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Introductory Statement by

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**Of the Republic of Macedonia at the 34th Session of the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against
Women**

New York, 25 January 2006

Madam Chair,

Distinguished members of the Committee,

Allow me at the outset to express my great pleasure for having the

Republic of Macedonia of the obligations under the Convention on the
Protection of All Persons of Discrimination against Women. We believe that

especially in the realm of anti-trafficking

improved status of women in rural areas, violence and trafficking in women and girls, in order to provide for full implementation of all provisions of the Convention in all areas of interest for women everywhere in the country. This report, and I am confident, the present dialogue with this Committee, are of huge importance; they provide a clear guidance for the future activities in respect of the issues and the full

harmonized with all relevant EU legislation. Just to mention a few: Law on Labour Relations of 2005, Criminal Legislation, Family Legislation, etc. I will revert to this issue later.

Despite a solid legal framework, functional institutional protection and a rising policy awareness, women in Macedonia still face some forms of discrimination. In fact, the situation is not as good as it seems to be.

would like to start with the fact that

we encounter remnants based primarily on the traditional prejudices and stereotypes.

Changes in the

One of the priority activities in the National plan is encouragement of

Committees have also prepared local action plans, with specific aims and needs for each of the municipalities, respectively.

The proposal to adopt a **Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women** is part of the affirmative action on the national level. It will ensure the basis for equal opportunities for men and women in the political, economic,

social, educational, and other areas of social life.

aim, this law specifies general and special measures to provide for equal

opportunities, and also determines the competences, tasks and obligations for

agreements and job contracts which introduce discrimination upon any of the

grounds of Article 6, shall be null and void.

Direct discrimination, as stipulated in Article 7 of the Law, is any action conditioned upon any of the grounds from Article 6 of this Law, by

which the person was placed, is placed, or could be placed in a less

favourable position than other persons in comparable cases

of dignity of the job applicant or employee, and which causes fear or creates
inappropriate, humiliating or offensive behavior.

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In case of discrimination, as described in Article 6 of the Law, the right
of the job applicant or the employee to seek compensation of damages in the

amount of five average salaries in the Republic of Macedonia is provided for.

If the job applicant, or the employee, in a case of a dispute, presents
facts that the employer has acted in breach of Articles 6 and 9 of this Law, **the**
employer has the burden of proof that discrimination has not occurred. It

The statistics show balanced representation of students of both genders, in both the enrolment policy, and in the process of education and graduation.

Among certain ethnic communities in the Republic of Macedonia, especially the Roma and rural ethnic Albanian children, there is evident problem of dropout of pupils, especially girls. The Ministry of Education of the

Republic of Macedonia undertakes measures to alleviate or eventually eliminate this phenomenon and reintegrate the pupils in the education system

These and other practical findings resulting from the activities of the

governmental sector in the Republic of Macedonia were an additional

argument for the need of urgent change of the society's treatment of this phenomenon, through creating legal and institutional prerequisites for prevention and elimination of violence against women.

In this sense, an important segment in the reform of the criminal legislation was the introduction of domestic violence as separate incrimination.

The amendments to the Law on Family of June 2004 introduced for the first time the treatment of family violence in the Macedonian civil legislation.

Namely, pursuant to the provisions of the Law, it is established that the state provides protection of the marriage and the family from broken relations

and violence in the marriage or in the family. Any type of violence in the marriage and in the family is prohibited.

The law also defines measures for protection from family violence.

For the purposes of implementation of the Law, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy opened four daily centres for victims of family violence, as special organizational units within the respective centres for social work. For

the purpose of full form of protection, the Programme foresees expansion of

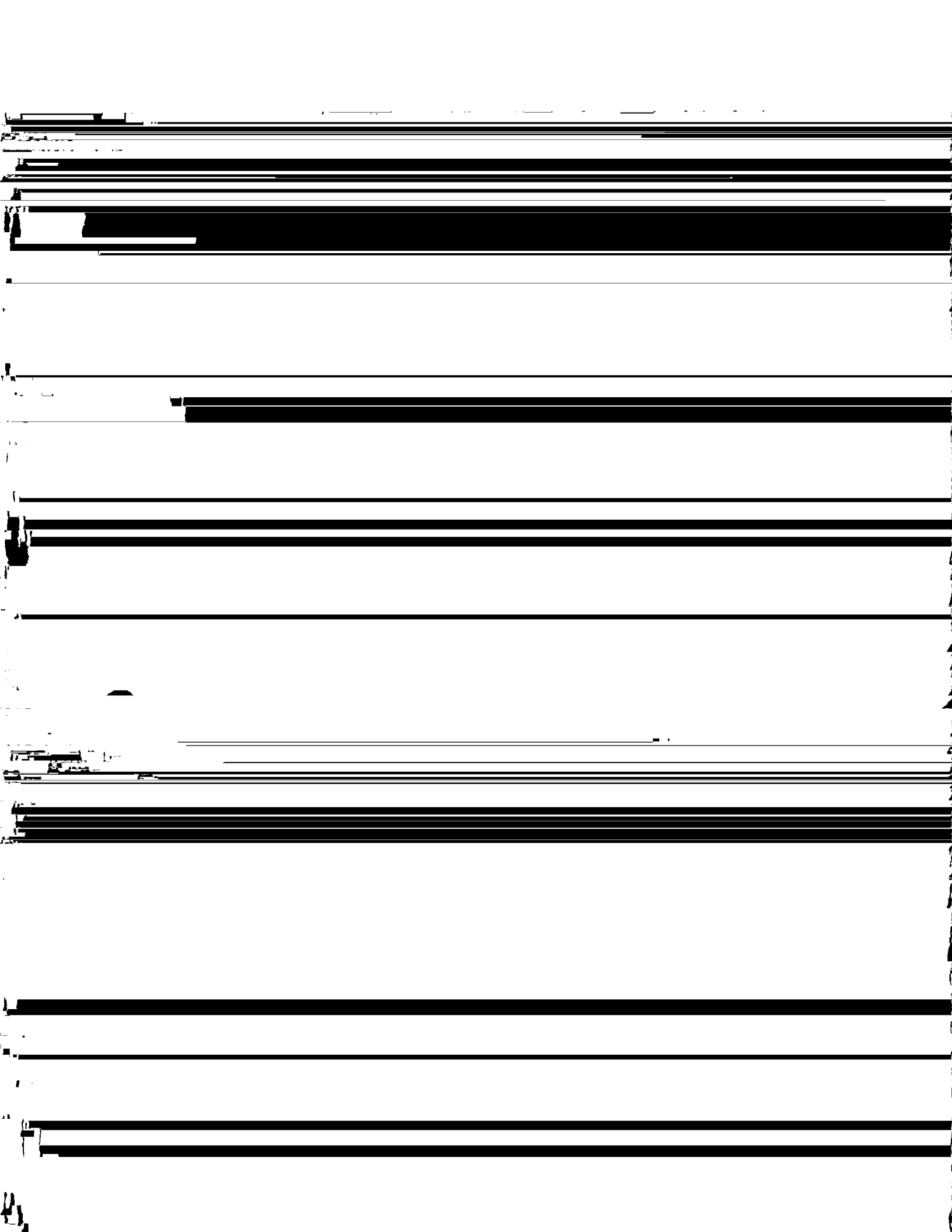
One of the strategic priorities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is continuous training for acquiring necessary knowledge and skills to recognize violence and to render assistance to family violence victims.

In this sense, within the framework of the ongoing cooperation with the UNICEF office in Skopje, between November 2004 and May 2005, a cross-sectoral training was organized on the topic "Working with victims of family violence in the community". Within two cycles of this training, training covered a total of 86 professionals from various backgrounds: social protection, healthcare, justice system, and the non-governmental sector. "

At the same time, in June 2005, a month-long National Campaign on Dealing with Family Violence was implemented, in order to strengthen the trust in the state institutions of the potential victims of family violence, recognize the problem of family violence and stimulate and encourage family violence victims to take action and to ask for help. The campaign was aimed at the general public, with a special emphasis of women and children as the

most common victims of family violence, but also to the media, in order to raise awareness about the presence of family violence.

Also, in cooperation with the non-governmental organization



with the EU standards. Particular attention is paid to the body of issues in the area of human rights and freedoms, as well as equal opportunities for every citizen. In that sense, we will continue working in a focused on the issues of gender equality, aware that a true democratic society requires full and unimpeded inclusion of both women and men, on a fully equal footing, in all social mainstreams.

I would like to use this opportunity to highlight the active and successful cooperation of the Republic of Macedonia with the United Nations and its agencies, especially the ones present in the country, and I hope such cooperation will continue in the future.

themselves. As you may see, there are many of them, which is yet another indicator of the commitment of the Republic of Macedonia to the aims of the Convention. I hope that in the dialogue to follow, we will be able to provide complete and competent answers to your questions.