

Denmark

16<sup>th</sup> session

248. The Committee considered the third periodic report of Denmark (CEDAW/C/DEN/3) at its 328th and 329th meetings, on 24 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.328 and 329).

249. In her introductory statement, the representative noted that the report had been prepared in a participatory way and included the comments of various women's organizations in Denmark. To further strengthen the outreach of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, both the Convention and the report had been translated into Danish and published by women's organizations.

250. The representative pointed out that much had been accomplished in terms of improving the status of women in Denmark, but the success went beyond the provision of legal rights. More importantly, Danish society had also started to change its attitude towards women. An understanding of the concept of gender, including the roles of both men and women, had gained ground. Denmark had focused its efforts on changing attitudes towards women and gender roles in Danish society. In the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, Denmark had focused on mainstreaming gender issues in all levels of society.

251. The representative informed the Committee about recent efforts to strengthen the institutional framework for the advancement of women that had not been reflected in the report. An ad hoc committee had been established to develop new ideas and strategies to improve national machinery and to consult equality institutions in other countries. Furthermore, the Government of Denmark had increased its support to the Equal Status Council in terms of personnel and funding.

252. The representative highlighted some recent changes in legislation designed to advance the status of women further. For example, Danish counties were now obliged to report to the national Government on issues related to equality in employment in their region, and a proposal would be discussed in Parliament concerning women's right to join the army under conditions almost equal to those applicable to men.

253. The representative described the special efforts undertaken by Denmark to encourage fathers to share parental responsibility for the raising of children. The legal framework provided unmarried couples with the possibility of sharing custody and granted both parents the right to parental leave. The representative also pointed out that those measures had to be accompanied by programmes designed to motivate men actually to use the

parental leave schemes. Therefore, the Minister of Employment was exploring new models to encourage fathers to make use of their newly acquired rights.

#### Concluding comments of the Committee

##### Introduction

254. The Committee expressed appreciation for the clear and well-organized third periodic report of Denmark, which closely followed the Committee's guidelines.

255. The Committee was pleased to note that the report and Denmark's answers to the questions of the Committee's pre-session working group provided relevant and up-to-date statistics. That allowed the Committee to discern the evolution of conditions in relation to the majority of the articles of the Convention.

256. The Committee also commended the Government of Denmark for including comments of non-governmental organizations in its report and in particular the fact that those comments responded to the report of the State party. The Committee evaluated that practice as a positive innovation.

##### Positive aspects

257. Denmark's commitment to high standards of gender equality and its consistent efforts to create an egalitarian society with respect to gender were regarded by the Committee as exemplary.

258. The Committee was aware of the legal measures taken by Denmark and the fact that the statistics on different aspects of gender equality in Denmark reflected constant improvement over time. The Committee was pleased to observe the institutionalized participation of women's non-governmental organizations in the politics of equality and the mainstreaming of gender equality through the creation of Equality Commissions in a majority of ministries in Denmark.

259. The Committee appreciated the Government's holistic approach to the implementation of the Convention and was pleased to note that conscientious efforts were already under way for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

260. The Committee was also pleased to learn that provisions concerning persecution on the basis of gender had been incorporated into the laws on the status of refugees in Denmark.

### Principal areas of concern

261. The Committee noted with concern the challenges currently facing efforts to implement temporary special measures to hasten gender equality, such as the removal of quotas by political parties. Although the participation of women in politics was at a higher level than in other countries, Denmark had yet to reach gender parity in the political sphere.

262. The disproportionately low levels of women's participation in academe, in research positions and in management positions in the public and private sectors suggested that insufficient systematic and goal-oriented advocacy and action was taking place in the light of Denmark's leading role in those areas.

263. The inadequacy of culturally and gender-sensitive measures and programmes for immigrant and refugee women to enable them to benefit from legal and social services available in Denmark was noted as an area of concern by the Committee.

264. The absence of a specific law on violence against women was noted as a principal deficiency. The Committee expressed a desire to have fuller information about the actual incidence of violence, rape and incest and was concerned about the absence of specific legislation and/or measures to sensitize the police, the judiciary or the public in general regarding those issues.

265. The Committee noted with concern that stereotypical perceptions of gender role continued to exist in society and were related to the perseverance of attitudes and behaviour that kept women away from decision-making positions and kept men from assuming an equal share of family responsibilities.

266. The fact that women, despite their high level of education, were more seriously affected by unemployment than men was noted with concern by the Committee. The Committee was also concerned that women were still paid less than men, despite efforts to initiate assessments of equal pay for work of equal value.

### Suggestions and recommendations

267. Temporary special measures should be maintained and strengthened, particularly in the areas of reducing unemployment among women; ensuring that women and men receive equal pay for work of equal value; increasing women's participation in private-sector decision-making; increasing the number of female university professors and researchers; and encouraging men to devote more time to child care and housework. Such initiatives should include quantitative targets, time limits for their achievement, specific measures and sufficient budgetary resources.

268. More research should be conducted on the incidence of violence against women, particularly in vulnerable groups such as immigrants, as well as on the advantages of enacting legislation specifically directed at reducing such violence. The research finding should be included in the next report submitted in accordance with article 18 of the Convention.

269. In particular, more efforts should be made to determine whether trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution are taking place and whether new communications technologies, especially the Internet, are being used for such purposes.

270. The gender and culture course, which is currently optional in pre-university curricula, should be made mandatory in secondary education.

271. In accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action, it is recommended that the value of non-remunerated work done by both women and men should be included in national accounts, through satellite accounts.

272. The Committee recommended that Denmark continue to include among the objectives of its development assistance programmes the promotion of the rights of women and the elimination of discrimination against women and, in particular, the implementation of the Convention in beneficiary countries.

273. In addition to information relating to the recommendations above, the Committee requested that the next report include information on:

(a) Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and of the commitments announced by Denmark at the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(b) The number of women and men who work: (i) part-time; (ii) on a flexible schedule; and (iii) outside the workplace, using new technologies;

(c) The steps taken by trade unions and business organizations to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;

(d) The use, in cases of abortion, of the RU-486 pill;

(e) The number of women who use medically assisted reproduction techniques and the number of children adopted;

(f) Disabled women, especially in terms of their access to education and employment;

(g) Concrete results and the de facto impact of policies on and programmes for women;

(h) The economic situation of women, including successful measures to combat the unemployment of women.

274. The Committee requested the Government of Denmark to address the concerns included in the present concluding comments in its next report. It also requested wide dissemination of these comments throughout the country to make the people of Denmark aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in that regard.