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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Statement by

Ms. Zetta Makri

Secretary-General for Gender Equality

Ministry of Interior

Greece

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Dear Chairperson,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greece aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

It is a great honor for me to address, on behalf of the Greek Government, the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I strongly believe that gender equality constitutes a fundamental human right and basic aim of every modern democracy. In addition, it constitutes a leverage for development, competitiveness and social cohesion in every country.

Women's rights must be protected and, besides the legislative framework, the struggle towards de facto equality must continue.

Today, faced with an admittedly grave financial situation, we continue on our dual approach to the promotion of gender equality. On the one hand, we design and implement specialised equality policies to promote and empower the participation of women in sectors in which they are underrepresented, and on the other, we perform cross-cutting interventions throughout the range of public policy, so as to tackle gender-based discrimination in each and every field of policy implementation.

In this time of severe unemployment, we empower women to keep their jobs by implementing a programme of actions targeting employed women, especially those whose work positions are at risk, and self-employed women, helping them develop entrepreneurial initiatives with a view to remain active in the job market.

Addressing the problem of violence against women, the priority theme of our Session, Greece has been implementing a comprehensive National Action Plan on preventing and combating violence against women. A bilingual SOS hotline, Counseling Centers, Hostels for the female victims and their children, awareness and sensitization campaigns, as well as cooperation with civil society and local stakeholders are the highlights of our National Action Plan.

In addition, Greece has been among the first countries to adhere to the initiative "Say No- Unite" by the UN WOMEN to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

To promote women's participation in public life and enhance their participation in political, social and economic decision-making, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality is implementing a wide range of actions. Women's participation in regional and local administration is being promoted through specific actions, including a relevant website, informational seminars and awareness raising initiatives.

A multilayered set of actions to promote women's participation in unions and associations of the Social Partners is also under way, aiming both to encourage women to participate in such unions and associations and to empower them to claim decision-making positions within such institutions.

As far as gender mainstreaming is concerned, we are implementing an action plan aiming to create relevant methodologies and tools, devise relevant actions in all levels of administration and evaluate them. In addition, the development of a new mechanism, an Observatory, is under way, to monitor and evaluate the implemented gender equality policies through the development of an Integrated Information System and a National System of Gender Indicators.

Dear Chairperson,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Greek State places great importance on matters of gender equality, especially now, in these turbulent times of the financial crisis. With women constituting more than half of our country's population and a pool of talent, skills and knowledge, it is only fair to assume that women's equal participation in all fields of political, social and economic life is the only viable road to development.

We realize that despite the adversity presented by the harsh economic environment, we must continue and boost our efforts towards gender equality, addressing at the same time the serious problems arisen in recent years.

Thank you for your attention.