



Permanent Mission  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
to the United Nations  
New York



**Statement by**  
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**for the "High Level Plenary"**  
**at the 54th session of the United Nations Commission**  
**on the Status of Women (1 to 12 March 2010)**

### **3 Messages**

- 1. The current challenges in a globalised world have immediate impacts on equality policy***
- 2. Modern equality policy is life-cycle policy***
- 3. The new UN Gender Entity should be set up and operative soon***
- 4. The issue of women in armed conflicts belongs among the canons of our equality policy***

Mr Chair,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The German delegation fully aligns itself with the declaration that the Minister of Equality of Spain has delivered on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to add just a few points from the German perspective.

In the 15 years since the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted, we have achieved remarkable progress worldwide, and the Commission on the Status of Women is highly instrumental in achieving this. The Platform for Action is still the only Road Map for Gender Equality and for the improvement of the status of women which is universally accepted. Nevertheless, we must further develop the strategies for achieving the actual equality of women and men over the long term – both on the national and the international level.

May I briefly touch on four current political challenges:

## First

In concrete terms, the current situation is determined by the consequences of last year's international **financial crisis**. Specifically, German gender equality policy is facing up to the challenge of overcoming the economic downturn as fast as possible.

To be successful in meeting this challenge, it takes the commitment of both sexes. Of decisive importance here is the strengthening of responsibility in solidarity. A policy of fair opportunities cannot but reinforce this.

Let us first of all take a look at the **labour market**. The crisis has triggered worldwide unemployment, with women and men being affected to a different degree.

In Germany, the crisis first showed an impact on male unemployment rates. Branches employing large numbers of women, such as the health care, education and other service sectors, proved, for the most part, to be crisis resistant.

This is leading to a situation where women increasingly take on the role of family breadwinner.

On the downside, the gross hourly wages paid to women are still clearly below those earned by men. As a result, families



who have to rely on a female breadwinner's income are exposed to a greater risk of poverty.

The gainful employment of women, the income they contribute and their career advancement opportunities have taken on an enormous importance for the family's economic situation. Accordingly, we are intensifying our equality policy efforts to make "equal pay for work of equal value" and "more women in executive positions" a reality.

- A current measure in Germany - modelled on an example from Switzerland – is the company self-test called "Logib-D": Logib-D supports businesses in identifying their own corporate gender pay gap. A customised counselling service helps Logib-D businesses to fight the causes of the gaps they find in the company.
- Another important aim of the Federal Government is to raise the number of women in leadership positions - both in business and in the civil service. To this end, we are developing a graduated plan with measures that are tailored to fit the various sectors.

## Second

Nowadays, equality policy must be designed as a **life-cycle policy**, offering targeted assistance during the critical transitions in the life cycle. Only targeted transition management can pre-

vent the risks inherent to typical life decisions from systematically acting to the detriment or benefit of one sex or the other. Our aim is, therefore, to support women and men in these phases, for instance through

- the parental allowance with its concept of partner months to promote the fair sharing of family tasks in the first year of the child's life
- a programme called "Vocational reintegration as a perspective" that supports women who wish to re-enter the labour market after a prolonged family phase.

Next year, we intend to develop a master plan with binding targets and concrete measures aimed at improving the equal participation of women and men in certain phases of the life cycle.

### Third

This year – the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration - the United Nations are taking a great step towards the better implementation of the objectives enshrined in this Declaration: The establishment of the new Gender Entity will be a milestone for making equality and the equal participation of women a reality. I have high hopes in our common endeavours to make the new Gender Entity operative within a short period of time.

#### Fourth

Not only the financial and economic crisis but also the international security situation affects men and women worldwide in a gender-specific way.

Specifically, we fully endorse the demands of Security Council Resolution 1325. In this context, we urge that women in armed conflicts not be perceived as mere victims, but that their role in peace-keeping and conflict settlement be actively strengthened. We strongly believe that women should be included in peace negotiations and reconstruction efforts.

We also strongly believe that women should participate as equal partners in both peace negotiations and reconstruction efforts. This is why, within the framework of its development cooperation, the Federal Government finances, for example, measures aimed at promoting gender equality in Afghanistan, at strengthening the political participation of women affected by the conflict in Columbia, and at eliminating sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Since the adoption of the Beijing agenda in 1995 and Resolution 1325 in 2000, Germany has initiated many measures to implement the demands enshrined therein on the national level.

In times of globalisation, national and international equality policy must be understood as two sides of the same coin.

It is in this spirit that we wish to continue our active collaboration.

Thank you very much for your attention.