

## **Part One:**

The background of gender equality policies in Turkey is constituted by the Republican reforms. Having a long history in Turkey, the legislative framework of gender equality has expanded in recent years and government policies aiming at strengthening the role of women in the society have become more widespread.

In this respect, considerable arrangements have been made particularly in the Constitution, which has the highest level in hierarchy of norms, and in fundamental laws. Through the comprehensive amendments made in the Constitution in 2001 and 2004, the Constitutional principle of equality between women and men has been strengthened.

After the amendments made in the Constitution, the first and the most important step has been the adoption of the *New Turkish Civil Code*, giving place to reformative arrangements, on 1 January 2002. The reconstituted Code has reached a new manner that pursues equality between women and men, puts an end to gender discrimination, makes women equal to men in the family and society and respects women's labour.

The Labour Law, which is also among the fundamental laws, has been reconsidered having regard to implementations that includes discrimination against women. In this regard, no discrimination including sex discrimination is permitted in employer-employee relations considering fundamental human rights (10 June 2003).

One of the fundamental laws which has been revised is The New Turkish Criminal Code. With the amendments made in this law contemporary arrangements have been brought on gender equality and violence against women in accordance with the recent conditions (10 June 2005).

Additionally, concerning the problems in the implementation process the Family Protection Law , which came into force 17 January 1998 in order to prevent violence against women, has been amended. With this amendment process protection measures regarding victims of violence have been varied ( 4 May 2007).

With these reformist amendments made in the last decade in Turkish laws, there is not any legal barrier left concerning gender equality. This has been tremendously important development in terms of generating effective results of politics.

In pursuit of these important legal developments, in order to reflect legally provided gender equality into implementation process intensive efforts have been carried out and also a large number of regulations and circulars have been put into effect to guide and to eliminate uncertainty that encountered during implementation.

In our country, National Development Plans which are prepared by State Planning Organization for 5 years period are the fundamental policy document in policy development and implementation processes. From her foundation Turkey gives importance to the planned growth and since 1963 she has been preparing 5 year National Development Plans. Among these Plans, Fifth 5 Year Development Plan came into force in 1985 was the first one that took women issues as a sector and develop specific policy priorities for women.

The latest one of these plans, which are prepared so as to improve economic, social and cultural structure by taking into consideration international obligations and needs of the country, is the Ninth 5 Year Development Plan that covers the 2007-2013 period. The Plan considers “promoting education and vocational training opportunities for women in order to increase their participation to economic and social life, improving employability of women and proceeding combating domestic violence” among priorities.

In order to mainstream gender equality into public policies and strengthening the socio-economic status of women in our country, “The National Action Plan Gender Equality” covering 2008-2013 period has been prepared in accordance with the above mentioned Ninth 5 Year Development Plan by national machinery General Directorate on the Status of Women (KSGM).

Aforesaid National Plan has been prepared with a scope of covering the titles of “Women and Education”, “Women and Economy”, “Women and Poverty”, “Women and Health”, “Women and Power and Decision-making Processes”, “Women and Environment”, “Women and Media”, and “Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women” which are among the critical areas determined in the Beijing Platform for Action. As for the critical areas named “Women’s Human Rights” and “Girl Children”, they have been taken into consideration under each of these titles. In the Plan, with the aim of promoting gender equality objectives, targets and implementation strategies have been established in order to constitute a base for development and implementation of the public policies. Also for each implementation strategy responsible institutions and agencies and cooperation institutions have been determined.

In the whole stages of the National Action Plan implementation period of which has started after the approval of the State Minister in charge of Women and Family Affairs cooperation with all stakeholders was considered as an important part. As a result of this, the Plan has been prepared with a large participation from relevant public institutions and agencies, NGOs, trade unions and confederations of workers-employers, professional organizations, Turkish representatives of international organizations, political parties and universities.

In Turkey although a similar National Action Plan Gender Equality was prepared in 1998, among the targets of this previous Plan only some legal arrangements could be accomplished. Therefore, it is given utmost importance to the monitoring and assessment process of the latest National Action Plan Gender Equality (2008-2013) which is under practice presently. Within this scope, monitoring and assessment committees have been formed for each of the critical area under the coordination of KSGM. Representatives of responsible institutions and agencies will take part in these committees corresponding to implementation strategies defined in respective critical area. The mentioned committees will convene twice a year at six-month intervals following the submission of reports by relevant parties to KSGM and will carry out the evaluation in terms of the implementation of the National Action Plan. In case of detection of shortcomings in the implementation process, KSGM, having the responsibility of monitoring, will take the necessary steps by the responsible institutions in order to overcome deficiencies.

As for violence against women, one of the critical areas stated in Beijing Platform for Action, again by the participation of all related parties a separate action plan has been prepared and it has been put into effect in 2010 under the title of “Combating Domestic Violence against Women National Action Plan”.

With the Plan it is targeted to improve the conditions in six main fields which are legal arrangements, social awareness and mental transformation, advancement of women's socio-economic status, protective services, curative and rehabilitation services and inter-sectoral cooperation. In this respect, various responsibilities have been given to related public institutions and agencies and cooperative institutions.

Above mentioned developments have been carried out in the direction of country requirements/demands and considering international obligations. In this context, the regulations in United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) taken into consideration primarily, also the European Social Charter, European Union Acquis, conventions, decisions and recommendations of institutions such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Cairo Conference on World Population and Development Action Plan, the Fourth World Conference on Women Action Plan and the Beijing Declaration, and the target of Millennium Development Goals on gender equality have been taken into account.

As it is known, Turkey signed "The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" (CEDAW) in 1985 and the Convention was ratified in 1986 with certain reservations, since some provisions of the Convention were incompatible with the Family Law section of the Turkish Civil Code. These reservations were withdrawn on September 1999 in expectation of the then-proposed amendments to the Turkish Civil Code and the declaration to article 9 of the Convention was withdrawn as of 29 January 2008 due to the amendments to the Turkish Nationality Law. Although the reservation of Turkey to the first clause of 29. article of CEDAW saying that "any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of the present Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If the dispute cannot be solved, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in conformity with the Statute of the Court", remains, the reservations concerning the substantive articles of the Convention has been withdrawn.

In addition, in 2004 a new sentence to Article 90 of the Constitution was added which ensures that "in the case of contradiction between the provisions of the duly ratified international agreements on fundamental rights and freedoms and the provisions of domestic laws, the judgments of the former shall prevail". Thus, in the case of any contradiction between the international agreements on fundamental rights and freedoms including CEDAW and the domestic laws the judgments of international conventions will be taken as a base.

Turkey signed the Optional Protocol of CEDAW on 30 July 2002. The Protocol was put into effect on 29 January 2003.

Moreover, Turkey adopted the documents (Beijing Declaration and Action Plan) agreed to right after the Fourth World Conference on Women without any reservations.

As it is fairly easy understood from abovementioned information, in our country in activities being hold concerning gender equality international developments are followed very closely and effective participation of all related parties to such activities is taken as a fundamental principle. Besides this, as it can be seen in the related parts, a great deal of implementations are carried out which give importance to participation of men to mental transformation activities about gender equality and in order to create awareness of men.

## **Part Two**

### **Women's Human Rights**

#### **Legal Developments**

Information concerning the developments on women's human rights are related actually the information that was stated in the whole report. Nevertheless, information that has not been stated or the details of which has not been stated in the other parts will be given place in this part.

As it is declared previously in the related parts, utmost important developments in the field of gender equality have been reached legally in our country. In this sense, the most important amendments are the ones made in the Constitution which is legally binding of other Turkish laws and has the highest level in hierarchy of norms. An amendment was made in 41. article of the Constitution and the provision declaring "The family is the foundation of Turkish society and *it is based on the equality between spouses.*" has been added. Another important amendment made in the Constitution in 2001 is the abolishment of the provision that includes inequality concerning Turkish citizenship in article 66 through putting forward the clause saying "The child of Turkish father *or Turkish mother* is Turk". In 2004 the clause of "Men and women have equal rights. *The State shall have the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice.*" has been added to succeed the first clause of Article 10. Like it has been declared in details in the first part, by the amendment made in 90. article of the Constitution in 2004 important progresses have been brought about concerning women's human rights.

The New Turkish Civil Code put into effect on 1 January 2002 is an important legal arrangement that gives to opportunity to Turkish society to live the contemporary developments. In the context of gender equality basic amendments which were introduced in the New Turkish Civil Code are as follows;

- The clause saying "The head of the family is husband." has been changed into "spouses carry out the conjugal community together."
- Representation of the conjugal community has given to each spouse together.
- The provision saying that the husband determines the conjugal home has been amended and the clause of "The conjugal home shall be determined jointly by the spouses" has been brought.
- The clause in the former Civil Code saying that the both spouses have parental authority over the children and in case of disagreement father's opinion will be predominant has been amended and the provision "both spouses have parental authority over the children. *In case of disagreement, the judge will elect.*" has been brought. Mothers may be entitled to custody over children born out-of-wedlock.
- The provision in the former Code declaring that "Spouses have freedom to choose their job and profession. They do not require other's permission." has been accepted by the new Code.
- The new Turkish Civil Code has accepted "participation in acquisitions" as the regular matrimonial property regime. Under this regular regime, acquired property which each spouse acquires during the marriage is shared equally when the marriage comes to an end.
- While according to the former Code the financial maintenance of the conjugal union and children belonged to the husband, with the new Code has brought the clause saying

“spouses contributes to the expenses of the family in proportion of their capacity with their labour and property”.

- Legal age of marriage has been raised to 17 for both men and women.
- The application place for marriage has been accepted as the marriage office where woman or man lives.
- In alimony law trials pleaded after divorce the authorized court shall be the court where the creditor of the alimony settle downs.
- The clause saying that upon the request of the parties divorce trials shall be taken as confidential sittings has been brought.
- None of the spouses can limit the other’s possessions on family abode without an explicit consent of the other. Neither of the spouses can alone annul a rental agreement related to the family abode even if family abode itself is a hired one.
- The right to become equal inheritor of father has been given to children who are born out-of-wedlock and lineage of whom are realized by recognition or judge decision just like the other children.

By the New Turkish Criminal Code put into effect on 1 June 2005 contemporary arrangements have been presented concerning equality between women and men and violence against women. Basic amendments which were introduced in the New Turkish Criminal Code are as follows;

- “Discrimination between woman and girl” has been abolished.
- Sexual crimes against women have been altered from crimes against society into crimes against individuals.
- The definition of sexual assault has been made and the basic form of it has been determined.
- Sexual harassment at the work place has been embodied and the qualified conditions of the crime have been determined. Also when the crime is being committed by misusing of hierarchical power or power arising from service relations or by making use of the easiness of working in the same place, then the respective penalties have been raised.
- The active penitence situations that necessitate delay of the trial or the penalty have been arranged and with this arrangement the clause that says if one of the sentenced person or accused person marry to abducted or detained victim; decline, delay or delete of penalties cannot be realized has been put forward.
- “Custom killings” are categorized under the qualifications of voluntary manslaughter and the provision has come into effect stating that perpetrators of custom killings will be punished with the heaviest punishment.
- Unfair provocation clause has been regulated and according to this clause it has been accepted that unfair provocation can be existed only as a result of implementing an unfair act. In this respect, the murderer (relatives or family member of the victim) of the women victim of sexual harassment on the grounds of honor cannot benefit from the unfair provocation reduction concerning respective penalty and it is also mentioned that every unfair action can not cause unfair provocation.
- If women victim falls pregnant as a result of a crime committed to her, professional doctor(s) who finishes the pregnancy in the hospital cannot be punished in the condition that pregnancy period is not exceeding 20 weeks and if it happened upon the consent of the woman.

- Qualified situations of sexual harassment have been arranged and it has been brought that in the condition of damaging the physical or mental health of the victim by manipulating sexual harassment the punishment will be a heavier one.
- It is stated in the clause giving place to the sexual harassment that committing sexual harassment crime by misusing of penetration provided by public service or service relations has formed the qualified conditions of the crime which necessitate heavier penalty.
- The crime of malicious injury is also regulated in case this crime is committed against an ascendant or descendant or committed against the spouse or brother/sister, it is recognized as the qualified crime.
- Under the title of torture and torment the crimes of torture and torment have been arranged. With these clauses the obligations of Turkey in terms of international conventions have been taken into account. In this sense, acts of torture have been defined as a separate crime. Committing the crime against a child or mentally defenceless individual or a pregnant woman has been penalized with imprisonment from 8 years to 15 years.
- Not performing caring, education or supporting obligations arose from Family Law has been defined as a crime. In the same clause, a person who leaves his pregnant spouse (married or unmarried) that fell pregnant from himself in a helpless position has been penalized.
- Genital examination has been arranged as a separate clause and a person who sent an individual to genital examination without authorized judge's or public prosecutor's decision or a person who made the genital examination have been punished with imprisonment from 3 months to 1 year.
- Having a sexual relation with an individual below full legal age has been determined as a separate offence.
- Arrangements have been made in terms of combating trafficking of women and children in line with the international obligations.
- Discrimination crime has been arranged and depriving of some people from legal opportunities by making discrimination not stem from the valid laws and legal regulations has been penalized.

As it is stated in the first part, Turkey is a party to the Optional Protocol of CEDAW. In this respect, it has been a very important progress in terms of protecting and developing the women's human rights that providing individuals and groups of women with the right to petition or the right to complain to the Committee of CEDAW and giving the Committee an authorization to accept and to observe the applications of complains in order to supervise the implementations.

## **Education**

Whenever there is a reference to women's human rights what comes to mind is the equal and non-discriminative right to education, a fundamental human right, which lays the ground for participation in decision-making processes, equality before the law and equal and adequate working conditions. In accordance with the 42. article of the Constitution which reads as "primary education is compulsory for all citizens of both sexes and is free of charge in state schools", Turkey, with no discrimination and on the basis of the principle of equal opportunities, provides a legal guarantee for the enjoyment of the right to education for each and every child. Rendering the compulsory primary education free of charge since the establishment of the Republic as well as taking measures for reducing drop-outs is within the

scope of this constitutional principle. The right to education of girls is guaranteed just as all other rights in the Constitution and the relevant provisions of other legislations.

In parallel to constitutional regulations, the Basic Law of National Education is set on the principle of “ universality and equality”. This law stipulates that basic education is compulsory for all citizens, boys or girls, and free of charge in public schools. In accordance, each and every Turkish child will benefit from basic education services without any discrimination between girls and boys.

Enrolment of girls is among the priority problems of the State as expressed in the 9th Development Plan being implemented and covering the period 2007-2013. Along with the statement which reads as “ necessary measures will be taken with a particular focus on rural areas and girls in order to reduce drop-outs in primary education, and transfer to secondary education will be increased”, the Plan includes objectives to develop projects aiming at; empowering women’s social status, expanding their activity areas, increasing their education levels to make them benefit from equal opportunities and possibilities, and increasing literacy among women.

Moreover, the “women and education” section of the Gender Equality Action Plan covering the period 2008-2013 has defined the objectives, targets and implementation strategies as well as the responsible institutions and organizations. A “Women and Education Monitoring Committee” was established to follow up the monitoring and assessment of the Action Plan.

As far as education is concerned, Turkey’s target is to achieve 100% in the schooling of boys and girls by 2010. Besides, Turkey has committed herself to achieve 100% in women literacy in the undersigned international conventions as well as in the international instruments that she adopted without any reservation. Within this framework, Turkey has embarked herself into a significant breakthrough to eliminate the negative indicators in the field of education.

The statistics on education illustrate that 10% of the children at school age, almost three-fourth of which are girls, are not enrolled to school.

In all Pre-schools, primary and secondary education schools, the same curriculum, rules and procedures of the Ministry of National Education are applied; however, there are rural and urban discrepancies as far as the quality of the education is concerned. Various activities, projects and campaigns are being carried out to eliminate discrepancies, to establish gender equality awareness, which is an important factor with regard to attendance of girls to schools, and to provide adequate physical conditions.

“Support to Basic Education Programme (SBEP)” is one of such projects which aims at developing the living conditions of the population in the most disadvantaged rural, urban and slum areas by increasing the education level. Reducing poverty, supporting the inclusion of children, youngsters and adults remaining out of the basic education into the scope, increasing particularly the average formal and non-formal education level of girls and women, are among the objectives of this Project.

Along with the boarding education services provided to poor children, scholarship services are also being provided to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades of primary education institutions as well as general and vocational technical secondary education institutions. Along with scholarship services, the implementation of “Conditional Cash Transfer” within the scope of Social Risk

Mitigation Project (SRMP) lays the ground for unconditional education assistance all over Turkey with the aim of establishing a social assistance network targeting the full access of children of families living in areas which are most in need of basic education services.

“Let’s go to school, girls! campaign” (Haydi Kızlar Okula) stands as the most important campaign targeting the 100 % enrollment of all children, particularly girls at primary education age but who remained out of the education system for any given reason, and all children in the age group of 6-14 who dropped-out or not attending school. The campaign has been initiated in 2003 in 10 provinces where the schooling rate is the lowest and was planned to be completed in 2005. However, as the campaign was relatively successful it has been extended and expanded all over Turkey in 2006. The campaign deploys Conditional Cash Transfer application with the aim of increasing transfer rates from primary education to secondary education and allocates increased aid to girls. Besides, the payments are handed over directly to their mothers so that the position of women is empowered both in the family and the society.

In addition, campaigns and activities such as “My Family”, “7 is Too Late Campaign”, “Mother-Child Education Program”, “Father Support Education Program”, “Pre-school Education Campaign”, “Parent-Infant Education Program” and “Mobile Nursery School” are being organized with the cooperation of public institutions and non-governmental organizations with the aim of increasing schooling rate in pre-school education as well as the awareness level of women in this regard.

Moreover, regional boarding primary schools are opened up to provide, the population at primary education age in rural villages and sub-villages where there is no school and thus the children of poor families, with access to primary education services. Regional Boarding Primary Schools is a practice initiated in the early years of the Republic which, bearing in mind the general culture structure in South Eastern and Eastern Anatolia Regions where a large number of girls do not attend school ensures the attendance of girls to schools.

Along with formal education systems, non-formal education systems also exist in our Country. The high number and variety of the training activities for women is noteworthy within the scope of non-formal education which aims at providing the individuals with information, skills and profession as well as individual-societal development. In addition to Ministry of National Education (MEB)’s non-formal education activities being carried out through vocational and technical schools/institutions, a great many of non-governmental organizations provide voluntary courses for women on literacy, skill and profession acquisition. In addition, the municipalities also organize similar courses. Southeast Anatolian Project (GAP) Administration’s Multi-Purpose Community Centers (ÇATOM) and Community Centers affiliated to the General Directorate of Social Services & Child Protection (SHÇEK) undertake similar activities. “Public Training Centers” of MEB stands as the widest organization in Turkey as far as non-formal education is concerned. These Training Centers provide “Vocational Technical Training, Social Cultural Courses and Literacy Courses”.

Aiming at increasing women literacy, the “Mother and Daughter in School” Campaign was launched by MEB in 2008 under the sponsorship of a public bank. This campaign targets to teach how to read and write to 3 million illiterate women in 4 years.



## Health

Health services in Turkey are met through the basic health services system, regulated in accordance with the current law adopted in 1961, as well as through the Law on “Family Planning” which took effect for the first time ever in 1965 and was amended later on for further comprehensiveness.

Health Services were expanded to the whole society with the Law on “Socialization of Health Services” adopted in 1961. Within the scope of this law, health services are being provided by giving a priority to important health problems and disadvantaged groups (women and children) through first level health facilities established in easy public access locations. There is no gender discrimination in rendering such services, and there is even a particular attention provided to women since reproductive health problems are particularly high.

As far as the health sector is concerned, there are many important targets defined in the 9th Development Plan (2007-2013) to translate above mentioned laws into implementation. As all these objectives aim at women, other objectives such as giving priority to protective health services particularly to mother-infant health, and eliminating barriers against poor and socially excluded people, primarily handicapped people, women, children and migrants in their access to health services directly aim at women.

Comprehensive basic health services (TSH) are being provided to all age groups and sexes through the widespread (rural and urban areas) first level health facilities namely 7417 dispensaries, 5486 health care centers and 234 Mother Infant Health and Family Planning Centers (AÇS/AP). Dispensaries and health care centers are located in rural and urban areas whereas Mother Infant Health and Family Planning Centers (AÇS/AP) are usually located in urban areas. The services are usually free of charge, however, sometimes affordable fees are also charged for services. Basic health service facilities are supported by some one thousand hospital services at second and third levels.

An important development is the requirement of a university degree for midwifery/nursery profession as a result of the law amendment made in 2007 within the scope of enhancing the quality of pre-graduation education of health human resources working particularly at the first level in rural and slum areas within the field of women’s health services.

Adopted in 1983, Law on “Family Planning” is another law and service type that exists in the field of health. It is more liberal and comprehensive when compared to a number of worldwide similar applications, and besides, it treats men and women on an utmost equal basis, and even allows the enjoyment of women’s reproductive right without any pre-condition in cases of unwanted pregnancies. In the years following the adoption of this law, efficient/modern contraceptive method utilization has exceeded the prevalence of the inefficient method for the first time ever, thus, the unmet necessity in family planning has gradually decreased. On the other hand, although the above mentioned law legalizes voluntary miscarriage up to week 10, the voluntary miscarriage pace has gradually declined since the 1990s with the application of direct service model in the Country.

“Reproductive Health Services”, significantly important from the standpoint of women’s health, are being provided by the first level health care facilities that are set Country wide within the scope of “Basic Health Services”. Although Reproductive Health Services target all

age groups and both sexes, the highest focus is on “Safe Motherhood” services (as it was the case in the International Development and Population Conference (ICPD), held in 1994 in Cairo). Indeed, Turkey has undersigned ICPD’s all suggestions without any reservation, and since then, started developing programs which handle the Countries traditional “Mother Infant Health” approach on a more comprehensive basis, tackle men and women within the scope of life cycle approach, and arrange types and quantities of services based on needs. “Women’s Health and Family Planning- National Strategic Action Plan” has been prepared in 1996 in parallel with ICPD. However, it has been updated in accordance with the developments and necessities in 2005 and was referred to as “Sexual and Reproductive Health National Strategic Action Plan for Health Sector. The Plan puts forward Turkey’s targets, priorities, and necessary actions for the period covering 2005-2015. This Strategic Plan defines priority areas of Turkey as reduction of maternal mortality, prevention of unwanted pregnancies, improvement of youth health, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, and reduction of regional disparities in health. Concrete targets and actions have also been defined in the Plan for the above mentioned priority areas.

By the means of “Turkey Population and Health Researches (TNSA)”, being carried out once in five years, the most recent one was conducted in 2003, on the basis of the sampling representing the Country since 1963; evidence based assessment of the situation with regard to pregnancy, birth, postnatal services for women, family planning services, baby and infant health services is maintained. It is also possible to observe the progress made or existing shortcomings.

Besides, various programs are conducted concerning the provision of service to women in the field of health. Pre-marital Counseling Program, Safe Motherhood Program, Maternal and Infant Nutrition Program, Baby and Infant Monitoring Program, Adolescent Health and Youth Program, Sexual Health Program, Information- Education- Communication Project (BEI), Public Training Development Project, International Reproductive Health Training Center Project, Reproductive Health Program, Republic of Turkey- United Nations Population Fund Third Country Programme, Maternal and Infant Mortality Prevention Project are some of such programs.

Reproductive health training programs have been implemented in cooperation with Turkish Armed Forces and Turkish National Police. Many of them have been institutionalized and made into programs.

## **Violence**

Violence against women is a problem faced by women all over the world. As violence against women is a violation of women’s human rights, it also affects public health. 1980s mark the time when domestic violence against women has entered Turkey’s agenda as a State policy. Since then, there have been very intensive activities that are being carried out with the participation of all relevant parties within the scope of combating domestic violence.

Bringing along a very important assurance system against violence, in 1998 the entering into force of the Law No 4320 on the Protection of the Family has been the very first step taken forward to ensure a healthy footing of the ongoing activities and to overcome the shortcomings in practice by ensuring more efficient steps in combating violence. Along with this law which defined the concept of domestic violence for the first time on legal grounds, the police and justice mechanism is activated with the notification of third persons, regardless

of the complaint of the victim, in cases where domestic violence takes place. Besides, following the entering into force of the law, circulars for judges and prosecutors have been drafted for ensuring its applicability. In addition, various training programs were also conducted. Moreover, the above mentioned law has been amended in 2007 based on the needs that emerged during its implementation. Within this framework, the definition of violence has been interpreted on a wider ground and family members “who are married but living separately, or for whom the court has ruled a separation or the family members who have the right to live separately” are also taken under protection. Besides, by incorporating the statement which reads as “the faulty partner or other family member” an injunction is enabled not only for the partner but for all family members living under the same roof. In addition, the law stipulates that, in case the judge deems it necessary, a measure for rehabilitation purposes could be ruled in which the person applying violence should address “a health care institution for examination or treatment”. It has also been ruled that the applications to benefit from this law and the rulings of the courts should be exempt from fees.

The Regulation on “the Implementation of the Law on the Protection of the Family” has been drafted following the entry into effect of the above mentioned amendments. The Regulation on “the Implementation of the Law on the Protection of the Family” which took effect on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 provides details of the measures stipulated in Law No 4320, clarifies the definitions of terms such as domestic violence, denouncement, and complaint. The fulfillment of alimony and measure orders as well as procedural operations has been also tackled in a guiding manner both for law enforcement officers and citizens.

One of the most fundamental legal arrangements within the field of combating violence is the New Turkish Penal Code which has been explained under the legal arrangements heading. Offences, which used to be assessed as offences against society and in which women are victimized, have been incorporated into the scope of individual offences, and offences such as marital rape and sexual harassment at work places have been embodied for the first time ever. In addition, “custom killings” are categorized under the qualifications of voluntary manslaughter, and punishing the perpetrators with aggravated life time imprisonment, the heaviest penalty in the law, has been made possible.

Another important progress in this field is the amendment made in 2005 to the Law on Municipalities which authorizes the municipalities to provide services to women victims of violence. Within this framework, Metropolitan Municipalities as well as the municipalities of 50.000 population and over have been assigned with the duty of opening up shelters for women and children.

All necessary legal measures are adopted as far as combating violence against women is concerned; however, it is by all means necessary to conduct intensive activities to translate these measures into practice.

Within this framework, the most significant development experienced was the establishment of the Parliamentary Research Commission in 2005 under the remit of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM). The Parliamentary Research Commission was established for “Searching the Reasons for Honor and Custom Killings and Violence against Women and Children, and Identifying the Necessary Measures that have to be taken. A report was drafted following the completion of the Commission’s work. The report provided its suggestions on the measures that need to be taken and identified the responsible agencies with regard to honor/custom killings and violence against women.

Following the Commission's report, a Prime Ministry Circular, published in 2006, has designated the General Directorate on the Status of Women (KSGM) as the coordinator institution with regard to honor/custom killings and violence against women.

Within this framework, the General Directorate on the Status of Women (KSGM) has accelerated its activities on violence issues particularly with the entry into force of the Organizational Law in 2004 coupled with the obligations assigned by the Prime Ministry Circular No 2006/17. "The Committee on Monitoring Violence Against Women" was established with the participation of relevant institutions responsible for the implementation of solution proposals with regard to honor/custom killings and violence against women.

Within the scope of the Prime Ministry Circular, all parties i.e. public institutions and organizations, universities, trade unions, professional organizations, non-governmental organizations, private sector, etc. would collate their activities on the issue and send them on a quarterly basis to the General Directorate on the Status of Women (KSGM). KSGM submits this information in the form of a report to the Prime Ministry. These periodical reports illustrate that all parties carry out their activities in a holistic manner and with decisiveness to implement the measures set forth in the circular and prevent violence against women. It has also been observed that the awareness and sensitivity on this issue is increasing.

An additional significant step ahead in the field of combating violence toward women is the preparation of "Combating Domestic Violence Against Women National Action Plan (2007-2010)". In accordance with the measures stipulated in the Prime Ministry Circular, this Plan, drafted under the coordination of KSGM with the participation of all relevant parties, targets 6 objectives; legal arrangements, achievement of awareness-raising and mental transformation, empowerment of women, provision of protective services, provision of curative and rehabilitation services, and cooperation amongst institutions and organizations. Periodical meetings are being held with the participation of responsible institutions and organizations under the coordination role of KSGM in order to ensure the monitoring of the Action Plan.

"A National Research on Domestic Violence against Women" was initiated and completed in order to overcome the lack of data noticed during the activities concerning domestic violence against women, to ensure monitoring of domestic violence, to identify the dimension and types of violence. The results of this research have been shared with the public opinion in February 2009.

In our Country, a great importance is also attached to awareness and sensitivity, an important instrument in combating violence against women.

Within this scope, the national campaign on "Stop Violence Against Women" continues. This campaign has been launched jointly by KSGM and United Nations Population Fund within the framework of "November 25, Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women". The visual materials of the campaign are broadcast on TV channels.

The General Directorate on the Status of Women is organizing in-service trainings in accordance with the protocols signed with various public institutions and organizations, yet, within the scope of awareness and sensitivity creation activities. In accordance with the protocol signed with the Ministry of Interior, the law enforcement officers working in 921 police centers and 276 police stations have been provided with in-service trainings since

2006. The number of the trained law enforcement officers has exceeded 40 thousand so far. In addition, In accordance with the protocol signed with the Ministry of Health, doctors, nurses, midwives, and other health care personnel working in the health sector started receiving in-service trainings in 2008. 75 thousand health care personnel is planned to be trained by the end of 2009. The Presidency of Religious Affairs will be another public institution where in-service trainings will be provided. The training activities aiming at creating awareness and sensitivity among religious officials will start soon.

In addition, within the scope of the cooperation with Turkish General Staff, military units have been provided with the training material prepared by KSGM on gender equality, and on the prevention of violence against women and honor/custom killings to raise the awareness level of men who constitute an important part of combating violence against women. This leads to the training of 450.000 private soldiers and non-commissioned officers on an annual basis.

One of the important activities carried out with regard to combating violence against women in our Country has been the “Combating Domestic Violence against Women Project”. Various meetings, seminars, trainings and workshops have been organized for all relevant parties during the project which was implemented in 2006-2008 with the financial support of the European Commission and technical assistance of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Within the framework of the project, an utmost importance has been attached to carry out activities aiming at the media, an important stakeholder in combating violence against women. The workshop on “Gender and Media” aiming at furnishing the future media professionals with gender equality and awareness on domestic violence has been conducted with a large participation of students. Moreover, workshops aiming at developing local media agencies’ sensitivity on their roles and responsibilities vis a vis the violence against women have been carried out in various regions and provinces with the participation of local journalists.

Laying the ground on the importance of creating awareness and sensitivity among men so that their participation in combating violence against women is enabled, KSGM held conferences on “the Participation of Men in Combating Violence against Women”. One of the launchers of a worldwide renowned campaign was invited as a speaker to these conferences where violence victims from 81 provinces, representatives of public agencies providing services to women under risk, relevant Ministries, international organizations, NGOs, and university representatives were invited to participate. Following the conferences, workshops were organized in the form of small groups.

As for the shelters/women guest houses, an indispensable instrument of combating violence against women, the shelters are affiliated to public agencies in our Country and they provide their services within the remit of the Agency for Social Services and Child Protection (SHÇEK). Currently there are 25 shelters affiliated to SHÇEK. In addition, non-governmental organizations, district governorship, governorships and local administrations also have shelters. The total number of these shelters is 24 of which 2 are allocated to human trafficking victims. Shelters work 7/24 and all services are free of charge.

The shelters carry an important role in the provision of protective and preventive services to violence victims. There is an ongoing intensive effort devoted to have a balanced shelter

distribution all over the Country, and to increase both the numbers and qualities of these shelters. Ministry of Interior's work aiming at the establishment of 8 shelters in cooperation with the European Union and United Nations Population Fund could be cited as an important example of such ongoing activities.

The services that are being provided within the scope of combating violence against women are not limited to what has been mentioned so far. For instance, "the Women Rights Commission" working under the Bars' women counseling centers is carrying out activities to ensure gender equality in fundamental laws, mainly the Civil Code. In addition, they provide women lacking information on women rights, application locations and procedures with counseling services which are free of charge. Besides, Union of Turkish Bar Association Women's Rights Commission (TÜBAKKOM), comprised of the bars that embody women's right commission, is carrying out activities to come up with solutions for the problems deriving from all forms of discrimination against women, including domestic violence as well. Non-governmental organizations carry out also various activities for women victims of violence. These organizations provide women with legal and psychological support in counseling centers and accommodation in shelters, if necessary.

In addition, psychological and legal counseling support, and financial assistance is provided to women victims of violence in SHÇEK's 42 "Family Counseling Centers" and 77 "Community Centers". Women who apply to be accommodated in women guest houses are guided to the relevant units.

On the other hand, the 30 Multi-purpose Community Centers (ÇATOM), affiliated to Prime Ministry Southeastern Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration (GAP), provide women with regional services such as training, guidance, profession acquisition, etc.

One last point that should be elaborated within the scope of protective and preventive services is the existence of a free of charge hot line working 24/7. This line was established to serve women and children who are either under the risk of being exposed to violence or in need of support.

### **Employment / Poverty**

When the stance of women in Turkey is taken into consideration from the point of view of right to work, yet, another fundamental human right, it is noticed that low employment level of women and high unemployment remain as an important problem. The employment rate of women in 2006 was 22.3% whereas the employment rate of men was 64.5%. Women who are part of the labor force in rural areas remain out of the labor force following the migration flow from rural areas to urban areas. Women's participation rate to the labor force is declining every year. Despite the egalitarian structure of the laws, failure in the establishment of the required mechanisms that would enable both the qualitative development of women and their access to labor force stand as one of the important reasons for such a decline. So far, important laws have been enacted, institutional and project activities have been conducted to increase women's participation in labor force and to fight against women poverty which remain as fundamental problem areas in Turkey.

The New Labor Code, entered into force in 2003, stipulates that any form of discrimination in respect to human rights, including sex, is not permissible in employer employee relation. Some new provisions such as prohibiting a direct or indirect difference in action due to sex or

pregnancy in the preparation, execution and termination of employment contract; less payment for equal work due to sex could not be made; gender, civil status, family obligations, pregnancy and birth will not be valid causes for the termination of an employment contract have been incorporated into the law for the first time ever along with the provisions both in respect to sexual harassment at work place and part-time work. Moreover, the duration of the paid maternity leave for women workers was increased.

Turkey's efforts to get involved in EU employment strategies have also a driving role in increasing women employment. As one may know, one of the 4 pillars of EU Employment Strategy is gender equality. Within this framework, "Employment Situation Report" in which women's position in the labor market was scrutinized was prepared. A Joint Commission Report was also drafted and submitted to the Commission. A National Action Plan will be prepared during the continuation of the process. This Action Plan will dwell on the required measures for the improvement of women's position in labor.

The amendment made in the Income Tax Law in 2007 brought income tax exemption to those who sell certain products in non-store businesses. The mentioned Law is of great importance to pave the way for flexible employment model that is being implemented in EU member States.

In 2008 an arrangement was made to increase women employment. In accordance with this arrangement, social security premiums (SSK) of women above 18 years old will be borne by the State for 5 years.

The Prime Ministry Circular, entered into force in 2004, on "Acting in line with the Principle of Equality in Personnel Acquisition" orders not to make any gender discrimination, besides the requirements of the service, in the acquisition of personnel to public institutions and organizations.

In 2006, the General Directorate of Turkish Employment Organization published a directive prohibiting public sector enterprise employers to make any discrimination based on gender in the employment relation, unless biological reasons or nature of the work deems it compulsory. This Directive has been sent to 81 Provincial Directorates and its implementation is being monitored.

"Active Labor Force Programs Project" aiming at enhancing women employment is being implemented jointly with EU Commission.

Affirmative action has been applied in the "Support Program (Lifeline Loan)" launched by the Small and Medium Sized Industry Development Organization (KOSGEB) in 2008, thus, women entrepreneurs are provided with the opportunity to benefit more than men from the loan provided to manufacturers, artisans and craftsmen with 0% interest rate.

Deploying the resources of Special Provincial Administration, micro credit applications have been launched to combat women's poverty. The micro credit applications were successfully implemented in Van and Mersin provinces, thus, there is an ongoing work to expand micro credit applications to other provinces.

In 2007, Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), Women Entrepreneurs Committee has accomplished its organization in 73 provinces through

“Provincial Women Entrepreneurs Committees” which will have important functions in promoting and supporting women entrepreneurship as well as overcoming obstacles in respect to women entrepreneurship. There is an ongoing work to expand these committees to all 81 provinces.

Two of the sections of the Gender Equality National Action Plan, prepared by KSGM, are “women and economy” and “women and poverty”. In this respect, objectives, targets, implementation strategies, and responsible institutions and organizations were identified under both sections in line with the 9<sup>th</sup> Development Plan. “Monitoring Committees” were also established for both sections with the coordination role of KSGM and participation of the identified responsible institutions. The agenda of the last two meetings of the “Advisory Board on the Status of Women”, established as stipulated in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> articles of KSGM’s Organizational Law, composed of the representatives of public institutions and organizations, universities and non-governmental organizations, were held on “employment and entrepreneurship”. There has been an agreement on the measures aiming at increasing women employment. In addition, responsible institutions and cooperation institutions were identified for the materialization of the suggestions with regard to the enhancement of women employment.

### **Authority and Decision- Making**

In Turkey, neither in the Constitution nor in the laws exist any provision that discriminates on the basis of gender in the field of political rights. Each and every Turkish citizen has the right to elect, the right to stand for election as well as the right to organization, freedom of opinion and freedom to express convictions. The Law on Political Parties refers to the same rights and prohibits carrying out party activities on the basis of discrimination, including gender discrimination.

In addition, it is possible to observe in the political arena in concrete terms that the equality granted in legal grounds will not translate into equality in practice. Although there is no barrier for political participation, causes such as the disadvantages of women in owning resources, the women stereotypes, etc. set the most significant barriers for women as individuals. It is a fact that still existing traditional life styles and value judgments, despite the partial loss of their impact and validity in nowadays, reduce the willingness of women to participate into political life.

In our Country, prior to many other Countries in the world, our women obtained the right to elect and the right to stand for election in 1930’s local elections, and in 1934’s general elections, however, one cannot claim that they currently have a high political participation level. After the general elections held on July 22, 2007, 50 out of the total 550 seats were obtained by women. The percentage of this distribution is 9.1% which stands as the highest percentage of the Republic era. There is one woman minister in the Council of Ministers.

Local administrations have a key role in advancing democracy and in the participation of women into decision-making mechanisms. Women could influence decisions made at local level to ensure a higher level sensitivity on gender issues. However, in Turkey, there is a limited representation of women in local administrations which could be seen as the first step for the participation of women into political life. After the local elections of March 2004, only 0,6% of mayors are women, among the members of the municipal councils only 2,3 % are women, and only 1,81% of members of the provincial councils are women.



It is necessary to state that in Turkey women are also underrepresented in public institutions' and organizations' high level administrative positions, committees, commissions and boards. However, the representation of women in specialty occupations is relatively high. Today, in our universities 39% of the lecturers are women whilst the percentage of women among the total number of professors has reached 27%. 36% of architects, 29% of doctors and 33% of lawyers are women.

The representation percentage of women in bureaucracy's high level decision-making positions is low. However, it is also a fact that women assigned to such positions are relatively successful. For instance, in diplomatic missions, dominated by men all over the world, 15 of the ambassadors out of 166 serving the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs are women. 7 of them are assigned in missions abroad. In Turkey, there are currently 21 women civilian administration authorities. We do not have any woman governor in Turkey whereas 5 out of 408 Deputy Governor are women, and 16 out of 857 District Governors are women. 6 out of the 165 District Governor candidates are women.

There has been a significant sensitivity in recent years both in women's demand and in political parties' allocations for women candidates following the activities aiming at the participation of women in political life carried out particularly by the Non-governmental Organizations. This development seems promising for future.

## **Media**

It doesn't make sense to handle media under a separate heading as far as women's human rights are concerned, however, media, a key role in settling women's human rights, is a very sound instrument in the development of thoughts, behaviors and value judgments as well as in the determination of the society's cultural and social structure. As a result of the developments taking place in science, communication and technology, media has the possibility to reach and affect large masses in a very short period of time. Communication tools have an impact in transposing society's behavior patterns, value and thought forms onto individuals and are efficient in the internalization of what is learnt. Therefore, media, being one of the most important and efficient actors in ensuring gender equality, has been scrutinized under a separate heading, though it is not tackled within the framework of women's human rights.

Due to the critical role mentioned above, media has been included among the "cooperation institutions/organizations" as mentioned in the Prime Ministry Circular No 2006/17, the indicator of the prevention of violence against women as a State policy, "Measures need to be taken for the Prevention of Violence against Children and Women and Honor/Custom Killings". Thus, media organizations are directly designated as "responsible organizations" in implementing the proposals.

In addition, "women and media" constitutes one of the major sections of Gender Equality National Action Plan, covering 2008-2013. Objectives, targets and implementation strategies were defined for this section. A Committee on "Media Monitoring and Evaluation" was established with the participation of responsible institutions and organizations.

The 1<sup>st</sup> clause of the 33<sup>rd</sup> article of Law No. 3984 on the "Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and their Broadcasts" stipulates "in cases where the broadcasting permit is violated, programs, made available by the Supreme Council of Radio and

Television, on education, culture, traffic, women and children's right, physical and moral development of adolescents, struggle against drugs and harmful habits, good use of Turkish language and environment training shall be broadcast". This provision enables broadcasting documentaries and training programs for women.

Besides, it is also possible to notify the Supreme Council of Radio and Television whenever the viewers believe that gender discrimination is made.

Considering the important function of media in the field of gender equality, a program aiming at mainstreaming gender perspective into the programs of local media has been conducted in 12 provinces together with the Federation of Journalists of Turkey, an important media organization of the printed media. In addition, the Federation of Journalists of Turkey is organizing competitions for young journalists in the fields of women and gender equality.

In 2008, KSGM organized "Media Monitoring Workshops" for Faculty of Communication students. Organization of such workshops will continue in 2009 as well.

Given the importance of the subject, a training program was organized on gender sensitivity and sexism in media for the expert personnel of the Radio and Television Supreme Council.

Media Literacy Project was developed with the cooperation of the Supreme Council of Radio and Television and the Ministry of National Education. The Project aims at protecting children and youngsters from the negative impacts of television in accordance with the Prime Ministry Circular No 2006/17. Within the scope of the Media Literacy Project, media literacy course is given in all primary education schools since the commencement of the 2007-2008 education year.

"Code of Ethics in Broadcasting" was signed on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 between the Radio and Television Supreme Council and Association of Television Broadcasters. The undersigned code of ethics is binding for the under signatory parties and comprises principles on; respecting human dignity, fundamental rights and freedoms, respecting private life and privacy, excluding broadcasts including discrimination based on race, color, religion, language and gender, excluding denigration and prejudices, paying attention on not to promote and legitimate violence, demonstrating sensitivity on women problem, and avoiding objectifying women.

Besides public institutions and organizations, non-governmental organizations also devote efforts to establish alternative streams against gender inequalities existing in the mainstream media.

## **Environment**

The first thing that draws attention whenever environment policies are mentioned in Turkey is the attribution of a special reference to environment in the Constitution. The 56<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution reads as "Everyone has the right to live in a healthy, balanced environment. It is the duty of the state and citizens to improve the natural environment and to prevent environmental pollution". Moreover, the right to participate in the formation of environment policies is a basis according to the current Law on Environment. Such arrangements are important, first of all, in terms of providing a legal ground for handling the environment issue in a contemporary manner, secondly, in terms of assuming the responsibility both by the State

and the citizens within a non-discriminative approach. Therefore, women have the right to demand services that would enable sustaining their lives in a healthy environment as well as the right to demand mechanisms that would pave the way for their participation in environment related arrangements.

Incorporating a section on “environment and women” in the Gender Equality National Action Plan (2008-2013) has been the most important step in the field of environment as far as gender equality is concerned. Thus, fragmented steps will hopefully transform into a holistic approach through the identification of objectives, targets and implementation strategies coupled with the establishment of “environment and women monitoring and assessment committee”.

### **Part Three:**

Structuring gender equality within the remit of the State came to the fore when global developments, our international obligations and developments at home were taken into consideration.

Within this framework, the first development was the establishment of “Advisory Board on Women Policies” in 1987, within the remit of the General Directorate of Social Planning, State Planning Organization. This development was in line with attaining the goal of reaching all sectors as foreseen in the Fifth Five Year Development Plan.

Consequently, in 1990, today’s General Directorate on the Status of Women was established with the name “Status and Problems of Women Department”, affiliated to the Prime Minister and with the aim of helping women gain their deserved right in social, economic, cultural and political fields. Since then, the organization structure of the General Directorate on the Status of Women has been constantly restructured. The last restructuring took place in 2004 with the Law No 5251 on “the Organization Structure and Duties of the General Directorate on the Status of Women”. Based on the provisions of the Law No 5251, KSGM was established by the State Ministry in charge of Family and Women Affairs as a central unit affiliated to Prime Ministry. KSGM was restructured as a national mechanism to “carry out activities aiming at the protection and development of women’s human rights, straighten women in social, economic, cultural and political life, and ensure women enjoy equal rights, opportunities and possibilities”. Thus, through this legal status, the General Directorate was provided with the opportunity to perform all its duties more efficiently.

In addition, “Advisory Board on Women Status” was established within the remit of the General Directorate, in accordance with the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> articles of the Law no 5251, with the participation of the representatives of public institutions and organizations, non-governmental organizations and universities, to assist the General Directorate in developing efficient policies and performing a more sound coordination role. The Advisory Board on Women Status has 36 members and is chaired by the State Minister in charge of Family and Women Affairs. The Advisory Board meets at least once per year to review, assess, set an opinion and come up with suggestions on the problems concerning the status of women. KSGM follows up the resolutions made within the scope of the meeting agenda.

Governments are held responsible for gender mainstreaming as highlighted in undersigned international conventions and resolutions. Given its position as a national mechanism and as a coordination institution, the General Directorate on the Status of Women has a key role in the

gender mainstreaming process. Besides, as KSGM is the responsible organization for the development of a cohesive gender equality policy, KSGM is a driving power for gender mainstreaming in other public institutions and organizations.

As the implementation of the policies developed for women are conducted by different Ministries, the General Directorate carries out its relevant activities in cooperation with relevant public institutions and organizations. Its role that lies herein is to take actions before institutions and organizations to ensure the implementation of the policies developed for gender equality, and to monitor implementation results and progress. An additional important point that should be emphasized is that the Ministries provide country wide services through their local organizations, and their local organizations work under the governor's office in provinces and under district governor's office in districts. Therefore, services concerning the developed policies are being implemented at the local level by governorships and district governorships. This fact places governorships and district governorships among the most important stakeholders of KSGM.

In order to render more efficient and higher quality services in cooperation, some ministries and institutions have their own units which provide direct services or carry out activities for women. These units are;

- State Planning Organization – Directorate General for Social Sectors and Coordination,
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs – Department Head of Women Farmers,
- Ministry of National Education - General Directorate of Technical Education for Girls,
- Ministry of Health- General Directorate of Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning,
- Turkish Statistical Institution – Gender Statistics Team under the Population and Demography Group working within the remit of Department Head of Social Statistics
- Prime Ministry Southeastern Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration (GAP) – Multi-Purpose Community Centers providing services to women living in South Eastern Anatolia Region ,
- General Directorate of Agency for Social Services and Child Protection – Department Head of Family, Women, and Public Services as well as the affiliated Community Centers, Family Counseling Centers and Women Guesthouses,
- General Directorate on Family and Social Researches, and
- General Directorate on Social Assistance and Solidarity.

“Local Agenda 21”, defined as the major mechanism to actualize sustainable development at local level, carries out some programs ensuring more efficient participation of women and youngsters in decision-making, planning and implementation processes. In our Country, we currently have some 40 women assemblies established within the city councils that are structured within the scope of Local Agenda 21 in 60 cities. Besides, local administrations provide services such as women shelters, family life centers, women's club, vocational and art courses and family counseling centers.

Another important issue that should be emphasized under this section is the institutional mechanisms that exist in academic level. As of today, we have Women Problems Research and Implementation Centers in 15 universities. These centers, composed of academicians with a background in different disciplines, dwell on issues such as gender, social and economic status of women, health, education, and violence. In addition, 4 universities have Departments

of Women Studies. Such structures are valued as important structures particularly in terms of creating human resources in the field of gender equality and in terms of developing gender sensitivity all over the society.

A relatively new and important development which should be touched upon under institutional mechanisms section is the Government Proposal on “the establishment of a Commission on the Equality of Opportunities” which has been submitted to Turkish Grand National Assembly. This proposal has been approved in relevant commissions and in the General Assembly.

#### **Part Four:**

As mentioned in above relevant sections in details, there is no legal impediment standing against gender equality in Turkey. The reform-like arrangements made particularly in recent years are setting the legal ground for this field.

However, some problems are encountered in practical implementation of the legal rights which are ahead of the society. There are still significant problems particularly in the enrollment of girls, participation of women in employment and decision-making processes. On the other hand, as is the case all over the world, violence against women constitutes one of the most important problematic areas.

There is an ongoing intensive work to translate into practice the necessary legal arrangements made in problematic areas. Within this framework, there is an effort devoted to reflect such legal arrangements into practice through various regulations, circulars and directives. The Regulation on the Implementation of the Law on the Protection of the Family as well as Prime Ministry circular No 2006/17 on “Acting in line with the Principle of Equality in Personnel Acquisition” could be cited as examples of such developments.

In addition, importance is attached to some necessary special measures as well as encouraging measures, yet, to reflect laws into practical implementation. The “Conditional Cash Transfer” application, as mentioned in details in the second section, the provision on the payment of social security premiums (SSK) of women above 18 years old to be borne by the State for 5 years, mentioned under poverty and economy section, are some of the relevant striking examples.

The sexist point of view in the societal structure creates barriers against women’s participation in social life and their enjoyment of the existing legal rights. Therefore, campaigns, trainings, in-service trainings, meetings and other forms of awareness raising activities are being organized, printed and visual media are deployed to create and awareness on the legal rights, to ensure a mental transformation and to enhance the sensitivity of both relevant parties and the whole public opinion .

Turkey has identified education, health, violence and participation in employment as priority areas in respect to ensuring gender equality and women empowerment. Besides other ongoing activities, the most important development in this regard has been the preparation and entering into effect of the “Gender Equality National Plan (2008-2013)” and “National Action Plan in Combating Domestic Violence against Women”. The mentioned National Plans have been prepared on the basis of the critical fields defined in the Beijing Platform for Action. Problems, priority areas and implementation strategies concerning this issue have been

identified. For each implementation strategy, the National Action Plans include room for the responsible public institutions and organizations. Separate “monitoring and evaluation committees” have been established for each field, yet, with the participation of the responsible public institutions and organizations to ensure the monitoring and evaluations of the National Action Plans. Significant developments are targeted to be achieved by 2013.

It is evident that ensuring the participation of all parties is necessary to achieve the goals of the works targeting gender equality. Given this fact, special importance is attached to the participation of public institutions’ and organizations’ central and local organizations, local administrations, non-governmental organizations, universities, trade unions, professional organizations and Turkey representation offices of international organizations in all activities that have been carried out so far in this field in our Country. Recently, the activities are no longer focused only on women; “participation of men” is made an important issue of focus.