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### DRAFT CONCLUSIONS (continued)

#### WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

18 January 2000

##### Introduction:

The ECE Member States reaffirm their previous commitments concerning equal participation of women and men in decision making, expressed in the past at various levels: the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the International Parliamentary Union Plan of Action (1994); the ECE Regional Platform for Action (Vienna 1994) chapters III E and IV E; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) - critical area of concern G; reinforced by *inter alia* the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions on Women in Power and Decision Making (1997).

Members of the Council of Europe and the European Union respectively reaffirm their previous commitments to: the Council of Europe Declaration on Equality Between Women and Men as a Fundamental Criterion of Democracy (Istanbul, 1997); the EU Council Recommendation (96/6/94) on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process; and the Paris Declaration of the Conference of the Member States of the European Union (1999).

##### Positive changes:

Increase in number of women parliamentarians in those countries where awareness raising on equal participation, legislative changes and positive action have taken place; more women entering into local politics in countries in transition as a result of democratisation, decentralisation and development of civil society; hence, new opportunities for these women to gain leadership skills, experience, knowledge and networking capacity and move into national politics; in most western democracies – increased women's

participation in elected, governmental and other appointed bodies following implementation of tools such as targets, quotas, voluntary agreements and other positive action; such development due to the increasing awareness of gender issues, the existence of institutional mechanisms for gender equality, increased assertiveness and capabilities of women and, in some cases, greater political will; increased recognition and documentation of new knowledge and changes in politics as a result of women's participation.

#### Obstacles and barriers:

Persistent prejudice, traditional and patriarchal approach to leadership especially in some political parties (party culture of masculinity) and countries; persistence of racism and ideologies of intolerance leading to limited access to decision-making bodies for some women because of their cultural and ethnic background; insufficient political will and mobilisation in support of positive action and target-setting to increase women's share in decision making; some electoral systems remaining unfavourable to women candidates; under-representation of women in party leadership and as a result their lower share in decision making in elected and appointed bodies; women's traditional role as caregivers, insufficient day-care and family care facilities, and lack of job-sharing, preventing women from increased participation in politics and other decision-making careers; persistent stereotyping including trivialization of women decision-makers and women's achievements by the media; slow movement of women into decision-making positions due to non transparent recruitment practices and current male-dominated incumbency effect; and additional barriers to women belonging to ethnic and minority groups.

In view of the above situation, the following key areas for action can be identified:

#### **A. Creating an enabling environment for an increased participation of women in power and decision-making**

##### Strategic direction 1: Promoting public awareness on the positive role and contribution of women in decision-making positions

*ECE governments, parliaments, political parties, media and NGOs*

- to organise public information campaigns and debates in order to raise awareness in public opinion and the constituencies of political, economic, social and cultural organizations on the principle of equal participation of women and men in decision making;
- to introduce a gender perspective in all debates of their executive bodies on political, economic, defence/peace, social, cultural issues and encourage the participation of women experts;

*ECE governments, political parties, educational institutions, media and NGOs*

- to organise campaigns and programmes aiming at removing stereotypes and prejudices about women's participation in power and decision-making, and showing the benefits of equal participation of women.

##### Strategic direction 2: Establishing a sound system of monitoring and evaluation

*ECE governments*

- to set up and apply indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of the progress made through government policies in terms of equal participation of women and men in political parties and elected bodies;

- to compile research findings and information on causes of problems and successes in promoting women to higher positions and to disseminate them as widely as possible;
- to regularly submit reports to their parliaments on the trends, obstacles and positive experience of women's involvement in decision-making.

*International parliamentary bodies*

- to support ECE national parliaments in ensuring an effective monitoring system for women's participation in elected bodies.

**B. Fostering women's participation in political parties and elected bodies**

Strategic direction 1: Furthering legislative changes and promoting positive action

*ECE governments, parliaments and political parties*

- to consider possible legislative changes (e.g. in the constitution or in the electoral system) which would facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in elected bodies;
- to recognize the need to include women with different backgrounds in politics at all levels in order to build representative democracy;

*ECE governments and political parties*

- to set time-bound targets with an ultimate view to reaching equal participation of women and men in elected assemblies and, as a first step, to reaching at least one third of each sex;
- to assess different options for the advancement of women, for example, voluntary agreements and positive action such as quotas and targets, and to decide on the most-appropriate measures which will ensure equal participation of women and men in elected assemblies;

*ECE governments*

- to introduce, where possible, financial or other incentives (e.g. supplementary public funding) for political parties which reach an established target of women in eligible position.

Strategic direction 2: Enlarging the pool of eligible women

*Political parties and NGOs*

- to ensure women's access to targeted training, mentoring programs and information about politics;
- to provide opportunities for women, including women from ethnic minorities to gain political experience by encouraging their participation and creating positive conditions for their entry into local and regional politics as a first step towards national politics.

**C. Fostering women's participation in high-level positions in government and appointed bodies**

Strategic direction 1: Setting targets and promoting positive action to reach these targets

*ECE governments*

- to set up time-bound targets for women's increased representation in government and appointed bodies aiming for their full and equal participation in these bodies;
- to encourage an increase by at least 10 percent, at each renewal, the number of women on public committees, commissions and public advisory bodies until balance is achieved;
- to present more women candidates at senior positions to international organisations.

Strategic direction 2: Ensuring equal opportunity in appointing processes

*ECE governments*

- to ensure transparency in the appointment process for high-level governmental and other bodies and to enlarge the pool of potential women candidates through an active search into existing networks of professional women decision-makers in relevant areas;
- to put an end to the practice of appointing well-established decision-makers to a multiplicity of public offices, thus making a greater number of positions accessible to new actors, and to reach out to prospective women candidates to fill these positions.

**D. Promoting women's access to high-level decision-making positions in economic and social spheres (private sector, social partners and NGOs)**

Strategic direction 1: Involving women in decision-making processes

*Employers, trade unions and NGOs*

- to take all necessary measures to involve women and women's organisations in policy and decision making processes in economic and social areas e.g. through consultations and enlarged participation of women in unions and other associations;

*Employers and trade unions*

- to promote balanced participation of women and men in positions of responsibility within employers and workers organizations, as well as in their delegations in the context of collective bargaining;

*ECE governments*

- to encourage government-subsidised associations providing public services or implementing public policies to ensure equal participation of women and men in their decision-making bodies and gender equality in their action strategies.

Strategic direction 2: Ensuring equal opportunity in recruitment and career development

*Employers and trade unions*

- to take positive action, for example, developing equality plans for career development and gender balance in decision-making positions;
- to review the criteria for recruitment and appointment to high-level decision making positions in the private sector and trade unions with a view to ensuring equal opportunity between women and men;
- to promote new ways of managing human resources and organizing work which facilitate access by women to positions of responsibility;
- to promote career advancement of women through, among others, measures aimed at reconciling family and work , including encouraging men to engage in family work;

*Employers, trade unions and NGOs*

- to facilitate women's career development in particular that of young women and women re-entering the labour force through mentoring, coaching, training and retraining;

*ECE governments*

- to make the public sector exemplary in terms of women's career development and a balanced distribution of decision making positions, namely through the definition of targets and the implementation of positive action.

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

18 January 2000

### **Introduction**

The ECE Member States reaffirm their previous commitments concerning violence against women expressed in the past at various levels: the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the UN Declaration on the elimination of violence against women (1993); the ECE Regional Platform for Action (Vienna, 1994) chapters III.A and IV.A; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) - critical area of concern D; reinforced by *inter alia* the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions on violence against women (1998).

Members of the Council of Europe and the European Union reaffirm respectively their previous commitments to: the Council of Europe Ministerial Declarations and Resolutions on Strategies for the elimination of violence against women in society: the media and other means (Rome, 1993); and the Tampere EU Council conclusions (1999) which refer to the issue of trafficking of human beings and especially women.

### Positive developments

- Increased awareness that violence against women and girls is no longer a private matter but a human rights issue; increased commitment to prevent and combat violence against women and girls; domestic violence being recognized as a criminal act in a number of countries, with an increased focus on holding the perpetrator accountable; standards and recommendations on how to tackle the problem adopted by intergovernmental bodies in the region; development of national action plans to address violence against women and girls in some ECE countries; strengthened protection of victims and witnesses; greater awareness nationally and internationally of the problem of trafficking in women and girls; and increased involvement of NGOs in strategies to address violence against women and girls.

### Obstacles and barriers:

- Real extent of violence not yet completely known because of insufficient reporting and lack of comparable statistics; domestic violence still treated as a private matter in a number of ECE countries; insufficient legislation to eliminate sexual harassment and rape, including marital rape; insufficient awareness of consequences of domestic violence, how to prevent it, and the rights of victims; increase in the incidence of trafficking practices in the region; in transition economies, aggravation of the root causes of trafficking such as poverty and unemployment; expansion of the transnationally organised crime cartels; extension of traditional gendered division of labour to the global level, with women more likely to be employed in unregulated sectors such as entertainment/sex industry and domestic service; increased number of highly vulnerable groups, in particular women and girls refugees and displaced persons in the various conflict areas of the region; inadequate public resources to enable governments to undertake new activities to address violence against women and girls; social exclusion of women victims of trafficking making them vulnerable to problems such as drugs, AIDS and violence; information technology increasingly used to promote the sex industry.

In order to prevent and combat violence against women and girls, ECE member States expressed their willingness to pursue their efforts in the following key areas for action:

**A. Promoting a comprehensive approach to combatting all forms of violence against women and girls**

Strategic direction 1: Adopting basic principles

*ECE member States*

- to firmly express their political will to combat violence and to ensure security as a human right of all citizens regardless of gender and in both private and public domains;
- to recognize that violence against women, whether in the private or the public sphere, is a criminal act and to ensure that legislation is commensurate with this criminality;
- to adopt a policy of zero tolerance of violence against women and girls.

Strategic direction 2: Strengthening research, and information sharing, on violence against women and girls

*ECE governments, regional organizations, research institutions, health care institutions and NGOs*

- to promote, nationally and regionally, the sharing of research results and statistics, as well as of information on best practices and innovative measures taken in combatting violence;
- to promote coordinated research on violence against women and girls that explores the nature, extent and consequences of violence and analyzes the impact of laws relevant to combatting this violence.

Strategic direction 3: Working towards elimination of violence in society

*ECE police authorities, judicial bodies, educational institutions, health care institutions, NGOs and the media*

- to work together, in a multi-disciplinary manner, and carry out activities aimed at prevention and early intervention in cases of violence, in particular public awareness campaigns, basic education and the enforcement of legislation against violence;

*ECE governments*

- to strengthen legislation against all forms of violence;
- to take necessary legal measures to eradicate harmful customary and traditional practices including, where appropriate, honour killings and female genital mutilation;
- to provide financial and other support to NGOs in their fight against violence;

*ECE governments and NGOs*

- to work with police to develop policies and protocols that enhance victim safety and encourage women and girls subject to violence to report to the police;

- to develop programmes aimed at preventing domestic violence by targeting potential perpetrators and at treating them through counselling and other support.

## **B. Combatting domestic violence**

### Strategic direction 1: Making domestic violence known and treating it as a public matter

*ECE governments, research institutions, health care institutions, NGOs and the media*

- to recognize that domestic violence is not a private matter but a human rights violation and is a criminal act which gives rise to prosecution, thereby guaranteeing the safety of the individual even in the home;
- to organize public campaigns to inform the public of the gravity of the phenomenon and undertake prevention activities to promote healthy and balanced relationships based on equality of boys and girls;
- to disseminate statistics and information on domestic violence and its impact on society, including information concerning relevant laws and possibilities of law enforcement;

*ECE governments and research institutions*

- to establish indicators of domestic violence and use them to monitor changes in the magnitude, forms, types of victims and circumstances of this violence.

### Strategic direction 2: Developing and enforcing laws against violence in the home

*ECE governments*

- to establish and/or strengthen legislation and regulations against all forms of domestic violence and enhance their enforcement;
- to establish clear guidelines for police and prosecutors on attitudes and behaviour in dealing with victims of domestic violence, as well as clear procedures corresponding to different cases of violence in the home;
- to enhance specialized police training to handle domestic violence situations, for example by involving persons with experience of working with perpetrators of violence or with their victims and by providing training which is culture sensitive and which safeguards women's rights;
- to step up the recruitment of women police officers;
- to provide training to prosecutors and the judiciary to increase their sensitivity to gender issues in cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse and to ensure that the cases are dealt with in the most appropriate way;
- to ensure that the sanctions for violent behaviour hold perpetrators accountable and thereby contributing to the prevention of recidivism;



*ECE governments and NGOs*

- to work with the criminal justice system to develop policies and protocols that enhance victim safety and encourage victims of domestic violence to report the crimes to the authorities.

Strategic direction 3: Providing assistance and protection to women and girls victims of violence*ECE governments*

- to bring in different actors (family and criminal courts, authorities for the protection of children and young people, health authorities, women's organizations) to work together in a cooperative and multidisciplinary manner to provide practical, medical, psychological and legal support to victims of violence;

*ECE governments and NGOs*

- to provide free legal and psychological counselling for all victims of violence;
- to provide shelter, medical assistance and social and psychological support for victims of violence;
- to secure the safety of victims either by removing the violent offender from the home in which the female victim lives or by providing a secure refuge for the latter.

**C. Stopping trafficking in human beings, in particular women and girls**Strategic direction 1: Strengthening laws and their enforcement*ECE Member States*

- to condemn trafficking as an infringement of the basic principles of human rights;
- to strengthen national legislation by further defining the crime of trafficking in all its elements, and by reinforcing the sanctions accordingly, including seizure of the proceeds of trafficking;
- to raise awareness of the police and border authorities to the problem of trafficking and to provide them with gender-sensitive specialised training in order to identify trafficking cases and dismantle the networks responsible for these cases, as well as to properly receive and assist victims;

*ECE Member States, and relevant international organizations (regional and global)*

- to step up international co-operation within the context of the current negotiations of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in developing a protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children and to protect trafficked persons in accordance with their human rights. Within this process, the following elements are of particular importance: agreeing on a definition of trafficking and its recognition as a crime; ensuring harmonisation between national legislation and the protocol and their coherence with existing regional and subregional treaties;
- to establish or strengthen, where appropriate, special anti-trafficking units (which should comprise both women and men), in particular those within law enforcement agencies, in order to promote coordination, specialization, competence and professionalism;

- to intensify cooperation between States in investigations and judicial processes relating to trafficking. Such cooperation should be supported by an effective exchange of information, involving intergovernmental law enforcement and police organizations and, appropriate, NGOs.

Strategic direction 2: Preventing trafficking

*ECE governments and research institutions*

- to examine the root causes of trafficking in persons, especially women and girls, focussing on: lack of education, chronic unemployment, discrimination, lack of viable economic opportunities, feminization of poverty, negative consequences of globalization of the economy, the sex industry, sex tourism, traditional negative images of women's sexuality, the demand side of prostitution and criminal networks and other stakeholders involved;
- to develop policies, measures and programmes aimed at eliminating this trafficking, which would: strengthen women's social and economic position, target clients and different actors involved in order to reduce the demand side, provide information and support to women involved, and increase resources to attack the problem;

*ECE governments and NGOs*

- in all countries, in particular in countries of origin, to promote a) economic alternatives and opportunities for women, including micro-credit, training in business development, skills training and job counselling; b) programmes that promote women's participation in economic decision-making; c) programmes to keep children, especially girls, in elementary and secondary schools; d) development of educational curricula about the dangers of trafficking; and e) grants to NGOs to accelerate the empowerment of women in local and regional, political, economic, social and educational roles in their countries;
- to provide financial and other support to the above programmes in countries of origin;
- in countries of origin, to promote awareness among prospective female migrants and their families about the risk of being exploited or being forced into prostitution, through information activities and campaigns carried out in close co-operation with NGOs and drawing on the experience of international organizations in this field;
- to introduce measures aimed at reducing demand for trafficking, such as encouraging respect for the dignity and integrity of all persons, especially women and girls and sensitizing the public on the infringement of human rights of these persons;
- to find ways to fight the tendency of traffickers and trafficking networks to use new technologies for circulation of supply and demand;

*ECE governments*

- to bring in different actors (law enforcement, immigration, social, judicial, administrative and customs departments, NGOs etc.) to work together in a cooperative and multidisciplinary manner to fight against trafficking;

- to raise awareness of personnel at consular sections of embassies to recognize possible trafficking the moment visas are requested. Embassies to inform visa applicants through hand-outs and leaflets.

Strategic direction 3: Protecting and supporting victims of trafficking

*ECE governments*

- to prevent, within the legal framework, women and girls trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation from being prosecuted for their illegal entry or residence or for their engagement in prostitution, taking into account that they are victims of sexual exploitation;
- to provide special residency permits for victims in appropriate cases;
- to provide witnesses with special support to report and file complaints, designed to protect their private lives and to reduce official procedures and their traumatizing effects;
- in case of repatriation, to work closely with NGOs to ensure safe conditions of return, especially in the case of victims- turned- witnesses and those at risk of being re-trafficked;
- to recognize the obligation, on the part of countries of origin, to accept the return of their nationals;

*ECE governments and NGOs*

- to take necessary measures for ensuring the security of the victims and their families and protecting their fundamental rights through legal, social, medical, psychological and other assistance, both as an objective per se and as a way to facilitate their co-operation for the prosecution of traffickers and for the witness protection programs;
- to provide basic services for the victims of trafficking such as shelter and health care;
- to develop policies and programmes for the rehabilitation and reintegration, both economic and social, of trafficked persons, and to allocate adequate resources for these programmes.

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