



Delegation of Ukraine

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EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN AND MEN

For the past several years Ukraine has made progress in realizing and learning of gender issues. Among the commitments taken by Ukraine before the European Community (EU) are the achieving of equal opportunities and rights by women and men.

Nowadays the Ukrainian state policy is aimed at creating equal opportunities for women and men. The policy is conducted with regard to international documents signed by Ukraine.

Gender discrimination could be seen in all spheres of Ukrainian life. The proportion of women in the legislative power bodies is 8.5 percent, in the sphere of big industry the proportion of women makes only 2 percent and 20 percent of women are among owners of small and medium enterprises. Men's salary is three times as high as that of women; the proportion of unemployment among women is higher than among men. By our estimates, in 20-30 years woman's pension will come to approximately 40-45% of man's pension. A woman works 4-6 hours more than a man. Moreover, housekeeping is not recognized as productive.

We have grown accustomed to the situation when the announcements of job vacancies in mass media contain limitations by age, sex, let alone appearance. Notwithstanding that such demands are banned. The only exception is made to specific work done by persons of certain sex. And employees are forbidden to demand any information on private life of applicants as well as on their family planning.

At the same time, situation with men has grown more acute. Men's unemployment is growing faster than that of women's. Men retire 5 years later than women despite lifespan of men is 12 years shorter. Such illnesses as TB, dependence on alcohol, drug addiction, and such phenomenon as suicide prevail among men. Another acute issue is the situation with preserving reproductive age of men.

Among the first steps outlined in carrying out gender policy are the formation and development of gender legislation.

Among the key legislative acts, aimed at exercising equal rights and opportunities by men and women, is the Constitution of Ukraine that confirms the equality of rights of men and women.

The major problem lies in the elaboration of an effective practical *mechanism* of implementing the national legislation concerning gender policy.

Alongside the Constitution of Ukraine, the national gender legislation consists of Labour Code (Code of Laws on Labour), Family Code, Civil and Criminal Codes, the laws of Ukraine on education, pension, state aid to families with children, on labour protection, Health Care Basic Legislative Principles, President Act on Modification of Work of National and Local Executive Power Bodies on Ensuring of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men (№ 1135, adopted on 26 July, 2005), etc.

However, notwithstanding a number of existing legislative acts on gender aspect, it was necessary to adopt a special law on gender. In this regard, on 8 September, 2005, the Parliament of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada) adopted the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men.

This Law has outlined the main directions of state gender policy and, to its credit, has defined such terms as “sex discrimination”, “sex harassment”, “gender equality” etc.

For the first time ever the Law has prescribed a compulsory legal expertise (gender juridical expertise) of the existing legislation as well as of draft legal acts.

The responsibility to conduct such expertise was laid on the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine.

Thus, since 1 July, 2006, the Ministry of Justice provides the gender legal expertise of the draft legal acts concerning human rights and freedoms.

Gender legal expertise is carried out with an intention to take measures to avert the adoption of discriminative provisions in new legal acts that do not correspond with the principle of ensuring equal opportunities and rights of women and men.

Gender legal expertise of legislation has been conducted since 2007 and deals with each and every particular legislative act in accordance with annual action plans of the Ministry of Justice.

In 2007 the Ministry of Justice provided gender legal expertise to 10 laws of Ukraine. In 2008 4 legal acts were examined. This work will carry on.

Besides, the State Programme for Ensuring Gender Equality in Ukrainian Society for the Period up to 2010 and Action Plan for it were adopted with an aim to maintain equal rights of women and men.

The abovementioned measures make the following provisions:

- creating consultative bodies, working groups of experts on gender issues at the national and local levels with a participation of scientists and NGO;
- providing information and educational measures aimed at combating violence against women and men;
- ensuring introduction of gender component in all international projects and programmes carried out in Ukraine both on the national and regional levels supported by international organizations and funds.

We will keep on further integrating gender equality in all fields of activity of state power bodies which, in turn, will augment Ukraine's status of a democratic state with a rule of law.