

Government Action Plan for Gender Equality

2004-2007

Summary

Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2004-2007. Helsinki 2005. 42 pp.
(Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland
ISSN 1236-2050, 2005:12) ISBN 952-00-1889-0 (print) ISBN 952-00-1890-9 (PDF)

The Government Resolution on the Action Plan for Gender Equality of the Finnish Government 2004 – 2007 initiates, compiles and co-ordinates the measures by which the Government promotes the equality between women and men. The action plan aims to implement the objectives that the Government has specified in its policy programme with a view to promoting gender equality.

The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2004-2007 consists of various elements. The measures of the action plan are related, among others, to the reform of the Act on Equality between Women and Men, promoting gender equality in working life, facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life, increasing the number of women in economic and political decision-making, alleviating segregation, reducing stereotypic gender images in the media, combating violence against women, men and gender equality, and enhancing gender equality in regional development and in international and EU co-operation. The Action Plan for Gender Equality incorporates a project presupposing extensive co-operation of the ministries, namely mainstreaming gender equality in state administration. The aim is to influence the decisions to be taken and thereby to increase the equality between women and men in society.

The preparing and carrying out of the Action Plan for Gender Equality is a part of the implementing and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 in order to promote the status of women. The measures of the Action Plan for Gender Equality cover the most important areas of the Beijing Platform for Action. The implementation of the action plan requires commitment of the Government and the ministries, and of the agencies and institutions under the ministries, to promoting gender equality as well as an extensive co-operation between the ministries and various actors. The Government follows the implementation of the action plan and reports on how it progresses.

Key words: equality, gender, media, parental leaves, power, reconciliation of work and family life, working life, wage differentials, women's studies, segregation, mainstreaming, violence against women

Foreword

Among the important goals the Government has set itself is the promotion of equality between women and men. The Government Programme includes a record number of objectives for improving gender equality. It also states unequivocally that promotion of equality between women and men is the responsibility of the entire Government and that the Government will produce an action plan on gender equality. The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2004-2007 sets out the Government's specific gender equality objectives and states which parties are responsible for their implementation.

The Action Plan is based on the Government's desire and obligation to pursue a broad-based approach in promoting gender equality. Finland also has obligations to promote gender equality under various international agreements and by EU legislation. Realization of gender equality is not, however, solely the concern of the Government, which is why the implementation of the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality will necessitate an approach on three different levels. Firstly, the Government, in its entirety, will promote the realization of gender equality in its own actions. Secondly, the ministries will promote equality within their own administrative branches, for instance through performance agreements. Thirdly, equality issues will be incorporated more vigorously than hitherto in the cooperative actions taken with different actors, for example local authorities and various organizations.

Social equality can be examined from many different viewpoints, among them those of different sections of the population, ethnic groups and age groups. The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality concentrates on the promotion of equality between women and men, as set out in the Government Programme. Equal opportunities for fulfilling one's own potential and for participating in society will be fairer and more just, and will improve the wellbeing of both women and men and make society more efficient.

The preparation of the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality has been a collaborative effort involving all the ministries. The Action Plan includes measures common to all ministries, such as mainstreaming, and measures specific to the ministries' own administrative branches. Mainstreaming is a new kind of procedure applied within the government sector, the impact of which will be reflected in gender equality and society at large. The aim has been to produce a concise Action Plan incorporating the ministries' principal equality-promoting measures. Implementation of the Action Plan's objectives requires that each ministry allocates the necessary staff resources to manage the issues. The Government will monitor the progress made in implementing the Action Plan.

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Contents

1 INTRODUCTION	7
2 REFORM OF THE EQUALITY ACT.....	8
3 GENDER EQUALITY IN WORKING LIFE	9
3.1 Greater focus on workplace equality planning	9
3.2 Raising the employment rate and cutting unemployment.....	10
3.3 Turning fixed-term jobs into permanent ones.....	12
3.4 Reducing differences in pay between women and men.....	13
3.5 Supporting the reconciliation of work and family life.....	14
3.6 More equal distribution of the employer costs incurred from different forms of family leave	16
3.7 Support for women entrepreneurs.....	16
4 INCREASING THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING.....	18
5 REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE PREVENTION OF PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN.....	21
5.1 General policies	21
5.2 Special projects at municipal level aimed at reducing violence against women .	23
5.3 Coordinating the anti-violence work	23
6 IMPROVING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE, PRESCHOOL TEACHING, AND OTHER TYPES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING	24
6.1 Improving day care, early childhood education and care and preschool teaching.	24
6.2 Reducing segregation in education and training	25
7 PROMOTING EQUALITY IN CULTURAL, SPORTS AND YOUTH POLICIES	25
7.1 Cultural and arts policy	25
7.2 Sports policy	26
7.3 Youth policy.....	26
8 GENDER EQUALITY AND THE MEDIA.....	27
9 GENDER EQUALITY IN HEALTH POLICY.....	27
10 SUPPORTING WOMEN’S STUDIES AND COORDINATION OF EQUALITY INFORMATION	28
11 GENDER EQUALITY AND MEN.....	29

12 MAINSTREAMING AND PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.....	31
12.1 Implementation of gender equality mainstreaming in the public administration.....	31
12.2 Organization of gender equality issues and assigning resources to them.....	33
12.3 Government personnel policy supporting gender equality	34
13 PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	35
14 GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVES IN INTERNATIONAL AND EU COOPERATION	36
14.1 Promotion of gender equality in the European Union	36
14.2 Mainstreaming of gender equality and gender considerations in international cooperation	36
14.3 Development policy	37
14.4 Crisis management.....	38
14.5 Equality in international processes involving environmental issues and sustainable development.....	39
15 MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE ACTION PLAN	39

1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in the Government Programme, promotion of equality between women and men is the responsibility of the entire Government. In the Programme, the Government also undertakes to produce an action plan on gender equality. Section 3.6 of the Government Programme outlines specific objectives for gender equality in relation to economic, employment and taxation policies, although the promotion of gender equality extends to all areas of the Programme and is thus an objective that applies to all branches of government.

The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality is the result of cooperation between all the ministries, with the common goal of promoting equality between women and men. The Action Plan is designed to implement the many equality objectives in the Government Programme. It brings together and coordinates equality-promoting projects and sets them in motion. The intention was to produce a concise document focusing on concrete measures that can be implemented or launched during the Government's term of office. The Action Plan incorporates legislative projects, training and development projects, investigatory work and other measures, some of which have already been started. Some of the projects also form part of other programmes. The largest project entity to be implemented through intersectoral collaboration is gender equality mainstreaming. Other major projects include the development of equality in working life and the prevention of violence against women and intimate partner violence.

Implementation of the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality forms part of the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The Action Plan's measures cover the most important areas of the Beijing Platform for Action and incorporate its three main principles: enhancing the status and dignity of women; implementing women's human rights; and promoting gender equality through mainstreaming. Mainstreaming refers to administrative practices and operating procedures for advancing gender equality as an integral part of the activities of the ministries. Following this principle, gender equality will be one of the key considerations at all levels, whether local, regional, national or international.

Implementation of the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality is a process that requires the Government, the ministries and the agencies and institutions under them to be committed to promoting equality, and also necessitates extensive cooperation with the many different actors involved.

The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality is divided into subject areas. At the beginning of each section is a box containing the Government Programme objectives for the particular subject being dealt with. Concrete measures are shown as bulleted items, each followed in parentheses by the name of the ministries responsible for the measures in question.

2 REFORM OF THE EQUALITY ACT

The Government will reform the Act on Equality between Women and Men and ensure its enforcement.

The Act on Equality between Women and Men entered into force in 1987. The aim of the Act is to promote the realization of equality and prevent gender-based discrimination in all sectors of society. The Act has been used particularly for improving the status of women in working life. Compliance with the Act is monitored by the Ombudsman for Equality and the Equality Board. The Act is an important mechanism for promoting equality.

The process of reforming the Act on Equality between Women and Men is currently under way. The Act needs to be amended for various reasons, among them the emergence of problems with its practical application, the obligations in the Constitution, and the statements made in the Government Programme. The reform will also allow the amended 'Employment Equality Directive' (2002/73/EC) to be put into effect.

The aim of the Government proposal for amending the Act on Equality between Women and Men is to strengthen the Act's provisions concerning the obligation to promote gender equality and the duty to eliminate gender discrimination. The proposed amendment includes a broadening of the Act's scope of application to encompass, as appropriate, forms of work that are similar to employment relationships. The proposals also include revised provisions on the general obligation of the authorities to promote equality and an expansion of the scope of application of the quota provision. The provisions on workplace equality plans are also revised in order to reconcile work and family life more effectively and eliminate differences in pay between women and men. Under the proposals, sanctions could also be imposed on an employer who neglects his duties regarding workplace equality plans. Sexual harassment will be a prohibited form of discrimination, as will any contrary action taken by the employer. There will no longer be a general ceiling imposed in the Act on the compensation payable to a person judged to have been a victim of discrimination.

- The Government proposal for amending the Act on Equality between Women and Men has been presented to Parliament and could enter into force during 2005. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- One new post is included in the 2005 budget for the Office of the Ombudsman for Equality. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

3 GENDER EQUALITY IN WORKING LIFE

In Finland, the majority of women and men are engaged in full-time employment. The employment rate among men is only slightly higher than among women, which is contrary to the situation in many other European countries. The proportion of men in permanent or full-time employment is higher than that of women. The unemployment rate among women and men is approximately the same (in 2003), but there are more men than women among the long-term unemployed. The labour market is segregated into female-dominated and male-dominated sectors and occupations. The employment rate among immigrants and certain ethnic groups is significantly lower than among the rest of the population. Among immigrants, the proportion of women belonging to the workforce is lower than the proportion of men.

Working life is an important area for gender equality issues, and the advancement of gender equality will therefore involve developing many of the aspects of working life. Aspects which are considered problem areas for equality include differences in pay between women and men, which have long remained at about the same level, and the fact that different types of family leave available have not been taken equally by fathers and mothers. An improvement in the reconciliation of work and family is important if working careers are to be extended and coping at work improved. A further aspect is that parents are having children at an increasingly later stage in their lives.

3.1 Greater focus on workplace equality planning

The workplace equality planning required under the Act on Equality between Women and Men is an essential tool for promoting equality at the workplace level. The Act obliges every employer to promote gender equality in a systematic manner and by setting goals. Employers with 30 or more employees are required to incorporate equality-promoting measures in their annual personnel or training plans or occupational safety and health action plans, or to draw up a separate equality plan. In the reform of the Act, the requirements for equality planning will be specified.

- The existence of a workplace equality plan will be checked in connection with occupational safety and health inspections at workplaces, and workplaces will be urged to undertake equality planning. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- The state of equality planning in the public sector will be investigated as part of the Ombudsman for Equality's work in monitoring compliance with the law. The investigation will be completed during 2005. (Ombudsman for Equality)

3.2 Raising the employment rate and cutting unemployment

It is the Government's aim to ensure that all citizens can participate fully in working life, contribute to longer working careers, facilitate the coordination of family life and work, promote equality and make work more attractive.

The Government's main economic policy goal is to find jobs for at least 100,000 persons by the end of the electoral period. This, with the creation of a strong foundation for a good rate of employment, will also be necessary in the years following the current period if a 75 per cent employment rate is to be achieved by the end of the following period.

An increase in employment is essential for the future development of the Finnish welfare society. This, in turn, requires not only the creation of new jobs but also an increase in the supply of labour. To increase the employment rate, working life will need to be made more attractive and work and family life reconciled more effectively.

Employment and unemployment must be examined separately for women and men. Gender differences are present in long-term unemployment, for instance, where men account for a higher proportion of the total figure. However, the proportion of men participating in labour market measures has been smaller than the proportion of men among the unemployed.

The Government is implementing a number of measures aimed at raising the employment rate and reducing unemployment. Some of these measures will be implemented within the intersectoral employment policy programme referred to in the Government Programme. The principal objective of the employment policy programme is to reduce structural unemployment and increase the supply of labour.

- In the structural reform of public employment services, services for clients with low employability will be relocated from the employment offices to employment service centres. The majority of unemployed persons who are difficult to employ are men. (Ministry of Labour)
- The measures implemented in the employment policy programme will also include measures concerning the availability of skilled labour, the extension of working careers and the development of working life. The gender viewpoint will be incorporated in the main projects of the employment policy programme, as set out in the plan drawn up in spring 2004. (Ministry of Labour)

In further developing the labour market measures, the gender division among the participants in these measures will be analysed and services then adjusted on this basis to ensure they are more appropriate for both sexes.

The sharp gender divide present among different occupations produces inflexibility in the labour market, hampering efforts to increase employment and recruit skilled labour.

In the reform of employment office services, the need to reduce this segregation will be taken into account in the personal services for job applicants and employers. In the labour market measures, such as labour market training, vocational guidance, employment services and employer services, efforts will be made wherever possible to support atypical, non-gender-stereotyped training and occupational choices.

A target of the Workplace Development Programme (TYKES) is that at least half of its project participants will be women. In addition, the promotion of gender equality is one of the selection criteria for the TYKES projects. The VETO Programme is aimed at promoting the attractiveness of work and working life and extending working careers by improving equality in working life and more effectively reconciling work and family life.

Support for unemployed young people will be strengthened by developing the youth workshop activities.

- The youth workshops will be developed by improving the competence of workshop instructors in gender equality issues. The gender division among workshop instructors and the number of female and male participants in the workshops and their placements after the workshop period, either in training or working life, will be monitored. In the workshops, attention will be given to the special features of 'women's work' and 'men's work'. To this end, the workshops will be obliged to develop a standard monitoring system, with the monitoring period lasting at least one year from the end of the workshop period. (Ministry of Education)

Immigrants still account for only a small proportion of the Finnish population, but this proportion nevertheless grew faster than in any other European country in the 1990s. In planning and implementing different measures it is important to take into account the special needs of all immigrants: women, men and children. The integration of immigrant women, for example, is affected by the fact that they are at home caring for children more often than immigrant men. The aim is to promote employment among immigrant women and, by supporting language learning, to improve women's opportunities for participation. Cooperation and networking with Finnish women will support employment among immigrant women, because many immigrants, too, will obtain work through informal networks.

- The Integration Act (Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers) and the integration practices involved will be developed in such a way that all immigrant women will have the opportunity to participate in training and services that support integration as soon as possible after arrival in the country. The Integration Act will be developed in such a way that parental leave and the home care allowance period will not reduce entitlement to a personal integration plan. (Ministry of Labour)
- In the case of immigrants who are illiterate and have little basic education, their constitutional right to receive a basic education will be safeguarded. (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour)

3.3 Turning fixed-term jobs into permanent ones

The competitiveness of workplaces in the public sector must be ensured. The Government will take special measures to make recurrent fixed-term jobs permanent, particularly in the public sector.

The Government's principal aim in developing working life is to make fixed-term jobs permanent. The fixed-term nature of many jobs is a gender-equality problem, not least because fixed-term jobs tend to be held by women who are at the stage of starting a family. The uncertainty of fixed-term employment relationships from the viewpoint of establishing a family and different types of family leave related to this is a problem especially for women, but also for men. Fixed-term jobs also increase the risk of unemployment as well as affect income and hamper future plans, as much for women as for men.

- The Government proposal for reforming the Annual Holidays Act includes several improvements to the status of those in fixed-term or part-time employment in regard to the determination and accumulation of annual leave. (Ministry of Labour)

At the end of 2003, one quarter of State sector employees, or about 30,400 persons, were in fixed-term jobs. Figures from Statistics Finland show that in 2003, 27 per cent of the women and 21 per cent of the men employed by the State were in a fixed-term job. The aim is that a job should be fixed-term only if so required by the nature of the work, the need for temporary substitutes, temporary arrangements for work related to a vacant post, or practical training.

- In autumn 2003, the Ministry of Finance sent out an advice note to government bodies on the principles applying to fixed-term jobs and on the measures for reducing the number of fixed-term jobs. On the basis of a questionnaire carried out in spring 2004, it is evident that government agencies and institutions have begun to revise the criteria for their fixed-term jobs, and this has already led to a reduction in the number of such jobs. The Ministry of Finance will monitor the situation. (Ministry of Finance, all ministries)
- The Ministry of Labour will appoint a rapporteur ad int. with the task of reporting on a range of matters including the prevalence of fixed-term jobs in different sectors, the gender division, and the extent to which the use of fixed-term employment contracts and the underlying principles are in harmony with the current legislation. (Ministry of Labour)

In quantitative terms, the majority of women's fixed-term jobs are in municipalities. The Commission for Local Authority Employers has issued guidelines on reducing fixed-term posts.

3.4 Reducing differences in pay between women and men

Together with the labour market organizations, the Government will promote equal pay and workplace equality through a long-term programme. The goal is to eliminate unjustified differences in pay between women and men.

The Government will reform the Act on Equality between Women and Men and ensure its enforcement. The reform will, for example, promote job evaluation across the boundaries between collective agreements and the principle of equal pay, by including surveys of the evaluation of jobs held by men and women and wage differentials in equality plans and by making wage information easier to obtain in cases where discrimination is suspected.

The Government considers that unjustified differences in pay between women and men are one of the main equality problems in working life. The available statistics show that the average difference in pay between women and men has long remained at about the same level. In euros, the difference has grown since the late 1990s. Women's average earnings for their regular hours of work have been about 80-82 per cent of the equivalent figure for men since the start of the 1990s, although in 2003 this proportion rose to 83 per cent. Part of this difference in pay is explained by gender segregation in working life, part by other factors and part remains unexplained, even after the latest studies.

- Equality in pay will be promoted through various measures including the forthcoming reform of the Act on Equality between Women and Men. Workplace equality planning will include pay surveys, the aim of which will be to allow the examination of pay differences in workplaces across the boundaries between collective agreements. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- The rapporteur's report on the preconditions necessary for the social partners and the State to compile an equal pay programme covering the entire labour market was submitted in August 2004. At the end of 2004, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health set up a tripartite working group to assemble the programme. The programme working group must complete its work by the beginning of March 2005. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

3.5 Supporting the reconciliation of work and family life

The Government will focus development resources particularly on promoting equality, the coordination of work and family life, psychological occupational safety and health, well-being at work and more effective monitoring of working hours, the development of good management practices and general expertise, workplace health promotion work and the special needs of the ageing workforce.

The Government will work with the labour market organizations to prepare the way for working time arrangements which take the needs of families and the best interests of children into better account. Opportunities for working shorter hours will be gradually introduced for the parents of children under the age of 10. Partial care leave and partial home care allowance will be developed to provide working parents with a real alternative. The expansion of partial care leave will be agreed on a tripartite basis and rapidly put into practice. Family policy leaves will be further developed and a more equal division of such leaves between both parents will be encouraged.

The attractiveness of working life must be enhanced and work and family life more effectively reconciled if the employment rate is to be raised. Reconciling work and family life or studying and family life is becoming increasingly challenging for parents. Through family policy and by achieving a more effective reconciliation of work and family life, the aim is that having a family will not be something that is delayed for financial or work-related reasons. The opportunity for a flexible return to working life after taking family leave is important, especially from the viewpoint of women's participation in working life.

More effective reconciliation of work and family life will require assessment and development of the legislative and other measures available. The family leave legislation will be further developed and a more equal division of such leave between both parents will be encouraged. In developing the family leave legislation, account should be taken of factors such as the parenting opportunities for single parents, parents living separately from their children, adoptive parents and same-sex parents. Consideration should also be given to the way in which work and family life are reconciled beyond the young-child stage, for instance in caring for ageing parents. Reconciliation of work and family life will be supported by improving the allowances and services for families. A comprehensive and high-quality day care system is a basic service that will be maintained and developed so as to allow parents of young children to effectively reconcile work and family life.

- The opportunities for developing the family leave legislation will be studied, the aim being to make it easier for both parents to exercise their right to take family leave and to ensure that there is a more equal division between women and men in the taking of such leave than at present. The opportunity to work shorter hours will be gradually expanded to include parents of children under 10 years of age. (Ministry of Labour)

- A project (*Tilaa lapsille, tilaa perheille – More consideration for children and families*) has been set up to support the reconciliation of work and family life by, for example, targeting an improvement in attitudes towards children and family life in the workplace and in society in general. The VETO ('Work Attraction') Programme will examine the links between family leave and labour market status. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- Women more frequently than men are awarded only the minimum amount of parent's daily allowance. This minimum level will be increased at the start of 2005. The Government has presented a bill (Bill 164/2004) to Parliament that is intended to make it easier to be eligible for earnings-related allowance. The Government bill proposes that this benefit be calculated on the basis of the employment earnings from the previous benefit period in cases where the children's age difference is no more than three years and there is no earned income during this period. In addition, work of at least one month would give entitlement to earnings-related allowance, provided the work would have continued if it were not for the start of disability or entitlement to parent's daily allowance. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- The integration of immigrant families will be supported by developing activities at open child day care centres and child health clinics. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Labour)

The part-time child care leave and care allowance system was expanded in 2003 to include parents of children in grades 1 and 2 of comprehensive school. Organizing morning and afternoon activities for schoolchildren reduces the time they spend alone without the presence of a trusted adult, and facilitates the reconciliation of work or study with family life.

- Support will be given to organizing more extensive morning and afternoon activities through central government transfers to the local government for this purpose. The necessary amendment to the law entered into force on August 1, 2004. The aim of morning and afternoon activities is to support children's upbringing in the home and at school and to promote equality in society. The objectives and nature of the morning and afternoon activities are set out in a separate regulation on the subject. The extent of the activities and range of different services will be monitored. (Ministry of Education)
- Reconciling studying and family responsibilities will be taken into account when investigating the acceleration of studies and the financial incentives related to student financial aid. To advance the career prospects for women researchers, the Academy of Finland will, where necessary, take into account the applicant's family situation in its funding criteria. (Ministry of Education)

- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health working group which investigated social security for grant recipients proposes that the ministries should take the necessary steps to ensure that the operating expense items for universities and other higher educational institutions can no longer be used to award grants for research, but only, for example, to award travel grants. The aim would be that researchers are recruited to vacant employment posts. Such posts would accrue earnings-related security and this would, if implemented, mean that researchers are entitled to earnings-related employment pension and parental benefits, i.e. maternity, paternity and parent's allowances. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

3.6 More equal distribution of the employer costs incurred from different forms of family leave

The costs incurred by employers from family leave will be shared more equitably.

Costs incurred by employers from family leave fall to a much greater extent on female-dominated sectors and may weaken women's labour market status. The reason for this is that women and men tend to be concentrated in different sectors, and so family leave is distributed unevenly, with women taking such leave much more often than men.

The employer costs incurred when employees take different forms of family leave have been evened out somewhat already, to the extent that those employers who pay full salary for the period of maternity leave receive compensation equal to the daily sickness allowance. Employers have also been able to apply for compensation for the annual leave costs accruing on employees' periods of family leave. The application procedure was simplified at the start of 2003, after which an increasing number of employers have applied for this compensation.

The alternatives for sharing the employer costs from family leave more equitably were investigated by a tripartite working group in spring 2004. The decision was taken to substantially increase the proportion of annual leave costs that is eligible for compensation as from the start of 2005. Investigation of the scope for more equitable distribution will be continued at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

3.7 Support for women entrepreneurs

The Government will enhance the conditions for employment and entrepreneurship with respect to men and women, such as quality daycare and other public services. For example, separate assessment of spouses for tax purposes, work-based social security for employees and entrepreneurs, and loans to female entrepreneurs will encourage women to enter the labour market.

The proportion of women among all entrepreneurs and among unpaid family members working with entrepreneurs has long been about one third. In relative terms, this is greater than in the other EU-15 countries. In part, women entrepreneurs have different

kinds of problems than their male counterparts, which is why special action is needed to increase the number of women entrepreneurs. Family-related duties, in particular, determine the opportunities for women to function as entrepreneurs.

Women's entrepreneurship will be strengthened as part of the Government's entrepreneurship policy programme with the aid of the following measures:

- A working group of the Ministry of Trade and Industry will examine the range of measures for promoting women's entrepreneurship and the resources for this, and will investigate the practical needs associated with women's entrepreneurship (e.g. the coverage of advisory services) and the keeping of statistics on women's entrepreneurship. The working group will submit its interim report on January 4, 2005 and continue its work during spring 2005. (Ministry of Trade and Industry)
- Regional women's activities and women's entrepreneurship will be supported through the work of resource centres, which will complement the advisory services of the Employment and Economic Development Centres especially at the initial stage of entrepreneurship. The need to establish new resource centres will be examined further. (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Trade and Industry)
- Using funds granted by the Ministry of the Interior to the Central Association of Women Entrepreneurs in Finland, a development plan will be drawn up and used as an aid in assessing the potential for setting up resource centres in different areas. The aim is that three to five of the regions will set up regional resource centres and strengthen the operations of the existing resource centres using the present financing mechanisms. (Ministry of the Interior)
- The enterprise advisory service will be developed at the regional and sub-regional level by increasing the operational scope of the Employment and Economic Development Centres' women's entrepreneurship advisers and by ensuring that such entrepreneurship is taken into account in regional services. (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Labour)
- The working group that submitted its report on the system of start-up finance in spring 2004 proposed that anyone completing their studies or leaving paid work or domestic work to become entrepreneurs could receive the start-up finance that is currently intended only for unemployed persons. It was also proposed that Finnvera's (state-owned export-credit agency) authorization to grant loans for women entrepreneurs and small entrepreneurs, which are often related to entrepreneur start-ups, be increased. (Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Labour)
- The working group investigating development needs in the social security provision for entrepreneurs (deadline May 31, 2005) will take the equality

viewpoint into account in its work as well as, for example, the challenges concerning reconciliation of work and family life for entrepreneurs. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

Women's entrepreneurship will be strengthened not only through the Government's policy programme measures but also through other actions.

The proposals made by the Theme Group on Women of the Rural Policy Committee regarding the promotion of women's entrepreneurship in rural areas will be implemented as part of the fourth Rural Policy Programme. The proposals concern strengthening of the enterprise advisory service and the operation of the resource centres, promoting the study of women's entrepreneurship, and revising social security for entrepreneurs. (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry)

- The cooperation programme for women entrepreneurs in Finland and its neighbouring areas (2002-2004) is being used to promote and expand women's entrepreneurship and cooperation and networking among women entrepreneurs, and to develop business activities in Finland and Russia. The intention is to link Sweden's women entrepreneurs into the cooperation network in the future. (Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Labour)

4 INCREASING THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING

The number of women involved in political and economic decision-making will be increased.

The need to increase the number of women in political and economic decision-making in Finland is still very relevant. Even though Finnish women of working age are already better educated and trained than men and participate in the labour market almost as actively as men, the percentage of women among decision-makers is still disproportionately low. This is even the case in organizations and sectors in which women constitute a majority. The aim of the Government is to increase the proportion of women in political, economic and other decision-making arenas.

The programme for increasing the number of women on the boards of directors of State-owned companies and companies with a significant minority State shareholding will continue until 2005. The programme is based on the following:

1. Women and men must constitute at least 40 per cent of board members in companies that are wholly owned by the State. This target must be met by spring 2005.

2. In non-listed companies with a majority State shareholding, the 40 per cent quota for women board members must become reality by spring 2005, unless there are explicit grounds for doing otherwise (such as provisions in the articles of association or shareholder agreements).
3. In non-listed companies with a minority State shareholding, the Government must promote gender equality, if necessary (?) by nominating its own candidates for board membership in a manner that helps to implement gender equality targets.
4. Listed companies in which the State has a majority shareholding or de facto controlling interest must be close to the 40 per cent target by spring 2005.
5. In listed companies in which the State does not have a de facto controlling interest, the Government must promote gender equality, if necessary by nominating its own candidates for board membership in a manner that helps to implement gender equality targets.
 - The Government will continue to increase the proportion of women on boards of directors of State-owned companies and in companies with a significant minority State shareholding in accordance with the policy described above. Implementation of the programme will take into account the normal process of renewing board membership. Women will be given priority when candidates are sought to fill board-membership vacancies. (Ministry of Trade and Industry, all ministries)
 - The Government will encourage parliamentary groups to nominate both women and men for board of directors and supervisory board membership.
 - The Government will monitor trends concerning the number of women on the boards of directors and supervisory boards of State-owned companies and companies with a significant minority State shareholding.

Women account for 44 per cent of the ministers in the present Government. The percentage of women in elected bodies has been slowly increasing. In 2004, 37 per cent of all Members of Parliament were women. Of the members of local councils elected in the 2004 local elections, 36.4 per cent were women. This was two per cent more than in the previous elections.

The Government considers it important to increase the number of women in politics. The responsibility for increasing the influence of women in different areas of political decision-making, and the nomination of candidates lies with individual political parties and bodies.

- The Government will encourage political groups and bodies to increase the percentage of woman candidates.
- The aim of the Government's Civil Participation Policy Programme is to have an attractive representative democracy based on a society with strong civil participation. As part of the Policy Programme, a study has been carried out on the impact of the Programme's projects on the status of women and men. The results will be taken into account in the implementation of the subprojects. The monitoring indicators of the Programme will be selected so that they enable civil participation to be monitored on a gender-specific basis. (Ministry of Justice)

The top echelons in the government sector comprise about 200 top-ranking civil servants, of whom 22 per cent were women in 2003. The top echelons comprise the highest posts in individual ministries, i.e. heads of department and above, and heads of agencies and comparable posts. In 2003, women held 33 per cent of top and middle-ranking managerial positions in the civil service and 38 per cent of other supervisory positions. It is expected that almost 80 per cent of all civil servants in managerial positions in the government sector will retire or move to other tasks by 2011.

- The Ministry of Finance will provide government bodies with recommendations and examples enabling them to increase the number of woman applicants for vacant posts and to pay greater attention to gender considerations at all stages of the recruiting process. The aim is to have more woman applicants for vacant managerial positions and to reach a situation in which about half of all new appointees are women. Support will also be provided for the networking of women in managerial positions in the government sector in 2004-2005. (Ministry of Finance, all ministries)

Women currently hold one fifth of all top posts in universities. The percentage has increased steadily but slowly. At the same time, a majority of all lecturers and full-time teachers are women. The aim is to achieve gender equality in leading positions in the teaching sector.

- The Ministry of Education and the Academy of Finland will examine the progress of women in researcher training and in their careers in the research field, and will study the measures that are needed to deal with any defects identified. The Ministry of Education will support the Academy of Finland in its efforts to promote the career of woman researchers and will develop statistics and indicators for monitoring the realization of gender equality. (Ministry of Education)

5 REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE PREVENTION OF PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

Resources will be allocated throughout the Government's term to preventing domestic violence and violence against women, and to discouraging prostitution. Additional resources will be made available for services to help prostitutes and victims of violence, and the protection of victims of trafficking in women will be strengthened.

To reduce the level of violence in society, a comprehensive national programme will be drawn up to combat violence, covering all the key areas. The means for intervening in cases of domestic violence will be strengthened.

5.1 General policies

Domestic violence and intimate partner violence against women are human rights violations and a particularly serious problem in Finland. Most of the perpetrators of such acts are men. Domestic violence and intimate partner violence also affect children. Only a small proportion of the victims of domestic violence and intimate partner violence are men. Violence and the threat of violence affecting women at work is also a growing problem. Victims of violence do not get enough help under the existing service arrangements and neither are there enough services available to help the perpetrators break the cycle of violence. Improving the knowledge and skills of those providing professional assistance is a key instrument in combating violence. The work to combat violence falls within the administrative purview of a number of different ministries. Under the Government Programme, ministries should allocate sufficient resources to their own administrative branches for combating violence and provide the agencies and institutions in their administrative branches with guidelines on the matter.

- In autumn 2004, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health completed the preparation of its 2004-2007 Action Programme to Prevent Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence. The Programme's central aims are to improve the nationwide network of primary and specialized services for victims and perpetrators of violence, to improve the effectiveness of assistance given to children and young people witnessing and experiencing violence and to develop professional skills needed in the anti-violence work and in handling different situations. The programme will be coordinated with the National Violence Reduction Programme. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- As part of the Internal Security Programme, the National Council for Crime Prevention will prepare a national programme aimed at reducing violence. The programme will cover all important areas of violence, and a working group focusing on violence against women will take part in the preparatory work. This aspect will also be discussed in other working groups. The Programme is to be ready by the end of 2004.

The Violence Reduction Programme of the National Council for Crime Prevention will cover all aspects of violence against women. (Ministry of Justice) The Ministry of Justice has drafted a number of legislative changes on violence against women and prostitution. The shortcomings concerning compensation for acts of domestic violence and violence against women are being examined as part of the plans to update the Act on State Compensation for Crime Victims. The new Penal Code provisions on trafficking in human beings and aggravated trafficking in human beings entered into force on August 1, 2004. At the same time, provisions on an aggravated form of pandering were introduced, and the marketing of sexual services was made a punishable act. The Government will consider the criminalization of the purchasing of sexual services in 2005. A provision to be incorporated in the Act on the Restraining Order at the beginning of 2005 will enable the imposition of restraining orders applying inside the family. Furthermore, the provision allowing for non-prosecution for acts of violence at the insistence of the victim, which has limited the right to institute criminal proceedings in such cases, was repealed as of October 1, 2004.

- Issues concerning violence against women will be made part of judges' training programmes from 2004 in accordance with the mainstreaming principle. (Ministry of Justice)
- Police forces doing community and regional policing have been given training on domestic violence as part of their basic training. The training will continue and the training programme will be updated as part of the programme of the National Council for Crime Prevention. (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior)
- Trafficking in human beings is a growing human rights problem that also affects Finland. A national action plan on trafficking in human beings will be prepared and implemented, giving due consideration to UN Conventions and the Finnish commitments under the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings adopted on December 2, 2003. Finland will also actively seek the adoption of a European Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings. Cooperation with Finnish non-governmental organizations in human trafficking issues will also be improved. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs)
- The State Provincial Office of Lapland will, in cooperation with different expert bodies, survey the extent and forms of prostitution in Lapland and the measures that should be taken to tackle the problem. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- The 1997 survey of female victims of violence will be repeated in 2005. The National Council for Crime Prevention will bring together the bodies interested in developing and funding the survey. (Ministry of Justice)
- In 2004-2007, the occupational safety and health inspectorates will closely monitor workplaces in sectors which have the greatest risks of violence and will issue instructions on the necessary measures. The aim is to reduce mental and physical violence at workplaces. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

5.2 Special projects at municipal level aimed at reducing violence against women

The Advisory Board on Social Work will prepare proposals for developing the social work sector. The proposals, which will be put forward by the end of 2004, will include more effective cooperation between social workers and the police. (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

- Efforts to prevent intimate partner violence will continue as pilot projects in a number of municipalities. The purpose of the projects is to give preference to those working methods and practices that have proved successful, improve multiprofessional cooperation and incorporate anti-violence work into the normal activities and decision-making processes of municipalities and sub-regions. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- A guidebook will be produced enabling those giving professional assistance to identify the different aspects of violence experienced by immigrant women and to find appropriate methods for dealing with them. The guidebook will be ready in autumn 2004. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

5.3 Coordinating the anti-violence work

Most actors involved in the practical side of the anti-violence work are at local level. The development of knowledge and skills and the dissemination of best practices is a major strategic challenge in the anti-violence work.

- Cooperation networks will be improved. (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- The setting up of a national unit for coordinating anti-violence work will be examined. The unit would be responsible for coordinating multiprofessional cooperation in the sector, such as the dissemination of information, the maintenance of websites, training, research, development work and international cooperation. (Ministry of Justice)

6 IMPROVING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE, PRESCHOOL TEACHING, AND OTHER TYPES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Finnish education system and the system of early childhood education and care rest on the principle of gender equality. Early childhood education and care and other types of education and training play a key role in the promotion of gender equality. Education and training help to shape attitudes and provide individual citizens with the knowledge and skills they need in their everyday life. Promotion of equality must already be taken into account in the upbringing and education of small children.

There are still substantial differences in the education and training choices of girls and boys and in the subjects they take. This perpetuates segregation and inequality in working life. The fact that boys have more behavioural and learning problems than girls, and the fact that girls suffer much more from psychosomatic symptoms than boys, clearly shows that there is room for improvement in Finnish education and training systems. However, consideration must be given to differences within each gender: there are poorly performing girls and well-performing boys, and boys, too, can have psychosomatic symptoms. In order to promote equality and to find good solutions, the way in which gender-based differences manifest themselves in areas such as learning and wellbeing at schools, the reasons for the differences, and the manner in which the differences should be considered in the planning of education and training should be surveyed and assessed more thoroughly.

6.1 Improving day care, early childhood education and care and preschool teaching

The best way of enabling parents of small children to participate in working life is to ensure that there are high-quality, convenient day care arrangements that accord with family needs. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will continue to develop the Finnish day care system so that it can continue to be a service fostering social equality and catering for the needs of families.

- Promotion of gender equality in child care, upbringing and teaching is included in the Government Resolution Concerning the National Policy Definition on Early Childhood Education and Care of February 2002, and in the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health; September 30, 2003) and the preschool teaching guidelines issued by the National Board of Education. With these documents, the development of early childhood education and care, child care and preschool teaching will increasingly focus on the developmental differences between girls and boys, thus ensuring that early childhood education and care and preschool teaching can help in bringing up children in accordance with equality principles. On the other hand, individual differences between girls and boys should also be taken into account so that

stereotypical conceptions and approaches are not perpetuated. (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

6.2 Reducing segregation in education and training

Segregation is well-entrenched in education, training and working life, and reducing it is a considerable challenge. Stereotypical conceptions about education, training and occupations suitable for women and for men make it difficult for young people to choose careers on the basis of their own talents and abilities.

- Gender equality will be promoted at all levels of education. In order to reduce segregation, educational institutions will be encouraged to adopt practices that support the promotion of gender equality. Furthermore, pedagogic methods will be examined on the basis of differences in learning performance between girls and boys (Ministry of Education)
- Promotion of gender equality in universities and polytechnics will be incorporated in the performance and target guidance processes. Efforts will be made to reduce segregation in education and training by improving undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education, by making student counselling more effective and by providing young people with information about different occupations. (Ministry of Education)
- More attention will be paid to the equality content of undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education, and methods will be sought for reducing the imbalance in the gender structure within the teaching profession. (Ministry of Education)

7 PROMOTING EQUALITY IN CULTURAL, SPORTS AND YOUTH POLICIES

As a civilized society Finland builds on skills, knowledge and creativity. The underlying values include equality before the law, tolerance, an international outlook, responsibility for the environment and equality between women and men.

7.1 Cultural and arts policy

Gender equality will be strengthened in cultural and artistic spheres by developing performance guidance, statistical compilation methods and indicators. The work will be based on a study commissioned by the Ministry of Education which examined the realization of gender equality and the assessment of gender impacts in arts and culture.

- Based on the study, measures necessary for promoting gender equality will be prepared during the autumn of 2004. (Ministry of Education)

7.2 Sports policy

The targets for the most important sectors under the Sports Division of the Ministry of Education will be defined so that gender equality can be implemented through information and resource guidance. The sectors in question are the support for national sports organizations, the support for sports institutes and construction of sports facilities, and sport and health sciences.

- The Ministry of Education has appointed a working group for the project. It consists of representatives of the Ministry of Education, sports organizations and sports research establishments and must complete its work by the end of January 2005. (Ministry of Education)
- The gender breakdown of the people involved in sports-sector decision-making and the degree of equality in different sports will be examined. This will be on the basis of the gender breakdown in different sports, which will be compared against such factors as the gender breakdown among decision-makers. (Ministry of Education)

7.3 Youth policy

In the promotion of gender equality in youth policy, the focus will be on legislation and youth programmes.

- The Government proposal for a new Youth Work Act will be prepared with gender equality as a central principle in the drafting process. Gender equality will also be incorporated in provisions on resources. In law-drafting during 2003-2005, the gender impacts of new legislation will be assessed by a separate expert panel, which will also contribute to the drafting process. (Ministry of Education)
- In the administrative branches of the Ministry of Education, the methods for youth work with girls' and boys' will be developed, with consideration given to the different types of problems. The aim is to strengthen the identity of young people and prevent social exclusion. The focus in the development of methods and assistance in youth programmes will be on preventive drug programmes, special youth programmes and programmes targeting young immigrants and young people in need of improved social integration. (Ministry of Education)

8 GENDER EQUALITY AND THE MEDIA

The relationship between the media environment and progress in equality issues is one of the most important issues in the promotion of equality between the sexes. As people spend more and more time with the media, the messages conveyed by different media are having an ever stronger impact on people's lives and thoughts. Media-related problems include the increasingly pornographic content of entertainment media and the public domain, and the stereotypical gender images conveyed by the media.

The media play a very important role in generating the images people have of girls and boys and women and men. Under the Finnish legislation and according to the principles followed in Finland, issues related to media content and the emphasis given to different areas are primarily matters of self-regulation and editorial responsibility. The Government follows developments in television programming, for example by initiating studies on the topic. There has been some discussion about the broadcasting times of violent programmes detrimental to child development or programmes containing sex. Operators have moved some programmes to later hours and are now providing more advance information about their programmes.

- As part of the 'Media and gender equality' project (2005-2006), the scope for promoting a balanced and stereotype-free gender image under the principle of media self-regulation will be examined in cooperation with media operators. The project is based on the strategic objectives of the Beijing Declaration, under which the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication should be increased and a balanced and stereotype-free media image of women promoted. The purpose of the project is to dismantle stereotypes of both women and men. (Ministry of Education)

The Council of Ethics in Advertising, a body operating under both the Central Chamber of Commerce and the Advertising Council, issues opinions on whether an advertisement is ethically acceptable. Advertising that violates equality principles or the rules of social responsibility or is otherwise contrary to good marketing practices is considered ethically questionable. Most of the opinions issued by the Council concern gender equality.

9 GENDER EQUALITY IN HEALTH POLICY

The aim of Finnish health policy is to improve the health and functional capacity of the population and to narrow health gaps between population groups. Even though, in overall terms, the health of Finns has improved, there has been some widening of the gaps between population groups. Women and men face different health problems. For

example, the average life expectancy of Finnish men is about seven years shorter than that of women, and mortality among men is more dependent on socio-economic factors than among women. Depression is a major mental health problem among adults and much more common among women than men.

In the lives of Finnish men, alcohol, risk-taking, self-inflicted violence and violence against others are often related. Young Finnish males are much more likely to die violently or in accidents than young men in other Western countries, and the differences between women and men are high in this area. One of the central targets of the Health 2015 programme is to reduce accidental and violent deaths among young adult males by a third by 2015, compared with the level of the late 1990s.

- Injury prevention has been made more effective by establishing a unit for the prevention of home and leisure accidents at the National Public Health Institute and by launching a national programme for reducing the number of occupational injuries. Campaigns to combat driving while intoxicated and waterway campaigns safety will also continue. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

Preserving functional capacity is a precondition for independent living. There are more women than men among older people with a weak functional capacity.

- A national programme for strengthening the functional capacity of older people will be launched. The programme, covering the years 2004-2007, will involve improved training for physical education instructors dealing with the elderly, improved physical education services for older people, and an increase in information provision about the maintenance of functional capacity and health among older people. (Ministry of the Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

10 SUPPORTING WOMEN'S STUDIES AND COORDINATION OF EQUALITY INFORMATION

Coordination between institutions engaging in women's studies will be surveyed.

Financial support has been given to professorships in women's studies and the national university network of women's studies. Even though most of the professorships are on a fixed-term basis, women's studies now form a well-established part of the university curricula in Finland.

There is now a national women's studies and equality information portal providing data and expert information on equality matters. The purpose of the Minna portal (www.minna.fi) is to gather together equality information and to enable women's and

gender studies to be effectively utilized. The portal will promote mainstreaming in the government sector and provide universities, non-governmental organizations, the media and the public at large with information about equality matters. The portal has a list of experts, thematically organized information with easy-to-understand articles, news pages, links and a women's studies bulletin. Additional information will gradually be added to the Minna portal. The launch of the portal has been supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

- The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will examine various options for arranging the documentation and gathering of information on equality issues on a permanent basis. The ministries will appoint a rapporteur ad int. for the task. (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)
- The Ministry of Education will improve the coordination of women's studies and give due attention to the status of women's studies in the performance guidance process. The aim is to ensure the position of women's studies as part of university-level research during the term of office of the present Government. (Ministry of Education)
- The task of the researcher career working group appointed by the Ministry of Education in autumn 2004 is to prepare a proposal for an overall strategy for the development of professional research careers and for ways of promoting research careers for women and gender equality in the sector. (Ministry of Education)

11 GENDER EQUALITY AND MEN

<p><i>Equality issues will also be assessed from the male point of view. Men will be encouraged to take family leave.</i></p>

The Government will also assess gender equality policy matters from the male point of view. Mainstreaming of gender considerations is an important instrument in this respect. The status of men is connected with all sectors of the Action Plan in various ways. The assessment and examination of gender equality policy issues from the angle 'men and gender equality' is a relatively new theme and approaches the whole equality concept from a new direction. Progress in the field of gender equality is only possible if men, too, are involved in equality work. In accordance with the mainstreaming principle, links between men and the different objectives, measures and projects of the Government Action Plan will be assessed during its implementation, as applicable. The Action Plan also includes projects specifically targeting men, such as the promotion of fatherhood, reconciliation of work and family life, and the development of employment services so that men suffering from long-term unemployment can find jobs.

- In a project ‘Tilaa lapsille, tilaa perheille’ (‘More consideration for children and families’), fathers are encouraged to make more extensive use of their right to take family leave, while another aim is to change attitudes at workplaces so that family leave by fathers would be more acceptable. The paternity leave information campaign will continue, and development of the family leave legislation with the aim of supporting fatherhood will also be studied. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Labour)
- In the administrative branch of the Ministry of Education, the status of men and the issues of gender equality have been highlighted in, for example, studies on learning differences between girls and boys and labour market segregation. Student counselling and vocational guidance will be developed to provide girls and boys with optimal support in their efforts to make educational and vocational choices from a broad range of options that are not limited by traditional gender concepts. Pedagogic methods will be examined and developed on the basis of the differences between learning results of girls and boys in order to foster learning among children and young people. In the development of the library sector, ways will be sought to encourage boys to read more. (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour)

Most of the perpetrators of violent acts are men. Most of the men carrying out serious acts of violence or falling victim to them are socially excluded and are often intoxicated when carrying out the acts. As part of the National Violence Reduction Programme prepared by the National Council for Crime Prevention and as part of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health’s Action Programme to Prevent Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence, improvements will be made in treatment programmes for those carrying out acts of violence. The National Violence Reduction Programme also aims to reduce violence arising from exclusion and alcohol use. The programmes are discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.

- Gender equality considerations will be incorporated in the civic education given to conscripts during their military service, and conscripts will also be made more aware of the causes and consequences of violence. (Ministry of Defence)
- A report will be prepared on the topic ‘men and gender equality’, which will outline the relationship between men and the gender equality policy. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

12 MAINSTREAMING AND PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

12.1 Implementation of gender equality mainstreaming in the public administration

The Government aims to mainstream gender equality throughout the public administration. Methods for assessing gender effects will be developed and evaluation will be taken into account in the preparation of legislation and the central government budget.

In the mainstreaming of gender equality, the aim is to develop administrative methods and operational approaches that help ministries and other authorities to promote gender equality as part of their activities. When implemented, such mainstreaming will have a wide impact on society at large. All ministries make decisions which have impacts on men, women and gender equality, and these decisions should be examined. The purpose of mainstreaming is to eliminate procedures and operational cultures characterized by gender neutrality or even gender blindness.

Another objective of mainstreaming is to ensure that civil servants take gender considerations into account when preparing matters. The aim is to make civil servants more aware of the impacts of their decisions on gender equality. Different ministries have to deal with different gender equality issues in their administrative branches, and therefore it is important that experts in each administrative branch can identify the gender equality issues important for their areas and give proper consideration to them.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has been developing mainstreaming as a pilot project since 2002, and other ministries, too, have their own projects for mainstreaming applications. The lessons learned from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health pilot project will be used for the development of a mainstreaming model applicable to the government sector as a whole.

- **Implementation of gender equality mainstreaming in the government sector 2004-2007**

- Mainstreaming training and information provision

Mainstreaming can only be successfully implemented in the government sector if civil servants are adequately familiarized with the topic. Starting in 2004, ministries will organize coordinated training on mainstreaming and gender impact assessment. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, all ministries)

The gender equality perspective will be incorporated in ministries' internal training programmes. The aim is to have the gender equality

viewpoint incorporated in ministries' internal training programmes by 2007 (including induction programmes). (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, all ministries)

During 2004, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will produce a guidebook enabling Government civil servants to assess the gender impacts of legislation. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

To support mainstreaming, the method of compiling statistics in different ministries will be revised so that the information can be produced by gender as extensively as possible. (All ministries)

There is now a national portal on women's studies and gender equality information (www.minna.fi). More details about the project, the aim of which is to support mainstreaming, are given in chapter 10.

The Gender Barometer produced every three years gives information about public attitudes, expectations and views concerning equality that can be used in gender equality work. The latest Gender Barometer was published in November 2004. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

A municipality-level databank has been set up to promote gender equality work in municipalities. The databank, which is accessible to everyone, provides gender-specific information. Databank maintenance and resourcing will be the subject to further studies. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

- Assessment of gender impacts of legislation

The instructions on drafting Government proposals, which were updated in 2004, also cover the assessment of gender impacts.

The aim is to examine the need for gender impact assessment in the drafting of legislation by 2006. Should there be such a need, gender impact assessment of each bill will be carried out. (All ministries)

- Assessment of gender impacts of the Government budget

As part of a pilot project launched by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in 2004, the Government Institute for Economic Research will carry out a study on the gender impacts of the main expenditure titles of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in the Government budget. In the project, the budget of the ministry's administrative branch will be examined and its direct and implied gender effects assessed. The project is part of a Nordic Council of Ministers project for assessing the gender impacts of Government budgets in different Nordic countries. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Finance will,

under the direction of the former, start to develop ways of assessing the gender effects of the Government budget on the basis of the information gathered during the pilot project. The aim is to prepare the Government budget for 2008 in accordance with the new guidelines that take gender considerations into account. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Finance, all ministries)

- Mainstreaming individual ministries' activities

In addition to the activities referred to above (mainstreaming training, legislation and the Government budget), individual ministries will also extend mainstreaming to other activities, such as project work. The ministries will see to it that mainstreaming will also be incorporated in the activities of the agencies and institutions coming under their administrative branches. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will act as the pilot ministry in this undertaking. Based on the lessons learned during this work, mainstreaming will also be incorporated in performance agreements and possibly also performance agreement guidelines. The plan is to include the mainstreaming aspect and projects promoting gender equality in performance agreements by 2007. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Finance, all ministries)

The preparation of the Government Action Plan has included working closely with different policy programmes. Individual ministries will continue to cooperate with policy programmes and other programmes under each ministry, ensuring that these programmes take gender equality issues into account. (All ministries)

12.2 Organization of gender equality issues and assigning resources to them

The Government will assign additional resources to equality issues. Competence in gender equality issues will be strengthened throughout the public administration.

In addition to mainstreaming, the management and promotion of gender equality issues in the government sector will also include improvements to the way in which gender equality issues are organized. Different ministries will intensify their cooperation in mainstreaming.

- All ministries will examine the way they organize their management of gender equality issues and how they assign resources to them. Gender equality liaison officers will be appointed in each ministry and these will form a network of gender equality liaison officers covering all ministries. (All ministries)
- The gender equality perspective and the promotion of gender equality will be incorporated in managerial training and in the induction of new civil servants. (All ministries)

- The resources of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's gender equality organization can be strengthened through internal reorganization of the administrative branch. The Office of the Ombudsman for Equality has received funding for one additional post in the 2005 Government budget. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

12.3 Government personnel policy supporting gender equality

The Government aims to be an exemplary employer by systematically applying appropriate personnel policies. The Government resolution on Government personnel policy (2001) includes the following objectives:

1. The Government will be involved in the development of all aspects of working life, including the reconciliation of work and family life by promoting gender equality in the use of family leave.
2. The entire culture of management will be revised. People in managerial duties and those applying for such tasks will be systematically trained, and women will be encouraged to seek managerial and supervisory jobs. Supervisors will be expected to promote a workplace atmosphere based on trust, and to encourage interaction and cooperation.
3. Employment in jobs of a permanent nature will be based on permanent employment relationships.

In order to implement this employment policy, the Ministry of Finance has prepared an action plan for Government employer and personnel policies for 2001-2003, which lists the development measures coming under the responsibility of the State Employer's Office. The individual ministries are responsible for guidance on the implementation of the personnel policy in their own administrative branches, and they are also expected to monitor the realization of the policy.

The introduction of new government sector pay systems based on job evaluation and personal performance will also facilitate the attainment of equal pay between women and men. In December 2004, the new pay systems covered 42 per cent of all Government personnel.

- The aim is to conclude agreements on new pay systems for as many sectors as possible by the end of 2004. (Ministry of Finance, all ministries)
- Monitoring the realization of the equal pay principle requires close cooperation on statistical matters, for which ministries and agencies have received instructions from the Ministry of Finance. The impact of the new pay systems on differences in pay between women and men will be monitored on an annual basis with reports prepared by individual agencies, while ministries will monitor

trends in their own administrative branches, and the State Employer's Office will follow developments in the government sector as a whole. In addition to compiling pay statistics, there will also be studies on how fair the new pay system is in the opinion of the personnel. (Ministry of Finance, all ministries)

13 PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Achieving a regional balance in the demographic structure will require employment opportunities for both women and men throughout the country. New job opportunities for women are particularly urgently needed in rural areas. In regional development, it is important to ensure that women are actively involved in decision-making at local, regional and national level.

Gender equality is a major theme in all Objective programmes in the present EU programming period 2000-2006 and will remain so in the new programming period starting in 2007. The EU Commission has appointed a high-level working group consisting of representatives from different Member States to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender considerations in the operation of the Structural Funds.

- More attention will be paid to gender equality and gender considerations in regional development, as required by the mainstreaming principle, by training authorities at central, regional and local level and people in elected positions, and by strengthening cooperation between different authorities. (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Labour)

In Objective 1 and 2 programmes, which are on a regional basis, targets have been set for employment among women and men and for new enterprises established by women and men. On the basis of the mid-term evaluation of these programmes, the bodies implementing programme projects and the authorities must be provided with more information and training if the programme targets are to be achieved.

- The assessment of the gender impacts of the programmes and projects will be developed and the assessments will be used to support decision-making in conjunction with project selections. (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, other ministries using structural fund financing)

The aim in all regional rural development programmes carried out in the administrative branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry during the programming period 2000-2006 is to achieve a situation in which 50 per cent of all new jobs are taken by women and 30-40 per cent of all new enterprises established by women. The aim of the programmes is to eliminate inequality and promote gender equality between women and men.

- In order to promote the gender equality targets of regional rural development programmes, a separate study of projects with gender equality impacts will be carried out during 2004. On the basis of the results, further measures will be carried out as part of the programme work, as necessary. (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry)

14 GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVES IN INTERNATIONAL AND EU COOPERATION

The Government wants to strengthen the capabilities of the European Union with regard to advancement of human and fundamental rights, wellbeing and security. The Government will pursue a proactive human rights policy, both in its bilateral relations and in the European Union and international organizations.

The Government will work to ensure that attention is paid to gender equality issues in the European Union, international organizations and bilateral cooperation.

14.1 Promotion of gender equality in the European Union

Finland will actively participate in the development and formulation of the EU's human rights and gender equality policies.

- Finland will incorporate gender considerations in all its activities in different policy areas of the European Union. (All ministries)
- In its preparations for the EU Presidency in autumn 2006, Finland will, as required by the mainstreaming principle, incorporate a gender perspective in the preparation of EU matters in different ministries, including work in each of the bodies under the Council, and in the ministerial meetings during the Presidency. (All ministries)

14.2 Mainstreaming of gender equality and gender considerations in international cooperation

The mainstreaming of gender equality and gender considerations is a generally accepted objective in the United Nations and has been promoted at different levels and in the executive bodies of different organizations. Finland is strongly committed to a full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to the promotion of girls' and women's human rights at the international level, too.

- Finland will actively work to ensure that attention is paid to gender equality issues in international organizations and in bilateral cooperation. This applies to

the United Nations system, international financial institutions and regional organizations (such as the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Council of Europe and the OECD). Promotion of gender equality is also a principle covering all aspects of Finland's neighbouring area cooperation strategy. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, all ministries)

- When appointing representatives to international and EU bodies or nominating candidates for elections, the Government will present a balanced selection of women and men. (All ministries)
- A national report has been drawn up on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Finland will actively participate in the organization of the international follow-up meeting in conjunction with non-governmental organizations. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

14.3 Development policy

The quality of Finland's development cooperation, which emphasizes poverty alleviation, gender equality and education, will be enhanced in order to bring about sustainable impacts on development.

The Government will promote and protect the rights of girls and women and will work to ensure that attention is paid to gender considerations in Finnish development policy. According to the Government Resolution on Development Policy, the promotion of girls' and women's rights and gender equality are underlying principles throughout Finland's development policy. A strategy and action plan to promote gender equality in Finland's development cooperation in 2003-2007 were adopted in 2003.

The main objective of Finland's development policy is to alleviate extreme poverty. Two thirds of those living in extreme poverty are women, and therefore improving the status of women as part of development cooperation and in other areas of development policy is of special importance for the implementation of the target.

- Equality perspective will be made an integral part of the political, social and economic dialogue conducted with the partner countries and of the development projects. In bilateral negotiations on cooperation, issues connected with gender equality will be raised, and the mainstreaming principle will be used for incorporating gender equality considerations in bilateral programmes and sectoral and budget support. Support will also be given for integrating equality considerations into poverty-reduction strategies, while funding will be allocated to projects specifically aimed at strengthening girls' and women's rights. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs)

- The implementation and monitoring of the strategy and action plan to promote gender equality will be put on a systematic footing. A preliminary gender equality survey will be carried out in 2004. The survey will form a basis for determining the indicators to be used for assessing progress in advancing gender equality, and for determining special measures. The use of funds allocated for promoting gender equality will be systematically monitored and information will be provided on statistics concerning these. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs)
- The expertise, knowhow and guidelines on gender equality issues will be improved, and training which emphasizes the link between poverty and gender will be organized. Promotion of gender equality will be incorporated in all project guidelines and gender equality considerations will be included in all strategies and policies under preparation. Gender equality will also be used as a success criterion in evaluations. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs)

14.4 Crisis management

The Government supports development of the Union's common security and defence policy, emphasizing the military and civilian crisis management goals shared by all Member States.

- As recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action and laid down in UN Security Council Resolution 1325(2000), the aim is to increase the role of women in peace processes at all levels, irrespective of which body is responsible for the operations (UN, OSCE, EU). The target also applies to promotion of the participation of local women's groups. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs)

Particular attention to gender considerations will be paid in connection with the training of peacekeepers. In the administrative branch of the Ministry of Defence, all persons assigned to peacekeeping operations will receive training in gender equality matters and in how to consider the status of women in peacekeeping tasks. Peacekeepers will receive information about the conditions, customs and codes of conduct in the areas of operations. The use of services provided by prostitutes is strictly forbidden. Adherence to the rules will be monitored and any violations will be dealt with immediately.

- All persons assigned to tasks aimed at supporting civilian crisis management, humanitarian assistance and peace processes, and organizations carrying out projects in conflict areas will receive gender-sensitive training. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior)

14.5 Equality in international processes involving environmental issues and sustainable development

The Government's policy is based on the economic, social and ecological dimensions of sustainable development and calls for a balanced coordination of production, economic growth and environmental factors.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 emphasized the balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social) and their interdependency. The social dimension also covers gender equality. The Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development will consider equality as part of the themes listed in its five-year work plan for 2003-2007.

- The implementation of the equality commitments of the Johannesburg Action Plan will be promoted as part of Finland's national implementation of the Plan and in international cooperation. (All ministries)
- In accordance with the Johannesburg commitments, an international framework programme on sustainable consumption and production will be drawn up. Gender equality will be included in all aspects of the programme. Finland will be actively involved in the preparation of the framework programme and will draw up a national programme for sustainable consumption and production. The proposal for the programme will be completed by the end of May, 2005. (Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Trade and Industry, all ministries)

15 MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE ACTION PLAN

A monitoring group involving all ministries will be set up for the Action Plan in 2005. The task of the group is to monitor the realization of the measures contained in the Plan, develop mainstreaming and expand it to the entire government sector. The coordination of the Action Plan monitoring and the development of mainstreaming will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The measures can be revised during the monitoring, as necessary. The final report of the Action Plan will be published in spring 2007. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, all ministries)

SOSIAALI- JA TERVEYSMINISTERIÖN JULKAISUJA
SOCIAL- OCH HÄLSOVÅRDSMINISTERIETS PUBLIKATIONER
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