



**Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**

**HUMAN DIMENSION SEMINAR**

**ON**

**THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY**

**CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY**

**Warsaw, 14 - 17 October 1997**

## **CONTENTS**

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>AGENDA, TIMETABLE AND OTHER ORGANISATIONAL MODALITIES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>PLENARY MEETING</b>	
	<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY Ms. ELIZABETH REHN</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>RAPPORTEURS' REPORTS</b>	
	<b>GENERAL CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>DISCUSSION GROUP 1 - Ms. ANDA CHRISTINA FILIP</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>DISCUSSION GROUP 2 - Ms. URSULA MÜLLER.</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>DISCUSSION GROUP 3 - Ms. REGAN RALPH</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>ANNEX</b>	
	<b>INDEX OF DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED DURING THE SEMINAR</b>	<b>25</b>

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Human Dimension Seminar on the Promotion of Women's Participation in Society was held in Warsaw on 14-17 October 1997. The Seminar was organised by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The Seminar was the twelfth in a series of specialised Human Dimension meetings organised by the ODIHR in accordance with the decision of the CSCE Follow-up Meetings in Helsinki 1992 and Budapest 1994. The previous seminars were devoted to: Tolerance (November 1992), Migration, including Refugees and Displaced Persons (April 1993), Case Studies on National Minorities Issues: Positive Results (May 1993), Free Media (November 1993), Migrant Workers (March 1994), Local Democracy (May 1994), Roma in the CSCE Region (September 1994), Building Blocks for Civic Society: Freedom of Association and NGOs (April 1995), Rule of Law (November/December 1995), Constitutional, Legal and Administrative Aspects of the Freedom of Religion (April 1996) and Administration and Observation of Elections (April 1997).

The seminar addressed a number of specific issues related to women in decision making processes, women in social-economic life as well as women in conflict situations, including war crime and violence against women.

The seminar was not mandated to produce any negotiated texts, but summary reports prepared by the Rapporteurs of the three Discussion Groups were presented in the final Plenary Meeting.

## **II. AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Seminar by the Director of the ODIHR.
2. Plenary: Keynote speech on the Legal Status of Women.
3. Discussion on women in decision-making processes, women in social-economic life and women in conflict situations, including war crime and violence against women.
4. Summing up and closure of the Seminar.

## **TIMETABLE AND OTHER ORGANISATIONAL MODALITIES**

1. The Seminar was opened on Tuesday, 14 October 1997 at 3 p.m. in Warsaw. It was closed on Friday, 17 October 1997.
2. All Plenaries and the Discussion Groups were opened.

3. Agenda items 1,2,3 and 4 were dealt with in the plenary meetings. The closing Plenary, scheduled for Friday morning, summarized the practical suggestions and ideas for dealing with issues and problems raised during the Discussion Groups.
4. Agenda item 3 was dealt with in the Plenary as well as in the three Discussion Groups:

Discussion Group 1: Women in decision-making processes

Topics included:

**Identifying structural, cultural and mental barriers to further participation**

- the importance of education
- the importance of social measures
- the importance of legal measures
- the importance of family policy
- the role of the media
- religious fundamentalism and women

**Measures to promote increased involvement, equal access and full participation by women in the decision-making process as well as in capacity-building**

- experience gained from different forms of preferential treatment of women in political parties, organisations, etc.
- experience gained from the promotion of women's decision-making power in private enterprises
- how to ensure the integration and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting 1986, paragraph 15, and the Moscow Document 1991, paragraph 40, in the work of the OSCE?
- the role of NGOs

---

Discussion Group 2: Women in social-economic life

Topics included:

**The economic status of women**

- women's access to paid work
- self-employment/agriculture
- women outside the labour market
- the situation for single parents
- the informal sector
- national and international standards on the labour market
- working hours, length of the working day
- wages and equal pay

## **Feminization of poverty**

- reasons for the feminization of poverty
- consequences for children, family and society
- the fight against the poverty of women
- the role of NGOs

## Discussion Group 3: Women in conflict situations, including war crime and violence against women

Topics included:

### **Violence as a tool of war**

- women as target of organised violence in conflict situations
- women in post-conflict rehabilitation and normalization
- legal attention to gender-specific crimes

### **Refugee and displaced women**

- violence against refugee women
- gender persecution
- "camp democracy"
- women and migration

### **Violence against women**

- women as target of racist violence
- women trafficking, networks of prostitution
- measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women

5. The Plenary and Discussion Group meetings took place according to the Work Programme.
6. An ODIHR representative chaired the Plenary meetings.
7. The ODIHR invited the moderators to guide the Discussions Groups. They were assisted by ODIHR representatives.
8. Standard OSCE rules of procedure and working methods were applied at the Seminar.

## **III. PARTICIPATION**

The Seminar was attended by a total number of 161 participants. Representatives of 39 participating States took part in it. The delegation of one Mediterranean Non-participating State, Tunisia was also present.

In addition six international organisations were represented: the Council of Europe, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Labour Organisation, United Nations Department of Political Affairs, United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

At the seminar 59 representatives of 48 non-governmental organisations were present.

#### **IV. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

The seminar was opened by the Director of the ODIHR, Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann. The keynote address was delivered by the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Ms. Elizabeth Rehn.

Opening contributions were made by 17 national delegations and two international organisations.

During the seminar three Discussion Groups met. The topics were divided as follows:

##### **Discussion Group 1: Women in Decision-Making Processes**

Key Note Speaker: Ms. Maria Regina Tavares da Silva, the Council of Europe expert, Adviser to the Governmental Commission for Equality and Women's Rights (Portugal)

Moderator: Ms. Christina Bürgi, Diplomatic Desk Officer at the OSCE Unit, Political Division, Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Switzerland)

Rapporteur: Ms. Anda Filip, Spokesperson, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Romania)

ODIHR: Ms. Gwen Mc Evoy, Intern

##### **Discussion Group 2: Women in Social-Economic Life**

Key Note Speaker: Ms. Dilfusa Guyamova, Staff Member of the Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights Office (Uzbekistan)

Moderator: Ms. Kamma Langberg, Project Manager at the Esbjerg Folk Highschool, lecturer at the Universities in Aarhus, Aalborg and at the Business School in Aarhus (Denmark)

Rapporteur: Ms. Ursula Müller, Commissioner for Women's Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Germany)

ODIHR: Ms. Nina Wessel, Intern

##### **Discussion Group 3: Women in Conflict Situations, including War Crime and Violence against Women**

Key Note Speaker: Ms. Barbara Lochbihler, Secretary General of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Moderator: Ms. Christina Doctare, Council of Europe expert, the Swedish Member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Rapporteur: Ms. Regan Ralph, Washington Director of Women's Rights Project; Human Rights Watch

ODIHR: Mr. Vladimir Shkolnikov, Migration Adviser

There were also several meetings taking place in the course of the seminar, among others with delegates from Central Asia and with NGOs.

The closing plenary meeting was chaired by the Deputy Director of the ODIHR. The Rapporteurs presented their reports. Statements on behalf of 15 national delegations, two international organisation and one NGO were made.

## **V. PLENARY MEETING**

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MS. ELIZABETH REHN the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a woman in earlier years active in politics in Finland, a country where the women are well represented in the parliament over one third - having been the first female Minister of Defense in the world and having experienced a presidential election where I lost in the second round but however got 46 percent of the votes, you must believe me when I say that my first contact with the politics in the Balkan was a depressing experience. My counterparts on all levels, from the local party leader, the Chief of Police, the religious leader to Ministers and Presidents, are to an overwhelming majority men. The main exception is the President of Republika Srpska, Mrs. Biljana Plavsic. The worst thing is that the majority of the male politicians are the same men that started the war, and they are still holding their offices. It makes speaking of reconciliation, human rights and human values very difficult. It makes the process to try to convince the people in the region that there is a future, very difficult. If we are suffering of a diminished belief in politicians in my home country, the problem is even worse in the countries covered by my mandate, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal republic of Yugoslavia.

I am not invited to this conference to talk about my own home-country, but before I continue with my experiences from the Balkans I hope that you will allow me to ver briefly comment on the equality situation in Finland, since I was not only the Minister of Defense - but also the Minister of Equality Affairs.

As early as 1906 with the introduction of universal suffrage, Finnish women became the first in Europe to be entitled to vote and the first in the world to stand for elected office. In the parliament election held in the following year almost ten percent of the seats went to women. The early introduction of voting for women had been facilitated by their participation in working life. A further reason was the activity of women in various organisations and the fact that there were accustomed to political life. The earliest popular movements in Finland were religious revivals, often initiated by women. From the nineteenth century women's organisations have been particularly prominent in social life, laying the foundation for schools, libraries, kindergartens, shelters for mothers and care for prisoners. They also promoted and developed the training of nurses and social workers and provided counseling in the care of children and the home. Furthermore, women's organisations were active in issues such as labour protection, the protection of children and maternity care, and they fought against prostitution and alcoholism. Most of Finland's old women's organisations are still active, renewing themselves along changing conditions. In politics as well, women focused on social and cultural affairs from the very beginning. Many reforms initiated on a charitable and volunteer basis by women's organisation are presently laid down in legislation.

I earlier told you about my background as Minister of Defence. Both my successor as Minister of Defence and the present Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs are also women. Although in principle Finnish women have access to the highest positions in society, the power elite is still male. Men have the highest positions in business, the trade unions and politics. The executive level of fields dominated by women is still mainly represented by men. This means that men ultimately make decisions about matters traditionally managed by women, such as child care and nursing. During the past economic recession, cuts and savings have especially been made in fields dominated by women. As the highest level of power is in the hands of men, there is a constant need for co-operation between women's organisations and for networks of women in various fields to defend issues common to all women and to further them. Finland has, for example, a network of female members of parliament. To conclude this part, the legislation in Finland is good thinking of equality but still have to remember that legislation is not reality.

Back to the Balkans. When talking about the situation of women in the former Yugoslavia, I would like to start with focusing on the children. In every conflict, unfortunately, the children are among the victims. In this very male-centred countries the main responsibility for the home and for the children lies with the women. Especially during the war women had - as always - to take care of the home and family. Women have fought a lot of wars, not always recognised by others, behind the front-lines. For me the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a crucial instrument. Therefore, I have communicated my observations, mainly in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Committee of the Rights of the Child.

Many children are left homeless and sometimes orphaned, bereft of any kind of stability in their lives. It is the responsibility of Governments and international organisations to conduct their work in view of the best interest of children, which are so important to lasting peace. There is also a big problem regarding disabled children, in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before the war, people were paying a tax for the care of disabled children, but now this is left to the regional administration - the Cantons. Since a lot of the Cantons are short of resources the majority of disabled children are in a tragic situation, left unattended, totally deprived of the special care they need. There are not enough special institutions and



the existing ones are short of means. Due to this chaotic situation we do not even know the exact number of disabled children.

The children are the future, and since I have lost hope in the generation now governing, I have found it crucial to focus on the younger generations. What can we do to avoid the ethnic cleansing again? I have identified education in human rights as a huge need in all parts of the former Yugoslavia. I find it important to mention my ideas for you, since I am convinced that the international actors need the support from first of all women, in the region and all over the world but also from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, to be successful in this task. I hope that we all agree that younger generations must develop a different approach to human values that those the world has witnessed in the former Yugoslavia during the last six years. There is, great urgency in including human rights education (appreciation for tolerance and multicultural society) in the curricula of all schools, not only a voluntary basis but as an important obligation of different countries' educational systems.

Amongst all the political chaos of the region there have been and there still are people suffering quietly but profoundly, people whose human rights deserve attention as much as those of anyone else. These people do not march in the streets. They do not get headlines in the newspapers. Heads of States and other prominent persons seldom talk about their situation in speeches. I call them "silent emergencies".

Who are they? An overwhelming majority are women, young and old. Victims of rapes, relatives to missing persons, children in orphanages, elderly people belonging to minorities left behind in small villages during the ethnic cleansing and now continuously harassed - living in humanitarian circumstances we have difficulties to imagine. The "silent emergencies" are crises which are not connected exclusively to the war, but have developed from the region's poor economic conditions.

I mentioned the victims of rape. One of the most horrifying findings after the war was that, for the first time, this appalling crime was used on a large scale for the purpose of ethnic cleansing. The victims of rape are not only women, they are often both sexes and including many children. These persons have faced and are facing problems of various kinds. There is the traumatic memories of the act itself that will never be forgotten, the anguish when they had to decide whether to keep children conceived through rape or to give them up for adoption. In all these cases victims still need protection, psychological care and practical guidance. In the interest of justice and truth, cases of rape should be brought to court. I am still concerned about the position of witnesses who will testify in domestic court, or before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, about violations of humanitarian law committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The victims need adequate assistance and protection, before, during and after the trials.

We have to respond to the enormous need for mine clearance, and reserve the resources to accomplish it. Especially now when the heart of the Dayton agreement is taking its first steps on the long way of implementation, the right to return. In the elections almost 90 percent of the voters voted in their prewar municipalities. This means that both displaced in the region, and refugees abroad have voted for a return, for living together with persons from other ethnic groups. The brutal reality is often putting an end to this. I understand very well that Bosnian families living in Germany or Sweden want to return, and they should be entitled

to do that if and when they express that will, Bosnia needs them. But it is our responsibility to objectively tell them to what they are returning, before they do so. The field where the children played football before might kill children now. Living in a peaceful country for a few years means that you cannot over one night teach the children that your own garden might be a killing field. Unfortunately, the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not put enough emphasis on mine clearance. I argue that if there would be more women involved with solving these questions, they would have a higher priority. I personally have met a lot of victims of mine accidents. You never forget them, and you will be quite convinced that a global ban of anti-personnel landmines is needed. I specially remember a child, a lovely boy of 11 years - playing football with other youngsters. The only difference was that he was sitting in a wheel-chair, with both legs amputated because he played in the suburbs of Sarajevo, and stepped into a mine.

The greatest "silent emergency" problem of all is the question of missing persons. They are Croats, Srbs and Muslims. They are still missing from Vukovar, from Gospic, from western Slavonia and the Krajina following Operations Flash and Storm, from Srebrenica and all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. They are still, two years after Dayton more than 18 000.

The deep depression that results when you do not know what happened to your loved one is the same for all people in this world - it does not depend on ethnic background or anything else. Mothers have the right to know about their sons and husbands, family members have right to know about their fathers and brothers. Even if the answer is the sad one, it is better the uncertainty, which has already lasted too long a time.

I am honoured to have had the possibility to talk to you about my findings in the former Yugoslavia. There are so many new conflicts in the world, stealing our attention, and it seems to be true that we cannot deal with more than one conflict at the time - we forget. I am travelling around in my own country and abroad reminding people, decision makers, about the fact that there is still no peace in Bosnia. The war is over, but the peace is still not there. I have my trust in you. Together with the women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Croatia and in Serbia and Montenegro we can do a lot to promise our children and grandchildren that this will not happen again.

## **VI. RAPORTEURS' REPORTS**

### **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

1. During the Seminar it was noted that in paragraph 40.10 of the Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE (1991) the participating States recognised the rich contribution of women to all aspects of political, cultural, social and economic life. This document forms an important part of the commitment by the participating States to the human dimension of the OSCE. The Seminar further noted that paragraph 141 of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) called for an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes designed to address armed or other conflicts. The Seminar also noted that paragraph 113 of the Beijing document defined violence against women as any act or threat of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. Paragraph 18 of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights noted that the

human rights of women are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

2. The United Nations Economic and Social Council meeting in Geneva in July 1997 defined mainstreaming as a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experience an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.
3. During the seminar it became clear that women, who represent more than half of the constituency of the participating States, felt that their interests are not adequately taken into account by the OSCE -particularly in the fields of democratisation, promotion of human rights, security coordination, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. It emerged that women were the principal victims of conflict; were also victims of many gender specific crimes such as trafficking of women and children, rape, enforced prostitution and sexual slavery; and were subject to gender-based persecution. The Seminar also noted that women were poorly represented in decision making processes and conflict management mechanisms. And that women's specific needs in, and contributions to the peaceful resolution of, situations of pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict were largely overlooked.
4. In the light of these findings, the Seminar called upon the participating States to reaffirm their commitment to these guiding principles; and to ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed into all activities, programmes and work plans of the OSCE to enable women to play a full and active role in democracy and peace building. The Seminar recommended that the participating States decide to establish, within the framework of the OSCE, appropriate mechanisms, at a senior level, to ensure that OSCE activities take account - in an integral manner - the interests and needs of all those covered by its mandate.
5. Some suggestions made at the Seminar, to help OSCE implement gender mainstreaming in all its activities, programmes and work plans, included: establishment of a senior post to coordinate these efforts; provision of gender-disaggregated data on OSCE activities, including staffing data; encouragement of participating States to promote gender equality in their OSCE delegations , on their expert lists and amongst seconded personnel in order to achieve a better representation of women in decision-making positions.

## **DISCUSSION GROUP 1**

### **Women in Decision-Making Processes**

#### **Rapporteur's Report: Ms. Anda Christina FILIP**

One of the uncontested contributions brought by discussions carried out within Working Group I was the valuable exchange of ideas and experience between governmental and non-governmental representatives from different OSCE regions - the Caucasus, Central Asia, Northern, Central and Western Europe, as well as Canada and the United States. There

was also interesting input from Mediterranean partner countries. It was acknowledged that in order to develop concrete action on gender-related issues within international organisations, a better knowledge of specificities and realities in participating countries is essential.

In terms of legislation and norms regarding equal rights and equal opportunities, it is generally recognized that, although equality *de jure* had been established, equality *de facto* is still very far away. Statistics clearly indicate that the presence of women in political and public bodies - Parliaments, Governments, Local Authorities, Social Partners, Public Administration - is unsatisfactory. The situation does not appear to be much better within international organisations.

The reasons that stand in the way of a better representation of women in decision-making are both complex and diverse. They include historical considerations, traditional mentalities that are slow to change, the perpetuation of sexist language and behaviour, the fact that women are the ones which hold most domestic and family responsibilities, socio-cultural factors, as well as economic conditions.

Despite this, it is evident that there is a direct link between the role of women and promoting democracy, on the one hand, as well as maintaining peace and security, on the other. The Beijing Platform of Action, in paragraph 181, states clearly that: "Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning" . (...) Moreover, "without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved".

Due to the different causes and levels of women under-representation in the various OSCE participating States, it is difficult to develop global solutions to this problem. Participants in the Seminar, however, have highlighted some of the more efficient strategies that can be applied, individually or in a concerted manner, to this end. These are:

## **1. SELF HELP, or women preparing for the decision-making process**

### ***a/ Pouvoir, savoir, vouloir***

It is a question of motivation, encouragement and training of women, accompanied by efforts to increase general awareness of the issue of equality as a fundamental component of any democracy. Specific actions may be targeted at women to promote assertiveness and self-assurance and to legitimize the will to participate in decision making that affects women's every-day life, as well as their interests and concerns.

Throughout the world, but perhaps most visibly in the case of new or restored democracies, which are undergoing a complex process of transformation, women must understand and accept that they are called upon to undertake a particular responsibility for the successful change of their respective societies, in all walks of life.

Moreover, women, as wives and mothers, mainly responsible for raising and educating future generations, have a crucial role to play in overcoming stereotypes and determining a change in mentalities and even in political and social culture.

***b/ Increased awareness. Better information and communication***

These may be achieved through various means, such as:

integration of the equality principle and of the gender dimension in educational and training systems;

information and public awareness campaigns for the values of democracy, mostly through women's associations and the mass media;

special information targeted at women, aiming at full awareness of their rights and how to exercise them (legal literacy);

better networking between women's organisations both within and between countries (databanks, as well as liaison and contact points established at the national level or at the level of international organisations should be more efficiently tapped);

making better use of new technology - Internet, Webside - which can give women greater access to valuable, up-dated information, implicitly preparing them for the decision-making process.

***c/ Female solidarity***

Learning to take part in decision making can also be seen from a bottom-up perspective. Women can help each other become more actively involved in finding solutions to problems and making decisions at the community level, be they neighbourhoods or parent-teacher associations, thus preparing for and upgrading their participation in public life.

Once women reach prominent positions, they may, in turn, develop initiatives which will ensure better representation. One participant recalled how, as Ambassador, she made sure that at least 30% of guests to diplomatic events organised by her Embassy were women. There are countless other examples of this kind.

## **2. POLITICAL WILL**

### ***a/ Measures at the national level***

Governments and Parliaments are called upon to attach greater attention to questions related to the equality between sexes, especially by:

Developing national strategies or plans of action, starting from the provisions of the Beijing Platform of Action, as a politically binding document;  
Developing a strong machinery at the governmental level, which promotes and enforces equal opportunity legislation;  
Commissioning up-dated statistics on the status of women in societies and targeting areas for improvement;  
Organising and encouraging reunions, model projects, practical measures in key fields such as education, health and social welfare, so as to facilitate the access of women to public life. In this sense, NGO's, as well as the mass media, have a particularly important role to play.

### ***b/ The principle of positive action***

Temporary special measures for the increased participation of women are generally considered to be of use. These can take on multiple forms:

the deliberate appointment of women to political or administrative bodies, where they are under-represented;  
the establishment within national electoral systems of quantitative targets or minimum thresholds, either through legislation or by political parties themselves, aimed at increasing women's representation;  
the achievement of a "critical mass" (30%), at which point it may be considered that such special measures are no longer needed;  
the revision of selection processes and criteria for those mechanisms or practices that may result in gender discrimination.

### ***c/ Instruments and mechanisms***

In a number of OSCE participating States there are instruments - Ministries for Equal Opportunities, Governmental Departments, National Ombudsmen - especially designed to promote mechanisms and specific measures, of a nature to facilitate the involvement of women in public affairs. Their objectives include:

mainstreaming gender principles into ministerial and institutional activities;  
keeping central authorities informed on gender issues;  
organising working groups, with the participation of NGOs;  
developing coordinated action plans in this field;  
promoting and implementing specific legislation (such as, for example, making sure that candidates for important positions include both men and women).

### **3. INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND THE ROLE OF THE OSCE**

A number of international organisations, such as the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Union and the Council of Europe, have included gender-related issues in the mainstream of their activities, thus contributing to a greater attention and awareness at the national level. In some cases, recruitment policies are becoming more gender-sensitive.

The need was stressed for increased cooperation and coordination between these organisations, so as to avoid duplication of efforts.

Speakers underlined the need for the OSCE itself to better adapt and ensure equal opportunities, by:

- including the gender perspective into OSCE activities and missions;
- drawing up a list of women specialists which can be involved in OSCE activities, especially crisis management and conflict resolution;
- organising international workshops for women, with a view to training negotiators for conflict situations. A coordination center for women can also be useful to train women and to look at the particular situation of women in conflict situations;
- including gender-sensitive issues on the regular OSCE agenda and in basic OSCE documents, calling upon participating States to implement commitments and take more decisive action in this sensitive area;
- organising follow-up OSCE events, including at the regional level, on the issue of gender equality;
- creating OSCE mechanisms specifically designed to deal with and promote equal opportunities, such as an OSCE Steering Committee on Gender Equality, a Gender Coordinator or Commissioner, or even an OSCE Council on Conflict Mediation, based on gender parity.

## **DISCUSSION GROUP 2**

### **Women in Social-Economic Life**

#### **Rapporteur's Report: Ms. Ursula MÜLLER**

The point of departure of the discussion of the group was paragraph 40.6 of the Moscow Document of 1991 which stipulates that “participating States will encourage measures effectively to ensure full economic opportunity for women, including non-discriminatory employment policies and practices, equal access to education and training, and measures to facilitate combining employment with family responsibilities for female and male workers; and will seek to ensure that any structural adjustment policies or programmes do not have an adversely discriminatory effect on women.”

The keynote speaker Ms. Dilyusa Gulyamova, Member of the Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights, Uzbekistan, stressed the importance of civil and social rights for developing a democratic society. She also linked market economy with social security.

The discussion centered around the following themes:

- Women's access to income
- Female unemployment
- Women entrepreneurs and women in small businesses
- Women and the labourmarket
- Equality of women and men in working life
- Social security for women
- Formal and informal economy
- Training and education
- Harmonization of work and family responsibilities
- Women and health
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in state budgets
- Cooperation between universities, non-governmental organisations and decisionmakers
- Feminization of poverty

### ***Women's access to income***

The group agreed to the importance of facilitating women's equal access to resources, employment market and trade. The group also observed the importance of strengthening women's economic capacity and commercial networks (e.g. networks among business women).

Everyone agreed that unpaid work of women, such as food production, voluntary work in family businesses and in the household, is a considerable contribution to the economy. Unpaid work should be measured and valued. It was pointed out that access to income included access to the labour market and possibilities to be self-employed.

### **Recommendation:**

We call on governments to promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.

### ***Women entrepreneurs and women in small businesses***

The group discussed how to include women in production and marketing cooperatives and it was pointed out that the access to micro-loans was essential for the establishment of small enterprises managed by women.

It was generally agreed that women-owned microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises had increasingly become a source of employment, growth and innovation. For example, women employers tend to recruit other women and were more family-friendly.



However, women entrepreneurs, notably in developing and transition economies, faced serious constraints related to the legal and institutional framework in which they had to operate, as well as to the lack of training, support services and credit.

It was suggested that micro-credit schemes should be supported and monitored in order to evaluate their efficiency in terms of their impact on increasing women's economic empowerment and well-being, income-earning capacity and integration into the economy.

**Recommendations:**

We call on governments to establish legal framework for credit unions that provide for micro-loans to set up businesses and small enterprises. The granting of loans should be connected to access to advisory services and training.

We call for government tax incentives that will encourage and support the development of micro-enterprises.

***Women and the labour market***

The production and use of gender-disaggregate statistics should be promoted as a fundamental tool for monitoring the gender division of the labour market.

Issues such as the impact on women of structural adjustments, financial policies and particularly consequences of state budgets for women should be examined.

It was generally agreed that there was a need to promote women's economic rights and independence including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.

The following trends were noted as regards the segregation of labour markets:

One is the situation in the former centrally planned economies where there was a mixed labour market but now in the transition to market economy there has been a drastic segregation of the labour market featuring unemployment of highly educated women. On the other hand, the established market economies have always had a segregated labour market and one consequence is an unequal life income for men and women.

There was a debate on the equality of women and men in working life. It was generally agreed that occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination must be eliminated. It was emphasised by the Council of Europe that the European Social Charter goes beyond non-discrimination and also provides for the right to equal remuneration.

**Recommendation:**

We call for statistics disaggregated by gender e.g. wages, unemployment rates and income.

## *Social security of women*

It was the consensus of the group that the creation of employment should be a main thrust of social policy. Social policy should promote two broad sets of measures. First, selfemployment should be promoted through measures that increase the access of the poor to productive assets. Second, achieving the full realization of the productive potential of the informal (grey) sector enterprises requires that existing institutional bottlenecks and market failures in the areas of credit, know-how and technology be removed.

### **Recommendations:**

It was suggested that governments should adopt policies to extend or maintain the protection of labour laws and social security provisions for those who do paid work in the home (e.g. non-waged workers).

In order to connect the social security systems with the small businesses a kind of registration is necessary. There should be a licence or registration system for small businesses as basis for access to the social security systems.

## *Formal and informal economy*

One problem that was repeatedly discussed was the lack of social security for women in different situations, for example those working in the informal economy.

In the discussion on informal economy two different areas were identified: Women doing housework without payment in their own homes or working in small gardens in order to provide food for the family. The other is women that are doing paid, but non-registered housework for others e.g. childcare. In both situations there are no social security benefits such as sick pay, insurance against accidents or pension rights.

It was generally agreed that all persons regardless of their status on the labour market should have a right to social benefits and that people that have paid work in the informal economy should be registered in some way. (This because in most states if they don't pay tax, they can't have social services). Private sickness insurance instead of taxes were mentioned as a possible way of establishing an alternative or additional social security system.

The informal/formal economy problems were raised in most of the discussions for instance concerning labour market, social security, small businesses, poverty and education.

### **Recommendations:**

It was suggested that governments should adopt policies to extend or maintain the protection of labour laws and social security provisions for those who do paid work in the home (e.g. non-waged workers).

We call on governments to establish social security systems open to every individual (e.g. parental benefits, pensions, unemployment benefits).

### ***Training and Education of women***

There was a debate as to the possibility of promoting and supporting elimination of biases in the educational system so as to counteract the gender segregation of the labour market, enhance employability of women, and effectively improve women's skills and broaden women's access to career choices, in particular in non-traditional areas. There is a need to give women access to potential and innovative areas of expansion in terms of employment, including new technologies. It was generally agreed that equal access for women to education must be ensured and women's access to vocational training, also in new fields, must be improved.

#### **Recommendations:**

We call for "job centers" which are open for women and which provide information on training and job opportunities. We call for the establishment of "job centers" especially designed to support women with information on their rights and on job opportunities and direct them to training possibilities.

### ***Harmonization of work and family responsibilities***

It was noted that empowering women in the labour force could help the empowerment of women in other spheres of life, including the household, provided that the balance between family and work could be achieved. Arrangements to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities were needed.

#### **Recommendation:**

Training and education should emphasise the importance of shared family responsibility between men and women.

### ***Women and Health***

It was reported that life expectancy in Russia of both men and women has decreased during the transition period and a growing gap in life expectancy between men and women was noted. One of the consequences is that women have a larger economic burden. The group discussed the growing number of teenage pregnancies which prevent young women from completing their schooling and acquiring a professional training providing them with the necessary skills to enter the labour market.

#### **Recommendation:**

We call for statistics disaggregated by gender e.g. life expectancy and access to health services.

### ***Mainstreaming a gender perspective in state budgets***

The review and modification of macroeconomic and social policies should include a gender perspective. It was generally agreed that state budget analysis should be gender-differentiated and the specific impact on women should be emphasized. The European Commission gave its approach on that. It was suggested that those involved in the analysis should have the right to comment on the effects of the state budgets on women.

**Recommendation:**

We call for budget analysis with special emphasis on gender issues and a gender specific analysis of new laws and regulations outlining the consequences for women.

***Feminization of poverty***

The discussion centered on the increased number of single mothers. There was a debate on the need to reduce the number of single mothers through information on family planning and access to safe contraception methods.

The group believed that it was important that single parents, mostly women, have a network to support them. Measures could include the forming of organisations of single mothers serving as information centers on social benefits, training and job opportunities. These could be assisted by local authorities and the business community. It was generally agreed that all programmes should be pro-active and train women to improve their opportunities on the labour market. Social benefits should primarily aim at encouraging education of single mothers and thus ultimately ensure that the children of single parents are not disadvantaged by their family situation.

Poverty particularly affects elderly women because they live longer and have lower pensions.

**Recommendation:**

We call for a gender neutral, guaranteed minimum state pension for elderly people, irrespective of their previous income or participation in the labour market.

**Due to the large participation of non-governmental organisations in the discussion group on “Women in social-economic life” we have come up with a eleven concrete recommendations, which we all agreed upon.**

**We are confident that these recommendations will be studied in the various gremia at national and regional level and particularly hope that some will be taken up in the OSCE Economic Forum.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS AGREED UPON BY THE DISCUSSION GROUP**

1. We call on governments to promote women’s economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.
2. We call on governments to establish legal framework for credit unions that provide for micro-loans to set up businesses. The granting of loans should be connected to access to advisory services and training.
3. We call for statistics disaggregated by gender e.g. wages, unemployment rates, income, life expectation, access to health services.

4. We call on governments to establish social security systems open to every individual (e.g. parental benefits, pensions, unemployment workers).
5. It was suggested that governments should adopt policies to extend or maintain the protection of labour laws and social security provisions for those who do paid work in the home (e.g. non-waged workers).
6. In order to connect the social security systems with the small businesses a kind of registration is necessary. There should be a licence or registration system for small businesses as basis for access to the social security systems.
7. We call for “job centers” which are open for women and which provide information on training and job opportunities. We call for the establishment of “job centers” especially designed to support women with information on their rights and on job opportunities and direct them to training possibilities.
8. We call for budget analysis with special emphasis on gender issues and gender specific analysis of new laws and regulations outlining the consequences for women.
9. Training and education should emphasise the importance of shared family responsibility between men and women.
10. We call for a gender neutral, guaranteed minimum state pension for elderly people, irrespective of previous income or participation in the labour market.
11. We call for government tax incentives that will encourage and support the development of micro enterprises.

### **DISCUSSION GROUP 3**

#### **Women in Conflict Situations, including War Crime and Violence against Women**

##### **Rapporteur’s Report: Ms. Regan RALPH**

Participants in Working Group III took great advantage of the opportunity to identify major issues of concern to women in conflict situations, in pre- or post-conflict environments; in the processes of conflict resolution and of building and maintaining peace; and in promoting human rights and democracy. Our discussion also focussed on the critical need for responses to these concerns, at the national, regional and international levels and particularly within the context of OSCE activities. This much is clear: the problems women confront are severe. We are excluded from decision-making in most spheres, from the family to senior policy-making levels. In conflict situations, we are targets of extreme and indescribable acts of violence. Far from being limited to conflicts, violence against women takes many forms, from trafficking of women and girls to domestic and sexual violence in the home or on the street.

What is also clear is that women have a vital, essential role to play in crafting effective responses both to the problems they experience as women and, importantly, to the profound

issues we confront together, women and men, in our societies. Yet, international institutions have sometimes been slow to draw upon women as a resource and to bring them into policy-making. The consensus in Working Group III was that this process should be accelerated and barriers to women's participation overcome. As stated by our keynote speaker, sound security policy demands respect for human rights for all people and requires democracy to ensure that decision makers are accountable to and representative of their constituents.

### ***Violence Against Women***

Reports from Kosovo, Tajikistan, Bosnia and elsewhere underscore the pervasive nature of violence against women in conflict situations. Combatants target civilians as a blatant tactic of war, with sexual violence chief among their weapons. Discrimination against women that relegates them to secondary status at all times may compound their vulnerability to violence in conflict situations and make it difficult for them to seek justice for crimes committed against them.

When women flee violence, conflict and instability and become refugees or internally displaced persons, they face more violence while in flight and once they reach their place of so-called refuge. These women also deal with the scourge of landmines as they search for safe haven and struggle to keep their family members alive and together. Despite increasing international recognition that women suffer gender-based persecution, international standards still fail to recognize such persecution as a legitimate ground for asylum.

Certain forms of violence are a constant, regardless of whether a country is at war: domestic and sexual violence and trafficking in women and girls are consistently cited as destabilizing factors in the family and society. Also constant is the lack of accountability for violence against women, wherever it occurs. The tradition of impunity for violence against women is now being challenged, and the effectiveness of two ad hoc tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda will be critical to that end. Similarly, the establishment of an effective International Criminal Court that explicitly condemns gender-based crimes may deter such acts in the future. Moreover, survivors of violence often have minimal or no access to essential services and assistance (medical, psychological, social, legal, economic).

### ***Women in Preventing Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Reconstruction***

Women clearly have a stake in preventing conflict, securing conflict resolution, and facilitating post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. Yet women and women's concerns are woefully underrepresented at levels ranging from policy-making to program implementation. In pre-conflict situations, women can help identify developing tensions and play a role in defusing them. Women act as mediators in everyday life and work in their communities to promote stability. In times of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, women's political, economic and social rights are at risk. They may be suffering the lingering effects of trauma and have increased need for physical and mental health care. For the first time, in the context of widespread unemployment and low salaries, women become heads-of-households who must struggle to gain access to financial resources and support their families. Their support networks have disappeared. Women's skills and experience have yet to be integrated into monitoring peace agreements and the process of reconstruction.

In such situations, the experience and expertise of NGOs, particularly those that focus on women's concerns, are a vital resource. In conflict situations, the international community has a special responsibility to act, given that local and national authorities cannot or will not meet those obligations. Thus, developing the role of institutions such as the OSCE to respond to the needs of women - over 50 percent of the population - is our challenge, and a cornerstone of meeting that challenge will be to integrate women's concerns into all OSCE operations. We commend and thank the OSCE and particularly the ODIHR for providing us with this forum. As our moderator asserted, this is an auspicious moment because it presents an opportunity for change.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The following recommendations do not represent an exhaustive list of all proposals introduced to the working group. Rather, they put forward specific suggestions that relate to key themes identified by working group participants.

#### **To the member states of the OSCE:**

##### 1. Increase efforts to incorporate women's issues into all aspects of OSCE work:

By establishing a senior coordinator, preferably based in Vienna, with a mandate to ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed into OSCE operations.

By providing training for all OSCE permanent and temporary staff to increase awareness and knowledge of women's issues, including the status and situation of women in preconflict, conflict and post-conflict situations.

By increasing representation of women at all levels of the OSCE, including especially conflict resolution activities.

By reaching out to and increasing the participation of NGOs working on women's issues throughout the region to participate in evaluating OSCE efforts to address women's issues and formulating recommendations for change.

##### 2. Improve efforts to identify, document and monitor violations of women's human rights, especially in conflict situations, but also in pre- and post-conflict contexts as well as other "peacetime" situations.

Within the ODIHR, ensure that staff have expertise in women's human rights, and that at least one permanent staff member has experience in women's human rights and a mandate to ensure that OSCE staff and field missions actively monitor and report on women's human rights.

Require OSCE missions to report to the Permanent Council and the Chairman-in-Office on efforts to monitor women's situation and status and outreach to local women's organisations and the results of such activities.

Request that the Chairman-in-Office report to the review committee in 1998 on efforts to improve monitoring and reporting on women's human rights and the results of such efforts.

Train all field mission personnel and human rights permanent and temporary staff in identifying, documenting and monitoring violations of human rights and particularly women's human rights.

Train field mission personnel in developing outreach to women's NGOs.

Ensure that human rights officers who work directly with victims of abuse have expertise and experience in working with victims of violence to avoid retraumatization and to ensure the quality of information gathered so that it can be used to hold perpetrators accountable.

Prepare field mission staff to identify and facilitate victims' access to service providers (medical, social, economic, legal, psychological).

3. Direct the OSCE representatives at the negotiations to establish an International Criminal Court to support explicit recognition of gender-based crimes as war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide.
4. Draw upon the experience of other international organisations, e.g. the European Union, WHO, Council of Europe, UNHCR, ICRC, UNDP, in working to incorporate gender issues into their work.
5. Given that civilians are often the targets of military aggression, the OSCE should enhance efforts to monitor compliance with military codes of conduct.

**To the ODIHR:**

1. Report the findings of this seminar, and particularly the recommendations for change, to the November 1997 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.
2. Communicate the findings of this seminar to other regional and international bodies working on related issues, including the Commission on the Status of Women in March 1998 during its two-week session on women's human rights and women in armed conflict; the U.N. Division for the Advancement of Women expert meeting on gender-based persecution in Toronto in November 1997; the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (whose 1998 report will focus on violence against women in conflict situations); the UNHCR, UNDP; the Council of Europe; the European Union; and the ICRC.
3. Identify and maintain an up-to-date resource guide of those within OSCE and NGO community with expertise on violence against women, women in conflict situations, women's human rights.



**VII. ANNEX - INDEX OF DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED DURING THE SEMINAR**