

4 October 2006

**HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
(Warsaw, 2-13 October 2006)**

Working Session 4: Tolerance and Non-discrimination I (Gender Issues)

STATEMENT

Madame Moderator,

Having aligned ourselves with the EU statement, we also would like to provide a brief 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 issues are among the main priorities of the Turkish Government.

Gender Equality

- 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 opens the way for personal application to the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- Starting from the 1990s, the Turkish Parliament has been adopting several new laws with a view to establishing gender equality and improving women's status in society. Let me highlight just a few of them:
 - ✓ A provision was added to Article 10 of the Constitution in 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.
 - ✓ The New Civil Code, which entered into force in January 2002, abolished the supremacy of men in marriage by establishing full equality of men and women within the family.
 - ✓ The Office of the Prime Minister issued a circular in January 2004 with a view to ensuring full respect of the principle of gender equality for recruitment into public service.

Women's participation in political life

- Turkey is one of the pioneering countries in providing rights to women in political life. Women in Turkey have been granted the right to vote and to stand for election in 1934.
- Although at present the number of women parliamentarians is relatively small in the Turkish Parliament, women's participation into political life is encouraged by all 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 life, including decision-making positions.

Violence against women

- The Government is determined to address the problem of violence against women.
- The Law on the Protection of the Family (No. 4230), which entered into force in 1998, allows women and children who have been subjected to domestic violence to lodge personal complaints. The Law also provides for the enforcement of precautionary measures initiated by the chief public prosecutor to ensure the protection of the victims, such as forcing the offender to abandon the house, payment of temporary alimony, etc.
- The Turkish Government is also determined to prevent honor crimes. Within this framework, crimes committed in the name of religion and tradition are seriously punished under Turkish legislation. The de facto reduction of sentences in the case of "honor killings" was abolished with the new Penal Code.
- A Committee was established within the Turkish Grand National Assembly to examine and prevent the causes and means of honor killings and violence against women and children. In July 2006, the Committee has issued its report, comprising a comprehensive list of measures to be taken for the prevention of violence against children and women. For each measure, competent authorities have been vested with the responsibility to implement and monitor the measures and to submit detailed quarterly reports to the institutions in charge of coordination.
- Special training programs are being carried out for security forces, health care personnel and other public servants who deal with women subjected to violence.
- Training programs on the human rights of women in collaboration with non-governmental organizations have also been provided by the authorities. The courses aim to increase the awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and to enhance their self-image and capacity for self-protection.

Thank you.