

**Joint ECE/UNDP Workshop on  
on Gender Statistics for Policy Monitoring and Benchmarking  
(Orvieto, Italy, 9-10 October 2000)**

**UKRAINE**

**GENDER STATISTICS TO REACH GENDER EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN  
LEGAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE AFFIRMATION OF GENDER EQUALITY**

Paper submitted by Ukraine<sup>1</sup>

**Introduction**

The last decade of the 20th century has seen major changes in the historic, international and legal status of Ukraine. In 1991, the Ukrainian people - in accordance with the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, affirmed its right to self-determination, and in 1996, Verkhovna Rada (parliament of Ukraine), approved the fundamental law of the sovereign, independent, democratic Ukraine - its Constitution.

The Constitution established the priority of person over the state, and launched a new era of building a rule-of-law state. The population of Ukraine is creating a civil society, in which a person, its life and health, its honor and dignity are to become the highest social values, and the protection of rights and freedoms of persons is to define the activities of the state, become the primary responsibility of the state. With the approval of the Constitution, the constitutional process has not ended; it continues in the development of legislation, codes, concepts, programs and other normative acts. A very important issue in Ukraine today is the legislative process to insure equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, based on the premise that women's rights are part and parcel of the universal human rights. The equality of rights and liberties of a person and a citizen, regardless of sex, is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine and other legislative acts. Article 24 of the Constitution states: "Citizens have equal constitutional rights and freedoms and all are equal under the law. There can be no privileges or limitations based on race, color of skin, political, religious or

---

Prepared by Cabinet of Ministers, State Committee of Statistics of Ukraine, UNDP "Promoting Gender

other persuasions, ethnic or social origin, status of wealth, place of residence, linguistic preference or any other characteristics. The equality of rights of women and men is insured by granting women opportunities equal to those available to men in society, in political and cultural activities, in education and professional training, in employment and wages; by the establishment of special benefits in the retirement regulations aimed at improvement of health and occupational safety of women; by creating conditions that allow women to combine employment with motherhood; by legislative protection as well as material and moral support of mothers and children, including paid maternity leave and other benefits for pregnant women and mothers."

Inclusion in the Fundamental Law of Ukraine of the principle of equal rights for women and men indicates that Ukraine and its civil society have reached the European and world level in the solution of gender problems, in the regulation of relations between women and men, and is an important aspect in the development of Ukraine's human potential, dismantling the age-old barriers that have encouraged gender inequality. Constitutionally guaranteed equal rights and equal opportunities is a condition for progress and evolutionary transformation processes. The time has come, therefore, for conceptual determination of clear guidelines for the gender policy in Ukraine, as well as for a mobilization of a national effort to develop and implement programs that open for the entire population, but for women in particular, a broad entry into the economic and political life, that engage them in decision-making at all levels of government.

In accordance with the constitutionally guaranteed basic human rights, the following documents now are in force in Ukraine: Civil and Criminal codes, Labor Code, Marriage and Family Code, the laws on education, social security insurance, on aid to families with dependent children, on job protection, the guidelines for the legislation on health safety in Ukraine, the declaration on General Principles for the State Policy on Families and Women, the Concept for the State Policy on Family, etc.

In Ukraine, there are no legislative documents containing articles or norms with language that is discriminatory towards women. In this regard it is worth noting that Ukraine not only is one of the larger European countries, with an area of 603.700 square kilometers and a population just under 50 million, but women make up 54 percent of its population, and they also constitute more than half of the country's labor force. This is a high level by international standards. In addition, women are a majority of the staff in the executive branch offices of Ukraine. But among the management ranks of all levels of government their presence is negligible.

Although the number of women elected to the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) has increased (19 members elected in 1994; 37 in 1998), and thus is approaching the world average of women in national legislative bodies, or 10 percent, it also shows a deep gender inequality in the country, an imbalance in the male-female relationship in the political sphere. The political force, therefore, is in the main one of single sex, with the male in the dominant role, which promotes male values and standards for the entire population. Considering the fact that politics, the political system of a society and its fundamental institution - the state - play the most influential and dynamic role in a society, then the will of males, indeed, becomes dominant throughout virtually the entire state, society and political life. Women, by and large, remain outside the system of governance. There are no women in leadership positions in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. There are only two women among the chairpersons of the Rada committees. Today, there are only two women in the Government of Ukraine, comprising 10 percent of its membership: Vice Prime Minister for Energy Issues and Minister of Justice. Of the 15 government agencies (state committees) only one is

headed by a woman. There also are six deputy ministers who are women, and three deputy agency heads, and there is only one woman among the deputy heads of other national institutions in Ukraine. There are no women in management positions on the staff of the President of Ukraine, or in the Council of Ministers of the Crimean Autonomous Republic, or among the presidential representatives (governors) in the oblasts (provinces) and major cities, and only 5 women serve as deputy governors.

While the percentage of women in the Verkhovna Rada is not high, it is much higher in the local government structures. Statistics show that the lower the government level, the more open it is to women. The results of 1994 elections to the legislative bodies of all levels in Ukraine showed that women constituted 30 percent of the successful candidates. In the 1998 elections, there was an increase in the number of women elected to local councils; they now constitute 38 percent of the membership.

Election of women to local legislative bodies is a step on their way to the national political arena. Participation in the election process is very important, because it provides political preparation both for women-leaders and for the voters. The effectiveness of the activities of legislative bodies depends on the election of good candidates.

But even with a successful broadening of gender democracy at the local level, women will still have to struggle to reach the highest legislative body (Verkhovna Rada), where the country's most important laws, the formation of the national policy, the basic strategic decisions for the whole country are determined.

Within the national civil service, the highest concentration of women-employees is in the State Statistical Committee (82%), in the Ministry of Justice (75%), in the Ministry of Finance (68.5%), in the Ministry of Health (62%), in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (58%), in the Ministry of Education (57.6%), in the Ministry of Culture (53%), and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (42%). Among the 3082 employees of rayon (county) and municipal courts there are 1164 women (37.8%), of the 831 employees of oblast (provincial) courts, including the Kyiv and Sevastopol city courts, 317 (38.1%) are women; of the 1614 notaries (lawyers) 1459 (90.4%) are women, while official registration offices known by the acronym "ZAHS" (for registering marriages, divorces, births) virtually all are staffed by women.

In the cultural sector, there are 116 thousand women-employees or 64% of the total; of the 160 thousand in managerial or specialist positions there 70.5% are women.

The healthcare sector employs 736 thousand persons - 617.7 thousand of them are women or 83.9%, and there are 3.1 thousand women in managerial positions or 25%. Women constitute 68% of state civil service employees, but very few of them hold managerial positions today.

Inadequate number of women in managerial positions within the executive branch of the government prevents them from having any real influence on decision-making processes or in taking an active part in the implementation of these processes. This also means that solutions of numerous social and economic problems, as well as efforts aimed at raising the status of women in society are slowed down. For this reason, in addition to their participation in efforts to strengthen Ukraine's independence, democratization, solution of the economic crisis, women are seeking their inclusion in all processes for the development of a modern society and in the solution of economic, political, social and legal problems at all levels of government.

Legislative measures are needed to insure women's representation in decision-making positions, specifically in committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, in the President's Administration, in

the Cabinet of Ministers and in other central and local governing bodies. Some steps have already been taken in this direction. The Government has decided to establish reserve cadres, reflecting the male-female proportion of the population, for staffing all levels of the executive branch.

Today, women are active in community organizations and charitable foundations. During the nine years of Ukraine's independence, women have had remarkable success in strengthening gender equality. There are numerous new women's organizations working for the raising of the status of women. They are developing new content and forms of the women's movement. There is evidence of consolidation of women's forces within the society, of moving outside the individual organizational structure and into general political and social activities, in trying to solve the country's problems.

Thanks to the activities of women and to the considerable influence of the women's movement (albeit not yet fully mature politically or influential enough), thanks to their intellectual potential, and in response to the social needs of the time - the changes that have taken place in Ukraine and in the world - new mechanisms for the strengthening of gender equality are being created. Only during the past seven years Ukraine has seen the creation of the President's Committee for Women, Mothers and Children (reorganized in 1996), The Cabinet of Ministers Office for Women, Families, Mothers and Children (established in 1993), the Ministry of Family and Youth (created in 1996 and reorganized in 2000 as the State Committee for Youth Policy, Sports and Tourism). Within the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Health there are departments and offices responsible for issues on the status of women, families and children. Parallel structures operate in oblasts, counties and municipalities.

In addition to these mechanisms, the state should establish and maintain an environment in which human rights are uppermost and in force. If there is no such environment, all declared rights and formal mechanisms for their fulfillment will not be implemented.

Despite the fact that all these structures, at various times, have been transformed and reformed, their activities modified, they remain indicative of the historic process of establishing and formulating the country's gender policy, based on the constitutional principle of equality of women and men. There are certain difficulties in evidence today in using the democratic approach to solving cardinal political problems. These difficulties are caused by inexperience in the use of budgetary resources, in personnel training, in the mindset of some bureaucrats and that of the population in general. But the constitutional principles of democracy have cleared the way in Ukraine for the progressive implementation of policy in the sphere of equal opportunities for women and men in all walks of life.

The Presidential Decree of May 31, 2000, establishing the Committee on Youth Policy, Sports and Tourism states that this central organ of the executive branch ensures the implementation of the country's policy on children, women, youth and families throughout Ukraine and is responsible for its maintenance and development. The main goals of the Committee are the following: together with other central agencies of the executive branch offer proposals for the formation of the policy on the state of children, women, youth and families, their demographics, on the encouragement of motherhood, on ensuring a healthy development of youth and children based on humanistic principles; develop, implement and control target programs on issues of children, women, youth and family; together with appropriate ministries, other central agencies and local government departments prepare periodic reports on the implementation in Ukraine of the UN Convention on the Rights of

Children and the UN Convention on the Liquidation of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as other conventions and international agreements whose goal is the improvement of the situation of children, youth, women and families, and which guaranty real opportunities for women in all forms of activities.

The creation of new agencies on issues of women, mothers, fathers, children, families and youth is motivated by a desire to stimulate the processes that would correct gender imbalances in public and private sectors.

The summary documents of the Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women emphasize that in the real world women still do not enjoy equal opportunities with men, that discrimination of women still exists. But women are obliged to fight for their rights and set various goals for achieving these rights in accordance with social, political, economic and cultural conditions and characteristics of the historic development of their country. This is the case in Ukraine.

Significant alienation of women from the decision-making system is a logical result of the previous development of the Ukrainian society. Deep within the consciousness of the population there remains a firm tendency - prevalent over centuries - that cultural issues belong to men, while natural ones to women; that men perform general civilization functions, while women give birth to children, or procreate the nature of humanity. Removal of women from the system of governance was a sort of political violence, reaffirmation of a masculine system of governance and thinking. Political socialization of women, as well as men, during rebuilding and reformation and the establishment of democracy based on the rule of law should lead to the development of gender democracy, which would be nothing less than the defeat of the patriarchal forms of political socialization.

Starting from the premise of the Beijing conference documents, and taking into account the need to improve the situation of women in society, as well as the need to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the political, economic, cultural and social life, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine passed such acts as Principles of the State Policy of Ukraine on Human Rights, Declaration on General Principles of the State Policy on Family and Women, and the Outline for State Policy on Family, while the Government of Ukraine approved a National Action Plan for 1997-2000 on Improving the Status of Women and Increasing Their Role in Society. Taking into account the social-economic situation in Ukraine and the level of achievements in solving the women's problems, the Declaration, the Outline and the Action Plan seek to improve the mechanisms for bettering the situation of women and raising their status in society. They also seek to ensure women's participation in decision-making at all levels of government, to apply in practice the constitutional principle of equality among women and men, to ensure women's access to all forms of activities, equality for women and men on the job market, raising of women's and children's familiarity with their own rights, prevent violence against women and girls and making available to women and girls who had become victims of violence social and legal consultations, creation of new jobs to prevent unemployment among young people and women, provide support for women's, young people's and children's organizations and charitable foundations, creation of rehabilitation and retraining centers for handicapped women and women's business centers or incubators to assist them in developing small businesses.

Modern society is changing not only within the new political system, new technologies, new ways to run the economy, but also in its views on feminism, on the role of a woman and a man, on the organization of their lifestyle, on the changes in their character and in the cultural phenomena.

An important factor in the establishment of gender equality is the need to change the mindset of both women and men. This is particularly relevant in the political sense. Women will be unable to change their mindset until they are included in the political and community life, take part in the governance on equal terms with men. Changes in the political sphere -- especially during the transition period from the totalitarian system, where politics, with its male viewpoint of physical force plays the dominant part -- should give the major role to the establishment of gender justice. The Ukrainian National Action Program 2001-2005 on the creation of conditions for equal opportunities for men and women in society based on the gender approach will be the basis for a harmonization of relations between sexes, for the establishment of parity democracy.

In just nine years of independence, Ukraine has taken a definitive step towards the necessary achievement of gender transformation, towards the world-level gender systems, affirmation of gender democracy, towards its place in the system of social democracy, law-based relations, acquisitions of social culture. Still, the issue of equality of women and men has not been placed on the country's agenda with full force.

The organization and self-governing of the Ukrainian society on democratic principles require a new system of societal norms that regulate social relations, as well as fine-tune those historic norms that have justified themselves. From among those norms the legal ones possess a significant place, because they regulate the relationship between sexes in society. This is why work on legislation and other permanent legal acts, that affirm the changes in the gender area and direct their development, continues in Ukraine today.

On the threshold of the 21st century Ukraine is taking on new criteria for the definition and affirmation of social progress. Gender is one of those factors that assures the transformation of Ukrainian society, its ascent onto a qualitatively new level of Equality, Development and Peace.

## **Fundamental Demographic Trends**

### **Healthcare for women and girls**

Unfavorable trends in the demographic processes to a larger or lesser extent have affected a number of countries, Ukraine among them, and have reached crisis proportions. Growing decrease in the population of Ukraine is a facet of this crisis. There is evidence of a sharp drop in the number of births, worsening of the state of health of the population, including that of women and children, all of which results in the decrease of the average lifespan of the inhabitants.

Ukraine continues to have the highest mortality rate and the lowest average life expectancy among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Over the past six years the country's population has dropped on the average of 400 000 persons per year. In 1999 the population has decreased by 394 800 persons. Natural decrease in population has been and continues to be the main factor in this; it amounted to 350 000 persons in 1999. The lowering birthth rate, combined with a high death rate is the main reason for the population decrease. The 1990s saw a lowering of the birth rate both in absolute and in relative terms. For example: there were 631 000 births in 1991, 418 000 in 1998, and 389 000 in 1999. During this period the birth rate was reduced by 35.5% (12.1 in 1991, 9.6 in 1995, 8.3 in 1998, 7.8 in 1999 per 1000 of population). Even more graphic are the figures for the average number of children born to women during their childbearing years: 1.7 in 1991, 1.38 in 1995, 1.19 in 1998, 1.3 in 1999. The birth rate in Ukraine thus is inadequate, since it long ago has

failed to maintain the population level of the country.

To a large extent, the birth rate also depends on the number of marriages and divorces. A growing number of single-child and childless couples is a feature of the demographic situation in Ukraine. Over the past few years there was a marked trend in Ukraine towards fewer marriages (there were 6.9 marriages per 1000 inhabitants in 1999, while that figure in 1991 was 9.5) and a virtually unchanging number of divorces since mid-1970's: 3.4 to 4.3 divorces per 1000 inhabitants.

Continuous lowering of the birth rate leads to the demographic aging of the population. Over the past ten years the share of retirement-age persons has grown from 380 to 409.

In recent years, life expectancy in most countries has gone up. In Ukraine, on the other hand, this indicator is a cause for concern, because it shows a tendency to fall. Life expectancy among women is higher than among men by 10.4 years (1998 figure). In recent years the average lifespan of women has been as follows: 1991 - 74.5 years, 1992 - 74.1, 1993 - 73.4, 1994 - 73.1, 1995 - 72.7, 1996 - 72.8, 1997 - 73.2, 1998 - 73.8, 1999 -- ? years.

Death rate in Ukraine continues to grow: 1991 - 12.9%, 1995 - 15.4%, 1998 - 14.3%, 1999 - 14.8%. There is a certain stability in the proportion of deaths between women and men by age group, with men leading in all age groups. This gap is particularly noticeable in the prime working-age group. The death rate among men in the 35-39 age-group is 3.8 times higher than in the same group of women: 688.9 men per 100 000 inhabitants and 176.3 women per 100 000 inhabitants die between the ages 35 and 39. As the result of differences in the levels of illness and death among women and men, life expectancy among women is 74 years, while among men it is 63 years.

The index of deaths from basic illnesses remains stable from year to year. The highest causes of death are cardiovascular disease, accidents, poisonings, tumors, traumas and pulmonary diseases. These account for 88.6% of deaths. There are particularly clear differences in the causes of death for women and men in the employable age, where tumors prevail among women, while accidents, poisonings and traumas prevail among men.

Indicators for infant mortality (0 - 1) have dropped both among rural and urban populations, but since 1996 the level of infant death in the rural areas has dropped significantly, which means that as the result of fewer births, there is a lower rate of mortality: 15.3 deaths per 1000 life births in 1995, 14.3 in 1996, 13.8 in 1997, 12.7 in 1998, and 12.7 deaths per 1000 births in 1999.

There is a clear difference in mortality of boys and girls: in 1999 mortality rate for boys was 14.8%, while for girls - 10.8%. In comparison, these figures were 15.6% and 12.1% in 1991, 16.5% and 12.7% in 1995, 16.2% and 11.7% in 1998.

Causes of mortality of infants under age 1 remain practically unchanged for the past few years. At the top is the so-called pre-natal state of the infant (37.6%). Following it are serious birth defects (27.3%). Differentiation in the rate of mortality by sex is manifested in other age groups. In 1999 the mortality of boys under age 14 was 12.1, while of the girls in this age group it was 8 per 10 000 of the population; and the mortality of men in the employable age group is 901.3, while of women it is 230.3 per 10 000 of population.

This was the reason for the 1999 Presidential Decree, "Target Program for Broad Genetic Monitoring in Ukraine 1999-2003."

In order to facilitate the formation and realization of a social program for the development of the population, the President on May 24, 2000 signed a decree approving the "Fundamental Guidelines for Social Policy to 2004." In the chapter on ensuring the development of population the document notes that the demographic situation in Ukraine remains complex. The main trend in the

demographic development is a steady decrease in population and a decrease in its natural growth rate, as well as aging of the inhabitants. The state policy in this regard is directed, first and foremost, toward the implementation of the Guidelines for the State Policy on Family and other programs. To slow down the negative trend in population decrease and its natural rate of growth, major initiatives are planned, including an increase in assistance for mothers and children, creation of suitable conditions for the growth of families, effective use by families of reproductive, educational economic and social functions, creation of conditions for women to combine professional interests with motherhood.

Availability of medical help and general health care resources has not diminished for women over the past five years. There is a wide network of health care facilities in the country, including 1300 hospitals with a total of more than 300 000 beds. Primary medical care for women is available in 6380 clinics that can examine more than 800 000 outpatients per shift. Some 200 000 physicians with a total of more than 100 specializations are employed in the health care sector. Among them, there are 11 840 obstetrics-gynecology specialists and 197 oncology-gynecology specialists, which averages to about 2.36 per 10 000 population, and in recent years this area of health care has been growing: there were 2.2 per 10 000 in 1991, 2.17 in 1995, 2.36 in 1998 and 2.52 in 1999.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform of action set strategic goals in the sphere of reproductive health care.

In Ukraine, at the beginning of the 1990s, family planning services, reproductive and sexual health care were not readily available. As the result, 1995 statistics were rather unfavorable: high mortality rate among mothers (32.3 per 100 000 live births), high mortality rate among infants (14.7 per 1000 births), high miscarriage rate (10%), increasing number of infertile couples (nearly a million), and many abortions (627 081, or 49.5 per 1000 women of childbearing age). In fact, abortion in Ukraine has become the main form of family planning.

All this has made it necessary for Ukraine to develop its own national policy on reproduction and sexual health. An important document aimed at the improvement of reproductive health was the national program called "Family Planning," approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 1995. In addition, the President issued a decree in 1996 approving another national program, "Children of Ukraine," which provides a number of measures for consultation and preparation of teen-agers and young people for married life, including ways to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and learn the norms of a healthy reproductive development.

The legislative acts have provided a number of measures directed at improvement of children's health and reproductive health of potential parents, which have improved the situation in this area. Beginning in 1995 the number of abortions and their frequency among teen-age girls have decreased. In 1995 among girls under age 14 there were 317 known abortions (0.17 per 1000 girls), in 1998 - 236 (0.12 per 1000 girls), and in 1999 - 213 (0.11 per 1000 girls); among girls aged 15-17 the figures were 20512 (19%), 12901 (11.9%) and 10 857 (9.8%).

Over the recent years there was an increase in sexually transmitted diseases - both in general and among women. Particularly disturbing is the increasing rate of syphilis infection. While in 1990 there were 6.2 infections per 100 000 women, in 1998 that number was 134.8. Since 1995, however, when government measures aimed at lowering sexually transmitted infections went into effect, there has been a lowering of the rate of infection. For example, in 1996 there were 144.8 per 100 000 women infected by syphilis, and in 1998 only 134.8. In other words, a 7 percent decline. The Beijing Platform calls for the establishment in every country broad programs for the prevention



of HIV/AIDS. Ukraine has launched such programs, but the situation here remains very serious. As of January 1, 2000, there were more than 30 000 persons in Ukraine with HIV (70% of them drug addicts and 283 foreigners). Since 1987 1170 of those found to be HIV-infected were children, while 1196 adults and 49 children were found to be suffering from AIDS. Of those, 458 adults and 31 children have died.

In April 1986 the Chernobyl nuclear power station explosion became one of the largest radiation catastrophes in human history. As the result, almost one percent of the entire territory of Ukraine became a nuclear disaster zone. Thirty-two rayons (counties) and six oblasts (provinces) of Ukraine with the total area of 50 million hectares (including 3.5 million hectares of agricultural land and 1.5 million hectares of forests) have been seriously polluted. Today, more than 200 000 persons live in these polluted areas.

The Chernobyl disaster not only damaged the environment, but caused a number of problems for the health of the population. Incidence of illness among children who live in the polluted areas is 2.35 times higher than that in Ukraine as a whole. Monitoring of these children shows that the incidence of their illness grows annually. From 1987 to 1998 the spread of diseases has increased 3.1 times, and cases of new illnesses have increased 3.4 times.

Particularly worrisome is the health of children who were born to parents affected by radiation. Between 1987 and 1998, the number of children born with birth defects has increased by 13%, with 7% born with a defective nervous system, 7% with defects in digestive system, which is 1.2 to 1.5 times higher than among children not affected by radiation.

Medical statistics show that in 1999, the incidence of illness among children up to age 14, who have been affected by the Chernobyl disaster, is 20.2% higher than among children not affected by the disaster (1241.1 to 1032.4 per 1000 children).

The number of stillborn children continues to grow; every year 40 000 women have miscarriages. In the high radiation pollution zone 43% of the children suffer from thyroid disease, while 12% have digestive illnesses. The number of gastrointestinal, oncological, cardiovascular, allergic and other illnesses, caused by the effects of toxic substances is growing. The incidence of thyroid cancer after the Chernobyl disaster has increased ten times in Ukraine. In the five oblasts of Ukraine that have received the highest dose of radiation, children with thyroid cancer constitute 65% of all persons suffering from this illness. Between 1981 and 1985 there were no known cases of thyroid cancer, but since 1986 -- 1300 persons, who were children or teen-agers at the time of the explosion have had thyroid surgery. The incidence of mortality from cancer among children of mothers exposed to radiation while pregnant is higher. Children are more susceptible to radiation than adults, and radiation of a fetus increases the risk of cancer. Additionally, radiation increases the process of aging and thus shortens a person's life.

Over the years, the state of health of the Ukrainian population, and that of children in particular, is not improving. Since the Chernobyl disaster, some 3 million 236 thousand persons have been identified as victims of the disaster - more than 1 million 115 thousand of them are children. In accordance with Ukrainian legislation "On the Status and Social Assistance to Citizens Who are Victims of the Chernobyl Disaster" in 1999 - 3 427 814 persons, including 1 332 549 children were eligible for one or more of 30 types of benefits, but because of limited government funds not all the benefits outlined in the legislation have been granted.

Genetic effects on people from low-dose radiation caused by the Chernobyl disaster continues to increase, and 15 000 infants per million of newly born are expected to have a genetic defect as the

result of increased radiation level in a number of areas of Ukraine.

In order to solve the problems in the sphere of women's and children's health, a differentiated gender approach is needed in the health care of the population. Only such an approach would ensure a reduction in the existing differences in the state of health of men and women.

### **Women and education**

Education is the basis of intellectual, cultural, spiritual, social and economic development of society and the state. Education in Ukraine is based on the principles of humanity, democracy, national consciousness, and mutual respect between nations and peoples. Citizens of Ukraine have the right to receive education in all educational institutions, irrespective of their gender, race, nationality and social status.

The right to education is stated in the Constitution of Ukraine, the Law “On education” (Art. 3), and corresponding articles of the laws “On vocational education” and “On universal secondary education,” which is in line with the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the final instruments of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

In Ukraine, women actually have equal rights with men in accessing education, curricula, literature, examinations, qualifications, classrooms, educational facilities and equipment, obtaining educational certificates from all types of educational institutions (except where such qualifications are dangerous or harmful for women’s health), stipends and other types of social and material aid for receiving education. In the past five years, a number of indicators have been introduced in statistical reports, which characterize the main parameters of education.

The situation in the sphere of education is described by the following quantitative indicators. In 1999, there were 1,379 students of the secondary school, 105 students of the vocational school, and 359 students of the higher learning institutions of different levels of accreditation, as well as postgraduate and doctoral students, per each 10,000 citizens of Ukraine. At present, 22,000 schools, lyceums, gymnasiums and collegiums accommodate nearly 7 million schoolchildren, 49% of whom are girls, which constitutes 78% of the total number of children aged between 6 and 17 years.

The gross enrollment ratio of children in the primary school is fairly high and stable. During 1995-1999, it was equal to 98% of the total number of children who reached the school age. The main reasons why children do not attend school are disability and neglect by parents of their duties regarding children’s education.

The number of boys and girls in comprehensive schools reflects a real demographic situation in Ukraine. An analysis of statistical data for 1995-1999 shows that among secondary schoolchildren there was 49.2% of girls in the rural area and 49.6% in the cities. Further, the percentage of girls in junior and middle grades, both in the rural and urban areas, differs from that in senior grades. In junior and middle grades (1 through 9), girls constitute 48.8% of schoolchildren in the rural and 48.7% in the urban area, while in the senior classes – 57.9% in the rural and 56.8% in the urban area.

The demographic situation in Ukraine also caused changes in the composition of specialized secondary education institutions. In comparison with 1998, the total number of pupils declined by 130,000, down to 6,587,000. However, the number of secondary school students in the rural area has concurrently increased. There is an encouraging tendency toward a steady growth in the number of children wishing to continue their education after the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In the 1998-1999 school year, the number of such children reached 66.6%, up from 58% in 1995-1996. There are 14,900 comprehensive schools operating in the rural area, or nearly 70% of the total number, which teach about 2.2 million pupils. In the mean time, more than 3,500 villages with children aged between 6-15 years have no schools at all.

The objective of reforming the national economy requires adequate qualitative restructuring of the vocational training system and its adjustment to the demands by the labor market. In 1999, vocational training was available from 989 state vocational schools including 98 technical colleges, 5 agribusiness schools, 19 art schools, more than 500 occupation training centers and other educational establishments. They provide education to 528,000 students, of which 207,000 or 39% are girls. Each year vocational schools give more than 200,000 students a possibility to complete their secondary education along with vocational training.

As a result of higher education reform, Ukraine's integral indicators of higher education are no worse than those of the developed countries. Now there are 340 students per each 10,000 people. This is up by 60 students over the past four years. The enrollment capacity of the higher school system has also increased and in 1999 higher education institutions could enroll up to 70% of school-leavers. At the beginning of 1999-2000 academic year, 52.9% of the female and 46.1% of male population aged between 18-22 years were studying in higher learning establishments. Women prefer to receive education in economics, law, health care, education, art and cinema.

Postgraduate and doctoral courses crown up the system of higher education. In 1999, 22,300 students were studying in 399 postgraduate institutions, while 1,200 students were taking doctoral courses in 194 institutions. In the past four years the number of postgraduate students has grown by 28% and doctoral students by 7%. Over the nine years of independence this number has increased by two-fold and 13-fold, respectively. The percentage of women among postgraduate students was 45% in 1995 and 48% in 1999, while among doctoral students it was 26% and 31%, respectively.

The percentage of women who took up educational activity as their occupation is fairly high and reaches 74% of the total number of those working in this sphere.

The strategies of both the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Plan of Action envisage the introduction of gender issues at all levels of education. Ukraine makes only first steps in forming a system of gender education. So far, gender courses are only taught in certain higher learning establishments and in Kyiv, L'viv, Odesa and Kharkiv universities. There are also eight centers and laboratories of gender studies in five Ukrainian cities.

### **Economic status of women and feminization of poverty**

When Ukraine gained independence in 1991, it embarked on a path of market reform and building a democratic society. It was hoped that transition to a market economy would make the economy more efficient and socially oriented. However, most spheres of life were hit by a social and economic crisis. Over the 1991-1994 period, the averaged annual rate of real GDP decline was 14%, while capital investments reduced by 22.5% in 1994. In 1995, Ukraine embarked on a policy of radical economic reform resulting in liberalization of prices, foreign trade and business activity, privatization of state property, implementation of priority institutional changes and formation of an adequate legal domain. Since 1994, the annual rate of GDP decline has steadily been slowing down every year: from 23% in 1994 to 0.4% in 1999. Also in 1999, a 4.3% increase in industrial production was registered for the first time during this period. Moreover, in January 2000, a 3.4% rise in GDP was registered in Ukraine, for the first time in ten years.

Meanwhile, the economic situation in Ukraine continues to be adversely affected by a considerable foreign debt, which as of January 1, 2000 stood at US \$12.5 billion. Allowing for hryvnia devaluation, the share of foreign debt as percentage of GDP was rapidly growing: in 1997 it was 22.9%, in 1998 - 41.8%, in 1999 - 54.2%. Per capita GDP in 1999 was US \$613. The living standards of citizens kept declining. In 1998, the real income of the population decreased by 1.6%, which generally corresponded to GDP dynamics, whereas in 1999, it reduced by 10.9% while GDP by only 0.4%.

According to Ukraine's Constitution, the general strategies of the Beijing Declaration, Beijing Action Platform and other international organizations, women are equal to men in their right to work and remuneration for it. However, despite having an educational level which is often even higher than that of men, women in Ukraine have a significantly lower level of wages than men. Meanwhile, the past few years have seen a trend to lessen gender-related imbalances in wage levels. In 1995, women's average wage stood at 80.1% of men's average wage, whereas by the end of 1999 this indicator was 72.4%.

In the mean time, women's wage level is much lower in the areas where most employees are women, compared with those dominated by men. The highest wage level was registered in the fuel, nuclear and electric power industries, where a majority of employees (65-73%) are men. Wages in these areas are 2.2-3.6 times higher than in the social sphere (culture, social security, health protection, education), where 72-87% of employees are women. Significantly, there is no sphere or industry where women have higher wages than men. The lowest wages (57.2% of men's) are offered to women in such areas as financing, crediting and insurance where women account for 71.4% of the workforce; communications (60.2%) with 63.9% of female employees; and public catering (64.8%) with 81.2% of the female workforce. Labor remuneration standards are extraordinarily low in Ukraine. In 1999, the average monthly wage of women employed in the economy equaled Hr 148.89 (about US \$30).

Wage size depends on many factors, for instance, the overall labor contribution, labor conditions, position, level of education and skills. The problem is that despite high professional and educational standards, women hold positions that are less prestigious and rewarding than men's,

their wages being on average by 28% lower than those of men. But this pay gap cannot be attributed solely to factors of direct discrimination. The main reason behind it is that labor legislation prohibits the use of female labor in difficult and unhealthy occupations, while male workers in such jobs get privileges and compensations which accordingly influence their labor remuneration levels. In 1999, men accounted for 73.1% of the workforce employed in basic production industries where conditions do not meet the requirements of sanitary-hygienic standards. Meanwhile, women account for 57-69% of the personnel doing harmful work in the printing, medical and light industries.

In the past few years, the level of economic activity of women has been much lower than that of men, and in 1999 the average figures were 57.2% and 67.9%, respectively. In part, it is attributed to a shorter duration of the women's active working career (up to 55 years) than that of men's (up to 60 years). Over this period, the fraction of women has dropped not only in the composition of labor force but also in the occupational pattern. The rate of female employment was also lower than male employment: it dropped from 60% in 1995 to 50.7% in 1999, being down on average by 8.9% on men.

Currently, the sphere of employment is characterized by high concentration of women in the non-production sector – the light, food and medical industries – ranging from 57.4% in the food industry to 86.6% in the sphere of social security; high percentage of women in occupations not requiring high skills; and the prevalence of women among the unemployed able-bodied population (62.1 %).<sup>\*\*</sup>

Especially destructive processes in the sphere of employment, especially as relates to women, are going on in small towns and urban-type settlements with a population of up to 50,000 people, which collectively accommodate over 11 million people or 22 % of Ukraine's entire population. Residing there are about 6 million women, half of them being in their able age. In those places, the levels of unemployment and joblessness among workforce are much higher than Ukraine's average. <sup>\*\*</sup>

In rural areas, the workforce amounts to only 6,394,200 people, including 46.7% of women. A large majority of them (about 40%) are employed in agriculture and forest management. Industrial enterprises in the rural areas employ 12% of the workers, transport and communications services - 4.1%, public catering and logistics - 7.3%, health protection, education and culture - 27.5%. According to sociological surveys, up to 30% of women employed in agriculture do jobs containing a high proportion of manual labor, 40% of them being 50 or more years old.

According to data from the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, a fifth (21.6%) of those registered as jobless as of the end of 1999 were rural residents. There is a high rate of quasi-unemployment in the agrarian sector caused primarily by shrinkage in production and workers' incomes.

---

<sup>\*\*</sup> No data available

The real rate of hidden unemployment\* in the rural areas is estimated at 0.9-0.95 million, the general unemployment rate reaching 2 million of able-aged people. At the same time, the labor potential of rural areas is rapidly aging: nearly one out of every five workers (18.8%) is of retirement age. In agrarian enterprises, 33.6% of employees are of retirement or pre-retirement age. Redundancy has nearly halved female employment in collective agricultural enterprises.

The situation in the registered labor market features considerable and steady redundancy of women at enterprises, institutions and organizations, a higher person-per-vacancy ratio for women, and more difficulty in getting a job. Women have more problems both in dismissal (they accounted for 62.6% of dismissed workers in 1999) and in getting employment. Their percentage in the employed workforce is always lower than that of men. Meanwhile, an upward trend is currently observed for this indicator. In 1995, only 41.7% of those placed in jobs by state employment centers were women, whereas in 1999 the figure reached 45%. Yet women are still slower than men in getting jobs. In 1999, there were 1,392,800 women registered with unemployment centers, one of every seven of them has been provided with employment.

Women are active in all efforts towards employment, including training or retraining to do jobs that are demanded on the labor market. In 1999, for instance, 72,800 women were retrained, which accounts for 57.5% of all those who were offered training.

In the five past years, unemployment among able workforce remains Ukraine's central problem, which is worsening due to a mismatch between labor supply and demand. The rate of growth in registered unemployment rose from 0.5% in 1995 to 4.3% in 1999, defying all effort to stop it. Over the eight years since official registration was introduced, women make up a large majority of registered unemployed. Total registered unemployment rose more than nine-fold numbering 1,174,500 persons as of January 1, 2000, with one out of every seven being in need of special social protection as they were unable to sustain fair competition on the labor market. People who failed to find a job after being in a registered unemployed status for one year account for 65.4%, more than one year - 34.6%. The percentage of young unemployed people under 28 is 35.5% with an absolute majority of women (approximately 75%). As of January 1, 2000, the majority (62.1%) of those officially registered as unemployed were women - 729,600. But the percentage of registered unemployed women has been showing a trend towards gradual decline in the past five years, from 72.7% in 1995 to 62.1% in 1999.

Today women are actively getting into small and medium-sized business. Thus, 36% of the EBRD Small Business Fund (up to US \$100,000) has been issued to women. According to the data of a joint project of the governments of the US and Ukraine for the privatization of non-arable land, women account for 35% of entrepreneurs who have bought privatized plots of land.

Workers, primarily women, released from social production are in most cases forced to become farmers or work on their private garden. Thus, there are 35,254 farms registered in Ukraine, 12% (4,129) being managed by women. The number of farms run by women has increased by 2% in the past five years.

---

\* Can not be verified for lack of calculation methods

Furthermore, according to a survey conducted by researchers for the Institute of Agrarian Economics, women have to do more than half of work on their private garden, spending an extra 2.5-3 hours on it. With an increase of garden area and the number of livestock in the private sector, women's labor contribution reaches 160 workdays.

The settlement of the overwhelming majority of rural problems is closely linked to progress in the agrarian and land reforms in Ukraine. It is these processes that may have a radical impact on the situation of women in the sphere of agricultural production.

### **Prevention of violence against women, trafficking and trade in women**

Over the five years since the Fourth World Conference on Women, violence against women has become a subject of public discussions. The scope of knowledge about reasons for and consequences of this phenomenon has considerably grown over the past few years. After being confined for several decades to Ukrainian society, this topic is becoming a subject of study and discussion. The closed character of the topic of violence is the cause behind the shortage of official and statistical data and the absence of experience in open debate on this subject in wide audiences, mass media and society in general, disregard for this problem by the law-enforcement agencies and inadequate competence of society on how to deal with it. A variety of forms of manifestation of violence against women and girls on most occasions tend to be "concealed," especially in the case of physical and mental violence in the family.

It is believed that family violence is confined to troubled families, but research findings show that violence does not always accompany drinking and poverty. Brutality, mutual humiliation and beating are very widespread forms of violence in family relations. Family violence not infrequently results in death, bodily injury, mental trouble, suicide, the loss of self-respect in the victim and others.

Information about cases of violence in the family very often fails to reach the agencies concerned because a sense of shame and tradition keep women from disclosing facts of violence. This considerably complicates both the process of getting unbiased information on cases of violence against women (hence the gap between the numbers of registered cases of violence and reality), and the process of protecting women against violence.

However, even official statistics show that the numbers of persons registered on police records for systematic offense in domestic relations is steadily on the rise. Their number has increased by 16% over the past five years, exceeding 67,000 persons as of January 1, 2000.

According to data from the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs, there were about 9,000 persons, detected in 1999 alone, who were suspected of committing 11,100 crimes against the life, health, freedom and dignity of females with 10,800 victims. The predominant forms of violence against women were the following:

premeditated and aggravated murder - 1,227 women killed;

premeditated grievous bodily harm - 1,215 victims;

rape - 1,256 victims;

sexual perversion - 6,522 victims.

Another big problem is sexual harassment. The findings of an independent research by non-governmental organizations show that 50% of women have suffered from sexual harassment and 8% of them repeatedly

Ukrainian legislation protects women who have become victims of violence. Article 107 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine provides for relevant punishment for such offense. But the Criminal Code contains no special clauses on responsibility for domestic violence. In Ukraine like in many other countries, law-enforcement bodies often refrain from interfering into the so-called domestic affairs. In view of the situation now prevailing in Ukraine, the need of adopting a domestic law to prevent violence in the family is being actively discussed.

Starting from 1997, a comprehensive research has been conducted under the UNDP “Gender in Development” program on the status of women in Ukraine including analysis of the phenomenon of violence against women. A sociological survey held under the project has shown that domestic violence is a very widespread phenomenon, especially in young families. It has been established that 12% of young women (up to 28 years old) suffer from physical violence in family life, 2% of them quite often. The research shows, however, that physical violence in the family may be initiated by women as well, but it is thrice as rare as violence initiated by men. One out of every five respondents polled in the course of the sociological survey holds that cases of physical violence against women occur very often in families nowadays.

It has been believed for a long time that there are no sexual solicitation in the workplace that abuse and discriminate women. However, the research conducted prove that virtually every woman has suffered from sexual harassment in the family, at work or under other circumstances.

Sexual harassment makes women give up their jobs which leads to double suffering – from mental and physical humiliation, and from material problems that are entailed in leaving a job. But Ukrainian legislation has no articles envisaging responsibility for sexual harassment in office.

Labor relations associate with another form of discrimination that can be found in employment ads in the press that specify the sex, age, appearance and other features. Such actions are in conflict with Art. 22 of the Labor Code of Ukraine but they do occur in society.

Although Ukraine has declared itself an open society, the problem of violence against women, especially sexual, still remains much of a closed topic. Actions by the law-enforcement bodies are oriented to punish the offender while the victim remains alone with her problems beyond their attention. This is why women’s non-governmental organizations are making efforts to help women who have suffered from violence in the family or sexual harassment to receive relevant



legal, medical and psychological support and assistance. They organize crisis centers, telephone hot lines and consulting centers. The creation of specialized institutions has started on the state level to help women who have become victims of violence. The first such institution opened in Kyiv in the summer of 1998 and there are plans to open another four in Kyiv and other regions.

Another urgent problem for Ukraine today is that of sexual exploitation of women, including in the form of coercion to prostitution, traffic and trade in women at an international scale.

Ukraine has committed itself to comply with the UN Convention prohibiting trade in people and exploitation of prostitution by third parties. The Criminal Code contains Art. 210 envisaging punishment for keeping brothels and procuring women for vice, but Ukraine is only in the process of forming a network of special services to fight against trade in people, prostitution and drug addiction which will contribute to coping with the problem. The difficulties involved in overcoming and analyzing this phenomenon also arise from the absence of official data on those engaged in prostitution or those who use their services.

Nowadays, official statistics on women involved in prostitution who are victims of traffic and trade in women is only being formed. However, unofficial data from law-enforcement bodies, social services and NGO surveys testify to the expansion of prostitution in Ukraine, especially coerced, as well as traffic and trade in women.

Traffic and trade in women constitute a worldwide problem and a worldwide calamity. Ukraine has become a supplier of "slaves" to the countries of former Yugoslavia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, Israel, the USA, the Arab Emirates and others. From Israel alone, some 1,500 women were deported back to Russia and Ukraine during 1995-1997. According to data from the embassy of Ukraine in Greece, there are about 3,000 young women involved in legal and illegal prostitution in Athens and Thessaloniki, and nearly 5,000 in Turkey.

Having embarked on its path into the European and international community as a democratic state, Ukraine has assumed commitments to comply with international law concerning the protection of human rights including the rights of women. In 1998, the Criminal Code of Ukraine was supplemented with Art. 124-1 "Trade in people." Criminal responsibility (different terms in jail) is envisaged for overtly or secretly taking possession of a human, whether or not involving any legal or illegal transportation, with or without the person's consent, across the border for further sale or other paid transfer for the purpose of sexual exploitation, employment in porno business, drawing into criminal activity, adoption for commercial purposes, using in armed conflicts and exploitation of labor. The adoption of the law of Ukraine on responsibility for trade in people is a very important contribution to overcoming this phenomenon. According to data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 17 criminal cases were filed under this article in 1999. In order to resolve this important problem, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine issued Resolution No. 1768 of September 25, 1999 which approves a program on preventing trade in women and children.

Today, national and international programs aimed at preventing violence, traffic and trade in women can only be successfully implemented by the joint efforts of states and non-governmental

organizations and by sustained international cooperation. To this end, Ukraine is implementing the “Struggle against traffic in women” project of the International Organization for Migration.

## **Conclusions**

The Beijing Declaration and the Action Platform as approved by the Fourth World Conference on Women outline twelve problem strategies that, at the turn of the millennium, raise concerns with the United Nations and the entire international community. Five years after the World Conference, these particular strategies have been identified as priorities in the final instruments of the UN General Assembly Special Session “Women in 2000: equality between men and women, development and the world in the 21st century” (June 2000). The final instruments of the Fourth World Conference and the UN General Assembly Special Session are important and serious attempts to resolve the problems of equality of men and women in the next millennium.

Basing on the principle that state policy should be a sustained rather than a sporadic process, in the future the state policy will be implemented in accordance with the main guidelines outlined in the final instruments of the Fourth World Conference and the UN General Assembly Special Session as well as with the guidelines identified in Ukraine as priorities at the previous stage of their introduction.

In this context, the Ukrainian government is currently working on a draft National Action Program for 2001-2005. Implementing tactics are being formulated to enhance the status of women in society and priorities are being identified for the near future.

Such priorities are:

- consideration of gender aspects in formulating state policy, programs and projects;
- prohibition of gender discrimination on the labor market, in employment and promotion;
- development of programs in the interests of women who have been affected by the negatives effects of economic reform, a settlement to the problem of women’s employment, providing a favorable environment for the development of business activity among women;
- providing for the legal education of the population and public access to information about existing national and international mechanisms against violation of women’s rights;
- elaboration of educational programs on human rights and international humanitarian law with due regard for gender-related aspects;
- involvement of women in decision making at all levels of authorities and in approval of decisions on environmental problems;
- working out a state policy and introduction of programs to promote the perception of health as a condition of complete physical, intellectual and social well-being rather than mere absence of disease and prevention of HIV (AIDS) infection;

- educate boys to respect the rights of girls and women to free expression of their will and to perceive common responsibility in matters of sex and reproductive behavior;
- working out recommendations and preparation of educational programs, textbooks and manuals at all levels of education to be free of stereotypes about the role of women and men;
- expanding opportunity for women's access to the mass media at all levels and promotion in the mass media of a stereotype-free image (role) of women in society;
- removal of factors conducive to trade in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution, slave trade or other activities and offering legal, medical and psychological aid to women and girls who are victims of violence in the family, at work or in other circumstances and setting up special rehabilitation centers for this purpose;
- enhancement of women's role and ensuring their equal representation at all levels of decision making in matters of peace, preventive diplomacy in all phases of negotiations, and mediation of women's non-governmental organizations.

The state policy to enhance women's status in society will be implemented with allowance for the country's economic condition but on a sustained and purposeful basis. The national action program for 2001-2005 to enhance the status of women in society is to lay the foundation for implementing the basic strategies as outlined in the final instruments of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization "Women in 2000: equality between men and women, development and peace in the