

# ***The Netherlands Five Years after Beijing***

## **National Implementation Report**

Report on the policies carried out by the Dutch government  
in order to implement the Beijing *Platform for Action* (1995 - 2000).

The material posted here was provided to the Division for the Advancement of Women by the Government in

# **I THE NETHERLANDS FIVE YEARS AFTER BEIJING**

## **I.1 INTRODUCTION**

co-ordinated emancipation policy by developing innovative initiatives for just two or three key themes each year. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and relevant ministries are involved as closely possible during the development of these initiatives so that the results can be integrated into regular policy wherever feasible.

The strategy pursued since Beijing will be continued in the coming years. During its second term in office, the government<sup>2</sup> set aside extra funding to expand facilities such as child care and stimulate experiments which would simplify the combination of paid work and unpaid care. A forward-looking strategy for emancipation is also being drafted for the period beyond the year 2000. The multi-year policy document to be published in the summer of 1999 will provide an initial indicator for policy beyond the year 2000 as well as an assessment of the trends, risks and opportunities facing the emancipation process. The government will use this document to plan its contribution to the Special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

As part of the government's mainstreaming exercise, an action plan outlining the emancipation policy role of each ministry has been published under the overall supervision of the Co-ordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy<sup>3</sup>. The action plan allocates at least three tasks to each ministry during the government's current term in office. It also contains agreements on evaluation and monitoring. A mo2.8(m)-24.9(p0.0018 T to9Sm)-24.e.0045.1928 -1.265.2((e)-3o1(s)-8( 50m)-2-42(r)-6.66 )-6.6(o)(0.002

women's fund which they use to support women's movements in countries receiving aid, strengthen the emancipation capacity and infrastructure of partner governments, encourage increased participation by women in Dutch-funded aid programmes and ensure that the results of these programmes benefit women and men equally.

### **I.3 DEVELOPMENTS SINCE BEIJING**

#### **I.3.1 Diversity as a source of capacity**

For many years, the Dutch government's emancipation policy viewed women in terms of disadvantage









## **II DEVELOPMENTS SINCE BEIJING: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

### **II.1 PAID WORK, UNPAID CARE AND INCOME**

The emancipation of women has had significant and irreversible consequences for attitudes to the status of women and men and for the way in which society is structured. Both sexes are playing an

almost certainly does not reflect the high level of hidden unemployment among women. This is caused by the fact that they temporarily leave work to have children or because they have not recently been looking for paid work.

Because there are fewer women in paid work, fewer women have access to an independent income than men. Even when they do engage in paid work, women still earn substantially less than men. This is partly due to the large number of female part-time workers and the relatively low job grades which women tend to occupy. In 1996 women earned 76% of the gross average hourly wage of men. The differences in pay between men and women are due to differences in the nature of the jobs done by men and women, and in their personal characteristics. These differences in job characteristics were extrapolated from a study of gender distribution between the various economic sectors, job types, job grades and full-time/part-time work. Women are overrepresented in the health care and catering sectors, largely perform administrative and caring roles, are more often found in junior posts and are six times more likely to have a part-time job than men. If gross wages are adjusted to take account of these characteristics, then the average female wage is found to be 7% below that of men.

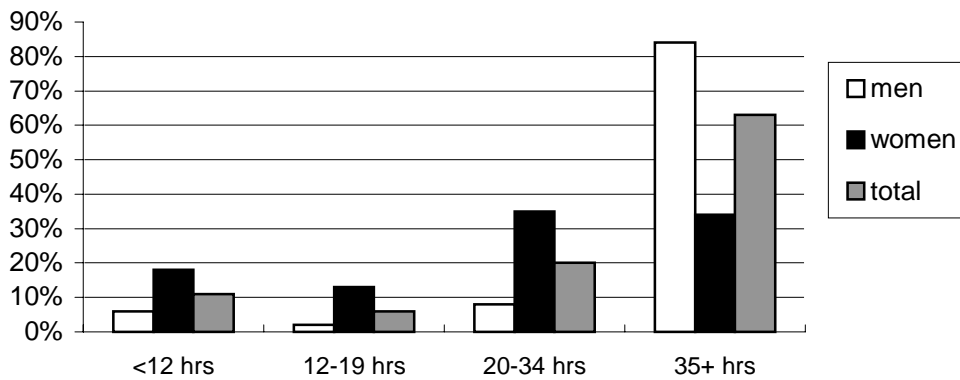
The 1998 Yearbook shows that in 1996, women accounted for approximately 25% of the total income of the working population. So although women make up around half the population aged between 15 and 65, their combined earnings only account for a quarter. This disparity, in which 50% of the working population earns just 25% of the overall income generated, is due to the combination of a lower number of women participating in the labour market, the large number of women in part-time work and their lower average hourly wage.

The differences between women and men are reflected not only in the amount of time they spend on domestic care but above all in their respective levels of economic self-sufficiency and their share in the household income. The term 'economic self-sufficiency' is generally defined as income from paid work which is higher than the average state benefit paid to a single person. The government coalition agreement states that the new tax system must do more to promote emancipation and economic self-sufficiency as well as making adequate provision for the existing category of sole earners.

### **II.1.2. Part-time work**

Part-time employment appears to be one way of combining paid work and unpaid care, especially for women. Government policy is geared towards increasing the number of part-time jobs to encourage more men to work part-time and to promote a fairer distribution of part-time employment between men and women. Research has shown however that although men are apparently keen to work shorter hours, most companies are unwilling to allow them to do so. Not only is it still considered socially unacceptable to express a desire to work part-time, employees also still find that working part-time adversely affects their career prospects. Specific measures are therefore being taken to encourage men to use the facilities available for combining paid work and unpaid and care. Existing

Diagram: **Active working population by length of working week, 1997**



Source: 1997 Labour Force Survey

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Not only is net labour market participation greater among men than among women, the relationship between having children and participation in paid employment also leads to disparities between men themselves. The labour participation of married and cohabiting fathers is significantly higher than that of single men (91% compared with 65%). The part-time factor also creates a major disparity between women and men. Also, men tend more often to engage in part-time work when they are younger (as retirement), whereas women tend to do so more often when they are older. This difference in behaviour before plays a different role in the labour market. This is a cultural phenomenon, while for

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both partners work three-quarters of the time, lies at the heart of the Combination Scenario described below.

#### **II.1.3.1. Committee on Future Scenarios for the Redistribution of Unpaid Care**

In 1994 the Co-ordinating Minister Emancipation policy established the Committee on Future Scenarios for the Redistribution of Unpaid Care. The Committee's task was to outline four future scenarios for the redistribution of unpaid care in the year 2010. These scenarios had to make clear how the organisation of unpaid care would evolve in relation to paid work to ensure that in time unpaid care would be shared equally by men and women.

<b>good practice: <i>Committee on Future Scenarios for the Redistribution of Unpaid Care</i></b>
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In 1995 the Committee presented four future scenarios. Both the Committee and the government expressed a preference for the Combination Scenario. This scenario envisages the creation of an even balance between unpaid care and paid work by both men and women. The unusual feature of the Combination Scenario is that it changes the status of women as well as that of men. Men and women will not achieve greater equality simply by having women join men in full-time employment, equality will be achieved only if paid work, unpaid care and income are shared equally between men and women.
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At present, paid work and unpaid care tasks are still not equally shared by women and men. There are three key areas in which the proposed redistribution of paid work, unpaid care and income must be

#### **II.1.4. Leave facilities**

During the previous administration, various steps were taken to ensure that employees of all ages could participate fully in the labour market. A variety of proposals were submitted to encourage people to take leave. The new administration is currently promoting leave-taking in the following ways:

##### **II.1.4.1. Pregnancy and maternity leave**

Female employees are entitled to a total of 16 weeks' paid leave which can be taken on a flexible

Since 1 January 1999, such companies have been able to claim back 30% of their net costs - that is, the cost price minus the parental contribution - under the Salaries Tax and Social Security Contributions (Reduced Remittances) Act. A growing proportion of child care facilities are hired out to companies wanting to offer such facilities to their staff, often on the strength of collective labour agreements between employers and trade unions. Company-funded child care facilities provide a necessary source of supplementary income alongside government funding. The same period has also seen a gradual increase in the parental contribution. Although in absolute terms the share of public funding has increased, in relative terms it has declined (parents 42%, government 33%, private sector 25%). The disadvantage of company child care facilities is that they do not take into account the child care needs of women who are not (yet) in paid work, who are not covered by a collective labour

|| especially effective way of helping women (especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds) to meet their specific training needs. ||

## II.2 EDUCATION

In the Netherlands, education is compulsory for boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 16. Pupils can obtain an allowance to cover some of their study costs and from the age of 16 they can get help with school fees. Students under the age of 27 may, under certain circumstances, qualify for student support in the form of a basic or supplementary grant. There are plans to raise the age threshold to 30.

There is no separate law in the Netherlands to encourage more girls and women to continue in education. There are, however, activities designed to combat truancy and premature school leaving among boys and girls. Dropping out of school is in fact more common among boys than among girls in the Netherlands. Since the 1990s, government policy to reduce dropout rates has concentrated on three interrelated goals: a basic qualification for all, a consistent approach and co-operation at regional level. Approximately 10% of pupils leaving secondary education do so without a qualification for their last course of study.

### II.2.1. Education levels

On average, the education level of the population as a whole has progressively improved. However, the education level of women is still lower than that of men on the whole. Girls in post-secondary education have largely closed the education gap among the younger generation due to the high level of participation.

Table: **Participation in full-time education, 1997-1998 (%)**

	MEN		WOMEN	
	1993/1994	1997/1998	1993/1994	1997/1998
<b>16 year-olds</b>	94.4	91.8	93.4	94.1
<b>19 year-olds</b>	55.4	56.6	54.5	57.6
<b>22 year-olds</b>	29.5	32.3	24.4	28.7
<b>25 year-olds</b>	11.1	11.8	7.5	9.1

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science Key Statistics, 1999

Participation in education beyond compulsory school age has shown a progressive rise in recent years, especially among women. As a result, women around the age of 18 are now actually overrepresented in full-time education. Women above the age of 20 are still underrepresented, however, but this is partly due to the more rapid progression of women through the education process (in other words, they take less time on average to complete their studies).

Although equal numbers of women and girls participate in the various forms of education and perform as well as - and in some cases better than - their male counterparts, their choice of study reflects an imbalance. In the Netherlands, the number of women and girls opting for technical subjects is lower than in other West European countries. In 1993, Technology and IT studies were included as additional subjects in the first stage of secondary education to encourage more women and girls to study technical subjects. Life skills are now also being taught in secondary schools to generate more interest in care and in the responsibilities of carers among boys.

In an effort to widen the educational base of young people, four subject combinations have been introduced in the upper years of senior general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). They consist of one art, one social science and two science combinations. All of these subject combinations will include mathematics, the precise content of which will depend largely on the focus of the overall subject combination. The Science and Technology and Science and Health combinations have been introduced to attract more girls to the sciences.



good practice: ***Stimulating Women and technology***

The *Women and Technology Action Plan 1995-1998* is designed to encourage more girls and women to opt for careers in engineering and technology. The Ministries of Economic Affairs, Education, Culture and Science and of Social Affairs and Employment fund relevant projects. The latest findings suggest that the problems in the sphere of 'women and technology' are due not so much to the negative attitude to technology among women, but rather to the following factors:

- The fact that women are unfamiliar with technical courses and technological industries;
- The negative image of technical courses and technological industries in general;
- The fact that the organisation and culture of technology are difficult for women to enter.

Axis, a consortium of employers, government and training providers, was set up in 1998 as a national platform for science and technology in education and the workplace. The issue of 'women and technology' is given express attention.

## **II.3 HEALTH**

Improving access to adequate, affordable and widely available health care and welfare provisions is given considerable attention in the Netherlands, not just for the population in general but also for specific groups. Monitoring the existing situation of women in all areas of health will make it possible to eradicate discrimination. Through the shaping of policy the specific needs of women can be taken into account.

### **II.3.1. Women's Health Services**

The Dutch government has recognised the existence of gender-specific differences in health for some

The AIDS Foundation finances projects relating to women and AIDS. It has issued an information folder on HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, which focuses special attention on preventing sexually transmitted diseases and the spread of HIV among women. A further training programme on HIV infection and pregnancy has also been launched for midwives and obstetricians. The Foundation has also been allocated a research and development budget to assist the prevention and treatment of seropositives/AIDS and to improve the quality of life of AIDS sufferers. The AIDS Policy Committee and the AIDS Research Co-ordination Committee assist the AIDS Foundation in this work. The AIDS Foundation also has a signalling and co-ordination function and is involved in a documentation centre and in the AIDS telephone information line.

### II.3.3. Sexual and reproductive rights

During the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Netherlands called for the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights based on the perspective and needs of girls and women. The term 'sexual rights' is also expressly taken to include the elimination of discrimination based on sexual orientation. For the Netherlands, this means working towards a situation in which individuals can participate on an equal footing in all social spheres, regardless of their sexual orientation. The special interests of lesbian women are a specific aspect of the government's gay rights policy. This policy is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

The UN Women's Convention contains provisions designed to offer protection from violence. These provisions can be used in turn to draft parameters to protect the sexual and reproductive rights of women (and men). The term 'reproductive rights' implies that women are free to decide for themselves if and when they want to have children. It also gives women the freedom to determine their own sexual and reproductive behaviour based on their own personal predilections and beliefs. Access to information and contraception is an essential precondition for this.

The difficulties associated with combining paid work and unpaid care appear to be leading to a decline in the birth rate. In the Netherlands, the average age at which women have their first child has risen to 29<sup>7</sup>, the highest in the world. More highly educated women tend to postpone having children until they have secured a firm foothold on the labour market and have good prospects of combining paid work with unpaid care responsibilities.

### II.3.4. Freedom of sexual orientation

Freedom of sexual orientation is becoming increasingly widely accepted in Dutch society. The coalition agreement explicitly includes statutory measures governing homosexual marriage. This also makes it easier to target specific groups such as ethnic minorities and the elderly. Against this background, the government has commissioned research on the status of homosexual and lesbian elderly in the Netherlands. This research showed that the status of some older lesbian women is worse than the general status of older persons in the Netherlands, especially in terms of their income and physical well-being.

#### good practice: **Registered domestic partnerships**

The legislation governing registered domestic partnerships, which took effect on 1 January 1998, is an extension of sexual and reproductive rights. This new law is not a response to international developments and conventions but to social developments within the Netherlands itself. Registered domestic partnerships have the same status as marriages and carry with them largely the same rights and obligations. They are intended for two individuals of the same sex who cannot marry or for two individuals of different sexes who do not wish to marry. The main difference between registered domestic partnerships and marriage is the relationship to children. Unlike marriage, a registered domestic partnership does not automatically imply a relationship with any children that may be born.

<sup>7</sup> CBS, 1999 Statistical Yearbook, page 66.



range of instruments was used, including a magazine for young people, a brochure, TV messages, advertisements and posters. Research shows that the campaign generated considerable media interest. This was presumably partly due to the fact that the topic was a novel one for a campaign of this kind.

The evaluation also showed that on average, two-thirds of the Dutch population was in some way exposed to the campaign. Exposure among the primary target group was even as high as 70%. Those who had seen the campaign discussed the issue more widely, felt more committed to it and had a better understanding of sexual violence. The attitudes of young people who had seen the campaign were changed for the better, in contrast to those who had had no exposure to it.

#### **II.4.2. Statutory measures to combat violence against women**

In the Netherlands, various measures were taken to create a legal framework to combat violence against women and girls.

##### **II.4.2.1. Child pornography**

On 1 February 1996 the Child Pornography Act came into force, followed by guidelines from the Public Prosecutor. The Act focuses on the protection of minors against sexual abuse. Article 240b of the Criminal Code was amended to incorporate the new law. The sentence for disseminating and/or displaying sexual images of persons under the age of 16 has been increased to four years for a single offence and to six years for more structural and repeated offences. A maximum fine of NLG 100,000 can also be imposed.

##### **II.4.2.2. Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (Provisional Scheme) Act**

The introduction of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (Provisional Scheme) Act on 1 April 1995 radically altered the status of victims during criminal proceedings by substantially widening the scope for compensation for material and non-material damage. The Victim Support Guidelines - a more detailed elaboration of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (Provisional Scheme) Act - state that when providing victim support, the police and public prosecution service must always give due consideration to the interests of victims and that victims must be treated in a correct fashion by support organisations.

##### **II.4.3. Sexual harassment in sports**

The national sporting umbrella organisation NOC\*NSF (Netherlands Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation) has drafted a policy plan entitled *Sporting Policy against Sexual Harassment, 1996-1999*. This plan concentrates on ways of preventing and combating sexual harassment in sports. The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport supports the policy plan.

In May 1997, the national sporting associations affiliated to the NOC\*NSF drew up a code of conduct for professional and voluntary workers in the sports industry. Since 1 January 1998, special telephone lines have been opened so that people can report incidents of sexual harassment in sports.

##### **II.4.4. Combating sexual harassment in education**

Preventing the misuse of power in schools and colleges is one of the spearheads of government policy. In 1998 the Elimination of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment in Education Act was introduced for the primary and secondary education sector and for adult and vocational education. Under this Act, educational establishments are obliged to report any suspected offences. The Act supplements existing measures to prevent sexual harassment.

##### **II.4.5. Action plan to prevent and combat violence against women**

recommendations were developed by an official interdepartmental working group<sup>8</sup> into a draft action plan. This was later put before an international meeting of experts in The Hague during the 50th anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in February 1998. The Dutch government delegation then submitted the recommendations from the experts' meeting to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the UN Commission on Human Rights (March/April 1998). International discussions in the CSW concerning violence against women have led to a call on governments to put together a co-ordinated national multidisciplinary action plan on violence against women. During 1999, the Ministry of Justice will be further developing this plan into an interministerial action plan to prevent and combat domestic violence as part of the European year to eliminate domestic violence against women.

#### **II.4.6. Measures to combat genital mutilation**

In the Netherlands, female circumcision is seen as a violation of the right to physical integrity and is therefore against the law. Various policy measures have been taken to provide information and support to women living in the Netherlands who are from countries where female circumcision is a traditional practice. Dutch embassies are supporting a number of projects in the context of development co-operation policy to inform, raise awareness of and eradicate female circumcision in countries receiving aid. Structural assistance is also being given to the NGO programme run by the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children.

<b>good practice: <i>Proceeds from book sale</i></b>
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As part of the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a book entitled <i>Reflections on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A Fiftieth Anniversary Anthology</i> , containing contributions from international human rights experts and activists. Proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and the UNFPA Trust Fund for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation.
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#### **II.4.7. Preventing and combating trafficking in women**

Trafficking in women, a growing form of international organised crime, has been given increased national and international attention in recent years. Since the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, efforts to combat trafficking in women have been speeded up. The European Union Member States have taken various initiatives in this area. To eliminate trafficking in women, measures are now needed with regard to prevention and early warning, investigation and prosecution, and victim support. This requires a joint approach at both national and international level. These areas together constitute the framework that will give practical form to efforts to prevent and

good practice: ***The Hague Declaration***

During the Netherlands' EU Presidency, the Co-ordinating Minister for Emancipation policy and the Minister of Justice organised a conference of EU ministers to discuss trafficking in women (April 1997) which resulted in the Hague EU Ministerial Declaration on European Guidelines for Effective Measures to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation (otherwise known as the Hague Declaration). This was a practical follow-up to the European Commission's Communication on trafficking in women and the initiative of Belgium and Ireland to conclude binding agreements in the field of justice and home affairs to combat trafficking in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children. It led to a unique form of co-operation between the EU policy areas of equal opportunities, justice and home affairs in the context of mainstreaming emancipation policy, and was continued during subsequent EU presidencies.

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and prohibiting the employment of minors or illegal immigrants.

To prepare for the new situation, intensive discussions were held between the municipalities, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, representatives of the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment and of Justice and the National Consultation Group on Prostitution. An Abolition of the Ban on Brothels Supplementary Policy Group has also been established under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice. This group brings together the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, the public prosecution service, the police, the Amsterdam and Hague city councils, officials from the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment, the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Health, Welfare and Sport and the A. de Graaf Foundation. The group has drafted an enforcement plan co-ordinating supervision and intervention by the local authorities and the police. The various parts of the police force, including the vice squad, aliens department, Criminal Information Service, units investigating serious and other crimes and the Financial Investigations Units will be responsible for all supervision. Due to the large number of units involved, it is important for supervision to be properly co-ordinated. This will probably take the form of checks by the vice squad, involving regular, targeted visits to premises where prostitution is taking place or could be taking place. The aim is to gain an accurate overview of the brothel industry and to obtain early indications about where prostitution is thought to be taking place.

#### **II.4.9. Women in armed conflict**

The initiatives, which have been taken to support women in armed conflict situations, fall into two categories. The first covers the provision of aid to the victims of war in the broadest possible sense; the second involves promoting the active participation of women in the peace process and during the period of post-war reconstruction, based on the needs of the women themselves. Various projects have been launched to examine the role of women in the peace process as part of the government's women in development policy. The main aim of these projects is to lay the foundations for peace and to foster peace negotiations.

good practice: <b><i>Conflict mediation and conflict prevention</i></b>
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<p>The development action programme 'Engendering the Peace Process' in the Middle East focuses on creating a foundation for peace. At the centre were the integration of gender, the formulation of alternatives for sustained peace and the activation of peace negotiations.</p> <p>Under the guidance of professional female negotiators and under the responsibility of two national groups, simultaneous hearings were held in both the Israeli and the Palestinians communities.</p>
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It is recognised by both parties that improvement of political participation by women must be based on a strengthening of their status within their own communities, though without opting for direct co-operation as yet. During a consultative forum in Jerusalem organised by the Dutch government and a delegation of senior international female politicians in September 1997, agreement was reached on the implementation of a joint action programme in the framework of Engendering the Peace Process. One of the activities designed to further broaden the foundation for peace is the establishment of committees for peace, justice and security. These are local women's committees in Israel and the Palestinian territories, which, through policy monitoring and public education, draw attention to the links between peace, justice, and security as preconditions for reconciliation and lasting peace. These groups also conduct activities to encourage the Israeli and Palestinian governments to appoint more women to negotiating teams and to involve more women in political decision-making, especially with regard to the peace process. Relevant agenda items include a political lobby tour, discussions with government leaders, publicity campaigns and a proposal to organise legal aid.



## **II.5 REDISTRIBUTION OF POWER AND INFLUENCE**

Equal participation by women is crucial for achieving democracy, social equality and a transparent and multiform administration. Equal participation in decision-making bodies, which are after all a reflection of society as a whole, enhances the legitimacy of government. It also improves the quality of decision-making, since decisions and the decision-making process will then reflect the diversity within society.

Decision-making can be divided into 'politics and public administration' and 'community-based decision-making'. Since 1992, the Dutch government has been pursuing a targeted policy to boost the number of women in politics and public administration.

### **II.5.1. Target figures for women in politics and public administration**

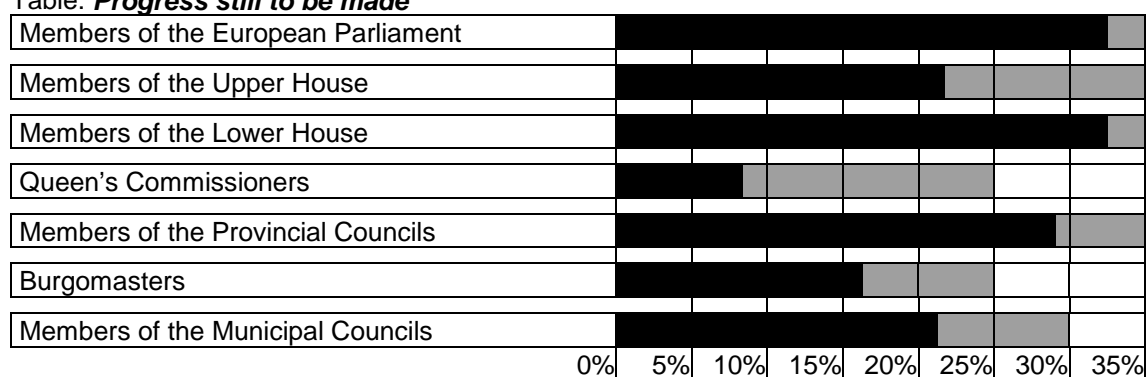
Since 1990 the UN has regarded 30% as the critical threshold for participation by women in political decision-making. If participation falls below 30%, women cannot exercise genuine influence in decision-making since they will find it difficult to be taken seriously as fully-fledged partners in the decision-making process.

Community-based decision-making is defined as participation in decision-making bodies, civil society organisations and enterprises. In principle, civil society organisations are themselves responsible for ensuring equal participation of women. The government merely stimulates, supports and assists the development of 'good practice'. The best-known government-funded initiatives in this area are Opportunity in Business and Toplink, which are discussed in more detail in chapters IV.2.7 and IV.2.8.

Women are still underrepresented on all decision-making bodies. There is therefore a very real danger that not all aspects or consequences affecting women will be taken into account in the decision-making process. Reasons for the underrepresentation of women in the decision-making process can be found both on the supply and demand sides of membership of such bodies.

On the demand side, the criteria and selection procedures used do not appear to favour female membership. The membership profile is largely male. Vacancies are filled by inviting or proposing

Table: **Progress still to be made**



■ Situation at the end of 1997      ■ Progress still to be made before reaching the target figure  
 Source: Women in Politics and Public Administration, *Progress Report 1998*, page 3

As the table shows, there is still some way to go before equal representation of women and men in government is achieved, although good progress has certainly been made.

good practice: **Review of the advisory system**

The Advisory Bodies Framework Act took effect on 1 January 1997. It imposes a legal requirement to work towards equal participation by women in government advisory bodies. This is an important step in increasing the representation of women on such bodies and has led to a substantial rise in the number of women on newly created advisory bodies

### II.5.2. TECENA

In addition to the Advisory Bodies Framework Act, the Temporary Expert Committee on Emancipation in the New Advisory System (TECENA) was appointed on 1 January 1998 for a maximum period of three years (see chapter IV.1.3.).

### II.5.3. Local decision-making culture

In 1999, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations launched a pilot project to increase diversity in local administration. Various municipalities are taking part in this project under the leadership of their burgomasters. The purpose of the project is to create a more accessible political culture at local level. Municipal councils will be conducting activities designed to make local political culture more attractive to newcomers to politics and to the wider public.

The current proportion of women in municipal councils is 22%, a percentage that has remained unchanged for the past three elections. The number of ethnic minority councillors has risen, yet remains low. Research has shown that female councillors either leave office during their first term or fail to put themselves forward for re-election. The same applies to councillors from ethnic minorities. This 'revolving-door effect' is a major reason why the proportion of women and people from ethnic minorities serving on local councils is not growing. Promoting increased diversity in politics therefore does not just depend on encouraging an inflow of new candidates, for example during selection procedures and local elections, but also on retaining (often new) female and ethnic minority councillors.

The municipalities taking part in the project will concentrate on, among other things, communication and co-operation, supporting new councillors and helping them to settle in, promoting diversity in style and approach - including as regards external profiling - and improving the way municipal councils operate.

## II.6 MEDIA AND IMAGE-MAKING

The distinctions made between men and women are often unintentional and tend to be based on a specific, deeply rooted historical image. Both men and women inherit images of a variety of topics, mostly incorporating a value judgement about those topics. One such image concerns what it is to be 'male' and 'female'. This generally takes men as its yardstick, thereby investing them with a higher status than women. This traditional norm is detrimental to role-sharing, freedom of choice and the social standing attributed to men and women.

The creation of gender-based images has been a specific focus of concern of emancipation policy since 1985. The government is taking steps to raise public awareness of processes which perpetuates existing sexual stereotypes. This awareness can then be used to influence those who generate and disseminate such images.

The government is trying in various ways to bring important findings about how images evolve to the notice of a wider public. To assist this process, it has published an accessible brochure for non-specialist readers about the problem of image making, illustrated by a large number of practical examples. This brochure has been widely disseminated.

good practice: <b><i>Guide to Effective Image Making</i></b>
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A <i>Guide to Effective Image Making</i> was published at the beginning of 1999 with an equal opportunities grant from the government. The guide contains advice for professional 'image-makers' on how to identify and break with stereotypical gender images. Most of these image-makers are government information officers, professionals in the advertising and media industry and authors of official and academic publications. The guide applies existing insights on the development of male and female images to the work of these image-makers using texts and illustrations
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### II.6.1. Image making Office m/f

The Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and of Social Affairs and Employment have been subsidising a five-year pilot project (due to end this year) on the development of gender-based images in the media. The purpose of the project, which is run by the national broadcasting corporation, is to find practical ways to generate a broader and more varied image of women and men and of what it means to be female or male in programmes broadcast by the corporation.

This project has had a significant impact, both within Dutch broadcasting and in other countries. It has led to a collaborative partnership with Scandinavian broadcasters, who are now conducting a similar experiment. A follow-on project has been launched in the Netherlands to make awareness of gender-based image-making a permanent feature of public broadcasting.

good practice: <b><i>AXIS Office for the Arts (m/f)</i></b>
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AXIS is a national organisation for women and culture, set up in 1996. The main aim of the AXIS Office for the Arts (m/f) is to change people's perceptions of men and women, of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. It also seeks to improve the professional status of women artists. The Office provides public information, answers queries from the public and supports professionals.
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### II.6.2. Business is Business

The book *Business is Business*, which was published in 1999 at the instigation of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, stresses the need for a 'gender critical' approach to language and thinking in policy. The book is based on various studies of image making, and seeks to make these studies available to a wider audience.

Policy documents often contain hidden examples of gender stereotyping and of the perceived role and status of men and women. This practice unintentionally and inadvertently perpetuates the imbalance of power between the sexes. Constant alertness to this hidden 'gender loading' in language and attitudes is needed. This will help prevent a so-called 'gender neutral' policy from having undesirable knock-on effects on the emancipation process.

## **II.7 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

One of the ways in which the Dutch government is trying to improve the environment is through rural development. Women are a key part of this process. Rural women are developing a variety of

### **III EMANCIPATION POLICY: A WIDE DIVERSITY OF INSTRUMENTS**

A wide range of instruments is needed to implement the government's two-tracked strategy, mainstreaming and targeted emancipation policy.

#### **III.1 INSTRUMENTS BASED ON LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**

##### **III.1.1. Equal Treatment Act (AWGB)**

The Equal Treatment Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of religion, personal convictions, political persuasion, race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation and marital status. The ban on discrimination does not apply to indirect discrimination, which can be objectively justified. Direct discrimination is prohibited unless it is specifically exempted by the Act. For example, the Act states that the ban on 8(ic)-8.5(ally)27.lydeics

1997 this percentage was 6.6 and by 1998 it had risen to 10.

#### **III.1.4.Regulations governing equal treatment**

Regulations provide the foundation for the anchoring of emancipation policy in law. They can be applied to any area and range from numerical targets to measures to combat violence against women. The government is in all cases responsible for investigating, banning and preventing direct and indirect discrimination through legislation, jurisprudence and public administration. Regulations governing the equal treatment of men and women are found in a wide range of areas and are laid down in various laws.

#### **III.1.5.Submission of reports to CEDAW**

Every four years, the signatories to the UN Women's Convention must submit a report to the Committee for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This report must outline all the measures arising from the treaty obligations which a country has taken and must

## **III.2. INSTRUMENTS DESIGNED TO BROADEN SUPPORT**

### **III.2.1. Communications policy**

Emancipation policy not only relies on the spreading of information about that policy but also - and increasingly - on modern forms of communication such as the Internet. Information and communication technology (ICT) is now able to influence people both in public as in private domain. However, due to logy

### **III.3 INSTRUMENTS GEARED TOWARDS THE SUPPORT, RESEARCH, MONITORING AND DETECTION OF HIDDEN DISCRIMINATION**

#### **III.3.1. Subsidy policy**

The most important instrument that can be used to implement the emancipation support structure is subsidy. A large number of national organisations now contribute to the emancipation process through projects and/or programmes. Most of these organisations are involved in building expertise or supplying information and drawing attention to policy-related issues. They are largely government-funded. Few, as yet, apply to the EU for funding.

##### **III.3.1.1. Emancipation Subsidy Scheme**

The new 1998 Emancipation Subsidy Scheme took effect on 1 January 1998. The review of the existing scheme was directly prompted by the introduction of the new General Administrative Law Act and the fact that the existing subsidy scheme no longer tied in with the general subsidy schemes administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The review was also carried out in response to social developments. Like its predecessor, the new subsidy scheme can award grants to small-scale and innovative initiatives. It provides a foundation for the launch of supplementary initiatives which continue to be necessary despite the fact that in various areas, the emancipation process is gradually being incorporated into the regular policy process. It is therefore still possible to



*Aim:* to promote balanced gender and ethnic relations by influencing social interaction and policy through its role as an independent emancipation and gender expertise centre for Dutch multicultural society and international fora.

5. Opportunity in Business

*Aim:* to promote equal labour participation by women at all levels in organisations providing employment, to encourage companies to make better use of women's capacities, to develop an up-to-date network for companies and to boost recognition of the economic potential of women. The Ministry of Economic Affairs co-finances this initiative, to which participating companies also contribute.

### **III.3.2. The Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy research programme**

The Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy research programme is redefined each year. Its purpose is to contribute to the ongoing encouragement, development and implementation of the government's emancipation policy.

The research programme is used to provide focus for new policy themes and to develop instruments to implement the government's two-tracked policy. To this end, the programme is divided into three categories.

#### **III.3.2.1. Innovative research**

Innovative research can be used to chart new developments and stimulate associated policy developments. This type of research can be experimental in nature due to the fact that it is forward-looking.

#### **III.3.2.2. Promoting the integration aspects of mainstreaming**

Research can help integrate emancipation goals into regular policy. One way of doing so is through instruments such as the Gender Impact Assessment, which is discussed below. Research can also be used to help clarify the progress made by emancipation policy in society.

#### **III.3.2.3. Follow-on studies**

The research programme also includes studies which can assist the implementation of political pledges, international obligations, current themes and follow-on research.

### **III.3.3. Monitoring**

Systematic monitoring is a useful way of making the emancipation process more transparent and open to evaluation. Numerical data and analyses can be used as source material for policy. Publishing this information not only clarifies the process for policy-makers but also makes it more accessible to the general public. This will widen support for emancipation policy and improve the quality of the process.

<b>good practice: <i>Emancipation Yearbook</i></b>
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The Yearbook is a collaborative effort between the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy and Statistics Netherlands (CBS). It brings together statistical data and analyses and includes a forecast as well as a retrospective analysis. Two yearbooks have appeared so far. The first Emancipation Yearbook was published in 1997 on the theme of paid work and unpaid care. The second appeared in 1998 on the theme 'a time and a place for work and care'. The third yearbook, to be published in 1999, will also be about paid work unpaid care: who cares in the 21st century?
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### **III.3.4. Gender Impact Assessment**

Since 1995, Gender Impact Assessment has been applied to policy proposals. This gives policy-

good practice: ***Gender Impact Assessment***

Gender Impact Assessment is an ex-ante evaluation that was developed in the Netherlands. It is an assessment of policy proposals focusing not on the aims of policy but on the degree to which policy causes a positive/negative impact of women and men and on the structural balance of power.

A theoretical framework has been devised for the Gender Impact Assessment based on the theoretical parameters of the analysis. For-81uip14(am)-24.8(ple, it identif)-13.7(ies)-8.4( s)-8.4(t)-1.7(r)-6.7(u)-0.5(c)-8. proposals. The purpose of these assessments is to prevent these proposals from unintentionally and inadvertently perpetuating gender inequalities or stereotypical role patterns. The same method has been applied to the advisory repor- on junior general secondary and pre-vocational educ

## **IV NATIONAL MACHINERY AND EMANCIPATION SUPPORT STRUCTURE**

In the Netherlands, political responsibility for emancipation policy resides either with a Co-ordinating Minister or a Co-ordinating State Secretary for emancipation policy, who is also responsible for regulating the distribution of paid work and unpaid care. Under the present administration a state secretary performs this role. In the interests of mainstreaming, the other ministers and state secretaries are also expressly responsible for emancipation policy in their own areas of competence. The interpretation and practical implementation of emancipation policy cannot therefore be separated from the specific policies of the relevant ministries.

### **IV.1. NATIONAL MACHINERY**

The political responsibility of the state secretary covers the emancipation aspects of government policy as a whole. The Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy, which has been part of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment since 1981, is the key component in the national machinery of central government. This unit is responsible for the development of a cohesive emancipation policy and has also been given the task of initiating, reviewing and co-ordinating policy.

Interdepartmental co-ordination is managed by the Interdepartmental Co-ordination Committee for Emancipation Policy, which is chaired by the director of the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy and brings together representatives from all the ministries. Almost every ministry has an internal co-ordinating body, which advises its own minister on emancipation issues relating to that ministry's area of competence. This is frequently an emancipation committee. The authority and practical influence of these bodies differs from ministry to ministry.

The work of the former Parliamentary Permanent Committee on Emancipation Policy has now been transferred to the Permanent Committee for Social Affairs and Employment. As a result, parliament can now assess the emancipation goals of socio-economic policy more fully.

Co-ordination between central government and international bodies is becoming increasingly important. The European Union plays a key role in this. Major international conventions such as the UN Women's Convention and international agreements such as the *Beijing Platform for Action* drafted during the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women are growing in significance.

The national machinery helps the government to develop policy and policy-related measures. This has widened the foundation for emancipation policy and has increased the scope for forging alliances and implementing successful initiatives. An emancipation support structure, however, remains necessary to stimulate the process of change towards an emancipated society. The shift in emancipation policy away from analysis and towards implementation has resulted in a deliberate broadening of the number of actors involved. The national machinery is also more geared towards widening the acceptance of emancipation beyond the scope of emancipation specialists. With this in mind, the government has been reviewing the emancipation support structure in 1995.

The government has drafted a series of conditions based on its review of aspects of the national machinery, the development of a new emancipation support policy and measures to integrate recommendations on emancipation policy into the government's regular advisory tasks. These conditions continue the strategy adopted by the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women. The various players involved can apply for subsidies to fund initiatives based on these conditions and move forward the emancipation process, and an exchange can take place between the women's movement and the implementation of government policy.

In order to be able to contribute to these developments and to operate as effectively as possible, the national machinery and the emancipation support structure must reflect and review the progress of emancipation policy so far. In recent years, the expansion of emancipation policy into other areas of society has increased the number of players involved in the emancipation process. In 1997 the emancipation support structure was reviewed to accommodate the latest national and international developments.

#### **IV.1.2. Disbanding of the Emancipation Council**

The Emancipation Council was disbanded on 1 May 1997 after having played a key role in emancipation policy over the past 16 years. The role of the Emancipation Council had been to issue recommendations to the relevant ministers, either at their request or on its own initiative, concerning the government's emancipation policy in general and the co-ordination of emancipation provisions and measures in particular.

The government decided to dissolve the Emancipation Council as part of its fundamental reorganisation of the advisory councils. This was done as part of the 'mainstreaming' exercise to integrate emancipation aspects into regular policy.

The disbanding of the Emancipation Council effected a major change in the emancipation support structure. The Council has played an important role in the evolution of the emancipation process in general and in the direction and guidance of policy in particular. It therefore functioned both in an advisory and a think tank capacity.

The Emancipation Council advised the government on ways of continuing to uphold emancipation issues after it had been disbanded. On the basis of this advice, the government opted for three main lines of policy to integrate emancipation policy into the new advisory structure:

- a) Provision of advice on emancipation policy as part of the regular work of all advisory bodies;
- b) The government will undertake to appoint sufficient women to external advisory bodies;
- c) The integration of emancipation policy into the new advisory structure will be given supervision and support.

#### **IV.1.3. Equal Treatment Commission**

The Equal Treatment Commission investigates and assesses whether there are contravening acts to the provisions of the Equal Treatment Act (see chapter III.1.2.).

#### **IV.1.4. TECENA**

On 1 January 1998, one year after the entry into force of the Advisory Bodies Framework Act, the Temporary Expert Committee (TECENA) was appointed for a maximum period of three years in order to monitor the incorporation of the gender perspective into the new consultation system. Its task will be to ensure that within the new advisory structure, government advisory bodies devote sufficient attention in their recommendations to the emancipation aspects of the issues under consideration. TECENA's responsibilities are to:

- a) Ensure that emancipation aspects are taken into consideration in all advice requested;
- b) Suggest ways in which the advisory bodies can increase knowledge of emancipation among their members and staff;
- c) Ensure that efforts are made to find suitable female candidates for appointments to advisory bodies.

## **IV.2. THE MAIN ACTORS IN THE EMANCIPATION SUPPORT STRUCTURE**

The emancipation support structure has been updated since the Beijing conference. The quality and effectiveness of emancipation policy in the Netherlands has always to some extent relied on the existence of an emancipation support structure. Emancipation policy is traditionally rooted in the inspiration and specific input of the wider women's movement and has evolved in close co-operation with these organisations<sup>9</sup>.

Support for initiatives launched by the women's movement has led to the development of centres of

Emancipation policy.

#### **IV.2.3. Foundation against Trafficking in Women**

The Foundation against Trafficking in Women protects the interests of (immigrant) women working as prostitutes or in related industries and who suffer coercion, violence and exploitation. The organisation receives a grant of approximately NLG 500,000 each year from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

#### **IV.2.4. TransAct**

To provide added impetus to the implementation of policy against sexual violence, the Netherlands Centre for Gender-Specific Health Care and the Eradication of Sexual Violence, TransAct, has been asked to head efforts to push forward policy to combat sexual violence for a four-year period (beginning in 1997), alongside its regular duties. Regional co-operation, promoting permanent attention to sexual violence in schools, quality control and strengthening the role of the client are all spearheads of this leadership role. TransAct receives a total of NLG 2.8 million a year for its regular work and its supplementary spearhead role from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

#### **IV.2.5. The Women's Alliance**

This umbrella organisation, created in 1993 following a merger between the Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency Platform and the Association for the Redistribution of Paid and Unpaid Work, has a very large number of member organisations, including the women's secretariat of the Federation of Netherlands Trade Unions, rural women's organisations, TIYE International and the National Women's Council. The Women's Alliance receives an annual grant of roughly NLG 500,000 from the Coordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy.

#### **IV.2.6. The Clara Wichmann Institute**

The Clara Wichmann Institute (CWI) is the central institute for women and law in the Netherlands. It receives an annual grant of approximately NLG 900,000 from the Minister of Justice.

#### **IV.2.7. Opportunity in Business**

The Opportunity in Business initiative was launched in 1996 as part of the emancipation policy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The aim of the project is to improve the way in which the capacities of women are utilised on the labour market. A further aim is to achieve a balanced distribution of men and women in jobs at all levels.

The Opportunity in Business steering group consists of representatives from 20 companies. These include KPMG, KLM, Unilever, ABN-AMRO Bank, Akzo-Nobel, plus the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment and of Economic Affairs, employers' organisations and trade unions.

Opportunity in Business provides customised support to member companies. The aim is for each affiliated company to draft its own plans and goals to achieve diversity, which are linked to its long-term business strategy. This will eventually bring about a cultural change within these companies. Opportunity in Business offers companies specific strategies for bringing about these shifts in corporate culture. Just over a year after its launch, around a hundred companies have now joined the campaign. Opportunity in Business receives a NLG 1 million annual grant.

#### **IV.2.8. Toplink**

Toplink, which was established in 1995, is designed to help recruit more women to the executive boards of NGOs, government advisory bodies and supervisory boards, and mediates in filling vacancies in these bodies. It manages a database of highly qualified women, which it uses to fill vacancies on the executive boards of national civil society organisations, government advisory bodies and company supervisory boards. Toplink receives an annual grant of NLG 400,000.

#### **IV.2.9. Consultative Group on Women from an Ethnic Group Background**

The Consultative Group on Women from Ethnic Group Backgrounds grew out of an informal network launched by the national machinery. It brings together representatives from black, immigrant and refugee women's organisations and institutions and representatives from four relevant ministries. The aim of this periodic consultation group was initially to maintain regular contacts to discuss proposed policy. Following an internal evaluation in 1997, however, the Consultative Group decided to focus more on the targeted influencing of government policy at an early stage to accommodate the wishes and needs of black, immigrant and refugee women in respect of emancipation policy.









protection of the reproductive rights of female refugees, while the Ministry of Justice has added the development of a plan of action against domestic violence to its own portfolio.

These emancipation tasks must however meet a number of specific criteria. They must, for example:

1. Be quantifiable;
2. Be achieved within four years;
3. Tie in with the main themes of the ministry's policy;
4. Tie in with the government's existing emancipation policy;
5. Be designed primarily to have an impact on society.

The ministries have also been asked to consider the recommendations of the Daily Routine Committee when preparing and selecting their emancipation tasks.

#### **V.4. The Daily Routine Incentive Scheme**

The recommendations made by the Daily Routine Committee led, among other things, to the Daily Routine Incentive Scheme, which the government decided to implement in 1998. NLG 60 million was

### **V.7. Emancipation and the younger generation in the 21st century**

As the 21st century draws nearer, it is important to know to what extent the '1990 generation' (those who turned 18 in 1990) have achieved economic self-sufficiency. In principle, the government no longer applies the traditional 'social contract' to this generation. This means that an unemployed or disabled breadwinner will not be entitled to an additional increment on top of his or her benefit if his or her dependent partner was born after 31 December 1971 and there are no children below the age of 12. The Emancipation Monitor will evaluate the degree of economic self-sufficiency of this generation. Specific attention will also need to be given to the status of girls from ethnic minority backgrounds, who are frequently faced with conflicting patterns of expectation. The role of these girls could be crucial in the creation of social cohesion in a multicultural society, according to the coalition agreement.

### **V.8. Appointment of a national rapporteur on trafficking in women**

One key recommendation made in the Hague Declaration on combating trafficking in women was the setting up of a monitoring system. It has emerged that in many countries - and at international level - there is no comprehensive overview of data on trafficking in women and on ways to prevent and combat this practice. It is insufficiently clear whether the measures taken so far to prevent and combat trafficking in women will give the desired effect. Partly for this reason, the Declaration calls for the appointment of a national rapporteur to register and process this data.

The Dutch government is currently making preparations to appoint a national rapporteur on trafficking in women. This national rapporteur will report to the government on developments affecting the extent and nature of forms of sexual exploitation, notably with regard to women and children. He or she will also be expected to investigate the effects of the policy measures taken to prevent and combat this practice and to submit recommendations for improvements. The national rapporteur's area of research will therefore not only cover trafficking in women but also topics not addressed in specific detail by the Hague Declaration. This area of research can be further adapted following an evaluation. An interim evaluation will be conducted after two and four years respectively.

The practical content and organisation of the mandate for a national rapporteur was prepared by the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy and the Ministries of Justice, Health, Welfare

#### **V.10. Development co-operation**

Following consultations with the women's movement in the countries concerned, the Dutch government decided to concentrate its development co-operation activities on six of the twelve critical areas of concern cited in the *Platform for Action*. These areas are: women and poverty, notably the right and access to natural resources such as land and water, education, reproductive health and rights, combating violence against women, women and armed conflict, and women in power and decision-making. The Netherlands is also contributing to the development of *national machineries*, both in international fora (UN, World Bank, IMF, EU) and in partnership with national governments. The evaluation of the emancipation component in Dutch development co-operation in 1998 concluded that there is still a long way to go in achieving material equality and removing structural and cultural obstacles in recipient countries. There are still far fewer women taking part in aid programmes than men, both among the beneficiaries and the implementing agencies. The Dutch government's current strategy of concentrating aid on a small number of sectors in a few countries could be detrimental to women. It has therefore decided that an effective gender policy in recipient countries should be one of the selection criteria for the concentration of aid. In the autumn of 1999, when the government comes to choose the relevant sectors in the selected countries, it will give priority to those sectors which promote the emancipation of women.