

**Check against delivery**  
**Embargo against delivery**

**Intervention by**  
**H.E. Aart Jan de Geus**  
**Minister for Social Affairs and Employment**  
**of**  
**the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Madam Chair, distinguished members of the Committee, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to address your Committee on the occasion of the consideration of the fourth periodic report of the Netherlands in pursuance of its obligations under the Convention of the Elimination of all form of Discrimination Against Women. This report covers a period of four years.

The Netherlands highly regards the work of the Committee and my delegation is looking forward to a productive exchange of views.

Let me first introduce the members of the Dutch delegation:

1. Ferdi Licher, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, deputy delegation leader
2. Petra de Leeuw, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
3. Gülay Sert, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
4. Lydia Lousberg, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
5. Tessa Dopheide, Ministry of Justice
6. Edit Bleeker, Ministry of Justice
7. Ira van der Zaal-Van Bommel, Ministry of Justice
8. Gert Bogers, Ministry of Justice
9. Cindy Verhagen, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
10. Olivia Croes, Aruban Delegation, Bureau Foreign Affairs
11. Jocelyne Croes, Aruban Delegation, Ministry of Education, Social Affairs and Infrastructure

And I am Aart Jan de Geus, Minister of Social Affairs and Employment.

We are here at your disposal for any questions you may have on the implementation of the Convention. We will answer them to the best of our abilities.

Madam Chair,

We highly welcome the work of the CEDAW Committee. And we are glad for this opportunity to account for our policy and implementation of the Convention. Having to account for our policy compels us to reflect on our performances. This keeps us on our toes and spurs us to take action. The Netherlands regrets and objects to the reservations some States have made to the Convention. In our view these reservations are incompatible with the aims of the Convention.

Since the last time we were your guest we worked hard to implement your recommendations. We raised awareness through dissemination of the Dutch translation of the Convention. The Committee's general recommendations were translated and made public on the internet for the use of the Dutch people. We have subsidised NGOs to prepare a shadow report and have invested in research. And of course we looked into the comments the committee made regarding the political party SGP and the lifting of the ban on brothels. I will come back to this at a later moment.



Madam Chair,

stakeholders we developed quality criteria, which are being supervised by local authorities.

In the Netherlands working parents have the right to take parental leave. The

been set up to advise local authorities and they serve as a bridge between target group and policy makers.

With the help of these women we initiate dialogues between men and women of ethnic minority groups on taboo subjects such as honour crimes, 'lover boys' and safety and security. Moreover, we are creating a nationwide network of anti-discriminations bureaus.

These are just some examples of the many activities undertaken in recent years. Ethnic minority women and girls are progressively performing better in education and training, compared to ethnic minority men and boys. Education

participation in the community is a good start. Volunteer work can serve as a stepping stone towards a paid job. Volunteer work can be done in i.a. the neighbourhood, at schools or in community clubs. We subsidise projects that encourage this. Not only because volunteers benefit, but also because they function as role models within their communities. One example is a project in six municipalities, which encourages ethnic minority women to do volunteer work, to become active in the community and develop their talents. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment finances projects to reach 50.000 women over a 3-year period.

#### 5. Glass ceiling

We all know examples of talented women unable to reach the highest jobs in the public and private sector. Fortunately, we are witnessing a rise in the percentage of women on company boards and in executive positions in all sectors of society. This is a positive development which is partly due, I think,

human trafficking. We can now act and punish more effectively, as has been done. Municipalities are responsible for an adequate control system and they can decide to introduce permits for brothels. In this way local authorities can control safety, health and working conditions in brothels. Brothels are regularly checked for possible infringements. In case of violation of the permit, direct and firm action is taken, for example by closing down the brothel. During inspections police look carefully for any signs of human trafficking. As a result of this new legislation we have better insight in the world of prostitution and more cases of human trafficking have been revealed.

We realise that we cannot achieve our objectives from one day to the next. Prostitution will never become a regular profession. We will have to stay alert for developments, due to the Internet, that pose new risks and assess these regularly.

The second evaluation of the lifting of the ban on brothels will be published this April. The Nation A kooi7( brothh-5.0otth-5.0otth-5.0otth-565brothh NationTeott(1s)-7.5(7(ilalso(e

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