

# **RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

## **Replies to the questionnaire of the United Nations Secretariat on the implementation of the Beijing platform for action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women (Beijing, 1995), and the final documents of the 23rd special session of the United Nations General Assembly (New York, 2000)**

### **Part I. Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.**

Achievements in the area of improving the status of women and promoting gender equality.

In the period 1999-2003, the social and economic reforms that have been implemented in the Russian Federation have promoted the ongoing development and strengthening of a market economy and a multi-party democracy, which has been directly reflected in the status of women.

In the economic sphere, steady growth in industrial production has contributed to raising the standard of living. The number of people with incomes lower than the subsistence level is falling. A rise in wages and salaries has been noted in the public sector, and there have been increases in student aid, pensions, and assistance to citizens with children. The federal budget has acquired a more social orientation. The Government of the Russian Federation is developing the social and economic spheres, most of all, in education, public health, and the development of human resources.

In the political sphere, in the 2003 elections approximately 10% of the members elected to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (the Parliament of Russia) were women (in 1999 it was 8%). Women candidates were put forward by all of the political parties that participated in the elections. The aforementioned was encouraged by focused work on clarifying the provisions of the law, "On political parties," adopted in 2001, the activities of women's leadership schools organized by non-governmental organizations, the parliamentary hearings that were conducted on the bill, "On state guarantees of equal rights and freedoms for men and women and opportunities for their realization in the Russian Federation," as well as the support of the aforementioned bill by the Government of the Russian Federation.

In the area of employment, the absolute number of unemployed women registered with employment offices has fallen, as has the average duration of the job search by men and women. In May 2003, the Government of the Russian Federation approved a Guideline for action on the labor market for 2003-2005, which, when realized, will promote employment in appropriate jobs for the population including women, the satisfaction of the requirements of the economy for workers of the appropriate professional qualifications, and the prompt reaction to changes in the labor market. The question of realizing this Guideline has been discussed many times at the meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women in the Russian Federation attached to the Government of the Russian Federation.

In the area of preserving reproductive health and providing obstetrical assistance, positive changes have been noted. The indicators of infant and maternal mortality are falling. The

absolute number of abortions in Russia is 1.2 times less than in 1999. The number of women making use of contraceptive methods, including hormonal contraception, is on the rise. In many respects this has been encouraged by the adoption by the Commission on the Status of Women in the Russian Federation of specific decisions for realizing a Guideline for preserving the reproductive health of the population.

In the sphere of social services, a network of social service institutions for families and children has been intensively developed and has great significance above all for women (in 1999, the number of such institutions was 2,134, and by the beginning of 2004 the number was 3,229). The scope and quality of services provided in these institutions have increased.

Questions of legislation Significant changes have occurred in the area of legislation during the recent period: a Labor Code of the Russian Federation was adopted, as well as various normative-legal acts to regulate relations in the social and employment spheres. The educational and social security systems have begun to be reformed.

In 2001 a Federal law was adopted, "On political parties," which provides for the participation of women and men in politics on the basis of equal rights.

The State Duma of the Russian Federation has approved the first reading of a federal law, "On state guarantees of equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities for men and women in the Russian Federation."

In 2003 the Government of the Russian Federation approved the Guideline for action on the labor market for 2003-2005, where specific measures for enlarging the opportunities for women on the labor market were considered, along with measures for increasing their competitiveness and professional mobility.

In the context of realizing the basic provisions of the Beijing platform of action a resolution was approved in 2001 by the Government of the Russian Federation approving the National Action Plan for the advancement of women in the Russian Federation and for expanding their role in society in 2001-2005. The Action Plan constitutes an obligation of the Government of the Russian Federation to resolve various problems affecting the status of women. The Plan provides for specific measures to improve the status of women on the labor market, to protect women's health, to develop a system of social services for women, and to provide assistance to women who have been the victims of violence.

The Government of the Russian Federation annually receives information on the implementation of the National Action Plan for the advancement of women and for the expansion of their role in society.

At the level of the 89 component parts of the Russian Federation, in accordance with corresponding resolutions of their executive bodies, regional action plans have been adopted and are being realized for the advancement of women, on the basis of which legislative acts and practical measures are being adopted. As a part of the realization of action plans, cooperation with non-governmental organizations is being fostered.

In order to achieve gender equality in Russia and to realize the provisions of the Millennium Declaration (goal 3), a new program document has been worked out in principle, a Gender Strategy for the Russian Federation, which is called upon to define a set of requirements and criteria for ensuring equality of rights and opportunities for women and men in all areas of life activity.

The draft of the Gender Strategy for the Russian Federation was discussed at international conferences in Briansk and Ivanovo, at a round table of social associations and non-commercial organizations attached to the Russian Ministry of Labor, at seminars and scientific-practical conferences in the Russian Academy of State Service attached to the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, at the Moscow State Social University, and at seminars in the Central, Siberian, Volga-region federal districts. The draft Gender Strategy has been subjected to expert examination in the ministries and departments of the Russian Federation, and it was also distributed to the component parts of the Russian Federation. The draft will be completed taking into account the comments and suggestions, and it will then be approved at the federal level. At present time in the component parts of the Russian Federation, regional gender programs are also being devised.

A national mechanism for the advancement of women continues to be strengthened and developed (details in part III).

Gender statistics continue to be improved on the basis of developing and implementing a new system of indicators, based on principles and recommendations of international organizations in the field of statistics. To develop new statistical indicators, scientific institutions and practical specialists have been consulted. A statistical compendium, "Women and Men of Russia" is published regularly. Questions concerning the development of gender statistics have been discussed on many occasions at the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in the Russian Federation. At the request of the Russian Ministry of Labor, additional indicators have been developed by scientific institutions of the Academy of Sciences of the Russian Federation along with statistical indicators that are necessary in order to obtain a fuller picture of the gender-related situations in various areas, specifically in education, the prevention of violence against women, incomes, salaries, and so on.

Notable progress has been achieved in the development of a social partnership between state authorities and women's social associations and non-commercial organizations. Representatives of social associations have been involved in developing a Gender Strategy for the Russian Federation as well as action programs in the component parts of the Russian Federation for achieving gender equality, and they are actively participating in realizing socially significant projects on the basis of state requests, including the formation of a sector of non-governmental social services.

During the reporting period, the Russian Ministry of Labor, together with partners from non-governmental and international organizations, has conducted many international and Russian conferences in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Briansk, Barnaul, Ivanovo, Irkutsk, Syktyvkar, and Ulyanovsk, as well as scientific-practical and educational seminars on various questions

regarding the advancement of women. With the cooperation of the Association for Aid to Victims of Violence, "Sisters," a cycle of training sessions has been conducted for specialists in the executive bodies of the component parts of the Russian Federation concerning the problem of trafficking in persons (17 regions in Russia participated).

With the cooperation of the organization, "East-West: Women's Innovative Projects," information regarding the activities of executive bodies in the area of the advancement of women has been placed on the most frequently visited women-related websites.

Worthy of special mention are the cooperation and support of confederations and associations of business women and their cooperation in the development of entrepreneurial activity. With the cooperation of the Confederation of Russian Business Women, during 2001-2003 forums were held with women entrepreneurs of Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. Among the topics discussed at these forums were questions concerning the use of new information technologies for business purposes, the necessary legislative context for the development of women entrepreneurs, corporate responsibility, the expansion of cooperation within the CIS, and so on.

Areas requiring the ongoing realization of measures for improving the status of women and for achieving gender equality

Despite the focused work of the Government of the Russian Federation for the realization of fundamental provisions of the Beijing platform for action and of the decisions of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, many problems in the area of the advancement of women remain.

Those in the most difficult situations are single-parent families with many children, families with disabled children, widowed pensioners, and women in rural areas.

In the area of work, a difference in salaries remains, extending between professions and within professions. The mechanisms have not yet been found to resolve the problem of equalizing salaries in the fields in which women's labor predominates (education, health care, culture, and social protection).

Great difficulties are created by hidden unemployment, delayed payment of salaries and benefits, as well as the employment situation in agricultural areas. Despite the decrease in the number of unemployed women who have been registered with employment offices, the percentage of unemployed women compared to the total number of unemployed remains high.

Despite the increasing representation of women in governmental bodies, mainly at the regional and municipal levels, the problem of promoting women to decision-making levels remains a matter of priority.

The problem of violence against women remains deeply troubling and at the present time a review of currently valid legislation is under way for addressing it.

Improvement in the social-economic situation of women in rural areas remains one of the most important tasks requiring the ongoing focused attention of the state.

## **Part II. Progress in implementing the critical areas of concern of the Beijing platform for action and future measures and initiatives set out in the final documents of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations**

For the purpose of realizing the provisions of the Beijing platform for action, in 1996 a Guideline on improving the status of women in the Russian Federation was adopted, in which strategic goals were defined along with means for their achievement. The Government of the Russian Federation considered it necessary in the Guideline to focus on areas of special concern:

- Observance of women's rights in conjunction with human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Participation of women in decision-making at all levels;
- Ensuring equal rights in the labor market;
- Health care for women;
- Violence against women.

Specific measures for achieving the aforementioned goals have been formulated and are being realized in the context of the National Action Plans adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation for the advancement of women and the expansion of their role in society. Implementation of the first Plan occupied the period 1997-2000, and that of the second Plan 2001-2005. Measures regarding the second National Plan were corrected, taking into account the decisions of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century."

Taking into account the provisions of the final documents of the Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women and of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, action plans and programs for the advancement of women and for achieving gender equality have been adopted and are being realized in the majority of the component parts of the Russian Federation, as well as special programs aimed at resolving the social problems of women, families, and children, achieving cooperation in the employment of women, providing health care, and securing reproductive rights, and so on.

Over the years during which the aforementioned National Plans have been realized, significant changes have occurred in society. Changes in labor law and in the system of pension benefits, the introduction of insurance principles into the area of public health, and the development of the non-governmental sector in providing social services and a range of paid services to the population have expanded the possibilities for realizing the National Plans, laid the foundation for freedom of choice for all citizens of Russia, and determined the various forms for the participation of women in the social-labor, political, and social spheres of life activity.

For the purpose of achieving gender equality in Russia, a new program document was worked out in principle, a Gender Strategy for the Russian Federation, which was called upon to define a set of requirements and criteria for securing equality of rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres of life activity.

Information regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Beijing platform is provided below for a series of fields.

## **1. Observance of women's rights in conjunction with human rights and fundamental freedoms**

In 1998 the federal law was adopted, "On compulsory social insurance against industrial accidents and occupational diseases," and in 1999 the federal law was adopted, "On the fundamentals of occupational safety in the Russian Federation," in which the principle of equal rights for women and men was strengthened in the area of occupational safety.

By resolutions of the Government of the Russian Federation, Nos. 162 and 163, dated 25 February 2000, schedules were adopted of heavy, harmful, and dangerous work which may not be performed by women or by persons younger than 18. The aforementioned schedules were prepared on the basis of scientifically established medical and biological criteria for evaluating workplace conditions, and they were affirmed by the Russian Ministry of Health in conjunction with the Russian Ministry of Labor. The schedules took into account the provisions of the ILO conventions, Nos. 13, 45, and 138.

In 2001 a new Labor Code of the Russian Federation was adopted, which took into account the law-enforcement practice and the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and ILO Convention No. 156 on equal treatment and equal opportunities for working men and women: workers with family responsibilities.

In May 2003, the Government of the Russian Federation approved the Guideline for action on the labor market for 2003-2005, which, when realized, will foster the employment in appropriate jobs for the population including women, the satisfaction of the requirements of the economy for workers of the appropriate professional qualifications, and a prompt response to changes in the labor market.

In 2003, a draft of the federal law, "On state guarantees of equal rights and freedoms and of equal opportunities for men and women in the Russian Federation," was adopted in its first reading.

For the purpose of preventing violence against women and children, traffic in persons, the transport of women and girls abroad for purposes of sexual exploitation, and the expansion of prostitution, changes and amendments have been made to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

Statistical information is the objective basis for carrying out the work of instituting gender equality in society. The development and implementation of gender statistics, including the gathering, processing, analysis, and presentation of statistical data with breakdowns in accordance with gender and age and reflecting the status of women and men in society, has made it possible to increase the amount of information available about the status of specific social-demographic groups in the population. Regularly published statistical compendia, "Women and Men of Russia," contain objective, detailed, and reliable information reflecting the status of women and men in all spheres of social life.

## **2. Ensuring equal participation of men and women in decision-making.**

Women candidates participated both in the 2003 elections for the lower house of Parliament (State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation) as well as in the 2004 elections for President of the Russian Federation.

In 2001 women constituted 8% of the members of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, and in 2003 the number was roughly 10%.

During the 2003 elections, all political parties put forward women candidates.

In 2003, seven women became members of the upper house of Parliament (the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation), in 2002 the number of women members was six, in 2001 one, and in 2000 two.

In 1999-2003, in the Government of the Russian Federation, the position of Deputy President of the Government of the Russian Federation, with responsibility for social benefits, was occupied by a woman.

The spheres of political responsibility for women generally coincide with the traditional duties of women, namely questions of social protection, the family, motherhood, and childhood.

However, for the last decade, women's representation in decision-making positions in executive bodies has tended to decline. During the last five years, no woman has occupied the position of minister in a federal ministry.

At the beginning of 2004, approximately 40 women were first deputy ministers, deputy ministers, and state secretaries in the overwhelming majority of ministries, departments, federal committees, and agencies of the Russian Federation, including the traditionally male-dominated ministries -- defense, transportation, energy, finance, emergency response, industry, science, and technology, and so on.

The current level of representation of women remains low, although in recent years a noticeable increase in the numbers of women has been observed at the regional and municipal levels.

In the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, efforts have been made to attract women to diplomatic careers within the structure of the Ministry. However, in this case as well there are few women occupying leading positions. Only one deputy minister is a woman.

Despite the fact that the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been undertaking systematic steps to increase the number of women diplomats, as before women are insufficiently represented in offices and diplomatic posts abroad.

A gender-oriented state personnel policy holds great significance for resolving the problem of the advancement of women. Questions regarding state service are controlled by the federal law, "On the principles of governmental service in the Russian Federation."

Thus the problem of the advancement of women in governmental bodies and at decision-making levels remains a high priority.

For the purposes of advancing the gender approach at the level of state policy and the gender education of state officials in the Russian Academy of State Service attached to the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, special courses in the gender problems of administration are being offered as part of preparing leaders at the highest level.

### **3. Ensuring equal rights in the labor market.**

Equal rights in the labor market are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation and by the Labor Code of the Russian Federation, and they are ensured by the federal law, "On employment in the Russian Federation," by the Guideline for action on the labor market for 2003-2005, and by the National Action Plan for the advancement of women and for expanding their role in society in 2001-2005.

The Guideline for action on the labor market for 2003-2005, which was approved by a resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation on 6 May 2003, calls for the development and realization of a group of active measures to promote the employment of various categories of women, specifically:

- Monitoring the status of women in the labor market in the context of the National Action Plan for the advancement of women in the Russian Federation and for expanding their role in society in 2001-2005;
- Realizing the principle of focused attention in the work of employment offices, which means essentially the orientation of state policy towards promoting the employment of a poorly defended category of the population, specifically women;
- Implementing effective mechanisms for profiling the unemployed. It is necessary to develop a method of profiling unemployed persons who have registered with the state -- to categorize them by gender and age, social-professional groups, as well as by groups differentiated according to degrees of activity and methods of seeking work;
- Providing opportunities for the least well defended parts of the population to receive all the services that are made available by employment offices and to increase their ability to compete on the labor market. For this purpose, it is proposed to develop and implement special programs of employment, professional orientation and professional training, to implement new socially oriented technologies and modern forms of training (such as distance learning and modular training), and to develop special infrastructure for the employment offices;
- Developing club work to foster the social-labor adaptation of unemployed women who have been out of work for a long period of time or who lack any experience of work (in the context of implementing the programs, "Fresh start" and "Job-seekers' club," and the

National Action Plan for the advancement of women in the Russian Federation and for expanding their role in society in 2001-2005);

- Conducting specialized job fairs for women;
- Developing specialized centers for the problems of women's employment, for example, the Moscow Women's Business Center;
- Developing various forms of family business;
- Developing traditional forms of agricultural management, renewing national craft industries for providing self-employment to women in rural areas and in the regions of Northern Caucasus and the Far North;
- Creating the economic and social conditions for eliminating the factors that cause discrimination in the labor market on account of gender, and so on.

The realization of a package of measures in the social-labor sphere which are set out in the Guideline for action on the labor market for 2003-2005, will make it possible to bring about employment at a living wage in appropriate jobs for the population including women, to satisfy the requirements of the economy for workers of appropriate professional qualifications, and also to react promptly to changes in the labor market.

The adoption of the package of normative legal acts directed at regulating the labor of workers who have family obligations has created the conditions for improving the competitiveness of women on the labor market and for changing the attitudes of employers towards "female" personnel.

A system has been created of professional training, retraining and refresher training, and it is aimed at working with unemployed women as well as with women wanting to change their jobs or their profession.

In the component parts of the Russian Federation, job banks have been set up to provide jobs for women who want to work at home or part-time.

Legislation has been enacted granting local authorities the power to set up quotas for the employment of citizens who are especially in need of social protection. Measures have been taken to provide economic stimulus to employers encouraging them to employ women.

The name "women's" is still associated with areas such as health care, social services, postal and telephone services, education, culture, and art. At the same time, the participation of women has increased in spheres that used to be dominated by men: entrepreneurial activity, especially of the small-business and family type, management, and marketing.

Many women prefer to work in the public sector, where salaries are low or but there are social guarantees--pregnancy and birth benefits, short-term disability benefits, time off for caring for children less than 14 years of age, a fixed schedule of work, and so on.

A structural analysis of the unemployed broken down according to gender shows that of the total number of unemployed citizens, 66% are women. Women constitute 73.3% of all citizens who are registered as unemployed and who have minor or disabled children, they constitute 65.6% of

all parents with more than one child, and they are 86.3% of all single parents. At the same time, the majority of openings posted in employment offices are in trades (77.7%), which are generally considered as being for men.

One peculiarity of the labor market is the fact that unemployed women have a higher level of education than unemployed men. Thus 53.4% of women have higher professional, special, and primary education. But of the job openings that are posted in employment offices, only 22.3% are specified for persons having higher professional and special education, so that this indicator amounts to 36% of unemployed women, and in the some regions it is even higher. An analysis of jobs conducted by the employment offices shows that employers need workers for non-prestigious, low-qualified, and poorly-paying jobs. The result is that of the unemployed citizens who have experienced a long (more than one year) interruption in their working life, the percentage of women is 65%, and the average duration of unemployment among women is 6.5 months.

Working within the framework of the federal law, "On employment in the Russian Federation," employment offices have made great efforts in identifying the forms and methods aimed at expanding employment opportunities for women, assisting in their adaptation to new conditions, and increasing their competitiveness on the contemporary labor market.

Towards the goal of resolving the entire spectrum of women's problems, in particular those that are connected to employment opportunities, the employment offices are actively cooperating with executive bodies, social institutions, women's social organizations and movements, and employers.

The most effective directions for the activities of employment agencies are profession-based work, social adaptation, professional training for new professions and specialties; assistance to unemployed citizens in starting their own business; and temporary employment of unemployed citizens within the context of measures designed to assist persons in finding jobs.

The fundamental goal for programs of social adaptation is helping unemployed women to acquire professional and psychological mobility, to be able to relate their self-knowledge to the demands of professional activity, to take into account the personal perspectives of professional development, to work out a flexible individual style of activity, and to find ways to compensate for the lack of professionally important qualities.

Work is actively going ahead for a special, focused technology that has been developed for each profiled group of unemployed citizens, a significant proportion of whom are women. In various component parts of the Russian Federation a variety of focused programs has been developed and are functioning for the social adaptation of the unemployed.

Job fairs for commercial and education positions are one of the most important ways to secure employment for unemployed women and one of the most effective methods of making available complete information regarding job openings and of furnishing consultation services on questions of employment, professional orientation, the law, and opportunities for training in the professions that are currently in demand on the labor market.

Employers and workers in company personnel departments are invited to job fairs of this type. If women participate in job fairs, they have the opportunity of finding a job independently.

During the first half of 2003, the employment offices organized and carried out more than 9,900 fairs for commercial and education positions, in which 818,700 persons took part, 70% of them being women.

Some assistance in solving the problem of women's employment is provided by cooperation with employers in organizing both permanent and temporary employment for women, including jobs that are subject to quotas. A form of cooperation such as temporary employment affords the employer the opportunity to assess the prospective worker, his or her knowledge, ability, and skill, and it also fosters the social adaptation of unemployed women.

The problem of women's employment is addressed by the organization of public-sector jobs, which is one of the main active ways of solving the problem of unemployment, through providing temporary employment and support for income, fostering a reduction in tensions on the labor market, and preserving the motivation for work among the unemployed.

Employment offices with the financial assistance of the component parts of the Russian Federation have concluded 50,400 contracts for carrying out public-sector works with companies and organizations, and in this way employment has been provided to 359,800 persons. The majority of the participants in this program have been women (64.1%).

Public-sector works are organized and carried out largely in the areas of housing maintenance and agricultural management, public-sector benefits, service enterprises, and organizations for print media distribution.

To improve the competitiveness of women on the labor market, it remains an effective form of the work of employment services to organize the professional training and retraining of personnel in accordance with the requirements of the market economy, taking into account the requirements of employers and the foreseeable state of the labor market. On the basis of educational institutions that are engaged in the training and retraining of the unemployed, flexible forms of professional training can be provided for the disabled, rural inhabitants, and women with underage children. In other words, a convenient program of instruction is set up, taking into account transportation schedules, and also when participation in group-based training is not possible for objective reasons, the unemployed can be trained individually, which can include distance-learning methods.

#### **4. Health care for women and ensuring equal access to medical care for men and women.**

For the purpose of observing equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the area of health in 2000, by a resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation, a Guideline for public health in the Russian Federation has been affirmed for the period until 2005.

State policy in the area of reproductive health care has been laid down, and a Guideline for protecting the reproductive health of the population has been adopted for 2000-2004, as well as a plan of measures for its realization.

Focused measures designed to protect the health of women have made it possible to reduce the absolute number of abortions carried out, to change the culture of contraceptive behavior, and to stabilize the indicators of maternal illness and mortality. By creating a system of ultrasound screening during pregnancy, it has been possible to decrease the number of children being born with serious developmental defects, and it has made it possible to reduce infant mortality.

An office has been formed for reproductive health and family planning, including centers for planning reproduction and families, and youth centers providing medical and social assistance to adolescents.

As a result of focused work on the federal and regional levels during recent years, positive changes have been noted in rising birth rates and declining maternal, perinatal and infant mortality.

Thus in 2002, 130,200 (9.3%) more children were born than in 2000, the overall coefficient of the birth rate for 1000 persons increased 11.3% and stood at 9.8 (as opposed to 8.7 in 2000).

The number of women dying from complications during pregnancy and birth and during the post-birth period has declined (out of 100,000 live births, from 44 in 1999 to 34 in 2002) and over the last ten years it has declined by 1.5 times.

A long-term trend towards reducing infant mortality has been observed (the number of infants dying before the age of one, per 1000 live births): 16.9 in 1999; 13.3 in 2002; and 12.7 for the first ten months of 2003.

Beginning in 1999, an increase in the number of normal births without complications has been observed. In 2001, for the first time in the last ten years, a reduction in the frequency of all fundamental complications of pregnancy has also been noted. The proportion of premature births and spontaneous abortions has declined.

By putting into practice the measures of the program, "Safe motherhood," it has been possible during the last ten years to reduce by almost a third the absolute number of abortions and by more than 20% maternal mortality from abortions. The percentage of women dying after abortions, as a percentage of total maternal deaths, was 18.5% in 2002 as opposed to 24.2% in 1999.

For the Russian Federation, as for other countries, the HIV epidemic is one of the most serious current problems.

The fundamental elements of state policy and strategy in Russia in the campaign against HIV/AIDS have been laid down in the federal law, "On preventing the spread in the Russian

Federation of the disease caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)," in which the fundamental policy principles are set out in connection with the HIV infection:

- prophylaxis against the spread of HIV infection in all levels of society, the development and production of effective means of diagnosis, treatment, and prophylaxis against HIV infection;
- achieving the lowest possible level of spread of HIV infection in the population and extending the lives of those infected with HIV;
- minimizing the social, economic, and political consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Russian Federation;
- making the diagnosis and treatment of HIV infection available at all levels of society, and so on.

As of 1/1/2004 in the Russian Federation 264,462 persons were recorded as being infected with HIV, including 7,591 children. The number of persons infected with AIDS was 817, including 193 children. The number persons who have died from HIV infection is 3,456, of whom 609 had AIDS.

The primary factor in the spread of HIV infection continues to be the use of intravenous narcotics. Thus up to 76% of newly recorded persons infected with HIV are intravenous drug users. However, since 2001 HIV infection has been actively spread through sexual means.

The presence of HIV infection is a medical indicator for the artificial termination of a pregnancy. In accordance with Article 36, "Fundamentals of legislation in the Russian Federation concerning health care," and with normative documents of the Ministry of Health of Russia, in the event that a woman so desires and agrees, a pregnancy may be terminated in the later stages (up to 28 weeks). Terminating pregnancy either at the request of the woman or for social or medical reasons is carried out at public expense in accordance with the state guarantee of free medical assistance to the citizens of the Russian Federation.

A large proportion of the young women using psycho-active substances intravenously engage in antisocial behavior. On average in Russia, every fifth pregnant woman infected with HIV is not being seen by a physician, and the presence of HIV infection in their cases comes to light only when they arrive to give birth.

Irrespective of the course of any individual birth and the type of delivery, the births of HIV-infected women are classified as involving complications. In addition to the paid post-natal time off, which in Russia is 70 calendar days, women who are infected with HIV and who work are entitled to an additional 16 days.

For the purpose of prophylaxis with respect to the perinatal transmission of HIV infection, an informed voluntary testing for HIV infection is carried out twice during the pregnancy at public expense (once when the woman is seen at a clinic and once when she arrives to give birth). Multiple observation makes it possible to carry out pre-natal prophylaxis against HIV transmission from the mother.

The epidemiological situation with regards to HIV/AIDS shows signs of stabilizing in Russia, as expressed in a slowing of the rise in new cases of HIV infection. Thus, in 2003 approximately 35,000 new cases of HIV infection were reported, which is 32% fewer cases than in 2002 (and in 2002 45% fewer were reported than in 2001).

The positive trends in the epidemiological situation regarding HIV infection are confirmed by a reduction in the indicators in a series of socially significant diseases, primarily drug addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, and parenteral hepatitis viruses. This is a consequence of the work carried out in 2001-2003 at the federal and regional levels against the spread of HIV infection.

The fundamental factors exerting a positive influence on the campaign against the HIV/AIDS epidemic are:

setting up a system for epidemiological observation;

creating a federal scientific and methodological center, seven regional centers, and 106 centers for prophylaxis and for the campaign against AIDS;

realizing the federal program, "Preventing and fighting diseases of a social character (2002-2006)," including the subsection, "Urgent measures for preventing the spread within the Russian Federation of the disease caused by human immunodeficiency virus ("anti-HIV/AIDS").

The measures of the program are directed at developing a system for informing the population concerning accessible prophylactic means against HIV infection, improving the epidemiological monitoring of the spread of HIV infection, regulating the legal measures for prophylaxis and for the campaign against HIV infection, guaranteeing the safety of medical processes, donated blood, biological fluids, organs, tissues, and immunobiological preparations, improving the diagnosis and treatment of HIV infection, carrying out scientific research work, strengthening the material and technical basis for the centers for prophylaxis and for the campaign against AIDS, socially protecting HIV-infected persons, training personnel, and so on.

To achieve effective cooperation among governmental, social, and international organizations taking part in the campaign against HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation, and also to carry out the provisions of the "Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS" in the Ministry of Health in the Russian Federation, a Consultative Council on the problems of HIV/AIDS has been created, the purpose of which is to coordinate the activities of governmental and non-governmental bodies that are working in the area of prophylaxis and of the campaign against HIV/AIDS and to represent the general interests of groups within the Russian population.

With regard to the special social significance of prophylaxis against the spread of HIV infection, the Russian Ministry of Health has created the Consultative Council on prophylaxis against the spread of HIV infection from the mother to the child in the Russian Federation. Representatives of international organizations (UNAIDS, UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF, East-West AIDS Foundation, inter alia) actively participate in the work of the Council. In the Scientific Center of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Perinatology of the Russian Academy of Medical Science, a monitoring department has been created for ongoing monitoring activity and intensifying

organizational and methodological assistance in this direction, and the Federal Scientific Clinical Center for the Prophylaxis and Treatment of HIV Infection in Pregnant Women and Children functions on the basis of the All-Republic Hospital for Infectious Diseases.

Questions of the prophylaxis, diagnosis, and treatment of HIV/AIDS have been included in the training and refresher training of medical personnel.

To ensure state statistical monitoring by the Russian Ministry of Health, since 2000 in the report form, "Information on medical assistance to women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the post-natal period," data have been included on the number of births by women infected with HIV and the number of children they have given birth to, and a temporary report form has been introduced, "Notification concerning cases of pregnancies of HIV-infected women that have been brought to term."

## **5. The prevention of violence against women.**

In Russia the problem of violence against women is continually monitored by state authorities.

Concerning the current state of the problem of violence against women, analytical and statistical materials made available by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation (MVD of Russia) and by departments of internal affairs of the component parts of the Russian Federation provide sufficiently objective information.

The problem of violence against women is viewed in society as a violation of human rights requiring the intervention of the state. Committing violence against women is a criminally punishable act.

In the MVD of Russia since 2001 a working group has met on the questions of preventing domestic violence, trafficking in women, prostitution, and violent acts of a sexual character, the working group being created to assure the cooperation between federal executive bodies and social organizations engaged in these questions.

For the purpose of prophylaxis with regard to serious and very serious "domestic" crimes, work of a preventive nature is being carried out by departments of internal affairs to uncover criminal activity.

Thus, in 2003 officials of the departments of internal affairs uncovered more than 2,500 crimes under Article 117 (torture), and more than 34,000 crimes under Article 119 (threat of murder or of causing serious harm to health) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

Officials of the departments of internal affairs have devoted special efforts to preventive-prophylactic work, aimed at preventing violence within the family, especially against the most vulnerable categories of citizens -- children, women, and the elderly. Within the scope of the law, measures are being taken for remediating the situations in dysfunctional families, and in especially critical cases, the norms of the criminal and administrative law are applied.

Persons who have permitted violations of rights within the sphere of domestic family relations are called to account in the departments of internal affairs, and prophylactic work is carried out with them.

In 2003, the prophylactic registries of the departments of internal affairs have recorded 3.7 million persons, of whom more than 317,100 persons committed violations of law in the sphere of domestic family relations, more than 381,500 were chronic alcoholics, and more than 136,100 were drug addicts.

The departments of internal affairs of the component parts of the Russian Federation are endeavoring to expose parents who exert a negative influence on their children, and prophylactic work has been undertaken with parents (guardians, custodians) who do not exercise, or exercise inappropriately, their obligations in the raising of children. In 2003, courts received 44,200 depositions for deciding questions of depriving persons of parental rights (in 2002, they received 40,700).

Within the structure of departments of internal affairs in several regions of Russia, specialized subdivisions have been created for the campaign against violations of rights in the area of morality. At the present time, they are active in the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, as well as in the Omsk region and the Udmurtsk Republic, where practical experience has been gained in the application of current legislation in preventing and intervening in violations of rights in the area of morality.

On 16 December 2003 the federal law came into force, "On the adoption of changes and amendments in the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation." The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation includes Articles 127-1, "Traffic in Persons," and 127-2, "Employing Slave Labor." The interpretation of concepts such as "traffic in persons" and "slavery" is substantially broader today and includes such crimes as involving others in prostitution, coercing persons for the transplantation of organs, and recruiting for work abroad that turns out to be illegal work in brothels. In this manner, but only in the area of fighting prostitution, it is possible to hold all intermediaries criminally responsible -- from the pimp to the telephone dispatcher. Most crimes that involve traffic in persons and the use of slave labor are classified as serious or very serious and are punished by incarceration for 8 to 15 years.

In accordance with the amendments that have been entered into the Articles, "Sexual relations with persons less than 14 years of age" and "Depraved activities" of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, the so-called age "of agreement to voluntary sexual relations and other activities of a sexual character" has been raised from 14 to 16 years. This also serves the purpose of protecting the rights of minors in the sexual sphere in their interactions with adults of both genders.

For the purpose of obtaining objective information concerning the scope of the spread of violence against women and children, including sexual violence, efforts are being made to improve the indicators of state statistics.

During 2001-2003, systematic work was carried out by the Russian Ministries of Labor, Internal Affairs, Justice, and Health, and the Russian State Statistics Committee to improve the forms of statistical accounting regarding violations of the rights of women and children, specifically regarding sexual exploitation, and to provide assistance to the victims of violence. Thus in 2001 by decree of the Russian MVD, the current form for statistical accounting, "Information on crimes entailing violent actions in relation to their victims," a section was added containing information on the victims of crimes, including minors, with an indicator of gender.

The Russian Ministry of Health, in its profession-based statistical recording, will take into account violations of rights of a sexual character committed against women and children, in accordance with the data of legal and medical expert reports.

In 2003 the Russian State Statistics Committee adopted a form worked out by the Russian Ministry of Labor for federal statistical monitoring, "Information concerning persons applying to institutions that provide social services for families and children," containing information concerning the number of clients making application, with differentiation according to gender, including the men, women, boys, and girls who have suffered sexual violence.

The role of legislative and executive bodies in the component parts of the Russian Federation has been significantly increased through realizing measures directed at improving the status of women in all spheres of life activity, discouraging discrimination on account of gender, and achieving gender equality.

In many regions of the Russian Federation, positive experience has been gained through efforts to prevent violence against women. In many regions, measures and action plans have been worked out and are being realized for improving the status of women and expanding their roles in society, including measures for preventing violence against women.

State structures, in close cooperation with social associations and non-commercial organizations, are working on preventing violence against women and girls.

Wide-ranging discussions at special meetings, conferences, seminars, and hearings on the problem of preventing violence against women have furnished an ongoing stimulus to the work of legislative and executive bodies, both on the federal level as well as on the level of the component parts of the Russian Federation, in organizing efforts on behalf of the victims of violence.

To furnish aid to victims of violence, a network of institutions has been created and developed for providing social services to the population, and, in addition to its other missions, it is being called upon to assist citizens in various difficult life situations and to contribute to the solution of many family-based psychological problems.

At the beginning of 2004, the number of social service institutions for families and children amounted to 3,229 (at the beginning of 2000 it was 2,240). As with similar institutions, vital assistance is being offered to the victims of violence and cruel treatment who have found themselves in difficult life situations.

In addition to the aforementioned, on the territory of the Russian Federation, under the auspices of social protection agencies (as of the beginning of 2004), 22 crisis centers were in operation for women, 94 crisis departments for women, functioning as structural subdivisions in social service institutions of various types. In crisis centers for women, psychological, legal, medical, pedagogical, and social-domestic services are provided for women and girls who have found themselves involved in difficult life situations or who have been subjected to violence. In crisis centers last year, assistance was provided to more than 50,000 women and children.

The social protection agencies of the component parts of the Russian Federation are coordinating the activities of centers situated on their territories and are providing them with organizational, methodological as well as practical assistance. With this purpose, the executive bodies of the component parts of the Russian Federation are adopting normative legal acts regulating the creation of crisis centers specializing in providing the entire range of social and legal services to women who have been subjected to violence. Crisis shelters have been formed for girls and young women who have been subjected to sexual violence and exploitation, and based in centers of social services, telephone hot-lines are in operation for women who have been transported abroad for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Victims of violence may obtain help both in state institutions as well as in institutions created by women's non-governmental organizations. At the present time, women's social organizations have created 47 crisis centers for assistance to women, which operate in close contact with executive bodies in the component parts of the Russian Federation and agencies of local government.

In the draft Gender Strategy of the Russian Federation, the problem of violence was dealt with in a separate section in which among the fundamental directions of work are the following:

Conducting educational campaigns on questions of violence with the purpose of increasing the knowledge in society and improving the understanding of the nature and influence of gender violence on social-economic, demographic, and cultural processes and social safety;

Working with the mass media to change social consciousness, behavior and social norms that project gender inequality;

Organizing and supporting the services that are engaged in the psychological and social correction of perpetrators of violent acts;

Developing and implementing disciplinary and educational programs for children, adolescents, and young persons on nonviolent methods for solving conflicts;

Conducting specialized and educational programs for employees in law-enforcement bodies at all levels, judges, officials of health agencies, psychologists, and social workers who provide assistance to women in crisis situations.

The education of specialists involved with the problem of preventing trafficking in persons and in providing help to the victims of violence is also very significant. For this purpose, in March 2003, the Russian Ministry of Labor together with the Russian social organization, "Independent Charitable Center for Assistance to Victims of Sexual Violence," or "Sisters," conducted a series of training sessions for specialists of executive bodies in the component parts of the Russian Federation on the topic, "Generalization from the Russian and international experience in preventing the trafficking in persons."

In 2004 the Russian Ministry of Labor together with the program TESIS propose to carry out the planned research into the problem of transporting women abroad for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

The association of crisis centers for assistance to women, "Let's stop violence," opened a National Information Line devoted to the problem of preventing the trafficking in persons. The purpose of the National Information Line is to make available information on Russian and international organizations which provide assistance to the victims of trafficking in persons in Russia and in foreign countries; on the embassies and consulates of Russia abroad; and on the measures that should be taken in order to secure personal safety during travel to foreign states. The services of the information line may be used by any person, but especially by those who are intending to travel abroad for the purpose of education, employment, or marriage.

The effectiveness of preventing trafficking in persons, the transporting of women and children abroad for the purpose of sexual exploitation, largely depends on the cooperative and coordinated work of the law-enforcement organs of various countries.

The Russian MVD has been endeavoring to strengthen and improve international cooperation in this area. In 1998-2002 joint operations were carried out with the countries of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) for preventing illegal migration and the transport of women. In accordance with the decision of experts of the operative committee of CBSS, NCB, "Interpol" has carried out an analysis of the facts of the transport of women for the purpose of engaging in prostitution and has created a map of the transport "streams."

## **6. Involving men and boys in achieving gender equality.**

In the Russian Federation the task of strengthening the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality is being addressed by making the male population more informed regarding questions of equal rights; advancing and developing gender education in secondary school and in higher education; encouraging the male portion of the population to adopt a tolerant, gender-sensitive attitude; and inculcating in men's public opinion a negative attitude towards violence against women.

In recent years, efforts to extend gender education in Russia have been intensified. In January 2003, the Commission on the Status of Women in the Russian Federation devoted a session to discussing the question of raising gender questions within the system of education, specifically the state of gender education. The Ministry of Education in the Russian Federation was asked to investigate the question of including the discipline of basic gender knowledge in the state

educational curriculum in higher professional education; to encourage the expansion of scientific research work on the topic of gender, and the training of scientific personnel in the scientific direction in question; and to retrain administrative personnel, teachers, and instructors in the fundamentals of gender knowledge.

In the Russian Academy of State Service attached to the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, certain special courses have been conducted on the problems of women in governmental service and on training women leaders, and various international women's symposiums, conferences, and thematically focused "round tables" have been organized. The aforementioned has made state officials who are receiving professional education in the Academy more informed concerning gender problems in contemporary Russia and their reflection in state administration.

The experience of teaching gender courses in schools has shown that the problem of gender evokes great interest among pupils, who are in the middle of a process of gender socialization, and for this reason young persons enjoy participating in discussions and in research work.

At the 23rd special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, "Women and Men in the year 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," the necessity was mentioned of expanding programs that permit women and men to combine work and family obligations, and of encouraging men to share equally with women the obligations of maintaining the household and caring for children.

The problem of combining professional and family roles for women in the Russian Federation is very serious. Russian women, as confirmed by statistics, prefer full employment. Proceeding from the interests of women, in the draft Gender Strategy of the Russian Federation it was envisaged to create more favorable conditions to permit an effective combination of maternal functions with professional ones, with the goal of providing women with the opportunity of a free choice of their life task. This in turn leads to changes in attitudes towards fatherhood.

In the Russian Federation during the last decade, fatherhood as a social institution has undergone fundamental changes. Among young men a revision of traditional gender roles has been under way in connection with economically providing for the family. Contemporary young fathers are much more involved in the raising of children, spend more time with them, and accept a part of the maternal obligations. Young men to a far greater degree than prior generations of men have begun to associate self-realization more with family life and, compared to their fathers, less with self-affirmation in the professional sphere. For improving the role of fatherhood in the Russian Federation, legal norms have been created and set down in the Labor and Family Codes.

### **Part III. Development of institutional mechanisms**

In Russia the creation of similar national mechanisms began with the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, No. 337, dated 4 March 1993, "On the initial tasks of state policy with regard to women," in accordance with which a National Council was formed in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women.

In November 1993, a Commission on Women, Family, and Demography, attached to the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, was formed.

By a resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation, No. 6, dated 8 January 1996, an interdepartmental commission was founded which was headed by the Minister of Social Protection of the Russian Federation. The status of the Commission and its membership were confirmed by a resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation, No. 599, dated 17 May 1996.

The intergovernmental commission had the status of a coordinating body, created for the purpose of unifying the actions of the federal executive bodies and executive bodies of the component parts of the Russian Federation.

By a resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation, No. 91, dated 28 January 1997, the interdepartmental commission was transformed into the commission on the questions of improving the status of women in the Russian Federation (under the leadership of the Deputy President of the Government of the Russian Federation).

An important step in the development of the national mechanism in question was the resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation, No. 491, dated 1 July 2002, by which the name of the commission was changed and amendments were adopted in its regulations regarding its activities, directed at "ensuring the application of gender approaches in preparing programs in the social and economic spheres (their evaluation from the point of view of realizing equal rights, freedoms, and opportunities for men and women)."

Since 1993 in the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation the Committee on Women, the Family, and Youth has been at work, its task being in part the realization of a Guideline for future legislation for securing equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women (adopted in 1997).

In 1999, in association with the Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, a Commission on Women was formed which in October 2002 was renamed as the Social Commission attached to the Office of the Chairman of the Federation Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in Russia. The task of the Commission is to implement gender approaches in the work of the Federation Council, to inform members of the Federation Council concerning the fundamental problems in the area of improving the social and economic status of women, to render expert opinions with regard to gender on decisions taken by the upper house of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

At the present time at the federal level, national mechanisms for improving the status of women include the Commission on the Status of Women in the Russian Federation under the leadership of the Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation, the Department on Women, Children, and the Family of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development of the Russian Federation, the Committee on Women, Family, and Youth of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, the Social Commission attached to the Office of the Chairman of the Federation Council for Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in Russia.

The main task of these mechanisms, among which there is a close mutuality and an ongoing exchange of information, is to support the Government of the Russian Federation in taking account of the gender problem in all areas of policy.

In most federal executive bodies in the Russian Federation (ministries and departments) at the present time there are structures carrying out the function of fostering gender equality, which monitor the situation at the level of deputy ministers, who are also members of the Commission on the Status of Women in the Russian Federation.

In developing bills, representatives of various executive bodies as a rule participate in parliamentary working groups. The Commission of the Federation Council carries out the function of furnishing expert opinions on questions of gender.

Component parts of the Russian Federation are creating in the localities analogous regional structures which are developing plans for concrete actions for improving the status of women, guided by the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the National Action Plan for improving the status of women in the Russian Federation and expanding their role in society in 2001-2005.

In November-December 2001, the Russian Ministry of Labor began monitoring the national mechanisms for the purpose of ascertaining the effectiveness of their activities.

In the course of the monitoring, the problem of taking account of gender approaches in the legislative basis of the component parts of the Russian Federation was analyzed, along with the presence/absence of expert opinions on gender, the level of training of staff workers in this area, and the presence of structural subdivisions responsible for their implementation. In addition, it became clear which are the plans and programs that exist for the solution of the most pressing problems of women. The information collected has made it possible to judge the directions of activity in the area of improving the status of women, to ascertain the group of persons responsible for the sphere in question, and to determine the level of competency in questions of gender equality.

During the period 1996-2000, structures dealing with the questions of improving the status of women were created. In all 89 component parts of the Russian Federation, and in administrative districts and regional ministries, a multi-branch network of subdivisions has been created that is responsible for the broader range of questions of social protection, health care, labor, education,

and other spheres of life for women, children and families. In addition to this, in 31 regions interdepartmental commissions have been created.