



## The Swedish Women's Lobby

The Swedish Women's Lobby (SWL) is a politically independent umbrella organisation for women's non-governmental organisations in Sweden. Our aim is to integrate women's perspectives into all political, economical and social processes, locally as well as internationally. We strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and to build and strengthen solidarity among women through information, education and awareness rising activities.

The Swedish Women's Lobby was established in 1997 and has more than 30 member organisations. SWL is the Swedish coordination of the European Women's Lobby, the largest umbrella organisation for women's organisations in the EU.

Further information about the European Women's Lobby: [www.womenlobby.org/](http://www.womenlobby.org/)

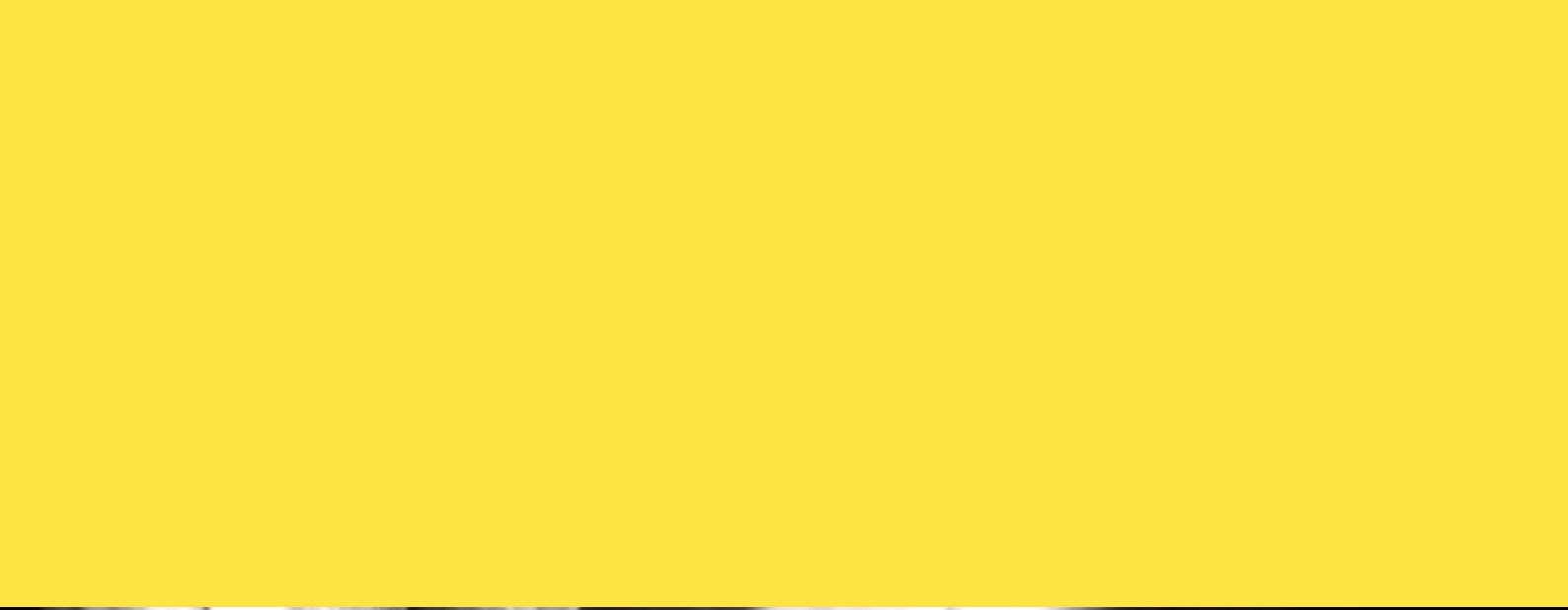


[www.sverigeskvinnolobby.se](http://www.sverigeskvinnolobby.se)



# Beijing + 15: The Platform for Action and Sweden

The parallell report from Swedish Women's Lobby



## Foreword

This year 2010 we are celebrating Beijing Platform for Action. The Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action are the two most important documents on women's human rights.

In 2009 the Government presented their report on Beijing Platform for Action and in 2010 Swedish Women's Lobby together with some other organizations presented their shadow report. The shadow report is being presented in New York on CSW. The Swedish Women's Lobby is hosting a side-event, a seminar based on our shadow report.

It is 15 years since the Meeting in Beijing 1995 and as we point out in our report Sweden has a long way to go before we can say that all women have all their human rights met.

The organizations that cooperated with Swedish Women's Lobby were:

Gröna Kvinnor (Green Women), Feminism & Human Rights, RFSU (The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education), KSAN (Women's Organizations Cooperation on Alcohol and Drugs), Forum Women and Disability, ROKS (The National Organization for Women's and Girl's Shelters), SKR (Sweden's Women's and Girl's Shelter Organization), The Mediacritical Network "Allt är möjligt", IKFF/WILPF and The Delta, Kappa, Gamma Society International.

Stockholm the 8 February 2010

Swedish Women's Lobby

## Women and poverty (A)\*

### Strategic objective A 1.

*Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.*

The Beijing Platform for Action urged governments to adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and develop strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty. As shown in the report SOU 2005:66 *Makt att forma samhället och sitt eget liv (Power to shape society and one's own life)*, the thesis of a feminisation of poverty is not useful in the Swedish context, the trends are too complex. Inquiries into the development of economic equality between women and men show a general increase in economic equality between them. At the same time, however, some groups have experienced a relative downturn in their economic circumstances in recent years. This trend has become more apparent during the last five years. Notably, the income gap between the average income after tax of women and men increased by 12 800 SEK a year (1 066 SEK a month) between 2006 and 2009.

The chances for single mothers to attain economic independence through paid work have diminished. Their employment rate has fallen. 36% of women in the labour force still only work part-time, making them less likely to be economically independent. Most part-time jobs are to be found in sectors dominated by women such as health care, public services and the retail trade, all of which have a generally low level of income. These groups also show the highest level of sickness absence. Their family situation tends to be traditional. Women use almost all the available parental leave, do most of the household work and start working part-time because they have small children and then stick to that life-pattern. They end up as poor older people. The Government has not adopted macroeconomic policies or strategies to combat this structural phenomenon. Furthermore, the Government has increased the fee for unemployment insurance in female-dominated sectors with high part-time unemployment, resulting in a growing number of women dropping out of the insurance scheme.

### Strategic objective A 2.

*Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources*

The Government has not revised laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources. Criticism is now being levelled at the Government's labour market and social policies, saying that they are harmful to the most vulnerable groups in society in which women form the majority. As pointed out by the Minister of Finance, there are huge gaps between women and men in the labour market but systematic action has not been taken to address the issue. The Government has rejected legislation to guarantee full-time employment. Initiatives to improve working conditions by structural changes have not been taken. Studies on the effects of the privatisation of public services, a development which is supported by the Government, show an increase in part-time jobs with low wages and insecure terms of employment with split working-hours. Nocturnal public childcare for night-workers has been reduced by municipalities and although this often prevents low-paid women from finding gainful employment, the issue has not been addressed by the Government. More women than men have no

income and all groups with low income are dominated by women. On the other hand, all groups with high income are dominated by men. In 2006, in the 20+ age group, just 21 700 women but 110 000 men had an income over 600 000 SEK. Wage-gaps have increased over the last five years. The majority of senior citizens on low pensions living in poor conditions are women. The Government has not adopted economic policies to address the needs of these groups and there is no action plan against poverty.

### **Strategic objective A 3.**

*Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions*

The recommendation in The Platform for Action to governments to provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions has not led to any action. A study of women with low income showed that an increasing number of women seek economic assistance from voluntary centres and churches thus implying that the policy toward this group is not sufficient. The trend in the general economic development is towards increasing economic differences and women constitute the majority among the groups with lowest income. 4 out of 10 single mothers lack a cash margin (i.e. to be able to raise 15 000 SEK within one week). Almost 50% of single mothers live in overcrowded conditions thus implying that they lack sufficient income and savings, as well as creditworthiness.

### **Strategic objective A 4.**

*Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty*

Gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address poverty among vulnerable groups have not been developed. The Platform for Action states that governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively. This has definitely not been done. In fact even gender disaggregated data on employment issues have been rejected by the Ministry of Labour market affairs department. The inquiry into gender equality policy proposed the introduction of a gainful employment tax allowance for single parents with low income. The aim of the proposal was to lower the threshold and marginal effects for lone parents with low incomes and thus strengthen a group that is economically vulnerable, but the proposal was not followed up. Integration policy often lacks a gender perspective despite the fact that immigrant women, particularly from some specific countries, have a much lower participation in gainful work and a higher degree of illiteracy.

## Education and training of women (B)\*

### Strategic objective B 1.

#### *Ensure equal access to education*

During the period 2002–2004, 255 so called gender educators were trained and these are now working in various municipalities implementing gender equality education, but they need more support. If there is to be any change in gender equality education, all adults working in schools must adhere to and use a gender equality teaching methodology.

Gender equality education must be part of both regular in-service teacher training and post-degree education for teachers.

### Strategic objective B 2.

#### *Eradicate illiteracy among women*

Even if all immigrant women are offered courses in Swedish and pass the SFI exam, (Swedish as a Second Language), few of them find employment or have the financial resources for further studies up to compulsory school level. For illiterate immigrant women the situation is even worse because the number of lessons offered to them is often not sufficient to achieve the SFI level. These women also have hardly any possibility to gain access to Swedish working life. Only 5% of immigrant women are offered trainee positions in combination with SFI. This means they have very few chances on the labour market. Hence, the gender pay gap will increase.

### Strategic objective B 3.

#### *Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education*

The educational system has a tendency to reinforce traditional, stereotypical views about gender and women. The choice of employment or studies follows traditional gender roles. Those who do break the rules and choose non-traditional educations and careers often fail to complete their studies or end up working in gender-traditional jobs later on. In the energy-electro-construction and car vocational training programmes, men still account for 90% of the participants.

More information and discussion about gender equality are needed to encourage women and girls to choose non-traditional educations.

### Strategic objective B 4.

#### *Develop non-discriminatory education and training*

The implementation of gender equality measures often starts with a local project often initiated by an individual member of the teaching staff or a group of enthusiastic teachers. It is then up to the local schools and municipalities to support the project. Unless the project receives such support, it is not likely to be successful. A gender equality project must be implemented in all activities of the school and must include both the adults working and students studying there as participants. Parents must also be involved.

Gender equality projects must to receive more encouragement and support from the municipalities. Equality must be included as an indicator in the evaluations of by the Swedish National Agency of Education.

**Strategic objective B 5.***Allocate sufficient resources for the implementation and monitoring of educational reforms*

Relevant legislation and regulations must be more efficiently implemented by all those dealing with education on all levels. Gender equality education must be a part of teacher training on all levels.

**Strategic objective B 6.***Promote life-long education and training for girls and women*

In adult vocational training, female students often choose traditional female training programmes. Those few women who choose non-traditional training often are given fewer opportunities to find a job. Even if they have good grades, they do not have the same opportunities as men to find a well-paid job.

There are very considerable gender differences in academic achievement. Generally, girls obtain better results and leave school with higher grades than the boys. At the same time the stress experienced while in school is growing among young people, particularly among girls. Despite there being more women students than men at institutes of higher education, and in PhD programmes, a mere 19% of Swedish professors are women.

**Women and health (C)\*****Strategic objective C 1.***Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services*

On average, women live 4.36 years longer than men in Sweden. But even though women live longer, they experience ill-health more often and seek health care services more frequently than men. Men have a higher mortality rate than women in measurable causes of death. But recently these gaps have narrowed and in some diagnoses completely disappeared. When analyzing all health policy indicators, men have significantly higher mortality than women. However, the trend is changing. Male mortality rates are decreasing, while they are increasing for women. Women's increasing mortality is mainly due to higher morbidity and mortality from lung cancer. The risk of contracting cardiovascular disease and subsequent death have declined for both women and men, with a greater decline for men. Women under the age of 50 show more than twice the mortality from cardiovascular disease as men. Two recent Swedish studies on hernia surgery show that mortality among women is much higher than among men. One recent study indicates that this may be partially linked to the fact that current surgical methods, which are developed for men, are being used on women.

The development in terms of life expectancy among Swedish women and men, in comparison with the rest of the European Union (EU), raises pointed questions about Swedish women's living conditions and opportunities to receive effective health care and treatment. Women are in many respects suffering more from ill-health than men. Above all, it is common for women to suffer from chronic pain and impaired mobility. There are also large differences in mental health welfare. It is especially common for women to suffer from prolonged or chronic illnesses, and from several diseases simultaneously.

An issue that has aroused considerable interest in recent years, is how women and men are treated when seeking and receiving health care. Several studies have shown that there are systematic and significant differences. The latest monitoring report from the National Board of Health and shows, however, that there have been some improvements in this area.

Regarding access to appropriate health care, women are consistently disfavoured compared to men when receiving the recommended treatment for heart failure. However, the understanding of gender differences in the controversial field of cardiac care, and how these differences can and should be analyzed, has increased in recent years.

The risk of dying from a heart attack has almost halved in the past twenty years for women as for men. This reduction in mortality depends on two things: the risk of developing a myocardial infarction has decreased, and the chance of surviving a heart attack has increased. Mortality from heart attack and stroke has declined more among men than among women.

## **Strategic objective C 2**

### *Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health*

Women report a greater incidence of mental illness than men. 22% of all Swedish women between the ages of 16 and 84 years suffer from insomnia or feel anxiety, agitation or worry. The corresponding percentage for males is about 13%. Suicide is the cause of about 2.5% of deaths among men and 1.1% of deaths among women. Women, however, make more suicide attempts than men. Women under the age of 50 receive care more often than men for attempted suicide. Women report more anxiety, agitation and worry than men in all age groups. The National Board of Health and Welfare states that women report insomnia and mild or severe anxiety, agitation or worry over one and a half times as often as men. Severe anxiety, agitation or worry, headaches and constant fatigue are twice as common among women. Depression is more common among women than men; 25% of all women and 15% of all men are estimated to need treatment for depression at some point in their lives. The percentage of young women aged 16–24 who feel anxiety has increased from 9% in 1989 to 30% in 2005. The corresponding figures for young men have increased from 4 to 14% during the same time period. Attempted suicide among young women is also increasing steadily and more girls have problems with alcohol and drug abuse. Just over a quarter (26%) of young lesbians have attempted suicide, compared to 11% of young homosexual men.

There are major differences in the treatment measures for male and female substance abusers. The proportion of women going through court-ordered treatment for substance abusers is increasing. Generally treatment methods, options and facilities have been organized around the needs of men, but should be further developed to meet the specific needs of women. Women are increasingly at risk from increased substance abuse, which indicates that health care for women must be improved. It has also been noted that there is a shortage of qualified treatment options for women.

Violence against a partner in an intimate relationship is perpetrated almost exclusively by men against women and children. The National Board of Health and Welfare estimates that every year about 75 000 women in Sweden are victims of violence in intimate relationships. Furthermore, violence and the threat of violence at the workplace mostly affect women, who account for about 70% of reported cases. A woman is more exposed to violence from a man she is close to, usually a current or former boyfriend, partner or husband. Each year in Sweden, at least 16 women are killed as the result of an act of violence by a male relative, and many more require hospital treatment and/or take refuge in a women's shelter. Women's shelters supported up to 200 000 women and children in 2008. To be repeatedly beaten, violated and threatened by someone you love or have loved and trusted has health effects far beyond physical harm. Women who are

abused in this way testify that they suffer severe guilt and shame, lose their self-esteem, become depressed, and suffer from anxiety and sleep disorders. Fear or shame prevents women from seeking help immediately. On the other hand, many women seek help indirectly, through the health care system for symptoms or injuries caused by violence. The extent of violence committed by men against women is so great that it can be characterized as a public health problem.

### **Strategic objective C.3**

*Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues*

The Swedish Governmental Report on Beijing + 15 does not include information on the implementation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Sweden despite an requirement set out in paragraph 96 of the Beijing Platform for Action. This section states that: “the human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health.” In Sweden, if a pregnant woman seeks abortion before the end of week nine of her pregnancy, she can decide whether to have a medical or a surgical abortion. However, in reality her choice may be curtailed due to long waiting lists. If a pregnant woman seeks abortion after the end of week 18 in her pregnancy, she has to make a special application to the National Board of Health and Welfare. More than 300 women and girls, most of whom have special needs, are denied abortion every year. This procedure is a serious infringement of the reproductive rights of women and girls in Sweden.

Another aspect of women’s and girls’ reproductive rights in Sweden that lacks data in the official government report is counselling and access to sexual and reproductive health and information and services for adolescents (paragraph 93 of the Beijing Platform for Action). We know from many studies that the provision of comprehensive sex education in school has positive effects on young people’s empowerment regarding their own sexuality and reproduction. Earlier this year, Sweden was criticized by The United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child for not adequately handling the serious increase in sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. The Committee recommended that Sweden improved sex education in schools.

### **Strategic objective C 4.**

*Promote research and disseminate information on women’s health*

Today there is far greater awareness about the different effects medicines have on women and men. In 2009, the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare has held seminars to highlight the danger in giving elderly women overdoses. Medicines are often tested on young healthy men and are then given in the same doses to fragile elderly women. The result is that many elderly women suffer more from the effects of their medicines than from the effects of illness or ageing.

A follow-up report from The National Board of Health and Welfare shows that the county councils’ commitment to equality in care has apparently increased during recent years. In 2007, all counties had included a mandatory goal of gender equality for healthcare users in their overall policy document, compared with about half of the counties in the previous survey in 2003. Public accounts of care results and other information seem to have improved awareness of the importance of sex-disaggregated statistics. Half the counties also say that they now have special indicators when following up care results, compared to none in the previous survey (2003) and more of them now work with sex-disaggregated statistics.

## Violence against women (D)\*

### Strategic objective D 1.

#### *Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women*

In a recent government report, it is stated that measures are being taken to better enable the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGO's) – i.e. the women's shelters and young women's crisis hotlines. While it is true that special government funds have been distributed to NGO women's shelters on a yearly basis since 2006, the rules for application were changed in 2007 limiting the application procedure to municipalities. NGOs can no longer apply for the state funds independently; instead the municipalities apply for funds and then also decide whether to use the funds to support its local women's shelter or to spend it on other measures to combat male violence against women. An evaluation of this process during 2007, shows that, while approximately half of the NGO women's shelters feel that the cooperation with their local municipality in this process has worked well, a third of the shelters report problems with cooperation or a total lack thereof. In several cases, the municipality has not applied for funds at all, resulting in the NGO shelter being left without state funding.

In 2008, a report from the National Council for Crime Prevention about police investigations of violence against women in intimate relationships shows that the rate of reported cases going to trial can be increased by an improvement in police investigative work. The most important factors leading to an increase in cases going to trial are interviews with witnesses, comprehensive documentation of injuries and a supportive attitude towards the victim on the part of the police. The study also shows substantial flaws in police work, where a failure to follow investigative leads has resulted in many cases never going to trial. In 25% of all cases studied, there was an identified, named witness who was never interviewed. 25% of the injuries were never documented. The study also shows serious discrimination of women of immigrant background; cases where the victim is a first- or second-generation immigrant are statistically less likely to go to trial.

The topic of violence against women is still not a mandatory part of the professional training of social workers, despite this being one of the most common problems that social workers will face in their work. This is in sharp contrast to many NGO women's shelters, which provide their volunteers with detailed mandatory training on these issues. The Government claims, in its defence, that it cannot control the curriculum of universities and colleges and hence to not assure that various professional groups receive adequate training.

Most divorces are initiated by the woman, and the prevalence study (Captured Queen, 2001) about violence against women shows that a third of divorced or separated women report violence or threats from their ex-husband as a reason for applying for divorce/separation. In 1998, Swedish family courts were given the authority to grant joint custody of children to both parents, even if this was against the wishes of one of the parents. Many implementation studies show that children are often placed in the joint or sole custody of a father who has physically abused the child's mother, or who has subjected the child itself to sexual abuse. The Children's Ombudsman found in a 2005 study that in 43% of all custody disputes during a specific year, the court gave joint custody to a father who was convicted of violent and/or sexual crimes against the child, or against the mother, and in 56% a convicted abuser was given unsupervised visitation rights.

These custody cases are tried according to principles created for non-violent parents. Often, children who refuse to visit their father out of fear, are subjected to police enforcement of the custody arrangement, and a mother who supports her child's refusal risks losing custody altogether for not complying with the court's decision. The legislation was amended in 2006 as a partial response to severe criticism, but court decisions are not showing any substantial change. Thus,

violent men can use the custody and visitation legislation to maintain power over women and children, and continue to abuse them. In fact, legislation (as practised by the courts) actually prevents women and children from being able to escape violent men.

Violence against women with disabilities has been brought to light by the disability movement itself, with the support of the women's shelter movements. However no resources to educate those working as volunteers in battered women's shelters have been provided, and the municipalities have not funded the women's shelter movement to make sure that their shelter apartments are accessible for women with disabilities.

Young women with disabilities are especially vulnerable, but the needs of elderly women for protection must be investigated, which has not been done in Sweden. The present legislation should be amended in accordance with article 6 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to ensure that women with disabilities are protected from violence and that courts, police and prosecutors are informed, educated and able to provide support. The debate has not even begun in Sweden.

The policies and laws concerning rape and sexual abuse have been debated extensively in Sweden in recent decades, resulting in several legislative changes. According to a 2009 report, Sweden tops the list of countries in Europe regarding the number of reported rapes per capita, but has a low percentage of convictions. In April 2005, the new Swedish Sexual Crimes Act extended the legal definition of rape to more acts, including exploiting someone in a helpless state. It is no longer enough that the sexual act took place without consent to receive a conviction.

In 1998, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) reiterated that the obligation of the signatory countries under Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights requires the penalization and effective prosecution of any non-consensual sexual act, even in cases where the victim did not resist physically. In violation of this obligation, Swedish legislation still stipulates a prerequisite of violence. Sweden must urgently adopt a law requiring the offender, in cases when he uses consent as a defence, to prove that he has made reasonable effort to ensure that his sexual partner has agreed (similar to British legislation on rape from 2004). This would increase the number of convictions, and would, importantly, have a normative effect, i.e. that sex should be a mutual act between consenting individuals.

Reports of rape are increasing in Sweden and in contrast to the situation in other European countries, many young Swedish rape victims do report the crime to the police. The age of the complainants has changed, e.g. the median age of offenders of so called "date rapes" fell from 27 years to 22 years in the 2000s. In 2008, a total of 5 446 rapes were reported, of which 262 led to a conviction. Unfortunately, the estimated number of unreported cases of rape is still high. While reports have increased in recent years, the National Council for Crime Prevention estimates that only about 20% of all rapes are reported.

In order to reduce violence in society in general, and men's violence against women in particular, Sweden has to start prevention work with boys and men, the potential and actual offenders. On this subject, the Government's action plan to combat men's violence does not propose actual measures, but focuses only on an individual level individuals, and lacks a gender power analysis.

## **Strategic objective D 2.**

### *Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures*

The Swedish Government has allocated general funds for different projects to eliminate violence against and trafficking in women. However, even if there are ongoing projects in the country on the subject of violence against women with disabilities, there is no research undertaken and projects are, with one exception, not government funded. The resources available for projects on violence against women with disabilities come mainly from the “National Inheritance Fund”, which is a state foundation promoting projects in the disability field, and for young people.

## **Strategic objective D 3.**

### *Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking*

In 1999, as the first country in the world, Sweden passed comprehensive legislation that prohibited the purchase of a sexual service. The legislation was particularly innovative as it rested firmly on principles of gender equality, noting that prostitution is violence against women, and, as such, contrary to internationally accepted principles of human rights of integrity and dignity. The initiative to criminalize the purchase of sexual services came from the Swedish women’s liberation movement.

The offence comprises of the purchase of all forms of sexual services, whether they are purchased on the street, in brothels, or anywhere else. Attempts to buy a sexual service are also punishable. Those in prostitution (and the vast majority of them are female) are not criminalized or subjected to administrative punishments, and have a right to services allowing them to exit prostitution and live lives without being subjected to violence. Since the legislation came into force, the number of individuals recruited into prostitution has decreased, almost 2 000 men have been apprehended, and the percentage of Swedish men over 18 years of age who have purchased some form of sexual service has decreased from 13.6% in 1996 to 7.8% in 2008. In addition, according to the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, the effective implementation of legislation has ensured that Sweden no longer is an attractive market for traffickers.

Specially earmarked funds have been made available to develop and carry out comprehensive training of police and prosecutors on the implementation of policies and legislation on prostitution and trafficking in human beings, leading to a high level of investigations and prosecutions of buyers, traffickers and procurers. In addition, information to different stakeholders internationally about the Swedish policies and legislation on prostitution and trafficking in human beings were prioritized, inspiring other countries in the European Union and beyond to implement similar laws e.g. Norway and Iceland (2009), South Africa (2007), and South Korea (2003) with similar positive results.

In 2008 the current government appointed an expert committee to evaluate the implementation and effects of the legislation that penalizes the purchase of a sexual service. The point of departure for the evaluation is that the purchase of a sexual service should remain criminalized. The committee report will be presented in 2010. Due to recent pronouncements by lawmakers close to the Government, the Swedish women’s movement is concerned that the Government will propose differentiated legislation that supports the flawed idea that someone who purchases a victim of cross-border trafficking human beings for sexual exploitation should receive a stiffer sentence than if he purchases and exploit a victim of local prostitution.

Another serious concern of the women's movement is the lack of adequate funding to agencies that provide assistance to victims of prostitution and trafficking in human beings. Despite a promise to increase funding for groups and organizations providing support through exit programmes for victims of prostitution and trafficking in human beings, the Government has not yet provided any funds. The women's movement is also concerned about the lack of victim-centred court policies. In a court case involving the purchase of a sexual service or of procuring (a crime primarily against the state) those who have been exploited through prostitution are not seen as crime victims. Instead, they are treated as witnesses, effectively excluding them from the support of a legal advocate and the possibility of receiving court compensation. This is, however, not the case under the legislation criminalizing trafficking in human beings (a crime primarily against a person).

## Women and armed conflict (E)\*

**In its report to the UNECE, Sweden only reported on strategic objective E 1.**

### **Strategic objective E 1.**

*Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation*

Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted by a unanimous Security Council in 2000, put women, peace and security on the international security agenda. The resolution is one of the first tools to implement the political agenda stated in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPA). However, the resolution does not go as far as the BPA regarding the importance of changing the core of security policies from military solutions to civil methods and prevention of violent conflicts. Importantly, the promotion of women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace is missing.

Sweden adopted a second National Action Plan (NAP) on Resolution 1325 in 2009. The NAP is a weak instrument with vague language and lack of mechanisms for accountability and instruments to encourage implementation, and does not include specific budget allocations or a timeline for implementing the proposed actions.

The NAP (quantitative or qualitative) does not set out measurable goals, nor does it include any clear priorities. Most importantly, there are no monitoring or control mechanisms for assessing results, and thereby assuring accountability. More specifically, there are no specific responsibilities attributed to any particular ministry, which makes it more difficult to monitor whether any action has been taken. Focus is on the use of Resolution 1325 by military institutions and not as a basis for civilian initiatives for peace building and the inclusion of women from civil society into these processes.

It is also notable that the implementation of Resolution 1325 is managed by the Minister for International Development Cooperation, rather than by the minister responsible for peace, security and human rights: the Minister for Foreign Affairs. By changing the responsible minister, a clear signal would be sent showing the importance Sweden attaches to the issue.

## Strategic objective E 2.

### *Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments*

It is positive that the Swedish government has pledged to provide extensive development assistance. It is however important to scrutinize the coherence between different Swedish policies and actions. Development assistance should e.g. be analyzed in the light of the sales of weaponry by Sweden, and the possibly counterproductive measures that are taken by the Swedish Government.

One example of Sweden's policies and actions is the cooperation with the government of Pakistan. Sweden finalized an extensive arms export deal with Pakistan in June 2006. It included the sale of SAAB's military radar system, Erieye. The arms deal is worth 12 times the amount Pakistan spends on water and sanitation each year. Between 2004 and 2008, Sweden has exported arms to Pakistan for US\$ 27 million whilst at the same time deciding to phase out development assistance to Pakistan.

Between 2000 and 2007, Sweden was the 8th largest supplier of arms to developing countries. During that period, Swedish exported arms for a total of US\$ 2.9 billion, positioning Sweden just after the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, Germany and Israel.

The total cost of military expenditure in the world during 2008 was US\$ 1 226 billion. Estimations by the Millennium Project, commissioned by the UN Secretary General and supported by the UN Development Group, indicate that the overall official development assistance required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals was US\$ 135 billion in 2006 rising to US\$195 billion in 2015, i.e. about 16% of the world's military expenditure.

Instead of working towards limiting global militarism and the arms trade by reducing arms exports, the Swedish Defence Minister does the opposite. In 2009, an article by the Minister was published in a large business newspaper presenting a proposal for a Swedish governmental agency to support Swedish arms exports in reality the creation of a tax-supported lobby agency for Swedish weapons transfers.

Sweden has for a long time been leading the international work towards disarmament. This has, however, changed in recent years. Sweden delayed its support and signing of the Convention against the Use of Cluster Weapons, clearly with the purpose to protect its own cluster bomb, the BK90. Cluster munitions constitute a major humanitarian problem. Almost all (98%) of the victims of cluster weapons are civilians and nearly half (40%) are children. Sweden was one of 96 countries to sign the Convention against the Use of Cluster Weapons on 3 December 2008 in Oslo but has yet to ratify it. During its Presidency of the European Union, Sweden did not initiate measures on the issue of cluster weapons.

Sweden's voice has been silent in international nuclear disarmament fora. One reason for Sweden's new stand on nuclear weapons may be that the European Union speaks on behalf of Sweden and two EU Member States, the United Kingdom and France, are nuclear weapon states.

### **Strategic objective E 3.**

*Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations*

The Swedish Government has not taken any initiatives to promote this objective. The measures put into place by defence actors to prevent trafficking in women and girls for sexual purposes with a focus on peacekeeping missions around the world have come to an end. Sweden is one of the few countries with an enforceable code of conduct, and legislation that prohibits the purchase of a sexual service which applies to peace keeping troops. This aspect should have been underlined and used as a positive example by Sweden in the international arena, during the time period now under audit.

### **Strategic objective E 4.**

*Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace*

Women's organizations working to promote peace can obtain funding from the Government, but the amount given to these organizations is a pittance compared to the grants given to pro- and paramilitary organizations, and the defence budget.

Concerning the Government's lack of interest in involving women in this work, an example from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be mentioned:

The Kvinna till Kvinna (Woman to Woman) Foundation scrutinized statements, speeches, articles, press releases and blog entries by the Minister of Foreign Affairs during two periods in 2008 and 2009. In seven articles written by the Minister, the words "woman" and "equality" were mentioned just once each. Of his 508 blog entries, the word "woman" is mentioned 7 times and the word "equality" just once. Over the period, Bildt produced 240 press statements in which the words "woman" and "equality" are mentioned twice each. In none of these contexts does he mention the link between women, peace and security. Women's rights are never mentioned as a core issue, only in supplementary sentences.

## **Women and the economy (F)\***

### **Strategic objective F 1.**

*Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources*

As shown in the chapter on women and poverty, women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources has improved for some groups of women in paid work but not for others. The majority of women in gainful employment work full-time and have increased their economic independence. After the decrease in the activity rate among women (and men) aged 20-64 years during the crisis in the 1990s, this increased in the middle of the 2000s and was 81% in 2007 (men 87%), however this is still lower than the figures from 1991. More women than men have temporary employment, inconvenient working hours and to an increasing degree split working-hours. A restoration of the work-line principal was proposed by the inquiry on gender equality as a necessity to fulfil the objectives of the Swedish gender equality policy. The inquiry argued that the work-line for women had been broken during the crisis in the 1990s through "hidden contracts" where women had to seek individual solutions to structural problems – solutions paid by women themselves

damaging their economic status. The Government has put forward the “work-first” principle as a means to combat labour market exclusion. This principle has been conducted in a way that puts pressure on individuals by withdrawing parts of the “hidden contracts” such as long-term part-time leave for illness or receiving part-time unemployment benefit (a situation almost exclusive to women), but doing nothing to structural conditions.

36% of women in the work-force work part-time and no changes have been seen during recent years, indicating a gendered organisation of the labour-market. Part-time work is still a norm in sectors dominated by women. But women are also expected to be satisfied with part-time jobs in workplaces where men have access to full-time work. Ongoing cases of sickness benefit days have recently gone down but are still higher among women than among men, especially among women working part-time in municipalities. The explanations given by researchers emphasise that these women lack control over their working conditions and have experienced cut-backs in the number of employees but no corresponding reduction in the workload. The inquiry on gender equality furthermore suggested that efforts should be taken to understand working-life conditions for these groups of women in the light of the changes underway in the economy and working life patterns, but these suggestions have not been acted on.

The Government has focused on the need for access to paid domestic services to increase the possibility for women to be more engaged in gainful employment suggesting that time spent on unpaid domestic work is the main obstacle to employment. The result of the reform providing a tax reduction for domestic services is that 46 000 persons (26 000 women and 20 000 men), 0.6% of the taxpayers, have used the opportunity given. There are approximately 2.15 million women and 2.40 million men in the Swedish workforce. Those who have taken most advantage of the reform are retired people older than 75 years. Every third user is a retired person. Tax-reduction for domestic services has mostly been used by high income earners living in wealthy municipalities. Prosperous areas such as Danderyd, Lidingö, Täby and Lomma are at the top of the list while less prosperous areas such as Gällivare, Skinnskatteberg and Storuman are at the bottom. Here only 0.05% made use of the reform. Younger people who have used the reform seem to be people who already work full time or are couples who had previously reduced their working hours and were now getting paid for it. The argument that private domestic services would diminish the black market and create new “white” jobs has been assessed by SCB (Statistics Sweden). The assessment showed that approximately 1000 jobs have been created through the reform but how many of these are new jobs is uncertain since some of the persons now using the right to tax-reduction already had “white” hired help in the home.

## **Strategic objective F 2.**

### *Facilitate women’s equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade*

Activities to facilitate women’s equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade have been weak. There are activities and programmes but not results. LRF, The Federation of Swedish Farmers, showed in a study that conditions for women are poorer in every respect. Despite the fact that life-long economic independence for women and men is an objective and crucial to Swedish gender equality policy this issue isn’t addressed in the article on women and poverty in the Swedish follow-up report. Sweden experienced one economic crisis in the 1990s and yet another in recent years. It would seem that exactly the same groups have been most heavily affected during both these crises. Since the conditions prior to the 1990s crisis were not restored, these groups are now in a weaker position than five years ago. These groups are dominated by women. Women’s access to capital of their own is still lower than that of men. Women in years of gainful employment have approximately half of the possessions of men in the same category.

Of the total capital in Sweden men possess 67% and women 33%. Wealth is unevenly distributed between women and men. In all municipalities in Sweden men on average have more possessions.

### **Strategic objective F 3.**

*Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women*

The Platform for Action demands that the Government provides business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women. Studies in the beginning of the 2000s showed that women in labour-market programmes attended shorter, cheaper courses which did not lead to employment. This is a prevailing trend. The same pattern was found within the Swedish Social insurance Office (Försäkringskassan). More intense measures were targeted towards men. Unemployed women were encouraged to establish small enterprises as part of labour-market activities to reduce unemployment but without any real possibility of becoming successful. Forced to close their businesses they ended up excluded from the labour-market insurance and burdened with loans. Initiatives to promote women in business have yet not yielded results though the Government has emphasised the growing possibility for women within care to create their own business within their fields of work. Care for elderly people is an expanding sector but the trend seems to favour big international corporations when it comes to competitive tendering rather than small enterprises run by women. The proportion of women in high positions and on boards within the business sector is no longer increasing. The Government has turned down legislation as a means to put pressure on big enterprises.

### **Strategic objective F 4.**

*Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks*

The strengthening of women's economic capacity and commercial networks is often put forward as an important issue by the Government. 100 million SEK were targeted towards women entrepreneurs but this has not yet showed effect. Funding women ambassadors to promote women's entrepreneurship has not been an institution able to alter credit mechanisms.

### **Strategic objective F 5.**

*Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination*

The Platform for Action holds governments responsible for the elimination of occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination. This issue has been addressed for many years, however occupational segregation still prevails. 56% of women and 36% of men of all those employed aged 20-64, work in the 30 largest occupations. Only seven occupations are equal, e.g. 40-60% of each sex. In recent years women have slowly moved into male dominated occupations and educational programmes but the same trend is not seen among men. Segregation is also vertical. In all sectors men still have greater opportunities to hold high offices though the number of women has increased. Wage gaps between women and men prevail in spite of women's higher level of education. In fact women tend to be overqualified for their positions while the opposite goes for men. Young women in employment interviews feel discriminated against when asked if they plan to have children, and the proportion of young women who lack job security is high.

## **Strategic objective F 6.**

### *Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men*

To promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men is important in gender equality policies. A government committee suggested that the parental leave allowance should be split into three parts as a means to increase men's responsibility for their children. Feminists have argued that the parental leave should be equally shared by the parents. Women use 80% of the parental leave available to the family which without doubt makes them a risky bet for employers and is harmful to their wage trend but also reinforces the norm of children being the responsibility of women and not of both parents. The Government has rejected demands for an individualisation of parental leave. Instead a gender equality bonus was introduced to encourage the parent with the highest income to make use of the parental leave. After running one year the figures in July 2008 showed that a total number of 26 persons applied for and six were granted the bonus. The reform has not been effective. Another reform by the Government was the voluntary municipal child-care allowance amounting to a maximum of 3000 SEK a month on the condition that public childcare is not used at the same time. In short it can be described as an economic incentive for women who don't have access to the labour market, mostly immigrant women, to stay out of it. It is absolutely contradictory to the "work-first principle".

Women do most of the unpaid care and domestic work in the family. This is particularly true for women in low-paid part-time jobs. The trend is often set when childrearing starts and then becomes the pattern. A growing area of responsibility for women seems to be providing care for elderly parents when public care is withdrawn. Most care for elderly persons is carried out by their equally elderly spouses who are already retired but a growing number of women are now reducing their working-hours to be able to cope with the burden of elderly parents in need of assistance. The demographic changes and reducing public spending are changing structural patterns that individual women have to cope with.

## **Women in power and decision-making (G)\***

### **Strategic objective G 1**

#### *Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making*

The Swedish Cabinet consists of 45% women and 55% men. However, the distribution of power within the Cabinet is not as equal as the proportion of women to men would seem to show at a first glance. The most influential minister posts – the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs – are all held by men. The same is the case for the positions as State Secretaries (including cabinet secretaries); a mere 32% are women while 68% are men. Many parliamentary committees, including the Finance, Defence, Tax, Foreign Affairs and Justice committees, are all chaired by men, making the distribution of power even more unequal.

Women still hold the main responsibility for the care of children and elderly parents. Parental leave is not divided equally, with just 20% of fathers utilizing their right to paid parental leave. Because women stay at home taking care of children, they are discriminated against in on the labour market. After having started a family, women do not have the same career opportunities as men, nor do their salaries increase at the same rate as those of men. The Government has made it

clear that they will not put into place any measures to force or even encourage fathers to take more responsibility in caring for their children.

Because of the current economic crisis, municipalities and counties are reducing their spending on social welfare measures and benefits. This means that women must bear a heavier burden in caring for children and elderly parents. Because women earn less than men during their lifetime, they are also struggling as pensioners. Often they are forced to depend on a husband, on their children or on society, instead of being economically independent.

In the private sector, company boards are made up of 14% women, and only 3% of CEOs and chairpersons are female.

The Government has declared that it will not implement Article 4 of CEDAW to increase the number of women in top positions. The women's movement is lobbying for a law, similar to the one passed in Norway, make it obligatory that at least 40% of top corporate be occupied by women.

## Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (H)\*

### **Strategic objective H 1.**

*Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies*

The Government is responsible for creating and strengthening national machineries and other governmental bodies to promote gender equality. These have instead become weaker and there is an explicit will from the Government not to govern when it comes to gender equality, possibly due to divergent opinions among the alliance of parties currently in power. Gender equality policy is left with no institutions, no legislation or agency to promote gender equality. The new discrimination act has to date lived up to all the fears regarding its ineffectiveness for gender equality work. Positive news in 2006 was that the Government increased the budget for gender equality ten-fold to 400 million SEK per year. More negative is the fact that a programme on what to achieve with the money seemed to be lacking. 140 million SEK went to gender mainstreaming activities at local authorities and regions to obtain sustainable gender equality. It seems to be successful (these activities are still running). The 400 million SEK was a short term venture and is to be reduced to 35 million SEK next year according to the budget. The Government argues that fundamental changes in governance and capacity building are, or should be, made during the last four years and therefore spending on gender equality policy efforts can be cut. Further development should be based on consultants paid for by ordinary means, an analysis without any power-perspective.

### **Strategic objective H 2.**

*Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programs and projects*

Integrating a gender perspective into legislation, public policies, programmes and projects as stated in Government Bill 2005/2006 has not been conducted. The plan for integrating a gender equality perspective into processes in the Swedish Government Offices will continue until the end of 2010 but it has not been implemented. A project focused on capacity-building for officials in the Government Offices showed clearly that their interpretation of the situation was that there is a lack of interest from the Government. The gender equality act is now part of the discrimination act. Having a plan for gender equality is mandatory only for workplaces with 24 or more employ-

ees, meaning only 1% of all enterprises are obliged to conform to this. Mapping wage differences only has to be done every third year. And Sweden still doesn't have any legislation on gender mainstreaming. In the instructions to government agencies, gender equality is mentioned but for this to become an effective tool, the ministries must show a greater interest in the issue when having discussions with agency directors-general.

### **Strategic objective H 3.**

*Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation*

Statistics Sweden has provided Sweden with top gender-disaggregated data since 1984. To generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation, it is crucial that every possibility is taken to evaluate policies and results. This is the basis for gender mainstreaming. It is particularly disappointing that, in the spring budget 2009, the Government presented important data on economic and employment policies without any gender-disaggregated data whatsoever. Searching authority websites for information on gender issues leaves one equally disappointed.

## **Human Rights of Women (I)\***

### **Strategic objective I 1**

*Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*

In 2009, all Sweden's different discrimination ombudsmen were fused into one equality body called the Discrimination Ombudsman. The only ombudsman that remains outside this body is the Children's Ombudsman. As a result of this fusion, discrimination on the grounds of sex is put on an equal footing with all the other grounds of discrimination instead of being seen as a separate issue. It is the women's movement's firm belief that there should be an independent gender discrimination ombudsman to be a watchdog and to ensure that every woman's rights are defended in accordance with CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and also to combat discrimination against women within other discriminated groups, such as persons with disabilities and people with a different ethnic background. Such groups (persons with disabilities, people with a different ethnic background or sexual orientation) are referred to as minority groups. Women, however, are not a minority but a majority.

The Swedish Government report does not even mention the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Article 6 which relates to women with disabilities. Instead of reporting on "standard rules," the Government should measure the status of women with disabilities in accordance with CEDAW and CRPD. Reports by the Government and its agencies, do not mention women with disabilities nor men with disabilities, instead they always refer to "persons with disability" or "disabled persons". In its Action Plan on Men's Violence against Women which, as the title suggests, casts "women" as the victims, the Government makes women with disabilities invisible by referring merely to "persons with disabilities". This will have serious implications for the implementation of positive measures directed to women with disabilities.

According to statistics compiled by the disability movement, women with disabilities are more highly educated than men with disabilities, but have less access to employment opportunities. If women do find employment, they are less likely to work full time. Women with disabilities are paid less compared to all other groups, including men with disabilities. They also have less access to support service, technical aids and have more difficulties in obtaining personal assistants, sign language interpreters, accessible information, accessible buildings and facilities, access to guides or other support, than men with disabilities. Further, women with disabilities suffer from poorer health compared to all other groups in society, both mentally (due to discrimination), and physically, as women in general have less access to good quality healthcare compared to men.

The Governmental report does not indicate that any attempt is being made to ensure that support services will be provided for women and girls with disabilities, nor to ensure that such services will be developed while taking into account the special needs of women and girls with disabilities. There have never been any initiatives by authorities to investigate how women and girls with disabilities would like their support services. It is also a fact that men with disabilities receive better quality support services than their female counterparts, including access to better technical aids.

In May 2009, the Government proposed amendments to the legislation on court-ordered treatment of substance abusers making it possible to sentence a pregnant woman to treatment within the confines of an institution, in order to prevent damage to the foetus.

Current legislation already allows for the detention of substance abusers who are at “serious risk of harming themselves or others”. With this proposal, it would be possible to detain a woman for the sole reason that she is pregnant and abusing substances, even though her abuse is not a serious risk to herself or others. The amendment would make the foetus a legal subject, and is, therefore, in direct violation of the Swedish Abortion Act, which is based on a woman’s right to control her body when pregnant. The proposed amendment would endanger the health of the pregnant substance abuser since it could deter her from seeking prenatal care. Instead, the Government should allocate specific funds to voluntary prenatal care for pregnant substance abusers.

Women with alcohol and/or drug problems are not receiving the care they require to live a life free from abuse. There are few institutions that provide treatment exclusively for women. A majority of these women have been abused and raped and need counselling but are instead regarded simply as women with drug addictions and not as victims of a crime.

### **Strategic objective I 3**

*Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice*

Gender-sensitive human rights education and training for public officials, including for police officers, military personnel, prison officers, health and medical personnel, social workers, people who deal with migration and refugee issues, and teachers at all levels of the education system are not obligatory, but should be made such, to ensure participation. Similarly, the Government should ensure the mandatory participation in such courses by members of the judiciary and Members of Parliament so they can better exercise their public responsibilities and remove gender bias in the administration of justice.

Violence against women, including sexual violence and rape, is increasing but the number of convictions is not. The police have been criticized for not prioritizing investigation of these crimes. Rather than being treated as victims, women are often treated as though they have provoked the crime due to the way they dress or the fact that they drink alcohol. Outdated myths of women as seducer and men as victims of his lust are still very much alive within the court system and in the society as whole.

It is also difficult for women with mental or communicative disabilities to report violent crimes. The police are not trained in how to conduct interviews, and if an interview is conducted e.g. with the help of a picture board, there are no pictures that show rape, abuse and violence. Information on rights is not all that accessible to women with mental disabilities, those with hearing impairments or female immigrants.

There is little public awareness of CEDAW in Sweden. The Government has failed to disseminate information about the Convention. Information about CEDAW is distributed by women's organizations, but they lack the funds to reach the general public.

Education in schools on women's human rights is seriously lacking. Such education should be obligatory and included in the school curriculum. Women refugees and women asylum seekers do not have their rights respected. They are not provided with information directed specifically towards them. Women's organizations are now producing material targeted at women asylum seekers, and also to those who work in women's shelters.

## Women and the media (J)\*

### Strategic objective J 1.

*Increase the participation and access of women*

More than 60% of journalism graduates are women and about 50% of all Swedish journalists are women. Despite this, Swedish media is highly gender-segregated, both vertically and horizontally. Most of the executives are men, and men occupy most of the prestigious posts as art and creative directors, copy writers, web designers, directors, etc. Women are mainly to be found in service positions such as assistants, receptionists, etc.

Women are under-represented in the media and this is a problem acknowledged both by the United Nations and the European Union. A dissertation from 2006 analyzed gender stereotypes on Swedish television. It reported that not much has changed in general representation of women since the 1980s. Although 70% of the news presenters are women, males still dominate the actual news. Sports and news have the lowest female representation and fiction and children's programmes the highest. Age representation on Swedish television is clearly gender-biased, the pattern being older men and younger women.

Swedish media workers have one of the most gender-equal participation rates in the workforce on a horizontal level, but the top positions are still mostly held by men. Most media workers seem to think that the output will be gender-neutral because they themselves feel gender-equal.

## **Strategic objective J 2.**

### *Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women*

In many ways, male dominance and women's subordination are maintained throughout the media. The media, especially the commercial media, such as advertising, film and other non-fiction material, often portrays women as provokers of sexual acts to increase consumption. The media, advertising and entertainment create more symbolic control over the female body than the male body. They define the space that is attributed to women and indirectly this becomes a more concrete control mechanism since the norm created is internalized and adopted by women themselves. As a result women tend to be more dissatisfied with their look than men and they are increasingly willing to spend large sums of money on cosmetic surgery, dieting etc.

The themes associated with the representation of women in media focus almost solely on beauty, youth, sexuality, family and care, while those associated with men are action, achievement, aggression, violence and crime. In advertising, the female body, preferably scantily clad, is used to sell everything from clothes and cosmetics to laptops, cars and tools. Men are seen to dominate in the public sphere, whereas women do so in the private sector. The emphasis on women's appearances, bodies and sexuality helps to sustain the idea of the female body's accessibility (to men) and the importance of attractiveness. Considerable bodily discipline is required – and conveyed by the media – to fulfil the ideal of the desirable woman. Women are told, from an early age to keep their bodies in good shape. In this way women are brought up to focus on their other image and body, which ironically coincides with the fact that women receive poorer care and poorer medical treatment than men in the Swedish health services.

There is no law against gender discrimination in advertising in Sweden. Such a law is deemed to inhibit the freedom of expression. Discrimination is supposed to be non-existent due to the idea of media self-regulation. For the past twenty years, the private industry-controlled Ethical Council investigated complaints about discriminatory advertisements, lacking real sanction and enforcement power. The previous government set up a commission on gender-discriminatory advertising. The report concluded that the self-regulatory system was insufficient, and that legislation with proper sanctions for the most serious cases should be developed. The report also showed that such legislation would be compatible with both the Swedish Constitution and the freedom of press laws. However, the present government has decided not to implement the proposals of the Commission. Instead, the Ethical Council has been replaced by the Ombudsman for Advertising, with similar mandate and functions.

## **Women and the environment (K)\***

*Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels.*

*Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development.*

*Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.*

The Swedish Governmental Report gives no explicit answer to these three strategic objectives. Instead the follow-up consists of five points where the objectives are mixed and generalized. In that way the Government avoids answering the specific questions. Among other values, however, we can spot a gender-related focus, but the result is a report that lacks a direct gender perspective. A basic question to ask is therefore whether the mainstreaming and integration of the gender perspective has made gender-related issues invisible?

The Government says its main working method is gender mainstreaming. The drawback of such a method is that it makes it impossible for us to judge whether women and men have an equal impact, at all levels. Furthermore, there are no visible mechanisms used to demonstrate the impact of tools such as gender budgeting.

The general paradigm in Sweden is that women and men should have equal opportunities in all aspects of life, for instance in politics, research, education and in working life. This way of thinking has been transferred to the environmental field. This makes it impossible to see the differences which really exist. The Swedish Environment Institute has provided evidence showing that woman would prefer to travel by public transport to a greater degree than men even if they could afford to have a car. The reason women give for this behaviour is a feeling of responsibility for environmental issues.

## The Swedish Governmental Report for 2004-2009

**The first point** describes a revised national strategy for sustainable development adopted in 2004: building sustainable communities, encouraging good health on equal terms, meeting demographic challenges and encouraging sustainable growth. Today Sweden has built a system to evaluate sixteen overall environmental objectives in a national strategy. So there is considerable knowledge about the environment as a whole and a lot of progress has already been made through the implementation of different measures in the field, none of which has been gender analyzed. The Governmental Report is therefore not relevant as an answer to the Platform for Action, which specifically addresses women and the environment.

**The second point** addresses a Nordic strategy for sustainable development revised in 2008. The report is based on values such as the equal worth of all people and describes equality between women and men as one of the prerequisites for sustainable development and for implementing Agenda 21. In the Government's description, we cannot find any tool to reach the goal but we know today that Agenda 21 is fading out in many municipalities and in Stockholm, Agenda 21 work is no longer allocated any resources. From a gender perspective, this is fatal because it is well known that local work engages, encourages and empowers women.

**The third point** is about Nordic cooperation in the areas of labour, trafficking and prostitution. These topics have, as far as we can see, nothing to do with the ecological environment.

Naturally there could be a connection if the gender-segregated labour market were a question in focus for the Nordic cooperation. The situation in Sweden is that in 2008 there is still a major imbalance in the academic world, with 94% of professors in the two most well known technological universities, the Royal Technical Institute, KTH and Chalmers University of Technology, being men. This means that those who graduate are basically only influenced by men's experience and life situation. The result is that infrastructure planning and building do not benefit from the knowledge of 50% of the population, namely women. And the entire technological development suffers as a result.

We know today that women in general, all over the world, have a smaller sized ecological footprint compared to men. Reaching the climate adaptation and mitigation goals is a matter of the utmost urgency, and the fact that women's knowledge, at all levels, is not fully taken into account or integrated into societal planning is alarming. Furthermore, the lack of women and gender perspectives in decision-making centres in the private as well as the public sector, is a situation the Government ought to act on immediately.

**The fourth point** describes the work of the Swedish Chemicals Agency in analyzing current knowledge regarding gender differences and the risks to human health of chemicals. The purpose is to identify fields of research. This work started in 2006 and will continue until 2011. As this is a new field of research, there are as yet no concrete findings.

There is already knowledge about the impact of residual chemicals and medicines on water. The long-term biological and genetic consequences for human being, animals and nature have just recently been recognized as an imminent threat. The Government does not say anything about this fact.

**In the fifth point** the Government stresses the question about heightened safety in urban environments from a gender perspective. This project is not directly related to ecological aspects but allows people to move safely about outdoors in urban areas thanks to better lighting in parks and other green areas.

## The Girl Child (L)\*

### Strategic objective L 5

#### *Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition*

It is absolutely essential that adolescent girls and boys receive comprehensive, non-religious sex education in schools. It is clear from many studies, that sex education in schools has beneficial effects on young people's abilities to make decisions about their own sexuality and reproduction.

Several recent reports conclude that ill health continues to increase among girls and young women including increased stress, anxiety, abuse, depression and self-harm behaviour. There is a plethora of proposals for "self care" and "online solutions" as feasible treatment for serious mental health problems for girls and young women.

The government has not allocated sufficient resources to preventive care and treatment initiatives, nor has it ensured availability of good, humane and timely care for girls and young women with different types of mental health problems. Counteractive measures must also be preventative, which requires the allocation of special resources.

There are no programmes of any kind, not even in rehabilitation services, that target women and girls with disabilities as a particular group of concern. Nor has the government or its agencies initiated programmes designed for women and girls with disabilities with the purpose to promote self esteem, self-confidence, and self-reliance. Such programmes would certainly help women and girls with disabilities gain better health status and increase their employment opportunities.

The girl child with disabilities faces additional barriers and must be ensured non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is our firm belief that the reference to Standard Rules should be changed to a reference to the (CRPD) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

## Strategic objective L 7

*Eliminate all violence against the girl child.*

### Rape

Courts are not applying the amendments to the sexual crimes legislation introduced in Sweden in 2005 correctly, hence, provides insufficient protection for children that are sexually abused or raped.

The amendment sets out that children under 15 years cannot agree to sexual acts. In principle, all sexual acts against children performed by older persons are rape. However, in two judgments from 2006, the Swedish Supreme Court took young girls' consent into consideration, in breach of the legislation, which led to two adult men not being convicted of rape against children.

In 2008, 1 421 cases of rape were reported; only 157 of which led to a conviction. In 1 278 of these cases, the victims were girls under 15 years. The facts speak for themselves. Despite that the vast majority of rape and child rape victims are women and girls very few perpetrators are convicted, with the attention of the court focusing on the behaviour of the victim rather than the acts and intentions of the perpetrators.

It is clear that the judicial system protects adult men's need to express their sexuality rather than ensuring girls' right and need of protection against violence.

A 2000 report from the Board of Health and Welfare shows that many children in Sweden are victims of sexual abuse perpetrated by a close relative (incest). The Board estimates that abuse against girls is between two to five times as common as abuse against boys. (Sexuella övergrepp mot barn – en kunskapsöversikt. SoS-rapport 2000:1)

Despite this, the Government has taken no measures and allocated no specific funds to counteract this form of abuse and assist its victims for several decades. In 2008, the Government updated its Action plan for safeguarding children from sexual exploitation.

This action plan however only covers child prostitution and child pornography. Neither does the action plan against violence against women include the issue, despite the knowledge that violence against children and women in the home often coincide. There has never been an action plan against incest/sexual abuse of children by family members in Sweden.

The Office of the Children's Ombudsman carried out a survey in 2005. This survey shows that, the court is likely to prefer joint custody and unrestricted visitation rights in divorce cases as a result of violence, despite the fact that one parent opposes it and even if the violent parent has been convicted of a violent crime. This flies in the face of reason and is totally against the spirit of the legislative history of the amendment, which states that when a parent has been violent towards another parent and/or children, the ruling in divorce cases should be sole custody for the non-violent parent.

Because of the court rulings, the violent parent can use Swedish custody legislation to force victims of crime to have to meet and cooperate with him. The experience of women's shelters is that violent men often use this to maintain power over women and children.

Girls with disabilities have not been given any attention at all when it comes to violence against girls and young women.

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