

# **PORTUGAL**

**Statement by**

**H.E. Ambassador João Salgueiro**

**Permanent Representative of Portugal**

**to the United Nations**

**to the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**New York, 28 February 2008**

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)



First of all let me congratulate you Mr. President and the other members of the Bureau on the occasion of your election to preside over the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Portugal aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the State Secretary and Deputy Minister for Labour, Family and Social Affairs of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

The Portuguese Government is very committed to the promotion of gender equality as stated in our Programme and guided by all the international commitments. Hence I will start by expressing our appreciation for the choice of this session's priority theme as financing is crucial for the implementation of all measures to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Following a recent reform of the Public Administration, the national gender equality mechanism, now called the "Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality", was strengthened at several levels. Namely, its competences were extended and now encompass responsibilities over policies to combat "Violence Against Women" and "Trafficking in Human Beings from a Gender Perspective".

For this reason three national plans were adopted in 2007 to be implemented until 2010:

1. The "Third National Plan for Equality – Citizenship and Gender" which focuses on the implementation of measures regarding the Promotion of Gender Equality following the priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action including Gender Mainstreaming in all Policy Areas as a requirement for Good Governance.
2. The "Third National Plan Against Domestic Violence". Portugal has developed a national plan targeting this area in particular as violence against women is considered a critical area set forth in the Beijing Platform for Action.
3. The "First National Action Plan Against Trafficking In Human Beings. The Portuguese Government is working in a holistic and integrated way to address this phenomenon and its devastating social consequences.

Portugal had also adopted a National Strategic Reference Framework in which a specific line of funding will be allocated to promote Gender Equality. The total amount for the period 2007-2013 represents an increase of more than three times compared to the previous period (2000-2006). The priority areas will be:

1. the promotion of women's employability and entrepreneurship, namely by encouraging female entrepreneurship as a factor for innovation and competitiveness through vocational training and re-skilling, financial incentives, micro-credit, creation of organisational networks, meetings and sharing of good practices;
2. fostering the implementation of Equality Plans in public and private sectors, in order to ensure that women and men enjoy equal access to jobs, equal pay for equal work, training and career progression and support in reconciling professional, family and private life;
3. support to NGO's projects for the advancement and empowerment of women in various areas of life in society;
4. the development of knowledge, training and information on gender equality for the society as a whole.

Also, a gender mainstreaming approach will be applied in the allocation of these funds in all policy domains.

In what concerns the empowerment of women in politics, the Portuguese Government is also committed to reinforce women's political participation and representation in all decision-making spheres. As a result, a Law establishing a minimum quota of 33% of each sex in the lists of candidates for elections to the Parliament, the European Parliament and for local authorities was adopted in 2006. In 2009 we will have the first elections under this new law, after which our national Parliament will evaluate its impact and revise it if necessary.

Last year, Portugal together with the other European Union member states, have defined the promotion of women's employability and entrepreneurship as a European priority. In this regard, the European Union adopted conclusions on "Balanced role of women and men for jobs, growth and social cohesion" and, as a follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted Conclusions and a report on indicators regarding "Women and Poverty" with the purpose of eliminating poverty especially among women.

Finally, in what concerns our national development cooperation policy, and guided by the objective of achieving the implementation of the "Millennium Development Goals", we have been working to introduce a gender mainstreaming approach in our policies and to increase our support to all programmes that have a strong gender impact. Some examples are programmes to combat poverty, HIV/Aids and other pandemic diseases, and to promote sexual and reproductive health

and rights; programmes to empower local women through social networks, particularly women's organisations and political women's groups, and programmes related to the financial sector to facilitate the development of strategies to reinforce the role of women in the economy, notably entrepreneurship.

In this context, another important guideline for our development cooperation policy is the strengthening of the relations with the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries in the areas mentioned above. We look forward to a more active and coordinated approach within this group towards Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women.

Portugal will continue to strive to implement our commitments in the pursuing of a world where women and men have the same rights and opportunities and are treated equally. We thank you for this important opportunity to share practices and experiences.

I thank you Mr. President.

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