



SLOVENIA

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**STATEMENT
BY**

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under 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”)

**of the 53rd Session of the
Commission on the Status of Women**

New York, 9 March 2009

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me first to express Slovenia's full alignment with the statement delivered by the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

This year, the priority theme of the Commission on the Status of women is focused on »the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS«. Experts and delegations highlighted a variety of related issues and areas where interventions are required. They also identified actions, strategies and measures that proved to be necessary to effectively respond to persistent unequal distribution of responsibilities.

The Slovenian government is convinced that to address the challenges identified in the Secretary –General’s report and those addressed by speakers, all human rights of women must be actively promoted and protected in an integrated and comprehensive manner. They are interdependent and touch upon all aspects of everyday's life and all individuals in their diversity.

Slovenia believes that interrelation between equal sharing of caring responsibilities with sexual and reproductive rights, right to be free from any form and manifestation of violence against women and girls, social and economic rights and right to participate in all spheres of influence and decision-making process, must be adequately addressed.

When women are compelled to have more children as desired, their burden of caring increases and inequalities between women and men exacerbate. In majority of cases, limitations on women’s choice in matters of sexuality and reproduction reflect the attitude that women should accept their biological roles as mothers and consequently their responsibility for the rearing of children and caring for family and household work.

The benefits of sexual and reproductive health and rights and services for equal sharing of responsibilities, for improving women’s social position, their contribution to economic growth, reducing poverty, preventing discrimination and social stigma of women and girls affected by HIV/AIDS and expanding participation of women in decision-making must therefore be duly taken into account in our endeavors towards narrowing the gender gap in sharing of responsibilities and division of caring work.

Mr. Chairperson,

In Slovenia the women’s right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of children is guaranteed by the Constitution. Policies put in place for ensuring free choices in matters of sexuality, reproduction and life styles are being implemented with due regard for women’s and men’s individual needs, interests, priorities and aspirations.

Lower economic power and social status of women in the paid care sector, limited right to economic independence of women domestic workers and economic dependence of those who shoulder all the burden of caring work and do not participate in any paid work, are often the cause and consequence of violence against women. Women lacking economic autonomy, face particular difficulties to bring to an end the violent situation.

The Slovenian government believes that better protection of women's economic and social rights constitute a major tool to eliminate inequalities between women and men in regard to paid employment, division of household responsibilities and care work. Moreover, efforts are also needed to address a specific situation of domestic workers, including migrant women domestic workers, who may even be excluded from legal definitions of work and deprived of a variety of legal protection.

Mr. Chairperson,

Slovenia has a long-term tradition of high participation of women in the labour market. Slovenian women and men believe that economic independence is one of the most important values. This value is confirmed by the fact that parenthood does not negatively impact the employment rate of women and men. Slovenia is the only EU member state where the employment rate of women with children under age of 12 is higher than the rate of women without children.

This high and full-time employment of women has been supported by parental leave arrangements, including individual right of fathers to paternity leave, 100% wage compensation for maternity, parental and paternity leave, provision of accessible and affordable care services and facilities and comprehensive and coordinated actions addressing the role of men and employers in achieving better balance between work and family and private life.

Stereotyped social roles ascribed to women and men constrain their choices and opportunities. They limit the scope for men and boys to become equally involved in households and care-giving work, while in regard to women, they restrict their capacity and political will to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas and at all levels. Progress towards our goals will be hampered if we do not join our efforts to effectively transform institutions and systems so that they are no longer grounded on historically determined male paradigms of power and life patterns.

Identifying good and promising steps is an important element of strengthening work on sharing responsibilities between women and men, elimination of violence against women, and gender balanced participation in decision-making, including in processes where policy responses to the current financial and economic crisis are being taken. In these endeavors, Mr. Chairperson, you have full support of my Government.

Thank you.