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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report assesses the extent to which attention to gender perspectives has been mainstreamed in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS, and provides recommendations for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2006/9 of 25 July 2006, entitled “Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women”, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, on an annual basis, a report on progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes with a particular focus on the priority theme of its session, and decided that in 2009 the priority theme would be “The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS”.

2. The present report is submitted in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/9 and General Assembly resolution 63/159. It incorporates an analysis of responses to a note verbale (DAW/2008/011) provided by Member States.¹ The report also draws on information and data from publications by United Nations entities and other sources as indicated.² It should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS (E/CN.6/2009/2).

II. Background

3. Promoting equal sharing of responsibilities, including care responsibilities, between women and men is a fundamental but challenging aspect of addressing gender inequality. Unequal sharing of responsibilities in the private and the public sphere has adverse impacts on women as well as men, their families, the economy and society as a whole. It has implications for equality of opportunity in education, in the labour market and in public life, including political participation, as well as for the quality of family relationships and caregiving.

4. Addressing the effects of the current unequal distribution of paid and unpaid labour between women and men, including housework, childrearing, caring of the sick and the elderly as well as the disabled, requires a comprehensive approach. Policy and legislative measures are required in a range of areas such as social protection, labour market policies, health, education and infrastructure. Efforts to identify and address the gender stereotypes that underlie discriminatory attitudes and practices are also critical, as are efforts to measure and value unpaid work.

5. Global commitments on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS, have been made by Governments, inter alia, at the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), as well as in the outcomes of sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women since 1996. International human rights treaties, including the

¹ Contributions were received from the Governments of Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Ghana, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Oman, Peru, the Philippines, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

² References to Member States are based on contributions made to the present report, unless otherwise noted.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, also recognize the obligations that State parties have to promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and its accompanying Recommendation No. 165, give specific guidance on policies and measures needed to assist both women and men workers to reconcile employment and family responsibilities. Global commitments linked to caregiving, social protection, and the distribution of paid and unpaid labour, were also included in the 2002 Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development.³

III. Initiatives undertaken at the national level

A. Gender stereotypes

6. Globally, stereotypical images of women and men continue to perpetuate inequality in the distribution of responsibilities and division of paid and unpaid labour. Both women and men are limited by gender stereotypes based on perceptions of women as ideal caregivers and men as ideal workers.⁴ Such stereotypes have contributed to women bearing a disproportionate burden of household and caregiving responsibilities regardless of their socio-economic status and involvement in employment, both formal and informal. Stereotypical views of masculinity, on the other hand, have contributed to the portrayal of men as full-time breadwinners and deficient caregivers.⁵

7. Because of the persistence of gender stereotypes and their impact on women and men and girls and boys, it is important to identify and address the factors that generate and perpetuate them. The socialization process and the agents of opinion formation in society, such as families, educational institutions, religious and community leaders and the media, play a key role.⁶

8. The role of education, including early childhood education, in both sustaining and challenging gender stereotypes has been pointed out by Member States. In several countries, including Belarus, Cyprus, Finland, Oman, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland, efforts have been made to revise curricula and/or provide training to teachers on gender stereotypes. In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, avoiding stereotypes about gender roles in education is mandatory, including for those teaching at nursery level, to ensure that children are not restricted by outdated assumptions of what women and men can do. In Denmark, the Ministry for

³ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002*, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7, chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 16.

⁴ See ILO, "Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS", background paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting, October 2008 (EGM/ESOR/2008/BP.2).

⁵ Gary Barker, "Engaging men and boys in caregiving: reflections from research, practice and policy advocacy in Latin America", expert paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting (EGM/ESOR/2008/EP.1), p. 2.

⁶ Mary Daly, "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS", background paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting (EGM/ESOR/2008/BP.1), p. 14.

Gender Equality launched a children's book and a guide for kindergarten teachers aimed at promoting less stereotyped gender roles. In Brazil, the Gender and Diversity at School programme trained teachers and managers of public schools to deal with diversity in the classroom and to address prejudiced attitudes and behaviours in relation to gender, ethnic-racial relationships and sexual orientation.

9. The need to work with the media has been recognized by a number of countries, including Belarus, Belgium, Cyprus, Lebanon, Malta and Romania. In Europe, research on how marketing and advertising affect equality between women and men revealed that codes of conduct in the media and new information and communications technologies rarely include gender considerations. In response, the European Parliament adopted a resolution emphasizing that gender stereotyping must be opposed at all levels of society.⁷ In the United Kingdom, rules set out by regulatory authorities for broadcast and non-broadcast media aim to ensure that advertisements are "legal, decent, honest and truthful". The trend in recent years has been to address traditional gender stereotypes, including by using irony and less stereotyped imagery.

10. National public information and awareness-raising campaigns to specifically address gender stereotypes have also been launched in a number of countries, including Estonia and Switzerland. In Latvia, two campaigns, including a series of advertisements, television and radio discussions, educational films and discussions for schoolchildren, were carried out in 2006 to address gender stereotypes in the labour market and the home. In Jamaica, public education and sensitization was carried out in schools, communities, and faith-based and other organizations.

11. A number of countries, including Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Lebanon, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines and Thailand, reported specifically on awareness-raising campaigns and other measures to address gender-based violence, including violence against women. In New Zealand, a Government Task Force for Action on Violence within Families involved community organizations, leaders and the mass media in a national campaign to change the behaviours and attitudes that tolerate family violence. In the Philippines, the movement Men Opposed to Violence against Women Everywhere was established.

12. In Belgium, a two-year research project in the Flemish region challenged gender stereotypes about the male breadwinner and female caregiver and examined ways for creating more equal relations within households. This project resulted in recommendations and tools to facilitate the reconciliation of work and private life. In Switzerland, a study found that, in families where fathers and mothers share responsibilities in the household and in professional life, both parents and children have a positive perception of the egalitarian sharing of roles. In addition, the same study found that children coming from families with a traditional division of labour between men and women often regret that, in comparison to their mothers, fathers were rarely present in their everyday lives. In Azerbaijan, the first ever survey of gender attitudes was conducted in 2005. The results from the survey were presented in the *Azerbaijan Human Development Report 2007 on Gender Attitudes in Azerbaijan: Trend and Challenges* launched in 2007 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

⁷ European Parliament resolution of 3 September 2008 entitled "How marketing and advertising affect equality between women and men" (2008/2038 (INI)).

13. Specific efforts have also been taken to discuss and challenge gender stereotypes and gender inequality in the labour market. The United Kingdom has adopted a number of policies and programmes that aim to address gender stereotypes through career advice. In Brazil, the Pro-Gender Equity Seal programme has promoted equal opportunities between women and men in public or private companies and institutions. It encourages companies to adopt internal policies to promote gender equality and awards them with Pro-Gender Equity Seals, which attest to a company's commitment to promote gender equality. Major challenges addressed by the programme include wage differentials and time-use inequalities between men and women, and the low representation of women in leadership positions. In 2008, a workshop was held to meet demands from participating companies for better training, technical expertise and exchange of practical experiences for addressing gender- and race-based inequalities in the labour market. The European Commission, in collaboration with the ILO International Training Centre, developed the training and awareness-raising project "Break gender stereotypes, give talent a chance!" to inform companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, of the benefits they can derive from overcoming gender stereotypes in business management.⁸

B. The intersection of paid and unpaid work

14. While there has been a marked increase in women's labour force participation globally in the last decade, evidence from time-use studies points to persistent imbalances and inequalities between women and men in regard to the performance of paid and unpaid work, in particular domestic and care work. Women spend more time than men on work overall, have fewer hours in paid work and in general have less discretionary time than men.⁹ A project of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) covering Argentina, India, Nicaragua, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania found that the mean time spent by women on unpaid care work is more than twice the mean time spent by men.¹⁰ In Latin America, over half of all non-employed women aged 20 to 24 cited their unpaid household work as the main reason they do not seek paid employment.¹¹ Women spend more time on multiple and overlapping tasks, such as care for children, older persons and the sick, cooking and cleaning, and they are more likely than men to combine paid and unpaid work.⁴ For example, 40 per cent of mothers working informally in the slums of Guatemala City were caring for their children themselves, with lack of childcare cited as a key reason for not taking formal economy jobs.¹² Data from a time-use survey in New Zealand showed that

⁸ See <http://www.businessandgender.eu/the-action>.

⁹ United Nations Development Fund for Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2005: Women, Work & Poverty* (UNIFEM, 2005), New York, p. 29.

¹⁰ See UNRISD, "The social and political economy of care: contesting gender and class inequalities", background paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting, 2008 (EGM/ESOR/2008/BP.3).

¹¹ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Social Panorama of Latin America 2006* (ECLAC, Santiago, 2007).

¹² International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), "Guatemala City: a focus on working women and childcare", in *IFPRI City Profiles* (2003), available from <http://www.ifpri.org/themes/mp14/profiles/guatemalacity.pdf>.

women and men spend a similar amount of time working, but 70 per cent of women's work is unpaid, compared with 40 per cent of men's work.¹³

15. Significant differences exist across and within countries in terms of time required to perform different household responsibilities owing to the inequalities in access to infrastructure and domestic technology. In many rural and peri-urban communities, considerable time is spent, mainly by women, on activities such as collecting water and fuel.⁴ Long travel times to work and limited access to transportation also make reconciliation of work and family more difficult for both women and men.⁴

16. While available data and statistics on trends in paid and unpaid work suggest that changes in men's involvement in unpaid work, including domestic and care work, are slow, in some countries, including Canada and Denmark, men's involvement in the care of their children and household responsibilities has grown. Results from time-use surveys in Canada show that the gap between women and men in the division of labour is slowly narrowing. While women are increasingly involved in paid labour, they still do most of the housework and tend to feel more time-stressed than men. However, an increasing number of men are sharing domestic responsibilities and paid work with their partners. Globally, the male/female gap in time spent on caring for children tends to be lower than the gap in time spent on cooking and cleaning.¹⁴

17. Similar findings were reflected in other responses received from Member States, including Belgium, Finland, Jamaica, Latvia and Switzerland. Research in Switzerland found that while unmarried couples shared responsibilities in a more egalitarian way than married couples, the unequal distribution of work between parents increased with the number of children in the household. It was estimated that, for married couples with no children, men undertake 52 per cent of the household responsibilities. In married couples with three children or more, men undertake 39 per cent of the work. A survey conducted in connection with an awareness-raising campaign targeted at men in Switzerland showed that 16 per cent of men working full-time would rather work part-time. Men who wanted to reduce their working hours were also found to face more challenges than women in the same situation.

18. The role of time-use surveys as an important tool for analysing the division of paid and unpaid work and promoting measures aimed at the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities has been recognized by several countries, including Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Jamaica, Latvia and Sweden. To date, however, only a limited number of countries have reported data comparable over time. Since 1996, Canada has included questions in its Census on three unpaid work activities: housework, childcare and care for seniors. Canada also conducts surveys that collect extensive detailed information on unpaid work, including the General Social Survey on Time Use and the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating. The General Social Survey on Time Use has been conducted four times (1986, 1992, 1998 and 2005) and will be repeated in 2010. In Peru, a pilot time-use survey will be carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and

¹³ Ministry for Women's Affairs, New Zealand, *Indicators for Change: Tracking the Progress of New Zealand Women* (Wellington, 2008), p. 60.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2007/2008* (UNDP, New York, 2007), "Human development indicators", table 32.

Information (INEI) in metropolitan Lima in an effort to generate information among Government officials and civil society on the use of gender-sensitive time-use surveys. In the Dominican Republic, the national machinery and the National Statistics Office worked together to plan and develop the first national time-use survey to measure the contributions of women and men in the home and family.

19. As women's increased labour market participation has reduced the time available for unpaid care and domestic work, the demand for care services outside of the household has been on the rise. The growing provision of care work through market, government and community services has not resolved the fact that it is carried out predominantly by women. In both developed and developing countries, women constitute a larger component of care workers compared to their share of the total workforce. Data available from the Luxembourg Income Study for 12 countries (mostly high-income countries) show that women constitute between 32 and 54 per cent of the total workforce, and between 68 and 88 per cent of paid care workers.¹⁰ Today, there is a significant migration of women for caregiving roles, as both domestic and public sector workers.

20. When developing policies and programmes on household responsibilities, including caregiving, attention needs to be paid to statistical data on demographic change, including changes in fertility rates, ageing populations and household composition. In Colombia, for example, there has been an increase in female-headed households. In Europe, single-person households and single-parent families who cannot rely on immediate help from co-residents have increased. Fertility rates have also declined drastically, life expectancy has increased and populations have become more geographically mobile.¹⁵ In countries where the ageing of the population has been advancing at an unprecedented rate, issues such as long-term care for the elderly, medical care and pensions are critical. In Japan, a survey in 2004 by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare found that, despite the care options available, most elder care was provided in the home by women (74.9 per cent).¹⁶

21. Failure to measure unremunerated work in quantitative terms in national accounts means that the work carried out at the household and community level, including tasks related to caregiving, and its contribution to social and economic development, remains underestimated and undervalued. Estimates show that the value of unpaid work can be equivalent to at least half of a country's gross domestic product (GDP).¹⁷

C. Legislative and policy responses

22. The gender-based division of responsibilities is closely associated with gender inequality more broadly. Efforts to promote sharing of equal responsibilities are part of the broader gender equality agenda outlined in the international legal and policy instruments and mechanisms. A number of countries, including Austria, Brazil, Cyprus, Estonia, Ghana, Latvia, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Switzerland,

¹⁵ Tine Rostgaard, "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men", expert paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting, 2008 (EGM/ESOR/2008/EP.6), p. 2.

¹⁶ Masako Ishii-Kuntz, "Sharing of housework and childcare in contemporary Japan", expert paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting, 2008 (EGM/ESOR/2008/EP.4), p. 4.

¹⁷ UNDP, *The Human Development Report 1995: Gender and Human Development* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), chap. 4, "Valuing women's work".

drew attention to national policies, action plans and legislation for gender equality, empowerment of women and reconciliation of work and private life, as well as the inclusion of the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality in national constitutions.

23. Several countries, including Belgium, Canada, Jamaica and Switzerland, noted the particular significance of legislation regulating rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance. Many countries have amended discriminatory employment laws (see E/CN.6/2005/2 and Corr.1, para. 288) strengthened legislation on violence against women (see A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1) and secured women's equal rights to land (see E/CN.6/2005/2 and Corr.1, para. 311). In Sweden, an Act on stronger safeguards against discrimination was adopted in 2008, which will apply to most areas of society, such as the labour market, education, goods, services and housing, social services, the social insurance system, health care, the national military and civilian service. With the support of ILO, Azerbaijan is in the process of integrating the ILO Conventions on Maternity Protection (No. 183) and on Workers with Family Responsibilities (No. 156) into its national framework.

24. A wide range of policy responses to facilitate reconciliation of work and family has been designed and implemented by Governments. A common policy response is the extension of employment benefits such as parental leaves. Most countries have a maternity leave policy in place and an increasing number of countries have introduced paternal leave policies granting fathers leave in connection with childbirth. However, the number of leave days, and whether the leave is paid or not vary among countries. Some countries are taking innovative measures to expand coverage and usage. In Brazil, unemployed women workers have also been granted the right to maternity leave paid under the social security system. New Zealand has extended paid parental leave to self-employed persons. Although in many countries parental leave benefits are often available to both women and men, for example, in Belarus, Canada, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands, women continue to take the majority part of parental leave. In Denmark, a State equalization scheme has been introduced that requires all employers to contribute even if they do not provide maternity/paternity leave, or have no employees who are eligible to take leave. The objective of the scheme is to ensure that the costs of leave provisions are divided more equally between employers operating in traditionally male- and female-dominated sectors.

25. While countries, including Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and the United Kingdom, are increasingly introducing or extending paternity and parental leave policies, the take-up rates among men of these benefits remain low. Countries with relatively high take-up rates by men are Iceland, Norway and Sweden, which provide for relatively high allowances during this period. In order to encourage fathers to take leave, some countries, including Austria, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, provide that some of the parental leave can only be taken by the father and is lost if he does not take it.⁴ In the United Kingdom, the introduction of paid paternity leave has been successful. Recent figures showed that of the 93 per cent of employed fathers taking time off around the time of the birth, as many as four in five took statutory paternity leave. In 2007, Germany introduced a parental benefit scheme, which provides for two additional "partner months". As a result, the number of fathers who took the opportunity to get involved in childcare in the first few months of their children's lives increased from less than 4 per cent in 2006 to

20 per cent in the second quarter of 2008.¹⁸ To encourage men to take parental leave, a number of countries, including Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia and the United Kingdom, have made targeted efforts to reach out to parents of newborn infants, employers and employees with information about paternity and parental leave entitlements.

26. Other examples of social policy measures to support caregivers were reported. Canada, for example, provided support to women and men caregivers through tax credits, an income replacement benefit, and through job protection for employees with specific caregiving responsibilities. The Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefit, for example, enables eligible workers to take a temporary absence from work without fear of income or job loss, when a family member falls gravely ill. It also provides up to six weeks of income benefits that can be used over a six-month period by eligible family members. In Belarus, additional leave-day benefits are available to parents of disabled children below 18 years of age and to parents who take care of two or more children below the age of 16. In South Africa, the child support grant programme recognizes the great diversity of households in the country. The grant is paid to the primary caregiver on behalf of the child, irrespective of whether the primary caregiver is the child's biological parent or not.¹⁰

27. The provision of accessible and affordable care services, including child and elder care, primary education and health services plays a key role in helping women and men reconcile work and family. The Finnish system of universal childcare services and family leave has facilitated the sharing of responsibilities between women and men and enabled women's participation in working life and in national and local political decision-making positions. Various efforts have been made by countries to extend and improve the provision of quality, affordable early childhood education and care, including in Belgium, Latvia and New Zealand. The United Kingdom has invested over 25 billion pounds sterling (£) in early education and childcare services since 1997. An additional £4 billion for the years 2008-2011 will be provided to local authorities for children's centres, early years' education and childcare. More recently, the Government further expanded its schools subsidy scheme and provided £265 million to enable disadvantaged children and young people to take part in regular and extended schools activities.

28. Services targeted to specific groups have also been developed in some countries. In Belgium, for example, working single parents with children under the age of four living in the Flemish region can use service vouchers for certain amounts of day care at home. In Colombia, community nursery homes have been established to enable poor families to engage in paid work. In the Dominican Republic, services for care of the children of university students and lower-income employees of the university have been established. However, almost half of the countries in the world have no formal programmes for children under the age of three, and for those that do have programmes, coverage is limited.¹⁹

¹⁸ Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, *Exploring New Avenues: Portraits of Men in Transition* (Berlin, 2008), p. 4.

¹⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Education For All, *Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong foundations: Early childhood care and education* (UNESCO, Paris, 2007).

29. In a number of countries, including Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Colombia, Latvia, the Netherlands and Romania, the reconciliation of work and family and work-life balance issues are receiving increased attention. In Japan, in December 2007, the High-Level Conference on the Promotion of Work-Life Balance, attended by representatives from ministries, employer and labour organizations, and local authorities, reached an agreement on a Work-Life Balance Charter and Action Guidelines for the Promotion of Work-Life Balance, which address issues such as job continuity after childbirth, take-up rates for paternity and other leave benefits and long working hours. In New Zealand, the *Choices for Living, Caring and Working* Plan of Action, published in 2006, gave parents and caregivers more choices about balancing care, paid work and personal time, including through paid parental leave, before and after school programmes, flexible workplace practices, and early childhood education. The New Zealand Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007, which came into force in 2008, provided the right to request flexible working arrangements, including a variation in hours or place of work, to employees with care responsibilities.

30. The United Kingdom has also taken a number of steps to promote flexible working hours. In 2003, the Government introduced the right to flexible working hours for employees who have children with disabilities, or children under the age of six. The right to flexible working hours was extended to caregivers of adults in 2007 and will be extended to parents of children up to age 16. The take-up of this benefit is high — 56 per cent of employees (14 million employees) work flexibly, or have done so within the last 12 months. However, evidence shows that a large proportion of male employees (42 per cent) with children under the age of six are unaware of their right to request flexible work arrangements. Some employers are also unsure how to handle such requests. In response, the Government launched a campaign to raise awareness of both individuals and employers on flexible working. In the Netherlands, the Government encouraged partners in the household to share the responsibilities of work and care responsibilities more equally, so that women can take on more paid employment and men can be more involved in care work. The most important policy instruments in support of this are the Working Hours (Adjustment) Act (2000) and the Work and Care Act (2001). The Work and Care Act provided the possibility to adjust working hours temporarily to fulfil pressing care tasks. In addition, the Life Course Savings Scheme gave each employee in the Netherlands the opportunity to save part of their gross salary tax-free to finance a period of unpaid leave in the future.

31. Several countries, including Estonia, Latvia, Romania and the United Kingdom, have taken various measures to eliminate inequality in the labour market and ensure equality of opportunity for women and men. In 2004, New Zealand committed to a five-year Pay and Employment Equity Plan of Action. The Plan aims to ensure that remuneration, job choice and job opportunities in the public service, public health and public education sectors are not affected by stereotypical gender roles. Pay and equity reviews are currently taking place throughout the public sector. In 2007, the Plan was extended on a voluntary basis, to Crown entities, State-owned enterprises and local government. A third phase may see the Plan extended to other employees, including those in the private sector. Legislation has also been passed requiring employers to provide appropriate facilities and breaks for employees who wish to breastfeed or express breast milk. Finland is committed to reducing the differences in pay between women and men. The Government and

central labour organizations agreed in 2006 on a joint Equal Pay Programme. In Romania, specific objectives aimed at combating the gender pay gap are included in the National Strategy on Employment. In Latvia, measures have been taken to facilitate the return of persons to the labour market after parental leave and to promote inclusion of the gender equality principle in collective labour agreements between employers and trade unions. In addition, efforts have been taken in several countries to diminish gender-based segregation in the labour market, including by encouraging men to enter female-dominated occupations and women to enter male-dominated occupations (see E/CN.6/2005/2 and Corr.1, para. 290).

32. In Estonia, a project aimed at increasing awareness of gender equality in private companies with respect to legal provisions, policies, measures and good practices was carried out in 2007-2008. A survey showed that awareness about gender equality legislation was low. To assist private sector employers to promote gender equality, guidelines on issues linked to recruitment, training and career development, pay and work-life balance were developed. In addition, seminars for representatives and employees of large, medium-size and small companies were held to increase the awareness of relevant legal provisions and to improve knowledge and skills in the use of methods and tools for the promotion of gender equality in an organization. A network, including private sector employers, representatives of employees and gender equality experts, was established to ensure sustainability of the project results.

33. Hiring domestic workers is a common solution for many families trying to reconcile care responsibilities with the demands of employment. Domestic workers are predominantly women, often from more vulnerable groups in society. In most countries, domestic workers are subject to unequal treatment relative to other wage-earners. Moreover, law enforcement is often lenient because of, inter alia, the hidden nature of the work of many domestic workers. Domestic workers are often employed for low wages, have few legal rights and little or no social protection.⁴ Argentina, Chile and South Africa provide some recent examples of countries where legislative efforts to provide basic labour and social rights for domestic workers have been made.²⁰ In the Dominican Republic, the national machinery was able to incorporate the recognition of unremunerated work as productive labour into the National Constitutional Reform Project.

D. Measures to support and strengthen the involvement of men in caregiving

34. In recent years, researchers and policymakers have begun to explore ways to increase the role of men in caregiving and domestic work and to address men's perspectives on their roles in families and as caregivers. Member States emphasized the importance of further targeting and involving men.

35. A number of countries have taken steps to engage men and boys and to raise awareness on men's various roles and responsibilities in society (ibid., paras. 656-663). In particular, initiatives aimed at promoting active and responsible fatherhood

²⁰ Shanra Razavi, *The Political and Social Economy of Care in a Development Context: Conceptual Issues, Research Questions and Policy Options*, Gender and Development Programme paper No. 3 (UNRISD, Geneva, 2007).

have been developed, including in Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Jamaica, Latvia, the Netherlands, and the Philippines. In Jamaica, the Bureau of Women's Affairs partnered with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social agencies, such as Fathers Incorporated, to support and strengthen the involvement of men in caregiving. Training and sensitization were provided to correct the sociocultural stereotypes of men as irresponsible parents. Public forums have also been organized by the Ministry of Health and Environment, in partnership with several NGOs, churches and service clubs, to raise awareness on men's roles and responsibilities in society. In Finland, a Father of the Year Award has been established, linked to Finnish family policy efforts to improve the possibilities of fathers to take a more active role in the family and in bringing up children. Efforts to improve support to fathers at maternity and child health clinics have also been taken, including through the development of the role of fathers in prenatal training.

36. In a series of portraits of individual men, a recent publication prepared by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in Germany, explored how these men have coped with change in reconciling the needs of their families, jobs and partners. The publication also addressed men's motivations in taking up new roles and responsibilities as well as the challenges and attitudes they faced in their personal and professional environments.¹⁸ In Colombia, the women's national mechanism developed a programme aimed at promoting democratic families, including through enhanced involvement of men in domestic work and caregiving.

37. In 2005-2006, an international European Union-financed project entitled "Men Equal — Men Different" was implemented by Bulgarian, Danish, French and Latvian partners. The project, which targeted young fathers, fathers to-be, families with children as well as employers and employees, sought to identify obstacles impeding active fatherhood; promote men's involvement in family life and child care; develop good practice in companies for reconciliation of work and family life; and change gender stereotypes. The final report found that while many positive examples of men's increased involvement in caregiving exist, cultural as well as economic barriers and traditional views of women as caregivers prevented men in all four countries from taking on more active roles as fathers in family life and caregiving.

38. In Denmark, the 2006 study entitled "Men, workplace culture and parental leave", conducted by the Danish National Centre for Social Research for the Department of Gender Equality, concluded that the workplace culture influenced men's use of parental leave. In Finland, studies showed that in 2004, workplaces still viewed the use of statutory parental leave as women's rather than men's right. Only 45 per cent of private sector employees thought it would be easy for a man to take family leave of between one and seven months. Furthermore, the persistent wage gap between women and men makes it more difficult for more men to take parental leave.⁴

39. Evidence-based policy and programme models for working with men to achieve gender equality are increasingly available, including through networks and organizations such as the Sonke Gender Justice Network in South Africa, Promundo in Brazil and other developing countries, and the Global White Ribbon Campaign.²¹

²¹ See for example: <http://www.genderjustice.org/za>; <http://www.promundo.org.br/>; <http://www.whiteribbon.ca/>.

E. Mechanisms to monitor progress and impact

40. Several countries, including Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Latvia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines and Romania, highlighted the role and work of national monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of national policies, plans and programmes aimed to promote gender equality across all sectors of society. In Japan, the Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Gender Impact Assessment and Evaluation under the Council for Gender Equality monitors implementation of Government measures for a gender-equal society and studies their impact. In Peru, a multisectoral commission has been established on monitoring the National Law and Plan of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men 2006-2010, with participation from many ministries and the National Institute of Statistics and Information. A round table with civil society on monitoring of the National Law and Plan has also been set up. In addition, a gender analysis of the public sector budget is mandated by law.

41. In 2006, Estonia published the results of the second Gender Equality Monitory study, which is a public opinion survey about gender equality issues, covering different areas such as decision-making, economy, working life, private life and education. In the Netherlands, the Emancipation Monitor is published every two years to provide updated statistics and information, including in areas such as paid employment, unpaid work and caregiving. The Ministry for Gender Equality in Denmark regularly publishes a database on relevant statistics on women and men.

42. In October 2008, the Ministry for Women's Affairs in New Zealand released the new report *Indicators for Change: Tracking the Progress of New Zealand Women*.²² Indicators have been developed for a range of areas, including health, education, labour force participation, and leadership. The report sets a baseline against which progress can be measured in the future. It will assist the Government to determine areas where more work may be needed. The report showed that the differences in women's and men's employment patterns and total incomes reflect the larger share of unpaid work, in particular care work, done by women. In 2001 the value of unpaid work in New Zealand was estimated at 40 billion New Zealand dollars, with women contributing 64 per cent of the total value.²²

43. Impact assessments, collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data, time-use surveys, gender-based analysis and gender-responsive budgeting are important tools used by Member States to mainstream gender perspectives in all Government policies, programmes and activities, including in areas linked to the priority theme. Canada has made extensive progress on the implementation of gender-based analysis across Government. For example, the Department of Finance is now applying this analysis to measures in the national budget. Submissions to the Treasury Board of Canada to obtain funds, as well as Memorandums to Cabinet, now require evidence of gender-based analysis throughout the analytical process of the initiative in question. In addition, the national women's machinery, in partnership with other Government departments, is currently developing a set of gender equality indicators, which will focus on a number of key areas, including unpaid work. In Belgium, a law was passed in 2007 requiring the Government to undertake gender equality impact assessments and gender-responsive budgeting; collect and monitor sex-disaggregated data; include gender equality objectives in

²² Available from <http://www.mwa.govt.nz/news-and-pubs/publications/indicators-for-change.pdf>.

official statements and policy notes; have a designated gender mainstreaming adviser in each ministry; and provide regular reports on progress and results.

F. Equal sharing of caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS

44. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has accentuated the need for attention to caregiving. In the context of HIV/AIDS, care has become a major source of inequality. It has been estimated that globally women and girls provide up to 90 per cent of the care need generated by HIV/AIDS.²³ Where public health services have been weakened and cannot meet demand, as in the case of countries with high rates of HIV infection, the burden of care is shifted onto households and communities.¹⁰ The vast majority of care costs and burdens are borne, therefore, by households and individuals, often those most in need, as well as by the non-governmental sector, volunteers in home-based care programmes and sometimes by the private sector. However, private sector services are unaffordable to the very poor.²⁴

45. Caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS also brings to the fore the intergenerational challenges of promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men. Before responsibilities are shared between women and men, they are often shifted to different generations of women. For example, many older women, such as grandmothers, take on responsibilities for caregiving. In Southern Africa, studies have shown that two thirds of primary caregivers in households surveyed were women and one quarter of these were over 60 years of age.²⁴ A study on the South African family and its response to HIV/AIDS showed that while men may have taken on new gender roles as caregivers, their involvement in what traditionally has been seen as women's work continues to be perceived as deviant both by women and by other men.²⁵

46. There are some signs of progress. In an effort to recognize and offer support to all generations of women who provide caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS, the Canadian International Development Agency provided funding to support the participation of older women in a "Grandmothers' gathering" in 2006. The meeting brought together grandmothers from Canada and Africa to share their experiences and to articulate and raise awareness about their individual and collective needs as caregivers. The project Midlands Food Security and HIV/AIDS, supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), was implemented by Africare in Zimbabwe. The project targeted people living with HIV/AIDS, providing practical home-based care and psychosocial support by training voluntary caregivers, and improving food security and income. One important innovation was the identification and training of male caregivers. Many of the clients reported that they were embarrassed about their illnesses and did not ask for home-based care support for themselves and primary caregivers in the household. With the

²³ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/UNIFEM, *Women and HIV/AIDS: Confronting the Crisis* (New York, 2004), chap. 4, "Caregiving".

²⁴ See UNAIDS, "Caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS" background paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting, 2008 (EGM/ESOR/2008/BP.4).

²⁵ See M. Montgomery, V. Housegood, J. Busza, and I. M. Timæus, "Men's involvement in the South African family: Engendering change in the AIDS era", *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 62 (2006).

involvement of male voluntary caregivers, the number of men seeking support when suffering from AIDS-related illnesses increased significantly.²⁶

47. Some national and local-level policy recommendations on men's involvement in caregiving have been developed. In Malawi, the Chitipa District AIDS Coordinating Committee required that community home-based care programmes should ensure a minimum of 40 per cent male volunteers. In other countries, including Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda national HIV documents explicitly encouraged men to play a greater part in care.²⁷ In Jamaica, attempts have been made to engage men to take responsibility for protection against HIV transmission. The involvement of men in national programmes and campaigns to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted illnesses has helped to educate the public on the benefits of shared responsibilities. In Kenya, as part of a Gender Equality Support Project, the Canadian International Development Agency funded a project on gender-based violence that specifically targeted men. Through dialogues and community sensitization workshops, the project has helped to train men to reach out to other men on how to prevent gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

48. **Member States have increasingly recognized the strong relationship between the achievement of gender equality and the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in paid and unpaid work, including in the context of HIV/AIDS. However, research shows that globally women continue to bear the larger share of domestic and care responsibilities than men. This limits their ability to participate fully in other areas, including in the labour market and public life.**

49. **Important innovative initiatives have been taken by a number of Member States, including policy and legislative measures, provision of services and awareness-raising to promote the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men. Progress has also been made in measuring and valuing informal and unpaid work.**

50. **States should ensure that comprehensive, multidisciplinary and gender-sensitive national policies and strategies on labour and social protection are in place, with measurable goals and timetables, monitoring and accountability measures, and mechanisms to ensure coordination with key stakeholders in the private sector and civil society.**

51. **Several countries have taken measures to promote gender equality in labour policies and to strengthen the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for both women and men. Legislation and policies in the area of employment should be reviewed and revised with the goal to end discriminatory practices and reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market.**

²⁶ IFAD submission to document E/CN.6/2009/6.

²⁷ UNAIDS, "Caregiving," *op. cit.*, p. 13, and D. Peacock and M. Weston, "Men and care in the context of HIV and AIDS: structure, will and greater male involvement", expert paper presented at the Expert Group Meeting, 2008 (EGM/ESOR/2008/EP.9), p. 12.

52. Leave provisions, including maternity, paternity and parental leave, policies related to flexible working hours, as well as other social protection measures — such as health insurance policies, pensions, child and family allowances — facilitate the reconciliation of work, family and care responsibilities. Such measures should be extended to all sectors, including the informal sector. States should ensure that these measures do not inadvertently reinforce gender bias and that workers are not discriminated against when they avail themselves of the benefits available.

53. While there has been increased awareness about the role of domestic workers and their contributions to the economy, strengthened efforts are needed by States and other actors to protect their rights and regulate their working conditions, including working hours and wages, and to improve access to health care and other social and economic benefits.

54. The general discussion of the 98th session of the International Labour Conference in 2009, which will focus on the theme “Gender equality at the heart of decent work”, will provide member States, employers and trade unions with an important opportunity to develop further policy guidance on these issues.

55. Accessible and affordable high-quality care services, including child and elder care, as well as education and health-care services, play a key role in reducing the workload of caregivers. Member States and international organizations, including multilateral and bilateral donors, should increase support to public infrastructure such as education, health, water, sanitation and transport, in particular in rural areas. In the context of HIV/AIDS, public health systems need to be strengthened to contribute to prevention, treatment and care, including through the provision of quality of services and enhanced support to home-based caregivers.

56. Further efforts are needed to identify and address gender stereotypes and, in particular challenge the stereotypical perceptions of the male breadwinner and female caretaker. The media and educational institutions should be encouraged to play a critical role in promoting egalitarian partnership between women and men in all spheres of life, including at the household level and in the labour market.

57. States should make targeted efforts to engage men in caregiving at the household level and in paid care work, including child, health or elder care. More research is required to assess the contributions of men to care work, and to better understand their perceptions and the challenges they face, including in making use of leave and flexible work policies in the labour market. Examples of men’s positive involvement in caregiving should be highlighted. National political and business leaders, as well as other prominent men, can provide role models and promote behaviour that challenges gender stereotypes.

58. Unpaid work, including caregiving, remains undervalued by society and remains largely unmeasured in national accounts. Time-use surveys provide comprehensive information on all categories of activities and thereby improve the visibility of women’s and men’s unremunerated work. Data collection and research on women’s and men’s contributions to paid and unpaid work should be undertaken to guide the development of national policies and programmes.

59. The value and cost of care to households and society at large should be recognized and incorporated in national economic and social policies, strategies, plans and budgets as well as in international development cooperation policies and programmes. Consideration of these issues is of particular importance in the context of the current financial crisis, including in terms of the role of the State in supporting economic and social development and in providing social and physical infrastructure and social protection.

60. Efforts should be made to deepen the understanding of the critical links between equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men and the achievement of the overall goals of gender equality and empowerment of women. Improved mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and documenting the implementation and impact of policies and strategies for increasing sharing of responsibilities between women and men must be developed. States should integrate gender-based analyses and impact assessments, as well as gender-responsive budgeting, in a coordinated and comprehensive manner across policy areas.

61. In addition to the measures outlined above, Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, employer organizations and trade unions and other stakeholders may wish to consider further legislative and policy recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in his report contained in document E/CN.6/2009/2.
