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**Achievements, gaps and challenges
in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action
in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States**

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Last 12 years systemic economic adjustments have changed the situation in gender equality and social justice in Central and Eastern Europe the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS). The gender impact of these adjustments differed by country, especially for EU accession countries and other countries in transition. But gender is a major dimension of uneven distribution of risks and opportunities related to the changes in economic, social and political spheres.

In 2005 year the international community will be engaged in a ten-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA), which guarantees women the equal rights and opportunities in economic, social and political spheres. After adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, all CEE/CIS countries reaffirmed their commitments to create institutional mechanisms for gender equality, empower women's participation in economic and social spheres and mainstream gender in their local, national and regional programs. Certain steps and efforts to mainstream gender have been undertaken and are still being undertaken by national governments with the support of international institutions and in partnership with civil society. National governments of CEE/CIS countries have established governmental bodies and adopted national strategies to empower women. This covers state governance, including legislative, executive and judicial branches of power as well as civil self-governance. In order to effectively achieve gender-related commitments made at the international level, two main types of institutional processes and mechanisms can be highlighted: a) internally, the establishment of institutions and national action plans for gender equality; b) externally, the international and regional support by international organizations and foundations. In both processes the initiatives of civil society and activity of women NGOs are of a great importance.

In the preparatory process for Beijing+10 all governments will report on achievements and obstacles in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at the national and global levels. To complete the picture, independent monitoring of civil society should counterbalance the official reporting. United Nations and UN ECE recognize the role of independent experts and civil society in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, monitoring a progress in gender mainstreaming and encourage NGO input and participation in Beijing+10 process.

This paper is focused on the most urgent for this region issues with regard to of the Beijing Platform for Action. These issues are women in the economy, social protection of women, trafficking in women, women's participation in decision-making process and national machineries for gender equality and advancement of women. This paper highlights achievements, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in CEE/CIS countries.

I. Women in economy

The process of building a market economy in CEE/CIS countries has been based on three pillars - privatization, liberalization and macroeconomic discipline. These changes had serious implications on redistribution of assets and levels of financing within societies. Gender is one of the most important aspects of these implications, since the distribution of assets during privatization was heavily biased towards men. At the same time women, as care takers, took over a large part of negative consequences of internal (increase of prices) and external

liberalization (foreign debt) as well as a constant pressure on national budgets, which resulted in cuts in public expenditure (including on health, education and family-related benefits). This is largely explained by the position of men and women in the economy and decision-making structures prior to 1989 as well as the fact that the transition policies did not take gender issues into account.

The pattern of privatization in CEE/CIS countries strongly suggests that men control more assets than women because in the Soviet period women were not in leading posts in the party and the "nomenklatura". There is a lack of official gender-disaggregated data to fully evaluate women's access to financial resources and assets. Based on expert estimates, however, women in Russia obtained only 5-7% of privatized assets. In Moldova, according to results of a survey financed by INTAS, only 1% women have assets as a consequence of privatization. There are, however, some cases of more equitable privatization. For example, as a result of privatization of dwellings in Ukraine, women own about 50% of dwellings in cities.

The adverse economic and social conditions in countries in CEE/CIS countries have particularly affected women which today constitute the largest number of the poor, powerless and disenfranchised. This has also resulted in rising poverty, unemployment, and prostitution and trafficking in women and children across borders. While growing poverty, unemployment and weakened social support and social services have been experienced by both men and women, women are affected more severely due to their reproductive and family responsibilities.

Regarding women's poverty the risk group constitutes the following categories of women: single mothers, divorced women with children, rural women, elderly single women, women - disabled, mothers having children - disabled, and unemployed women. The risk of poverty is high among men of the following categories: unemployed, single retired men, and disabled.

The following available data gives good grounds to conclude that the process of market transition has decreased women's opportunities in economic life.

- Despite the relatively higher education, women are still discriminated in the market for stable and well paid jobs. Human Rights Watch report (2003), "Women's Work: Discrimination Against Women in the Ukrainian Labour Force," describes how Ukrainian employers discriminate against women job seekers in the way they announce vacancies and interview applicants.
- All over the CEE/CIS region in 1994-2000, 80% of all discharged workers were women. As a rule, directors of enterprises and firms consider women to be more expensive and less reliable workers, because women have a right for maternity leave. The prejudice also exists in that women give higher priority to the family than to professional career. The largest fall in female economic activity was observed in Hungary and Latvia between 1985 and 1997: from 61% to 43% and from 68% to 54% respectively.
- Female salary constitutes only about 60-75% of male salary in the CEE/CIS region. The wage gap is a result of the concentration of female jobs at the lower end of the labor market and of the discrimination through lower pay for work of equal value.
- In the agricultural sector, processes of privatization and the creation of family-based enterprises may redefine women as unpaid family workers without the social benefits they were entitled to as members of enterprises.

- The proportion of women in business is by far lower than that of men. Studies show that the process of privatization places more assets under the control of men than women. Women dispose of lesser start-up capitals and have more limited access to credits needed to raise finance for business operations and expansion. Information concerning credit opportunities and training courses is less accessible to female managers as well. Businesswomen who had to quit their businesses report having serious problems trying to keep afloat in the extremely corrupt environment the former soviet countries.
- Homemaking is still regarded an area of gender discrimination. For example, the "double burden" borne by women in Ukraine was significantly heavier than that for women of Western Europe (by 15 hours per week on average) and totaled 70 hours per week.

The share of women in the total number of economically active population in CEE/CIS countries is about 47-49%. Informal small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operated by women play a critical role in the economic survival of poor families. This is particular relevant in the transition countries of CEE/CIS region. Negative impact of economic structural adjustments pushed women out of traditional labor market and forced them to seek them ways to support themselves and their families. In this context, self-employment in the formal sector has become crucial for family survival. Last 3-4 years the women business is developing rapidly in the most of CEE/CIS countries.

- According to results of BIZPRO survey, in Ukraine women controlled 22% of private small and medium enterprises in 2000.
- By results of INTAS survey in Moldova, women owned 25% private small enterprises in 2002.
- In Ukraine among the recently established enterprises 29,8% are controlled by women, and only 22,7% - by men. It allows concluding that women business is developing more intensively than men one.

The reasons that stimulate women to start their own business in CEE/CIS countries is, on the one hand, a necessity to support their families and provide an access to education and health services for children, and on the other hand, a desire to be economically self-sufficient and independent, to plan their own time, make professional carrier, realize professional skills and knowledge.

In all CEE/CIS countries the majority of women's enterprises is engaged in wholesale and retail trade. Other relevant development trends of women business are agriculture, public catering, industry, consumer services, hotels, and tourism.

The contribution of women business in economical development of country includes:

- Creation of new jobs (for women in particular).
- Growth of sale due to which the national markets is saturated with consumer goods and services.
- Application of innovations: technologies, methods, and also expansion of a assortment of production, goods, and services.
- Increasing of incomes, which leads to increasing of consumer demand that, therefore, stimulates general economic development.

But development of women business has more long-term consequences, than only rise of national production, expansion of market, increasing of incomes and welfare of the population. The women business influences both economic and social environment in country. In social sphere women business contributes to decreasing of unemployment and reduction of poverty. By creation of new working places for women, female business assists to prevention of trafficking in women.

Gaps and obstacles

In spite of SMEs are an important source of growth and new jobs in market economies worldwide, in most CEE/CIS countries their potential remains, however, still untapped. This relates especially to women as, despite good levels of education and high participation in the labor market, they become entrepreneurs on average twice less often as men. The gender gap in entrepreneurship is seen in all countries regardless the size of the SME sector in the economy.

The obstacles for women business development are common for most CEE/CIS countries: women lack of starting capital, business contacts, information and protection from power structures. Social and psychological factors also make barriers for female business. These factors include both women's diffidence and patriarchic stereotypes, which dominate in society. By results of research in Moldova, 59 % of business-women need external support, such as advice, consulting, training, to overcome their psychological barriers.

Also national SME and labor market policies rarely identify women as a target group or explicitly address the issue of women's ability to pursue self-employment

Selected cases of good practice

Program of "Women Professional Promotion" in Slovenia. Slovenian national Employment Action Program includes a "Program for Women Professional Promotion" that focuses on providing women with new employment possibilities, and in particular on opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship. At its women's information center (META Center) located in Ljubljana, and via "Women's Promoters" in each region, the program provides services such as training, mentoring, and opportunities for networking with other business women in Slovenia and internationally. The project is financially supported by the government and is implemented by the Slovenian Small Business Development Centre in partnership with the women business association GIZ Podjetnost.

Bosnian Women's Economic Network (BWEN). The Bosnian Women's Economic Network (BWEN) in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an example of a grassroots effort to improve self-employed women's ability to network and to access information in a post-conflict setting. The nation-wide network, sponsored by the STAR Network of World Learning, an international NGO, is subdivided geographically into 5 reference groups that cross ethnic lines, and focuses on economic issues pertinent to women. In addition to self-employed women, its 1500 members (as of 2002) also include women from NGOs, trade unions, and business associations. BWEN uses a variety of methods of communication among its members, such as an electronic listserv and a

bimonthly newsletter, Mreža, that includes profiles of successful self employed women, discussions of issues such as microcredit and BiH tax and legal frameworks, and advertisements of members' products and services. BWEN also provides face-to-face networking opportunities for members as well as workshops on topics pertinent to starting and growing a business. In 2002, BWEN held workshops on access to finance and invited representatives from sources of finance, such as microcredit providers, banks, and government institutions, to attend. As a result of the information provided in these workshops, nearly 50 women were able to access credit from government funds as well as banks and microcredit providers. The BWEN also successfully lobbied the Federal Employment Bureau (FEB) to improve transparency of the information provided on its loan program for self-employment and to publish gender-disaggregated data about applications and loan recipients. Results included improved publicity about FEB loans in general, since many details about the program had not been advertised at all, as well as better knowledge about the reasons why women's applications had been rejected. By demanding greater access to this information, the BHWEN also put pressure on the FEB to be more gender sensitive in its activities.

State Program of Small Entrepreneurship Support in Belarus. There is a fixed institutional structure dealing with and responsible for the elaboration of national SMEs policies at the governmental level in Belarus: the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Investments established in July, 1996 and its regional offices. The government has developed a "State Program of Small Entrepreneurship Support in Belarus (1999)", which stipulates financial support of small enterprises and individual entrepreneurs. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Investments, 18,199 new jobs were created in the Program framework. Though the government has already set for itself the goal of developing small enterprises and support for the private sector, the real measures are rather weak, if not lacking, and still are in an infant phase. One of the crucial questions is the lack of adequate understanding of the SMEs sector and how to promote SMEs.

Financing SMEs is one of the major challenges of entrepreneurship development especially for start-ups and beginner enterprises. The Government has not established appropriate financial schemes such as credit guarantee schemes, leasing, start-up credit schemes and equity facilitation. There is an overwhelming need for medium and long-term credit, in particular for start-ups. Credit banking institutions are reluctant to provide adequate support for them. The existing credit banks have no real experience of how to deal with this sector. The evaluation of feasibility studies is not an easy task and there is a high risk to be shared when evaluating a beginner SME. Personal resources such as family savings and loans from friends provide the principal source of start-up capital. According to the survey conducted in 1997 in Minsk, 73.2% of entrepreneurs used only family savings to start their business, and only 8.9% did not finance their business from personal resources. Additional funds were raised from: relatives - 9%, state enterprises - 9%, local subsidies - 3.6%, local partners - 3.0 %, foreign credit lines - 1.2%, credits from commercial banks - 7.7%. According to a survey held in Minsk in 1998, entrepreneurs consider existing business support structures ineffective.

Women's Economic Empowerment Project (WEE) of Winrock International in Ukraine. WEE Project addresses the needs of Ukrainian women for business and entrepreneurship skills. Activities include long- and short-term training, access to credit for women-owned businesses,

and grants to non-governmental organizations that support women in business. Key partners in this project, which is funded by USAID/Kiev, are the U.S. Peace Corps, ACDWOCA and the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF).

In partnership with six Ukrainian women's NGOs Winrock International has established Women's Business Support Centers (WBSCs) in Donetsk, Kharkiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Mykolayiv, Chernihiv and Crimea. The WBSCs offer three-month business-training courses for women. Each WBSC hosts a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer with extensive experience in the business sector, which provides consultations on operations in small and medium business. Already 1,251 women have completed these courses and 391 of them have started or diversified their businesses, creating 1,212 new jobs. Empowerment Training seminars have also reached 1,230 women, of whom 138 have started their own businesses, created 261 new jobs, and launched three new Credit Unions. In addition 37 new business associations have been formed and a quarterly newsletter on civic initiatives is also published and distributed through the programme.

The Credit Union Program was launched with the aim of improving access to credit for women entrepreneurs by providing loans through credit unions in the same oblasts as the WBSCs. The program began as a loan fund earmarked for WBSC graduates with viable plans for starting a business or expanding an existing one. Working through local credit unions this program assists women entrepreneurs who may not otherwise qualify for bank loans or credit from donor programs to obtain start-up capital for business development, thus providing access to capital to a neglected business niche. The program is also designed to support the viability of the six currently participating credit unions. The philosophy of the program is to instill in participants the importance of responsible borrowing and credit management. Successful participants build a credit history that can make them more attractive clients to credit unions as well as banks. A first time borrower is eligible for a loan of up to \$750; after successful repayment, that amount may be increased to \$1,500. After two successful repayments, it can be increased again to \$2,000. The program has been expanded, accepting applicants not only from WBSC's graduates but also from graduates of WBSC short-term training and WEE empowerment training. Approximately \$325,870 in 354 loans have been made to women entrepreneurs through this program to date. This year WEE Grants Program awarded \$75,000 to eight NGOs to support women's economic development.

The UNECE Program on Women's Entrepreneurship. This Program aims at raising awareness of women entrepreneurs issues, enhancing dialogue, promoting the exchange of best practices and recommending policies, supporting the development of women-run companies. Main activities of the UNECE include: organization of the annual Forum of Women Entrepreneurs; maintenance on the UNECE website of a virtual Portrait Gallery of Excellent Women Entrepreneurs and a Network of Women's Business Associations, which promote role models and business contacts; work of the Team of Specialists on Women's Entrepreneurship within the Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development organization of sub-regional workshops and seminars; and demand driven advisory services, provided to governments and civil society organizations.

II. Social protection of women

While all CEE/CIS countries subscribed to the broad goal of gender equality as formulated in binding international legal frameworks, as well as to the principle of gender mainstreaming in

public policies and actions, as outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action, gender mainstreaming in social security remains a challenge in a variety of ways. The need to balance gender equality with other public policy goals remains a challenge for social security reforms, as is the question how to align the goal of gender equality with engrained cultural patterns of inequality and gender stereotypes. Also, it is often not easy to take account of women's diverse interests and expectations. So far, research on the gender impacts of specific policies is spotty, and data and information is lacking, nationally as well as comparative data, so that gendered policy planning, monitoring and evaluation are fraught with difficulty.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, most CEE/CIS countries have restructured their social security schemes significantly that have a negative impact on women. Many changes were a necessary consequence of the ongoing economic reform process after 1989: Welfare state institutions and provisions had to be adjusted to be compatible with a market economy environment. The efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of social security benefits and services needed to be increased, and greater transparency of benefit administration was a popular demand. Given the breadth of inherited social security schemes, governments were also interested to reduce the burden of welfare state provisions on the state budget, and to ensure the financial sustainability of social security in the long run.

At the beginning of the 1990s, all CEE/CIS countries provided a broad variety of family benefits, in time, cash or in kind, to support parents in bearing and raising children. Commonly, the range of benefits included maternity protection and benefits, often in combination with a birth grant, childcare leave (typically granted only directly following maternity leave), childraising benefits, and leave and benefits for taking care of a sick child. Non-cash programs included subsidies for child-related goods and family services. Cash benefits were more common in Central and Southeastern Europe, while non-cash programs played a greater role in the Soviet Union. Coverage of family benefits was broad and comprehensive, and was mostly attached to, or directly provided through, the workplace. Overall state spending on family benefits in CEE/CIS countries surpassed the average spending in OECD countries.

First expenditures for family benefits and family support programs appear to have declined in many countries of the region. Research during the early years of transformation indicated a decline in the GDP share of family benefits in Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Romania, with family support declining proportionately more than other public transfers. This trend is confirmed by more recent data from Hungary and Poland where the decline was a result both of direct cuts, and of failure to adjust benefits for cost-of-living increases, as well as for Romania. Here, again, the share of family benefits declined significantly, while the share of social security benefits overall remained relatively stable, or even increased (for example spending for health and pensions). A declining value of family allowances in relation to the average wage has been reported from Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Russia.

While numerous changes were introduced in the area of childcare and childraising benefits, change in maternity benefits was less common. Typically, maternity benefits were maintained as employment-related social insurance benefits. Some countries extended the length of maternity leave, for example Albania, Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Armenia. In 2000, the Polish government initiated a series of rapid changes in the duration of the benefit: It was increased

from 16 to 20 and then to 26 weeks, but ultimately the government restored its original duration of 16 weeks. A few countries reduced the replacement rate of the benefit or changed the basis for the calculation of the benefit. Hungary, making a single change as part of a 1996 fiscal austerity plan, reduced the replacement rate of wages from 100 to 70 percent. Poland maintained an income replacement rate at 100 percent of the worker's current wage. The Czech Republic made a single small change, shifting the basis for computation of benefits from gross to net wages. In some countries a father's leave with connection of the birth of a child was introduced (e.g. Poland, Romania, Slovenia). Polish fathers, for example may take two weeks of the total maternity leave period available, Slovenian dads are entitled to 90 calendar days of paternity leave. While maternity benefits have remained relatively untouched, some studies report a growing gap between the numbers of mothers who are entitled to the benefit and those who actually take advantage of it. The absence of legal or collective trade union instruments of enforcement, and pre-entry labor market discrimination against women in childbearing age are widely reported, with maternity benefits mentioned by employers as a reason for not hiring women.

The last decade a reduction in the number of pre-school institutions has taken place throughout the CEE/CIS region, especially in former soviet republics. The majority of children at pre-general education age stays at home, being out of primary education curriculum. Many parents cannot afford to pay rising fees for kindergarten services. Closures of schools, day care centers and kindergartens have transferred childcare and nursing responsibilities to women. This not only limits their ability to gain employment but also their participation in the social and political activities within their communities.

Since 1994 national expenditures on the public health sector in Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine have been cut at least four times, making medical and health services less accessible for communities. The shift to a chargeable healthcare system has created insuperable difficulties in this sphere for the majority of the population. The tariffs for medical services sometimes exceed the family budget. The right of access to medical services free of charges guaranteed by the government is in fact implemented only to a limited extent. As a result, the marginal strata of the population often turn up at medical institutions only at late stages of illnesses or do not go there at all. Therefore the morbidity of the population has abruptly risen in the region.

So, in Ukraine the availability of hospital beds has been cut from 127 beds per 10.000 people in 1992 to 70 beds per 10,000 people in 2000. This has had an extremely bad effect on the population's access to public health services in rural areas. There are villages where there are no hospitals at all. Medical services are more and more concentrated in cities, and moving away from residents of rural areas. This especially concerns obstetric and pediatric services.

The budget cuts in the public health sector and the increasing proportion of payable medical services is a factor that disproportionately affects women as one of the most economically disadvantaged groups in the process of transition. Single parent families where women dominate as breadwinners are particularly vulnerable in the situation. Decreasing access to health services has transferred the care of ill family members and old parents almost exclusively to women.

Measures to reduce the financial costs of health services by shortening the time that patients stay in hospital for post-operative recovery also transfer the burden of convalescent care to women in home. In turn this can have a knock-on effect, forcing women to be absent from their paid employment and lowering their productivity.

All these factors marginalize women and minimize their opportunity to participate in economic, social and political decision-making process. At the same time the lack of women's participation in policymaking, lack of focus on and insufficient discussion about the gender dimensions of social security, and different priorities with respect to social security - support for mothers and homemakers vs. equal opportunities and treatment for fully employed women – complicate efforts to operationalize gender mainstreaming in CEE/CIS social security reforms.

Selected cases of good practice

2004 NEWW-Polska Gender Budgeting Initiatives in CEE/CIS region. 2004 Gender Budget CEE/CIS regional project which is implementing by the Network of East-West Women - Polska and the Network of East West Women. The idea of the project began in April 2003, when UNIFEM along with Heinrich Boell Foundation, Global Fund for Women and NEWW provided support for a regional conference on gender and economics organized by Network of East West Women-Polska (NEWW-P). The main outcome of the conference was the establishment of a gender budget working group that shares information and experience in the region on gender budget analysis.

UNIFEM continues to support the consolidation of this network by:

- Facilitating and providing support to the Gender Budgets Working Group that shares information and experience in the region on gender budget analysis (by the economic advisor).
- Support NEWW-Polska and its member NGOs in building gender budgeting capacities in the region.
- Ensure that relevant outcomes that emerge are linked with the case studies undertaken in the regional flagship publication on the statistical picture of women in the labor market.

The main goal of the CEE/CIS Gender Budget Initiative is to ensure that government policies and priorities are more responsive to gender issues by promoting and fully incorporating gender concerns in public spending and by increasing women's participation in governmental budgetary decision-making process.

This Initiative is the first of its kind in CEE/CIS, and brings together women's NGOs from throughout CEE/CIS that have a commitment to carry out gender budget projects. The Initiative is coordinate and support the development and implementation of country-level gender budget activities, provide a mechanism by which these activities can be coordinated and shared on a regional level, and support the development of country and regional advocacy initiatives based on the outcomes of the gender budget analysis.

In order to plan the activities and the scope of the project, the NEWW-Polska organized a strategic planning meeting for both future participants of the project and experts in the area of

gender budgeting. This meeting took place on 14-18 April 2004 in Gdansk, Poland. It has brought together practitioners from regions where UNIFEM has already launched gender budget initiatives, economic experts and women leaders from CEE/CIS region.

The first experience in gender analyses of federal budget in Russia

The study on gender budgeting as an innovative social technology has been summarized and published in the book “Gender budgeting – the first experience in Russia” (2002) written by Ludmila Rzhanitsina, and supported by Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) within Women’s Network Program.

Sample gender budget for federal budget 2002 in Russia gave analysis of the existing social, economic and financial legislation, statistic data on gender and mathematics methods. The developed methodology used quantitative correlation between budget incomes and expenditures, and their distribution between tax-payers and beneficiaries of both genders taking into account their shares in professional and entrepreneur activities, capital origin, wages, pensions, allowances, and social services consumption. The calculations revealed that a professional gender segregation in the key economic fields leads to losses of 15-20% of the annual budget and earnings, which can be compared with 40-50% of the annual budget growth.

Gender asymmetries were also observed in budget expenditures. Women and children who constitute 2/3 of the population receive approximately 1/3 of the aggregated state spending. All the maternity benefits that women are often “blamed for” are fully supported by their own contributions to the budget and obligatory insurance funds. The main conclusion of the investigation is that if a more just gender distribution within the areas of labor, wages, property, and resource ownership was insured, the state could be richer and better socially developed.

III. Trafficking in women

Most of the studies on trafficking have been conducted in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in countries located in the Balkans and Baltic. These states have become major sending and transit areas. In spite of lack of comparable and official statistics, there is strong evidence that trafficking in women to, within and from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and is a growing problem. The fact that trafficking is not only illegal, but also often connected to organised crime networks, violence and corruption, means that access to information and informants is often limited, and even impossible in some cases. Due to its illegal and violent nature, researchers and others working with victims of trafficking or on holding perpetrators accountable are at risk. Trafficked individuals are the commodities of a multi-billion dollar global industry, which is dominated by highly organised criminal groups who operate largely with impunity. Increasing economic hardship in the developing and transition countries, onerous obstacles to legal migration and serious armed conflict have coincided with a reported rise in the number of cases of trafficking in the ECE region as well as a spreading of the problem to areas which were previously less affected. Trafficking affects and implicates most countries in the ECE region in one way or another. While trafficking routes vary over time, the direction invariably goes from a poorer country to a wealthier one.

Selected cases of good practices

Anti-trafficking policies in Moldova. A comprehensive National Action Plan on combating trafficking in people has been approved by the Moldova government on November 9, 2001. Additionally, a national committee on combating trafficking in people has been established with the deputy Prime Minister Valerian Kristya as a national co-ordinator.

Collaborating Partners: Stability Pact, OSCE, Council of Europe, several UN agencies (UNDP; ILO; UNICEF) and NGOs. An initial assessment of the magnitude and causes of the problems has been undertaken during the first 6 months. The main concerns have been:

- the identification of the vulnerable groups and traffickers methods;
- the development of a database of standardised data/quantitative data collection;
- qualitative data/sociological surveys of the problem

Other steps taken include:

1. Awareness-raising campaigns for the general population, and preventive measures with the participation of both government agencies and NGOs. These include:
 - Publication and dissemination of information (statistical booklets, brochures, videotapes, etc.) about the problem at national and international level;
 - Information on health risks associated with sexual exploitation;
 - Media campaigns targeted at young girls, and youth in general, that are not attending school;
 - Counselling of vulnerable groups (unemployed people in search of job) on the dangers of trafficking and giving information on potential sources of help in the countries of migration, and contact information of centres that help victims abroad;
 - banning pornography, violence and other means in the mass media that violate human dignity and integrity.
2. Intervention programmes: Ensuring the right for the victims to return to their country of origin and providing them with assistance, including both legal and medical support. This implies:
 - training of the personnel that have first contact with victims (police, social services, etc.);
 - setting-up hotlines for victims;
 - and ensuring the social re-integration of victims through:
 - counselling on the employment possibilities;
 - professional training and retraining of skills to find a new job;
 - financial assistance in entrepreneurial activities.

All these measures are integrated into the broader context of improving socio-economic status of vulnerable groups, primarily, women and youth:

- programmes against poverty, especially poverty among women and young people;
- prevention of illiteracy and lack of schooling;
- continuous education.

In the future, three ministries (Ministry of Law, Ministry of Interior Affairs, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs) are taking the main responsibility to conform the national legislation with the international law on the issue of trafficking in humans. This work includes:

- introducing appropriate criminal penalties against traffickers;
- making amendments to the legislation so that the perpetrators and not the victims are persecuted;
- creating amendments that make perpetrators pay compensation to their victims,
- Future international co-operation and co-ordination:
 - bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements between Moldova and recipient countries or memoranda between different ministries in different countries on preventative measures and assisting victims in returning to their country of origin.
 - agreement with the recipient countries to assist the victims in receiving temporary residence permits on humanitarian grounds with the purpose of giving them time and the possibility to sue the perpetrators if they so desire. During this period, the victims will have access to the necessary medical and social services.
 - Exchange of information between countries involved and coordinating actions.

IV. Women's participation in decision-making process

The objective of more balanced participation of men and women in national governing structures is one of the goals of Beijing Platforms for Action. Although women in all countries of the CEE/CIS region enjoy the legal entitlements necessary for taking part in the political process without restrictions, they continue to face serious difficulties in becoming involved in equitable numbers in the political process. Whatever the constitutional arrangements, the core of decision-making in each country is the executive branch of the government, that is the cabinet and the senior civil service. In the CEE/CIS region, women's share in government varies from zero to 15 per cent.

In Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the countries of the CIS, women have found themselves progressively pushed out of public life, and only in the Baltic states and a couple of other countries did women manage to progress sufficiently to make up 15 per cent of the elected parliaments. Repeated studies of gender and voting behaviour indicate that the absence of women in electoral office is not the result of voting in general elections but is attributable to party nomination practices. The role of political parties in increasing women's representation is clearly crucial, as political parties are the channels to elected office. The limited presence of women in parties and their even smaller role in parties' executive committees explains in large part the difficulties women have in getting access to political power.

General attitudes in society, which construe men as the only real political actors, tend to legitimate men and their political actions, while disqualifying women. In the same sense, women in politics are often more closely scrutinised and criticised than men. The unequal division of family responsibilities places women at a disadvantage in terms of time needed to be active in politics. Similarly, limited social services inhibit women's access to "disposable time" required for building up a political career. Other explanations for the dearth of women in electoral politics include the lack of positive measures and networks to support women in politics and the re-emergence in some societies of patriarchal values and relegation of women to the private sphere of the family.

As a result of all this, women are the minority among parliamentarians in all countries of the region and therefore have relatively little influence on the social and economic policies that characterise a society. Training and strong policies in some of the members states with quotas and targets have been instrumental in increasing women's presence in different appointed offices in the senior civil service, commissions and committees that make up part of contemporary government.

Selected cases of good practices

Ukraine: project on training women in political leadership (Olga)

Olga is a joint project between the UNDP and a Swedish development consultancy (Språngbrådan Utvecklingskonsulter AB) that is co-sponsored by SIDA. Initiated in 1998 and dealing with training women-politicians, the project focuses first on election campaigning and is followed by post-election training. The main objectives have been:

- to involve more women in politics and strengthen their role in political decision-making;
- to train men and women together in order to create a partnership that will achieve a gender balance in political leadership.

The project contributed to a greater awareness of gender equality as an essential building block of a democratic society, thus making gender issues high on the political and public agenda. Indeed, members of parliament, heads of regional administration, and mayors have all participated in the project activities. In all, about 1200 people took part in different project activities (60% of which were women). Over the course of the project, an International Ombudsmen conference took place in April 2001 in Kiev under the auspices of the Swedish Presidency. Extensive media coverage of the project's activities (TV, radio and newspapers) was organised both at the national and regional levels.

V. National machineries for gender equality and advancement of women.

All CEE/CIS countries repeatedly reaffirmed their commitments to create institutional mechanisms for gender equality, to empower women's participation in economic, social and political spheres and mainstream gender in their local, national and regional programs. These commitments are mainly contained in the following documents adopted by UN Member States: ECE Regional Action Plan (1994), Cairo Platform for Action (1994), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and Decisions on Institutional Mechanisms Adopted by UN CSW (1999), agreed conclusions from the regional ECE Beijing+5 Meeting (2000), Monterrey Consensus Document (2002), and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002). Certain steps and efforts for gender equality and advancement of women have been undertaken and are still being undertaken by national governments with the support of international institutions and in partnership with civil society.

These documents recognize women's right to labour conditions equal with men, including the right for equal payment for equal labour or labour of equal value; right for leave with pay in the period of pregnancy and childbirth, including sufficient social support with assured return to the work place and length of service. They also recognize women's right to a decent living condition

for themselves and their families, to social services, including childcare institutions, and to recognition of unpaid housekeeping work.

In order to effectively achieve gender-related commitments made at the international level, two main types of institutional processes and mechanisms can be highlighted: a) internally, the establishment of institutions and national action plans for gender equality; b) externally, the regional support by international organizations and foundations.

Following up on the decision of Fourth World Women's Conference (Beijing 1995), national governments of CEE/CIS countries established governmental bodies to promote the advancement of women and adopted state gender strategies. All countries now have national machineries (commissions, committees, councils on gender issues) to advance women, set out state policies and strategies, develop a platform of action, coordinate and facilitate gender mainstreaming into all national policies, strategies and programs. This covers state governance, including legislative, executive and judicial branches of power as well as civil self-governance.

Slovak Republic

The country signed the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1982 within Czechoslovak republic and the Slovak republic overtook the responsibility to fulfil this convention on the basis of succession in 1. 1. 1993. The co-ordination committee for the Problems of Women at the Ministry of the Work, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak republic was set up in March 1996 after Beijing. The department for Equality of the Opportunities was set up at the same ministry. The Ministry prepared National Action Plan for Women in the Slovak Republic that proposes a set of steps to diminish the existing problems of the status of women in Slovakia in the time horizon of ten years.

Belarus

Belarus provides an example of how gender can be mainstreamed in national programmes for social and economic development and applied in international cooperation and cross-programme work.

The Government's Programme Concept for Social and Economic Development of Belarus was developed for the period 2001-2005. The basic objective is to improve the living standards of Belarusian through export-oriented economic growth with social equity and security. Efforts of national government in this direction have been supported by UNDP and reflected in the second country cooperation framework (CCF) for Belarus (2001-2004). Gender mainstreaming is one of the priorities in all areas of government's programmes and CCF: (a) policy and legislative development; (b) access to information communication technology; (c) access to the benefits of globalization; (d) promotion of small and medium size enterprises; (e) alternative institutional and financial means for provision of goods and services; (f) promotion of innovative investments; and (g) social security.

Expected results from this cross-programme work are: (a) all programme beneficiaries will be applying rights-based approaches to their work in developing and implementing policies; (b) further integration of gender issues in national development and sectoral plans will increase women's participation in entrepreneurship, decision-making and access to information technology; and (c) there will be increased public and government awareness on gender issues.

Ukraine

During the second half of the 90s, the Government of Ukraine made some efforts to address gender inequalities and improve the status of women in the country. In 1993, the Sector on Women, Family, Motherhood and Childhood Protection (part of the Cabinet of Ministers) was created. In 1996 the Ministry of Family and Youth Affairs was created, and later transformed into the State Committee for Family and Youth in 1999, the department of which took responsibility for women's status and gender equality.

The “National Action Plan for Improving the Situation of Women and Promoting Gender Equality in Society during 2001 – 2005” is based on the gender approach and will be the basis for a harmonization of relations between sexes, for the establishment of parity democracy. Such priorities are:

- consideration of gender aspects in formulating state policy, programmes and projects;
- prohibition of gender discrimination on the labour market, in employment and promotion;
- development of programmes in the interests of women who have been affected by the negative effects of economic reform; a settlement of the problem of women's employment, providing a favorable environment for the development of business activity among women.

The National Plan of Action for Advancement of Women and Promoting Gender Equality is a good initiative, as it attempts to address the critical gender and women's issues in Ukraine. It is, however, more a list of activities to be undertaken by various parties than a strategic document determining the key directions and interventions needed in this sphere. It tends to lean more towards a traditional approach in protecting women against exploitation and promoting cultural and family values. On the positive side, it has prioritized the collection and publication of gender disaggregated data to facilitate more gender sensitive policy making and programming; integration of gender issues into higher education and conducting gender expertise of legislation (all of which have been already initiated with the support of the UNDP Gender in Development Programme). The budget of this Plan is determined on an annual basis. The budget provided for 2001 is so limited that they could not implement more than 10% of the planned activities.

Georgia

On 20 February 20 1998 the State Commission on Elaboration of State Policy for Women's Advancement was established by the President of Georgia. The mandate of the Commission envisages acting as the main coordinating body of the Government's gender policy. The key instrument in this coordination and in the implementation of the Government's gender program is the National Plan of Action for Improving Women's Conditions in Georgia, approved by the Order of the President of Georgia in 1998 and prolonged in 2000 to 2004. The State Commission is headed by a woman, the Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council of Georgia on Human Rights Issues. The other 26 members of the Commission are representatives of the Government and NGO's. The State Commission is supposed to operate in close contact with the different ministries where gender focal points are nominated to ensure a smooth interaction.

Kyrgyzstan

In 1996 the State Commission on Family, Women and Youth Affairs was established under the Kyrgyz Government to provide institutional support for promotion of women's interests. According to its mandate, the Commission implements the state policy on women's development, establishes and implements state and national programmes on gender in relation to family, women and youth. The State Commission coordinates these efforts with the sectoral ministries, administrative structures, local governments, civil society organizations including political parties, non-governmental organizations, as well as international organizations in the

Kyrgyz Republic.

Through the State Commission's efforts, special committees on family, women and youth affairs were established in 1997 within the Legislative Assembly and People's Representatives Assembly of Jogorku Kenesh/Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic. The State Commission is also represented at the local level by Women's Initiative or Ayalzat Centers which were established with the support of UNDP. The activities of these Centers focus on co-ordination of Youth Family and Women's issues among local agencies, field support for women's NGOs communities, women-entrepreneurs and farmers. Additional Centers have been established at the local level.

The budget allocation for the State Commission, however, has been reducing every year to 30* in 1998 due to national budgetary constraints. As of November 1998, only 1.5 million Som (US\$ 50,000) was received by the Commission, hardly enough to implement the plan of activities for the year. The provincial "Ayalzat" Centers are losing their influence in society due to a lack of adequate Government support and funding. Challenges remain in establishing an effective implementation and monitoring mechanism for this strategy; obtaining adequate financing for the activities of the Ayalzat programme, which has been extended for another five years; and influencing social attitudes which currently hinder women's advancement and particularly, participation in leadership.

Gaps and obstacles

The establishment of gender machineries in all CEE/CIS countries and the progress made in developing effective tools such as gender disaggregated statistics should be considered an important step forward to ensure gender equality and advancement of women. However, the main challenges to the effectiveness of national machineries often stem from a combined lack of clear mandates, experience, and human and financial resources. With these internal problems, it is often difficult for the national machineries to solicit high political support and authority. The established commissions and committees have not the appropriate tools and resources for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of adopted platform of actions.

Actually a common hindrance in national program implementation is the weak gender awareness within government structures. Mechanisms to analyze the specific roles and responsibilities, and the consequential problems, needs and interests of men and women are therefore not in place. It is not possible, therefore, to ensure that national policies, strategies and programs are completely relevant and effective for all sectors of the population.

In the region only in EU accession countries (in particular, Lithuania, Poland, Croatia) an Equal opportunity Ombudsman, with a specific mandate to oversee the monitoring of the Equal Opportunities Act, has been established. Other countries are in the process of reviewing their legislation for gender-based discrimination and to propose additional legislation that will reverse the inequalities resulting from the transition to market economy.

To effectively mainstream gender into institutional processes, governments should coordinate their efforts and strengthen the linkages between the National Plan of Action to Empower Women and various National Plans aiming at sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction. The establishment of multi-ministerial "gender desk" with administrative and budgetary powers, with broad participation of gender sensitive economists, lawyers, women's NGOs and business organizations could be an effective tool to ensure that gender concerns addressed in the formulation, implementation and evaluation stages of policy making.

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