

Government Report on

GENDER EQUALITY



Government report on gender equality

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SUMMARY

GOVERNMENT REPORT ON GENDER EQUALITY

■ In its Report on Gender Equality the Government outlines the future gender equality policy in Finland until the year 2020. The aim of the report is to reinforce the long-term and systematic promotion of gender equality, and it lays emphasis on the commitment to the implementation of gender equality policy at all levels. Furthermore, the report looks into the objectives and measures of the policy that has been pursued and their effectiveness as well as into the developments in gender equality over the past ten years. The Government Report on Gender Equality is the first of its kind. Therefore, it covers the gender equality policy of not only the present Government but also of the previous governments since the end of the 1990s.

The thematic areas chosen for the report are derived from the gender equality objectives of the government programmes and government action plans on gender equality in the end of the 1990s and this century. The main thematic areas are decision-making, education and research, working life, reconciliation of work and family life, men and gender equality, violence against women, intimate partner violence and trafficking in human beings, and the status of gender equality authorities and gender mainstreaming. The report also addresses developments in the gender equality legislation and Finland's activities in the EU gender equality policy and on the various arenas of international gender equality policy. Gender equality issues are also dealt with cross-cuttingly from the perspective of immigrants and minority groups.

Key words: **gender equality, gender equality policy**

FOREWORD

■ In October 2010 the Finnish Government submitted to Parliament a Report on gender equality, which is the first in the country's history. The aim of the Report is to review the Government gender equality policy since the late 1990s and outline future policies to the year 2020. As gender equality policy covers several areas of social life, the report, too, focuses on several themes. The report reinforces the long-term perspective and systematic planning of gender equality policy and outlines future policies. The guidelines of the report are concretised and realised during future electoral periods. Usually, a new Government draws up an action plan on gender equality pulling together the key equality measures during the electoral period and defining responsible actors for them.

This publication includes the Government Report on Gender Equality. The Government Report relies heavily on the background document which is available in Finnish and Swedish. The expert working group chaired by Professor Helena Ranta played an important role in drafting the background document. Furthermore, six studies conducted by experts were commissioned for the preparation of this Report and they discussed education, higher education and research, working life, reconciliation of work and family life, violence against women and the status of gender equality authorities.

According to the Report, the European Union and international action programmes and conventions – notably the UN Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) – have had a major impact on the Finnish gender equality policy. Finland continues to give high value for open international interaction in the field of gender equality and wants to learn from other countries' good practices to promote gender equality and to eliminate gender-based discrimination. International cooperation plays an important role in finding solutions to global gender equality problems.

After having discussed the Report, Parliament gave the Government its reply in March 2011. In Parliament's opinion the Report is praiseworthy and, together with the background document, it gives a good general view of the current state of gender equality in Finland and the developments in recent decades. Parliament requires that the Government submits the next Report on gender equality policy by 2021 and prepares an intermediate report by 2016.

Helsinki, March 2011

Stefan Wallin
Minister

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I INTRODUCTION

■ The Government hereby submits to Parliament this report on equality between women and men, pursuant to the Government Programme. This is the first Government Report on gender equality submitted to Parliament, and therefore covers not only the gender equality policy of the present Government but also that of previous Governments back to the late 1990s. The report evaluates the goals and actions of gender equality policy and the effectiveness of those actions. At the same time, the Government submits to Parliament a review of the present state of gender equality and of gender equality trends over the past ten years.

In this report, the Government outlines its views on the future gender equality policy to the year 2020. The Government aims to strengthen systematic long-term gender equality policy and to emphasise commitment to its implementation at all levels of government. The report further aims to provide tools for the drawing up of action plans for gender equality by future Governments. It will serve as a basis for Parliament, actors in society and private citizens to engage in a wide-ranging debate on gender equality goals and gender equality policy means. The Government, having adopted the report, is committed to it. This Government Report contains an evaluation of and outlines for gender equality policy. The appendices to the Report contain background document with a more detailed discussion of the gender equality policy goals and actions of past Governments and changes in gender equality over the past ten years. This background document was not discussed by the Government.

Gender equality issues touch on all areas of society. Political and economic decisions have gender equality impacts that have a concrete effect on the life situations of women and men. Gender equality policy is particularly challenging because of its wide range and cross-sectoral nature. To pursue an effective gender equality policy, the entire Government must accept responsibility for promoting gender equality, and cooperation between policy sectors must be enhanced in Parliament, in ministries and at the regional and local government level.

Because gender equality policy touches on a wide range of administrative sectors and policy areas, the content of this Report had to be limited to a specific set of themes. This delimitation was based on the gender equality goals entered in the six most recent Government Programmes¹ and on the

¹ Government Programme of Prime Minister Mari Kiviniemi's Government, 19 June 2010; Government Programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second Government, 19 April 2007; Government Programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's Government, 24 June 2003; Government Programme of Prime Minister Anneli Jäätteenmäki's Government, 17 April 2003; Government Programme of Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen's second Government, 15 April 1999; Government Programme of Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen's Government, 13 April 1995.

Government action plans for gender equality prepared in the late 1990s and the 2000s (1997–1999, 2004–2007, 2008–2011). Thus, this Report does not discuss gender equality issues in all areas of society.

The principal themes of this Report are:

- Decision-making: political decision-making and senior corporate management
- Education, training and research
- Working life
- Reconciling work and family life
- Men and gender equality
- Violence against women, intimate partner violence and human trafficking
- Gender equality policy organisation
- Gender mainstreaming

The Report also contains sections on legislative trends in gender equality and Finland's actions in the gender equality policy of the EU and in various international gender equality policy contexts.

The Report on Gender Equality discusses equality between women and men while examining both genders and their status in various areas of society. In addition to this, the relationship of men and gender equality is discussed in a separate section, highlighting gender equality issues of specific importance to men and exploring the role of men in promoting gender equality. Women and men both bear responsibility for promoting gender equality, and modern gender equality policy is a policy for all genders.

We should note that, because of the constraints mentioned above, the Report only makes brief reference to many important gender equality themes. This should not be taken to mean that these themes are unimportant for future gender equality policy efforts. Although the Report focuses on gender equality issues, it also aims to draw attention to differences among both women and men from the gender equality perspective and to intersections between gender equality issues and other equality issues. A particular point of interest lies in immigrant and minority issues insofar as they relate to gender equality or multiple discrimination.

The Report is based on the gender equality goals entered in Government Programmes and on Government action plans for gender equality. Principal attention was given to those areas of action in which gender equality goals have been set. This also represented an opportunity for evaluating which important gender equality issues or themes have not been sufficiently addressed in the Government's gender equality policy.

In addition to goals, the Report discusses gender equality policy implementation and the means through which gender equality has been

promoted. Key tools in gender equality promotion include the Act on Equality between Women and Men, which entered into force in 1987, cross-sectoral gender equality policy and, especially in the 2000s, the mainstreaming of the gender equality perspective in all decision-making. Furthermore, gender equality has been promoted through projects in various areas, the funding opportunities for which have increased with Finland's joining the EU. The important question here is which means can best ensure the long-term continuity of gender equality policy.

The major challenge in examining gender equality policy is evaluating the impacts and effectiveness of gender equality policy. This would require an extensive evaluation of how various policies – such as employment, education and economic policy – have affected gender equality and how gender mainstreaming has progressed in these policy areas. This is only discussed to a limited extent in the background document for this Report. Furthermore, six studies conducted by experts for the preparation of this Report were used as background information for evaluating the impacts of gender equality policy.

The UN Beijing Platform for Action has had a significant impact on Finnish gender equality policy and its range of means. The Action Plan for Gender Equality of the Government 1997–1999 was largely derived from the themes of the Beijing Platform for Action. This Report also aims to draw attention to the Beijing Platform for Action over a wide range of topics so that gender equality policy would come to include themes such as poverty and economic policy.

The regular reporting on the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in particular offers tools for evaluating the progress of gender equality and the policy pursued in Finland. The recommendations issued by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to Finland have been used in the preparation of this Report. Attention has also been given to the effects of EU regulation on Finnish gender equality legislation and to interaction between international organisations in the area of gender equality.

The preparation for this Report was supported and carried forward by an expert working group chaired by Professor Helena Ranta. This working group included representatives from ministries and experts on the various focus themes. The working group played an important role in drafting the background document for the Report.

Two hearings were held for NGOs, labour market organisations and other interest groups in connection with drafting the Report, on 19 May 2009 and on 10 March 2010. The organisations and other parties involved were also invited to submit written statements. The draft Report was circulated for comment among ministries between 15 June and 4 August 2010.

2 GOVERNMENT GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Finland is in many ways a pioneer in gender equality. Finnish women have been actively participating in working life and political decision-making for a long time. The Government has undertaken active measures to promote the reconciliation of work and family life and gender equality at various levels of decision-making. In recent years, increasing attention has also been given to social problems related to the status of men.

Gender equality is being promoted through a dual strategy. This includes both specific actions to remove obstacles to gender equality and mainstreaming the gender perspective in all decision-making and its preparations. Finland is committed to promoting gender equality through both legislation and gender equality policy. The European Union, international conventions and international gender equality policy also oblige the Finnish government to pursue gender equality actively. Good practices in other countries have helped find new ways for promoting gender equality. Open international interaction and learning from the best practices of other countries will continue to form a central part of our gender equality policy.

Over the past 10 to 15 years, Government Programmes have included explicit gender equality goals. The gender equality agenda has remained basically the same: increasing the proportion of women among decision-makers, addressing gender equality issues in working life (including narrowing the gender pay gap), more equal distribution of family leaves and combating violence against women. These have been addressed in several Government Programmes. Governments have adopted Action Plans for Gender Equality to translate gender equality goals into practice, with all ministries involved in implementing these Action Plans.

Promoting gender equality is a cross-sectoral effort and requires cooperation between various actors, for instance at the ministries. Although the Government has the main responsibility for promoting gender equality, the contribution of regional and local actors, NGOs, labour market organisations and research bodies is vital. It is of paramount importance to involve both men and women in promoting gender equality.

2.1 DECISION-MAKING

The Government has been promoting equal gender representation in political decision-making and on company boards through a variety of measures over the past ten years. Many of the gender equality goals set have been well attained. The proportion of women on the boards of State-owned companies

has been increased as desired. Women's career paths in central government have been supported through active measures, and there have been positive developments.

In recent decades, the proportion of women in elected political decision-making bodies and in the Government has increased. In the past ten years, there have consistently been more than 40% women in the Government, and in the present Government more than half of the ministers are women. In the 2000s, a woman became Finland's Prime Minister for the first time. However, within the Government the division of duties continues to be somewhat gender-oriented. For example, the Minister of Finance has always been a man.

The quota provision adopted as an amendment to the Equality Act in 1995 has notably improved gender equality in decision-making preparation. The quota provision is fully applied to the composition of committees and working groups in central government, although there are still differences between ministries as regards the proportion of women and men in preparatory bodies. In local government, the quota provision has improved equal representation of women and men particularly on executive municipal boards and on municipal committees. Nevertheless, women remain in a minority in top local government posts, such as the chairs of municipal bodies and municipal managers; the quota provision does not apply to these. Also, the trend towards larger units in local government seems to have curbed the growth of the proportion of women in these management posts, at least in the early stages of the local government reform.

Government action to increase the proportion of women on the boards of State-owned companies and associated companies has been successful. By contrast, in companies where the government has a more minor holding, there are still comparatively few women in management positions. The percentage of women on the boards of public limited companies has increased, to almost 17% in 2010.

In addition to having women and men equally represented, it is important to include the gender perspective in the promotion of democracy and citizen participation. Gender equality was addressed in the Government Resolution for promoting democracy adopted in 2010, and gender mainstreaming will be continued in the forthcoming democracy evaluation and democracy policy report of the Finnish Government. The gender perspective is also important to consider in improving the potential of immigrants and minorities for participation and in engaging in dialogue with organisations representing them.

2.2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Several Government Programmes and Action Plans for Gender Equality have presented goals for promoting gender equality in education and training. The stated aim has been to ensure equal opportunities for developing skills and talents to all students, regardless of their gender. Another aim has been to

promote gender equality actively to reduce gender segregation in choices of subjects to study and, later, of careers. Gender segregation in education and training is reflected in the segregation of the labour market into 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs'.

Legislation concerning the education sector and development plans concerning education, training and research have included very few gender equality goals in the past ten years. By contrast, there have been several experimental and development projects related to gender equality promotion in recent years. Studies on teaching practices show that the gender-neutral approach in education policy has not been sufficient to question traditional gender divisions and stereotypical ideas. The results of projects undertaken should be put more systematically into practice in gender equality planning at educational institutions and in the development of their counselling and teaching practices.

The national core curriculum for basic education contains the best provisions for promoting gender equality, while the national core curriculum for upper secondary school and vocational qualification requirements contain few references to gender equality. Much attention has been paid in the 2000s to student counselling and guidance counselling, and to improving the quality of basic education. However, gender equality has not been separately studied or evaluated in this process.

In the curriculum reform of 2004, 'handicrafts – technical work' and 'handicrafts – textile work' were combined into a single subject, 'crafts'. In practice, crafts teaching is still divided into technical and textile work, which sustains the traditional segregation between boys' and girls' subjects. The National Board of Education has launched an evaluation of learning outcomes in crafts. Decisions regarding the content and targets of crafts teaching will be made in connection with the curriculum reform in the 2010s.

The Equality Act requires educational institutions, except for comprehensive schools, to draw up an operational gender equality plan whose specific areas of focus are the implementation of gender equality in student selection, organisation of teaching and evaluation of study performance. The National Board of Education has helped educational institutions draw up these plans by preparing a guide for the practical implementation of gender equality planning and promotion of gender equality work in educational institutions. According to a study conducted in 2009, however, so far relatively little gender equality planning has actually happened in educational institutions. Active promotion of gender equality has been considered important in comprehensive schools, too, for instance through extending the gender equality planning requirement to basic education. It is important to integrate gender equality planning into teaching and other practices at educational institutions.

Teaching materials have an influence on the kind of idea young people form of girls and boys, and of men and women. The influence of online material and the media in teaching and in finding information poses special challenges

on the promoting of gender equality. The Ministry of Education and Culture is currently developing ways of enhancing gender awareness and promoting a more diverse image of women and men in teaching materials, together with publishers of teaching materials. A study on gender images in basic education textbooks, commissioned by the National Board of Education, was completed in September 2010.

2.3 HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Gender equality efforts have been going on at universities and in research institutions for several decades. The Academy of Finland has promoted gender equality and women's studies since the 1980s. In the Government's Action Plans for Gender Equality, goals and measures concerning higher education and research have involved desegregation, reinforcing gender and equality awareness in teacher training, promoting women's research careers and consolidating the status of women's studies, among other things. However, a comprehensive integration of the gender perspective into higher education and science policy is only just beginning.

Universities have made good progress in drawing up gender equality plans. According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture, all universities have a valid gender equality plan; a number of universities of applied sciences have not yet completed theirs. Sex-disaggregated statistics are already available, but more will be needed, compiled also by type of education and field of science.

The Government has promoted gender equality in higher education for instance by including in university agreements a provision on the promotion of gender equality in research careers; also, the monitoring indicators used by the Ministry of Education and Culture include gender-specific person data. The status of students with families is of particular interest. Efforts have been made to promote equality between female and male students and to enable better financial potential for starting a family while still studying.

The Government aims to include gender-aware teaching in all teacher training. Between 2008 and 2010, the Ministry of Education and Culture funded a research and development project offering concrete tools for enhancing gender equality awareness and gender awareness in all areas of teacher training.

Removing obstacles to women's academic careers is a key task in promoting gender equality in research and in science policy. The most problematic point in terms of gender equality is the post-doctoral phase and in particular the fact that women are slow to gain appointments as professors. Several measures were proposed in the 2000s to promote women's academic careers. The overall goal is to include issues related to women's position and gender equality in academic careers in all science and university policy. Suggested concrete measures include appointment policies, reconciliation of work and family life,

and improving the status of women researchers through mentoring programmes and management training. Implementation of these goals is important.

Women's studies, men's studies and gender studies have not yet established themselves in universities, and the status of these subjects varies from one university to another. The situation is particularly difficult in those universities where chairs funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture have been discontinued. Factors crucial to the operating potential of the sector include consolidation of teaching resources and support from university management to subject development. Also, it would be important to integrate gender studies better into various other departments and subjects. This is directly related to the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in university degree requirements and the promoting of gender equality expertise in higher education. Sectoral research has also so far largely ignored gender equality issues.

2.4 WORKING LIFE

That Finland performs rather well in terms of gender equality manifests itself for instance in the fact that the employment rate among women and men is almost the same. One broader goal underlying gender equality goals on the labour market is to achieve a high employment rate. Significant social policy measures have been undertaken to increase employment among both women and men, such as separate taxation for spouses, family leaves and day care; these help both women and men go to work.

Gender equality policy seeks not only to provide women and men with equal opportunities for entering the labour market but also to reduce gender segregation. There are some positive developments on the labour market in that women are increasingly entering traditionally male-dominated fields. However, there has been very little increase in the number of men entering fields traditionally dominated by women, such as caring and nursing occupations. In fixed-term employment relationships, women outnumber men by a large margin.

While fixed-term employment is excellent for certain life situations, it may also cause problems. Issues faced by people in fixed-term employment relationships have been highlighted in gender equality policy, and the status of fixed-term employees has been improved through several legislative amendments. Part-time work, on the other hand, has been somewhat neglected in gender equality policy. The gender equality policy measures aiming at increasing employment that have been undertaken have been largely labour market policy measures. There are not as many gender equality goals defined in the area of economic policy, and there is no mechanism for assessing gender impacts in this field.

The gender pay gap remains a key gender equality issue in Finnish society. Since 2006, Governments have been engaged in an Equal Pay Programme with the social partners, the general aim being to reduce the gender pay gap

to no more than 15% by 2015. In 2009, women's pay amounted on average to 82% of men's pay. The trend in recent years has gone in the right direction, but very slowly. In the most recent round of agreements, Prime Minister Vanhanen's second Government provided local authorities with an increased central government transfer to remedy the shortfall in the pay of occupational groups where women were in the majority. This raise was targeted at skilled occupational groups with a majority of women whose pay did not correspond to the demands of their jobs.

Another aim is to support women's career paths and to increase the number of women as managers. As a matter of fact, the proportion of women among managers has increased, particularly among supervisors, but also in senior management, and this applies to both the private and the public sector.

The Government has initiated several extensive programmes to improve the quality of working life. Promoting gender equality has been included in these programmes, although it has not been prominently featured in the projects launched. Gender equality policy in working life tends to focus on measures to promote equality. However, discrimination cases involving pay, pregnancy and hiring continue to emerge both in complaints to the Ombudsman for Equality and in court cases.

Increasing attention is being paid to the status of ethnic and other minorities in society. There have not been many gender equality policy measures involving minority groups. Even cases with multiple causes for disadvantages in working life, such as gender and ethnic background, or gender and disability, have so far been given scant attention in gender equality policy.

2.5 RECONCILING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

Reconciling work and family life has been part of gender equality policy for quite some time. Many measures have been undertaken to enable this: a well-run day-care system, better family leave arrangements, and morning and afternoon care for young schoolchildren. A more equal distribution of family leaves between parents is a long-standing gender equality policy goal. This stems from the aim to have parents share responsibility for their children and to strengthen the relationship between fathers and children. A more equal distribution of family leaves between fathers and mothers will also serve to improve the labour market status of mothers. The trend in this has been positive for the past decade, as fathers are increasingly making use of family leaves, particularly paternity leave. The benefits for family leaves have also been increased, which helps the financial situation of families with children. However, it is still a challenge to get fathers to take more family leaves, particularly parental leave, which is still mainly taken by mothers only. Experiences in Finland and abroad show that fathers mostly make use of the family leaves specifically earmarked for them.

Compensation to employers for parental leaves has been increased several times during the 2000s, and at present most of the employer costs of these periods of leave are already being covered. This compensation is funded, through health insurance, by employers in both male-dominated and female-dominated sectors, and also by employees and the government. In the case of family leaves, some of the cost is still not being compensated, such as a small part of the costs of maternity leave and the costs of temporary care leave to care for a sick child.

The diversity of families is constantly increasing. There are many kinds of families: single-parent families, same-sex parent families, adoptive families, rainbow families, and so on. Changes have been made to the family leave system to allow for this diversity, for instance regarding the status of adoptive families and divorced parents, and family leave rights have also been extended to partners in registered relationships. The diversity of families will continue to need to be taken into account when developing the family leave system. The aim is for the family leave system to be equal for all children regardless of what kind of family they are born into.

Solutions introduced for the reconciliation of work and family life are mainly limited to early childhood and the parents of young schoolchildren. However, other groups also have needs for flexible solutions in reconciling work and family life. Increasingly, employed persons of working age are taking care of ageing family members alongside their job. Consideration should be given to what measures might be needed for supporting people in such a situation.

2.6 MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

The Government's gender equality policy incorporates a broad view of issues of men and gender equality: how men relate to gender equality. The theme of men and gender equality can be explored from three perspectives. Firstly, men should be considered as both subjects and objects in gender equality policy. Secondly, gender mainstreaming requires the assessment of planned actions from the point of view not only of women but of men, too. Thirdly, some of the problems faced by men are also relevant for gender equality policy.

Issues related to men and gender equality have been discussed in Finnish gender equality policy for several decades. A significant step was taken in 1988 when the Council for Gender Equality set up the first Men and Gender Equality Subcommittee. Internationally, Finland also led the way by introducing the theme of men and gender equality into EU debate during the Finnish Presidency of the EU in 2006.

Over the past 15 years, the status of fathers and getting men to take more family leaves have received repeated attention. Other measures involving men and boys during the report period have included developing pedagogical methods based on learning differences, developing library services to encourage boys to read more, alleviating segregation and applying the gender perspective

to the development of social welfare and health care services. Many of the measures undertaken to improve the status of women also help men, such as improvements to the terms and conditions of fixed-term employment relationships.

Competence and expertise in issues of men and gender equality are needed to support decision-making. It has also been found important to have more such expertise in public administration and services. Gender mainstreaming includes taking into account the status and situation of men in the preparation of matters and in decision-making. Indeed, this has been a key means in gender equality policy for tackling men's problems, for example, in health care policy. More special measures with a strong gender viewpoint should be undertaken in various administrative sectors to promote male health and healthy behaviour among men. Such measures require research data and analytical views concerning social exclusion and discrimination.

Even today, fathers only take a small proportion of the family leaves to which they are entitled. Influencing attitudes thus continues to be important. Studies also show that at workplaces family leaves taken by fathers are not viewed quite as favourably as those taken by mothers. At child health clinics and in contacts with the authorities regarding divorces and custody issues, it is important to support both parents' relationships with their child.

Stereotypical conceptions of gender roles restrict the lives of men and boys. Early childhood education, educational institutions, workplaces and the media are particularly important for dismantling the stereotypical models of manhood, and their role in this should be enhanced. The relevance of violence for cultural models of manhood must be explored, and ways found for encouraging violence-free lifestyles in all areas of life. At the same time, differences between men and boys and the diversity of their life situations should be taken into account. Such diversity may stem from permanent factors such as ethnic origin or sexual orientation, or from variable factors such as family relations and occupation. Power relationships between men should also be taken into account in the diversity debate.

It is important to ensure the increasing participation of men in the gender equality policy debate and in promoting equality. This will serve to reinforce the conception that promoting gender equality is a common task for both men and women. We will continue to need a wide-ranging and polyphonic debate on goals regarding men and gender equality.

2.7 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

As a State Party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Finland is committed to comprehensive prevention of violence against women, which is a serious violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women. The Government has

mostly aimed to take steps to prevent intimate partner violence and domestic violence, to which end various projects and programmes have been launched during the past decade. Violence against women at work and trafficking in women have also been addressed. The Government has, for instance, undertaken measures to improve services for victims of violence, to enhance expertise on violence and to promote changes in attitudes. Legislation has also been developed particularly with regard to intimate partner violence and violence at the workplace. The Government has adopted a Bill (HE 78/2010 vp) which would bring petty assault in intimate partner violence and violence against a person because of his or her job duties subject to official prosecution. Also, a review and reform of the legislation on sexual crimes is currently in progress. A comprehensive Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women was adopted in summer 2010. This Action Plan focuses on preventing repeated intimate partner violence, reducing sexual violence and protecting women in a vulnerable position.

Violence against women and intimate partner violence can only be successfully prevented through close cooperation between the authorities, service providers, NGOs and experts in various fields. Multiprofessional and cross-sectoral cooperation has been pursued in projects to prevent violence, with good results. State Provincial Offices and local authorities have provided local and regional training for professionals. Cooperation between the police and the social welfare authorities has been developed, and police training on violence issues has been increased. Efficient coordination and development of the prevention of violence against women and intimate partner violence will require the establishment of permanent practices and structures at the national level.

Ensuring availability of services for the victims of violence and other parties throughout the country remains a key challenge. Development of service models and structures is already being pursued at the local and regional level in cooperation with the police, the social welfare and health care authorities and NGOs. Recommendations for service development have been drawn up for local social welfare and health care authorities. Implementation of these recommendations will be evaluated during 2011. The specific needs of immigrants in encounters with violence have been taken into account in service development, whereas by contrast violence against gender and sexual minorities, persons with disabilities and older people has received less attention. Violence encountered by men in intimate relationships and measures related thereto has not so far been addressed as a separate issue in the prevention of intimate partner violence. We should also note that intimate partner violence in the home also increases the risk of violence against children.

Violence encountered by women at the workplace has been given special attention together with the occupational safety and health inspectorates. Harassment and other inappropriate treatment were prohibited in the amendment of the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 2002. The Act

on Equality between Women and Men requires educational institutions to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment and gender discrimination.

The costs of violence to society are significant. The costs of violence against women have been assessed in two separate studies commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. In financial terms alone, it is important to enhance action towards early prevention of violence against women and intimate partner violence and awareness raising.

Various measures have been taken to prevent the sexual exploitation of women in human trafficking. A project for the prevention of the sex trade and prostitution was run from 1998 to 2002. Finland's commitment to international treaties has resulted in several amendments to national legislation particularly as regards combating human trafficking and protecting its victims. Buying sexual services from a victim of the trade in sexual services was criminalised in 2006. Key goals and actions for preventing human trafficking have been entered in the Revised National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Victim identification measures play a central role in this Action Plan, and a low threshold for identification will continue to be an important goal in order to get help to all victims of human trafficking.

2.8 FINLAND'S ACTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Finland has contributed actively to international gender equality cooperation and EU gender equality policy, influencing the development of regulation and other measures concerning gender equality. Within the European Union, Finland has sought to promote long-term cooperation with the European Commission and other Member States for integrating the gender perspective into the decision-making processes of the EU. Finland has worked for gender mainstreaming in the EU's Foreign and Security Policy and its Development Policy. Another goal has been to mainstream the gender perspective in Finland's own preparation and decision-making in the EU context. Finland has supported the strengthening of gender equality programmes and bodies in the EU and has also promoted the implementation and monitoring of the UN Beijing Platform for Action within the EU on the basis of joint indicators.

At the UN, Finland has worked to promote gender equality and to reduce discrimination and violence against women and girls, with particular reference to promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls. Preventing violence against women and improving the status of women during armed conflicts and in fragile and post-conflict societies are also goals advocated by Finland. Finland has actively contributed to the reform of UN functions for improving the status of women and to the creating of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

Within the Council of Europe, Finland has actively endorsed enhanced action for preventing violence against women and domestic violence, including

the creating of a comprehensive and efficient system in the Council of Europe Convention negotiations. At the national level, Finland is preparing to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Within the OSCE, Finland has supported the measures of that organisation to achieve gender equality and to improve the status of women.

Finland has also been participating actively in Nordic gender equality efforts and in promoting gender equality in the OECD for many years. In development policy, Finland has consistently advocated improving the rights and status of women and girls and enhancing gender equality and social equality. The implementation of gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in development policy has also been evaluated. Finland is committed to promoting gender equality in attaining the UN Millennium Goals. In combating climate change and promoting sustainable development, gender equality and the status of women have been identified as a key area of action.

2.9 GENDER EQUALITY POLICY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

To date, the status of women and men who belong to minority groups as well as differences among women and men have not been addressed to any great extent in gender equality policy. In the future, gender equality policy will be pursued with a view to the diversity of society as a whole. Issues related to the status of immigrant women and men belong to the gender equality agenda. We should also note that there is very little sex-disaggregated research data available on the status, living conditions or political participation of the Sámi or the Roma to support decision-making. The same is true of person with disabilities. Gender equality issues may also vary by age: for instance, gender equality issues concerning girls and boys or ageing women and men will be considered more closely in gender equality policy in the future.

Similarly, a stronger gender perspective is needed in non-discrimination policy. For instance, gender mainstreaming in immigration policy will be continued. Similarly, the status and rights of persons with disabilities should also be considered from the gender perspective. Gender mainstreaming is also needed in Roma and Sámi policy, while paying attention to the multiple discrimination experienced by Roma and Sámi women on the basis of both their gender and their ethnic background. Issues regarding the status of sexual minorities and related actions should also be examined from the gender perspective. Gender equality policy and non-discrimination policy share many common goals and concrete tools for addressing the aforementioned issues. Closer cooperation is needed in the future between those involved in gender equality issues and those involved in non-discrimination issues. It is important to pay particular attention to intersectional and multiple discrimination based on gender and other reasons.

2.10 GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN ECONOMIC POLICY

Gender equality issues in working life have for long been a key area in gender equality policy. Goals and actions related to employment and, more generally, to working life, are closely linked to the economic policy solutions and measures chosen. The gender perspective has not been considered nearly as much in economic policy as in employment policy, nor has advance assessment of how various economic policy decisions may affect the status and income of women and men. The gender equality action plans of the Government have so far not incorporated economic policy issues. It is important to assess gender impacts in economic policy, especially when planning measures for revitalising the economy.

2.11 GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN POVERTY REDUCTION

The purpose of sustainable economic, employment and social policies is to ensure the wellbeing of all Finns even in financially difficult times. Another aim is to reduce poverty and social exclusion. Statistical compilation in this field has been developed to produce sex-disaggregated data. The majority of single parents are women. The financial position of single parents declined during the 1990s recession, and although the situation improved somewhat in the 2000s, poverty among single parents remains a serious problem. Women over the age of 75 living alone and receiving only the national pension also have a high poverty risk. There are more men than women among the socially excluded, and the majority of homeless persons are also men; homelessness entails a serious risk of social exclusion. Men living alone are also over-represented among recipients of social assistance. It is important to assess in advance the impact of actions to reduce poverty and social exclusion separately for women and men.

2.12 GENDER EQUALITY POLICY GOALS AND MONITORING

Evaluation of gender equality policy poses the question of what means and division of duties can achieve the best and most sustainable results in gender equality policy. Over the past 15 years, the number of gender equality goals in Government Programmes has increased. The goals and means outlined have been given concrete expression in the Government Action Plans for Gender Equality. The gender equality goals in the Government Programmes and the Government Action Plans for Gender Equality have set the key goals that have governed the direction of cross-sectoral gender equality policy.

Over the years, the gender equality policy agenda has, with justification, focused on certain key issues. For each Government, the principal gender equality themes have been those entered in the Government Programme and in the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality. However, longer-term

goals transcending electoral periods are also needed along with a strategic vision of how to attain those goals. Long-term gender equality policy requires evaluation of past gender equality policy on the one hand and an assessment of the gender equality impacts of changes in society on the other.

Enhanced monitoring as in the other Nordic countries is needed in order to attain the gender equality policy goals set. Monitoring of gender equality policy should be clarified, and suitable indicators need to be found. The goals entered in the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality, for instance, must be put into concrete terms so clearly that their implementation and the resources allocated to them in various administrative sectors can be followed in detail.

2.13 GENDER EQUALITY LEGISLATION

The Act on Equality between Women and Men has been in effect for more than 20 years. The international and EU context was highly relevant for its enactment and for subsequent amendments made to it. The Act is of a general nature and includes two key sets of provisions. Firstly, the Act contains provisions prohibiting discrimination in virtually all areas of life and in all social activities; secondly, the Act provides for the promoting of gender equality in the actions of the authorities, at workplaces and at educational institutions. The Act also provides for its supervision and for sanctions for violating its provisions.

The Equality Act has been amended and revised on several occasions, the major amendments being enacted in 1992, 1995 and 2005. EU law was incorporated into the Act in the amendment of 1995 along with provisions on quotas and gender equality plans. The key elements in the reform of the Equality Act in 2005 were the implementation of the EU Equality Directives, the enhancement of gender equality planning and the promotion of equal pay through the pay survey obligation. With the 2005 amendment, Parliament also added provisions to the Act requiring educational institutions to draw up a gender equality plan for their operations, except for basic education institutions. The gender mainstreaming principle was strengthened in the Act.

The Employment and Equality Committee of Parliament noted in its statement in spring 2010 (TyVL 6/2010) that the Equality Act now constitutes a functional entity. Nevertheless, gender-based discrimination, for instance because of pregnancy still occurs. The possibility of merging the Non-discrimination Act with the Equality Act was raised in connection with revising the former, but this idea was broadly rejected in consultation in 2008.

Recent studies on gender equality planning at workplaces show that there is clearly more gender equality planning now but that the quality of the plans produced leaves something to be desired. In spring 2010, the Employment and Equality Committee of Parliament required amendments to be made to the Equality Act. The Committee noted in its statement, among other things,

that the Act should be amended to include explicit instructions for evaluation of the value of different jobs as part of the pay survey process. The Equality Act needs more detailed specifications, some of which are related to the Non-discrimination Act currently being revised. It must also be considered whether further specification is needed in other legislation to make the provisions of the Equality Act better known.

2.14 STATUS AND OPERATING POTENTIAL OF GENDER EQUALITY AUTHORITIES

Since the reorganisation of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in 2001, gender equality matters have been handled by three different units, each with their own area of operation. The Equality Ombudsman supervises compliance with the Equality Act, the Gender Equality Unit prepares and coordinates the Government's gender equality policy, and the Council for Gender Equality is a parliamentary advisory body which takes initiatives on gender equality issues.

It has been estimated that the control measures of the Gender Equality Unit, extending as they do to several administrative sectors, require clarification. The tasks of the Unit largely involve the launching of gender equality policy measures and coordinating them across several ministries and administrative sectors. A key element in this coordination is the mainstreaming of the gender perspective across all administrative sectors. Although the Government Programme entries on gender equality have been translated into specific measures in the Government Action Plans for Gender Equality, established procedures in place for monitoring them do not exist in all cases in the various administrative sectors, and there is sometimes a lack of commitment in implementing them.

In the EU15 countries, the most common organisational model for the preparation of gender equality matters is at the ministry department level, while some countries have a dedicated ministry for the purpose. Gender equality matters are handled at the unit level in only one other Member State in addition to Finland. What has been considered important in considering the placement and hierarchy level of the unit is the cross-sectoral nature of its duties and its links to the preparation of non-discrimination policy. The Ombudsman for Equality has considered it important to enforce the independence of the Ombudsman's office.

It would be worthwhile to explore the placement of gender equality and non-discrimination issues in the same ministry. At present, non-discrimination issues are spread out across several ministries. If, however, gender equality policy and non-discrimination policy preparation were to be placed in the same ministry, cooperation between these two areas would become closer.

The Government Programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second Government called for an increase in resources for gender equality actors. The Employment and Equality Committee of Parliament has also drawn attention

on various occasions to the resources available particularly for the supervision duties. The second Government of Matti Vanhanen allocated funding for a tripartite equal pay programme for a four-year period and set up 'Minna', the Centre for Gender Equality Information in Finland, as a permanent institution. Moreover, an increased appropriation was allocated to the gender equality authorities in the Budget for 2011.

2.15 RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

The Government in its entirety is committed to promoting gender equality, and gender equality matters fall within the domain of all ministers. The Minister responsible for Gender Equality Affairs has a central role in the guidance and encouragement of gender equality policy.

The Equality Act charges every public authority with the responsibility to promote gender equality. This applies not only to individual civil servants but to the entire organisational decision-making process, in which the promotion of gender equality must be taken into account. It has been found to be essential for the implementation of gender equality policy that sufficient efforts are undertaken at the ministry, regional and local levels and regular procedures are established for the preparation of gender equality matters.

Experiences in recent years have shown that getting various actors to commit to promoting gender equality also requires a closer link between the Government Action Plans for Gender Equality and the preparation and planning of other decision-making. So far, not all of the goals and actions entered in the Government Action Plans for Gender Equality have been incorporated in preparation and planning in the respective policy sectors. Progress in this requires increased cross-sectoral cooperation.

NGOs and other actors in the civil society have played an important role in promoting gender equality and in raising relevant issues. The fruitful cooperation between the civil society and the public authorities in efforts towards gender equality should be continued.

2.16 GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender mainstreaming has made notable progress in the preparations and decision-making of the Government in the 2000s, and increased resources are being devoted to it. Mainstreaming the gender perspective is one means of promoting gender equality, as it highlights how planned actions affect women and men, respectively. Gender mainstreaming shapes the procedures and processes of politics and administration so as to make them to promote gender equality. Public authorities are required by law to take the gender equality perspective into account in preparation and decision-making. Over the past five years, progress has been made in gender mainstreaming in the work of

the Government particularly as regards preparation of legislation and of the budget. Nevertheless, it is still the case that the gender impacts of proposed legislation are relatively rarely assessed, and there are no well-established procedures for this. It has also been found that the implementation of gender mainstreaming at the regional and local levels should be enhanced.

In order to advance gender equality, it is important to incorporate the gender perspective in the planning and implementation of major social reforms from the very beginning. Such major reforms include the restructuring of local government and services, the lengthening of work careers and reforms in working life more generally, the wellbeing and income of families, the status of minorities, and the enhancing of growth and competitiveness. At the same time, the Government considers it important that the situation of men is also taken into account in mainstreaming.

Experience has shown that efficient implementation of gender mainstreaming requires a strong and permanent steering structure. It is important to tie gender mainstreaming more closely to the development of good governance and the improvement of policy effectiveness. The commitment of ministry management to gender mainstreaming has been found to be a crucial factor. Operational gender equality working groups coordinating gender mainstreaming work in each ministry are in a key position.

2.17 KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE SUPPORTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Special measures to promote gender equality, gender mainstreaming and gender equality efforts at the grass-roots level require supporting knowledge, research and gender equality expertise. Without sex-disaggregated statistical data and analyses it is difficult to take concrete action to promote gender equality and to monitor progress. Supervision of compliance with the Equality Act also requires regularly updated statistics. Shortcomings in research and expertise on gender equality manifest themselves as obstacles to promoting gender equality in a number of fields. For example, the development of teacher training requires research and training on how gender awareness can be supported in the work of school teachers.

Statistics Finland has for a long time been leading the way in preparing sex-disaggregated statistics, and ministries are also making progress in this regard. However, the majority of research institutions still do not produce sufficiently sex-disaggregated data, and there are clear deficiencies in this respect at the regional and local levels. Efforts to develop sex-disaggregated statistics in various areas of society should be continued.

The results of publicly funded gender equality projects, whose number increased in the 1990s as Finland joined the EU, should be better leveraged in decision-making, training and working life. These projects have generated important information and experiences on the promoting of gender equality

particularly at the grass-roots level, but this information has been poorly disseminated and not widely utilised after the conclusion of each respective project. The Centre for Gender Equality Information, Minna (www.minna.fi), was launched at the end of 2009 and is making a significant contribution in producing and distributing information. Minna compiles and publicises information on gender equality and related research and projects, aiming to serve a wide range of users. It is important to make use of the information compiled by Minna in gender equality efforts and in the preparation of decision-making.

3 POLICY OUTLINES

GENDER EQUALITY LEGISLATION

1. The gender equality planning provisions of the Equality Act will be improved, and provisions concerning gender minorities will be added to the Act

The social partners will be consulted to establish what more specific provisions are needed on pay surveys, how the right of elected officials to obtain payroll information can be updated, and how personnel participation in gender equality planning can be safeguarded through additional measures. More specific provisions are required on job evaluation in the Equality Act so that comprehensive pay surveys at workplaces will better help eliminate unjustified pay differences. Non-discrimination of gender minorities will be provided for in the Equality Act, and the obligation for educational institutions to draw up a gender equality plan will be extended to basic education. Legislative preparation related to gender equality planning at workplaces requires tripartite negotiations.

In the future, the entering of a requirement to analyse pay survey data in the Equality Act will be explored. The business sector will be consulted regarding an obligation on enterprises to publish their pay survey analyses in the interests of transparency, for instance in their annual reports or personnel accounts. The public sector can lead the way in this.

2. Non-discrimination protection will be enhanced

All legislation incorporating non-discrimination provisions will be rendered as systematically uniform as possible, though without weakening the present level of protection. The positive know-how acquired from the Equality Act will be transferred to other non-discrimination provisions. Multiple discrimination will also be taken into account when amending legislation.

3. Gender equality will be promoted in other legislation too, not just the Equality Act

Gender equality is also influenced through other legislation than just the Equality Act. Gender impacts should be especially taken into account when preparing legislation with significant impacts on the status and equal treatment of women and men and on the protection of pregnancy and parenthood. Such provisions include those in employment legislation concerning the duration and termination of an employment relationship, family leave rights and exercising them.

Once experiences have been accumulated of the application of the Consumer Protection Act as amended in 2008 and of the reshaping of the role of the Advertising Ethics Council, the need for stepping up restrictions on advertising that violates gender equality and on related sanctions will be evaluated.

4. The system for supervising the compliance with the Equality Act will be enhanced, and monitoring and evaluation will be increased

Supervision by the Equality Ombudsman will be developed so as to make the supervision to cover efficiently not only discrimination issues in working life but also the legal requirements to promote gender equality. The Equality Ombudsman will be authorised to initiate conciliation proceedings.

Less severe means than bringing a discrimination case to court are needed to help victims of discrimination. Therefore the right of initiative in bringing discrimination issues to the attention of the Equality Board must be extended beyond the Equality Ombudsman and the central labour market organisations to other NGOs. The Government aims to merge the Equality Board and the Discrimination Board.

The functioning of gender equality legislation will be monitored more comprehensively through studies and reports in order to gain an overall view of the current state of discrimination and gender equality. Information must be gained on the implementation of both non-discrimination and the promotion of gender equality.

STATUS OF THE GENDER EQUALITY AUTHORITIES

1. Gender equality policy steering measures will be further specified by the Government

The Government as a whole will commit to continuing to promote equality between women and men in its decision-making. Each minister is responsible for promoting gender equality in his or her respective domain. For the sake of visibility and clarity, the minister responsible for gender equality must have the words 'gender equality' in his or her title.

Procedures for handling gender equality matters will be consolidated in the various ministerial working groups and the Government as a whole. Gender mainstreaming is at present handled by the ministerial working group on public administration and regional development, and progress with the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality is monitored at the Government's informal evening sessions. Discussion and decisions by other ministerial working groups are also required in matters related to gender equality policy.

Cross-sectoral steering measures for the Gender Equality Unit will be further specified, as these have not yet been consolidated, and taking measures

forward in the administration often requires separately declared support from the political level.

2. The organisational status of gender equality policy will be strengthened

It is necessary to establish an organisational structure for gender equality matters that would serve the promoting of gender equality policy in the Government as a whole. The Gender Equality Unit will be promoted in the hierarchy to match the practice of other EU Member States. The cross-sectoral tasks of the Unit will be taken into account when considering where to locate it. The Council for Gender Equality is closely connected with the Gender Equality Unit, and their administrative proximity should be maintained.

3. Resources for gender equality matters will be increased, and implementation will be strengthened at all levels

Civil servant resources will be allocated to the management of gender equality matters in every ministry. The model piloted by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy of having an official specifically appointed to manage gender equality matters will be adopted at other ministries, too.

In local government and intermunicipal cooperation, implementation of the requirement to promote gender equality and of gender mainstreaming will be enhanced and gender equality expertise improved. These efforts will draw on good practices already in place in some municipalities and on the tools provided by the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. Gender equality issues will be taken into account in the strategic planning of local and regional authorities. As in several other EU Member States, the management of gender equality matters will be organised regionally by having the Regional State Administrative Agencies and the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment take responsibility for promoting gender equality in their respective regions. Gender equality expertise in regional government will be improved.

4. The independence and operating potential of the Equality Ombudsman will be improved

The Equality Ombudsman will be provided with more resources for supervision duties in the long term to ensure the functioning of the Equality Act. The independent status of the Equality Ombudsman will be consolidated to correspond to that of the Minority Ombudsman, including the authority to appoint personnel. The need for regional supervision will be taken into account.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

1. Regulation on gender mainstreaming will be reinforced

The legislative basis in the Equality Act for gender mainstreaming will be further specified.

2. The gender perspective will be mainstreamed in key processes in central government administration and financial planning

Gender mainstreaming procedures will be clarified and reinforced, and mainstreaming will be incorporated in all actions. Progress has been made in the central government administration in influencing key processes and developing cooperation between actors to promote gender mainstreaming. Progress is particularly clear in the processes of legislation drafting and the Budget preparation. However, not many gender impact assessments are conducted, and this situation must be improved. The instructions drawn up for the entire Government concerning gender impact assessment in legislation preparation are clear and binding.

Ministries continue to further the gender mainstreaming objective in drafting the Budget. To support this, each administrative sector will investigate the gender impacts of its operations and of the allocation of appropriations more closely. The Ministry of Finance must play a key role in coordinating and enforcing the gender mainstreaming obligation when the draft budget is drawn up at the various ministries. In the future, the gender perspective will also be taken into account in budget monitoring, for instance as part of the central government final accounts, and central government revenue and expenditure policy as a whole will be assessed from the gender perspective.

Gender mainstreaming in the performance management process will be developed at the Government level. Some ministries have already made progress in this respect. Mainstreaming the gender perspective will be included in operating and financial planning, for instance in the drawing up of ministry strategy and corporate steering. Including the gender perspective at the planning stage will pass it on to all implementation.

3. A strong steering structure will be created for enforcing the gender mainstreaming obligation, and management support will be ensured

Efficient enforcement of gender mainstreaming will require the creating of a permanent and stronger steering structure besides the commitment and support of both the political leadership and ministry management. Gender mainstreaming will be integrated more closely with other administrative

development (e.g. administrative development measures of the Ministry of Finance and meetings of the ministerial working groups). Systematic promotion of gender mainstreaming and the creating of a strong steering structure require the permanent allocation of resources to the development of gender mainstreaming tools, practices and training.

Implementation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming will be increasingly transferred from the Gender Equality Unit to the ministries themselves. It is vital for gender mainstreaming to ensure the resources, potential for influence and continuity of operational gender equality working groups. The membership, assignment and position in their ministry of these working groups must be clearly defined. Permanent procedures must be established for preparation and decision-making in gender equality matters in each ministry, and working groups must have a working connection to the ministry management.

4. Gender mainstreaming training and know-how development will be continued

The gender perspective will be included in basic training in every ministry, starting with induction training for new recruits, with special reference to particular issues in each administrative sector. On the other hand, leaders of gender equality working groups and gender equality coordinators require concrete means and indicators to further mainstreaming in ministry processes.

As a rule, all data and statistics concerning people will be sex-disaggregated and analysed by gender. Information production in the administrative sectors will be developed on this basis. Gender mainstreaming is supported by existing gender equality data, the compiling and dissemination of which is now the responsibility of the Centre for Gender Equality Information Minna set up in connection with the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD).

DECISION-MAKING

1. Gender equality will be incorporated in all decision-making, particularly in the promotion of democracy and citizens' participation

In addition to quantitative gender equality objectives, the promotion of gender equality in decision-making processes and gender mainstreaming in all decision-making at the national, regional and local levels will be ensured. Gender equality and the gender perspective will continue to be a key factor in the planning and implementation of democracy policy (including Finland's democracy evaluation and democracy policy report) and in the monitoring of trends in democracy and civil society.

2. Potential for participation by minority groups will be improved, taking the gender perspective into account

The gender perspective will be taken into account in improving the potential of immigrants and minorities for participation in decision-making and organisational activities and in engaging in dialogue with organisations representing them. Special attention will be paid to increasing participation by immigrant women and women in other minority groups and to consulting both women and men when consulting minority groups. Also, research data must be produced concerning the participation of minority groups in decision-making, particularly women.

3. Gender equality will be ensured in local government reform

Gender equality in local government decision-making must be monitored as the local government structure and the practices of local authorities change. Gender mainstreaming will be reinforced in the implementation of the restructuring of local government and services and its evaluation. Women are still in a minority in senior management in local authorities, although the quota provision in the Equality Act has significantly promoted the gender balance in municipal bodies, particularly municipal executive boards and committees. The aim is to secure equal representation by both genders among chairs of local government bodies and in management and steering groups which have proliferated in recent years; both are excluded from the quota provision.

4. Equal representation of genders will be promoted among senior management in central government administration and in the private sector

The Government continues to promote equal representation of women and men among senior management in central government administration through active measures. The Government has paid particular attention to this issue in the 2000s, as a result of which the proportion of women in senior government posts has increased. Recommendations for improving women's career paths in central government administration must be efficiently implemented. Also, efforts will be made to dismantle structural obstacles to women's career development and their progress to senior posts.

The Government will continue to engage in dialogue with the private sector to support women's career development and to promote equal representation of women and men on the company boards. The Government aims to increase the proportion of women on boards of companies. Government action to increase the proportion of women on the boards of State-owned companies and associated companies over the past ten years has been successful. By contrast, in companies where the government has a more minor holding, there

are still comparatively few women in management positions. The percentage of women on the boards of listed companies has increased, particularly in recent years, but it is still under 20%.

5. Gender equality will be enshrined in the composition and work of the Government

The Government aims to ensure equal representation by women and men in its own work, as regards both ministers and state secretaries. Equal numbers of women and men as ministers will also help to promote gender equality in the cabinet committees.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. Promoting gender equality will be included in education policy

The Government will ensure that goals and actions to promote gender equality will be included in education policy planning and development. Gender mainstreaming in preparation and decision-making concerning teaching and education will also be ensured, drawing on existing research data and good experiences of gender equality efforts in experimental and development projects.

2. Curriculum planning and teaching methods will be employed to promote gender equality

Goals and measures to promote gender equality will be defined more comprehensively and clearly in the national core curricula and vocational qualification requirements as well as curricula. Gender-aware curricula and teaching methods must be introduced at all levels of education. Means for monitoring and evaluating local curricula from the gender perspective will be developed. Differences among both girls and boys must be taken into account in the organising of teaching, in teaching contents and in teaching methods.

Crafts is to be developed also in practice into a subject with the same content for all pupils, taking into account the study on learning outcomes in crafts to be completed by the National Board of Education in 2011 and also the work of the working group on the general aims and distribution of lesson hours in basic education. Focus on gender differences in physical education will be alleviated, and more flexible groupings will be introduced.

3. Gender-aware student counselling and guidance counselling will be developed

Girls and boys will be supported through teaching and student counselling to make subject, training and career choices based on their individual characteristics, strengths and motivation – even non-typical choices. Personal guidance and small group sessions supporting this aim will be ensured at all types of schools.

Development of student counselling and guidance counselling will be taken into account in gender equality planning at educational institutions. Gender equality issues will be integrated into the basic and further training of student counsellors and guidance counsellors.

4. Gender equality goals and measures will be reinforced in early childhood education

Goals for promoting gender equality and for dismantling gender stereotypes will be incorporated into the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care and the National Core Curriculum for Pre-School Education in the next round of revisions. Media education concerning gender issues in advertising and the media will also be included. Media education for young children will be developed in early childhood education, pre-school education, and morning and afternoon activities and clubs for young schoolchildren.

Training in gender-aware pedagogy will be provided for future child nurses, family child carers and kindergarten teachers, and for early childhood education professionals.

5. Implementation of gender equality planning will be ensured at educational institutions, and the planning obligation will be extended to basic education

Implementation of operational gender equality planning will be ensured at educational institutions, and the planning obligation will be extended to basic education. Gender equality planning and gender equality efforts in schools will be integrated with other planning and development. The education authorities are considering ways in which to encourage teaching staff and the management of educational institutions to participate in gender equality promotion training. The participation of students in gender equality planning will be increased.

Development and monitoring of gender equality planning will be continued by focusing particular attention on the impact of gender equality plans on the operating practices and curricula of schools. Sexual and gender diversity will also be taken into account in developing gender equality plans. Monitoring of the implementation of gender equality planning will be included in the performance management between the Ministry of Education and Culture

and the National Board of Education. Further monitoring methods will be developed in cooperation with the Equality Ombudsman and the National Board of Education

6. Gender equality will be promoted through teaching materials

Publishers of school textbooks will be consulted to ensure that textbook authors are aware of the gender equality perspective and that the guide on this topic published by the National Board of Education is available to all authors. Teaching materials will be regularly evaluated from the gender equality perspective. Teachers, pupils and students will be provided with tools for reinforcing critical and gender-aware media literacy in media education.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

1. Gender mainstreaming will be reinforced in higher education and science policy

The gender equality goals in Government Programmes and the goals and actions of the Government Action Plans for Gender Equality will be integrated more closely into preparation and decision-making in the area of higher education and science policy. The Ministry of Education and Culture will conduct an advance assessment of the gender impacts of all higher education and science policy reforms, including the restructuring of university admissions processes. The impacts of the new University Act and structural changes in universities will also be monitored and assessed from the gender perspective. Gender mainstreaming will draw on existing statistical data and research in the field as well as gender equality efforts in higher education and the science community, and sex-disaggregated statistics will continue to be developed. The gender perspective and active promotion of gender equality will be closely integrated into the agreements between the Ministry of Education and Culture on the one hand and universities and universities of applied sciences on the other. Gender mainstreaming in innovation policy will be promoted with specific reference to women's expertise in generating innovations.

2. Gender equality efforts at universities and the integration of the gender perspective in university teaching and research will be further promoted

The Ministry of Education and Culture will continue to monitor university gender equality plans and their implementation and to support gender equality efforts at universities. The Government considers it important for universities and universities of applied sciences to produce sex-disaggregated statistics for each area of teaching and/or field of science to support their gender equality

efforts. Good practices developed by universities will be disseminated and utilised more effectively. In keeping with the aims of the Equality Act, the incorporation of gender perspective and gender equality expertise in teaching and research at universities and in teaching materials will be promoted.

3. Promotion of gender equality and gender awareness will be integrated into all teacher training

The Government aims for providers of teacher training to include gender equality and gender awareness content and perspectives in all basic and further training for teachers, student counsellors and guidance counsellors. To achieve these aims, the results of the 'Gender equality and gender awareness in teacher training' project will be incorporated in teacher training, and research supporting gender-awareness in teacher training and in the work of teachers will be promoted. The Ministry of Education and Culture will support universities in various ways to help the good practices generated in the project to be introduced into teacher training. Also, training in gender-aware pedagogy will be provided for future kindergarten teachers, and for early childhood education professionals. Teacher training in crafts will be revised, as the subject is to be developed into a subject with the same content for all pupils, taking into account the study on learning outcomes in crafts to be completed by the National Board of Education in 2011.

4. Women's research careers will be promoted through concrete measures

Promotion of gender equality in research careers remains a topical issue, even though more than 60% of those completing master's degrees are women. Special attention should be focused on the post-doctoral phase and in particular the fact that women are slow to gain appointments to senior teaching and research posts, particularly as professors, despite the broad recruitment base. Several measures were proposed in the 2000s to promote women's academic careers. The Ministry of Education and Culture, universities, research funding organisations and research institutions will ensure in their respective domains that these measures are implemented and monitored. The overall goal is to include issues related to women's academic careers and gender equality in research in all science and university policy. The successful gender equality efforts of the Academy of Finland will be continued, and the know-how accumulated will be used for broader promoting of gender equality in the area of research and science policy. Active promotion of gender equality requires more data analysed by gender for instance on research funding and evaluation practices and on academic career progress.

5. The status of women's studies, men's studies and gender studies will be strengthened

The status of gender studies (including women's studies and men's studies) varies from one university to another, and not nearly all have established permanent resources for this field. The status of gender studies in universities will be consolidated. The Government also aims that universities will reinforce the status of gender research in various other departments, integrating it into other subjects. At the same time, special attention must be paid to identifying and recognising gender studies expertise in staff appointments also in fields other than gender studies. The Ministry of Education and Culture will chart the situation in gender studies nationwide and will monitor the situation regularly. The integration of gender equality issues and the gender perspective into sectoral research will also be enhanced. The gender equality perspective is still a rarity at sector-specific research institutions, and only a small fraction of their resources is spent on gender equality research.

EMPLOYMENT

1. A high employment rate will be aimed at through gender-aware economic and employment policy

To increase employment among both women and men, the Government will reinforce the gender equality perspective in the areas of economic policy and employment policy. In economically difficult times, unemployment among men usually rises rapidly, also among young men. Also, men are more susceptible to long-term unemployment than women. The public sector is important for women's employment, since about 40% of all employed women are in central or local government. The impact of family leaves on women's employment will be studied, and returning to the labour market will be made easier. The employment of single mothers will be addressed more closely, as their unemployment figures are higher than those of other mothers. Increasing the number of women entrepreneurs is also a goal.

2. The gender perspective will be enhanced in extending working careers

Extending working careers and coping at work are major challenges as the population ages. Attention will be paid to access to the labour market by both young women and young men at the start of their employment careers, the aim being to prevent social exclusion. Working conditions will be developed so that employees can maintain their working capacity and functional capacity longer. Women's and men's working conditions and problems are somewhat different from one another. In order to succeed in extending working careers and improving working conditions, the central government will ensure that

women's and men's differing work-related problems will be taken into account for instance in measures for the development of working life.

3. The gender pay gap will be narrowed

The Government will continue to make determined efforts to narrow the gender pay gap. For this to happen, the social partners must in forthcoming agreement negotiations make determined efforts towards equal pay. In the past decade, women have earned between 80% and 82% of what men earn. The lower average pay of women is reflected later in lower average pensions. The gender pay gap is partly due to the fact that the labour market and training are segregated into 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs'. The work traditionally done by women is often underappreciated.

Finland is committed to the equal pay principle: that is, equal pay for equal work and work of equal value, regardless of gender. The social partners play a key role in agreeing on working conditions. Since 2006, Governments have been engaged in an Equal Pay Programme with the social partners, the general aim being to reduce the gender pay gap to no more than 15% by 2015. Attaining this goal will continue to require true commitment from all parties.

The key to reducing the overall gender pay gap is to reduce differences in pay between fields dominated by women on the one hand and men on the other. The aim is to achieve equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of which sector the job is in. In local government in particular, there is a pay deficit in fields dominated by women.

4. Segregation in working life will be alleviated particularly by encouraging men to take up traditional women's jobs and by promoting women's career development

In order to alleviate gender segregation in employment, men will be encouraged to enter fields traditionally dominated by women, such as care work. There have been changes in the segregation situation, as women increasingly take up traditional men's careers such as medicine or law. Considering the labour market overall, however, segregation has not declined very much. In particular, men have been slow to take up traditional women's jobs.

Women are increasingly found in leading positions in various areas of society. The Government aims to continue to identify obstacles to women's career development and address them vigorously to further improve women's career opportunities. The Government will ensure positive developments in this respect in the central government administration while encouraging private enterprises to set clear goals and to decide on concrete measures and timetables to help women's career development in the private sector.

5. Involuntary fixed-term and part-time work will be reduced

The aim is that in the future fixed-term and part-time employment should be in the first place a matter of choice, and the adverse effects of these forms of employment should be minimised. A number of improvements have already been made to the status of employees in such employment relationships. The grounds for fixed-term employment relationships have been specified, and the status of fixed-term employees has been improved through legislative amendments. The volume of fixed-term employment has decreased during the past ten years. Women are much more likely to work in fixed-term and part-time jobs than men. In relative terms, fixed-term employment relationships are most common in central and local government. We should note, though, that fixed-term employment may be a desirable option in certain life situations and at certain points in a person's career.

The quality of part-time work should be considered more closely in gender equality policy. The volume of part-time work has been gradually increasing over the past ten years, for both women and men. Part-time work may actually be a desirable option in certain life situations, for instance for part-time pensioners, the parents of small children, persons entering the labour market or persons with limited functional capacity. However, it often involves income problems and difficult working hours. As these adverse effects are unequally divided between women and men, the situation is problematic from the gender equality point of view. The status of part-time employees has been brought closer to that of full-time employees through legislative amendments. Adverse effects should be minimised so that fathers and mothers have a real choice in what is best for their particular life situation.

6. The status of immigrants and other minority groups in working life will be improved while taking the gender perspective into account

The Government aims to develop Finnish working life and Finnish society so as to make attitudes towards immigrants and other minorities – including the Roma, the Sámi, persons with disabilities, gender minorities and sexual minorities – more positive and thereby to improve their actual possibilities for finding employment. In setting gender equality policy goals, it is important to recognise the special problems of women and men belonging to minority groups and to promote their equal inclusion in working life. It is also important to intervene more proactively in situations of multiple discrimination in the workplace, for instance on the basis of both gender and ethnic background or sexual orientation.

RECONCILING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

1. Solutions for reconciling work and family life will be extended to cover various life situations

The aim is to enable reconciliation of work and family life in all life situations, not just when the children are small. So far, gender policy aims regarding the reconciliation of work and family life have been limited to the time when the children are small. However, it is not only the parents of small children who have family responsibilities. The potential of extending the right to part-time care leave to a much later date than at present, for instance to cover the parents of children reaching puberty, will be investigated. Potential for flexi-time, part-time employment and temporary leave for taking care of family members other than one's own children will also be increased, since the ageing of the population means that an increasing number of employed persons will bear responsibility for their ageing parents and will be obliged to help them in many ways even if not bearing principal responsibility for their care.

2. Fathers and mothers need their own period of parental leave

The parental leave working group appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health pursuant to the Government Programme will submit its proposal on parental leave reform by the end of 2010. The Government will outline its policy on parental leave reform after receiving the report of the working group. One of the points of the reform is to support parenthood and to encourage fathers to take more family leaves. It is essential for gender equality to increase the taking of family leaves by fathers, as this will not only reinforce the relationship between child and father but also improve the labour market status of women. The taking of paternity leave has clearly increased during the past decade. By contrast, the number of fathers taking parental leave is significantly lower. Experiences in Finland and abroad demonstrate that fathers are more likely to take leave specifically earmarked for them. The best way to increase the use of family leaves by fathers is to create a non-transferable parental leave period for fathers. One example of this is the 6+6+6 model, which has been found to have significant cost impacts and positive employment impacts. Single-parent families must be guaranteed the right to parental leave as long as that of multiple-parent families. Another aim is to allow more flexibility in when to take parental leave, up to the third birthday of the child.

3. Costs of paid maternity leave to employers are compensated more than before

The Government considers it important to increase the compensating of the costs of paid maternity leave to employers. The possibility of introducing in the long term a family leave financing model where all family leave benefits would be paid out of a dedicated insurance scheme financed by employers, employees and the government will be explored. The costs of family leaves have for a long time been equalised between employers in sectors dominated by women on the one hand and men on the other, through health insurance. Although compensation of the costs incurred by employers through family leaves has been increased on several occasions over the past ten years, there are still some direct costs that employers have to pay. These apply to employers in sectors where the collective agreement contains provisions on paid maternity leave. Employers also incur indirect costs, for instance in recruiting and training maternity leave substitutes. Improved compensation for costs incurred by employers because of parenthood is being explored in the family leave working group appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

4. The diversity of families will be taken better into account in developing family leaves

The aim is for the family leave system to be equal for all children regardless of what kind of family they are born into. The legislation on family leaves has already been amended to better address the diversity of families. Attempts are being made to correct problems involved in family leave rights and the benefits paid, and family diversity will be taken into account when developing the family leave system. The financial status of student families will be improved so that young people will have better potential to start a family while still studying; this will also contribute to gender equality. To this end, students with dependent children are supported to help them complete their studies. Practical solutions are being explored in the parental leave working group.

MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

1. Gender mainstreaming is also about taking the position of men into account in preparation and decision-making. Mainstreaming the gender perspective will be continued and enhanced.

Gender mainstreaming is a key means for gender equality policy to address the problems faced by men. Therefore promoting gender mainstreaming is important for men, too. It should be considered whether certain areas should be given more focus in the mainstreaming process. Mainstreaming the gender perspective in health care policy, for instance, is particularly important for the status of men.

2. Reinforcing of the role of the father in the family will be continued with enhanced measures

Efforts to strengthen the role of the father in the family will be continued, and with enhanced measures if necessary. Men take more paternity leave now than before, but despite long-term efforts fathers only use a small fraction of all the family leaves available. Studies show that an equal distribution of the responsibility of parenting and everyday duties in a family may correlate with a lower risk of divorce and a higher rate of satisfaction in the parents' relationship. More detailed research on this topic is needed in Finland, and the theme will be introduced in publicity and training aimed at professionals such as municipal social welfare and health care personnel and NGOs supporting parenthood.

3. Men's parenthood supported in cases of divorce

In encounters with officials in matters of divorce and custody, for instance in the social welfare and health care sector, more attention should be paid to preserving the care relationship of the child with both parents. It is important to ensure that the father will retain responsibility for the children and the everyday life of the family even in the case of divorce and that a positive father-child relationship will persist after the divorce. The more the father has participated in the care of the children from the very beginning, the more of a chance this has of succeeding.

4. Competence and expertise in issues of men and gender equality will be strengthened

Competence and expertise in issues of men and gender equality must be built up at three levels: academic research and teaching, expert resources in the public administration, and various public services such as social welfare and health care services. In the case of academic research, this mostly involves the promotion of men's studies and gender studies and their teaching at universities. Increasing expertise on gender mainstreaming in various policy areas in public administration will at the same time increase expertise on problems faced by men. Attention will also be paid to gaining added competence regarding men and gender equality in social welfare and health care services both nationally and at the local level. The expertise of various men's organisations will also be leveraged.

5. Models of manhood must be diversified, and participation by men in the gender equality debate must be enhanced

Educational institutions, workplaces and the media are particularly important for dismantling the stereotypical models of manhood, and their role in this should be strengthened. Better attention can then be focused on the diversity of men and their life situations. Dismantling stereotypes and expanding models of manhood will affect all areas of life, from a man's role in a family to gender segregation in training and working life.

Men must be more widely engaged in the gender equality debate and in the promotion of gender equality, not only among experts but also at various other levels of society. The participation of men is important, because gender equality involves men, and men can bring new viewpoints and themes into the gender equality policy debate; moreover, this will serve to reinforce the conception that promoting gender equality is a common task for both men and women.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- I. Coordination and development of violence prevention, information gathering and statistics compilation will be ensured

The aim is to create a permanent national organisational structure for effective prevention of violence against women, intimate partner violence and domestic violence. This organisational structure is to be responsible for development and coordination in all the various areas of violence prevention.

Information gathering will be systematically developed so that the data acquired will be comparable and available to all officials and other parties involved in preventing violence. Official registration and information gathering systems must contain the following information on the parties to a violent incident: gender of the victim and perpetrator, age of the victim and perpetrator, form of violence, and relationship between the victim and perpetrator. More research is needed on gender-based violence and connections between various forms of violence, taking intimate partner violence against men and minority aspects into account. It should not be forgotten that women may also be perpetrators of violence.

2. Long-term development goals will be set for the prevention of violence against women

The Government will ensure that long-term development goals for efficient prevention of violence against women, protection of victims of violence and bringing the perpetrators to justice will be developed based on a comprehensive and human-rights-oriented approach. The goals will cover legislation, official instructions, service development, monitoring of measures and systematic information gathering. The goals will also serve to enhance the prevention of violence at educational institutions, in workplaces and elsewhere in society. The goals and measures entered in the Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women will be taken into account in drawing up these long-term development goals.

3. Awareness raising and violence prevention will be enhanced at educational institutions, in workplaces and in society at large

The authorities and educational institutions responsible for teaching must ensure that a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based and sexual harassment and violence is included in curricula, gender equality plans and anti-bullying programmes at educational institutions.

Gender-based and sexual harassment and violence at workplaces will continue to be efficiently addressed for instance through gender equality planning and occupational safety and health measures, and by creating specific operating models for preventing gender-based and sexual harassment.

Men's organisations play an important role in opposing a culture tolerant of violence and stereotypical gender roles, and also in shaping a more diverse image of manhood. NGOs and other organisations working with children and adolescents also need to step up their awareness raising measures to prevent and reduce violent behaviour and harassment among both girls and boys.

4. Continuity of expertise among professionals engaged in preventing violence will be ensured

Training for professionals who encounter victims of violence in their work and who are engaged in preventing violence will be increased with regard to all forms of violence, including honour violence and sexual violence. Prevention of violence against women and intimate partner violence must be included as a special item in the basic and further training of social welfare and health care professionals, judges, prosecutors and police officers. Violence issues should also be included in law degree programmes. Multiprofessional cooperation has yielded positive results, and development will continue. Particular attention should be paid to cases of divorce and separation, during which the risk of violent behaviour may increase.

5. Services for victims of violence and other parties will be ensured

The Government will ensure the nationwide availability of services related to preventing violence, for instance through legislation. Services intended for victims of violence and other parties will be added to municipal social welfare and health care services, and a permanent steering and support structure will be set up nationally, regionally and locally. In the future, the Government will also ensure the availability of municipal services for leaving prostitution and finding other opportunities to earn one's living. The division of duties between the central government, local government and NGOs in organising and producing these services will be explored.

The special needs of minority groups that have experienced violence and the threat of violence, such as ethnic minorities, immigrants, persons with disabilities, older people, gender minorities, sexual minorities and children, will be taken into account in the planning and provision of services. The special needs of men who have been victims of intimate partner violence will also be taken into account.

6. Legislative means for protecting victims and preventing repeated violence will be enhanced

Legislative means for preventing violence against women and for protecting victims will be enhanced. Instructions will be drawn up to ensure cooperation between the authorities and service providers in cases where a restraining order is issued in order to maximise protection for the victim. The provisions on the right of prosecution in cases of petty assault should be amended to bring petty assault against a family member or dependent or against a person because of his or her job duties subject to official prosecution. The applicability of cases of intimate partner violence to mediation will continue to be carefully considered, and practices are constantly being reappraised. The legislation on sexual crimes will be reviewed in the context of international comparison, which must address the provision on waiving measures in a case of rape.

7. Action against human trafficking will be evaluated and developed from the gender perspective

Action against human trafficking, particularly the implementation of the Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings and related legislation, will be evaluated and developed from the gender perspective. Jurisprudence will also be reviewed. The review must focus particularly on the impacts of action against human trafficking on the victims of human trafficking and similar crimes and the availability of support and shelter for them.

8. Identification of the victims of human trafficking and referral to the help system when investigating human trafficking offences involving prostitution will be enhanced

Means for enhancing identification of the victims of human trafficking and referral to the help system when investigating human trafficking offences involving prostitution will be explored. Pre-trial investigation authorities and judicial authorities will be trained in the areas of violence and sexual abuse and other infringements related to pandering, prostitution and human trafficking. Measures will be undertaken to ensure that victims of pandering will be referred to the service system and support as necessary even in cases where there is no evidence of a human trafficking offence as such. Being a victim of abuse and the mere suspicion of the victim having been a victim of human trafficking is sufficient cause.

9. The functioning of legislation prohibiting the purchasing of sex will be monitored

The functioning of legislation prohibiting the purchasing of sex will be monitored on the basis of a report issued by the Ministry of Justice in autumn 2009. The report will be submitted to the Legal Affairs Committee of Parliament in 2010. After the Legal Affairs Committee reports, possible further action will be outlined; this may include further reports, legislative projects and service development needs.

FINLAND'S ACTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

1. Finland will actively promote gender equality in the European Union

Finland is engaged in long-term cooperation with other EU Member States and the European Commission to integrate the gender perspective into the decision-making processes of the EU and to reform these processes. Gender mainstreaming will be continued in Finland's preparation of EU matters by developing concrete tools for promoting mainstreaming. Finland is actively contributing to ensuring the continuity of gender equality programme work in the EU and to strengthening the status and operating potential of gender equality bodies. Finland also aims to ensure that the European Institute for Gender Equality will gain sufficient operating potential and fulfil the expectations vested in it as a promoter of the status of women and gender equality within the constraints of its resources. Finland will continue to support the implementation and monitoring of the UN Beijing Platform for Action within the EU on the basis of joint indicators.

2. Finland will continue to promote gender equality actively at the United Nations

Finland continues to work actively in the General Assembly, in various bodies and special organisations of the United Nations to promote and strengthen gender equality and to reduce discrimination and violence against women and girls. Finland is contributing to the promotion of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls and is seeking a solution to restoring the functional capacity of the EU together with other like-minded Member States. Finland also promotes combating the violence against women during armed conflicts and focuses special attention on the status and rights of women and girls in fragile and post-conflict societies. Finland supports the comprehensive reform of the UN and in particular the work of the new gender equality entity politically and, as and when possible, financially. It is important for the new gender equality entity to be sufficiently resourced, and its independence will help gender equality to be achieved at all levels.

3. Promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in development policy will be ensured

Efforts will be made to enhance high-quality implementation of gender equality as a cross-cutting development cooperation goal. Attainment of gender equality will be measured with unambiguous indicators, including the resources used. In order to attain this goal, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will draw up a gender equality strategy for development cooperation, setting out clear goals and resources. Finland supports the EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development and is efficiently implementing the shared gender equality goals of the EU. Finland is also continuing efforts to improve the role and status of women and girls and to promote gender equality in climate change issues and other environmental issues in developing countries; this work has already got off to a good start. Finland will evaluate its achievements and objectives with regard to the Millennium Goals pertaining to gender equality and maternal mortality, and will undertake concrete measures to ensure that our development cooperation contributes sufficiently to the attainment of these objectives.

4. Finland actively promotes gender equality in Nordic cooperation and in the work of the Council of Europe and the OECD

Finland is an active participant in gender equality cooperation between administrations, politicians and researchers in the Nordic countries. Results of this cooperation are used to develop gender equality policy domestically and in international contexts.

Finland supports the efforts of the Council of Europe to implement women's rights as part of the organisation's core human rights mission. Finland supports cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe on gender equality policy, noting particularly the work of the European Institute for Gender Equality. Finland is in favour of achieving a comprehensive convention on preventing and combating the violence against women and domestic violence.

Finland promotes gender equality in the work of the OECD and is an active member of GENDERNET, providing financial assistance according to its means and working towards gender equality being taken into account in international development cooperation standards. Finland is actively participating in the work of the OECD Development Centre to develop tools for promoting gender equality.