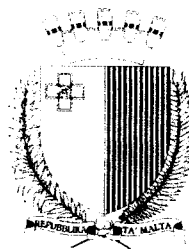


MALTA



Statement by

**Mr. Claude Bonello
Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Malta
to the United Nations**

Commission for the Status of Women

Agenda item 3

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General
Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality,
Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century"**

Friday 6th March 2009

United Nations, New York

(Please check against delivery)

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Mr. Chairperson,

Malta reiterates its full commitment towards the development of the status of women in all spheres of life which aim to embrace equality and a true partnership between men and women in the sharing of responsibilities.

The Government of Malta continues to promote the advancement of women and gender equality in all areas and levels of Maltese society. Through both legal enforcement and the adoption of procedural measures, the situation of both women and men and gender equality in Malta and the concept of equal sharing of responsibility have made important and critical strides particularly through a series of major breakthroughs which include legislative measures that safeguard equality between the sexes.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to present succinctly Malta's views during this general debate but before doing that, my Delegation would like to state that the statement delivered by the Czech Republic on behalf of the EU Member States **generally** reflects Malta's position on the subject being considered by this Commission. In this context, Malta would like to clarify its position with respect to the language in the said EU statement relating to the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Malta firmly continues to maintain that any position taken or recommendations made regarding women empowerment and gender equality should not in any way create an obligation on any party to consider abortion as a legitimate form of reproductive health rights, services or commodities.

The national legislation of Malta considers the termination of pregnancy through procedures of induced abortion as illegal, and does not recognise abortion as a measure of family planning. Malta has consistently expressed its reservation on the use of terms such as 'reproductive rights', 'reproductive services' and 'control of fertility', including in the context of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Beijing Platform of Action (1994) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Whilst expressing its support for these Programmes and Instruments, Malta reiterates and upholds its reservations made at the time of their adoption.

This position has similarly been registered on a number of occasions within the context of established EU positions whereby Malta also registered the same reservations as listed in the footnote of the EU Statement delivered on Monday 2 March 2009 during this CSW, including the European Consensus on Development, OJ C 46 of 24.2.2006; Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Recently emerging issues regarding HIV/AIDS (doc 7227/07, including the Statement in the Annex); Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation (doc. 9561/07) and a European programme for action to confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through external action (doc. 9278/05).

We therefore request that this position be included in the records of this meeting.

Mr. Chairperson,

Malta welcomes the priority theme for this year's Session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 'The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS'.

This theme is particularly relevant in the context of prevention which should be considered as the cornerstone for all other activities within the comprehensive approach to tackle the expansion of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This is especially so in Malta where, at present the number of cases of HIV/AIDS is still small and therefore prevention measures are more relevant to try to prevent the spread and the occurrence of an outbreak. In this regard, Malta has been collaborating with the EuroHIV surveillance network and passes on information about HIV and AIDS cases. This information is given about each case notified every year and includes sex, year of birth, mode of transmission, year of HIV and AIDS diagnoses, year of death and stage of disease.

Within the context of care-giving and the equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women, the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate within the Ministry for Social Policy conducts several initiatives in schools to raise awareness on this theme throughout the scholastic year, including during the Health and Safety. Training of teachers in Personal and Social Development at both initial teacher training and in-service training courses are also performed whereby teachers are provided with resources and advice for referrals. Sex education and awareness is incorporated in the National Minimum Curriculum and schools are legally bound to offer this subject whereby education on HIV/AIDS is covered in these lessons

On the other hand, the general public is being targeted through the local broadcasting media including television and radios (discussion programmes) and the published media (magazines, newspapers). The local youth centres are also utilized for seminars and discussions. A number of initiatives have also been conducted on the university campus where students are encouraged to conduct AIDS awareness campaigns based on peer education principles.

A number of encounters have taken place in different work settings initiatives after the Health Promotion Directorate was invited by the employer or the employees. Professionals have also been targeted. Training of nurses, midwives and other health professionals on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and education is being performed at registration and post-registration levels. Training of teachers and psychologists on HIV/AIDS is carried out at their initial training level and in in-service training courses.

Mr. Chairperson,

Malta remains committed to the attainment of concrete results towards the development of the status of women and achieving gender equality in all spheres. We strongly believe that this position protects and consolidates such a partnership through the promotion of the right values of personal development for both men and women thus creating what we believe is the right role model for our present and future generations. In this regard, one cannot but reiterate the importance of the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the development of all spheres in our societies.

It is in this spirit and conviction that Malta intends to work with other Member States and the wider UN System towards the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality in all spheres.