

TURKEY

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
PRIME MINISTRY
General Directorate on the Status and Problems of Women**

**RESPONSE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
TO THE
QUESTIONNAIRE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE
BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE)

SECTION ONE

REVIEW OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS ON SOCIAL GENDER EQUALITY AND SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRESS OF WOMAN AND THE DIFFICULTIES CONFRONTED WITH: GENERAL VIEW

1. Implementation of Beijing Platform for Action and Basic Gains

Turkey, who has been an active participant in United Nations Fourth World Conference on Woman in 1995, is among the countries that has signed the Beijing Declaration and the Action Plan without any reservations. Turkey has adopted three basic targets (To withdraw its reservations in the CEDAW Agreement that has been signed in 1985 by the year 2000, to decrease the mother and infant deaths by 50% in 2000 taking 1994 as base, to abolish women illiteracy which was 28.9 % in 1994 by increasing compulsory primary school education to 8 years) in the context of this conference and has made commitments to the international community to achieve these goals.

Turkey, parallel to the general understanding adopted following the Fourth World Conference on Women and during the Beijing Conference process has prepared a National Action Plan in December 1996 by a commission formed with the participation of General Directorate of Women's Status and Problems, representatives of women association from various sectors, academicians and representatives of related government bodies and submitted it to the United Nations.

Considering the conditions and priorities of the country and the commitments of Turkey during Fourth World Conference on Women, eight (Women's Education and Training, Girl Child, Women and Health, Violence Against Women, Women and Economy, Women in Power and Decision Making, Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, Women and Media) of the twelve critical areas in the Beijing Platform for Action has been defined as critical areas in Turkey's National Action Plan.

It is possible to gather the selected "critical areas of priority" in three major categories. First one is education, health, the girl child, and economy as vital condition for the empowerment of women in the society; Second is providing the leading and actual contribution of the state (national mechanisms) as its importance has been clearly proven through the historical experience of Turkey; and the third is the implementation areas (violence against women, women and media, women in power and decision making) that is thought to change religion, custom, tradition and "special area" values that are known to play an important role in legitimizing and reproducing gender inequality and discrimination against women with social-cultural values.

During the past nine years following the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action Turkey has realized most of its commitments made in Beijing by carrying policies parallel to the

Platform and thus achieved important progress in the area of gender equality and women human rights.

Increasing Literacy;

(One of the most important steps taken in Turkey for empowerment of women after the Beijing Conference is the adoption of the law for eight year compulsory education in 1997 and implementation of this law. One of the important bottlenecks in women's education in the country is the low ratio of the girls that continue to school after the compulsory education, due to economic and cultural reasons. Raising the education level of the girls was targeted by increasing the compulsory education to eight years. It is expected that with the new system girls in the critical age group will be in the education system for a longer time and this will contribute to their self consciousness. Besides, where before girls were introduced to different vocational and technical branches(including religious education) after five years of primary education, it is planned that girls will be more effective and free in choosing their area of education with the adoption of eight year compulsory primary education. It is also expected that with the new system the age for marriage and motherhood for girls will become higher since they would be in the education system for longer time.)

Withdrawal of the reservations on CEDAW;

(Turkey had its reservations on the 15. And 16. Articles of CEDAV during the signing process in 1985 due to the contradictions of these articles with the articles of Turkish CIVIL code regarding use of legal licenses and marriage and family affairs).

Decrease in mother and child deaths;

(The National Strategic Plan and Action Plan for the improvement of women's health were formulated in follow-up to the Cairo and Beijing Conferences. This, combined with enhanced inter-sectoral co-operation; the relevant legislation for family planning; and, the importance placed on physical infrastructure and human resource training has been a major gain towards meeting the health related problems of women. Corresponding figures of the preliminary results of 1998 Turkish Demographic and Health Survey confirm the overall improvement in women's health. The preliminary results of the Survey reveal that; the rate of fertility has declined from 4.1 per cent in 1980-1985 period to 2.6 per cent in 1995-1998 period, a sharp decline in infant mortality has been observed during the recent decades - it was estimated to be 53 per thousand live-births in 1994 which is now 43 per thousand live-births, similar tendency has also been observed for maternal mortality.

In addition to these important developments, adoption of the Law on Protection of the Family in 1989 and the new Civil Code in January 2002 were important steps in this process.

In spite of the measures taken on both national and international level to spread out the gender equality, inequality in various forms is continuing to surround the world. Social incidents with violence and various armed conflicts in different parts of the world are surely the most important obstacles for the goals of Beijing. In spite of the women movements and human rights defenders continuing their work in such an environment world states and communities can not fully succeed to eliminate violence against women. Today on the world one out of every three women is facing different forms of violence.

Violence against women which is an obstacle for women to live in security is a violation of human rights. Because in many communities domestic violence is seen as a private area and that it is difficult to interrupt in the private area, to cease the violence against women in the family and eliminate the harm it had created is a difficult social problem.

As emphasized by Beijing Platform for Action, violence against women is the most striking visible face of the unequal power relationship between men and women that has been continuing through ages, hindering the progress of women.

As in many other countries in the world, in Turkey too violence against women is an important problem. In this context, adoption of the Law for the Protection of the Family in 1998 which aimed at eliminating violence against women and especially preventing violence in the family, is a very important progress considering that intervention of state in this area which was regarded as private is very difficult.

On the other hand Turkish Criminal Code is being reviewed as a whole and a new draft is prepared where gender equality is considered. For example, regarding crimes of honor which we consider as a heavy violation of human rights, the article which provides criminals of honor crimes commutation of the sentence does not exist in the new draft. Another progress that this draft will provide is that the necessary arrangements in gender equality are being worked on.

In this context, media has one of the most important roles both for elimination of violence against women and the progress of women. Media is continuing to create models for gender roles which are discriminating against women. Besides presenting women body as an object, media generally presents women as mothers and the persons responsible of the house asexualizing and men as professionals and representatives of power and authority, putting both in their traditional gender roles. Since 1990's as a result of maturation of women movements and women work programs as well as the national women mechanisms, genderism in the media has become more visible both as the representation of women and the participation of women in various media organizations and became the headline for discussions and studies. Increase of academic publications and student thesis that analyze genderist applications in producing news, advertisements, etc. in the written and visual press have made the subject more visible.

The fact that women are grossly unrepresented in the various sectors of the media also contributes to the persistence of sexism of the sector. However, with the increase in the number of private media companies during the last decade, the number of women working, particularly in the TV and movie industry, has increased. Yet, proportion of women in managerial positions is still at insignificant levels. Sex-desegregated data on employees in the different sectors of the media is scarce. Therefore, reference can be made to only some fragmented sources of information. For example, women held only 1,873 of the 11,322 yellow ID cards given to journalists on June 2000; in the autonomous Turkish Radio and Television Institution (TRT), women make up 2,030 of the 8,180 personnel, and 116 of the 214 managerial posts. In the latter, women are concentrated mainly in middle management and they make up only 1 % of the high-level management posts. The annual ratio of women oriented programmes on TRT television channels is 6.9 %, and on the radio channels it is 15-17%.

SECTION TWO

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWELVE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND FURTHER ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES IDENTIFIED AT THE 23 RD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Examples of legal amendments, programs and projects

- A legal development in the area of domestic violence was the enactment of a new **law on the Protection of the family**, prepared by the Directorate General of Women's Status and Problems in co-ordination with universities, civil society organizations and related public organizations. This law entered into force in 1998.

The law introduced some protection orders which will be determined by the family courts upon the complaint of the abused women and children or the application by the public prosecutor. In order to protect the victims and the other members of the family, the law also states that, the party who applies domestic violence should stay away from home or – workplace for a period of time. This protection order aims to keep parties out of each other's sight and sound lines.

If the security forces find out that the perpetrator is not complying with the ruled protection orders, the court shall rule for imprisonment from three to six months.

- Other important development is the amendments of the **Article 41 and 66 of the Turkish Constitution** in 17 October 2001. Article 41 of the Constitution established the principle of equality between spouses as a basis for the family.

Article 66 of the Constitution on Turkish citizenship, previously stated that the citizenship of a child of a foreign father and a Turkish mother would be defined by law. This provision was deleted in October 2001. Thus, the Constitution no longer discriminates on the basis of sex in the case of a foreign parent.

- The new Turkish Civil Code which entered into force on the 1st of January 2002, strengthened gender equality, equality between the spouses and considered women totally equal to men in family and society. The main provisions of the new law are as follows:
 - Under the new Family Law, there is no longer a head of the family. The spouses are to care jointly for the proper maintenance of the family.
 - Each spouse represents the conjugal union.
 - The conjugal home has to be determined jointly by the spouses.
 - The women have the right to use their former surname in front of the husband's surname.
 - As regards to the parent-child relationship, both spouses have parental authority over the children. In case of disagreement, the judge will determine.
 - Spouses have freedom to choose their job and profession. They do not require the other's permission. (The former Civil Code in Article 159 stated that women should take their

husband's permission to enter a job or profession. This article has been considered void by the Constitutional court in 1990)

- The new Turkish Civil Code accepted "participation in acquisitions" as the regular matrimonial property regime. Under this regular regime, unless the spouses agree upon a different regime marriage, acquired property which each spouse acquires during the marriage is shared equally when the marriage comes to an end. Each spouse takes his or her own property.
 - The new civil code rose the legal age of marriage for women from 15 to 17. Boys and girls who have not completed 17 years of age can not get married. However, under extraordinary conditions and for an important cause, the judge may permit a boy or a girl who has completed 16 years of age to get married.
 - The spouses contribute to the maintenance of the conjugal union, each according to his or her own capacity.
 - After divorce, the competent authority for maintenance allowance claims, is the court at the residence of the claimant not the defendant,
- A draft has been prepared by The Ministry of Justice to amend the **Turkish Criminal Code** which is adopted by Turkey in 1926, according to contemporary needs and conditions. Relevant parts of this draft amendment have been examined by a commission of university and civil society organizations' lawyer representatives under the co-ordination of the Directorate General of Women's Status and Problems. The Report!which identified the Articles of the new Draft Criminal Code which discriminates against women and the Report!of the Commission consisting of women members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and relevant_bureaucrats under the head of the Minister Responsible For Women Affairs were sent to Justice Commission of the Turkish Parliament and the Ministry of Justice.

On the other hand, Turkey is making substantial contributions at the international platform, to the efforts in the field of crimes committed for the sake of honour. For example, Turkey ensured that early and forced marriages and crimes committed for the sake of honour are to be considered among the forms of violence against women, identified in the outcome document of the Beijing + 5 special session of the United Nations General Assembly. As a result, in the document, crimes committed for the sake of honour are considered a violation of women's human rights and a form of violence against women.

- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is ratified by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 30 July 2002 and entered into force on 29 January 2003. The Optional Protocol aims to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it allows persons or groups of persons claiming to be victims of a discrimination to submit their claims to the CEDAW Committee and permits the Committee to initiate an investigation, by the approval of the relevant country, on serious and systematic violation of women's rights.
- In Turkey, upon the enactment of New Civil Code, it became a necessity to establish specialized courts to settle the conflicts arising from the Family Law. For this purpose, The

Act on Establishment, Jurisdiction and Trial Procedures of Family Courts was prepared and entered into force on January 18, 2003.

Women and Education

At the Beijing Platform for Action, party States committed that everyone should have access to basic education before the end of year 2000; 80% of all children at the age of primary education should finish primary school and to close the gender gap in primary and middle education before the end of 2005. It is also stated that everyone in party states should complete primary education before the end of 2015. Turkey, by increasing compulsory education to 8 years in 1997, took a significant step in education. One further step is to educate girls in higher rates in order to close the gap in boys and girls education.

Some legal arrangements are made to meet the expenses of 8 year primary education. In order to implement these legal arrangements effectively, a state project named “The 2000 Project for Contemporary Education” is put into force. The purposes of this project are to provide 100% schooling in primary education; to increase quality in primary education, to decrease the number of students in one class to 30 and to put an end to the practice of consolidated classes. Another aim is too widespread the Transported Education which is especially important for girls and to increase the enrolment capacities of Regional Boarding Primary Schools and Boarding Primary Schools.

Especially, girls from rural settlements that do not have a school, benefited from these services. All expenses of the students in these schools are provided by the State.

Students in remote and scarcely populated areas where transported education is not economic and where transportation facilities are inadequate are placed in Boarding Primary Schools. During 2000-2001 education year, 100 thousand female and 185 thousand male students benefited from these facilities.

After the enactment of the Law number 4306, the number of Regional Boarding Primary Schools and Boarding Primary Schools increased by 97 % and 80 % respectively.

Although, education is a compulsory legal right and opportunity for all Turkish citizens, still in 2000, 19 percent of women are illiterate. The Ministry of Education organizes various programs and training courses for women and girls who have not been able to access formal education or left formal education after a period of time. In 2000 699,310 women benefited from these courses. 526,341 women attended vocational courses, while 136,716 attended social-cultural and 36,253 attended literacy courses.

Again, open Lycee programs are launched by the Ministry of Education in 1994-1995 education year to provide education for girls who had to drop school early and for women of all ages. In 2000, 138,663 girl students were educated at Open Education Lycee.

Woman and Health

In Turkey there are 13 million women in the age range of 15-49 that consist 25 % of the population. With such a population of women, it is unavoidable that women's problems will be reflected to the social life of the country.

Although life expectancy at birth is longer for women, in Turkish society this is shorter than the developed countries where both genders can receive equal services. In 2000 life expectancy at birth is expected to be for men is 66.9 years and for women is 71.5.

Regarding women health in Turkey, spreading services of reproductive health and raising the quality of these services is one of the important progresses in this field.

Prolificacy in Turkey is in tendency of decrease. The most important factors that effect prolificacy tendencies are regional differences (east-west), place of residence (rural-urban), women's age and level of education. Among women highest rate of prolificacy is in the 20-24 age group. Total rate of prolificacy (the total number of children women will give birth if this fertility rate is valid during their whole prolific life) is around 3.1 children for women in rural areas and 2.4 children for women in urban areas. Average for Turkey is 2.6 children per woman. With these results we can see that the difference between rural and urban areas in total prolificacy rate that continued since a long time is getting less.

East Anatolia Region is the area with highest prolificacy rate with more than 4 children when we look at the prolificacy rates according to basic variables. In North, Middle and South Anatolia Regions prolificacy is lower with total prolificacy rate of less than 3 children. The lowest rate is seen in West Anatolia Region with 2.0 children. This rate is comparable with many West European countries.

In Turkey where marriage is prevalent and almost all of the child birth is in marriage, age of first marriage which means the beginning of the risk of pregnancy is an important demographic indicator. Where, first marriage age for women who are now 45-49 years old was 18.4, it has risen to 20 for those women who are 25-29 years old. These figures show that there is a steady rise in the age of first marriage.

One of the commitments we have made in Beijing was to decrease the mother and infant deaths by half. Regarding this, mother deaths which was 132 out of hundred thousand in 1981 was 100 in 1990 and calculated as 54 out of hundred thousand in a study named Mother Deaths and Reasons Research, carried out in 53 provinces and 615 hospital in 1990.

Rate of infant deaths that were 5.26 % in the period of 1988-1993, decreased to 4.27 % during the period of 1993-1998. The rate of child death (1-4 age group) decreased from 1.68 % to .98 % for the same periods.

One of the important changes that the new Civil Code, that is effective of January 1, 2002, has brought is the condition of 17 years of age for the marriage of girls and boys, in order to prevent marriages at very young ages in the country.

In accordance with the suggestions made in Cairo World Population Development Conference in 1994 and Fourth World Conference, the traditional mother health approach is changed to “Woman Health” which deals with the health of women throughout the life with a broader context. With this understanding a study was carried out with the coordination of Ministry of Health and the participation of public institutions, volunteer organizations, private sector and syndicates which was completed in 1998, and “National Action Plan on Woman Health and Family Planning” was prepared as a result of this study. However the action plan will be revised within this year.

In Turkey consultancy services on family planning and fertility health is given free of charge in all health unit that is active and Mother Infant Health and Family Planning center.

Education is an important factor that effect prolificacy. Where those women who have not any education or who have not completed any school on the average have 4 children during their prolificacy period, women with middle school or higher education have 1.6 children.

Initiatives to Improve Mother-Child Health and Reproductive Health

The basic strategy in the Mother-Child Health and Family/Planning programme is to enhance the capacity of all relevant institutions. In this regard, Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the civil society and the universities, as well as international organizations, undertake numerous projects throughout the country to improve reproductive and primary mother-child health care, particularly in the less developed regions and poorer segments of the society. Among these are:

- Safe motherhood programme- aims to give on-the-job-training to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates;
- International Reproductive Health Training Center – a GOT – UNFPA initiative to provide training programmes on reproductive health to participants from Turkey, and countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Africa;
- Reproductive Health Programme – implemented between 1997 and 2000 as a multi-purpose programme, including training of health professionals, family planning and contraceptive use counseling to couples and upgrading of facilities that provide primary mother-child health care to Women’s Health Centers equipped with modern medical technology and surgical intervention.
- GOT – UNFPA third national programme (2001-2005) – aims to enhance reproductive health through training and awareness raising, institutional capacity building, generation of knowledge and data, among others. The project is a collaborative effort involving Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Science Academy of Turkey, State Planning Organization, State Institute of Statistics and DGSPW.

The State Institute of Statistics is in the process of developing gender health indicators and generating sex-desegregated data. There are also many small pilot projects undertaken by GOT and NGOs or in collaboration, to improve primary and reproductive health care, raise public awareness on related issues, including sexually transmitted disease, curriculum development on reproductive health for university students and enhance overall access to health care services.

Violence Against Women

Violence against women is an important issue that effects, directly or indirectly, large segments of the society and urgent measures are required to curtail and eliminate it. The persistence of violence can be attributed to many factors, including difficulties in the implementation of laws and regulations that prohibit such acts, lack of awareness and knowledge of the existing regulations and mechanisms, lack of effective measures to deal with the underlying causes of the problem and provocative role the media continues to display in covering acts of violence.

Various studies show that violence against women in the family is common in most homes. For instance, 34 percent of households experience physical violence, 53 percent experience verbal violence. Same study revealed that 46 percent of children are subjected to physical violence.

The results of Turkey Population and Health Research show that, half of married women consider that men can batter women if she deserves. Even the other half says that women should not argue with men.

The Law on Protection of the Family, Act no: 4320, enacted in 1998, aims to protect family members who are subject to violence, until divorce.

The Directorate General of Social Services and Child Protection Institute has opened 8 guest houses for women in various Provinces (İzmir, Bursa, Antalya, Ankara, Eskişehir, İstanbul, Samsun ve Denizli). There is 1 shelter opened by İstanbul Küçükçekmece municipality. Besides, guidance and counseling services are offered by the Provincial Social Services Directorates of the 81 provinces as well as by the six counseling centers operated by civil society organizations and one such center operated by local government.

Training of security forces, health care personnel and other public servants who deal with women subjected to violence, and educating women and girls of their legal rights is another high priority goal in the fight against violence against women. The Directorate General of Women's Status and Problems collaborates with civil society organizations in this field. In this context, spot videos and short movies about violence against women and centres for battered women have been prepared.

Women and Economy

In Turkey employment of women is continuing to be one of the basic areas of problem. In the context of globalization, unemployment of women during the last twenty years in turkey has shifted to unregistered economy. The significant and continuous decline of women in participation of workforce is shown as the most important proof of this view. The participation of women in the workforce which was 34 % in 1990 became 27.9 % in 1998 and 25.9 % in 2001.

In general out of 100 women in Turkey, 57 are in agriculture sector, 14 in industry sector, and 29 in services sector.

Looking at the situation as to the condition of work, out of 100 woman only 11 work in their own business as employer, 39 work as an employee in return of daily or monthly pay, and half work as family worker without any salary.

While agriculture sector's place in the economy is decreasing by half due to the migration to urban areas, agriculture is still the sector that employs women most. Although this sector keeps the women as an unpaid family worker it motivates women to socialize and participate in decisions.

Besides, in Turkey where there is an intense migration from rural to urban areas, women who are in the workforce in their village can not find a job when they move to the city due to their lack of education and professional skills and generally become housewives. 11.5 million (67.8) of the 17 million women who are not in the workforce, claim that the reason they are not in the workforce is because they are "housewives". This situation decreases the participation of women in the workforce both in rural and urban areas. Women who have to work because of the low income of the family goes into the informal sector without social security and have to work in low status-income jobs. This situation does not reflect in the man power data and unemployment rates look very high.

Besides the uneducated and unskilled women the fact that the rate of unemployment among educated and young women population is also high is an important indicator to be able to understand employment of women. Rate of unemployment among the young women population who live in the city and who are at least high school graduate is twice as much as the men in the same situation (Unemployment rate for women is 43 % while for men is 20 %).

This situation reflects to the distribution of income also to a great extent. It is obvious that women and girls are the ones that are affected most in all areas of their lives from decline of income distribution. Decline of income and thus living standards while forcing women to work in marginal jobs to increase their decreasing income, on the other hand increases their time allocated to in-house production.

Second sector that employs women most is the services sector. Some of the areas in this sector are socially accepted as "areas appropriate for women". The third sector for women workforce is the industry sector where especially in manufacturing still women employment is restricted. Whereas in the same sector women are still preferred in labor-dense industry branches. In both sectors especially in unregistered businesses women and children are employed mostly without any social right and social security.

The basic reason of working women to end their work life after a short period and/or not to be able to show their potential for advance in their career is the problem for women to reconcile their work and home life. Woman has to share the responsibilities of taking care of children and elderly in her family life with her husband and/or with the state. The number of day care centers in the country is still insufficient in spite of all efforts.

In Turkey about 1.6 million (14.5 %) of 11 million active workers with social security are women.

Important developments in Turkey after the Fourth World Women Conference are as follows:

- The bill on “Parental Leave for Birth or Adoption of a Child” which is drafted with the aim of sharing the responsibility of child care among mother, father and state which is the most important factor that hinders women to work , will be submitted to the Prime Ministry after all the views of concerning bodies are received.

The bill aims to give a leave for the father as well after birth or adoption of a child for taking care of the child and to equal the paid and unpaid leave duration so that there won't be different implementation among social security institutions. With this aim changes are proposed in work laws and the Law of Public Employees.
- With the change in the taxation laws made in 1998, married women can submit tax statement independent of their husbands.
- To promote small entrepreneurship Turkish Public Bank is applying credit programs with low interest and long term, and women who produce at home or set up small businesses can benefit from these programs.

Women in Politics and Decision-Making

In the past two decades, in various countries around the world, supporting policies are being developed to increase representation of women in politic life. Equal participation of women in decision-making is not only a justice and democracy movement but also a necessary requirement for the advancement of the status of women as well. Active participation of women in all levels of management and mainstreaming a gender perspective in all levels of decision-making will ensure to realize the goals of development, equality and modernization.

In Turkey women gained the right to vote in local elections in 1930 and the right to elect and to be elected in national level in December 5, 1934. During one-party period, representation of women in the parliament is regarded as an important issue within the concept of establishing a modern and independent nation-state and in this regard, by the application of a quota system, in the 1935 elections 18 women were elected to the parliament which represents 4.6 % of the total 395 members of the parliament.

Women in Local Government

Women's achievements in social and economic fields are not reflected accordingly in politic sphere. Women's representation in local government, which can be considered as an initial step in politic participation, is also very low.

While in 1989 elections, share of women members in Provincial General Assemblies was 0.8 %, this rate increased to % 1.4 in 1999. Besides, while there weren't any women mayors until 1989, in 1989 elections 0,2 of all mayors were women and in 1999 elections this figure increased to 0.6

%, a total of 20 women mayors among 3216 mayors all together. The last local elections were held in March 2004, but statistical data has not been cleared yet.

Women in Public Administration

According to 2001 data, 29 % of middle and high-level decision making positions within the public administration are women. Only one woman has been appointed as provincial governor. Among a total of 686 district governors, only 14 are women. Besides, there is one deputy provincial governor and 2 candidates for district governorship.

The share of women within the total number of judges and public prosecutors is 18 %. Among 11 permanent and 4 substitute members of the Constitutional Court, 1 permanent and 2 substitute members are women. The share of women lawyers within all lawyers is 26 %. The share of women notary publics within all notaries is 15.5 %.

These data show that women's status is advancing beyond traditionally assigned gender roles in society in all fields of life including work life, but high-level decision making positions are not equally shared yet.

The Draft Proposal on the Reorganization of Maternity Leave

Different social security organizations have different rules concerning maternity leave. A draft proposal has been prepared to equalize the situation of workers and to harmonize the duration of maternity leave to European Union standards. Workers covered by the Acts number 4857 and 657 are entitled to a paid ante-natal rest period of eight weeks and post-natal rest period of eight weeks. Women workers will be allowed 1.5 hours a day to breastfeed their children for up to one year following the post-natal rest period. An unpaid leave of at most twelve months following the post-natal period may be shared between the parents.

Bearing in mind the European Union criteria, relevant articles of ILO Conventions and Social Charter of the European Union and the results of the symposium on Women in Law, both parents are allowed to benefit from maternity leave in case of adoption. Work on the Draft Proposal is still continuing.

Crimes Committed in the name of Honour

Honour crimes constitute a very severe form of violence against women and remain high on the agenda of the women's movement. Honour killing is used to describe the murder of women by their husbands, fathers, brothers or other close relatives, because of honour reasons. (disobedience to social sexual norms)

Article 462 of the existing Turkish Penal Code which offers leniency to perpetrators of honour crimes is lifted on June 19, 2003, within the framework of the 6th EU Harmonization Legislation.

A new Draft Criminal Code has been prepared by the Government and sent to the Parliament .Discussions on the Draft started on October 20, 2003 in the Sub-commission of the Parliament. Work is still under progress and all sections of the society including the civil society organisations continue to express their views on the new amendments.

Combat Trafficking in Human Beings

Turkey made significant progress in the area of trafficking in persons, particularly in women and girls, in short time.

- Turkey signed and ratified the international documents on “trafficking in white people” and “trafficking in women and girls” also the United States Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to Articles 34 and 35, party States made commitment to protect children against all forms of abuse and exploitation and to take all national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent children from working in illegal activities and from all forms of commercial and sexual exploitation. Turkey also signed and ratified the Protocol to the United States Convention on The Rights of the Child on May 9, 2002.
- Turkey signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto; in particular the Protocol against Trafficking in persons and Smuggling of Migrants on December 13, 2000 and this convention and protocols are ratified by Turkish Parliament on March 18, 2003.
- In parallel to social, political and economic developments in the World and in Turkey. Turkish Criminal Code (Act No.765) has been amended to harmonize it with international agreements and contemporary needs. By the amendment of the Article 201\ b of the Act on August 3, 2002, Trafficking in persons was defined as a crime and 5 to 20 years of imprisonment was put into effect for the perpetrators.
- The Act on the Work Permits of Foreigners (Act No.4817) and the regulation thereto is approved and put into force on September 6, 2003. The amendment of the 5th Article of this Act aims to prevent fake marriages.
- With the initiative of the Ministry of Health, A Council of Ministers’ Resolution concerning to provide free medical care for the victims of trafficking has been prepared and sent to the Office of Prime Minister for approval.
- General Headquarters of Gendarmerie (Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı) established a specialized team consisting of an army officer and sergeants, to perform as a general co-ordinate on the issues of Trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling. Work is under progress to establish similar teams in 20 other provinces.
- With the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which acts as a National Co-coordinator on the issues of Trafficking in Persons and with the participation of all related ministries and organizations, Duty Force to Combat Trafficking in Persons was

established. Action Plan prepared by this Duty Force has been approved by the Office of Prime Minister.

- Action Plan calls for the protection of victims of trafficking, to provide psychological assistance for reintegration into society and into their families of victims of trafficking, to organize campaigns through voluntary organizations to inform society and potential victims and to provide training for law enforcement and other relevant officials in the prevention of trafficking in persons.
- Human Rights Department, in collaboration with The Office of Prime Minister Committee on Human Rights Education (Başbakanlığa bağlı İnsan Hakları Eğitimi Komitesi), organized seminars_10 different provinces on women and children rights as well as trafficking in persons.
- Ministry of Justice and Headquarters of Coast Security organized training courses on the issue of trafficking in persons, for judges, prosecutors and coastal security personnel respectively.
- Directorate General of Women's Status and Problems organized two comprehensive panels in 2002 and 2003 in order to raise the awareness of society in the prevention of trafficking in persons.
- Turkey, by ratifying United Nations Protocols, by making amendments in Criminal and Nationality Laws and by enacting a new Law to regulate work conditions of foreigners, established the necessary legal framework and started implementation both in administration and justice system accordingly.

Co-ordination of the follow-up activities of various World Conferences

National level follow up of the world conferences are co-coordinated by selected individual governmental agencies whose mandate corresponds to the sectors covered by the Conference in question. Despite the multiplicity of agencies, each tasked with follow-up of separate world conferences, the co-ordination among them has been quite smooth due to the establishment of specific inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms. Co-ordination committees have created the venue for representatives of the relevant ministries and other public bodies as well as NGOs to voice their points of view as well as specific demands and interests. In this connection, the Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women (DGSPW) has made a special effort!to work in co-operation and co-ordination with the related institutions. The DGSPW arranged several co-ordination meetings, along this line, to exchange views on the various global conferences and to identify common policies and strategies emanating from them. The main objective in this regard has been to build partnerships and alliances for gender mainstreaming.

In particular, mention should be made of the follow up activities to the **Vienna Human Rights Conference**. Initial follow up activities were first carried out by the Board of Monitors established at the premises of the State Ministry responsible for Human Rights. This board

convened representatives of relevant government agencies, NGOs as well as experts. Following successful institutionalization processes, the Board was replaced by the permanent Secretariat for the High Board of Co-ordination on Human Rights. The Secretariat is tasked with integration of human rights concerns in government plans and policies. It announced, soon after its establishment, the commencement of the International Decade for Human Rights Education. One of the most important achievements in this regard, has been the introduction of human rights, including women's rights, in primary and high school curricula in 1995.

The follow-up to the **United Nations Conference on Population and Development in Cairo** is being carried out under the supervision of the State Planning Organization under whose auspices a Co-ordination Council was established. Representatives of relevant government bodies participated actively in the co-ordination works. As an executive body, the Ministry of Health played a crucial role to realize the commitments made at the ICPD and the FWCW. Some relevant follow up activities are as follows:

Traditional mother and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) approach has been replaced by women's health and a comprehensive reproductive health (RH) approach whereby RH problems of adolescents, reproductive age, and post menopausal and elderly women are addressed.

Population and RH targets and strategies are included in the 7th Five Year Development Plan.

The "Population Planning Advisory Board" was reorganized as "Women's Health and Family Planning Advisory Board" following the ICPD. This Board convenes representatives from the government agencies and NGOs. The Women's Health and Family Planning Strategic Plan was formulated in co-ordination with all concerned parties. The Plan covers the fields of service provision, empowerment of women, public health education, gender sensitive training of health personnel.

In 1997, seventeen NGOs came together in a first time ever experience in Turkey to form a women's health commission entitled KASAKOM which was known as a health commission before (please see part 2.2). KASAKOM formulated and implements a project targeting improvement of RH levels of women in the less developed regions of the country. The KASAKOM project is supported by the UNDP under the execution of The Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women.

SECTION THREE

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS

Where in many countries of Europe institutionalization process of gender equality was in 1970's, in Turkey institutionalization process of gender equality in state started in 1987 with the establishment of Consultative Committee on Policies Aimed at Women within State Planning Organization. Because it was aimed to reach all the social sectors with necessary coordination and support services in the Fifth Five Year Development Plan, State Planning Organization prepared different programs for the sectors. Being among the sectors that were not included in the plan, since 1985 State Planning Organization decided to form a sector for "women" considering international conventions and decisions as well as the social developments regarding women. Consultative Committee as the first official national mechanism in Turkey undertook the mission to establish a sector for women and to put policy measures in the five year development plans about women.

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women , Nairobi, made it necessary to establish a unit to X future strategies and coordinate or carry on X sixth Five Year Development Plan. The present "General Directorate of Women's Status and Problems" was established under Prime Minister' Office for women to gain their deserved status in social, economic, cultural and political areas in equality.

General Directorate of Women's Status and Problems is charged to prevent all forms of discrimination against women, to improve women's rights, to make women active in all areas of economic, social and cultural life, and to carry studies that will be the foundation to basic policies and programs for women to make use of the opportunities and possibilities of development equally.

It has undertaken an important mission to cooperate with government institutions, local authorities and non governmental organizations including volunteer women associations, and to form a network among these organizations.

In Turkey placing social gender perspective in all policies, plans and programs is till an ongoing effort. In this effort, Turkey has planned strategies with a universal approach that are sensitive to national and regional values where at the same time directing institutions to be more broad-minded in their point of view towards gender equality.

Ministry of State which the General Directorate of Women's Status and Problems works under have established a communication network with all other related ministries so that its policy proposals would become concrete policies.

"Department of Women in Rural Development" in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and "General Directorate of Technical Training for Girls" in the Ministry of National Education are important partners of General Directorate of Women's Status and Problems.

Besides, State Statistics Institute classifies the collected data on gender basis as well and has established “Women Statistics Section” in 1994.

Activities regarding social gender equality and progress of women could never have a realistic share in the national budget and is limited with the budget of the General Directorate of Women’s Status and Problems. A portion of the budget of Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health is transferred to works on equality also (share for technical vocational schools for girls and General Directorate for Mother and Infant Health). Absence of appropriate expenditure classification in the state budget expenditures makes it impossible to make even a rough guess of social gender equality related spending.

An important amount of budget cut down is done in public expenditures in order to eliminate budget shortages. This cut down in the state budget have influenced the national mechanism both in quantity and quality. The share of national mechanism in the recent years has fallen more.

Establishment of Women’s Problems Research and Implementation Center in 14 university (the first was in Istanbul in 1989) to make research and implement regarding women is among the positive developments regarding establishment of institutional mechanisms for the progress of women. In the universities of Istanbul, Ankara, Aegean and Middle East Technical University post graduate programs are organized to have educated manpower.

SECTION FOUR

MAIN CHALLENGES AND WAYS TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES

The Republic of Turkey has had an exceptional and historically unique experience in regards to women. All decisions made for the advancement and empowerment of women today invariably reflect this historical significance. With the foundation of the Republic in 1923, Turkey experienced rapid social and political transformation. During the Ottoman Empire, communities were regulated by their own religious values and rules which meant that Islamic rules governed the Muslim population. The establishment of the Republic brought forth a socio-political structure whereby religion and state were clearly separated and law were formulated according to strictly secular principles in a society where 99% of the population is Muslim.

Some of the main axis of this transformation were ensuring equality between men and women; state support for women in entry into the public sphere; radical changes in the legal system; and efforts to transform the social traditions and values which were inherently discriminatory. With the adoption of secular order, women's entry and participation in education, employment and political life were made possible. Through egalitarian public policies the state, in fact, took an active role in encouraging and supporting the participation of women in the public spheres. As a result, Turkey accomplished in 1930s and 1940s, an unparalleled transformation in gender equality that was, by universal standards, most satisfactory at the time.

However, contentment with this rapid transformation coupled with the changing social, political and economic conditions of the Republic, prevented further expansion of women's human rights to levels and areas reached by the western world.

The later, i.e. a new understanding of women's human rights which emphasized the rights as well as the and sought equality in the private sphere alongside the public one demanded further empowerment of women in all walks of life, was difficult to incorporate into Turkish social and political system.

Nonetheless, such demands also found reflection in the Turkish society in the 1980s when women's movement became a strong and increasingly vocal proponent of women's human rights demanding a major overhaul of the existing laws, in particular Civil Code, in order to update them.

The current situation with respect to advancement of women and gender equality in the country is beset by some serious problem areas. Despite the gains made since the establishment of the Republic, educational attainment levels for women and the girl-child are not equal to that of the male population; furthermore they vary in different geographic regions and exhibit serious differences along the rural / urban residence. On the other hand, sufficient gains have also not been made to ensure women's equal access to health services; there are deficiencies in the reproductive health and mother-child health care fields. Rural to urban disparities persists in this regard too. Notwithstanding the legal rights, Turkish women are not able to enjoy de facto equal rights in political participation particularly in terms of access to decision-making positions; nor are their access to economic resources on a par with men.

In the background of this picture lies both economic factors and continuing existence of a socio-cultural structure that supports and perpetuates gender inequality and discrimination and has found visible political representation with the advancement of competitive, democratic political institutions in the country.

- In Turkey, women do not confront any legal obstacles in exercising fundamental people rights such as education, political rights, employment. Turkish law guarantees formal equality between men and women. But, despite significant improvement over time, gender equality in education has not been achieved and women, to date, continue to lag behind men by almost all indicators. Especially when rural/urban, regional and age disparities are concerned, there are significant inequalities in women's literacy rates.

A strong patriarchal culture reflected in gender discriminatory traditions and practices (such as son preference, early marriage) as well as scarce economic resources have acted as barriers to women's education. Budget restraints in education effect negatively, especially women and girl children from the lowest socio-economic status, to reach these resources.

Increasing of compulsory education from five to eight years and various services provided by the Ministry of Education in order to eliminate gender inequality in education and to provide opportunities to adults to continue their education are supposed to eradicate this problem.

- Women employment is still a problematic area in Turkey. There has been a steady decline in female labour force participation. Main problems encountered by women are as follows:
 - Women are generally employed in labour-intensive sectors of the economy such as food, textiles, ready-made clothing and tobacco industries. But when compared with agriculture sector, women employment in these sectors is low. A considerable number of women are still employed in agriculture.
 - Due to separation of jobs into two categories: "women's work" and "men's work" as traditionally accepted in society, women labour intensifies in traditionally women jobs and they do not apply to the jobs accepted as "men's job" even though there is an open position. By doing so, they accept low status and low wage jobs.
 - Women working in agriculture are unpaid family workers, women working in industry and services are usually employed in the lowest section of the work branch or work place. Low status jobs bring together low wages, lack of social security and temporary work.
 - With the increase in education, women labour participation possibilities also increase. But still, in every level of education, there is an inequality against women. This inequality may be eliminated in the future, but besides formal education, women need non-formal education (i.e. vocational courses) to acquire skills for paid work.
 - Gender discrimination that women face both when applying for the jobs as well as during the work life is also an important obstacle. Examples of discrimination are: employers do not

accept women applications for jobs that are considered “male” occupations; at times of economic crisis, at the very first place, women workers are dismissed; women are not treated fairly in duty distribution; employees pay lower wages to women workers.

-In Turkey, social security services are provided by three different institutions: the Public Servants Retirement Fund, the Social Insurance Institution and Bağ-Kur (Social Insurance for the self-employed). But majority of working women do not enjoy the benefits offered by these institutions. The voluntary pension scheme offered to housewives by Bağ-Kur is rarely used due to lack of information and, since most housewives do not have the personal income required for premium payments and remains at the mercy of their husbands.

The main reason for women workers to leave work life early and not to progress their career is the problems they face to harmonize work and family responsibilities. Women are considered homemakers who should take care of domestic duties, and childcare and be responsible for the well being of other family member, including the elderly. Women have to share these responsibilities with their husbands and/or with the State. But, in Turkey, childcare services provided by public and private institutions are insufficient.

- Despite some progress achieved in the area of mother-child health care and reproductive health, there are serious gaps in the availability of health care services, particularly between urban and rural areas and among the regions. In addition research shows that the educational level of women is positively correlated with lower levels of fertility and improved mother child health.

The infant mortality rate, despite the decreasing levels, is about 10 times higher than the rates in developed countries. The fact that neo-natal death accounts for greater portion of infant mortality is indicative that obstetric services need to be improved. Effective use of available services also requires improved levels of education, particularly of women.

As a result of unmet need in family planning, 35 % of the couples either do not use any (10%) or an effective (25%) family planning method even though they do not wish a pregnancy. As indicated above, induced abortion is still high; however, although accepted in Turkey, the use of post abortion contraception is quite limited. Reproductive health services are considerably neglected by adolescents and older women. Male participation in reproductive health programmes is at very unimportant levels.

- Since a country-wide research that reflects the prevalence of violence in Turkey has not been realised yet, statistical data which uncovers the exact extent of its prevalence, kinds and occurrence and at the same time, which is very important to develop measures and policies to combat violence against women, to implement these measures and policies and to support!the victims of violence, could not be established. As a result, effective policies that aim to eradicate violence against women could not be developed and existing support!and aid mechanisms (such as counseling centers and shelters) to eradicate violence are insufficient. Besides, honour crimes that constitute a very severe form of violence and a direct threat to life continue to be a very important issue. A Draft Criminal Code has been prepared and sent to Parliament Justice Commission. The amendments in this new draft bill aims to eliminate

traditional values and patriarchal understanding of sexuality in society where crimes of sexual assault against women and girls are treated as felonies against public decency and family order not to the individual himself.

- There are various problems in women's participation in political life and decision-making processes. These problems are related to structural, social-cultural and economic factors:

-Women are disadvantaged in participating decision-making processes and power sharing. There is a big difference between men and women in possessing property. Existing social sharing of power or role distribution restricts women's economic freedom. But politics require a certain amount of economic power. Women lack this necessary economic power which is considered essential for participation in politic life.

-Apart from this economic issue, reconciling traditional role and political life creates problems. Since politic life is organized by men according to their behavior patterns, women who used to give priority to family life face difficulties in adapting to conditions of politic life.

-More importantly, traditional values discourage women to take interest in politics. Women are not educated to have passion to take part in political race. Therefore women do not consider politics among their primary responsibilities and as a result are not represented sufficiently in power sharing and decision-making processes.

-Another factor that hinders women to enjoy their political rights as necessary is the education. Women, even they have high level formal education, are not, generally aware of their political rights. But The Centers for the Research and Implementation on Problems of Women, opened recently in connection with universities in 14 places, offer education programmes on this issue.

-Another factor that can be related to the problem of women participation in power sharing and decision-making processes is the Structure of politics. In pre-election system, a woman candidate has to get the consent of delegates. But since the behavior patterns deemed appropriate for men and women in society are completely opposite, women politicians have to achieve a much harder struggle.

-Besides, when women leave their place of birth due to marriage or education causes, their connections to that place weaken and as a result, possibilities of being nominated from that area considerably decreases for women who desire to enter politics.