



Statement of the Gender Equality Platform from the Republic of Moldova regarding the implementation of the commitments of the Beijing Declaration +25

Gender Equality Platform

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In the last five years a series of measures have been taken in Moldova to improve the situation of women with the support of civil society and external partners. A few examples of measures to ensure gender equality such as: 14 days of paternal leave; prohibition of sexist language and sexist advertising; introduction of the 40% gender quota in the electoral and decision making processes and the sanction of deregistering those candidates, who do not respect this provision; approval of the National Strategy on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (2018 - 2023), the related action plan (2018 - 2020) and the Law no. 196/2016 with reference to the most vulnerable groups of women emergency restraining order, withholding allowance for parents who care for children up to 3 years, including reducing the unpaid period from 3 to 1 year old. It was approved the National Plan on Women, Peace and Security (Resolution 1325), in this way was increased the number of women in Police and Border Police from 13% to 18%.

In spite of these positive changes in the national legislation and the taken efforts in order to improve women's situation, certain vulnerabilities and gaps are still to be tackled.



I. Education and training of women

As there is a clear delimitation between women's and men's role in society linked to traditional gender roles, the education sector is dominated by women in a proportion of 86%. The sector has poor working conditions, very low salaries that very often do not reach the average salary (360 EUR).

Fewer women work in science, research, innovation, informational technologies, and construction, but an exceptionally high number of women work in services, education, health, and social assistance.

Proposals:

1. Introducing gender equality awareness at all levels of education;
2. Lifelong education of teachers in the field of gender equality;
3. Raising awareness on career choice without gender stereotypes among girls and boys.

II. Women and poverty

Women generally have a lower status and occupy lower paid jobs than men. Furthermore, women of reproductive age are often denied employment, as employers are often reluctant to bear the costs associated with maternity leave. Rural women from Moldova are one of the most vulnerable groups that are influenced by economic and social factors. The main economic factors that influence the vulnerability of women are unemployment and wage differences between women and men, and the main social factors - trafficking and domestic violence. Women and girls in rural areas suffer from poverty more often. Even though the poverty rate among rural women has declined in recent years, there are no jobs in villages, and wages are extremely low.

According to statistical data, rural women make up 30% of the population of Moldova, and almost half of them work in the agricultural sector. Even so, income from agricultural activity does not ensure them a living above the poverty line.

Proposals:

1. Development of female entrepreneurship in rural areas;
2. Combating the exploitation of women in agricultural work and informal care work;
3. Gender analysis of tax reforms and policies and their impact on women and men..

III. Women and health

Women continue to face discrimination and difficulties in accessing health information and healthcare. This concerns especially women in rural areas, women with special needs, displaced women and women from conflicting areas, and women from ethnic minorities. Levels of awareness on healthy lifestyles, reproductive health and family planning among teenagers and young women, especially those living in rural and remote areas, is very low. Adolescent pregnancy rates are on the rise as a result.

Proposals:

1. Eliminating discrimination, ill treatment, and violence toward women from the health care system, especially in perinatal/obstetrics services;
2. Create more efficient programs for the prevention of alcohol abuse and tobacco use;
3. State programs on cancer prevention, accommodation measures for women who suffer from cancer;
4. Improved access to family planning and reproductive health programs for women in rural and remote areas.

IV. Violence against women

Almost all specialized services for victims of gender-based violence are provided by NGOs. These are often lacking sustainability because of limited funds for direct services and dependence on international donors. In addition, such services are not supported by the state, because of lacking mechanisms and unfriendly legal framework. The medical documentation of cases is insufficient. Medical doctors do not record correctly the multiple health consequences of violence and do not collect the data needed for reporting and assistance. The forensic examination of many cases is inefficient and renders superficial reports focused mainly on visible signs of violence.

Proposals:

1. Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention);
2. Secure sustainable state support and services for victims, for their protection, rehabilitation, enabling, empowerment and for access to justice;
3. Secure the appropriate and efficient legal investigation of cases of gender-based violence;
4. Adopt and promote the "human rights-centered", "victim-centered" and "trauma-centered" approaches in all states' actions and policies;
5. Ensure state support to caregivers and to NGOs that provide services to victims of gender-based violence.

V. Human rights of women

Multiple, less visible groups of women face a lot of discrimination and stigma in Moldova. These include LGBTIQ women, sex workers, drug users, women with HIV positive status, refugees, undocumented migrants, stateless women, women with disabilities, women from ethnic minorities, single mothers. These less visible groups face a particularly high risk of exclusion, stigmatization and discrimination, which often prevents them from lifting themselves out of poverty and impedes their access to public services.

Proposals:

1. In order to ensure the fundamental human rights of all women living on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, state needs to have a human rights based approach that will include also an intersectionality approach, this way to have a broad response for all human rights violations;
2. Ensuring the access to health services and hygienic basic needs of women from detention facilities.

VI. Women and the economy

In Republic of Moldova there is a high rate of women working in the informal economy without any social insurances. In addition, a gender wage gap of 17% persists between men and women doing an equal work. Public employment policies do not have sufficient focus on unemployed women, especially among those from the most disadvantaged groups. The efforts are low to support women's employment and improve women's access to decent jobs, despite the fact that these measures could diminish the level of emigration among women. Women and families, who have children with special needs are considered the poorest and there are no sufficient state support programs for nutrition and childcare services for them.

Proposals:

1. Introducing flexible working schedules, as well as provisions for working at distance, without rendering women's work precarious;
2. Improving women's working conditions, especially in the textile sector. Introducing mandatory gender quotas for the Management Boards;
3. Improving social assistance programs, especially in childcare and care for other family members;
4. Stimulation, including taxation, of corporate social responsibility programs for women, focusing on intersectionality, diversity and inclusion;
5. Creating conditions for women/single mothers to accessing loans, while minimising the risk of women's indebtedness;
6. Devising institutional responses to sexual harassment at the workplace;
7. Modifying the calculation base in the social insurance system for women who are on childcare leave in order to give them the right to pension..

VII. Women and armed conflict

A specific, less visible group of women are women from Transnistria – an Eastern region that violently broke away from Moldova in 1992, but whose independence is not internationally recognized. Constitutional rights and protections in this region are overall limited. Women in Transnistria are facing a particularly high risk, as there are no laws on gender equality or gender-based violence.

Proposals:

1. Women's involvement in the conflict resolution activities.
2. Safety for children from Romanian language teaching institutions from the Transnistrian region;
3. Strengthening the capacities of women in the Transnistrian region in providing first aid;
4. Involving experts from different non-governmental organizations with military and security units at the security area and Transnistrian region.

VIII. Women and the media

Media outlets are predominantly run by men; invited experts, including political, social, and economic commentators are also usually men. Therefore, women are underrepresented when reflecting on a wide range of topics, including elections, politics, justice, security, etc. The media discourse remains sexist and discriminatory, sometimes involving elements of hate speech.

Proposals:

1. Promoting nonviolent, gender sensitive communication through a curriculum on gender in the departments of journalism, communication sciences, public relations, and marketing;
2. Promoting gender parity in media and advertising through measures such as: improving the legal framework regarding the media through the human rights and gender equality, activities to strengthen the capacities of journalists and media agencies; promoting the participation of women from a decision-making level in the political and economic field in raising-awareness campaigns, radio and TV shows - a step that naturally fits into ensuring a complex approach to equality between women and men; reviewing and amending Journalists' Code of Ethics, including a minimum participation rate of 40% for women and men in the composition of the Broadcasting Council.

IX. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

Through the reform of the central public administration in 2017, the institutional mechanism for promoting gender equality has suffered. Only the Policy Department for ensuring equality between women and men within the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection is functional, but it has limited resources to cope with the development and implementation of gender equality policies. The governmental commission has not been convened since 2017. If at the level of central public administration the gender coordinating groups were set up, at the level of districts and the local public administrations, the mechanism does not work.

Proposals:

1. Restoring the activity of the Governmental Commission for Equality between Women and Men, tasked with coordinating the institutional framework for ensuring gender equality. The Commission is to establish a Government Agency for gender equality tasked with fulfilling the commitments made by Moldova within the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, Objective 5, and gender mainstreaming in all 17 SDGs;
2. Formation of the Committee on Equal Opportunities within the Parliament. The tasks of the commission will include: (i) mandatory endorsement of all relevant legislative acts from the perspective of the impact on gender equality; (ii) annual hearing of all central authorities regarding the progress in the implementation of the state policy in the field, (iii) prevention and combating of sexism in the parliamentary activity;
3. Establishment the position of Adviser on gender equality to the Presidency;
4. Systematic sex- and age-disaggregated data collection at the national level to support decision-making (ex-ante), policy implementation at different stages, monitoring and evaluation (ex-post).

X. Women and the decision-making processes

In the last 3 years in the Republic of Moldova a series of measures have been taken to improve the situation of women in this area such as introduction in 2016 of the 40% gender quota in electoral and decision making processes, in 2018 state budget funding for political parties that have 40% of women ensured, in 2019 the sanction with the deregistration of those candidates who do not respect the 40% quota on their candidates' list etc. The currently cabinet of ministries counts seven women ministers (out of twelve); the speaker of the Parliament is also a woman

Proposals:

1. Fair representation at the leadership level of the Legislature so that at least 40% gender quota would be ensured;
2. At least one Vice-President of the legislature should be of the opposite sex;
3. The same rule should be applied in the case of the election of the factions' leaders in the Parliament. The number of men and women chairmen of the parliamentary committees should be equal;
4. Ensuring that election campaigns feature respectful and accurate depictions of women and men, actively addressing gender stereotypes;
5. Mainstream gender equality component in the work of Trade Unions, making them among the main promoters of gender equality at the workplace and within the framework of social partnership.

XI. Women and the environment

The environmental conditions in Republic of Moldova - a primarily agricultural country, continue to degrade, affecting the quality of soils, water, and air. Government action regarding climate change, which has a disproportionately negative impact on rural women and youth, lacks a concrete vision. Rural girls and women are on the frontlines of extreme climate events affecting natural and agricultural resources, as well as key actors in building resilience to climate change. A quarter of the damage caused by disasters associated with climate change between 2006 and 2016 were borne by the agricultural sector in developing countries and had a significant impact on food security and the

Proposals:

1. Public recognition of environmental equity as a major, transversal determinant in guaranteeing sustainable and safe livelihoods for the country's population;
2. Empowering rural girls and women to respond to adverse events associated with climate change;
3. Raise awareness among youth on existing scientific evidence of climate change and encourage youth participation in civil society action.

This document was prepared by Gender Equality Platform, an informal network of associations and civic activists: The Association "Against Violence in the Family - Casa Marioarei"; The Modern Woman; Mildava; Voice of Roma Women "ROMANO ALAV"; Forum of Women's Organizations of the Republic of Moldova; Gender-Center; Institute for Conflict Resolution (InReCo); Promo-Lex; Woman for the Future; Honor and Rights of the Contemporary Woman; Alina Andronache, civic activist; Ana Gurau, civic activist; Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Moldova; Center for Partnership for Development; Center for the Rights of People with Disabilities; Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Tortured "Memory"; Resource Center for Human Rights; Women's Political Club 50/50; Diana Enachi; East-European Foundation, observer member; Galina Precup, gender expert; Georgeta Carasiucenco, journalist; The Group of Feminist Initiatives in Moldova; Marina Zarija, lawyer; Nata Scobioală, civic activist; Olga Nicolenco, gender expert; Tatiana Kebak, civic activist; Woman for Contemporary Society; AFINA; LEX XXI Human Rights Association.