

Report of the Netherlands government to the UNECE for the preparation of regional review and appraisals in the context of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2010

The Hague, March 2009

**Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
Directorate for Emancipation**

Part I and Part III: Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, including the institutional development.

Main policy developments

A short review

In the fight for equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the Netherlands, we have managed to achieve a lot in a relatively short time. It was only 50 years ago that the legal incapacity of married women was deleted from the law and female teachers and civil servants were no longer obliged to resign once they got married. Since then we have made a lot of progress. The basic principles of equality of the sexes and equal treatment of women and men are legally anchored in international treaties and European and national legislation. Increasing numbers of women take part in all domains of social life: politics, administration, science, culture, the media, employment, sports etc. As a result emancipation has become a lot more matter-of-course in the Netherlands.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were adopted in 1995. After Ad Melkert, minister for Emancipation (and at present deputy director of UNDP), had returned from Beijing, he immediately launched the memorandum "Emancipation in progress". With this memorandum he wanted to realise a break of trend in emancipation policy. Until 1995, much had been analysed by the 'specific' emancipation policy unit, but in the 'mainstream' nothing really changed. Minister Melkert (not only minister for emancipation policy, but also minister of Social Affairs and Employment) wanted emancipation to be integrated into the important policy dossiers. He started 'gender mainstreaming' in his own department.

Since 1985, economic independence is the central element in the Dutch emancipation policy. In the Netherlands, historically part-time work is more popular amongst women than a full-time job. Since 1995 part-time workers have been rewarded the same way for their economic efforts as full-time workers. Part-time work has, in all aspects, been legally given equal status with full-time work (e.g. legislation on minimum wages, pensions, equal pay). Nowadays part-time work has, in all aspects, become fully fledged paid work. Strengthening the position of part-time workers has led, apart from a considerable rise in the level of education of women, to a considerable rise in the participation on the labour market by women between 1995 and 2008. In 1995, 44% of the women, aged between 15 and 65 years in the Netherlands, had a job of 12 hours or more; in 2008 the percentage had increased to 59%.

In 2000, the Cabinet launched a memorandum in which, for the first time in history, goals were described for the long term, namely the year 2010. Taking into consideration that developments in gender equality and gender mainstreaming take a considerable effort, the Cabinet decided to plan as realistically as possible and take a considerable step in gendermainstreaming. In this memorandum for the short and middlelong term, the Cabinet did not speak any longer about short term, temporary emancipation projects, but about important parts and development in the proces of emancipation. E.g.: the participation of women on the labour market, the percentage of women in top positions in companies and within the government, the economic independence of women. Different ministries of the 'mainstream' were involved in reaching these goals. In 2006, the then Cabinet evaluated this memorandum of 2000, which resulted in a new memorandum, the so-

called Dutch Multi-year Emancipation Policy Plan 2006-2010. The goals chosen in 2000 remained, but the ways to achieve could differ slightly.

An *Emancipation Review Commission* (VCE) was established at the request of the former Cabinet in 2004. The VCE was charged with monitoring, evaluating and stimulating the progress of the gender mainstreaming process in central government in the period up to 2007. Historically, the Minister or State Secretary for Emancipation was in charge of stimulating gender mainstreaming, after which the responsibility fell to the ministries. The starting point of the emancipation policy is that every Minister is responsible for gender mainstreaming in his/her own policy area¹.

The Commission conducted its work in two reviewrounds. The main conclusion of the VCE was that the coordination of the emancipation policy needs to be enhanced. The VCE has, per ministry, formulated a final report on the emancipation policy and the available gender expertise. In its concluding final report on the emancipation policy, entitled 'A bit better is not good enough!', the VCE concludes that expertise in the area of emancipation and structural anchoring of the emancipation policy in the ministries are both lacking. There is also a lack of central direction with regard to the emancipation policy.

In 2004 it was decided to make a change in the subsidy policy, whereby proportionately more funds were granted via project subsidies than via institute subsidies. The arguments were substantive and were also aimed at the involvement of (new) organisations, with the objective of supporting local initiatives to enhance the emancipation process in society. With substantive plans, NGOs were able to compete for long-term subsidies. This subsidy scheme for Emancipation projects that ran from 2004 through to 2007 was frequently used by self-interest groups for new Dutch citizens. Other NGOs have also availed themselves of the scheme.

In 2007, with the start of the present Cabinet, a new emancipation memorandum, '*More opportunities for women. Emancipation Policy 2008-2010*', was launched. It elaborates on the former memoranda of 2000 and 2006. The directorate for Emancipation is not involved in 'how' ministries try to reach their emancipation goals. But since the year 2000, it measures the progress in emancipation by conducting a so called emancipation monitor every 2 years. Taking into account the report of the Emancipation Review Commission, the Cabinet chose to describe as clearly as possible which ministry is responsible for which part of the memorandum.

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¹ A two-track policy

Emancipation memorandum 2008-2011

The Coalition Agreement of the Balkenende IV Cabinet, which was installed on 22 February 2007, includes the following paragraph about emancipation, in order to give new stimulus to the emancipation policy:

- a new Emancipation memorandum will be issued during this term of government;
- the government will address employers about their efforts to bring more women into top positions;
- in education in particular, few women hold top positions, whereas this area in particular can set an excellent example. Initiatives to increase the number of women in top positions are supported;
- in close consultation with employers, measures are being taken to combat the undesirable dropping out of the workforce of women aged 35-40 and increase their chances of re-entry/re-integration;
- women are still earning less than men. The government will work on ending this inequality.

The Emancipation memorandum '*More opportunities for women: Emancipation policy 2008-2011*' was published in October 2007 with the following subjects:

1. labour participation,
2. women and girls from ethnic minority groups,
3. safety and
4. international emancipation policy.

These subjects are in line with the ones in former policy plans in the Netherlands. They are still considered the most important issues concerning gender equality. For the first time in history, the important role of men and boys concerning the emancipation of women was stressed in the memorandum and specific actions for them were announced (see also part IV). Also the cooperation with regional and local governments, as well as NGO's, civil society groups, employers' and employees' organizations, has even got a bigger accent in this memorandum. The government has also made extra funds available to support the emancipation process; increasing to 10m Euros extra by 2011. These are all national financial resources. Through partnerships with regional and local governments, based on co-financing, the allocation of budgets for gender equality at all levels will increase considerably.

The emancipation memorandum has generated a lot of publicity. The Government has put the Emancipation memorandum on the agenda in the House of Representatives by means of two memorandum meetings.

At the Cabinet change in 2007 the coordination of the Dutch Emancipation policy was transferred from the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, which also makes him the Minister for Emancipation. He is supported by the directorate on gender equality of around 22 fte's.

This government wants to improve the situation of gender mainstreaming by making the contribution of the line ministries to the emancipation policy as transparent and verifiable as possible, increasing the emancipation expertise and giving more definition to the role of the Minister for Emancipation as the driving force and supporter of the emancipation policy.

The Minister for Emancipation has sent a letter about the division of responsibilities between the Minister for Emancipation and his colleagues to the government. In this memorandum he

indicated that the primary responsibility for achieving the main objectives listed in the Emancipation Memorandum and the realisation of the policy in the different areas lies with the individual line ministries and that they must be held accountable. The Minister for Emancipation is responsible for the emancipation policy of his own Ministry; the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

The Minister for Emancipation also considers it important to promote structural attention for the emancipation policy in areas other than the policy areas stipulated in the Emancipation memorandum. The ministries have sent their own responses to the final report of the Review Commission and their own contribution to the emancipation policy to the House of Representatives. This gives expression to the individual responsibility and duty of accountability of each ministry. This has made the division of responsibilities more visible and has enhanced the coordination in respect of the emancipation policy. In their contributions, the ministries give definition to the conditions for the successful anchoring and implementation of the emancipation policy.

These conditions are:

1. commitment to the emancipation policy on the part of the political and administrative top
2. a clearer allocation of responsibilities in respect of the emancipation policy
3. availability of emancipation expertise
4. the use of emancipation tools
5. clarity about objectives and resources.

The contributions of the ministries show that the emancipation policy is better anchored across the government, and that there are also new initiatives. Depending on the phase of the emancipation policy and the nature of the policy domain, each ministry gives shape to this in its own way.

Within each ministry focal points for gender equality and empowerment of women have been established. Within some of the ministries, for example the ministry of Education, each policy directorate has established a focal point. The focal points within the several ministries regularly meet within the framework of the Interdepartmental Committee on Emancipation and exchange experiences and information on policy issues.

The Minister for Emancipation envisages a task for himself supporting the ministries in the anchoring of the emancipation process. Extra efforts will be made, and active participation is required, in the areas of the four substantive priority themes in the Emancipation memorandum: labour participation, women and girls from ethnic minority groups, safety and International emancipation policy. This means that for the separate components collaboration agreements have been made with the responsible ministries for their (temporary) support and contribution to achieving the objectives. Examples are the Part-timePlus Task force² and 1001Strengths³.

The emancipation subsidy scheme was terminated on 1 January 2008 and has also been evaluated. The evaluation was aimed at the effects of the subsidy scheme and what has been achieved with projects. The projects jointly reached approximately 120,000 women. The majority

² The Part-timePlus Taskforce is the responsibility of the State Secretary of Social Affairs and Employment

³ 1001Strengths is a programme that promotes the participation of 50,000 vulnerable women of non-Dutch heritage through volunteer work.

of the projects focused on women and girls of non-Dutch heritage. The subsidised projects were distributed throughout the entire country. Often the projects dealt with sensitive themes, such as honour-related violence or the activation of women who are barely participating in society. To be able to rollout successful projects throughout the country, the Minister for Emancipation will make extra funds available.

In 2010 the government will conduct a ‘*midterm review*’ on the emancipation policy in the departments. The review will be conducted by the individual departments themselves and will look at the results achieved during this term of government and include an exploration of new opportunities. The Minister for Emancipation offered to customized agreements with the departments regarding collaboration and support in the reinforcement of the emancipation policy in the departments. Apart from a few workshops on gender equality in specific policy field the other ministries don’t need any further support from the directorate for emancipation. For making the midterm review they asked for a format, in which the Minister for Emancipation mentions the elements he wants the other ministries to report about.

International policy

The Minister for Emancipation also has a managing role in the Dutch realisation of the UN Women's Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action. In this context each ministry has its own responsibility for integrating the emancipation policy in its own international policy dossiers. The Minister for Emancipation reports to the CEDAW every 4 years using input of all the ministries. The report is also sent to Parliament. The minister sends the concluding comments and recommendations of the Committee to all the ministries and to Parliament. In the letter to Parliament he reacts to these concluding comments, on behalf of the Cabinet.

The translated recommendations of the CEDAW Committee tot the 4th report of the Dutch government and the translation of General Recommendation no. 25 on Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention in respect of temporary special measures, and other relevant information on CEDAW were placed on the website www.emancipatieweb.nl.

The text of the Convention and its translation in Dutch was published in the Netherlands Treaties Series. The Government’s treaty database, moreover, contains all relevant data on the Convention, e.g. a list of Parties and dates of entry into force. The Convention, in the Dutch language, is available, in particular in specialised bookshops, (university) libraries and judicial organs.

Every 2 years the Minister for Emancipation also makes a national report for Parliament, based on 1 or more articles of the UN Women's Convention. Always in close cooperation with the ministry that is responsible for policy area that is concerned.

The Netherlands has successfully worked on the anchoring of the male/female perspective in a number of areas of foreign policy. Nonetheless, in 2006-2007 it was noted that there is room for improvement in the connection between policy and implementation. The emphasis of the policy was on a general strategy of focusing on the position of women, the so-called *gender mainstreaming*. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has concluded that this one-sided

emphasis on gender mainstreaming delivers insufficient results, as the practice has shown us that the focus on women's rights and the 'empowerment' of women has been declining. In 2007 the Netherlands subsequently defined seven priority areas in foreign policy for combating the progressive discrimination against women. These areas correspond with the conclusions of the UN MDG task force on gender equality, which provided advice on the areas of attention for achieving MDG3:

1. Secondary education for girls
2. Sexual and reproductive health and rights
3. Time-saving infrastructure for women
4. Well-regulated property and inheritance rights for women
5. Formal employment and equal opportunities in the employment market
6. Participation and representation of women in politics and administration
7. Combating violence against women

The focus is specifically on women in conflict areas, marginalised women and adolescents. These priorities were established in the context of the so-called 'Project 2015', a government-wide project aimed at optimising the Dutch contribution to achieving the MDGs. In the 'Government agenda 2015', which was published in June 2007, the rights and opportunities for women and girls (MDG3 and MDG5) were once again given a prominent place in the integrated foreign policy.

The stepping-up of the policy is worked out in two policy documents. In the Development cooperation policy document entitled 'A matter for everyone' of October 2007, more attention for the equal rights and opportunities of women and sexual and reproductive health and rights have been included as one of the four central areas of intensification. For 2008, €30m in additional resources has been released, increasing to an additional €50m in 2010. In the Human rights strategy 'Towards a dignified existence', which was presented in November 2007, the improvement of the position of women and girls, and the combating of violence against women and girls in particular, has been named a priority. How this priority will be realised has been worked out in a number of concrete action points, ranging from promoting the implementation of the UN resolution on violence against women to the improvement of legislation and enforcement in this area. The emphasis of this intensification is on results. A proactive, result-oriented approach within the integrated foreign policy is the objective, whereby the government will be informed of the progress every other year by means of a specific results report.

Monitoring and evaluation of the achieved results

It is a good thing to monitor the policy intentions in the area of emancipation to establish a clear map of what has been achieved. The emancipation policy has a number of different monitoring moments and formats.

In September 2007 the *policy review on emancipation* was completed. The objective of the policy review is to make the state budget more transparent; in a glance it must be clear which objectives the ministries strive for, which tools they use, how much money is involved and what the result of these efforts is. The conclusion was that in recent years the emancipation policy has been most successful with respect to the following operational objective from the budget: to broaden and deepen the emancipation process at different levels. In this area results were achieved with relatively limited funds. The objectives - the sustainable integration of the

male/female perspective in policy and the implementation to promote the quality and effectiveness of central government policy - received less attention under the Balkenende II⁴ and III⁵ Cabinets.

With regard to the evaluation of the general progress in the area of emancipation in the Netherlands, the *Emancipation Monitor* is published once every two years. The publication of the last Emancipation Monitor was launched March 2009.

With regard to the emancipation policy in the ministries, the government will conduct a *midterm review* in 2010. In addition to the ministry reviews, in 2010 the Minister for Emancipation will submit to the House of Representatives an overview of the progress of all the priority objectives as listed in the Emancipation Memorandum.

Gender aspects will be dealt with in the context of VBTB⁶ activities and interdepartmental policy studies (IBOs), where relevant. Where applicable the Ministry of Finances also promotes that gender and ethnicity be included in these IBOs and in the conduction of policy reviews by the ministries. In addition, where relevant, measures in the area of taxation are evaluated for emancipation effects as standard.

Main legislative achievements

The main legislation in the Netherlands that applies to banning discrimination against women is Article 1 of the Constitution and the Equal Treatment Act⁷. Article 1 of the Constitution provides an important foundation for the combating of discrimination. The ban on discrimination in the Dutch Constitution is implemented in six specific Acts of Parliament.

Partly thanks to the Equal Treatment Act and the Equal Treatment Commission⁸, equal rights for women and men in the Netherlands in the legal sense have been realised to an important extent.

Since 2004 a number of changes have contributed to the reinforcement of the equal treatment legislation in general and the position of women in particular. For instance, in line with European Directives, the Equal Treatment Act has been providing explicit protection against sexual discrimination since 2007. The Act now also makes it clear, in line with the Equal Treatment Act for Men and Women, that direct discrimination based on gender also includes discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood. Finally, the equal treatment of men and women in pension schemes has been expanded.

The Government's efforts will remain focused on improving the framework for equal treatment before the law. Important elements are streamlining, attunement and making legislation more accessible.

On 1 November 2005 the Act evaluating the Equal Treatment Act came into effect. This Act

⁴ Balkenende II Cabinet: 2003-2006

⁵ Balkenende III Cabinet: 2006-2007

⁶ VBTB = From policy budget to policy accountability.

⁷ The Equal Treatment Act (Awgb) prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, philosophy, political views, race, nationality, sexual orientation or marital status.

⁸ In 1994 the Equal Treatment Commission (CGB) was established: an independent, national body that monitors compliance with the equal treatment legislation and provides advice and information.

provides for an expansion of the powers of the Equal Treatment Commission to conduct studies at its own initiative. Until this Act came into effect the Commission could only conduct such studies at its own initiative in an entire sector. A sector-wide study takes so much manpower that, in the past, the Commission only did so in a limited number of cases. Now a study at the Commission's own initiative can also be conducted in just a small number of companies.

In 2005 the Equal Treatment Act was evaluated by the Equal Treatment Commission (CGB) and in 2006 this was done again by external researchers. The Cabinet has submitted the Government standpoint on the evaluation to the House of Representatives in December 2008.

Since November 2006 the Equal Treatment Act for Men and Women has been updated. This change provides for the *implementation of Directive 2002/73/EC* (change to Directive 76/207/EEC) of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 September 2002 in respect of the implementation of the principle of equal treatment of men and women with regard to access to the labour process, vocational education and promotion opportunities, and with regard to employment conditions. The legislative change results in intimidation and sexual intimidation becoming a form of prohibited discrimination, broadening the legal protection of employees. The Act also prohibits prejudice against an employee who has been confronted with intimidation or sexual intimidation. This Act gives employees a somewhat stronger legal position in the case of (sexual) intimidation, namely:

- because of a shift in the burden of proof, which will now also apply to intimidation and sexual intimidation;
- because of the added option of appealing to the Equal Treatment Commission;
- because of an expansion of the protection against prejudice when an employee makes a claim of (sexual) intimidation.

To support the introduction of this Act, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has created fact sheets for employers and employees. A subsidy has also been awarded to the 'Women and Justice Foundation Clara Wichman' for the 'Sexual intimidation in the workplace' project. The first objective of the project is to create a convenient brochure as a practical guide. The target group is, specifically, members of complaints commissions and confidential counsellors. The second objective is the updating of the Legal Guide, with judges, lawyers and legal aid providers as the target group.

In the Netherlands there is no statutory right of complaint for individual employees. However, this does not mean that employees have nowhere to go with their complaints. Any employee who feels that he or she has been discriminated against can submit a request for investigation to the Equal Treatment Commission. The Commission will then investigate the complaint and evaluate whether the actions did in fact contravene the equal treatment legislation. The complaints procedure of the Commission is publicly accessible. Process representation is not compulsory and there are no costs associated with the procedure. In addition, employees can report their complaint to one of the antidiscrimination agencies. The antidiscrimination agency can play a mediating role in resolving the complaint or supporting the employee in further procedures before the Equal Treatment Commission or the courts. It is important that many Collective Labour Agreements (CAOs) contain stipulations about complaints procedures. Larger companies and institutes in particular have now instituted internal complaints procedures and complaints commissions, where employees can take any complaints

about discrimination and (sexual) intimidation. Examples are the complaints procedures for sexual intimidation, aggression, violence and discrimination at a number of universities and the complaints procedures of a number of municipalities.

Part II:

In this report we give a vast description of Dutch policy on gender equality, so a lot of the information could be repeated in this chapter. We chose not to do so. Where relevant we add information on the Beijing areas in this chapter and otherwise we would invite the reader to read the Chapters I, III and IV.

A. women and poverty

The Netherlands doesn't have any special policies aimed at reducing the poverty of women. All policy measures focusing on women are taken in the field of education and labour market and are aimed at increasing the educational and thereby professional levels of women and men. See for information on this the sections B and F.

In general, the introduction of the Work and Social Assistance Act (WWB) transferred policy-based and financial responsibility for social assistance benefits from the national cabinet to the municipalities. Dutch municipalities play a key role in helping people who are far removed from the labour market to gain experience as part of an employment scheme to facilitate the creation of jobs for those receiving benefits under the Work and Social Assistance Act (participation jobs), while retaining their benefit. As a consequence, the number of people moving from reintegration processes to work has increased.

B. Education and training of women

Since the eighties, the educational level of women has substantially increased. Girls used to lag behind boys, but now choose more often higher education and graduate faster than man.

With regard to the level of education, there however remains concern about girls from ethnic minority groups, especially with a Moroccan or Turkish background. They also do better in education and have higher scores than boys with the same background, but are still lagging behind in comparison with girls of native Dutch heritage.

Dutch emancipation policy however primarily focuses on the professional separation between women and men. Segregation by education direction has hardly reduced at all. Technical education is still dominated by male students. The throughflow of girls to scientific or technical follow up studies is negligible. Hardly any girls choose Nature and Technology to start with. The "Science and Technology Platform" will pay extra attention to girls in VMBO (prevocational secondary education) and MBO (upper secondary vocational education) in order to positively influence the influx and through-flow of girls in science and technology.

Since education is a key foundation for labour participation, the Netherlands also takes concrete steps to significantly reduce the number of young people who cannot read properly and to reduce the number of school dropouts.

C. Women and health

The promotion of health in the area of sexuality is aimed at the entire population and at young people in particular. This is the responsibility of municipalities. The prevention programmes are realised by the Regional Health Services (GGDs). They encourage schools to use specific lesson

packages. The GGDs in turn are supported by different NGOs involved in the field of sexual health. These NGOs are subsidised by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Sexualisation

A social debate has arisen in the Netherlands about the portrayal of girls and women as sex objects, and about unrealistic beauty ideals and the increasing commercialisation and sexualisation of the female body in the media. The government has decided to evaluate what the possible consequences are of the sexualisation of society. Based on that evaluation, that is due in April 2009, the government will develop a policy plan.

The current sexual morality among young people appears to be leading to a coarsening of sexual etiquette, which puts the physical integrity and safety of girls at risk. One in 6 girls and one in 20 boys under the age of 25 have been forced to perform or submit to sexual acts that they didn't really want to. Around one third of all sex offences reported by young people in the years 1996-2004 were committed in group context.

Scheme for self-employed persons

The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment has set up a scheme for a pregnancy and childbirth allowance scheme for self-employed persons to protect the health of mother and child. This allowance will financially enable female self-employed persons and co-working spouses to stop working in the period prior to and after childbirth.

Foreign policy

For many years the Netherlands has been a country that actively works on improving the position of women and in particular sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). In part as a result of the Dutch effort, an additional target for SRHR has been included under MDG 5: 'universal access to reproductive health by 2015'. As a result the implementation of the Cairo Action Programme (adopted during the International Population Conference in Cairo in 1994) has become better embedded. For the Netherlands, reducing the arrears with regard to MDG 5, and therefore a reduction in maternal mortality as well as 'reproductive health for everyone', is a key objective in foreign policy.

D. Violence against women

The prevention and combating of violence against women and girls has been one of the main objectives of the Dutch emancipation policy for many years. The policy distinguishes between four forms of violence against women and girls: domestic violence, human trafficking, honour-related violence and female genital mutilation. The ambition is to reduce aggression and violence by 25% by 2010 compared to 2002.

Domestic violence

The scale of domestic violence in the Netherlands is no greater than in other countries. By means of a special register of domestic violence incidents, the police have been able to calculate that

every year they receive over 63,000 reports of domestic violence.⁹ However, these are only the registered incidents and do not reflect the total scope of all the cases of domestic violence. Because of shame, fear and feelings of guilt only a small proportion of those involved report the violence: approximately 12% of all domestic violence cases. This means that the number of official reports is merely the tip of the iceberg.

The Netherlands has put in place an extensive programme of measures, with a range of actions. The government policy document 'Private Violence, a Public Matter',¹⁰ has led to an Action Programme on Domestic Violence, which has run until 2008. The emphasis in the new Action Programme will be both on consolidating the results achieved over the past few years and on responding to new developments. For example, extra attention will be focused on prevention and early identification of domestic violence. Furthermore, policy will focus on taking away obstacles with respect to exchanging of information between professionals in the field of domestic violence.

Other

Other goals and policies of the government concern improving the provision of information to prostitutes, reducing the numbers of victims of related violence, combating femal genital mutilation and enhancing the expertise of professionals.

E. Women and armed conflict

Women, peace and safety

In the past period the Netherlands has made active efforts to implement UNSC resolution 1325, by means of the formulation of a National Action Plan 1325. This plan was launched by the Ministers of Development Cooperation, Defence and Foreign Affairs, together with a large number of representatives from Dutch development organisations and knowledge institutes, on 4 December 2007. The Action Plan is a joint product and can therefore count on broad social support. As a result of this Action Plan the already good collaboration in this area between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Emancipation department and community-based organisations is expanded further, both in countries where the Netherlands itself is active and through actions in international forums. Action points have been defined on the basis of 5 themes:

- The (international) legal framework
- Prevention, mediation and reconstruction
- International collaboration
- Peace missions
- Harmonisation and coordination

Among other things, for instance, military personnel who participate in peace missions in Afghanistan receive context-specific training on the roles and position of women in peace processes, the Ministry of Internal Affairs aims to include more female police officers in

⁹ 'Met de deur in huis. Omvang, aard, achtergrondkenmerken en aanpak van huiselijk geweld in 2006 op basis van landelijke politieciijfers' (*Inside the front door. Scope, nature, background characteristics and handling of domestic violence in 2006 on the basis of national police figures*), Beke Consultancy and Research Group, Arnhem/Dordrecht, September 2007.

¹⁰ Published in April 2002.

reconstruction missions, the Netherlands advises NATO on the integration of UNSC resolution 1325 within NATO operations and policy coordination meetings are held between the government and local active development organisations.

F. Women and the economy

For this section please refer to the other chapters in this report, in which we describe all the efforts of the government to increase women's participation on the labourmarket and to increase women's economic independence.

G. Women in power and decisionmaking

One of the key areas in which the Netherlands' Government would like to achieve better results regarding gender equality, is the participation of women in decision-making processes. Although the participation of women in Dutch Parliament is rather satisfying (around 40% in the Lower House and 35% in the Upper House), in all other areas, public and private, the participation is very low. Therefore, the Dutch Government puts a lot of effort in increasing the participation of women in decision-making. In May 2008, over 50 organisations, in the public as well as the private sector, voluntarily signed up to a Charter, called Talent to the Top. The Netherlands is very pleased that apart from central government so many organizations from all areas of Dutch society have joined the Charter. We hope that by the end of the year 2009 over 100 organisations and businesses will have signed up to the Charter. By joining the Charter, organizations commit themselves to develop a strategy or continue to pursue clear strategy for the influx and through-flow of women in management positions. The signatory companies determine quantitative goals for their own organization, review their achievements and report about them to a so-called Monitoring Commission. The Monitoring Commission will report each year to the Minister of Economic Affairs and it will announce the results of the signatories in the media by specifically referring to the names of the organizations and companies concerned.

The Government wants to be an exemplary employer. In governmental Advisory Bodies it is now compulsory to ensure a proportional representation of men and women. Any new appointment must respect this principle. The objective for the central government is to achieve that at least 25% of the senior civil service positions in 2011 consist of women. In order to reach that goal in 2011 the Dutch government is using a range of tools such as networks, deployment of recruitment agencies and an action programme to interest, develop and commit female candidates.

I. Human rights of women

Human rights of women is a broad concept that covers all the other subjects described in this chapter. The Dutch government has no special actions aimed at human rights at women. For legislative information please see chapter I of this report.

J. Women and the media

The Netherlands has no special policy measures on women and the media. However, the Minister for Emancipation in this Cabinet is also responsible for the media and there are several initiatives that are important to mention, because women and girls profit from them. As we said under 'women and health' the Netherlands government is worried about the sexualisation of society. Therefore the next initiatives are worthwhile to mention:

1. The expertise center for a wise use of media: launched in 2008, 72 media organisations joined it. The center provides its expertise to schools and parents and tells them how young people can wisely make use of the media;
2. A code of conduct, launched and signed by the television media themselves. It's a self-regulatory instrument.
3. A self-regulatory and complaints system that classifies programs on the content, regarding violence, sex, etc. It is called 'Kijkwijzer' (Watch in a wiser way). MTV Networks, owner of MTV and TMF, uses this system since 2006, also for videoclips. In this way watchers are warned about the content of programs and clips. When showing videoclips MTV also sends out a signal to youngsters in order to invite them to react to the content of the videoclips and start a debate with them.

K. Women and the environment

The Netherlands has no special policy measures aimed at women and the environment.

L. The girl-child

The Dutch government has no special actions aimed at the girl child. Girls profit from all the policy measures described in this report. The only policy measure that is a specific one is the combating of female genital mutilation. It is forbidden in the Netherlands, and parents risk imprisonment, also when they have fgm committed outside our country. The government gives subsidy to several migrant groups of women to have discussions within their own groups on fgm. Another initiative that is worthwhile mentioning, though not especially aimed at girls, but at boys and girls, youngsters and their parents, are the Centers for Youth and Family, that the Cabinet Balkenende IV is creating at community level. This center helps children, youngsters and their parents when they have severe problems. The centers are aimed at helping parents and their children to solve these problems, by counseling, supporting etc.

Part IV: Remaining challenges and actions to address them

Although we have made a lot of progress in the Netherlands in the area of women's liberation, a large gap continues to exist between the equal rights of women and men on the one hand and social reality on the other.

New insights and challenges

The emancipation process is changing. In recent years it has become increasingly clear that the participation of women is not primarily a matter of redistribution, but mainly a matter of combining. In the Netherlands the vast majority of women want to combine motherhood with a (small) part-time job. Women say they would not necessarily work more if their partner worked less. However, women would want to work more if they could structure their working hours flexibly, if they had the opportunity to work from home and if they could keep more of their net income. From the point of view of the ageing population the talents of women cannot be overlooked. The government and the social partners therefore need to make considerable investments to create work opportunities that are worthwhile and that can be combined with care for children and with informal care. Not just mothers but fathers, too, would benefit from this.

Another perspective is the fact that the emancipation of boys and men from ethnic minorities is not keeping pace. Girls and women from ethnic minorities are indicating increasingly strongly that the traditional views of boys and men are obstructing their emancipation, integration and participation and that this creates tension in the upbringing of children, in marriage and in the family. There is a need for a dialogue with boys and men about emancipation. The success of the Father Centre in the Hague shows that among many men themselves, there is also a considerable need for dialogue and for personal and social development. Experiments in employment facilitation and reintegration have shown that a combined approach for women and men is more effective than an individual approach. The emancipation of boys and men from ethnic minorities therefore specifically requires extra attention.

A new challenge in the emancipation process is presented by the sexualisation of society, including by the everpresent depiction of girls and women as sex objects and the associated unattainable beauty ideals. Through all sorts of media girls and boys are exposed to openly sexual acts, insinuations and advances at an increasingly young age. As a result this approach becomes an increasingly 'normal' part of youth culture. This presents girls and boys, as well as their parents, with new challenges. If, in the past, the emancipation process of young people was strongly linked to fighting for freedom and individual choices, today the freedom of many young people is so great that emancipation also becomes linked to the risk of boundless freedom. This applies particularly to the area of sexuality. Young people are relatively vulnerable and are not always able to properly set their own boundaries and respect those of others.

Departing from the trend is necessary

The stagnation of the emancipation process means it is necessary to depart from the trend. This is why the government wants to create more opportunities for women:

- 1) more opportunities for women in the employmentmarket;
- 2) more opportunities for women from ethnicminorities to utilise their talents;
- 3) more opportunities for girls and women to have a life without (sexual) violence;

4) more opportunities for girls and women in the rest of the world, particularly in developing countries.

More opportunities for women in the employment market

The government subscribes to the analysis in the SER's (*Social and Economic Council*) medium to long-term advice, which stipulates that an extra increase in the labour force participation is needed in future to counteract the burden imposed by the ageing of the population. To this end social partners have committed to a participation objective of 80% by 2016. This will require considerable effort. A situation where women who are in the stage of establishing a family (age 35-40) stop working early must be prevented, whereas a situation in which women work more hours must be promoted. A comprehensive package of measures to achieve such a situation is therefore included in the government's policy programme. There will be additional tax advantages to discourage non-working and to make employment more worthwhile, also for women. The transferable tax credit for the nonworking partner will be phased out over 15 years. It will become more attractive and easier to combine work and childcare: the government plans to improve the availability and quality of day-care and from January 1st 2008 has increased parental leave from 13 to 26 weeks, so that fewer women stop working when they have children and more women return to work after their parental leave. The government will also increase the number of Extended Schools (so-called 'brede school') and improve the coordination between education, childcare, sports and cultural activities, among other means by creating 2500 combined positions. There will be a public benefits scheme for pregnancy and maternity leave for the self-employed. The government has set up a Part-time Plus Taskforce to increase the labour force participation and working hours of women and create a greater base of support. This will require a cultural change within companies and more positive perceptions among women themselves. It must become easier and more attractive for women to work more hours. In many companies the possibilities for working flexible hours are still limited. Together with the provinces and municipalities the government will work on flexible opening hours and tailor-made services to make it easier for parents to combine work and childcare.

In order to promote future generations of women becoming economically independent, girls will be encouraged towards a greater diversity in their study and career choices, and to a greater investment in their career. In schools that participate in the Girls and Technology Promotion Programmes a 10-25% increase can be seen in the number of girls who choose to pursue a technical course of study. In the coming years the government will make further investments in this area. Existing initiatives that are working well will be broadened and intensified and female role models will be used.

The government itself will set the right example regarding the appointment of women in top positions and the equal remuneration of women and men. The target is to halve the pay gap between men and women during this term of government. At present all Secretary Generals are male. The target is for 25% of the senior public service positions to be occupied by women by 2011. Half of all general and general technical advisory bodies must consist of women. In order to increase the number of female professors the government is using a target value of 15% for 2010. For the other educational sectors quantitative target values have also been formulated. The government will encourage others to follow its good example and set concrete target values. The results of authorities, educational institutes and the business world will be tracked and compared via monitoring and benchmarking (performance comparison). It is important that good and bad performances are rendered visible by means of '*naming and shaming*'.

More opportunities for women from ethnic minorities to utilise their talents

The government wants to increase the social participation of 50,000 women from ethnic minorities by helping them find volunteer work and paid employment. A good command of the Dutch language and an understanding of the Dutch culture is an essential condition to achieve this. The Integration Delta Plan is expected to make it possible for people from ethnic minorities to catch up on their integration. To this end, the plan makes it possible for women who have been in the Netherlands for longer to also follow an integration course. The Thousand-and-One Strengths project, which is aimed at volunteer work, is linked to the Integration Delta Plan, thus creating a dual integration and social participation progression. The objective is to halt the fragmentation of good initiatives. For women without basic qualifications, a coordinated process of integration, education, social participation and - ultimately - paid employment is needed, also based on the concept that equipping women in this way can contribute to preventing violence in the longer term. In its administrative agreement with the municipalities the government has undertaken to support 25,000 people who are not entitled to benefits to find work. This agreement also provides new opportunities for women from ethnic minorities. The same applies to the plans the municipalities are making for the 40 special attention neighbourhoods. The municipalities have agreed with their social partners that they will create (para-professional) functions for women from ethnic minorities. This will also give the talents of these women higher visibility in the employment market. In addition, the government will support the national 'rollout' of emancipation initiatives for girls and women from ethnic minorities that have proven their value in recent years. The government wants to prevent girls and women being obstructed in their emancipation, integration and participation by traditional views, restrictions to their liberty or (threats of) violence. The emancipation of boys and men from ethnic minorities will therefore be given extra attention. In the years 2009-2011 the government will support the creation and implementation of 15 so-called Father Centres, where men and boys, mainly from ethnic minorities, will have the opportunity to meet, to follow education programmes and to have discussions on all sorts of difficult subject, such as honour related crimes.

More opportunities for girls and women to have a life without (sexual) violence

Emancipation is closely linked to women's right of selfdetermination: the opportunity to make choices freely and safely. The safety of women still leaves a lot to be desired. Domestic violence and sexual violence occur on a large scale even in the Netherlands. Honour-related violence and the scale of forced prostitution and trafficking in women are causes for serious concern. Women without an independent income or residence status are particularly vulnerable. The government is intensifying and broadening its current efforts to reduce violence. Young people are also relatively vulnerable and are not always able to properly assess their own boundaries. The government therefore feels it is extremely important to give more attention to media astuteness, sexual and relational education and assertiveness and to promote expertise in this area. Advice on sexual matters alone is not enough. Girls and boys must also learn to be able to set their own boundaries, learn to respect the boundaries of others and be able to defend themselves against undesired sexual approaches and violence. The government will explore what young people, parents and professionals need in this area and what can be improved. The government will make extra funding available for the development and application of methodologies in the areas of sexual and relational education and assertiveness in schools and colleges and the promotion of expertise in vocational training.

More opportunities for girls and women in developing areas

The government wants to structurally improve the focus on the position of girls and women in developing areas and, to this effect, signed the Schokland agreement earlier this year together with a large number of social organisations. The Netherlands will urge other countries to fulfil their political and financial promises. This applies particularly to the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls' right to education. In the area of peace missions and conflict prevention the government is implementing a national action plan.

Improved emancipation policy in the departments

The government wants to broaden the emancipation policy across the entire government sector. This applies to the priority policy themes outlined in this Memorandum, but also to other policy themes not included in this Memorandum. Examples of such themes are physical policy areas such as a public housing, spatial planning, the environment, agriculture, nature management, water management, traffic and transport. In these areas there are opportunities for linking emancipation and sustainability together. The responsible departments will work this out further. The above can also be developed within a broader diversity policy. In its final report entitled 'A bit better is not good enough!' the Auditing Committee Emancipation concludes that expertise in the area of emancipation and structural anchoring of the emancipation policy in the departments are lacking. Neither is there a central focus on the emancipation policy. This government wants to improve this situation by making the departments' contribution to the emancipation policy as transparent and verifiable as possible, increasing emancipation expertise and giving substance to the role of Minister for Emancipation as a driving force and supporter of the emancipation policy. The departments each submit their own reaction to the final report of the Auditing Committee Emancipation and their contribution to the emancipation policy to Parliament. In their contributions the departments interpret the conditions for the successful anchoring and realisation of the emancipation policy. These conditions are: the commitment of the administrative and political top to the emancipation policy, a clear allocation of responsibilities with regard to the emancipation policy, the availability of emancipation-related expertise, the use of emancipation instruments and clarity about emancipation objectives and means. The contributions of the departments show that there is improved anchoring of the emancipation policy across the entire government sector and that there are also new initiatives. Depending on the phase of the emancipation policy and the nature of the policy domain each department gives this objective structure in its own way. In 2010 the government will conduct a 'midterm review' on the emancipation policy in the departments. The review will be conducted by the individual departments themselves and will look at the results achieved during this term of government and include an exploration of new opportunities. The Minister for Emancipation will come to customised agreements with the departments regarding collaboration and support in the reinforcement of the emancipation policy in the departments. These agreements may relate, for instance, to enhancing the emancipation expertise or to the methods for implementing the departmental observations. In addition the Minister aims to collaborate with a minimum of 25 municipalities. Social institutes, emancipation agencies, women's organisations and selfhelp migrant organisations can make an important contribution to this target. The government will reserve extra funding for impetus at a national, provincial and municipal level.

Quality of the emancipation knowledge infrastructure

The government wants to improve both the quality and the efficiency of the knowledge infrastructure for emancipation. The International Information Centre and the Archive for the Women's Rights Movement (IIAV) will be housed at the Institute for Social History (IISG). Expectations are that these measures will improve the quality of collection management and the availability and accessibility of information. With regard to E-Quality the same applies: fusion with other knowledge institutes is expected to lead to further quality and efficiency benefits. The government is currently investigating the options in this area. Furthermore, for both institutes it will be critically assessed which tasks do and do not form part of the basic knowledge infrastructure.

Additional funding for the emancipation process in society

As part of the government's policy programme, an indicative additional amount of up to a potential 10 million Euros in 2011 will be released during this term of government. These funds will be distributed between the emancipation policy and homosexual emancipation policy. Additional funds are available (in addition to the emancipation budget) for the through-flow of women to management positions within education, culture and the sciences and for the through-flow of girls to technical studies. The government will use these extra funds to spur on the emancipation policy at national, provincial and local levels.

The current subsidy arrangement with relatively small emancipation projects will be terminated. Many valuable initiatives have been developed. It is now especially important to apply and anchor more broadly those initiatives that have proven effective in practice. In this context it is important that municipalities, social organisations and self-help migrant organisations work closely together and develop plans. New initiatives are also needed for the emancipation of boys and men from ethnic minorities.

With the additional funds for the emancipation policy:

- a) the Part-time Plus Taskforce, which focuses on encouraging more women to work and encouraging women to work more hours, will receive support;
- b) on the basis of collaboration agreements, departments and municipalities will receive support in the development and realisation of their emancipation policy;
- c) the Thousand-and-One Strengths project, which aims to guide 50,000 women from ethnic minorities toward social participation, will receive support;
- d) on the basis of collaboration agreements, forerunners among provinces and municipalities will receive support to implement flexible opening hours and customised services, making it easier to combine work and child-care;
- e) a programme aimed at reducing the segregation in education and the employment market and increasing the number of girls in scientific and technical professions will receive support;
- f) a programme for sexual education and assertiveness of young people and for increasing the expertise of professionals will receive support;
- g) the national rollout of a number of emancipation initiatives of social institutes that have proven effective will be supported;

- h) a number of new initiatives for the emancipation of boys and men from ethnic minorities will be supported;
- i) a number of innovative programmes organised by women's networks will be supported;
- j) the emancipation knowledge infrastructure will be supported and improved.

With these investments the government wants to give the emancipation process a new dynamic and visibly decrease the gap between equal opportunities and unequal social reality in the coming years.

Appendix

Summary table of Emancipation Memorandum objectives

Main objectives

Sub-objectives

Labour force participation

Main objective 1

Increasing the labour force participation of women in terms of numbers and hours

Sub-objective 1.1

Working has to be worthwhile

Sub-objective 1.2

Improving the combination of work and childcare

Sub-objective 1.3

Better distribution: more women in top positions, less professional separation and smaller pay gap between women and men

Women and girls from ethnic minority groups

Main objective 2

Offering opportunities to and utilising the talents of women and girls from ethnic minority groups

Sub-objective 2.1

Increasing the social and labour force participation of women and girls from ethnic minorities

Sub-objective 2.2

Increasing the self-sufficiency and personal development of women and girls from ethnic minority groups

Sub-objective 2.3

Promoting the emancipation of men and boys from ethnic minority groups

Safety

Main objective 3a

Preventing and combating violence against women and girls

Sub-objective 3.1

Preventing and combating domestic violence against women and girls

Sub-objective 3.2

Improving the provision of information to prostitutes

Main objective 3b

Sexual and relational education of girls and boys and increasing their ability to defend themselves against (sexual) violence

International emancipation policy

Main objective 4

Contributing to the (global) abolition of all forms of discrimination against women and the structural improvement of the position of women

Sub-objective 3.3

Preventing and combating honour-related violence

Sub-objective 3.4

Combating female genital mutilation

Sub-objective 3.5

Enhancing the expertise of professionals

Sub-objective 3.6

Gaining an understanding of the consequences of the sexualisation of the role of girls and women in society

Sub-objective 3.7

Increasing the assertiveness of girls and boys

Sub-objective 3.8

Preventing teenage pregnancies

Sub-objective 4.1

Guaranteeing a structural focus on the position of women in developing regions

Sub-objective 4.2

Improving sexual and reproductive health and rights, particularly for girls and women

Sub-objective 4.3

Guaranteeing systematic attention for the effects of international peace missions on local women and giving thought, where necessary, to the composition of the team to be sent

Sub-objective 4.4

Structural focus on improving the position of women in all international areas of policy