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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
FIFTY-THIRD SESSION

Statement by

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Mr. Chairperson

Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Greek Government, I would like to congratulate the Commission on the Status of Women for its initiative to organize this general discussion on a very crucial topic during the 53d Session.

We fully adhere to the report of the UN Secretary General, considering that equal share of responsibilities between women and men is a prerequisite for gender equality. The achievement of gender equality is an integral part of fundamental human rights, economic development and social cohesion.

Our National Action Plan on Gender Equality has adopted an integrated and cohesive strategic intervention through gender mainstreaming and positive actions, following international and European commitments.

A modern institutional framework and a series of policies cover all critical areas of the Beijing Action Platform such as increasing of female employment, preventing and combating violence against women, eliminating stereotypes through education, encouraging women's participation in decision-making processes.

One of our priorities is the social integration of vulnerable groups, such as migrant women, disabled persons and victims of trafficking. Through targeted programmes, thousands of women especially unemployed, benefited from counseling, vocational training and jobs.

Reconciliation of family and work life and sharing of responsibilities are also considered of great importance in our agenda. Parental and maternity leaves are granted, with special care for single parents, adoption or surrogate motherhood. Equality action plans in enterprises include flexible types of employment as well as childcare facilities for both women and men.

Furthermore, women's participation in decision making at all levels is enhanced through a wide establishment of quotas in elections as well as in public, scientific and local committees.

Distinguished Delegates,

Unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS, is one of the main causes of gender inequality and discrimination.

This phenomenon, mostly connected to gender stereotypes, needs essential evaluation of women's domestic work and care giving. Nevertheless men's role and involvement has to be enhanced.

In this framework the elimination of gender stereotypes through educational procedures is one of our priority targets. Awareness-raising campaigns promote women's and girls self-protection and encourage men and boys to assume their responsibilities.

To face current challenges, especially in the context of care giving, investment in affordable and high-quality public services is considered of great importance. At the same time, gender budgeting is a major challenge for European policies. Close cooperation with Social Partners and NGO's is strongly needed.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the context of global economic crisis, climate change and poverty, we must identify and respond to specific needs of women and girls, subject to multiple discriminations.

Gender-sensitive policies in all sectors, including health, education and employment, are imperative to support female potential, as a valuable resource for economic and social development.

At the same time, women must be given a key role in decision-making processes, recognising their contribution in facing crisis.

I can assure you that Greece is totally committed to that end.

Thank you for your attention.