

MALTA



Statement by H.E. Mr. Christopher Grima, Ambassador  
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Fifty-sixth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Agenda item 5: Follow-up to the World Conference on Women and the  
twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000:  
gender equality, development and peace"

Friday, 2nd March 2012

United Nations, New York

Mme. Chair,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your effective and successful presidency over this year's Session of the Committee. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

Malta associates itself with the statement of the European Union adopted by Minister of State for External Relations, Minister for Gender Equality of Denmark, from a national perspective.

The Government of Malta recognizes the difficulties that exist and constantly happen to women in rural areas, which touch on all ranges from maintenance and care of land to food security, the difficulty of access to proper health care and other services. As a result, it is pursuing a number of initiatives to improve the living conditions of rural women, including the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mme. Chair,

Malta acknowledges that providing equal opportunities to all men and women, including those in rural settings contributes to alleviating their situation and promoting gender equality in society. In this regard, Malta is committed to complying with international treaties in order to empower and enhance the participation of women in the economic and social spheres. Malta endorses gender mainstreaming and the promotion and integration of gender equality in all policies and measures as a means to address different circumstances and needs of men and women in various settings.

Indeed, through the efforts of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta is working with relevant stakeholders to provide for equal opportunities and gender equality by providing training, promoting good practices and encouraging the adoption of such good practices to address and eliminate the discrimination of this kind.

initiatives have been undertaken to assist women and encourage their participation in areas where they are underrepresented. Encouraging more women to participate in entrepreneurship, which provides a means of increasing their economic independence, reduces the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

One of the initiatives by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality is by raising awareness on gender equality employment through the 'Equality Mark' certification that is given to employers who foster equal opportunities in their business cases, following an equality review. Through this 'Equality Mark' employers are encouraged to promote equal treatment and equal opportunities for both genders mainly in the recruitment process; in the working conditions; in the promotion, development and update of an equality and a sexual harassment policy; in training and career progression; and in the uptake of family friendly measures.

Mme. Chair,

Malta's national plan for combating poverty and social exclusion focuses on promoting wide broad priority objectives, namely the social inclusion prospects of children and young people, as well as better employment prospects and opportunities for all) and equal opportunities (through increased access to the most marginalized and vulnerable population groups).

Malta will continue to support the efforts to maintain gender equality policies and progress, as well as raising awareness on equal rights and responsibilities, and to further promote gender equality and the advancement of women in Maltese society.

Mme Chair,

The Government of Malta will continue to dedicate its energy and policies to guarantee the availability, quality and sustainability of these essential services, particularly public health services.

The Maltese public health care system provides a comprehensive basket of health services to all persons residing in Malta, who are covered by the Maltese social security legislation, but also provides necessary care to special groups.

The Health Division offers comprehensive obstetric services ranging from antenatal care through delivery to the postpartum period, in such procedures and others relating to the sexual and reproductive health of women. Malta upholds a principled position that these do not take place outside the framework of one of the most fundamental of human rights – the right to life. Malta strongly believes that the right to life extends to the unborn child from the moment of conception, and therefore considers that the use of abortion as a means of resolving health or social problems is a denial of that right.

Keeping in mind this principled position Malta continues to work hard to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other relevant relevant international instruments.

Mme. Chair,

I would like to conclude and I would like to underscore the determination of my Government to empower women by ensuring that they are able to safeguard their rights on equal terms, and by combating and preventing discriminatory treatment in order to be able to ensure the realisation of their full potential to participate in all spheres of Maltese society.