



STATEMENT BY

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STATE SECRETARY

**FOR THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND LABOUR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
HUNGARY**

**AT THE 53RD SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'd like to congratulate to you, Mr. Chairman, and to all the members of the Committee for the outstanding job you have done.

Gender equality and improving on the status of women and enhancing their positions are important elements of the UN mandate. We know that the equality of the genders promotes social development on the whole. A wonderful example to this is the tool kit to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals, where gender equality is present throughout as a horizontal goal supporting every one of the Goals.

Hungary is thoroughly committed to improve the status of women and to create real equality between women and men. We do believe that women's rights are fundamental human rights, and we have to use all the available tools to enforce them. It is our joint responsibility to work towards this together.

I am happy to inform you that as a result of the work started last year, Hungary has developed a long term Strategy with the purpose of promoting gender equality. When preparing this Strategy, we relied greatly, among other documents, on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action issued at the Fourth World Conference on Women. We studied closely the key areas identified therein, and we fitted these goals into our Strategy. We paid special attention to the disadvantaged, most vulnerable groups, such as the Roma women and rural women. As corresponds to the CEDAW recommendations, we laid the foundations of our action plan by carrying out national research exercises for both groups.

The priorities of the Strategy naturally are in line with the Goals identified in the Roadmap issued by the European Union for 2006-2010 to promote gender equality, and Hungary is fully committed toward its implementation.

The topic of today's session is one of these priorities. Just as you could hear from the speaker for the European Union, all over Europe, and thus in Hungary too, the reconciliation of private, professional and family life, the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, is a priority. Hungary has been tackling this issue as a priority for years, in line with European and international expectations.

The equal sharing of family and private life responsibilities is a fundamental goal when speaking about improving the status of women because we cannot speak about equality if women have to do practically all the unpaid work after having done their paid work. This is a double load that could stand as a huge obstacle that hinders women's progress.

However, it is not at all easy to change the deeply rooted traditions on which private life and family responsibilities are based. We have tried to use a number of tools, and we continue to do so. Among the tools we can find those that give us external support such as programs to create child care institutions, and initiatives to share parental leave in a more balanced way. But we can have real success only if we also involve the media on the continuing bases, to show all the benefits of having a fairer share of the responsibilities and a more balanced division of the loads.

When talking about sharing care responsibilities we can see clearly how inequality hinders women. As for HIV/AIDS prevalence, Hungary is one of the more fortunate countries. We have been running a number of preventive and informative programs, thus the infection rate is low: there has been no change in the HIV infection rate in women since 2003. But we also see that infection makes the everyday life of millions of women around the world very difficult and it determines their lives, so we fully agree that we need joint action. We hope that the present session will help in this, too.

Now I would like to speak on other very important issues: equal participation of women and men in decision making at all levels.

The proposal in 2007 to introduce a quota system in the Hungarian Parliament has not turned into law. Nevertheless a dialogue started on the issue, which is kept alive by the government. We published a book on it, and we have a road show running in the country where we give presentations on what the quota is all about, what role it plays in creating a more just society and on its benefits. We hope that these events, where academics and the NGOs are also involved, will help in shaping the mentality of the entire society.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I can also inform you that Hungary has taken another step towards demonstrating her commitment to promote the UN Goals. The UNIFEM Hungarian National Committee Association was set up at the beginning of 2009, which was registered as the 17th such national committee. The Association develops its own mission in line with the strategic goals of the world organization. Its primary target is to help shaping Hungarian public opinion through equal opportunities initiatives and changing the mentality. Secondly, it plans to provide technical and financial support to UNIFEM action in the developing countries; it also wishes to share social and scientific experience to help women make progress in the world, including our own region. The National Committee Association announced its 2009 program at its founding meeting, in which it highlights the enhancement of gender budgeting processes in line with the 2008 priority issue of the Commission on the Status of Women. As a result of this announcement, several local governments were willing to undertake the job of reviewing their budgets from the gender perspective. All this reflects the fact that NGO action also plays a very important role in gender equality in Hungary.

We know that the efforts and work done by the UN every year take us closer to achieving these goals, and the processes that take place within the UN also aim at reaching the correct rate and level of representation of women, just as at promoting and enhancing real gender equality.

I sincerely hope that the results of the work of the present session of CSW will continue to successfully contribute to the achievement of our goals.

Thank you for your attention.

