

MALTA



Statement by H.E. Mr. Sirisaya F. Berg, Ambassador Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations

Fifty-fifth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Agenda Item 3 : Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly devoted to gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century

Monday, 28th February 2011

United Nations, New York

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation would like to extend its appreciation to the Chairman for his report on the priority theme. Malta welcomes the Report, Recommendations particularly since the Recommendations are also Malta's commitments in the enhancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. While we recognize the challenges in the implementation of our commitments, Malta intends to work with vigour and determination with all other UN Member States to ensure that the objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action are achieved.

Safeguarding equal treatment between men and women in all spheres is fundamental to ensure equality of opportunities. In pursuance of this objective, the Maltese Government continues to take different measures to integrate the gender perspective into national development plans.

Equality of opportunity in access and participation for all genders in education and training, as well as in the labour market are fundamental for the achievement of *de facto* equality in society at large. Indeed, the National Commission on the Promotion of Equality in Malta recognizes the contribution of both genders in the labour market and in the sphere of education is crucial not only to boost economic development but also to enhance social inclusion.

To this end, the integration of the gender dimension in all public programmes and measures contributes to the promotion of gender equality in both social and economic spheres.

Mr. Chairman,

At this point, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to clearly reiterate Malta's position on the statement made last week in this Commission on behalf of the EU Member States by H.E. the Minister for National Resources of the Republic of Hungary.

Malta would like to register its position once again in its consistent reiteration that it unambiguously endorses the commitment to ensure that "equal access to reproductive health services is essential for guaranteeing women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and... that expanding access

productive health information and health services are essential for achieving the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Programme for Action, and the Millennium Development Goals".

As it did in numerous international conferences including the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing sixteen years ago, Malta would like to reaffirm the view that any discussion on rights and services to women with respect to reproductive health should take place outside the framework of one of the most fundamental of human rights – the right to life. Furthermore, these discussions are to be taken in the context of the ICPD.

Malta maintains its position that this year's theme under consideration in this session of the Commission on the Status of Women does not provide the proper context for such language.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) which is the legal framework in which the local education system operates, emphasises the importance of equality of access to the educational system. Such equality of access has to be without discrimination on the grounds of ability, economic background, etc. The issue of Gender Equality is considered in detail under Principle 11 of the NCF which states that "gender equality is not a theme that should be treated by the school in isolation, or during the teaching of a particular subject. Equality should be an inter-disciplinary theme, within which teachers can develop within the context of their particular subject, confronting prejudice and promoting more gender-inclusive alternatives". Moreover, Objective 5 of the Curriculum outlines the strengthening of which refers to the right of education without discrimination based on "age, sex, belief or economic means". Therefore gender is taken into account in curriculum development and learning approaches across all levels of education (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary level), and

The NCF provides clear guidelines regarding the school to work curriculum and encourages gender equality, gender equality, and equity in opportunities and outcomes. In this context, Guidance Frameworks have been provided which in turn provides the framework regarding the role, competences and quality standards regarding gender issues. Also, gender equity is a core issue in teacher formation within the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta where students are engaged in a process of learning on the introduction of gender for a family. In the social Family in the Roman Symbol, which explores the complex issues surrounding one of the social markers of difference in our schools and boys, and a gender equity policy would reduce or eliminate the negative outcomes for children.

Furthermore, gender is available as a topic in professional development which activities provided by participation in the Commission's compulsory in-service courses are organised by the Curriculum and eLearning Department within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education.

Malta would like to take this opportunity to once again extend our congratulations to the UNSG, the USG and Executive Director of UN Women Ms. Michelle Bachelet as well as other key actors who made UN Women a reality. The Official Launch of UN-Women, which took place last week (24 February 2011) clearly indicates that this much needed new entity will contribute to the effectiveness of the UN System in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Thank you.