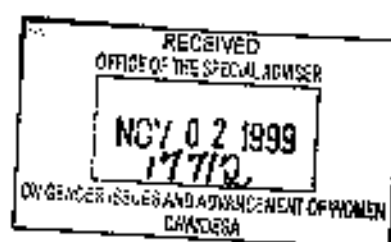


## **Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action**

Response to a questionnaire submitted by  
the Government of Iceland



**The Ministry of Social Affairs**



## Part One

### Overview of trends in achieving gender equality and women's advancement

Immediately after the UN's Beijing Conference, or at the end of November/December 1995, the Icelandic authorities and the Nordic Council of Ministers organized a conference attended by representatives from the Nordic and other countries on how they could further unite their efforts. The conference was important and did support a special gender equality cooperation between the Nordic and other countries.

The objectives of the Icelandic authorities in gender equality are set forth in a year plan of action for gender equality. A decision was made on the government's implementation of the BPA being within the framework of the Icelandic plan of action for gender equality. Upon the revision of the Icelandic action plan from 1997, work was conducted on integrating the objectives set forth in the four-year national action plan on gender equality. The Icelandic

Government passed the new four-year plan, which applies to the period 1998-2002 on March 10, 1998. The plan is based on the following articles:

In November 1998, the Minister of Social Affairs established a committee to follow up on the four-year plan. The members of the committee come from the three main political parties in the Ministry of Social Affairs and the fourth member is the director of the Equality Council.

The government's plan of action, which are rooted in the BPA, will be addressed in the following text, such that each governmental minister undertakes to work on the responsibilities of his/her ministry, as well as working on projects that are decided to be jointly carried out.

On the weight or priority of projects:

being integrated into all factors of policy formulation, decisions and measures by the

government parties, the director of the E

The articles in the Icelandic plan of action are supported with projects. The plan of action's work on certain projects, which the government

Note that the listing is

**Projects of the Government**

## 1. Gender-specifying all statistics

- iii The governmental ministries and the state institutions will receive a circular introducing a decision by the government to the effect that all statistical information and reports will be specified by gender. The Statistical Bureau of Iceland will collaborate with the state institutions on the execution of this project. The Office for Gender Equality will study the progress of this project two years after the government's action plan takes effect.

## 2. A study will be made on whether public policy formulation is based on gender equality.

The government will appoint a committee to study whether and how public policy formulation is based on gender equality. At the beginning of its work, the committee will present its frame of work to the government and make proposals on the categories of issues to be specially studied. The committee will launch its work no later than by May 1, 1998. The progress of the committee will then be evaluated and

Gender equality at state institutions  
The management agreement between the Ministry and the State Institutions will be amended to include a provision on the equality, among other things. Additionally, Civil Servants, which addresses gender equality at state institutions will emphasize the importance of the letters of appointment of the management for the promotion of gender equality at the relevant institutions

### Women and economic affairs - women and economic power

A committee will be appointed to present a proposal on a research project regarding the economic power of women and men, and on where such power is embedded in the Icelandic society.

### The projects of individual governmental ministries

Each ministry has agreed to conduct a study on the status of women and men who work in the relevant ministry or its institutions, and to prepare plans on improvement in areas where they are deemed to be necessary. Furthermore, each ministry has agreed on special measures to balance the percentage of the genders on the committees

Special projects  
Women in

concerning gender equality in school, aimed against students

the basis of conventional vision focuses on education for the head equality and gender equality progr

1. **The Prime Minister's Office**

The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for the execution of the government's projects, of the above section.

2. **The Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs**

Among projects which the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs is responsible

### 9. The Ministry of Fisheries

Among projects which the Ministry of Fisheries is responsible for is women in fish processing and women and entrepreneurship in the fishing industry.

### 10. The Ministry for the Environment

The Ministry has appointed an equal status committee consisting of representatives from the institutions that fall under the ministry's umbrella.

### 11. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for is women's international organisations and human rights violations against

Among projects w  
and men working  
women and girls.

Minister of Social Affairs presented a bill on a new  
equal status Act which is intended to support women's rights as well as men's, as

During the first half of 1999, th

education, advertising campaigns and publications. The committee has been active since October 1998 but the mandate for the committee is five years.

In April, an association of women in business was founded. The purpose and intention of the association is to work for women's cooperation and to found a target group facing banks and lending institutions. Networking will be practiced under the protection of the association. The government will support the association during the first years.

In 1998, the Office for Gender Equality and the Ministry of Education, under which affairs of the State Broadcasting Service fall, established a joint committee on women and the news media to study the access by women to the news media and their participation in decisions regarding the development of the media. Also it should study which female and male images the news media present and how to work towards the results to coverage of violence against women in all its variety.

The committee, which was appointed for a one-year term, will present its report this fall.

The experimental project "Men of responsibility" started at the end of April in 1998. The project provides therapy to men who have used violence against their family. The

special meetings on the BPA and its importance for the equal status struggle in Iceland, as well as generating the organization of conferences.

It should be mentioned that the Icelandic Women's Right Association (KRFI) and UNIFEM in Iceland had representatives in the Icelandic delegation at the BPA. The KRFI also organized the participation of Icelandic associations (NOGs) in a Forum which was held in Huarso parallel with the BPA. The government offered grants for participants. Most of the NOGs which did have representatives at the BPA or participated in the meeting in Huarso have worked on following up the BPA resolutions/conventions.

A good example of an initiative taken by NGOs after the approval of BPA is an

## **2. Education and training of women**

The governments policy is to work for improvements in the educational system, guide its execution and see to it that enough capital and labor force is available. Special emphasis is placed on Article 84 in the PFA.

The Ministry of Education is responsible to alert those involved in education and training at all levels to the importance of nonstereotyped roles of women and men of



this workshop is to make women more qualified and active in job searching and on the labor market, so they will have the opportunity to get a long term job or go on to further studies.

3. Women and health

The government's policy is to increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and good quality health care, information and related services. The government will undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues and promote research and disseminate information on women's health. Emphasis is placed on Articles 92, 96, 100, 101, 104, 106 f, g, and v, 108, 109 b, c, u, and k in the PFA.

The report of the committee on future policy in health affairs will contain proposals for a future policy in health affairs based on the different needs and circumstances of

The sexes

The standard statistics in the social security system are gender specified in areas where this is technically possible. Work will commence on such specifying being applied to all information.

The special campaign on preventive measures against narcotic and tobacco usage will not be the reason for smoking by women and girls on the one hand, and for the use of projecting propaganda and education to young girls in particular.

The execution of the regulations that apply in the PFA on research of pharmaceutical products (GCP) will be ensured in regard to show full consideration for the interests of women and men.

In the spring of 1995 the Minister of Health and Social Security appointed a committee on women's health whose brief is to explore changes to women's health and submit proposals for improvement. The committee has already carried out extensive collection of data, held conferences around the country, and published reports on women's health. The committee has submitted a final report to the Minister of Health and Social Security. A detailed synopsis on various fields provides

The prioritization of the proposals

4. Violence against women

The objective of the government is to take and eliminate violence against women and study the

measures to prevent and the consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures. Special emphasis is placed on Articles 123, 124, 125, 126 a, b, and c, 129 a, b, and c in the PFA.

Three committees were appointed under the umbrella of the Ministry of Justice and against women, one dealt with necessary amendments to legislation, another with improved treatment at the stage of police investigation and the third with reform in the judicial system. The committees handed in their reports in April 1998. They were

are committee and the judicial procedure committee after they

the national government in May 1998. At the same time the  
Affairs, Health and Education were asked to consider the results  
to decide how to execute their proposals. This assignment is

the state treasury's compensations to victims of a crime has  
a work of a committee which was appointed by the Minister of  
committee is now working on a revision of the criminal law.

relief was given by amendments to the criminal procedure  
its regard better access to the investigation process and the

Victim's right to free counsel.

end of April 1998.

not their family. The

of the Equal Status Council but is  
Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social

committee guides the progress of

if for two years. After that the

the Ministry of Social Affairs will promote the formation of a  
presentation of a parliamentary bill with the objective of eliminating

of sexual harassment at the workplace and in schools. The Administration of

and means and the Office for Gender Equality investigated

in the community, its nature and extent. The Minister of Social

ed a report together with these institutions which was published as a

er 1998. The book's main topic is the research on sexual harassment

1996. There are also chapters on legal status and legal procedure in

neighboring countries, the European Union and the International Labour

in addition it contains practical advice to employers, employees and

harassment.

The experimental project "Men of responsibility" starts

The project provides therapy to men who have used violence

project is an initiative of the Mch's C

financially supported by the Ministry of

execution of the project while a special evaluation

while project. The project is planned as an experimental

Advisory

program

Account

Ministry

Affairs

book in

in work

Iceland

Organ

Victims

The report indicates that domestic violence is a problem in Iceland, and that women who are subjected to violence make more use of the health service than others, that they use more sedatives and sleeping medications than others, and display many physical and mental symptoms which are attributable to violence. The report states that ways must be sought of assisting these women without handling them primarily as patients. The proposals in the report include that domestic violence should be

classified as a health problem, and that the health service should be given a leading role in dealing with domestic violence. As stated in item 3 above, the proposal provides that a project team will be appointed to begin work at once on the implementation of the proposals.

promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and to reduce the incidence of man rights abuses in conflict situations. of peace must be promoted as well as assistance to refugee women, displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women. Emphasis is placed on Articles 133, 134,

### 5. Women and armed conflict

The government policy in this field is to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and to reduce the incidence of man rights abuses in conflict situations. Women's contribution to fostering peace must be promoted as well as assistance to refugee women, displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women. Emphasis is placed on Articles 133, 134,

giving grant liability to applicants who apply for loan insurance from the Women's Loan Fund. The project will run for one more year.

Last March a Service Center for Originators and Companies (IMPRO) which service all and medium sized companies and originators was founded. Special support is given to women's businesses inside IMPRO.

founded. The purpose of the

larger group facing the

r' protection of the

association. The government will support the association the first years

Last April, an association of women in business

association is to work of women's cooperation and work

banks and lending institutions. Networking will be practi

association. The government will support the association the first years

should be mentioned that the government of Iceland, in cooperation with the US government and the Nordic Council of Ministers, hosted a conference on "Women and Democracy at the Dawn of the New Millennium" in October 1999. The participating countries were the Nordic countries, the United States, Russia and the Baltic states.

conomy, and following are examples of countries: the United States, Russia and the Baltic states. The two main themes were political questions that were raised in the field

n wishing to participate in politics/public

s and what are the most effective methods politics/public decision-making?

ted to formal governmental or other gies and structures can be developed to for office, getting elected, and increasing

questions in the field of economy:

- What strategic approaches can be adopted to deal with these challenges?
- What are the barriers women face when developing businesses and how can women overcome these barriers?

For further information on the conference see <http://www.womenanddemocracy.com>.

## 7. Women in power and decision-making

The government's policy is to take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making and to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership. Particular emphasis is placed on Articles 182, 186, 190j, and 192.b in the PFAI.

The Icelandic government's four-year action program on measures to promote gender equality for the period 1998 to 2002, has the objective of improving the status of women in various sectors of society by ensuring equal opportunities for women in

- What are the barriers women face when making decision-making?
- How can women overcome these barriers to increase women's participation in decision-making?
- Why are women not elected to decisionmaking positions? What measures can be taken to improve women's chances of being elected to these positions?

decision-making. Each ministry, for example, has agreed to conduct a study on the

will prepare plans of improvements in areas where the  
Furthermore, each ministry has agreed on special measures  
of the genders on the ministry's committees, boards and co

Last March a Service Center for Originators and Company  
small and medium sized companies and originators was  
given to women's businesses inside IMPRA.

Last April, an association of women in business was for  
association is to work for women's cooperation and to f  
banks and lending institutions. Networking will be practi  
association. The government will support the association d

The Minister of Industry and Commerce believes that the  
of Women in Business and by giving this special support  
1998 a balance of 50% of women in business on a national

The Office for Gender Equality has recently' publi  
decision-making, including any participation by wo  
the social partners' organizations to encourage  
Partners' organizations to promote balanced partic  
to public commissions and committees.

The Equal Status Council launched an effort citi  
with the women's organisations of the political p  
women's movements with the goal of increasing th  
councils. Municipal elections took place in the spring

newspapers. A report was prepared on the percentage of women in individual  
municipal councils in Iceland. The percentage of elected women rose from 25% to  
29% in the elections. In the towns and in the capital city, Reykjavik, the percentage of  
women among the elected representatives was 32%.

government that a committee be appointed to adopt and monitor a stratego-  
plan to promote balanced participation.

Minister of Social Affairs established a cross-party committee with a five-year  
a work on increasing women's participation in politics. For example, through

in Iceland, the Office for Gender Equality and the  
creation of a project manager (75% of a full position).

come from all the polit  
Icelandic Women's Dis  
was recruited in October

The committee on increasing the participation of women in politics has been active since October 1998. Among the committee's efforts, for example, is that it initiated an advertising campaign with the objective of making the general public aware of the

campaign and active involvement of women and politics during

public attention and led to increased discussion of parliamentary elections in Spring 1999. A part of

differences between the genders and that there are instances where they cannot undertake each other's roles. In light of this theme, an effort was made to illustrate

that the genders are different in various ways and therefore, it is imperative that parliament reflects society's gender ratio. Before this year's national elections, the

committee also held open meetings in all the electoral districts to promote the theme of women increasing their participation in politics. The collaboration of the women's organizations within the political parties and the media was secured to ensure widespread dissemination of the committee's agenda.

An Icelandic female scholar is currently conducting comprehensive study on the status of women and men in politics, on the effects of the electoral system, the size of

since affect the

the electoral districts and how the methods of running

also be mentioned, i.e. it was published by

Equality is a matter of justice. A newly published book

Nordic Council of Ministers in Copenhagen. The title of the book is

ies, how far these nations have gone towards

delifráttir? Kjörla og valráttir í Norðurlöndum. Gender and Politics in the Nordic Countries.

nd to explain why women have made more progress in

the objective of gender equality in politics in the Nordic

than women elsewhere. The book will presumably be

available in English in

of 1999.

ncouraging initiatives and good practice, the Icelandic

in promoting, support

and called for measures to ensure balance of influence

authorities have strengthened

have already been launched and others are pending.

between women and men. Conferences have been

r discussion on the power and influence of women. It

was held in Iceland on women, employment

Various proposals were

agreed upon at the conference and are currently

s worked on under the Nordic

umbrella. The Equal Status Council regulates

its national conventions, as

stipulated by law, addressing, for example, the

nd influence of women both in

politics and the economy, and proposals are

and dispatched, among others,

to the authorities and the members of the labor

t. The aforementioned booklet

on women and power in Iceland will also be published

in English.

d, in cooperation with the US.

ated a conference on "Women

It should be mentioned that the government

government and the Nordic Council of Minis

participating countries were the Nordic countries, the United States, Russia and the Baltic states. The two main themes were politics and economy. For further details see

8. Institutional

The government policies, programs

is for the advancement of women

to integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public and generate and disseminate gender data and information for planning and evaluation. Emphasis is placed on Articles 207.a and 207.b and 207.c in the PFA.

ness raising of the general public (news media included) on the presentation of non-stereotypical images of women and men. One of the 5-year action plans is to advise companies, institutions and NGOs with advise in matters pertaining to gender as well as making recommendations and suggestions of measures in areas

9. Human rights of women

protect the human rights of women, through the instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice and achieve legal literacy. Special emphasis is placed on Articles 210, 229, 232, 233 and 235 in the PFA.

The government is to promote full the orientation of all human Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination under the law and in practice and achieve legal literacy. Special emphasis is placed on Articles 210, 229, 232, 233 and 235 in the PFA.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs will promote that international bodies like United Nations and the Council of Europe especially study human rights violations aimed against women.

Under the umbrella of Ministry of Justice, courses on human rights, including a

the media. Policy is to increase the participation and access of women to media. Emphasis is placed on Articles 236, 237, 238, 239 and 243 in the PFA.

The government expression and communication in the media

ing Office for Gender Equality and the Ministry of Education, under which

women and the news media. According to the committee's letter of appointment, the committee is requested to study the access by women to the news media and also to study their participation in decisions regarding the development of the media. A study should also be made on which female and male images the news media present and

how to work towards the media's coverage illustrate the life and work of women in

at its variety. A policy formulation in this field should be based on studies.

During the nearly one year that has passed since this committee has collaborated with the Social Science Dept. of in conducting two news media studies: a coverage analysis (newspaper and radio) and a study of the prevailing work views and conventions at the news media with respect to the gender images of the news media and in society itself. The committee, which was appointed for a one-year term, will present its report this fall. A decision will be made on the continuation and on grounds of the report, i.e., on whether the committee will be requested to follow up this basic work through the appropriate measures or whether other parties within the administrative system will be requested to do so.

11.3.1. **Women and the environment**  
The government's policy is to involve women actively in environmental decision-making and programs for sustainable development. Special emphasis is placed on Articles 253 a, b, and c, 256 a, b, g, h, and i in the PFA.

#### 11.3.1. Women and the environment

The government's policy is to involve women actively in environmental decision-making and programs for sustainable development. Special emphasis is placed on Articles 253 a, b, and c, 256 a, b, g, h, and i in the PFA.

This Ministry has approved an annual state committee consisting of representatives from the institutions that fall under the ministry's umbrella. A course will be held on equal rights in September 1999.

#### 2. The girl child

The government's policy in this field is to put emphasis on the girl child in the PFA.

#### Measuring Development Progress

The following information are published in *Iceland in figures 1998, Women & men in the Nordic Countries 1999*. These books are

## ANNEX II

### Common Data Sets/Indicators

Detailed official statistics are published in the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 1997* and *Women and Men in Iceland 1997* appended to this report.



## Population and fertility

### • Population size

4: 0-14; 15-49; 50+

Urban/rural distribution

Rate

Women aged 15-19

to pages 30-47 and 64-67 in the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland*  
*Iceland in figures 1998*, pages 2-4 in *Women & men in Iceland*  
*Women and Men in the Nordic Countries 1999*.

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of Iceland 1998, p. 5 in *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 1997* and p. 4 in *Women and Men in the Nordic Countries 1997*.

### Maternal mortality rate

Reference is made to p. 64 and 69 in the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 1998*, p. 4-6 in *Women & men in Iceland* and p. 4-6 in *Women and Men in the Nordic Countries 1999*.

## Health

### • Population with access to health services

1 and 230 in the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 1998*.

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Reference is made to p. 64 and 69 in the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 1998*, p. 4-6 in *Women & men in Iceland* and p. 4-6 in *Women and Men in the Nordic Countries 1999*.

(Everyone has an access to health services)

## Reproductive health

### • Contraceptive prevalence

(No data available, but an access to contraceptives is available)

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Reference is made to p. 64 and 235 in the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 1998*.

Gender equality in education

- Ratio of boys in primary and secondary education combined
- Ratio of literate females to males at ages 15-24

Reference is made to p. 252-259 in the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 1998*, p. 28-29 in *Women & men in Iceland 1997* and p. 5 in *Women and Men in the Nordic Countries 1999*.

Economic activity

- Unemployment ratio
- Employment-population ratio
- % of labour force engaged in agriculture, industry and services

by employment status

aged 10-14 who are working. (No data available)

Reference is made to p. 250-260 in the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 1998*, p. 28 in *Iceland in figures 1998*, p. 28-36 in *Women & men in Iceland 1997* and p. 5 in *Women and Men in the Nordic Countries, 1996*.

people	No. of victims of violence per 100 000 people
people	No. of persons in prison per 100 000 people

#### Housing and environment

	Floor area per person
	No. of persons per room excluding kitchen and bathroom
% population with access to flush toilet sanitation	
% population with access to safe drinking water	
% population with access to electricity	
% population relying on traditional fuels for energy use	
Arable land per capita	

All Icelanders have access to adequate sanitation, safe drinking water and electricity. In recent decades, geothermal energy has replaced imported oil for space heating, and now approximately 85% of all households are heated with geothermal energy. The remaining 15% of the space heating market is covered by electrical (12%) and (3%) heating. In 1995 the average size of dwelling units was about 130m<sup>2</sup> and median usable living space per person was approximately 50m<sup>2</sup>.

Reference is also made to p. 21-22 and 136 in the *Statistical Yearbook of Iceland 1998* and p. 3 and 13 in *Iceland in figures 1998*.