FINLAND

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Part I: Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment

The Finnish Government recommitted itself to the implementation of the UN Platform for Action at the Twenty-Third United Nations General Assembly special session “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” in June 2000. This report gives an overview of the achievements and challenges faced in Finland and is a continuation to the report given in 1999 five years after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.¹

This report has been prepared in a collaborative process with line ministries. A half-day seminar was organized where various partners (including women’s organizations, other non-governmental organizations) were invited to assess the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and identify main future challenges ahead. A summary of the main recommendations given at the seminar is attached to this report as an Annex A. Part I of the report gives an overview of the past ten years by reviewing the Government Programmes, relevant legislative processes and analyzing the trends and challenges ahead.

As a general analysis after the fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the focus of interventions on promoting gender equality in 1995-2004 has been on gender mainstreaming, combining work and family life as well as elimination of violence against women. There are lessons learnt and successful policies involving boys and men in the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, especially related to elimination of violence against women and promotion of responsible fatherhood.

In the global context, Finland ranked 5th in the Gender Development Index (GDI) in 1998. In comparison, the GDI for Finland in 2003 was 0.928 and Finland ranked 10th. In the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), Finland ranked 5th in 2003. However, as already reported in 1999, hidden and indirect discrimination of women prevails and gendered practices put women and men in an unequal position.

In 1999 major challenges reported were de jure/de facto gender equality, job segregation, employment situation of women (fixed-term and atypical employment relationships), equal pay and responsibility of officials and employers to draw up an annual plan for the promotion of equality in organizations. The same challenges still exist but a special emphasis has been put on elimination of multiple marginalisation of women belonging to minority groups such as people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, refugees and immigrants. The sparsely populated country and ageing population remain as challenges for the future and possibly have impacts on the status of women, especially related to availability of and access to services, growing economic dependency rate and women’s burden as caretakers in the family.

¹ Furthermore, Finland has recently submitted its fifth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (later referred as CEDAW 2003 report) which includes detailed reporting of the legislation, policies and programmes promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment.
The support for informal care covered approximately 26,000 clients in 2002, over a half of whom were men. 75 percent of the family caregivers were women and 25 percent were men. The number of men as informal carers has, however, slightly increased. In 40 percent of the informal care situations, the person cared for and the caregivers were spouses.

The longer lifespan of women means at present that on average men benefit more from home-care by spouse than women. In working life, employees’ bounds to their households and families are still narrowly seen from the viewpoint of the care of small children. Employment policies need to be made more favourable to informal care so that in the future informal care would more equally benefit both women and men.

The Council for Equality and Statistics Finland published the second Finnish Gender Barometer in 2001. The barometer uses evaluations, attitudes and men’s and women’s own experiences to study the division of housework and power relations between the genders and their acceptability in the prevailing societal situation.

A clear majority of men and women felt that men should increase their participation in the care and raising of their own children. The majority of working women and men considered that workplaces do not encourage men sufficiently to use childcare leaves. In other words, Finns support a shared responsibility for the financial support of the family and for parenthood. A copy of the gender barometer 2001 is provided as an attachment to the CEDAW 2003 report. The next Gender Barometer is scheduled to be published in 2004 by the Gender Equality Unit.

Parliamentary discussions between 2000 and March 2004 have touched upon several critical concerns of the Beijing Platform for Action. Those include issues related to education and training (gender impact assessment of education policy, gender equality in teacher education), the wage gap between women and men, equalisation of family costs, gender impact assessment of pension schemes, resources earmarked for national mechanisms and gender mainstreaming in state administration/Government, gender impact assessments of legislative acts, the Government’s National Programme and implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Specific questions have been raised on women’s representation in top management in the Government, leadership programmes for young women and protection of immigrant girls from violence within family.

**Government Programmes since 1995**

Promotion of gender equality has been visible in all Government Programmes since the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The first Government Programme for 1995-1999 committed itself to the promotion of gender equality and equality in working life and closing the gap between women’s and men’s salaries. The Government adopted the Government’s Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality in February 1997.

The Government Programme for 1999-2003 committed itself to

- securing public social services,
- implementing the principle of equal pay,
- implementing gender mainstreaming in Government administration,
- gender impact assessment of new legislative acts, and
removing obstacles to women’s entrepreneurship and providing entrepreneur loans for women.

The ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women entailed amendments to Finnish legislation. The most significant reform was the enacting of the Equality Act in 1987, which prohibits gender-based discrimination and establishes the post of an Equality Ombudsman to supervise compliance with the Act. The Act obliges authorities and employers to promote equality. Shortly after the Act was adopted, the Convention was ratified. The amendment to the Act in 1995 stipulates a 40 per cent gender quota in municipal select boards, municipal administration and government committees. The reform of the Equality Act involves that the access to pay data is facilitated and there will be new tools to eliminate pay differentials, such as a pay survey. The preparation of an equality plan will become obligatory (with sanctions, if not implemented) for workplaces with more than 30 employees. Other amendments to legislation upon ratification of CEDAW were: Child Custody and Right of Access Act 361/83, Guardianship Act 368/83, Nationality Act 584/84, Family Name Act 694/85, Marriage Act 411/86. The Optional Protocol to the CEDAW was ratified in 2000 (1093/2000).

Main legislative and administrative reforms are described in parts II and III.

Challenges ahead

From a gender perspective the Programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen’s Government (since 24 June 2003) is more comprehensive and tangible than the previous Programmes. The Government has committed itself to the promotion of gender equality and it is the responsibility of the entire Government. The Government will draw up an action programme in 2004 to attain gender equality, and it will mainstream gender equality throughout the public administration.

The Government sees it important to:

- Assess equality issues also from men’s point of view
- Encourage men to take family leave
- Share the costs incurred by employers from family leaves more equitably, which can be said to be of significance for the possibility of women to enter the labour market and to stay there.
- Enhance the conditions for female employment and entrepreneurship with respect to men and women, for example by means of loans to women entrepreneurs
- Together with social partners to draft a programme on equal pay and equality in working life aimed at eliminating unfounded differences in salary
- Discourage prostitution and allocate more resources for services to help prostitutes and victims of violence
- Protect victims of trafficking in women. Legal penalties for pandering offences will be tightened and the investigation methods improved,
- Consider criminalization of the purchase of sexual services

The Government is currently preparing a national action programme to implement gender equality in its Programme. The purpose of the Government Programme is to introduce mainstreaming equality into all State administration. The gender impact assessment will be done especially when enacting laws and preparing the budget. Details are given in part III and in the CEDAW 2003 report.
In April 2004, the Government adopted the Policy Programmes as part of the Government’s strategy document. The Government’s Strategy Document serves the implementation and monitoring of the Government Programme. Impacts of the Strategy Document will be assessed annually coinciding with the budget preparations. The gender impact assessment of the document requires resources and long-term capacity-building strategies at all levels of assessment.

The resources earmarked for gender equality or women’s empowerment are allocated through short-term project funding leading to various problems, such as lack of sustainability, coherence and uncertainties in the availability of services. The change in structures requires a change in attitudes of individuals. A longer-term strategy in gender-sensitization and practical tools for gender mainstreaming are required at all levels of state administration. This need has been recorded in the Government Programme.

Act on the Integration of Immigrants came into force in 1999. The Government made a declaration to the Parliament in the year 2002 regarding the implementation of this law. The Government as well as Parliament have paid attention to the status of women immigrants and to the problems confronted by them in their new home country. The law encompasses immigrants living in Finland who are unemployed work applicants and/or social welfare clients.

**Finland as an international actor**

Finland has a long tradition of promoting gender equality also in its foreign policy. The Government of Finland is committed to mainstreaming gender equality in all its activities and policies in this field. Special emphasis is given to the following thematic areas: Human rights of women and girls, promotion of sexual and reproductive rights, elimination of violence against women, education of women and girls, gender dimensions of globalisation and women's rights in conflict situations.

The importance of gender equality as one of the main goals of Finnish development cooperation is manifested in the constant and systematic way in which gender issues are highlighted in the various Finnish development cooperation policy and strategy papers, namely in the Decision-in-Principle on the Operationalisation of Development Policy Objectives in Finland’s International Development Cooperation of 2001, in the Policy on Relations with Developing Countries of 1998 and in the Decision-in-Principle on Development Cooperation of 1996.


In 2003, a Strategy and Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in Finland's Policy for Developing Countries for 2003-2007 was prepared by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to
operationalise the policy documents. The objective of the strategy is to achieve a fundamental increase in the impact of Finland's developing country policy with regard to gender equality and women's rights by the year 2007. The strategy is based on the mainstreaming approach. The principle of mainstreaming entails that all personnel are responsible for implementing the Strategy and Action Plan. The progress of implementation of the strategy will be monitored on annual basis.

Finland has been actively promoting gender issues in international fora, e.g. in the EU, in OECD and throughout the UN system, including specialized agencies, operational programmes and international financial institutions. At major UN conferences, Finland has systematically emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming and highlighted the rights of women.

Finland has actively promoted gender equality in the context of the information society at national and international levels. In the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Finland worked for the full recognition of the role of women in the information society. The Declaration of Principles includes important statements on women's empowerment and their full participation in all decision-making processes in an inclusive information society. Finland has contributed funds to the Gender Caucus project implemented in cooperation with UNIFEM and ITU to promote a gender perspective in the WSIS process.

The Ministry of the Environment was one of the conveners of the first Meeting of Women Leaders on Environment in 2002. The objective was to discuss poverty and globalisation and the relationship to environment and sustainable use of natural resources from the gender point of view. As a result, a network of Women Environment Ministers was formed and a second meeting was arranged in connection with the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

In addition to attempting to integrate a gender perspective into all its programmes, sectoral and budget support, Finland has supported initiatives that aim specifically at the advancement and empowerment of women, such as the Gender equality and equity programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Reproductive health, equity and rights programme in Nicaragua, the Prevention of all forms of trafficking in women and children programme in Cambodia in collaboration with IOM, the Women's entrepreneurship programme of UNIDO and the Integrated reproductive health and mother and child health care programme in Afghanistan in association with UN Habitat.

The gender approach and specific components to assist the empowerment of women have characterised all main Finnish bilateral human rights projects, for instance in Central America, the Balkans and Afghanistan. In NGO cooperation, Finland has provided assistance to national and international NGOs advancing gender equality, such as FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationalists'), FAS (Femmes Africa Solidarité), IA (International Alert Gender and Peace Building Programme), IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation), IAC (Inter Africa Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children), IWTTC (International Women's Tribune Center) WEDO (Women's Environment and Development Organisation) and WIDE (Women in Development).
In multilateral cooperation, Finland has financially supported UNIFEM programmes targeting the prevention and elimination of violence against women. Finland's substantial support to UNFPA can be considered an important contribution towards the advancement of women's reproductive rights.

Finland also contributed towards the publication of the UNIFEM report "Women, War and Peace" published in 2002, as part of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325. In 2003 Finland financed a P-5 post in the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, on women, peace and security issues.

In the context of co-operation with neighbouring areas (Russian Federation and the Baltic States), Finland has promoted gender equality and women's empowerment with the objective of increasing stability, welfare, equality and social stability in the region. Concrete examples of this include e.g. support to projects on preventing trafficking in women, violence against women and sexually transmitted diseases, and on promoting women's entrepreneurship and awareness of equal rights.
Part II: Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Reporting under part II on the progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action deals mainly with legislative acts and specific programmes undertaken during the five-year reporting period 2000-2004. Details of the legislative acts and programmes during 1995-1999 are given in the first national report on the Beijing Platform for Action in 1999. The progress reporting on implementation follows the twelve critical areas of concern. Issues related to gender mainstreaming and institutional development are dealt with under part III of the report. The fifth periodic CEDAW report gives further details in each reform and programmes. References to specific parts of CEDAW report are made under each critical area.

Elimination of multiple discrimination – safeguarding equality

During the past few years and especially after the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, particular attention has been paid to persons or groups subjected to multiple discrimination. Women and girls belonging to minorities (such as Sámi, Roma, or immigrant women) and women with disabilities often face multiple discrimination based on ethnic origin or health status, as well as gender.

The Act on Safeguarding Equality (21/2004) entered into force in 2004. The Act forbids discrimination based on age, ethnic or national origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, status of health, disability, sexual orientation and other personal reason. The special aim of the Act is to tackle multiple discrimination, which has also been a major concern for doubly marginalized women. A detailed description of the law is given in the CEDAW 2003 report.

The Ombudsman for Minorities started as an authority on 1 September 2001, when the Act (660/2001) and the Decree (661/2001) on the Ombudsman for Minorities entered into force. It is the task of the Ombudsman for Minorities to promote good ethnic relations as well as the position and rights of foreigners and those belonging to ethnic minorities in Finnish society, to monitor the implementation of equality, to supervise compliance with the discrimination ban against those of ethnic origin as well as to make initiatives, to inform, report and carry out the tasks assigned to the Ombudsman for Minorities in the Aliens' Act (378/1991).

The task of the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) set up by the Government in 2001 is particularly to promote good ethnic relations as well as to prevent racism and ethnic discrimination. Detailed information on the Ombudsman for Minorities and Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations and their specific activities related to gender equality is given in the CEDAW 2003 report.

Challenges to eliminating multiple discrimination

Some 10 per cent of the population is estimated to have an injury or disability causing a significant detriment. Among them, approximately 60 per cent are women. There are hardly any research results or statistics on discrimination faced by women with disabilities. Information
about persons with disabilities is often gender-blind and the Finnish disability policy is gender-neutral.

The Finnish constitution provides a special status for both the Sámi and Roma minorities. The CEDAW 2003 report gives further information on the situation of minority women in Finland, including immigrant women.

The Finnish Rural Policy Programme has a Co-ordination Group which also includes a separate theme group for women. It is a contact network of women working in different jobs in different parts of Finland, and aims at enhancing the female perspective on rural and regional policy. In 2003, the theme group compiled an action plan on rural women. Details on the Rural Policy Programme are given in the CEDAW 2003 report under article 14.

A. Women and poverty

As an overall analysis, macroeconomic policies have often been gender-blind and often social policies and programmes for tackling poverty and social exclusion do not specifically analyse gender impacts nor mention gender specific targets.

Finland has prepared the second National Plan of Action to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion (2003-2005) as part of the implementation of the Nice European Council decision in December 2000. The National Plan of Action emphasizes know-how, social justice and regional balance, and encourages work and entrepreneurship. Finland’s policies in combating poverty and social exclusion are based on the principles of the Nordic welfare state, including universal services and adequate social protection.

During the recession years of the 1990s the average real income of the working-age population declined in all types of families. Only after the middle of the 1990s the average real income began to approach the pre-recession level. Simultaneously with economic growth and improved employment situation, income differences between households have increased rapidly since the mid-1990s. The income development of families with children has lagged somewhat behind that of other population groups. In particular, the income of single parents has improved less than that of other population groups since the recession years. The main reason for that is the higher unemployment rate among single parents compared with others. The income development of families with children under school age has likewise been weaker than that of other groups.

Approximately 11 per cent of people live under the relative poverty line. The amount is three per cent higher than in 1990. This poverty is mostly due to long-term unemployment. The most vulnerable groups include young adults, long-term unemployed people and single parents. The amount of the population vulnerable to poverty is estimated to be around 250,000, of which the number of households with only one person is around 140,000. In the 1990s, the rising divorce rate led to an increase in the number of single-parent families. Roughly 20 per cent of families with children are single-parent families. Most of the single-parent families are headed with women, single-supporter fathers are still a rare phenomenon.
In general, the difference in the number of men and women living below the poverty line has decreased. However, the amount of women over 65 years of age compared with men in the same age group is three times higher.

The CEDAW 2003 report gives detailed information on social security, pension benefits and child day care related issues under article 11. Similarly, information on inheritance legislation is given under article 16 in the CEDAW report.

**B. Education and training of women**

The CEDAW 2003 report gives detailed information on education and training related issues under article 10 on gender differences in education, measures relating to youth and sports policy, and women’s studies.

**Achievements**

As reported in the CEDAW 2003 report, all Finnish girls go to school and women are well-educated. Among 20-64-year-old women, 75.4 per cent are secondary-level graduates, as opposed to 71.5 per cent of men. Over 90 per cent of those aged 16 to 18, half of the 19-24-year olds and one quarter of those aged 25-29 were studying in some post-basic level education leading to a qualification.

Also the share of women among university-level graduates in Finland is higher than that of men. Of those completing a university degree in 2001, the share of women was 59 per cent. Of those obtaining a post-graduate degree (licentiate or doctorate degree) in the same year, the share of women was 46 per cent. The share of women with a licentiate or doctorate degree increased from 15 per cent in 1975 to 33 per cent in 2001. In 2002, 61 per cent of the population aged 15 or over had some post-basic qualification. Nearly all children aged 7 to 15 were in comprehensive schools. CEDAW 2003 report gives details on the Equality Plan of the Academy of Finland under article 10.

Regarding the adult education statistics, in 2000 more than one half of the population aged 18 to 64, or almost 1.8 million, participated in adult education, that is, education and training specifically intended and organised for adults. Almost three fifths of women took part in such education and training, while the proportion for men was slightly under one half. This difference in participation rates between men and women has remained the same for the last twenty years.

Although especially young women are highly educated in Finland, the educational fields are strongly divided into women's and men's fields. Over 80 per cent of those with a technical education were men in 2001, while 89 per cent of those with social or health care education were women. Also the education, service and art fields are female-dominated with a share of about 70 per cent.

The total reform of the legislation on education entered into force on 1 January 1999. In connection with the legislative reform, special attention was paid to ensuring educational equality and equal educational services. The legislation also included a provision on the right of the student to a safe study environment.
**Challenges ahead**

Gender and regional equality are values underpinning the basic education core curricula to be adopted in 2006. The Development Plan for Education and Research 2003-2008 will focus on gender differences in learning styles for boys and girls, and their impacts on teaching methodologies and teacher training.

Finnish basic education is based on a gender-neutral way of thinking, which, in spite of its underlying equality, may in practice result in inequality in the education system. The curricula of schools do not for example include education in equality nor does the teaching necessarily support the development of gender sensitivity.

In the performance funding granted by the Ministry of Education to polytechnics, attention has been paid to the strong differentiation of the training in some fields to female and male dominated fields. Polytechnics with an above-average rate in recruiting minority-gender students and teachers to training programmes strongly differentiated by gender, receive additional funding for practices supporting gender equality. The Development Programme of Mathematics and Sciences "LUMA", operating in 1996-2002, was also aimed at promoting greater gender equality in these fields. Details are given in the CEDAW 2003 report.

Equality issues are also becoming more prominent in teacher training. In addition to compulsory teacher training studies, equality issues are covered also in other study entities and students may take courses relating to gender equality as optional courses, literature courses, or in the form of courses planned by the students themselves. However, NGOs have pointed out that gender components should be compulsory for all vocational and on-the-job training for professionals (such as police, judges, teachers, etc).

Women are also a clear majority in preparatory education of immigrants. Special attention should be directed to women emigrating from countries where literacy rates are low, particularly among women and girls. Due to lacking or low levels of formal education, these immigrants are in a vulnerable situation in a knowledge-based, high-technology society.

According to the recent Government Report on Human Rights Policy, the welfare institutions do currently not provide sufficient services for persons with disabilities, who thus often suffer institutional discrimination. Some NGOs have stated that the current educational services do not systematically meet the specific needs of women with disabilities.

**C. Women and health**

The CEDAW 2003 report gives detailed information on health related issues under article 12 on the promotion of health, health care during and after pregnancy, family planning and abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases. The Government submitted a report on public health in 2000 and 2002 and since 2002 the report is to be issued every four years. The report describes health differences between men and women.
In 2002, about 55,000 children were born in Finland, which is about 10,000 less than ten years ago. In 2002 the population of Finland was about 5.2 million.

By European standards, the Finnish fertility has however remained relatively high, being 1.73 in 2002. The average in the European Union was 1.53. In recent years, there have however been changes in the fertility rate by age group. The fertility of those under 25 has fallen, whereas that of the over-30s has risen. The fertility rate of women between 25 - 29 years has fallen in the past few years. In general, women are having their first child later than before. The average age of first-time mothers was 27.7 in 2002. The number of families with children is growing slightly, but an increasing number of women remain childless at the same time. It seems that family policy support has enabled families that already have children to have more, whereas having a first child becomes less common due to increased economic insecurity among the young. One reason is that atypical and fixed term employment is common amongst women in the age group 25 - 29.

The life expectancy has slightly increased for both men and women and the difference between men and women has decreased slightly (81.5 for women and 74.6 for men in 2001; 80.5 for women and 73.4 men in 1997).

The demographic structure in Finland is at the moment favourable but it will change drastically in the next few years, since the population is ageing at a rapid pace. The proportion of people aged less than 15 years in the population is about 18 per cent and that of people over 65 years 15 per cent. In 2030, the proportion of older people will be about 26 per cent and that of children under 15 years 15 per cent. The share of population outside the labour force is growing and the population of working age will begin to decline as soon as from the year 2010.

**Successful examples**

*Promoting the health of young people (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health).* The regular follow-up of young people's health, health habits and healthy school environment since 1998 has been successful in providing precise data on youngsters’ health and in inspiring further actions on community level. Based on the survey the sexual knowledge of young people slightly improved from 2000 to 2002.

Several NGOs are or have been implementing projects on the prevention of genital mutilation of girls. The activities have included preventive campaigning at the community level, improving the health of women and girls, educating health care students and personnel.

NGOs receive funding for counselling and campaigning on the issues of sexual health, family planning and infertility. The Sexual Health Clinic of the Family Federation of Finland aims at promoting sexual health, improving sexual health services by offering services such as the Open House, which offers free of charge counselling and treatment for all under 18-year-old girls and under 20-year-old boys. Another project aims at improving men’s welfare through counselling, creating more positive media atmosphere of masculinity and creating sexual education material and providing education for health and social care professionals. The Clinic has launched new services for women who have been sexually abused.
As reported in the Government report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1999, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has followed the patients’ position in the health care system. The Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients came into force at the beginning of 2001. The Act strengthens the rights and position of persons with disabilities as users of services. Women with disabilities have special needs for health care services, especially during and after pregnancy, and for family planning. However, many women with disabilities feel that their rights to equal partnership, motherhood and family life are questioned or not valued.

**Challenges ahead**

One of the future challenges is to improve the economic dependency ratio. An ageing population structure means added pressure on the sustainability of public economy, firstly as a factor increasing the pension and care costs. Secondly, if the decrease in the supply of labour cannot be compensated for by increasing the employment rate and productivity, the economic growth and the increase of tax revenues will slow down, which in turn will make it harder to finance social protection. A growing unemployment rate and increasing unemployment costs would mean that less resources are available for developing services.

Women's specific health needs relate to the access and availability of services for the treatment of osteoporosis and related bone diseases, breast cancer and mental health problems. Taking into consideration the ageing of the population, services for ageing women will be in great demand in the future. Regarding legislative acts, a proposal for an Act on Infertility Treatment is currently being prepared.

**Access to health care services**

As reported in the CEDAW 2003 report, challenges remain in providing equal access to health care services in remote areas and for people with special needs. The CEDAW 2003 report also gives details of the health care services provided to women belonging to minorities.

In April 2002, the Government made a policy decision with the aim of ensuring good health care for all citizens also in the future. The purpose is for everyone to have access to necessary health care irrespective of their place of residence and financial status. The means to attain the goal are the development of health services in co-operation between the State and the municipalities also taking into account the activities of NGOs and the private sector.

The most central development areas relate to proactive work towards health and health promotion, ensuring access to and availability of health care, the sufficiency of personnel and an improvement of their skills, a reform of the activities and structures of the health care system and strengthening health-care financing. The project will continue until the end of 2007. The national health care project is supported by a project of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities for 2002-2004 aiming at a reorganization of the primary health-care services of the municipalities.

The Health 2015 public health programme is the most important strategy for health promotion in Finland. It continues to aim to give people a longer and healthier life and to reduce health differences between population groups. The targets for different age groups are e.g. child well-
being and health, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse among young people, accidental and violent
death among adult men, working and functional capacity among people of working age, and
average functional capacity among people over 75. The rest of the programme targets concern
healthy life, satisfaction with health services, and reduction of inequality (amongst gender,
educational and occupational groups). One specific target aims at reducing the number of
accidental and violent deaths among young adult men. Further details on target indicators for
children and adolescents are given under the section on girls.

Reporting on sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health issues
The CEDAW 2003 report describes in detail available health care services during and after
pregnancy as well as family planning services. Finland has committed itself to implementing the
Programme of Action agreed in Cairo in 1994 through providing sexual and reproductive health
services to all and promoting sexual rights at all levels. Details on abortions and sexual health
education are given in the CEDAW 2003 report. NGOs argue that the incidence of abortions
among young women has increased due to lack of preventive campaigning and lack of
systematic sexual health education in schools.

Trends in sexually transmitted diseases: In 2002, a total of 13,661 cases of chlamydia were
detected in Finland, 62 per cent of these cases were in women (the number has increased since
2001 by over 1,000 cases). The cases of gonorrhoea have, on the other hand, been continuously
decreasing, and in 2002 only 235 new cases were reported, and the share of women was 23 per
cent. The reported cases of syphilis were 126 in 2002. In 2002, 129 HIV infections were
detected, 29 per cent of them in women. In the same year, 20 new cases of AIDS were
diagnosed. The four persons who died of AIDS in 2002 were all men.

Women make up 25 per cent of all (cumulative since 1980) HIV positive cases in Finland (28
per cent in 2002). 13 per cent of all HIV positive cases in Finland are below 25 years of age, 2.3
per cent are below 20 years of age.

Some examples of successful strategies include low-threshold counselling and support centres
(incl. needle exchange) for intravenous drug users (IVDUs), free testing and treatment for HIV,
confidentiality within health care and possibility for anonymous testing, government support for
NGOs working with PHLWAs, a personal letter to every 15-year-old youth about sexual and
sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, topics since 1987, voluntary and free
screening for pregnant women since 1997, needle exchange and anonymous counselling centres
for IVDUs since 1997, anonymous and free services (counselling, support and treatment for
STDs) for sex workers in the capital Helsinki, STD counselling and treatment included in the
programmes for IVDUs and prostitutes, free anti-retro-viral treatment also for pregnant women
testing positive (only a few found annually), and campaigning for social inclusion and accepting
atmosphere within HIV/AIDS programme.

In the new national guidelines for child health clinics which will be issued by the Ministry of
Social Affairs and Health in spring 2004, emphasis is placed on early identification of post-
partum depression, early intervention and prevention of violence in the family.
**Research and information**

Universities and other research units (e.g. National Public Health Institute and the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health STAKES) carry out research on both sexes but also on women’s health. The emphasis on gender differences is not yet very marked. In 2003 a book entitled "Gender and health" was published, which analyses gender differences in morbidity and mortality, reproductive health, gender differences in health behaviour as well as gender issues in the provision and use of health services.

**D. Violence against women**

**Measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women**

Finland has completed (1998-2002) a five-year action plan directed at the prevention of violence and prostitution. The project was administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (MSAH) and it was implemented by the National Research and Development Center for Welfare and Health (Stakes) during the term of the previous government. During the first phase, prevention of domestic violence was promoted by developing pilot projects in municipalities and by arranging training as well as by producing educational material for the professionals. The action plan has been reported earlier in 1999 and recently under the CEDAW report 2003.

In its programme of 24 June 2003, the Government brought up the prevention of violence in relationships and against women as well as the prevention of prostitution from two viewpoints: as an issue of gender equality and as a phenomenon weakening the safety of citizens.

As referred in the CEDAW 2003 report, the current Government programme will allocate resources throughout the Government's term to prevent domestic violence and violence against women and to discourage prostitution. More resources will be made available for services to help prostitutes and victims of violence, and the protection of victims of trafficking in women will be strengthened.

A joint programme of various administrative sectors has already been started to increase the security of citizens and to reduce violence. Ministry of Interior prepares at present a programme on internal security. A central goal of the programme is to decrease the number of violent crimes. The National Council for Crime Prevention (Ministry of Justice) has the task of preparing a programme for crime prevention. The prevention of violence against women is included.

Long-term work is needed in order to develop the professional skills of the employees and to improve the services. Therefore, in the years 2004-2007 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is preparing a second phase Action Plan at the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence which meshes with parallel programmes being developed by the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Justice (The National Council for Crime Prevention). The action plan will run until 2007 and aims to improve on work already carried out, in particular by developing services nationwide to help victims and perpetrators of domestic and intimate partner violence against women and children. The supply of services is often sporadic and there are significant regional differences in the availability of services. The other goals of the Action Plan are: intensifying the support for children and young people who witness or experience violence and developing the professional skills required for the work against violence and for handling related
issues. The aim is to improve the professional skills of employees so that they would be able to identify and intervene in problems of violence at an early stage.

The highest police management has set a guidance group to prevent domestic violence with the task of developing professional training of the police, workplace training, research and local police activities forming part of crime prevention as well as information. The central key areas are the basic training of policemen, workplace training and further training. One focal point also includes co-operation between different authorities and voluntary organizations. The highest police management has determined local police operations as one of the focal points of the Police Performance Plan (2003/2006). A separate theme for the years 2003 and 2004 is the prevention of domestic violence.

Follow-up seminar in April 2004 summarized the needs and demands for new action plan at the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence. NGOS were concerned about availability of services for victims and short-term project funding. They addressed also the need for resources for new studies and statistics on violence against women.

**Eliminate trafficking and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking**

As referred in the CEDAW 2003 report, the current Government programme will allocate resources throughout the Government’s term to prevent domestic violence and violence against women and to discourage prostitution. More resources will be made available for services to help prostitutes and victims of violence, and the protection of victims of trafficking in women will be strengthened. The Government has undertaken to direct resources to increase support services for the victims of abuse and trafficking in women as well as prostitutes.

The Government has recorded the drawing up of a national action plan to prevent trafficking. The purpose is to draw up a national, common program on the prevention of trafficking in women. The program will, inter alia, look into ways of preventing this trafficking. This includes tangible plans and arrangements to protect the victims of trafficking in women and witnesses.

Details of the legislative reforms and increased co-operation with neighbouring countries are given in the CEDAW 2003 report. The CEDAW 2003 report under the article 6 gives details on the preventive action on commercial exploitation of women (co-operation between authorities, sex phone lines, legislative reforms, and sexual rights).

**Study of the causes and consequences**

Finland has conducted extensive national studies on victims in 1980, 1988, 1993, 1997 and 2003. Studies on victims contain gender-specific information on becoming victims to violence, traffic accidents, occupational accidents, accidents at home as well as other accidents.

Violence against women has been studied in co-operation projects between Statistics Finland and the Council for Equality in three statistical reports. A separate study on violence experienced by disabled women was published in 2001. All above mentioned reports are mentioned in detail in the CEDAW 2003 report.
Development of crime is being followed by the National Research Institute of Legal Policy. It conducts impartial research on legal policy, publishes related reports and follows the development of Finnish and international legal policy research. As part of this task it has been researching both women as crime victims, and crimes committed by women (annual report “Crime in Finland 2002”)

Violence following a divorce may often remain hidden. Assaults and violent behaviour frequently continue even after a divorce and the former spouse may be subjected to threats, stalking or other harassment. NGOs have been concerned about violence directed at women after the break-up of a relationship. Extensive research on the topic is still to be conducted.

**Legislative acts**
The Beijing + 5 report in 1999 provided information on the following legislative acts: legislation on assaults and sexual offences (chapter 20 of the Penal Code 563/1998, criminal procedure; Act 689/1997).

Major reforms are briefly mentioned below; detailed descriptions of the reforms are given in the CEDAW 2003 report.

The Act on the Restraining Order (898/1998), which entered into force at the beginning of 1999. The Ministry of Justice has prepared a Government Bill (HE 144/2003) to amend the Act on the Restraining Order to be applied inside a family (so called inside-the-family restraining order). In connection to this reform, the prosecutor will be given the authority to charge in cases of domestic violence with assault even in cases where the victim requests that no charges should be raised.

The Government Bill on the Restraining Order (HE 144/2003) proposes an amendment to the Penal Code to repeal the provision of chapter 21, section 17 of the Penal Code on the non-prosecution of assault. The purpose is for the amendment to enter into force at the same time as the amendment of the Act on the Restraining Order.

The amendment of the Code of Procedure entered into force at the beginning of October 2003 (360/2003) and it improves the protection of witnesses, injured parties and others heard at trial. The Act now includes provisions on the possibility to hear a person for the purpose of giving testimony at the main trial without a party or the public present or through a video conference.

The amendments proposed to the Penal Code and the Act on the Restraining Order indicate that the attitude of society to domestic violence is negative and that society considers domestic violence a serious problem that has to be tackled.

Section 2 of the Decree on Pre-trial Investigation and Coercive Measures (575/1988) has been supplemented by a new second paragraph relating to the transfer of a police report (288/2002).

The concept of mediation as part of the settlement of the violence receives controversial feedback. Legislation covering a possibility for mediation is being prepared. NGOs have pointed
out that the right of the victim to receive free of charge assistance in court is less known and more attention should be paid to increase awareness of this right.

A Government Bill has been presented to the Parliament in relation to trafficking in human beings and according to which, the Penal Code should be amended so that trafficking in human beings, procuration, and prostitution could be more effectively prevented (HE 34/2004). The amendments are related, on the one hand, to the implementation of Finland’s international obligations and, on the other hand, to responding to national amendment needs. In addition, amendments are proposed to criminal provisions on the arrangement of illegal immigration as well as child pornography.

**Examples of NGO services**

Several NGOs provide guidance and support under project funding for women and girls experiencing violence or threat of violence through telephone and internet services. Special needs of immigrant women (such as services in minority languages) are provided as much as possible with current resources. A project on non-violent alternative for men in Espoo is piloting a meditative process towards violence against women. Many of the services are provided with voluntary human resource contributions. Details of few examples are given in the CEDAW 2003 report.

Finland takes part in a larger European Commission funded project which aims at mapping the occurrence of and best practices in combating the phenomenon of honour crimes in Europe.

The church has strongly and visibly participated in prevention campaigns and actions relating to violence against women. These campaigns have included, inter alia, the Ecumenical Decade of the World Council of Churches "Churches in support of women" as well as the decade "From violence to settlement", currently ongoing. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has recently launched its action plan to eliminate violence against women.

The victims of crime task force set by the Ministry of Justice submitted its report on 19 June 2001. The task force made proposals on how to improve the position of a victim of crime in practice. On the basis of the proposals of the task force, inter alia, a guide brochure has been drafted for victims of crime and translated into several languages.

**E. Women and armed conflict**

The Ministry of Defence has developed a code of conduct for peace keeping missions and integrates gender issues in the training of peace keeping personnel. Training is given in social and cultural aspects of the mission area. The use of prostitutes is prohibited. The code of conduct is monitored and immediate action taken in case of violation.

In 2003, the Government Bill on a new Aliens' Act was given to Parliament (HE 28/2003). It introduces the possibility to consider gender-related persecution as a criterion for granting asylum. Details are given in the CEDAW 2003 report.
F. Women and economy

The CEDAW 2003 report gives detailed information on economy and especially work related issues under article 5 on men’s and women’s joint responsibility for the family (reconciling of work and family life, unpaid domestic work), article 10 on promoting equality in working life through labour policies, article 11 on elimination of discrimination in working life, atypical employment relationships, immigrant women on the labour market, the proposal for an act on safeguarding equality, collective agreement system, wages and unemployment among women, and article 13 on supporting women entrepreneurs. The labour policy of the Government Programme is also described in the report.

Details of the immigrant women’s position in the labour market are given in the CEDAW report under article 11. Details concerning the Roma women are given under article 5. Disabled women experience difficulties in the labour market, and systematic actions to support disabled women entering labour markets are needed.

Access to employment

Due to the unbalanced labour demand and supply, Finland suffers from structural unemployment affecting more than 170,000 persons. In 2002, the unemployment rate of both women and men was 9.1. The number of unemployed women was 114,000 and that of men 123,000. The unemployment rates were highest among 15-24-year-olds and they decreased with age. In the case of 15-24-year-old women, the unemployment rate was slightly lower than that of men. However, in the case of 25-44-year-old women, the unemployment rate was slightly higher than that of men. The differences in the unemployment rates of women and men were small.

In 2001, 19.6 per cent of unemployed women had university degrees while 13.2 per cent of unemployed men had these degrees. A larger share of unemployed men than unemployed women lacked education beyond the basic level.

Towards the end of the 1990s, unemployment among the parents of families with children was reduced. Mothers of small children however adjusted their working hours according to the age of children: less than half of the mothers of children less than three years were employed whereas the corresponding proportion among the mothers of school-age children was about 70 per cent. The mothers of every third child and fathers of more than every second child had atypical working hours (shift, evening, night, and weekend work). In the 1990s about a quarter of the mothers and fathers and a tenth of the fathers of minor children (less than 18 years of age) had part-time or fixed-term jobs. Fixed-term work is typical for the first years of career among highly educated women and such employment is more common in the public than in the private sector.


Supporting women’s entrepreneurship

The Ministry of Trade and Industry: (MTI) promoted women’s entrepreneurship through entrepreneur loans for women in 2003 amounting to 18.2 million euros.
**Wage gap - men’s Euro is women’s 82 Cents**

A research project (Finnish Work Environment Fund, commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health) on gender wage differentials in the Finnish labour market showed that the overall wage gap of about 21.5 per cent cannot be accounted for by individual characteristics, as age and educational qualifications are similar for men and women. When industry and occupational qualifications were included in the regressor matrix, only about 50 per cent of the gross differential remained unexplained. An even larger part of the gross differential could be explained in sector-specific analyses with a dense set of occupational dummies. Women with a high wage predictor, that is women with good educational qualifications in well-remunerated occupations, lag the most behind their male counterparts with similar characteristics.

For instance, the number of state employees is about 125,000, of which women constitute 48 per cent. Calculating the average wages of all men and all women the gross wage differential is around 20 per cent among the central government personnel. Adding the occupational variable leads to a large drop in the gender differential of central government employees. Occupational categorization explains away most of the wage differential. About 90 per cent of the gross differential is explained by differences in the segregation into different occupations. Workshops are being organized for personnel in 2003-2004 in order to learn how to assess the gender impacts of collective agreements. According to the state personnel policy (Government Decision 2001), the state employer will be actively involved in reconciling work and family life and promoting an equal use of family leaves.

The social partners (central employers' organizations, both private and public sector employers and all central employees' organizations representing both salaried and professional employees) have agreed on several issues concerning equal opportunities in the current Incomes Policy Agreement for the years 2003 and 2004. Details are given in the CEDAW 2003 report.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is preparing an initiative on a reform of the equalization of family costs as a tripartite process in 2004.

The Household Satellite Account measures and values unpaid household production. The method used in Finland follows mainly the Eurostat model, and results of the accounts will be available in autumn 2004. Finland has had an active role in developing and promoting the model.

**Elimination of occupational segregation**

The Action Plan of Finnish Employment Policy for 2002 mentions the following measures in order to decrease segregation:

- reforming the foundations of comprehensive school and senior secondary school curricula so that the contents of education and teaching methods will alleviate segregation
- launching of projects and practices promoting atypical educational choices for both sexes
- drafting development projects on the contents, methods and arrangement of education to alleviate segregation
- arranging campaigns to influence workplace culture and the attractiveness of various branches, particularly the metal industry
• developing employment services, particularly advice and counselling services in a gender-sensitive direction
• statistical studies to ascertain the fields with an uneven gender distribution and the greatest need for labour in the near future.

**Harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men**
Legislative acts related to the Family Leave Package are described in the CEDAW 2003 report under article 5.

Fathers are entitled to a paternity leave. In 2002, nearly 67 per cent of fathers exercised their right to paternity leave. After the maternity leave, either parent may take parental leave. In 2002, only three per cent of fathers took parental leave. NGOs are worried about the trend and negative attitudes of employers on the issue. Requests have been made to support fathers’ decisions.

According to the Gender Barometer and the interview of 2001 about the attitude of workplaces to the use of statutory family leave, it is much more difficult for the fathers to take a few months of parental leave than it is for the mothers to be on care leave until the child is three years old.

In 2002-2003, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health implemented a campaign to encourage the use of parental leave entitled "Use your parental leave". In connection with the campaign, maternity clinics distributed leaflets about parental leave to parents visiting the clinics. Also the central labour organizations have promoted a more equal use of family leaves among men and women. They have arranged several regional events within the framework of the project "Time-out for the family" in the spring of 2002.

**G. Women in power and decision-making**

The CEDAW 2003 report gives detailed information on decision-making and power related issues under article 7 on the right to vote, the composition of Government, state civil servants, funding granted to women’s organizations and under article 4 on the quota provision of the Act on Equality between Women and Men.

**Achievements**
The Government applies the gender quota provision in the nomination of working groups and experts.

The Ministry of Finance carried out a project to promote access of women to the top and middle management in the state administration in March 2002 - December 2003. The activities included human resource management policies and strategies of central government organizations, improvements in planning for promoting equal opportunities (real targets or measures), informing of good practices, a network of women managers (260 participants), and a mentoring programme. The network continues its meetings. The number of women in top management in state administration was 21.9 per cent (196 women) at the end of 2003; the increase was 6.6 per cent from 2002.
The number of women leaders and managers in the service and industry sectors has increased significantly during the last ten years. Within the industry, the number of women has doubled within the past twenty years amongst the expert and manager positions. In 1981 the proportion of women was 10.8 per cent, whereas the proportion in 2002 was 23.8 per cent. Within the service sector the proportions were in 1993 37 per cent and in 2003 42 per cent.

After the 2003 parliamentary elections, Finland had, for the first time in its history, a woman as a prime minister and a 50-50 gender balance in the cabinet. However, Ms. Jäätteenmäki submitted her resignation as Prime Minister just two months after taking office.

**Some future challenges**

- The quota provision in the municipalities has increased the participation of women in decision-making bodies at the municipal level. However, there are plans to advocate more women to become elected in the forthcoming municipal election in October 2004.
- 79 per cent of municipal employees are women.
- Equality planning within municipalities: personnel policies and gender impact assessment and gender budgeting initiatives.
- 90 per cent of experts called by parliamentary committees are men.
- Women in international decision-making: recommendations of the SC Resolution 1325 are yet to be systematically implemented.

**I. Human rights of women**

The Government Report on Human Rights Policy released in April 2004, for the first time, in addition to covering the international human rights environment, also focuses on human rights questions in Finland.

The report reiterates that human rights are a priority in the government’s foreign and security policy. Finland’s active international role in promoting human rights and its good record in the implementation of human rights obligations in Finland are interconnected.

In Finnish human rights policy, special emphasis is given to the rights of women, children, minorities, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Nationally, the government is committed to e.g. counteracting human trafficking and violence against women, as referred to above. Internationally, the Government aims at improving the consistency of Finnish human rights policy and considering human rights as a cross-cutting issue in all foreign policy sectors.

**J. Women and the media**

The CEDAW 2003 report gives detailed information on media related issues under article 5 on discriminatory advertising and article 13 on promoting equality in culture.

The Council of Ethics in Advertising issues statements based on the International Code of Advertising Practice stating “advertisements should not condone any form of discrimination based upon sex and they should not undermine human dignity”. However, the council may not issue sanctions.
The training toolkit "Screening Gender" is a co-production between five public service broadcasting organisations: NOS (Netherlands), NRK (Norway), SVT (Sweden), YLE (Finland) and ZDF (Germany). A sixth broadcaster, DR (Denmark), was part of the consortium during its first year of operation. The project was developed over three years (1997–2000) and was co-financed by the Commission of the European Communities.

The kit contains a variety of tools designed to provide insight into gender and gender portrayal on television. The materials can be used in a wide range of training contexts – for example, in courses on various aspects of programme-making (interviewing techniques, script and scenario writing, commentary, visual grammar, and so on); in seminars to raise awareness among decision-making groups such as managers, programme buyers, commissioning editors; in discussions with trainers themselves to help focus on training themes and priorities.

Finland is implementing a project “Information Society Skills for All” as part of the National Information Society Strategy. Special projects are supported to develop the information society skills of girls and women. Measures are being taken e.g. to increase the relative share of women in education in the information industry fields.

**K. Women and the environment**

The Land Use and Building Act came into force in 2000. Women have been actively involved in developing participative and interactive working methods as part of the land use. Experiences gained and lessons learned during the environmental impact assessments and enforcement of land use and building act could be used in other sectors as well.

**L. The girl-child**

The CEDAW 2003 report gives detailed information on issues related to girls under article 12 on health issues such as the Health 2015 project and under article 10 on youth and sports policies. Child care issues are reported under article 11.

According to the Family Federation of Finland adolescent sexual health figures improved up to the mid-1990’s. Abortions have increased after the mid 1990’s partly due to cuts in school health services and after the sexual health education became voluntary. School sexual health education will become again a compulsory subject in the autumn of 2004.

In the year 2001, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health further set up a working group to study violence and sexual abuse and to target care. As a result of the work, in spring 2003 the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, Stakes, published a guide for social welfare and health care authorities and for the police on the identification and investigation of violence against children and sexual abuse. The guide gives tangible instructions to study suspicions of violence and sexual abuse against children.

The range of early childhood education and care services will be increased so that families can choose the service which is the most appropriate to their needs. Support for a child’s growth,
development and learning coupled with support for parents and families bringing up children and early intervention will be adopted as the new areas of focus in day care. The development work is implemented on the basis of the Government Resolution concerning the national policy definition on early childhood education and care issues in February 2002.
Part III: Institutional Development

**National mechanisms to promote gender equality**

An administrative reform of the national equality mechanisms supporting gender equality took place in 2001. Three entities were formed: Gender Equality Unit, Ombudsman for Equality and Council for Gender Equality. The reform divided the area into three entities: preparing legislation and Government’s gender equality policy, supervision and monitoring of the Act on Equality and promotion of the implementation of gender equality.

Through the Beijing Platform for Action the Government has committed itself to a close cooperation with central institutions and non-governmental organizations when drafting the national implementation programme. In general, a tripartite system is used for preparation of legislation and policies. Since 1999, representatives of NYTKIS, the coalition of women’s organizations, and the National Council of Women have been invited as permanent experts in the Council for Gender Equality. Women’s organisations participate as expert members of working groups and are often involved in drafting laws through written statements or hearing mechanisms in preparatory phases.

The tasks of the Gender Equality Unit include drafting and developing the Government’s gender equality policy in collaboration with other ministries, tasks related to the mainstreaming of gender equality, preparation of national legislation, tasks related to the European Union’s equality legislation and policy, and tasks related to international affairs. The Unit coordinates gender mainstreaming in the state administration. Further details are given below.

The Ombudsman for Equality, in turn, continues to be an independent supervisory authority in connection with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The tasks of the Ombudsman for Equality include supervision of the Act on Equality and especially the discrimination bans of the Act as well as the promotion of the Act. The Ombudsman for Equality handles issues that have emerged in the supervision of the Act on Equality and other related issues. The number of statements has remained fairly stable annually. In 1999, a statement was requested in 156 cases, in 2000, in 174 cases and in 2001, in 175 cases. The majority of the requests relate to discrimination in working life. In 2001, 41.1% of those requesting a statement were women, 44.6% were men and 14.3% were authorities, organizations and companies.

The implementation of the Act on Equality is also supervised by the Chancellor of Justice and the Parliamentary Ombudsman who are, within their own competencies, in charge of the general supervision of legality as well as for the implementation of fundamental and human rights. However, both of these authorities receive fairly few complaints regarding gender discrimination because the citizens usually turn in these matters to the Ombudsman for Equality. Further details on the amendment of the Act and the supervisory roles of the Chancellor of Justice and the Parliamentary Ombudsman are given in the CEDAW 2003 report.

The Council for Gender Equality is a parliamentary body regulated by a decree (389/2001) assigned to promote social equality between women and men. It, inter alia, monitors the implementation of equality in society, makes initiatives and proposals and issues statements to
develop legislation and other measures affecting equality, supports collaboration between authorities and various organizations, promotes gender sensitive research, and utilization of results of such research.

The Council consists of 13 members, selected according to the relative strength of the political parties, and permanent expert members by the Government for a term of the parliament. The main partners of the council are political decision-makers, women’s research institutes, women’s and men’s organizations, labour market organizations (social partners) and other non-governmental organizations.

The council disseminates information on relevant and current issues (such as violence against women, fathers as clients in child welfare clinics, a guidebook for immigrant men and women, a book on gender equality policy). The council has since 1998 awarded annually men promoting gender equality. So far awardees have been active in reduction of men’s violent behaviour, promoting fatherhood, and role models for men.

Women’s organizations have criticized the reform of the national mechanism and considered that insufficient attention was paid, in connection with the reorganization of State equality work, to guaranteeing sufficient resources for all three offices.

**Gender mainstreaming**

The basis for gender mainstreaming is provided by the fundamental rights in the Constitution Act by the Act on Equality. Thus, the general obligation of the public authorities to promote gender equality has been integrated into legislation. Gender equality and mainstreaming is well represented in the current Government Programme. The Programme states that the promotion of gender equality is the task of all government ministries and that the integration of gender mainstreaming into the whole of state administration will be done. Methods of gender impact assessment will be developed and the assessment will be integrated into legislation and preparation of the state budget. The parliamentary auditors report paid attention in 2002 to the guidelines on the preparation of Government bills and inclusion of gender impact assessment in the preparation.

Details referring to gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessments are reported in the Government’s CEDAW 2003 report under article 11 in the chapter on safeguarding social security and development of gender impact analysis.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has been charge of a mainstreaming pilot project. Details of the pilot are given in the CEDAW 2003 report. Mainstreaming is achieved through training at the highest level. The Government Programme states that awareness of gender equality issues should be improved. In this regard, the Gender Equality Unit has organized internal training at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health as well as in other ministries and will continue the training with the state administration as a whole.

Gender equality and mainstreaming is well represented in the government platform or programme. The programme states that the promotion of gender equality is the task of all government ministries and that the integration of gender mainstreaming into the whole of state administration will be done. Methods of gender impact assessment will be developed and the
assessment will be integrated into legislation and preparation of the state budget. Also the knowledge in gender equality issues will be increased in the state administration.

**Some examples of promoting gender equality in the line ministries**

Most of the ministries have equality plans and working groups on gender equality. In the following, short descriptions are given of a few examples: The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for the gender quality issues. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has been charge of a mainstreaming pilot project. Details of the pilot are given in the CEDAW 2003 report.

The Ministry of Labour has been entertaining, already since several years, a plan of equality, based on the Ministry’s personnel policy. The plan was lastly revised in the end of the year 2002. An equality workgroup is active in the Ministry, with the task of following the progress of realization of the equality plan and of promoting the equality views in society’s mainstream planning, decision making and implementation. Leading members of the administration as well as the staff will be trained on gender mainstreaming in 2004.

The Ministry of Labour strives to take into account the problems of equality in its personnel policy. The target set for the plan of equality policy among the personnel is to increase the share of women in the Ministry’s leading administrative posts. Indeed, some positive development has been noted: women’s share in the leading positions was 35 % back in the year 1998 and lately 47 % in 2002. Paying due attention to the equality viewpoint, based on mainstream policy principle, has continued in the personnel balance sheet.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications acknowledges mainstreaming in the Ministry’s action plan for 2004-2005. Gender equality materializes in its actions through the legal framework concerning the ministry’s personnel policy as well as through additional supportive action when needed. There are more women than men participants in the ministry’s special training for its future leaders and specialists.

The Ministry of Finance will evaluate the influence of gender in its main tasks and processes and integrate gender perspective in various practices of the ministry. Training will be given for the personnel responsible for law-drafting in the ministry.

The Ministry of the Environment has a working group for gender equality which has prepared an equality plan for personnel policy. The Ministry is involved in preparations for the national action plan for promoting gender equality.

The Ministry of Education has commissioned a research project on gender aspects and effects in the arts and cultural sector. The aim is to make a proposal on how to evaluate gender impacts in the sector and propose an action plan on how to carry out and promote gender equality. A new committee was appointed in 2004 to evaluate the impact of gender equality recorded in the Government Programme for the sports sector. The ministry has been preparing a pilot project assessing the allocations of sport resources. The pilot includes legislative assessment and study of the use of public funds.
In the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 2003, a Strategy and Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in Finland's Policy for Developing Countries for 2003-2007 was prepared. The objective of the strategy is to achieve a fundamental increase in the impact of Finland's developing country policy with regard to gender equality and women's rights by the year 2007. The strategy is based on the mainstreaming approach. The principle of mainstreaming also indicates that the entire personnel are responsible for implementing the Strategy and Action Plan. The progress of the strategy will be monitored on an annual basis.

**Statistics**

The paragraphs of the Beijing Platform for Action on statistics provided a good basis on which a national plan for the development of gender statistics could be built. Statistics Finland, the national statistical central office, produces data of different aspects of women's status. In the 1980s and 1990s, especially wage differences and female leadership were in focus. Towards the end of the 1990s, Statistics Finland started to develop further gender equality indicators also in the area of politics. Consequently, in Finland, public authorities gather and publish gender-segregated data on most, if not all political indicators (e.g. voter turn-out, candidacies, representatives, committees, various indirectly elected organs) at all levels of participation, which has proved an extremely important instrument in the course of years for revealing gendered injustice.

Statistics Finland has a special gender statistics unit, but gender has been mainstreamed in all statistics. The phenomenon is looked at from a gender perspective. There is also a horizontal co-operation group for gender statistics in Statistics Finland where the producers and the users of the statistics can go through the needs together. Those that produce statistics are dependent on users who request new types of data. Statistics Finland has formed an expert group where users of statistics consider needs for the development of indicators.

The Facts and Figures about Women and Men web pages and books are intended to serve as a source of information for those interested in gender equality in Finland. The examination focuses on different aspects of women's and men's lives: population, families, education, employment, income and participation. The new website provides gender related data on municipal and regional level.

However, there are still some gaps in providing gender sensitive data. There are hardly any research results or statistics on discrimination faced by disabled women and no basic statistics exist at the moment giving basic information on the status of the disabled women.

**Women’s studies**

Women’s studies is an area of research that quickly expanded and diversified in the 1990s, and its establishment in Finnish universities was promoted by eight professorships donated by the Ministry of Education. When accepting the funding, the universities committed themselves to redeeming the professorships. Of the professorships redeemed by the universities, only some are permanent, and only one of the permanent professorships has been permanently filled. In addition, the Academy of Finland funds the Minna Canth Professorship for a fixed period.
From the administrative and financial point-of-view, units of women’s studies have very different positions in the different universities. In different universities they are located in different faculties and administratively they are departments, institutes, subjects or networks. What is characteristics of the work of all of them at present is a lack of continuity, inter alia, due to fixed-term appointees to jobs and the insecure funding situation. This also hampers planning and the long-term development of the subject.

According to the evaluation report commissioned by the Ministry of Education and carried out by an international evaluation team under assignment from the Academy of Finland and completed in autumn 2002 (Evaluation report submitted as an appendix to the CEDAW report), women’s studies in Finland are of a high level and socially significant. However, the report notes that without additional resources women’s studies are bound to regress in Finland; the present resources will not even be sufficient to maintain the present level. In addition, the report pays attention to the under-developed documentation services in Finland compared to the other Nordic countries.

The women’s studies units belong to the Finnish Society of Women’s Studies, which publishes the Women Studies magazine and arranges an annual Women’s studies seminar. At present the Society has about 500 members and activities include a national e-discussion channel "Women’s Studies List". Women’s studies units have also established a university network "HILMA" to develop teaching and research co-operation.

The post-graduate school "the Gender System of Women’s Studies" has at present 20 post-graduate students, seven of whom are funded by the Ministry of Education and five by the universities and eight have acquired their own funding. In addition, according to a Nordic report, about 90 graduate students in Finland have received instruction in women’s studies. There are, thus, expert resources in the field. The problem, however, is a lack of financial and administrative support. In addition to increasing university teaching, a significant future challenge is the mainstreaming of women’s studies also in basic and secondary education.

**Support to women’s organizations**

The participation in societal life through different NGOs is a significant form of participation in Finnish democracy. Finnish organizations are also characterized by an extensive and active group of women’s organizations, which is quite unique with regard to its scope and variety even in Nordic comparison. For example the National Council of Women of Finland has been working to promote equality since 1911. The National Council has 56 member organizations with a total membership exceeding 500,000.

Non-governmental organizations are vital in providing services in Finland in many sectors, such as support services to victims of violence, promotion of environmental planning, health and social services. Many objectives and actions of the Beijing Platform for Action are undertaken by the organizations with the financial support of the Government, mostly with fixed-term project funding. Many organizations have raised concerns of continuity and sustainability of such a funding mechanism. Current laws do not regulate government subsidies for women’s organizations.
Unlike the activities of many other joint organizations of men and women, the activities of women’s organizations are not supported by statutory public financing in Finland. However, the Ministry of Education grants discretionary State support to the Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations for Joint Action, NYTKIS. Women’s organizations, however, receive other support and project-specific aid even though they do not receive permanent State aid. Several women’s organizations experience the uncertainty relating to funding as a drawback. In addition to increased funding, the Coalition has proposed the establishment of a specific resource centre for equality and research on women to promote factual equality and to strengthen the connections between research on women, the women’s movement and equality policy.
Part IV: Main challenges and actions to address them

Part II of the report lists various challenges for further strategies and actions falling under the 12 strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The new Government Programme is implemented during 2003 - 2007. The Policy Programmes of the Government are in the process of being finalized and the implementation will take place in 2004. The Policy Programmes will include measures for the promotion of gender equality.

The follow-up to the Government Programme is based on the Government Act and it is carried out by the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office. The implementation and monitoring of the Government Programme is based on a new document called the Government Strategy Document.

Specific aims of the promotion of gender equality in the national action programme are: preparation of the national action programme, amendment of the Act on Equality, reduction of the wage gap between men and women, decreasing fixed-term employment relationships, increasing the share of women in decision-making and economy, increasing women’s entrepreneurship, decreasing violence against women and prostitution, and assessing the gender equality issues from men’s point of view. The first follow-up to the Government strategy document will be finalized by the beginning of 2004. Based on this information, the Prime Minister's Office will, in spring 2004, initiate the revision of the strategy document in connection with decisions regarding the spending limits.


Finland is drafting a Government’s Action Plan for Gender Equality for the years 2003-2007. All ministries participate in the drafting of and implementing the plan. The Gender Equality Unit is coordinating this work. The Action Plan will include many of the tasks of the Beijing declaration but is also implementing tasks referred to in the Government Programme and the Government Strategy Document. The Action Plan includes programmes, legislative amendments and other measures promoting gender equality which different ministries will be carrying out during this parliamentary period. There will be no specific funding for the Action Plan but, instead, all the measures are funded from each ministry’s funds related to each specific measure. There will be a follow-up group and report on the Action Plan.

As the work on the Government’s Action Plan for Gender Equality is in progress it is not possible to give much details yet. Some of the things which can be mentioned, though, are: An administrator will map the possibilities for preparing a pay equity programme, after which that programme will be finalised by the government and the labour market organizations. The government will continue with its plan to increase women’s share in the boards of the enterprises owned fully or partly by the government. There will be several measures for improving the reconciliation of work and family lives. These include continuing the information campaign on father’s possibilities to use family leaves, developing legislation and changing the attitudes in society towards children in a more positive direction. There is a task group which looks at
possibilities to adjust the costs of parental leaves incurred by employers. A task group also tries to find ways to support female entrepreneurs.

There will be programmes for the prevention of violence towards women and children and for preventing trafficking. Multi-professional co-operation in the field of violence will be improved.

An information portal for women’s studies is being built. It will include a search tool for experts, articles on thematic areas etc. Possibilities for the improving of coordination and documentation within the field of women’s studies will be mapped out.

As a part of the follow-up of the Government’s Action Plan for Gender Equality, its programmes and measures will be evaluated from men’s and gender equality perspective.

The Action Plan also includes measures taken for mainstreaming as stated before.

Many of the challenges in the future remain the same as already reported in 1999. Those include equal pay, elimination of segregation at work, and elimination of violence against women. The organizational reform of the national mechanism supporting gender equality took place in 2001. The next five-year period could provide a space for assessing the reform from the organizational and resource point of view.

Results and lessons learnt of the gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessment pilots within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will be further used in the whole government administration. The monitoring of the impacts of the legislative acts remains an important task for the following years.
Annex A. Role of non-governmental organisations in follow-up activities in Finland

In April 2004, a half-day follow-up seminar was organised by the co-ordinating ministries, the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in co-operation with the NGO Committee on World Conference on Women, as a part of the preparations for the national report on the ten year follow-up of Beijing and Beijing+5.

Over a hundred organisations were invited to the seminar to assess the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and identify the main challenges ahead. The basis for the discussions were the Beijing Platform for Action and the draft country report of the government.

Assessment of the implementation and identification of the future challenges was done in six thematic working groups reflecting the twelve critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action: Poverty and economy; violence against women and armed conflicts; education, training and media; health and environment; power, decision-making and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; and human rights and the girl-child.

Each thematic working group appointed a chairperson, a key speaker, and reporters. In each group, the key speaker briefly highlighted the main points of the thematic areas of the Beijing Platform of Action, after which a round table discussion was held to assess the implementation of the objectives and actions in Finland since 1995. A second round of discussion took place with the aim of identifying remaining challenges for the future and selecting three key recommendations to be put forward in the plenary discussion at the end of the seminar.

In nominating chairpersons, key speakers and reporters to the working groups, special attention was paid to the balance between government representatives, NGOs and other participants. Involvement of men was seen as critical; however, only five men participated the workshop.

Sixty-five participants, representing 31 NGOs, several political parties, ministries and the Council for Gender Equality took part in the discussions. Organisations were given a chance to provide written comments, and seven non-governmental organisations gave detailed comments and recommendations for the draft report.

The outcomes of the discussions were fed into the preparation of the final country report. Key future challenges identified by the thematic groups are briefly described below.

**Thematic working group on poverty and economy**
- strengthening the analysis on poverty, increased income differentials, the position of single parents, ageing and old women in particular, and income differentials within families
- equality problems regarding work and family: dismantling the segregation in working life, moulding attitudes at workplaces (a genuine right for men to take parental leaves), sharing the costs of parental leaves, making the parental leave system more flexible (e.g. a right to utilise the ‘father’s month’ during the home care period)
- continuous monitoring of the Strategy for promoting gender equality in developing country policy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Thematic working group on violence against women and armed conflicts
- activities to prevent violence against women must be integrated into primary services at the municipal level, the access to and availability of services at the municipal level should be guaranteed
- long-term work is needed; one of the concerns is the commitment to the national action plan by future governments
- long-term commitment through resource allocation towards the maintenance of the existing databank on violence against women, renewing the new study “Faith, hope, battering” to update statistics on violence against women
- resources for education, training and research

Thematic working group on education, training and the media
- current teacher education is seen as gender blind; focus should be on development of identity, and the research findings of women's studies should be applied in practice; ability to react to sexual harassment
- strategies needed to address violence in advertising
- women are often seen in the media as persons doing things, seldom as persons influencing things
- the ICT and its links to gender equality – gaps in the present Government programme

Thematic working group on health and environment
- guaranteeing sexual health education and services for young people in particular through preventive work
- taking account of women's special needs in the supply of health services; the special needs of immigrant women, ageing women and mentally handicapped women should be paid attention to
- how the environmental contamination affects the reproductive health and fertility of, in particular, women and young girls

Thematic working group on power, decision-making and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- more women to be involved in decision-making, to correspond to their proportion in population
- gender impact assessment should be a part of ordinary functions and information production a part of the assessment, also attitudes should be influenced, statistics made available
- gender should be made visible in regard to different population groups

Thematic working group on human rights and the girl-child
- the role of education and training at all levels (comprehensive school, vocational education, further education)
- gender sensitivity and human rights issues should be integrated into the activities of child day care centres, schools, youth work etc.
- move away from papers to attitudes (men should be involved and boys' needs made visible): sex education, reduction of violence (prevention and treatment), emphasising the inclusion in community
- special questions regarding multiple discrimination: work with women and girls belonging to minority groups
- sustainable funding

Finnish NGOs have continued advocating the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action since the beginning of the Beijing+5 process. To strengthen the advocacy process, Finnish NGOs established an NGO Committee on World Conference on Women in 2002. The follow-up activities have included a study circular, which produced a document producing an analysis on the twelve critical areas of concern and specific challenges on the implementation in Finland. The analysis was handed over to the newly elected Government and Prime Minister in March 2003. The committee is actively campaigning for the Fifth World Conference on Women.