

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

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INTERACTIVE EXPERT PANEL

**Review Theme: Equal sharing of responsibilities between
women and men, including caregiving in the context of
HIV/AIDS**

**Panel 4: Gender norms and stereotypes, socialization and
unequal power relations
Sharing and balancing life-work responsibilities**

PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN WOMEN CAREGIVING ROLE

by

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¹ The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

Madam Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is an honour and pleasure for me to also participate in this panel which is dedicated to the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men especially with regard to sharing and balancing work, private and family life. As was already mentioned I am working as the head of Gender Equality Unit of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Our Unit is responsible for creation and coordination of government policies in the area of equal opportunities for women and men.

Inseparable part of the policies concerning equal opportunities for women and men is also searching for possibilities of better balancing of work, private and family life. Focusing on this topic is also crucial for many other areas such as increasing of number of women in decision-making positions, strengthening economic independence of women or combating violence against women.

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of the representatives of non-governmental organizations as fundamental because their insight into the topic of balancing of work and private life and their know-how is essential for work of such advisory body of the Government. This link between non-governmental organizations and government policies could be mutually beneficial. Through the Committee, representatives of non-governmental organizations offer their experience and can therefore influence Government's policies in the area of equal opportunities of women and men.

The Committee for Balancing Work, Private and Family Life is chaired by a representative of a non-governmental organization, currently Network of Mother Centers. Let me say few sentences about this Network. Mother Centers are usually established and managed by mothers on parental leave. They enable mothers with small children to get out of the isolation they may face because of all-day care of children.

The first Mother Center in the Czech Republic was established in 1992 and, ten years later, the Network of Mother Centers was founded. The Network brings together more than 300 Mother Centers from all over the country. Within the Network mothers (and also fathers and grandparents) are able to strengthen their self-confidence and become active citizens. Through common actions, they can also influence social development and political decisions. The Network of Mother Centers offers children day-care which is particularly important as there is a relatively low capacity of child-care services for children in pre-school age in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, the Network of Mother Centers makes effort to build the so-called caring community which provides sense of solidarity and is open for all social classes, races, refugees and many others. Such community is able to teach tolerance and prevent xenophobia. The Network of Mother Centers focuses on different target groups, including employers and employees. The Network is a member of several international organizations such as GROOTS International (since 1999), has a partnership with the Huairou Commission and also initiated the establishment of the international network of Mother centers MINE in 2001.

In 2012, the Working Group Men and Gender Equality of the Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was established. Among other topics, the Working Group is engaged in the issue of men and care giving. By means of the Working Group the Czech Government also cooperates with non-governmental organizations. The Working Group is chaired by the director of a non-governmental organization the League of Open Men which is among others focusing on the support for the care giving role of

men. From their initiative, in 2010 and 2011 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs implemented a project called How To Dad.

The main objective of How To Dad project was to increase the number of men actively involved in parenthood, thus enabling women to engage in professional life. The project also aimed on promoting the value of fatherhood while at the same time fighting the discrimination of women on the labour market. The project showed parenthood as a responsibility shared by both the woman and the man and provided tools for increasing the men's participation in parenting. It was also deeply focused on balancing work and family life. Basic activities o

