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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Fifth periodic reports of States parties

Denmark

Corrigendum

After the Introduction insert the following:

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Summary of conclusions and initiatives

The overall goal for gender equality in Denmark remains. Women and men should have the same rights, obligations and possibilities in all areas of life. Equality between women and men continues to be regarded and treated as an important area of government policy, and consensus among the major political parties on the goals for the policy in this field remains.

Methods to promote gender equality have developed from being a mere question of creating adequate legislation to a matter of bringing about changes in gender stereotypes and attitudes through communication and information. Focus has changed from eradication of all forms of discrimination against women to the acknowledgement of women as indispensable partners in economic and social development. It has also changed from being a women's issue only towards aiming at establishing a positive atmosphere of cooperation between women and men in order to obtain a just and fair society in which girls and boys, women and men have equal opportunities. The public debate is concerned with issues such as the results and "profitability" of working towards gender equality.

Young women in Denmark are increasingly arguing that they do not face considerable gender constraints when choosing education, job and career. Trends in gender relations over the past decades are being questioned, and public debate is focusing on the changing role of modern men, and what women have gained or lost in their fight for equal status and equality of opportunity. Traditional gender perceptions are starting to change. This is reflected in the fact that young men want to take part in family life and parenthood.

Despite substantial progress gender disparities still exist within important areas. Equal pay is still not a reality, the labour market is till divided by sex, it still lacks flexibility, and the low representation of women in decision-making positions is still a fact.

Much energy has been used to modernize methods and tools for promoting gender equality in Denmark. As part of the follow-up to the Platform for Action, and based on a change of attitude towards gender issues in the population in general, the Government established a Committee in 1996 to evaluate the possibility of reorganization of the future institutional set up. Based on the recommendations of the Committee a new act has been adopted by Parliament on a new and institutional structure to promote gender equality in the future. The new structure consists of three bodies: a department under the Minister for Equality, a Knowledge Centre and Debate Forum and a complaints board.

A number of initiatives have been taken during the past three to four years to promote equality within the fields of the different ministries, for instance:

- With regard to **education**, efforts have been made to increase the interest of children and young persons in technical subjects, natural sciences and entrepreneurship, and to promote equal opportunities for both sexes within information technology. The policy objectives have especially been directed towards lifelong education and the improvement of qualifications.
- With regard to **research**, a debate has been initiated on the uneven representation of men and women as professors and researchers. An action plan has been adopted and specific actions have been taken to change attitudes

and behaviours within research circles where a disproportionate number of male researchers prevails.

- With regard to the **labour market**, new ways and means have been developed to promote gender equality, including better opportunities for women with limited educational backgrounds. Gender mainstreaming strategies are increasingly being used in the regions to get more unemployed people into work. Work focuses on the gender aspect by introducing women as well as men to labour market areas in which they until now were underrepresented.
- Extension of parental leave schemes for fathers is a step forward in promoting men's opportunities for taking part in the care of their children.
- With regard to **pensions**, the Government has achieved approval from Parliament for the "Gender Equality for Occupational Pension Schemes Act".
- With regard to **violence** against women, the Danish Parliament amended the law in 1997 to strengthen victim support.