

# PORTUGAL

**Fifty-Sixth Session of  
the Commission of the Status of Women**

**General discussion**

**Statement by**

**H.E. the Secretary of State for a Dignified, Equal,  
and Quality of Portugal**

**Ms. Teresa Morais**

**New York, 29 February 2019**



Madam Chair,  
Distinguished delegates,

It is an honour for me to address you on this Commission, on behalf of the Portuguese Government, that took office in June 2011 and to this date has had the time that I have the opportunity to participate in its work.

As a privileged forum for the discussion and the assumption of commitments, I have the highest expectations in the outcome of the work of this Commission.

Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the Portuguese Constitution, and one of the crucial tasks of the Portuguese State is to ensure it through a transversal and effective way, through appropriate public policies.

The progress and the quality of development will only be fully achieved when we have succeeded in eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and their under-representation.

The Program of the 10th of the State, which is based on the principle of accountability of the State in the achievement and promotion of political, economic and social equality throughout society by enhancing the role of women, is not only a matter of rights and social justice, but also an essential condition for the achievement of the objectives of sustainable growth, jobs and education.

Policy in this area is obviously based on the framework of international guidelines and commitments, including the core principle of the Rio de Janeiro Platform for Action.

There are clear progresses in building equality in law, and many steps taken to achieve effective equality between women and men.

We, in Portugal, achieve a reasonable situation as regards levels of political participation of women and men, but the same cannot be said with regard to their representation in economic decision-making, where the presence of women is clearly insufficient.

In order to change this situation, Portuguese Government approved in 2011 a resolution requiring companies of the public sector the approval, implementation and evaluation of plans for equality to achieve a balance in the presence of men and women in their boards. The same action is recommended for now, to private companies. The evaluation results will be done by Government every six months.

Madam Chair,  
Distinguished delegates,

Portugal is currently implementing the following National Plans and Programme for Action:

- IV National Plan for Gender Equality, citizenship and non-discrimination (2011-2013);
- IV National Plan against domestic violence (2011-2013);
- II National Plan against trafficking in human beings (2011-2013).

- National Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Resolution 1525 (2004-2013);
- Programme of Action for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (2011-2013).

These plans are being implemented by public bodies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Commission's main objective is to mainstream gender equality in governmental activities, namely, in all policies implemented at the central and local levels of public administration. This is also translated on the adoption of gender equality plans and on the institutionalisation of ministerial equality advisers and teams in each of the eleven ministries of the Portuguese Government.

These plans are a fundamental tool in gender mainstreaming. Accordingly, all ministries have prepared or carried out a revision of their existing ministerial plans and a new strategy of sectorial equality, for the execution of the measures which regard the implementation of the National Plans.

Portuguese Governments, at least in the last decade, encouraged the municipalities to implement municipal plans for Equality.

The National Authority for Equality (Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality) recently launched the contest "Live for Equality" intended to distinguish best practices of the municipalities in promoting gender equality.

It is of great importance as local authorities have a fundamental task in providing women, especially those living in rural areas, an opportunity to identify the constraints on their full participation in economic and public life, and to develop specific initiatives in their favour.

Therefore, the Commission is aware that the current economic crisis in Europe can be a risky moment for the promotion of equality.

The challenges are overwhelming: unemployment, precarious work, rise and women being more likely than men to be adversely affected.

Therefore, all our attention must focus on ensuring that the situation does not lead to a deteriorating position of women in the labour market, on the contrary, we have to encourage them to professional qualifications and take full advantage of their potential in order to overcome this critical moment.

Let's remember that the fight for women's rights never was!

I wish to send my regards to the Bureau and to the Commission in the next two weeks.

Thank you very much for your attention.