

Israel's Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)

Part 1: Major Overall Achievements and Obstacles

In Israel a woman currently serves as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, a woman served as the Speaker of the 17th Knesset (Israel's Parliament), a woman heads the largest political party after having served as Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a woman is the current Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations. Among all the judges in Israel's judicial system, **51%** are women.

In 2007, **15.1%** of all women had an academic degree, in contrast with 12.3% of all men. **8.0%** of the women had a Masters Degree, while this was true of 7.4% of the men. About **50%** of those who are currently completing medical studies and studies in accounting are women.

The principal achievements in the status of women in the State of Israel are expressed in extensive legislation intended for advancing women (details in Part 2) and in the mechanisms that were established in various areas of activity (details in Part 3). The legislation and its implementation constitute the foundation stones for the advancement of women. In the last two years, emphasis has been put on issues concerning Gender Mainstreaming, obligating Government ministries and bodies to provide gender disaggregated data – by law.

Various laws stipulate the obligation for the appropriate representation of women at various foci of decision-making. However, there is a difficulty in applying the obligation in the law due to the absence of sanctions for non-implementation of the law and due to the lack of enforcement mechanisms.

In all of the laws which stipulate the obligation for appropriate representation, no measure has been set for what would be considered "appropriate." In a number of Supreme Court Judgements, the interpretation that is given to "appropriate" is that of equality. Pursuant to that, the Government Attorney General issued directives in 2003 determining that appropriate representation must be interpreted as being equal representation.

In legislation, the equality between women and men is expressed also in an equal distribution of functions within the family unit. In Israel, both parents are entitled to divide between them the rights to paternity leave, days of absence from work due to illness of their children, the developing tendency that emphasizes creating an atmosphere that would contribute to the advancement of women at work, and all this with the viewpoint of developing a career while raising a family. A law from 2008 stipulates that incentives will be given to employers who advance women and who act to adapt the workplaces for women.

In the Knesset, the Committee on the Status of Women has been active since 1992, and the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women has been operating within the framework of the Prime Minister's Office since 1998.

Gaps in pay between women and men in Israel are still evident, and various steps are being taken to improve the situation.

Beijing Platform for Action

Education and Professional Training for Women

Due to the law for compulsory education up to the age of 18, in Israel there is practically no illiteracy.

In 2002, the Unit for Gender Equality was established in the Ministry of Education, operating programs for eliminating gender stereotypes, programs for empowerment and leadership of youth leaders, male and female, etc. The unit deals with the educational system at all levels: principals, teaching staff, pupils, and parents.

The Unit for Gender Equality, in cooperation with various NGOs, operates unique study programs:

- The program for "Human Dignity and Gender Equality";
- The program for "Inculcating Friendship and Pairing Without Violence";
- The program for "Girls and Boys Who Are Leaders for Change" – a program of empowerment which is operated in high schools with the goal of promoting leadership; the program began as one intended for girls and was expanded to include boys;
- The program "Gender, Politics and Active Citizenship" – operated with the goal of internalizing political and civil awareness among the youth, with emphasis on democracy from the gender point of view, including the advancement of women in politics;
- The program for the empowerment of girls in the state religious educational system is focused on building feminism from a Jewish feminist viewpoint.

The Council for Advancing Women in Science and Technology was established in 2000 by Government Decision No. 2660 and also in accordance with a decision of the European Union.

The Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport gave scholarships for the purpose of supporting the advancement of women in science during the years 2007-2008.

The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor operates courses for training women from various special groups - women from development areas in the country, ultra-orthodox women, single-parent mothers - in order to advance them and improve their economic situation.

The project "**The Future Generation for Hi-tech in Industry**" has been successfully operated by the Science and Technology Administration in the Ministry of Education. This program is deeply involved at the middle school level and is intended to guide pupils in general and girl pupils in particular to choose science and technology subjects in high school.

Women and Health

The National Council for Women's Health is one of 18 councils that were established as advisory bodies to the management of the Ministry of Health (Programs in the health sphere will be detailed in Part 3).

Violence Against Women

Around the country **70** centers are operating to deal with and prevent family violence, there are **13** shelters for battered women, and in January 2007 the Prime Minister announced the allocation of a special budget for two interministerial programs: one dealing with the victims of sexual assault, and the second for removing women from prostitution (Details in Part 3).

The **Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law** was passed in 1998. Its purpose is to prevent sexual harassment in order to protect the person's dignity, liberty and privacy, as well as promoting gender equality. According to the law and its regulations, employers (including institutions of learning and the security forces) must publicize the regulations, as per the Prevention of sexual Harassment law, and to stipulate how and to whom complaints are to be submitted; there is also an obligation to appoint a person in charge of handling complaints about Prevention of harassment.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women distributes the code for preventing sexual harassment to all employers. Moreover, the Authority has a list of organizations which conduct professional training for those in charge, according to the law, of dealing with sexual harassment, and the Authority prepares instructional material for the general public.

In 2007-2008, two interministerial national programs began to operate: **The Program for Dealing with the Victims of Sexual Assault** and **The Programs for Removing Women from the Cycle of Prostitution**. Special budgets were allocated for both programs, and professional elements from Government ministries and public bodies are involved.

During the last eight years, awareness has increased greatly concerning the problem of **trafficking in women**, principally due to the intensive work done by a parliamentary committee that has been operating since 2001 and also thanks to the energetic activity on the part of social organizations. All these have brought about a change in the image and perception of women who are the victims of trafficking, from that of being offenders to that of being the victims of offenders.

In 2006 an interministerial coordinator was appointed to deal with **human trafficking**. That coordinator is conducting intensive activities, which are coordinated with all other Government ministries and NGOs which deal with the phenomenon of human trafficking.

Since 2004 the "Maagan" shelter for **women victims of trafficking** has been operating. The shelter provides a humanitarian answer for foreign women who are victims of trafficking.

In 2006 a law was passed **prohibiting human trafficking**, stipulating that the victims of trafficking are entitled to free legal assistance from the State. The law stipulates an

arrangement which enables the confiscation of traffickers' funds and property, and also stipulates that a special fund must be established into which the fines that the courts would impose on the traffickers would be transferred. The money in that fund would be used in the struggle to raise awareness about trafficking, as well as for rehabilitating the victims.

The NGOs have made a significant contribution to efforts invested in the attempt to reduce the dimensions of the phenomenon, and in finding humane solutions for dealing with and rehabilitating women victims of trafficking. Today one can state that the State and the organizations are working together in order to eliminate the phenomenon of trafficking in women.

Women in Times of War – Involving Them in Negotiating Processes for Resolving Conflicts

Following UN Security Council Resolution 1325, intensive activity began on the part of women's organizations who recruited women Knesset Members and brought about the passing in 2005 of an amendment to the Law for the Equality of Women's Rights, requiring appropriated representation for women in bodies that shape national policy in all matters, including those pertaining to foreign policy and defense, or in the prevention, management and resolution of political and international conflicts, including the carrying out of negotiations, etc. that would lead to the signing of an interim agreement or peace treaty.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women monitors and supervises the implementation of the obligation for appropriate representation in political processes. In the last three years, a woman, Tzipi Livni, has served as the Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Israel, and has led the country's international activity.

From data that has been collected since the end of 2008 emerges the fact that the percentage of women in bodies that determine national policy is **35.5%**, while the percentage of men is **64.5%**. This data is only partial and refers to the situation in 18 Government ministries and authoritative bodies, out of a total of 23 Government ministries. There is a difficulty in collecting the data.

Women and the Economy, Equal Employment Opportunity

Following legislation, the **Commission for Equal Employment Opportunity** was established in 2008, its goals being to ensure equal employment opportunity and to generate public awareness of the importance of equality.

In Israel, **51%** of all adult women go to work (in contrast with 62% of all men), but women still continue to fulfill the function of raising the children, and a duality of functions exists which frequently makes difficult their integration into and advancement at work.

During 2008, the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women initiated promotion of the idea of a "**Family Friendly Workplace**." An interministerial committee was established to study the matter, and the committee began deliberations in order to submit its recommendations to the Civil Service Commissioner. The goal

is to adopt an approach in the Civil Service that would serve as a model and would lead to the adoption of the principles at additional places of work.

In March 2008, a law was passed to **encourage the adapting of workplaces for women and for the advancement and integration of women at work**. According to the law, financial incentives would be provided in appreciation to those employers who integrate and advance women at work.

Program for Single Parent Families: In 2007, a program was opened for single parent families entering the labor market, with the aim of encouraging them to go to work and to make it easier for the head of the family to go to work. Within this framework, entitled families receive an enlarged subsidy for the monthly fee for a child at a nursery/daycare center, special training courses, and the funding of academic studies.

The Regulating Division at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor is engaged in enforcing **the woman's right not to be fired** under various circumstances. These circumstances are stipulated in Article 9 of the Women's Employment Law, according to which a pregnant employee may not be fired without a permit, nor an employee undergoing fertility treatment or an employee on maternity leave, nor an employee staying at a shelter for battered women.

Women in Power and Decision-making

In 2005 the Law for the Equality of Women's Rights was amended and it was stipulated that appropriate representation would be given to women in all public bodies that determine national policy. The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women monitors and supervises the implementation of the law, and data was collected in 2007 from Government ministries and supportive units showing the fact that in the committees and teams under the authority of the Government ministries, the rate of women's representation is **37%**.

In 2005, the Municipalities Directive was amended and stipulated that appropriate representation for women would be given in municipal corporations and companies.

In 2003, the Sports Law was amended and stipulated that appropriate representation for women would be given in sports bodies that receive State support, including management, different types of posts, and the staff.

The Companies Law stipulates that a company which at the time of the appointment of an external director all the members of the company's directorate are of one gender, the appointed external director will be of the other gender.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women operates vis-à-vis the Israel Securities Authority and vis-à-vis elements in the Ministry of Justice in order to monitor and supervise the implementation of the law. The data collected in 2007 showed that out of **754** companies, **165** companies are not carrying out the instructions of the law and their directorates do not have any representation for women. The percentage of women in the companies' directorates is **15.7%**, while among the external directors, only **23%** are women.

Public Bodies for Advancing the Status of Women

Since 1992, the Committee on the Status of Women has been operating in the Knesset, and it includes women Knesset Members, and Knesset Members from the various political parties with a variety of political outlooks all of whom have a common goal: to further legislation that would advance the status of women in all walks of life, and to supervise the implementation of these laws.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women was established under law in 1998 with the goal of advancing gender equality in Israel and to bring about coordination between the bodies that deal with the status of women in Israel, to promote education, legislation, and enforcement in these areas, to promote activity for the prevention of violence against women, to provide the Government with tools and information that are required in order to achieve these aims, and to serve as a central authority that would act to carry out these principles.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women operates within the Prime Minister's Office, and this itself is testimony to the orientation of the State in taking upon itself the responsibilities for advancing the status of women.

The Ministerial Committee for the Advancement of the Status of Women in Israeli Society was established in 2001.

In 2008 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was established, its goals being to ensure equality at work and to generate public awareness regarding the importance of equality.

Within the Civil Service, the **Department for the Integration and Advancement of Women** operates. The department is responsible for shaping the Civil Service Commission's work and its work plan regarding the advancement of women in the Civil Service. It instructs, guides, and utilizes **70** women advisors for the advancement of women at the Government ministries and their supportive units. The department handles women's complaints regarding deprivation, discrimination and sexual harassment; is responsible for implementing the Prevention of Sexual Harassment law and instructing the women in charge of the matter at the ministries; plans and develops instruction and information in the subjects of equal opportunity and the status of women; collects data and information and is responsible for their being publicized; handles all the issues regarding the status of women in the Civil Service; assists and promotes relevant legislative work.

At the **Union of Local Authorities in Israel** there is, among the other positions, a coordinator of the advancement of the status of women.

The women advisors for advancing the status of women in the municipal authorities are appointed under the law since 2000. These advisors serve as an executive arm of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women. In 2008 the law was amended, defining their role and their senior standing as being parallel to that of a department director in a municipal authority.

Women's Rights

The Women's Equal Rights Law (1951) anchors women's rights, as do the Equal Employment Opportunity Law and the Equal Pay Law for female and male employees. In 2008, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was established, its goals being to ensure equality at work and to generate public awareness regarding the importance of equality.

In March 2008, the website of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women was launched and it contains much information for the benefit of the public: explanations and information on women's rights, data regarding the percentage of representation and regarding violence against women, summaries of relevant laws pertaining to the status of women, Government decisions, and links to additional sources of information.

The booklet **Women – A Guide to Bodies and Organizations in Israel** was published at the beginning of 2008 and its distribution is continuing. This booklet provides information about organizations operating in the area of the status of women, and the information is arranged according to such subjects as: personal status, pregnancy and birth, the family, girls, legal assistance, women's health, violence, employment, education, etc.

Women in the Media

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women regularly monitors the issue of the image of women, as it appears in the media, and initiates queries to the responsible elements in cases where offensive publicity appears. In recent months, the Authority initiated 5 such queries, and in some of them the offensive publicity was removed.

Girls

Within the interministerial framework of dealing with the victims of sexual assault, the Ministry of Education operates mechanism for dealing with young girls and teenage girls (and also young boys and teenage boys) who are victims of sexual assault, and training and guidance is carried out to identify and locate victimized children.

On Women's Day in 2007 the Authority chose the subject "**Eliminating All Forms of Discrimination and Violence Against Girls**", which the UN declared to be the priority theme for 2007.

In June 2007, the city of Bat Yam held a Girls' Festival, under the motto "The Girls of Today are the Women of Tomorrow."

At the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, treatment and services are given to girls and young women of the age 13-25 who are in situations of risk and distress (danger within the family; physical, sexual, and mental violence; unwanted pregnancy; etc.). The treatment is given by special social workers in the departments of social services and through associations.

Together with the local authorities and associations, frameworks are operated for special treatment of girls in distress.

Part 2: Achievements, Including Policy Development, Legislative Change, Advocacy, Awareness Raising, and Capacity Development

Legislation for Advancing Equality

In 2008, the Women's Equal Rights Law was amended, stipulating: "One who requires of a person to indicate on a form or another document the name of his parents, will require that he indicate the names of both parents, to the extent that they are known to the person." Indicating the name of only the father in forms will cease, and the names of both parents equally will be indicated on forms and documents.

In 2008 the Names Law 5716-1956 was amended, according to which in cases where the name of the father of a minor under the age of 16 is unknown, the mother of the minor may determine the name that will be indicated. Thus, the paternalistic and arbitrary arrangement was ended whereby the Minister of Interior determined the name that would be indicated in such cases.

In 2008, the Local Authorities Law (Woman Advisor for the Advancement of the Status of Women) was amended, and stipulated what functions would be assigned to the woman advisor. Furthermore, her required levels of education and experience were defined, as was her senior status among the employees of the municipal authority.

Legislation and Administrative Decisions Obligating Appropriate Representation for Women

In 2005, the Women's Equal Rights Law was amended, obligating appropriate representation for women in all public bodies that determine national policy. This is to be the case among employees and in all the posts and ranks of public bodies.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women monitors and supervises implementation of the law, and from the data collected from Government ministries and supportive units in 2007 emerges the fact that in the committees and teams under the responsibility of the Government ministries the percentage of women's representation is **37%**.

In 2005, the Municipalities Directive was amended and stipulated that appropriate representation for women would be given in municipal corporations and companies.

In 2003, the Sports Law was amended and stipulated that appropriate representation for women would be given in sports bodies that receive State support.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women initiated and brought about the Government Decision 1362 of March 2007 which stipulated that Ministers would appoint women to the directorates of government companies until attaining **50%** and within two years of the decision being adopted. For the first time in Israel the percentage of appropriate representation was stipulated and for the first time an obligatory time period was set. As a result of this move, the percentage of women's

representation in government company directorates significantly increased within a year from 33.5% (February 2007) to **38.5%** (February 2008).

The Companies Law stipulates that a company which at the time of the appointment of an external director all the members of the company's directorate are of one gender, the appointed external director will be of the other gender.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women operates vis-à-vis the Israel Securities Authority and vis-à-vis elements in the Ministry of Justice in order to monitor and supervise the implementation of the law. The data collected in 2007 showed that out of **754** companies, **165** companies are not carrying out the instructions of the law and their directorates do not have any representation for women. The percentage of women in the companies' directorates is **15.7%**, while among the external directors, only **23%** are women.

Legislation Regarding the Employment of Women

In 2008, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission was established by law, its goals being to ensure equality at work and to generate public awareness regarding the importance of equality.

In 2007, the **Employment of Women Law** was amended, stipulating that maternity leave would be extended from 12 weeks to 14. The law was also amended to extend the limitation period for dismissal after maternity leave from 45 days to 60 days. Another amendment to this law stiffened the penalty for dismissal without a permit of a pregnant woman or one who is on maternity leave, one who is in a battered women's shelter or a woman who is undergoing fertility treatment.

In 2007, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was also amended, expanding the prohibition against discrimination for parenting, so that pre-parent situations, fertility treatments and in vitro fertilization treatments would be covered by the prohibition against discrimination in hiring, work conditions and dismissal from work.

In March 2008, the **Encouragement of Advancement and Integration of Women in the Workforce and the Adjustment of Workplaces to Women's Need Law** was passed. According to the law, financial incentives would be given to those employers who integrate and advance women at work.

Legislation on Gender Mainstreaming

In November 2007, the **Law on the Implications of Gender in Legislation (Legislative Amendments) 5767-2007** was passed, according to which the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women was assigned the task of preparing and submitting gender impact assessment on legislation proposed in the Knesset. Thus, the **gender mainstreaming** approach was applied in Israel; this approach is based on the view that all policies influence men and women in various ways, due to the various roles played by women and men in society and due to their different degree of access to positions of power in society and to government budgets.

Pursuant to this legislation in 2008, additional legislative amendments were passed: An amendment to **the Statistics Ordinance**, that determines that the collection and processing of statistics relating to individuals and the publication of the results by the Central Bureau of Statistics, will include statistics by gender, and the **Women's Equal Rights Law 5711-1951** was amended – according to all of which public bodies that publish data on individuals will do so according to gender. The instructions of this law will enable the Authority to carry out its function in the best possible manner, based on gender data and on the official, verified, and supervised situation at the time.

Legislation Regarding Personal Status

In 2008, the **Capital Relationship Law** was amended, thereby enabling the division of property even before divorce proceedings, which sometimes continue for a long time, would end. This amendment would reduce the possibility of putting pressure on the woman pertaining to the divorce.

In 2007, the Rabbinical Courts Law (executing divorce rulings) was amended and the means for enforcement against those who refuse a divorce were expanded, in order to reduced the number of "chained" [agunah] women who are refused divorce and who suffer egregious harm to their freedom.

At the beginning of 2008, the **Prevention of Domestic Violence Law** was amended, stipulating that a court of law will not reject a request for a protection order according to the law in order to prevent domestic violence, nor a request to grant a threatening harassment restraining order according to the law in order to prevent threatening harassment, until the petitioner will be given the opportunity to make his/her case.

Policy Change

Different areas that in the past were handled by women's organizations have gradually moved into the domain of the State's responsibility. For example, the area of **violence against women**: Around the country 70 centers have been established to handle and prevent domestic violence, and 13 shelters for battered women have been established.

The various laws to encourage the employment of women and to relax the criteria for their employment testify to the growing trend to bring about the integration of more women into the labor market in order to ensure their equality in employment and to ensure their economic independence.

During the last ten years, there has been a change in dealing with the problem of **trafficking in women**. In 2001, a Subcommittee on the Trafficking in Women began to operate in the Knesset. Since 2004 the "Maagan" shelter for women who are victims of trafficking has been operating; the shelter provides a humanitarian answer to foreign women who are victims of trafficking, and each one of them is given the possibility of receiving legal assistance.

In 2005, a law was passed enabling the law enforcement agencies to close down brothels, and during the last two years 107 brothels have been closed.

In 2006, the Government Ministries Directors General Committee was established with the assignment of shaping a Plan of Action for dealing with the phenomenon of

human trafficking. In 2007, the Government adopted the Committee's Plan which contains 30 decisions on measures of prevention, enforcement, and protection.

In 2006, the Law Against Human Trafficking was passed, stipulating that the victims of trafficking are entitled to free legal assistance from the State. An interministerial coordinator for the matter was appointed.

Information for the Public

In March 2008, the website of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women was launched, containing much information for the benefit of the public: explanations and information on women's rights, data regarding the percentage of representation and regarding violence, summaries of relevant laws pertaining to the status of women, Government decisions, and links to additional sources of information.

The booklet **Women – A Guide to Bodies and Organizations in Israel** was published at the beginning of 2008 and its distribution is continuing. This booklet provides information about organizations operating on behalf of women and their advancement, and the information is arranged according to such subjects as: personal status, pregnancy and birth, the family, girls, legal assistance, women's health, violence, employment, education, etc.

Campaigns around International Women's Day

In 2008, International Women's Day was held within the context of Israel's 60th Anniversary, the central theme being Israel's Children. In cooperation between the 60th Anniversary headquarters and the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women it was decided that on Women's Day awards would be given to women who had made a significant contribution to Israeli children.

On Women's Day in 2007 the Authority chose the subject "**Eliminating All Forms of Discrimination and Violence Against Girls**", which the UN declared to be the priority theme for 2007.

On 15 February 2007, a conference was held in preparation for Women's Day, with the participation of the women advisors for advancing the status of women in the municipal authorities, the women coordinators for the advancement of women in Government Ministries and supportive units, and professionals. Professional lectures were given and informational material was handed out.

Policy for Advancing Women in the Labor Market

In 2008, in keeping with the law, the **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission** was established, its goals being to ensure equal employment opportunity and to generate public awareness of the importance of equality.

In Israel, **51%** of all adult women work (in contrast with 62% of all men), but women still continue to fulfill the function of raising the children, and a duality of functions exists which frequently makes difficult their integration into and advancement at work.

In recent decades awareness has grown concerning the need to view both parents, equally, as being responsible for the raising of their children and for running the

family unit. One of the means for making it easier to combine the commitments at work with the commitments to the family is to create a "family friendly" environment, which encourages a balance between the employee's professional life and private life, with the aim of easing and reducing pressures caused by the need to simultaneously deal with both worlds.

During 2008, the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women initiated a move to promote the idea of a "**Family Friendly Workplace.**" An interministerial committee was established to study the matter, and the committee began deliberations in order to submit its recommendations to the Civil Service Commissioner. The goal is that the adoption of the approach in the Civil Service would lead to the adoption of the approach at additional places of work.

Encouraging Education for Girls

In 2005, the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women was partner to a project to training women tutors to encourage girls to choose technological majors and subjects.

Empowerment Courses for Women

During 2006-2007, the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women carried out - through the Israel Association of Community Centers and in cooperation with the women advisors for the advancement of the status of women in the local authorities - courses for training women to organize projects for the advancement of women in the community and for instilling professional tools to operate those projects. About 1800 women participated in these courses.

Campaigns for the Preventions of Violence Against Women

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women carries out activities aimed at raising public awareness concerning domestic violence, with the focus being violence against women. In the Authority's informational campaigns that take place around International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (in November), emphasis is given to the fact that one of the results of domestic violence is the great harm done to the children who grow up in homes where such violence prevails.

Every year, in preparation for International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the Authority distributes an updated informational pamphlet containing the telephone numbers and details of centers and associations which are to be contacted in cases of domestic violence. The informational pamphlet is distributed in Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, and Amharic.

In November 2008, the Authority held a campaign to raise awareness of the existence of 70 centers for dealing with and preventing domestic violence. The campaign's slogan was "It is possible to exit the cycle of violence with breaking the cycle of life." 8,600 households were treated by the centers during 2007. In these centers help is given to all members of the family: women, men, and children.

In November 2006, the Authority held a publicity campaign about **violence that leaves no external marks**, i.e. verbal or psychological violence, under the slogan "Don't let words kill you from within."

In November 2005, an informational campaign was held for young women and girls on **identifying early signs of violence during the period of courtship**. The campaign was carried out in Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, and Amharic.

In November 2004, a television ad was produced, its slogan being "Involvement is not interference." It was intended to spur to action those in the circle around victims of violence - within the family, at work, and socially - in order to break the conspiracy of silence.

Implementing Policy for Removing Women from Prostitution

Within the framework of the interministerial program for removing women from the cycle of prostitution, a professional team was establishing to create the program, and in 2008 the implementation of that program began, involving the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women in the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education. For the first time ever since the establishment of the State, a state-run program is operating regarding prostitution.

Information and Educational Programs Concerning the Trafficking in Women

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women is acting to raise awareness concerning the trafficking in women.

A seminar on the subject "**Trafficking in Women**" was held on 16 December 2008 by the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women together with the Beersheba Municipality.

An annual budget of NIS 200,000 has been designated for the Ministry of Education for the purpose of raising awareness within the educational system about the trafficking in women. In 2007-2008 the budget was used to publish a booklet about the subject intended for educators, a number of conferences were held for teachers and conferences were held for pupils, and the school curricula included a lesson plan about prostitution and the trafficking in women as slavery of the 21st century.

The Policy of Advancing Women in the Ethnic Minority Sectors

The **Government Decision No. 881** of 25 September 2003 set a multi-year program for 2004-2008 which would include special programs for advancing the status of Bedouin women in the south of the country, adapted to their special needs. The program was implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, and within the program's framework workshops were held in the high schools. Furthermore, a work plan for advancing the status of Bedouin women was established, including the employment of Bedouin women, awareness and information concerning women's health, empowerment courses, activity to prevent domestic violence, etc.

On 31 August 2006, two Government decisions were adopted **No. 412** (Arab/1) and **No. 413** (Arab/2) concerning the advancement of the status of women in the Bedouin, Druze, and Circassian sectors in the north. The decisions determined that a comprehensive survey would be carried out to examine the needs of women; activities would be undertaken to encourage education and professional training through

scholarships; through training courses, the deepening of awareness, study days, etc. In keeping with this, in November 2007, 75 scholarships were given to women students, covering half of the annual university tuition fees, and in 2008 a similar number of scholarships were given. Moreover, in 2008 courses and professional training programs began to be held for this population, including in areas that emerged from the survey.

The publications of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women are issued also in Arabic.

Implementing the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law

The Prevention of sexual Harassment Law was passed in 1998. Its purpose is to prohibit sexual harassment in order to protect the person's dignity, liberty, privacy, as well as promoting gender equality (**Chapter 4 of the 1995 Beijing Conference Platform for Action**).

According to the law and its regulations, employers (including institutions of learning and the security forces) must publicize a code of the main principles of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law, and to stipulate how and to whom complaints are to be submitted; there is also an obligation to appoint a person in charge of handling complaints about sexual harassment, as well as an obligation to carry out informational activities for employees during work hours.

The Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law applies to all employers, including those in the private sector. The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women distributes the regulations for preventing sexual harassment to all employers, and it is distributed in five languages.

- A. At the end of October 2007, an information and enforcement operation was conducted for the first time, jointly by the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women and the enforcement division at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor. During the course of the operation, inspections were conducted at **163** business places, employing **15,000** workers; it was found that about **34%** of the employers had apparently violated the law in not having publicized the regulations as per the law.
- B. Beginning in 2006, the Authority has initiated queries to all employers in order to collect data and to put together the lists of all the women coordinators for the prevention of sexual harassment in the municipal authorities, private workplaces, government companies, and the kibbutzim. A mapping of the data for the end of 2008 contains the following:
 - At workplaces in the private sector: **880** women coordinators for preventing sexual harassment;
 - In the municipal authorities: **170** women coordinators for preventing sexual harassment in 250 authorities (68%);
 - In government companies: **48** women coordinators for preventing sexual harassment in 65 companies (74%);

- In the Civil Service: **70** women coordinators for preventing sexual harassment (who are also the coordinators for the advancement of women) in Government Ministries and supporting units.
- C. In cooperation with the Union of Local Authorities in Israel, the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women has begun a process of training women coordinators for preventing sexual harassment. In 2008, there were two training courses.
- D. Currently, the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women is in the process of producing an instructional kit comprised of a film and accompanied by explanations. The kit will be distributed gratis to places of employment.

Part 3: Institutional Development

Women Coordinators for the Advancement of Women in the Civil Service

Within the Civil Service, the **department for the Integration and Advancement of Women** operates. The division is responsible for shaping the Civil Service Commission's work and its work plan regarding the advancement of women in the Civil Service. It instructs, guides, and utilizes **70** women coordinators for the advancement of women at the Government ministries and their supportive units. The department handles women's complaints regarding deprivation, discrimination and sexual harassment; is responsible for implementing the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law and instructing the women in charge of the matter at the ministries; plans and develops instruction and information in the subjects of equal opportunity and the status of women; collects data and information and is responsible for their being publicized; handles all the issues regarding the status of women in the Civil Service; assists and promotes relevant legislative work.

Women Advisors for the Advancement of the Status of Women in the Municipal Authorities.

At the Union of Local Authorities there is, among other positions, a coordinator for advancing the status of women.

The Local Authorities Law (Women Advisors for the Advancement of the Status of Women) 5760-2000 obligates every local authority to appoint a woman advisor for advancing the status of women.

The women advisors for advancing the status of women in the municipal authorities are in charge of advancing women both among the women employees in the local authorities and also the women residents within the municipal boundaries. The advisors are agents for change and serve as executive arms for the administrative work of the local authorities, thus widening the internalization of the value of equality.

At the end of 2008, there were **222** local authorities (out of 252) which have women advisors, i.e. there are advisors in **88.09%** of all the local authorities.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women maintains constant contact with the women advisors for the status of women in the municipal authorities,

sends them up-to-date information about events and about the national activity in the area of the status of women, cooperates with them in conferences and meetings, distributes informational material to them, visits their places of work, and receives from them annual activity reports, etc. At the beginning of 2009, an "advisors' dossier" was distributed to each of the women advisors, containing information and professional tool for their ongoing use.

Mechanisms for Women's Health

A. **The National Council for Women's Health**, is one of 18 councils that were established as advisory bodies to the top echelon of the Ministry of Health. The Council's role is to influence the shaping of health policy with respect to the health of women. The Council acts in three areas: promoting women's health; health services for women; special women's health issues.

B. **The National Council for Women's Medicine, Neonatology and Genetics** assists the top echelon of the Ministry of Health in shaping national policy, preparing guidelines, and improving the control of the quality of women's medicine.

C. The Health Ministry's **Department of Mother, Child, and Adolescent Health** deals with the implementation of medical policy from the prenatal stage until the age of adolescence.

D. The Health Ministry's **Department of Community Genetics** deals with family and genetics inquiries in order to try and find high-risk couples and give them appropriate genetic advice, if possible before the first pregnancy.

E. **Family Health Clinics ("tipat halav"- baby care)** provide preventive medical services for the entire population. The services include:

- Instruction in conduct that influences health, instruction in family planning, preparing for a healthy pregnancy, and avoiding contagious diseases that influence pregnancy;
- Nurse's and doctor's monitoring of the development of the pregnancy;
- House calls, to the extent needed, for a new baby, instruction and advice on nursing, eye and ear exams, vaccinations, etc.
- Nutrition and physical activity, groups for single parent mothers, informational materials on a variety of topics.

F. **Services for Women Victims of Domestic Violence** are given – emotional support, counseling and escorting of every victim who arrives at a hospital or a family treatment clinic. The services include information about laws, rights and services which are available to the victim, immediate contact is made with elements that provide assistance, treatment is received according to the decision of the victim, and in emergency and threatening situations the victim is referred to a protected framework, such as a shelter or hostel.

The Council for Advancing Women in Science and Technology

The Council was established in 2000 by Government Decision No. 2660 and also in accordance with a decision of the European Union. The EU decision stipulates that any country that is a partner to research projects in Europe must establish a council for advancing women in science and technology. The Council acts as a coordinator between state and public bodies and private ones on all matters pertaining to advancing girls and women in science and technology.

Encouraging Women to Study Science

The Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport issued a public announcement on applications for scholarships, in order to support and advance women in the sciences during 2007-2008. The purpose of the program is to increase the number of women engaged in science and technology, in the exact sciences and in engineering in which there is a low representation of women. The amount of the scholarship is NIS 30,000 for a period of one year.

Mechanisms for Advancing Women Sports in Israel

In accordance with Government Decision No. 3416 of 2005 the **Public Council for Advancing Women Sports in Israel** was established. The Council advises the Government on all matters pertaining to setting criteria for supporting women sports and acts to promote policy for developing women sports in Israel.

The **Department for the Advancement of Women Sports** at the Ministry of Science, Culture and Sports deals with developing awareness regarding the importance of physical activity as a healthy way of life among women in their daily routine. Furthermore, it operates a new "national program" for developing competitive and achievement sports for young girls, teenage girls, and women. The program's budget is NIS 80 million for eight years.

Mechanisms and Frameworks for the Struggle Against Violence

Within the framework of the objectives of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women in the area of fighting violence against women and empowering women, the Authority conducts a unique venture: self-defense workshops which are intended for women in the cycle of violence. The venture is jointly conducted by the Authority, the Israel Police, and the women advisors of the local authorities. A detailed informational booklet on the self-defense workshops, that was prepared by the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women and the Israel Police, is distributed to the public. In 2007-2008, there were 13 self-defense workshops, which were completed by 235 participants.

Identifying and locating victims of violence: In 2007, the interministerial program for treating victims of sexual assault began to operate. For this program, an annual budget of NIS 241,000 was allocated to the Ministry of Education.

Mechanisms for Removing Women from Prostitution

Within the framework of the interministerial program for removing women from the cycle of prostitution, a professional team was establishing to create the program, and in 2008 the implementation of that program began, involving the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women in the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education.

The budget designated for the program in 2008 was NIS 9,600,000, and the allocated funds are to be anchored in the basic budget, e.g. becoming a regular annual activity.

At the end of 2008, two **emergency apartments** were opened, providing a temporary roof for those engaged in prostitution: one in Tel Aviv, the other in Haifa. A **national hotline**, the phone number being 1-800-200690, was put into operation. The hotline is intended for girls and women engaged in prostitution who frequently find themselves in difficult situations involving abuse, rape, and theft. A **hostel** began operating, and is intended to provide psychological and rehabilitation treatment over an extended period. A **Daytime Center for Psychological and Occupational Rehabilitation** has been opened in Tel Aviv, and **mobile clinics** were acquired for examining and treating girls and women engaged in prostitution and will operate in Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Alongside the establishment of frameworks for treatment, an annual budget of NIS 200,000 has been allocated with the aims of raising awareness within the educational system about the subjects of prostitution and the trafficking in women. In 2007-2008 the budget was used to publish a booklet about the subject intended for educators, a number of conferences were held for teachers and conferences were held for pupils, and the school curricula included a lesson plan about prostitution and the trafficking in women as slavery of the 21st century.

Mechanisms for Eliminating Stereotypes

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women monitors the image of women, as reflected in advertisements in the media, texts and various publications, and, according to need, initiates contacts with relevant elements, using explanations and persuasion, in order to remove humiliating or stereotypical images of women. During the last two years, the Authority intervened in seven cases of offensive publicity, and in two of them brought about their removal.

In 2008, the Authority conducted two seminars on the topic "**Women and Food – Eating Disorders**," jointly with the "Women in the Picture" Association and within the framework of the International Women's Film Festival in Rehovot.

Mechanisms for the Professional Training of Women

The **Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor** conducts training courses for women from special groups - women from development areas, ultraorthodox women, and single mothers - in order to advance them and improve their economic situation. Promoting the employment of women is done through their being included in professional training programs, preparatory courses, and technological studies at the level of technicians and practical engineers. Furthermore, an answer is provided for special obstacles that women face in various sectors. Moreover, tools are given that increase the chances of women to receive work after completion of their studies, through workshops for development of employment skills and programs for the empowerment of women.

Mechanisms for the Professional Training of Girls

The project "**The Future Generation for Hi-tech in Industry**" has been successfully operated since 1998 by the Science and Technology Administration in the Ministry of

Education. This program is operating at the middle school level and is intended to guide pupils in general and girl pupils in particular to choose science and technology subjects in high school, so that they will be integrated in the future into these areas in industry and hi-tech. Among those involved in this project is the Women Industrialists Forum of the Manufacturers Association of Israel.

In 2005, the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women participated in training women tutors that would have the role of encouraging girls to choose technological majors and subjects.

Frameworks for Taking Care of Toddlers

The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor supervises **nurseries** and **daycare centers** around the country. These educational frameworks for toddlers are intended for the children of working mothers. With the aim of encouraging women to go to work and to contribute to their family's income, the Ministry financially assists in the children's stay at the nurseries and daycare centers.

Program for Single Parent Families: In 2007, a program was opened for single parent families entering the labor market, with the aim of making it easier for the head of the family to go to work. Within this framework, entitled families receive an enlarged subsidy for the monthly fee for a child at a nursery/daycare center, special training courses, and the funding of academic studies. This assistance is given primarily to single mothers. Other benefits for single parents include special training courses and subsistence grants during academic studies for a bachelor's degree.

Mechanisms for Defending the Rights of Working Women

In 2008, in keeping with the law, the **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission** was established, its goals being to ensure equal employment opportunity and to generate public awareness of the importance of equality.

The **Regulating Division at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor** is engaged in enforcing the woman's right not to be fired under various circumstances. These circumstances are stipulated in Article 9 of the Women's Employment Law, according to which a pregnant employee may not be fired without a permit, nor an employee undergoing fertility treatment or an employee on maternity leave, nor an employee staying at a shelter for battered women.

In those situations where an employer submits a request to fire a woman employee, despite her right not to be dismissed, the employer has the obligation to prove that there is no connection between the dismissal, or the reduction of the volume of her work, and the personal condition of the employee. The dismissal will be carried out only after the approval of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor.

Mechanisms for Dealing with the Phenomenon of Trafficking in Women

During the last eight years, awareness has increased greatly concerning the problem of trafficking in women, principally due to the intensive work done by a parliamentary committee that has been operating since 2001 and also thanks to the activities undertaken by social organizations. All these have brought about a change in the image and perception of women who are the victims of trafficking, from that of being offenders to that of being the victims of offenders.

In 2006 an interministerial coordinator (a function which was being fulfilled already as early as the end of 2001) was appointed to deal with human trafficking. The coordinator is conducting intensive activities, which are coordinated with all other Government ministries and NGOs which deal with the phenomenon of human trafficking. Her work includes putting background material on the Ministry of Justice website, visiting shelters and asylum facilities for victims of trafficking, organizing study days for judges, issuing information, etc.

Since 2004 the "Maagan" shelter for **women victims of trafficking** has been operating. The shelter provides a humanitarian answer for foreign women who are victims of trafficking, and who must stay in Israel until completing their giving of evidence against the traffickers in women, or until the women are deported from the country. Every victim of trafficking may stay at the shelter, whether she has chosen to cooperate with the legal proceedings against the trafficker or not.. The shelter can provide temporary housing for 50 victims of trafficking, and is operated by the Minister of Welfare and Social Services. At the shelter medical services are offered, as are services of psychological and social help, and there are also social activities and professional training programs. Additionally, every woman is offered the possibility of receiving legal assistance under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice.

In 2005, a law was passed limiting the use of a location in order to prevent the committing of a crime. The law enables the law enforcement authorities to close down brothels, and as a result during the last two years 107 brothels were closed.

In 2006, the Government Ministries **Directors General Committee** was established with the assignment of shaping a Plan of Action for dealing with the phenomenon of human trafficking. In 2007, the Government adopted the Committee's Plan which contains 30 decisions on measures of prevention, enforcement, and protection. The Government adopted the Directors General Committee's decisions in a Government Decision on 2 December 2007.

In 2006, the Law Against Human Trafficking was passed, stipulating that the victims of trafficking are entitled to free legal assistance from the State.

The maximum penalty for human trafficking or for mediating in such trafficking is 16 years imprisonment; if the victim is a minor, the maximum penalty is 20 years.

The NGOs have made a significant contribution to efforts invested in the attempt to reduce the dimensions of the phenomenon, and in finding humane solutions for dealing with and rehabilitating women victims of trafficking. Today one can state that the State and the organizations are working together in order to eliminate the phenomenon of trafficking in women.

The Coalition for the Struggle Against Trafficking in Women: The Coalition was formed in 1997, following a report issued by the Israel Women's Network which examined the phenomenon of the trafficking in women in Israel for the first time. Today, the Coalition comprises a large number of feminist organizations, human rights organizations, and male and female activists who have set the goal of working together to eradicate the phenomenon of trafficking in women for prostitution in Israel.

The Coalition is acting to broaden awareness amongst the public about the evils of trafficking and abuse, and to make dealing with these matters a top priority on the public agenda.

Mechanisms for Supporting Girls and Young Women at Risk

At the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, treatment and services are given to girls and young women of the age 13-25 who are in situations of risk and distress (danger within the family; physical, sexual, and mental violence; unwanted pregnancy; etc.). The treatment is given by special social workers in the departments of social services and through associations.

In cooperation with the local authorities and associations, frameworks for treatment are operating within a warm and supportive environment:

- **Warm Home Club:** a daytime community center which has the goal of empowering girls;
- **Sexual counseling stations:** jointly operated by both the local authorities and the Ministry of Health;
- **Transitional apartments:** for 4-6 girls age 17 and above who cannot stay in their own homes and who need accompaniment and guidance;
- **Women's Corps [Chen] Groups:** a framework that operates during the daytime, five days of the week, and provides immigrant girls and girls from the Arab sector completion of their education, living skills, social skills, and professional training;
- **ADI (Power, Care, Friendship):** A project that deals with girls who are the victims of violence or girls with destructive behavior; care is given in a daytime center, serves as a supportive framework, treats and rehabilitates the girls, without asserting authority and without detaching the girls from their surroundings;
- **Mentoring Program (Girls for Girls):** girls who have experiences distress and have overcome it assist other girls who are in such a situation; the program is operated by Tel Aviv University (School for Social Work), together with the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, the Ministry for Immigrant Absorption, the Joint's Ashalim, and WIZO.

Mechanisms for Rehabilitating Released Women Prisoners

The percentage of women in the general prison population is only about 2%. The characteristics of the women prisoner population include living with unique and severe distress, usually harsh abuse as young girls and during adolescence. Most of them are addicted to hard drugs, and many of them have a history of engaging in prostitution.

About 70% of the women prisoners are mothers, most of them single parents. Within the framework of the **Authority for Prisoner Rehabilitation**, services for treatment have established, adapted to the community, including the establishment of a system

of alternatives for the prisoner, principally for minors or for pregnant women and mothers of toddlers.

Part 4: Remaining Key Challenges and Constraints, and Plans for Future Action and Initiatives to be Addressed

Difficulties in the Implementation of Equality and the Advancement of Women

The main difficulties in advancing women are:

- The lack of sanctions for non-implementation of the laws regarding appropriate representation for women in senior positions and in centers of decision-making;
- Invisible discrimination and obstacles which stand in the way of women who wish to contend in the political arena;
- The relatively relaxed attitude of society's and the political system towards violence against women;
- Social stigmas that still consider women to be inferior to men;
- Traditional expectations regarding the role of women in raising children and taking care of the household;
- The labor sphere still does not carry out all the conditions required for combining work with managing a household.

Plans for Future Activity

- Inculcating the idea of "family friendly organization" at the workplace and in social systems;
- Encouraging women to manage small businesses, after proper training and supportive accompaniment during the process;
- Continuing the effort to raise awareness for cooperation and equality between women and men;
- Continuing the struggle to eradicate violence against women – increasing the penalty for violent family members; treating the victims of violence; educational and informational programs;
- Encouraging women to have greater involvement in centers of decision-making, so that women will aspire to be involved in political and economic centers;
- Widening gender mainstreaming and looking at legislating and its influence on both genders.