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DRAFT CONCLUSIONS

WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

17 January 2000

Introduction:

The ECE Member States reaffirm their previous commitments concerning equal participation of women and men in the economy, expressed in the past at various levels: the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the ECE Regional Platform for Action (Vienna 1994) chapters III C, D and IV C, D; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) - critical areas of concern A and F; reinforced by *inter alia* the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of action (1995); the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions on Women and the Economy (1997), the ILO's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its follow-up; the ECOSOC Ministerial Communiqué entitled "The Role of Employment and Work in Poverty Eradication: the Empowerment and Advancement of Women" (1999).

Members of the Council of Europe and the European Union reaffirm their previous commitments to: the 1992 EC Directive on Maternity Leave; the 1996 EC Directive on Parental Leave; the Council of Europe Recommendation R(96) 5 on reconciling work and family life (1996); the Declaration on Equality Between Women and Men as a Fundamental Criterion of Democracy (Istanbul, 1997); the Council of Europe European Social Charter and its revised European Social Charter; and the EU Council Resolutions on the 1997, 1998 and 1999 Employment Guidelines.

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New opportunities:

- Increased participation of women in the labour market and subsequent gain in economic autonomy; enlargement of job opportunities for women due to structural transformation of the economy, including globalization, particularly in the services sector, self-employment and entrepreneurship; increased opportunities to reach middle and higher level management positions in some countries; greater potential for introducing measures enabling better reconciliation of work and family responsibilities; proportion of women with university degrees sharply increased, even exceeding that of men in some disciplines; in some cases, new opportunities for longer and/or multiple careers for women.

Persistent or new obstacles:

- Persistent segregated higher education and labour markets, confining a large proportion of women in low paid, low skill and precarious work (working poor) and admitting a very small percentage of women in decision-making positions; globalization and economic restructuring often resulting in reduced job security and social benefits; persistent wage gaps between women and men; atypical modes of employment (temporary or casual work) often not of free choice; difficulties of monitoring or enforcing labour standards in environments associated with these types of employment contracts; in most countries, weak or non-existent social protection schemes for many women in these jobs and for unemployed women; in some countries, insufficient social security measures for women during pregnancy and maternity; insufficient encouragement for men to reconcile work and family; inadequate application and monitoring of health and safety standards in temporary and casual employment; insufficient gender sensitivity in labour markets and social welfare institutions; still insufficient training and employment of women in new information and technology professions; unbalanced and self-limiting choice of vocational training leading young women to jobs with no advancement prospects or with low pay; even for women with higher education, difficulty to secure jobs commensurate with their level of skills; less opportunities for women in terms of career development and promotions; lack of mechanisms for the transmission of information about employment and social services available for women; lack of full visibility of the type, extent and distribution of unremunerated work; persistent gender stereotyping leading to unbalanced distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men; in countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), women bearing most of the hardship induced by the economic restructuring and being the first to lose jobs in times of recession; in the same countries, women being squeezed out from fast growth sectors; loss of childcare facilities due to elimination or privatisation of state work places and increased need for elder care without the corresponding facilities; continuing inequality of access to training for finding re-employment and to productive assets for entering or expanding businesses.

In view of these trends, four major challenges can be identified, to which correspond four key areas for action in the ECE region:

A. Eliminating discrimination against women in the labour market

Strategic direction 1: Further developing and applying legislation and rules for eliminating discrimination against women in recruitment and conditions of work

ECE governments and social partners

- to review the structural, legal and behavioural barriers preventing gender equality in the world of work - the review should cover important problem areas such as gender bias in recruitment; inequality of pay for equal work or work of equal value; inequality in sharing work and family responsibilities between women and men; unequal treatment of workers' rights and benefits in terms of their application to women and men; unequal career opportunities (glass ceiling);
- based on the review, to work jointly to introduce measures for removing these obstacles and barriers. These include, for example: new codes of conduct and positive action e.g. equality plans and equality labelling; introducing legislation preventing and punishing discrimination against women in recruitment and in work conditions, including discrimination due to their reproductive roles and functions; introducing legislation providing gender balanced parental leave conditions which enable and encourage fathers, as well as mothers, to take care of children; providing training to different categories of professionals who are in strategic positions for promoting equality in the labour market; making the income tax system non-discriminatory; revising job classifications and job evaluation schemes to effectively apply the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; guarantee of career development to part-time, job sharing and other forms of traditionally atypical work.

ECE governments, the private sector, social partners media and NGOs

- to organize public information campaigns and debates in order to sensitize public opinion and other relevant actors on the principle of equal participation of women and men in work and family;
- to organize campaigns and programmes in educational institutions and in the media aiming at removing stereotypes and prejudices about men's participation in family life.

Strategic direction 2: Eliminating gender-based occupational segregation

ECE governments, the private sector and social partners

- to analyse and respond to the major reasons why men and women are affected differently by the process of job creation and job destruction associated with economic transition and structural transformation of the economy, including globalization;
- to develop measures that eliminate professional segregation against women, in particular working immigrant women and women from ethnic minorities by facilitating their access to jobs corresponding to their skills as well as developing adequate professional training to promote their professional progression;

- to pay particular attention to recruiting women in those high-growth and high-wage occupations which are traditionally dominated by men e.g. finance, the technology sector and engineering;
- to review the criteria used for recruitment and promotion of women and men in decision-making positions in order to eliminate discriminatory barriers;

ECE governments and social partners

- to offer encouragement to employers, inter alia by introducing incentives, to recruit and promote women in decision-making positions;

ECE governments and educational institutions in ECE countries

- to develop gender-sensitive curricula, from kindergartens and elementary schools to vocational training and universities, in order to address gender stereotyping as a major root cause of segregation in the working life;
- to increase accessibility to post-secondary education for persons with dependents and/or low income through initiatives such as grants, scholarships or loans;
- to develop vocational training in order to combat the horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market;

The media in ECE countries

- to complement the above educational programmes with media programmes that promote gender equality.

Strategic direction 3: Establishing a sound system of monitoring and evaluation

ECE governments

- to set up and apply indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of progress achieved in terms of equal participation of women and men in the labour market and in family life;
- to regularly report to parliaments on the trends, obstacles and positive experiences regarding equal participation of women and men in the labour market and in family life.

B. Increasing employment opportunities for women

Strategic direction 1: Developing the employability of women

ECE governments and social partners

- to develop a set of policies and programmes providing access to life-long learning and retraining, including in information technology, which would be tailored to women's needs according to the different stages of their lives and of family formation;

- to encourage the education of girls in science, mathematics, new technologies of information and technical subjects from upper secondary school level upwards and to encourage women to consider employment in high-growth and high-wage sectors and jobs;

Strategic direction 2: Fostering women's access to self-employment and entrepreneurship

ECE governments

- to foster self-employment for women through fiscal measures, simplification of administrative procedures and other measures facilitating the establishment of micro enterprises and SMEs;

ECE governments, the private sector, social partners and NGOs

- to strengthen entrepreneurial skills for women through training and special education programmes;

ECE governments, international financial institutions, the private sector, social partners and NGOs

- to provide technical and financial support to organizations assisting women entrepreneurs in creating SMEs;
- to ensure equal access to credits, in particular through gender awareness-raising among bankers and others influencing access to credit;
- to extend the outreach so as to increase awareness of existing programmes available for women entrepreneurs and business owners;

The private sector and business associations in ECE countries

- to undertake business missions specific to women entrepreneurs and to ensure their participation on all such missions in order to open up new opportunities for their businesses.

Strategic direction 3: Supporting women's employment

- to enact family friendly policies and introduce flexible working time to enable women and men to balance their paid and unpaid work responsibilities;
- to jointly develop new approaches to paid employment and entrepreneurship to support women and men in meeting their income and family care needs;
- to promote new schemes addressing the needs of society to provide care, in particular for children, the elderly, and those with illness or with disabilities;
- to pay particular attention, in designing employment strategies and job creation programmes, to measures which will increase access to employment for lone mothers, mothers with young and/or disabled children, disabled women and, where appropriate, women-pensioners.

C. Promoting gender equality in social protection

Strategic direction 1: developing a new approach to social protection in response to new trends in employment (the rise of atypical jobs, increased work flexibility) and the changing needs for dependent care in society.

ECE governments and social partners

- to extend and/or redesign social benefits (e.g. health and pension) to those part-time, temporary and other workers, including those in agriculture, who are not covered or insufficiently covered by existing schemes;
- to review and redesign unemployment insurance in order to extend it to those not currently covered or insufficiently covered, such as temporary, part-time and home workers and agricultural workers;

ECE governments, social partners, local authorities and NGOs

- To build up partnerships around innovative social protection schemes which, depending on their nature, objectives and coverage, would involve the social partners (trade unions and employers), welfare state institutions, local authorities and NGOs.

Strategic direction 2: Ensuring adequate pension benefits for older women

ECE governments and social partners

- to find ways and means to take into account in the basic pension schemes the number of years of unpaid work of women and men, thus mitigating the disadvantages of those with shorter periods of paid work due to their movement in and out of the labour market, most often due to care responsibilities, during the active age period;
- to also consider the situation of older women who have never worked for pay and develop innovative social security schemes for them.

Strategic direction 3: Developing additional social protection measures to reduce social costs of transition for women in CEE and CIS countries

ECE governments and social partners

- to enhance cooperation with CEE and CIS countries in order to assist them to improve and implement social protection policies aimed at combining universal coverage of social services with targeted assistance to the most vulnerable groups including women affected by the social costs of transition.

D. Empowering women through access to and control over resources

Strategic direction 1: Monitoring the gender impact of poverty eradication programmes

ECE governments, international aid agencies (including UN Funds and Programmes) and international financial institutions

- to assess the extent to which poverty eradication programmes have a positive impact on the empowerment of women living in poverty in terms of access to training and education, employment, land, income, credit, skills and social services. Such gender impact assessment should cover national poverty eradication programmes, as well as those of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF;
- to define concrete changes in poverty eradication programmes in the light of the above assessment.

Strategic direction 2: Supporting the empowerment of women

ECE governments, international aid agencies (including UN Funds and Programmes) and international financial institutions

- in view of the above assessment, to review the approach of empowerment programmes and projects in countries with economies in transition and in developing countries so that they effectively ensure women's access to and control over resources;
- to increase resources for poverty-eradication programmes aiming at the empowerment of women in these countries and for networking among NGOs supporting such programmes;
- to enhance cooperation and coordination among various actors in support of programmes that empower women and contribute to their economic autonomy.

WOMEN IN ARMED-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

17 January 2000

Introduction

The ECE Member States reaffirm their previous commitments concerning violence against women expressed in the past at various levels: the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the ECE Regional Platform for Action (Vienna, 1994) chapters III.A and IV.A; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) - critical area of concern E; enforced by *inter alia* the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions on women and armed conflict (1998).

Positive developments

- Recognition of the violation of the human rights of women in armed-conflict situations as violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law; increased awareness of gender-based violence during conflicts; some progress in international legislation in this area; and increased acknowledgement of the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention and in post-conflict situations.

Negative developments

- Recent armed conflicts of non-international character, resulting in a growing number of civilians affected, hence greater risk of women being victims of gender-based violence in armed-conflict situations; despite the fact that, since 1994, it has been recognized as a war crime, rape as a planned and systematic act often used as a weapon of war, particularly in recent conflicts in southeastern Europe; other forms of violence such as forced migration and forced prostitution; consequences of rape in terms of physical, psychological and mental trauma, forced pregnancy, greater risk of HIV/AIDS and rejection by family and community; loss of adequate health conditions and reproductive rights, including availability of efficient contraception; consequences of the use of certain weapons like anti-personnel mines; in the aftermath of a war, traumas for refugees and internally displaced women and girls, in particular widows, forced mothers, fatherless girls, mothers who have lost or have been separated from their children and single women without any state, family or kinship protection; consequent risk of being marginalized by society; strong link between the ideologies of intolerance, ethnic cleansing and patriarchal culture, as a major source of conflict; economic hardships for women due to loss of male members of the family, loss of means of subsistence, housing, property and land, and deprivation of means to make a living; insufficient action for addressing the specific needs of women and their children during and after repatriation; in peace-building and reconstruction processes, women continuing to be excluded from all decision-making.

In view of the above situation, the following key areas for action can be identified:

A Developing international and national legislation against gender-based violence and enhancing its implementation

Strategic direction 1: Developing, adopting and ratifying legislation

ECE governments

- to take initiatives in order to reinforce the provisions of international legal instruments and tribunals relating to gender-based violence in armed conflicts; in this context, to give particular consideration to violence against women and girls in non-international armed conflicts;
- in those countries that have not yet done so, to consider quickly ratifying the existing legal instruments and crime tribunals, in particular the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- to review national legislation to ensure that sanctions are strengthened and prosecutions are effected against perpetrators of all forms of gender-based violence both in peaceful time as well as in armed-conflict situations.

Strategic direction 2: Enhancing the implementation of legislation

ECE governments

- to take all necessary measures, including those relating to extradition laws and procedures, to ensure that the perpetrators of gender-based crimes are identified and prosecuted;
- to provide effective witness protection programmes, including after trial.

B. Protecting and supporting the victims of gender-based violence in conflict situations

Strategic direction 1: Ensuring the human rights of women and girls victims of violence in and after armed conflicts

ECE governments and NGOs

- to provide assistance to women and girls affected by armed conflicts to regain their status in society in political, social, economic and legal terms. Particular attention to be given to women who, due to missing family members, are left in a state of uncertainty, lose their rights and are not eligible for assistance (e.g. assistance schemes for widows and single-headed households);
- to ensure that women and girls affected by armed conflicts are informed of their human rights procured through international and national legislation on gender-based violence;
- in case of repatriation of refugees and displaced persons, to provide a safe return into the country of origin, taking into account the specific needs of mothers with children, widows, elderly women and unaccompanied girls;

ECE governments

- to build consensus and develop a common policy to facilitate intervention in places/countries where human rights of women and girls in particular are violated;
- to apply international norms to ensure equal access and equal treatment of women and men in refugee determination procedures and the granting of asylum.

Strategic direction 2: Improving rehabilitation and reintegration programmes

ECE governments, international organizations and NGOs

- to empower women involved in all conflict situations, including women refugees and displaced women, by involving them in the design and management of humanitarian activities and ensuring, that they benefit from these programmes on an equal basis with men;
- to strengthen, or introduce where they do not exist, gender-sensitive and targeted policies and programmes to address the needs of women and girls in crisis situations and after armed conflict situations;
- to further develop commonly agreed guidelines for action, integrating medical, psychological and social components of assistance programmes for women and girls victims of all forms of violence, to be used by relevant governmental entities (national and local), international organizations and NGOs;
- to design and support programmes for economic reintegration in particular through skills-training and income-generation programmes;

ECE governments, bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and NGOs

- to consider strengthening, or establishing where they do not exist, specific national/international funds for empowering women and women's organizations to contribute to building a new life for women in post-conflict periods, in particular by making available: medical, psychological and other services, shelter, legal counselling, as well as credit and skills training to enable women to regain self-reliance;
- to integrate a gender perspective into all humanitarian activities.

B. Creating an enabling environment for lasting peace

Strategic direction 1: Promoting the role of women in all peace processes

ECE governments, international organizations and NGOs

- to increase the participation of women at all levels of decision-making and implementation in all peace processes: conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building;

- to base peace-making and peace-keeping efforts not only on military enforcement but also on confidence building by strengthening civil forces, as well as peace and reconciliation groups, and by fully involving women in these movements;
- in the aftermath of war, to ensure that international organizations, governments and other relevant actors involve women as major actors in all stages of the design, planning and implementation of post-conflict transformation as opposed to simply reconstruction and to mainstream gender in all measures to be taken.

Strategic direction 2: Promoting a culture of peace

ECE governments

- to support the reconstruction of democratic institutions in war-torn areas as a basic condition for promoting equality between women and men;

ECE governments, research institutions and NGOs

- to promote research on and awareness of the root causes of gender-specific violence, in particular the patriarchal model of society, the practised stereotypes of masculinity and the prejudice against minority groups;

Governments, educational institutions, NGOs and the media

- to develop, through public campaigns and educational programmes, a culture of peace by fostering the recognition of the value of cultural diversity and by opposing all forms of intolerance and racism;
- to provide support to exchange programmes of youth and students between countries and different cultures.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

17 January 2000

Introduction

The ECE Member States reaffirm their previous commitments concerning institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming, expressed in the past at various levels: the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the ECE Regional Platform for Action (Vienna, 1994) chapters III.F, IV.F and V.A; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) - critical area of concern H; and the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions on Institutional Mechanisms (1999);

Members of the Council of Europe and of the European Union respectively reaffirm their previous commitments to Recommendation R(98) 14 on gender mainstreaming of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers; Article 3 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999); the 1995 Council Resolution and the 1998 Council Regulation no 2836/98 on integrating gender issues in development co-operation.

Positive developments:

Further development, in some countries, of existing institutional mechanisms for gender equality, their restructuring and upgrading, and creation of new ones; wider acceptance of gender mainstreaming approach; growing perception of gender equality and full enjoyment by women of their human rights as an objective per se and as a progress for humanity; awareness of the need for both specific policies for the advancement of women, gender mainstreaming policies and equality policies.-

Obstacles and barriers:

In some countries, lack, stagnation or weakening of national mechanisms; inadequate allocation of financial and human resources and marginalized location within the public administration; in some parts of the region, insufficient understanding of the political significance of gender equality issues as issues of democracy and human rights; consequently, lack of political will and necessary legal tools for establishing an effective gender mainstreaming strategy as well as lack of implementation of this strategy; in a large number of ECE countries, lack of recognition of gender equality as an integral part of good governance, democracy and human rights; slow and partial progress in implementing gender mainstreaming and in developing gender disaggregated statistics and prognoses; absence of benchmarks and indicators of gender equality.

In view of these trends, three key areas can be identified for future action.

A. Strengthening institutional mechanisms for gender equality

Strategic direction 1: Strengthening the mandate of institutional mechanisms

ECE governments

- to review the achievements and shortcomings of the institutional mechanisms created and developed since the Beijing Conference and to assess their impact on national policy-making;
- on the basis of the above assessment, to take new steps to strengthen these mechanisms by i) ensuring that their mandates, roles and responsibilities are well defined; ii) providing them with the necessary sustainable human and financial means; and iii) ensuring their presence in all governmental departments so that gender mainstreaming is integrated in all policy areas and accountability of the government to gender equality policies is extended to these areas.

Strategic direction 2: Ensuring continued role and strength of institutional mechanisms and mainstreaming policies

ECE governments

- to recognize that the primary responsibility for gender mainstreaming rests with governments
- to ensure that national mechanisms are placed at the highest possible political level;
- to ensure that changes in the political environment do not affect the existence, role and importance of the institutional mechanisms for gender equality;
- to diversify national mechanisms, including through the creation of the position of ombudsperson, and strengthen them through institution building.

Strategic direction 3: Providing support to national mechanisms in countries with economies in transition and developing countries

ECE governments and NGOs from Western Europe and North America

- to support capacity-building in those countries where the mechanisms are weak or are insufficiently developed, through provision of finance and/or expertise, for example for training programmes, study tours, personnel exchange and advisory visits.

B. Developing tools for enforcing and monitoring policies of equality

Strategic direction 1: Developing a system of monitoring gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming

National mechanisms of ECE governments

- to propose, where appropriate, a political agenda for initiating gender equality legislation and creating independent bodies so as to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of such legislation;

ECE governments and multilateral organisations

- to accelerate the work on establishing a set of acceptable and comparable quantitative and qualitative gender equality indicators in order to develop, monitor and evaluate gender-based policy implementation;
- to establish a number of gender equality benchmarks and time-bound targets in key policy areas at the national and international levels and to use them to monitor progress;

Mechanisms in ECE governments, the private sector and social partners

- to establish gender equality plans where they do not exist and assess regularly their achievements.

Strategic direction 2: Advocating for a gender perspective in the resource allocation processes

Mechanisms in ECE governments (interministerial and ministerial)

- to make gender analyses of the budget allocations within and among all government sectors and on this basis to advise the budget planners in order to work towards an allocation of resources which is gender-sensitive and which provides the necessary financial and human resources for the achievement of gender equality targets.

Strategic direction 3: Making use of good practices in gender mainstreaming

Mechanisms in ECE governments

to regularly gather and exchange good practices and lessons learned in integrating gender mainstreaming in policy development processes;

from the above good practices, to draw lessons and case studies on gender mainstreaming; to disseminate them among relevant decision-makers and use them, for example, as a basis for training programmes for officials.

C. Strengthening the synergy between institutional mechanisms for gender equality and civil society

Strategic direction 1: Creating alliance with different actors within civil society through regular dialogue

National mechanisms in ECE governments

- to open up channels of communication with the different actors at the local, regional and international level – women’s organisations and other NGOs, trade unions, employers organisations, consumer associations, other economic and social entities, academic institutions and the media - in order to gain from their experience and knowledge, as well as to obtain their support for the promotion of gender equality and women’s human rights, and benefit from their influence on decision-making bodies;
- to strengthen these ties and ensure their continuity through an established regular dialogue between governmental and non-governmental actors;

NGOs and research institutions

- to share their experience and make known their gender research findings to the media, social partners, educational bodies and government authorities so that these various actors take them into account in their policies and practices;
- to organize themselves around specific gender issues and approach the relevant national mechanisms to discuss their positions, views and proposals thereon.

Strategic direction 2: Supporting the activities of civil society organizations

Mechanisms in ECE governments

- to provide financial and technical support to autonomous organisations and institutions devoted to research, analysis and evaluation of gender activities and issues and use their results to improve policies and programmes;
- to provide civil society with access to statistics and information regarding gender issues;
- to encourage the media to remove gender stereotypes and negative images of relationships between women and men, and girls and boys.