

DELEGATION OF TURKEY

1 October 2007

**HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
(Warsaw, 24 September-5 October)**

Working Session 10: Gender aspects of security

Madame Moderator,

Having aligned itself with the EU statement, my delegation too would like to provide the participants with a national account of Turkey's ongoing efforts to ensure gender equality, to promote women's participation in political life and to prevent violence against women. All of these are among the main priorities of the Turkish Government within the framework of the reform process.

Gender Equality

- The prevention of discrimination against women and the establishment of gender equality in society are among the main priorities of the Turkish Government.
- Equality between women and men before the law has been one of the principles of Turkish Constitution. In the Article 10 of the Constitution, it is stated that "*Women and men have equal rights. The State is responsible for overseeing that this equality goes into practice*". According to the 9th National Development Plan for 2007-2013, in order to ensure women's participation to economic and social life, educational and training opportunities of women will be increased, employability of women will be improved and fight against domestic violence will be continued.
- Since the second half of the 1990s, the Turkish Parliament has continued to adopt several new laws with a view to establishing gender equality and improving women's status in society. Many positive steps have been taken in this respect.
 - ✓ A provision was added to Article 10 of the Constitution on 17 May 2004, by which the state was deemed responsible for not only ensuring non-discrimination between women and men, but also to take necessary measures to provide the enforcement of equal rights and opportunities for women in every field.
 - ✓ Among the efforts to prevent discrimination against women and improve the status of women, the amendment to Article 90 of the Constitution is also notable. With this amendment which was adopted on 17 May 2004, supremacy was given to international conventions concerning basic rights and freedoms, including the CEDAW, over all national laws.

- ✓ The New Civil Code, which entered into force on 1 January 2002, established full equality of men and women within the family.
 - ✓ The Office of the Prime Minister issued a circular in 2004 with a view to ensuring full respect of the principle of gender equality for recruitment into public service.
 - ✓ The new Turkish Penal Code which entered into force on June 2005, contains several important clauses with respect to improving the social, economic and political life and status of women in the society.
- Turkey is a party to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) since 1985.
 - Furthermore the Turkish Government ratified the Optional Protocol of CEDAW in 2002. The ratification of the Optional Protocol constituted an important step as it opens the way for personal application to the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Women's participation in political life

- Turkey is one of the pioneering countries in providing rights to women in political life. Currently, there are 48 women parliamentarians in the Turkish Parliament. There is a great interest in political parties to have more women participate actively in political life.
- Within this framework, women's participation into political life is encouraged by all of the political parties and there is an increase in the number of members of women's branches in the parties.
- Statistics indicate that women's status in Turkey is advancing in all fields of public life, including decision-making positions.

Violence against Women

- The Government is determined to address the problem of violence against women through strengthening legislation, improving law enforcement, protecting victims and promoting educational and awareness-raising campaigns.
- The Law on the Protection of the Family (No. 4230), which entered into force in 1998, is of special significance in the efforts to curtail violence against women.
- The Turkish Government is also determined to prevent so-called "honor crimes", which constitute a gross violation of women's human rights. Within this framework, crimes committed in the name of religion and traditions are severely punished under Turkish legislation.
- A major legal blow has been dealt to honor crimes with the new Turkish Penal Code which entered into force on 1 June 2005. The de facto reduction of sentences in the case of "honor killings" was abolished with the new Code.

- Special training programs are being carried out for security forces (especially for the gendarmerie which is in charge of security in rural areas), health care personnel and other public servants who deal with women subjected to violence.
- The Directorate General on the Status of Women and the Directorate General of Social Services and Child Protection Agency also undertake training programs on the human rights of women in collaboration with non-governmental organizations. The courses aim to increase the awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and enhance their capacity for self-protection.
- Moreover, non-governmental organizations, as part of their mandate to eliminate violence against women, conduct researches, gather data on violence and develop problem solving strategies to respond to physical, psychological, social, financial and legal problems arising from violence.