

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES

Date: 26 April 1999

Ref: BG/BT

Re: Beijing questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE ON IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CRITICAL AREAS
OF CONCERN OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Part one: Overview of trends in achieving gender equality
and women's advancement

The Third Plan of Action for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, adopted
by the Spanish Government for the period 1997-2009 aimed at promoting policies
of equal opportunities for the social advancement of women in the following areas:
The European Union's Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for
Women and Men, the Madrid Declaration on Women's Employment, the Madrid
World Conference on Women held in Beijing, and the guidelines of the
Union's Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

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- Incorporation of a social perspective into government policies.

These goals are pursued in the context of a changing society and of developments in the world who face threats and who do not enjoy the same rights, or status as women in our own society.

developments in other parts of the world or status as women

On the basis of these assumptions, numerous legislative reforms and policies have been introduced during the period since the Beijing Conference in order to promote equality of opportunity between men and women; there has been a major effort to incorporate a cross-cutting gender perspective into all government activities during this period.

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Taking into account the importance of education as a basic tool for women's self-reliance - order to enable them to make choices consistent with their own views and to raise the rights to which they are entitled - a significant change has taken place in our country in recent years with regard to the education of women. It is reflected in the total number of girls enrolled in non-compulsory primary and secondary schools and in the fact that the majority of university students are women.

Taking into account the importance of education as a basic tool for women's self-reliance - order to enable them to make choices consistent with their own views and to raise the rights to which they are entitled - a significant change has taken place in our country in recent years with regard to the education of women.

Despite this progress, greater efforts are still necessary in this area. The female illiteracy rate remains higher than the male rate, 5.39 per cent compared to 2.17 per cent. Women are also in the minority in enrollment in scientific and technological courses (they account for 27.66 per cent of the students in such courses compared to 66.38 per cent in the humanities), and, while a growing number of women are employed as teachers, they are seriously under-represented in the most prestigious areas and at the highest levels. Therefore, the goal is to promote equal access to all educational processes by developing models that promote equality.

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In the area of employment, it should be stressed that women's situation is still unsatisfactory. However, an increasing number of women are being incorporated into the working world, and the rate of female employment is 37.2 per cent, 26.18 percentage points below that of men. This reality demonstrates that women lag far behind men in their social and economic rights.

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These structural changes must necessarily be based on the
division of family and work responsibilities between men and w
interest of reconciling family and professional life; amendmen

code and improvements in the system of social services that promote flexibility of assignments and working hours in the productive world should enable women and men to reconcile work and family responsibilities on an equal footing.

In this connection, we should also highlight the Employment Action Plan, submitted by Spain to the European Union in June 1984, in accordance with the guidelines of the Luxembourg Summit Meeting. It includes specific activities for the sole purpose of creating stable, high-quality employment in order to ensure that Spain is genuinely on the same level as the rest of Europe, particularly as regards women. The Plan contains specific measures to promote equal opportunities and encourage women's participation in society by

eliminating obstacles to their advancement in the labour market. The changes in organizational and product structures that have taken place in our country have not yet resulted in balanced participation by both sexes in power and decision-making.

Although women's participation in political life has progressively increased, there is an obvious qualitative and quantitative imbalance in this regard. Women hold 25.1 per cent of the seats in the Congress of Deputies, 14.9 per cent of the Senate seats and 19.05 per cent of the seats in the Autonomous parliaments; they account for 32.05 per cent of Spanish representation in the European Parliament, which is higher than the Parliament's average of 27.8 per cent.

Hence, of the 15 States members of the European Union, Spain ranks seventh in terms of degree of political participation.

As for the Government, women account for 44.45 per cent of the civil service but only 29.48 per cent of the high-level posts. Similarly, they hold 57 per cent of the high-level government posts and 71 per cent of the councillors of the Autonomous governments and 6.1 per cent of municipal posts.

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Special mention should be made of the policies developed for the benefit of

rural women whose situation has changed considerably in recent years

Activities to strengthen the role of rural women have intensified demonstrated by the adoption of the Third Plan, which introduced a section on meeting the needs of these women - not only those living in rural areas but also those living in urban areas who work in the rural area

As women are increasingly subjected to physical, psychological abuse which prevents them from enjoying their human rights and fundamental freedoms, the theme of violence is one of the areas to which our Government is devoting special attention.

Over the years, there has been a considerable increase in complaints of violations of sexual freedom, suggesting that women are more aware of individual problems. In 1995 the Spanish Government adopted the Plan of Domestic Violence 1998-2000, which has six main parts: - awareness prevention; education and training; social resources; health judicial practice; and investigation. With a total budget of (approximately US\$ 57 million).

in women's access to health services and health care programmes. The Plan, however, contemplates various activities aimed at preventive health care for women throughout their life cycle.

The principal measures are aimed at establishing programmes for the preventive diagnosis of disease, providing adequate information to women, conducting studies and collecting gender- and age-disaggregated data for further analysis, while devoting the necessary attention to elderly women who require special care and to young women through campaigns for the adoption of a healthier lifestyle.

In this connection, we should highlight the collaboration by the Ministry of Health, with the cooperation of the Institute for Women's Issues, of the complementary health care plan, adopted in 1995 and aimed at strengthening and broadening women-specific services.

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eradicating discriminatory advertisements and preventing, as far as possible, sexist distinctions between men and women.

Among the measures summarized above, we can highlight, with regard to the mainstreaming of the gender perspective, the progress achieved as a result of the implementation of the Third Plan for Equal Opportunities in such areas as employment, where great efforts have been made in view of the difficulties women

increased investment in activities to provide social services, the growth of the public staff, and an increase in budgetary, human and material resources to ensure equality of opportunity between men and women.

ics, such as the environment, which was introduced in the Third Plan, and decision-making, have witnessed major progress and remain an area of concern for our Government; thus, strong impetus must be given to measures in both spheres.

Other areas of the Third Plan, and areas of promoting

Implementation of the activities included in the Third Plan is monitored on a quarterly basis.

The implementation of the Third Plan is monitored

to the review of the implementation of the Third Plan on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, during the first year it was in effect 145 of the activities were carried out or initiated, although they are all in the process of being implemented.

Accord- ing to the 1988 Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, others, for

At the ten areas covered by the Third Plan, the degree of implementation in the first year was equal to or greater than 50 per cent.

In the first year, implementation

Part 5: Financial and institutional measures

During the time period covered by this questionnaire, there was a significant increase in the budgetary, human and material resources devoted to ensuring equality of opportunity between men and women.

The Government's priority interest in policies to promote equality is reflected in the most recent budgets adopted, which were elaborated as part of the 1988 Act but allocated more resources to the Institute for Women's Issues. The Institute, particularly in recent years, has acquired new responsibilities.

These programmes have been implemented through two mechanisms:

1. Through general programme grants whose purpose is to support the women's association movement and the social participation of women, especially with respect to the labour market, education and decision-making;
2. Through programmes designed to promote equal opportunities for men and women, giving priority through the allocation of 0.52 per cent of the individual

income of 1987 to education programmes intended to enhance skills and promote their access to the various educational levels. Also given to programmes intended to promote the employment and self-employment of women in order to ensure equal opportunities for women in the labour market. It is worth noting the coordination during this time period of the 1986 Comprehensive Plan of Basic Social Services benefits, which included projects for, inter alia, the provision of equipment to social services centres, shelters, hostels and information and other services, on the basis of the agreements concluded between the Ministry of Social Affairs, the autonomous communities and local communities.

In 1986, 987 projects were financed through the Plan, compared to 1,024 projects in 1985, as funding for that purpose has increased in recent years.

The autonomous communities have their own equal opportunity mechanisms

among government services.

The Sectoral Women's Conference of the Ministry of Social Affairs, to which the Institute for Women's Issues and Coordinator of the Equal Opportunity Policy in the autonomous communities at regional level and by the national meetings are periodically held.

Among the objectives of the sectoral Conference is the implementation of the commitments of the Fourth World Conference on Women and other global conferences relating to the ministerial responsibilities.

The Institute for Women's Issues also acts as a coordinating body composed of the various ministerial departments, women's associations and social agents.

The autonomous communities, through the sectoral Conference and governmental organizations and social interlocutors participated in the elaboration of the Fourth Plan for Equal Opportunities, in accordance with the guidelines established by the Fourth World Conference on Women. Thus, the Plan was the result of a consensus of the institutions and of all of these sectors, which makes possible the development of equal opportunities in the country.

