women.