The National Action Plan for Women in the Slovak Republic

Bratislava, September 1997

Preamble

The Slovak Constitution guarantees the basic rights and freedoms for all Slovak citizens irrespective of sex. Despite of this, there are reasons why to discuss specific position of women. They are the maternity and the physiological differences that cause increased demands for the health care and better labour conditions. To achieve the harmony between the maternity function and the professional realization of women is one of the most complicated problems for women - mothers, families and societies.

In the Slovak Republic, there is the policy that the women’s rights are an integral part of the human rights.

As to our national cultural values we state that:

- woman and man are two different identities of a human being complementing each other who realize themselves in different life roles,
- despite the differences men and women demand equal development possibilities and equal legal treatment in human and civil rights,
- maternity and paternity mean for women and men one way of their personality realization. This deserves the respect of the society.
- responsibility for the family, good relations and culture in the family and in the society are common tasks for both men and women.

In regard with our future in Europe we have to respect:

- women’s rights identical with human and civil rights in most of the other countries in the world,
- legislation stating the equal opportunities for men and women,
- common responsibility of women and men and their rights in solving problems in the families, society and the world,
- new common definition of relations and roles of men and women as a need of present social development,
- to accept and solve our own problems according to the recommendations of the 4th World UNO conference on women in Peking.

Referring to these statements, responsibilities and knowledge, the Slovak government in close cooperation with all non-governmental women’s organizations decided to accept

National action plan for women in the Slovak Republic

Slovak government is responsible for the development in the society and is obliged to supervise the legislation, education, economy policy, employment policy, social and family policy to support the development and to depress the discrimination for women and men as well.

The priorities of the Slovak government are:

I. To bring to real life equal opportunities for women in the family, at work and in the society

Provisions:
Promote and monitor human and civil rights of women.

Promote the principle division of the statistics data according to sex.

Promote the supervision of safe labour conditions for women.

Help women in finding jobs, mainly to women with health problems, family duties and other problems.

Support the services for education and child care.

Increase the legal knowledge of women in labour and family law.

Support the establishment of the "ombudsman" to supervise human rights in all spheres.

Supplement the legislation regarding regional and local responsibilities for housing conditions. From the tax incomes the towns should be able to finance the investments in housing and services, mainly for women and families.

Find a legislative way to solve housing problems after divorce, provide allowances for housing and state economic provisions to help the housing policy.

Supplement the legislation, so women could use their own surname together with their husband’s surname.

II. To find possibilities for women’s life decisions concerning the family, job and society.

Provisions:

Enlarge possibilities for women in their choice between maternal and professional roles.

Promote new requirements for family allowances.

Promote a consistent system of provisions for mothers who want to start their professional career. This means mainly amendments in labour law for women and their further education.

Promote legislative changes in minimum alimony for small children who are in care of just one parent.

Promote the state support for families with more children, where parents care properly for their alimentation and development.

III. To promote the abolition of the economic disadvantages causing the material poverty of women.

Provisions:

Continue monitoring and analysing of the differences in wages according to sex and to eliminate differences in remuneration.

Support jobs with shorter working time.

Promote the average wage pension payments paid by the state during women’s maternity leaves.

Create tax preferences for those who employ women with children under 15.

State possibilities for economic activities of women, their self-employment, family enterprises, small and medium size companies, change the tax and credit policy, promote consultancy and information services, in regard with the specific position of businesswomen.

IV. To influence the public opinion regarding the equal opportunities for women and men
a) in education

b) in mass media

Provisions:

ad a) In education we suggest:

Give more care to the girls’ and boys’ education in prosocial and cultural communications and to learn them to honour the family values.

Promote critical thinking, selective use of mass media, mainly electronic ones.

Promote anti-drug education in regard to the pupils’ age, health care prevention, family and parental education, to learn them the values of human life from birth till death as a prevention in the negative social activities.

Enlarge the education with social work, communication with the victims and offenders of criminal acts in the system of post graduate study and the whole life education.

ad b) Via the mass media we suggest:

Monitor the objectivity, truth and information scale of the mass media regarding the women’s position in the society.

Promote the restriction of violence in mass media, change of programme structure and transmitting times with the aim to eliminate the violence and drug addiction.

Inform about the most important tasks of the Slovak Republic in solving the women’s position in our society, so it is in accordance with the international conventions.

Realize the public opinion research to state the efficiency of the governmental mass media projects.

Support the mass media activities to stress the women’s self confidence.

Use the results of the national and international projects and inform public about the aim to improve the women’s status in the society.

V. To create conditions for the protection and improvement of women’s health

Provisions:

Prepare analyses on women’s health based on demographic and health statistics in the Slovak Republic.

Learn women to take regular medical oncological and cardiological controls as it is stated in Slovak legislature.

Care especially for the prevention on drug abuse of women in regard with their maternal function.

Create possibilities for women’s free time activities, mainly in sport.

In frame of the state family policy it is necessary to apply the system of indirect provisions to support the birth rate and healthy development of the population including social and educational provisions.

Support the establishment of the centers for families with small children who need whole day care and the service centers for older women’s care and consultancy.

Help the lactation program and healthy alimentation program for children.
Pay special attention to interests and needs of the children, mainly those of girls’ alimentation and health programs.

VI. To create conditions to eliminate the violence against women

Provisions:

Create legislative and educational provisions to eliminate the violence against women.

Support new centers for violence victims (asylum houses), resp. centers for people in hard life situation with consulting services.

Promote changes in legislation so the criminal acts committed against family members were punished by law and the victim’s approval would not be necessary.

Prepare educational programs to change the behaviour of aggressive individuals and their come back to their families.

Promote the creation of the SOS line for violence victims, to train the SOS lines staff.

Join the national and international programs, eliminate prostitution and trade with women and children and publish these programs.

VII. To promote the development and employment possibilities for women with small professional chances (women living in small villages, Roman women, women not prepared for their maternal role, disabled women).

Provisions:

Strengthen the competences of local administration, their resources for women with small development opportunities in culture and education.

Support regional investments to create new jobs for women with low development opportunities.

Support educational and cultural activities, development in small villages, development of local administration, local activities, etc. (preparatory grade for the population with smaller development chances).

Improve the employment of handicapped women.

Open possibilities for Roman women with smaller development chances for their educational influence in the family and in their children education.

Abolish the discrimination in the pensions from youth for disabled girls and women and pensions for disabled women.

Prepare specific program in family education for disabled girls and women.

VIII. To support the organizations promoting the development of women on the national and international levels

Provisions:

Support projects and programmes on equal opportunities for men and women and on women status on national and international levels.

Support activities and cooperation of all national and international institutions and organizations based to help equal opportunities for men and women.
Support the research in the field of equal opportunities for women and men and their common relations on national and international levels.

Create suitable legislative and economic provisions for the non-profit women’s organizations.

Via the international organizations (regional committees, other subregional structures) help the national institutions in monitoring, realization and evaluation of the Action platform accepted on 4th World Women’s Conference held in Peking.

Via regional offices and specialized agencies of UNO (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, FAO, etc.) identify women’s worst problems of, including the time frame and financial possibilities.

Support experience exchange in solving individual problems concerning the women with EU and other associated countries.

Position of Women in SR (Analytical part)

I. Position of women in the Slovak Republic

The basic rights and freedoms of men and women without any difference are contained in the Constitution SR of 1992 in the Articles 12 - 25, similarly as political rights (Articles 26 - 32), including the right to participate in the public matters administration (Article 30) and it fully respect the equal rights of men and women.

The economic, social and cultural rights protect all citizens equally, both men and women. In some aspects, however, the Constitution SR guarantees increased protection to women: the health protection at work Article 38, the women's protection in pregnancy Article 41 or guarantees explicitly the protection of rights entitled together with father: for the education of children Article 41, part 4, and assistance by the state, Article 41, part 5.

Pursuant to the Article 51 of the Constitution, all these rights are directly guaranteed by the Constitution, they may be required without any dependence on passing laws, executing these articles, with the exception of the Article 38. The details about rights in the Article 38 are defined by the Labour Code No. 65/1965, Coll. of Acts as amended by later legislation.

II. The women's share in the management of the society

Pursuant to the Article 30 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, the citizens have a right to participate in the public matters administration directly or through a free choice of their representatives regardless to the sex.

One of already traditionally monitored parameters of women's participation in the political decision making is the representation of women in the parliament. Before 1989, ÈSSR applied the quote system which guaranteed a relatively high participation of women in the Parliament: it was, however, a formal and considerably passive participation.

Similarly as in other countries of the Central and Eastern Europe, the quote system was cancelled as a remnant of the past, and consequently the number of women in the parliament decreased. In 1986, in the Federal Assembly there were 29% women and in the Slovak National Council - 30%. After elections in 1990, their number decreased to 10% in the Federal Assembly and to 11% in the SNC. In that time, the women's representation in parliaments of countries in the Central and Eastern Europe decreased from the average of 26.6% in 1987 to 11.7% in 1990.

One of reasons, of a low number of elected women in 1990, was a low representation of women on candidate's list of political parties, respectively their disadvantageous placement in functions where it was less probable they will be elected. Undoubtedly, what played the role, however, was also the reluctance of women to candidate. Another reason was also the lack of women's confidence to powers of women candidates and finally, the women themselves were not ready to vote for them.
In parliamentary elections in September 1994, 311 women became candidates from the total number of 2008 candidates, which presents 15%. At the present time, in the National Council of the Slovak Republic, there are 14% of women, in the Government 4% women and on the communal level, the number of women is within the range from 10% to 30%. For comparison, the data of 1994 are available when the women in the Danish parliament represented 30.7% of all members, in the Austrian parliament 24.3%, in the Italian parliament 12.9%, in the Czech parliament 9.5%, in the Irish parliament 8.7%, in the English parliament 6.5%, in the French parliament 5.7% and 4.3% in the Greek parliament.

The women's position in the society is characterised, beside the top levels, also by the women's share in important social and economic life areas. It may be said for the illustration that the post of a judge was occupied by 40% women in 1980 and 52% in 1990, in the same time period, the percentage of women on the post of a prosecutor increased from 27.3% to 41.5%, the number of women advocates decreased to 13.8% in 1993 compared to 19.4% in 1980. In 1994, 11% women were ambassadors. The women represent 4.9% of professional soldiers and 6.9% in the police bodies. In the culture area, roughly 40% of women occupy the post of a director in the cultural facility.

In the state administration, in county and district offices, the women prevail on posts of heads of social matters departments, education, culture, consumer's protection departments, while the number of women increases toward lower functions (detailed data are not available).

The number of business women increases, prevailingly in the small business area, however, a decisive share in the private business belongs to men. In the business category without employees, the women represented 21.7% in 1993, in the business category with employees, there were 19.7% of women.

The low political activity of women is characteristic for the present Slovak society. When globally looking at causes of a low women's participation in the management of the society, the most frequent reason is, and may be understood as the absence of conditions, enabling to women to increase their participation in the management of the society.

The women's political activity or passivity depends first of all on their living conditions. There are not too many changes in spite of many social and economic transformation movements. The possibilities for a woman's career in the political area were, and are further on, conditioned by social conditions and family tasks. Based upon sociological research from last 6 years, the present low women's participation in the policy making may be understood as a final result of various phenomena interaction - the majority of women voluntarily resigns to the place in the policy (roughly 85%). Those nearly 15% of women with a high level of personality and aspiration capital, meet in their ambitions with so known “glass ceiling”. The policy is a very highly segregated issue, prevailingly man's sphere of activity.

As it follows from the sociological research (+), a big part of women prefers family tasks, while the position of women in leading functions is influenced by traditional attitudes to mother's duties. The women themselves have a feeling of insufficient qualification and practice to perform leading functions. The professional potential of women with a higher education is not used enough. The job career is difficult to reach for many highly educated women because of the care about family, especially when services are still of a very low quality, insufficient and very costly. The majority of educated women does not use these services, they better rely on their own work. It is shown that a low share of women in the management of the society may be seen as a part of a bad success in the competition with men, and partly because of subjective reasons on the women's side.

+ Z. Bútorová et al.: On a ona Slovensku (He and she in Slovakia), Bratislava, FOCUS, 1996

III. Women's economic activities and their position in labour law relations

2.1. The economic activity

The Slovak Republic belongs to countries with a high economic activity of women and countries with a high women's employment.
The high level of women's participation in the labour force in changed economic conditions has probably to do with factors of multidimensional character such as: traditionally high labour value in the women's value system, economic necessity following from still persisting two incomes model of the family, approach to the labour not only as the income source but also the sphere of social contacts and self-realisation.

Based upon results of the selective labour force determination (hereinafter SLFD) held by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic in 1996, in the average, there were 2,554.4 thousand economically active persons (labour force sources). In the total number of economically active persons, the women represented 46.4% in the average, i.e. 1,186.3 thousand persons (in 1995 it was 46.3%).

The economic activity rate at 15 years and older population (men and women) reached in the average in 1996 61.4%, the economic activity rate at men was 68.5%, the rate of the economic activity at women was 54.8%.

Of the total number of economically active persons, in 1996 the employed persons represented in the average 89.1%, i.e. 2,276.8 thousand persons (in 1995 - 87.2%). The employed women of the number of economically active women represented 88.1%, i.e. 1,045.3 thousand women (in 1995 the average was 87.0%). The unemployed men of the number of economically active persons represented 10.9% (277.6 thousand persons) and unemployed women of the number of economically active women 11.9% (141.0 thousand persons). These data are from the selective labour force determination by the SO SR and not from the register of the unemployed persons at labour offices.

The highest rate of the economic activity in the long-term development (1994-1996) is reached by women in the age category between 35-39 years (92.2% of this age category women), 40-44 (89.9%), 30-34 (89.3%). A significantly high rate of the economic activity is observed at women in the age category between 45-49 years (85.0%) and 25-29 years (84.6%).

Of the number 1,607.5 thousand economically non active inhabitants over 15 years, the women represent 60.8% (978.0 thousand persons). The biggest group is represented by the women pensioners 617.6 thousand persons, i.e. 63.1% (men 364.8 thousand, i.e. 57.9%) and women students and apprentices 203.2 thousand i.e. 20.8% (men 215.5 thousand, i.e. 34.2%). The women in households represent 96.9 thousand, i.e. 9.9% (men 1.4 thousand, 0.2%) and the women capable to work 43.1 thousand, i.e. 4.4% (men 26.3 thousand, 4.2%). So called "discouraged" women who do not believe they can find a corresponding job represent 0.4% (men 0.8%) and 0.3 thousand women (0.03%), 1.2 thousand men (0.2%) do not want (do not need) to work. The rate of women's economic activity in SR is higher compared to Austria (43.3%) and Germany (42.2%) and lower, if compared to the northern countries where the women's participation in the labour force is traditionally high (Finland 48.5%, Sweden 48.9%).

2.2. The employment

The majority of women, similarly as men, has one full time job. The self-employed women in the 4th quarter of the year 1996 represented 35.2 thousand women (105.1 thousand men). Beside that 10.9 thousand women (20.5 thousand men) had a part time job parallel to the full time job.

A shortened working time had 41.3 thousand women and 11.2 thousand men in the 4th quarter of 1996, it means that the women represented 78.8% of the total number of persons employed for a shorter working time. Among most frequent reasons for a shorter working time belong the health reasons (10.7 thousand women and 4.7 thousand men), employer's initiative (8.7 thousand women and 1.7 thousand men), care about children (5.1 thousand women) and also because the shorter working time meets their requirements (9.7 thousand women, 2.3 thousand men).

The majority of women works mainly in the processing industry (especially textile, clothes making and food industry), in the branches of non production sphere (especially in the education, health care, public administration area) and in shops. A significant number in the total number of employed women works also in the agriculture.
From the viewpoint of women's professional working structure, the highest number of employed women was in the group of technical, health care, pedagogic and adjacent professions (242.0 thousand), i.e. 10.5% of the total number of employed persons in the 4th quarter of 1996, further on (150.8 thousand) i.e. 6.6% of women were in the group of lower level of administrative workers - clerks, 182.3 thousand women (7.9%) worked in the group of operational workers in services and shops. In the group of assisting and non qualified employees, 137.1 thousand women worked, what is 6.0%. In the group of scientific, professional and intellectual workers, 123.1 thousand women worked, what is 5.4% of the total number of employees in SR.

Of the total number of employees with the university education, including higher and bachelor studies (according to the selective labour force determination in the 4th quarter of 1996), the women represented 44.5% of the total number of employees, 57.1% with secondary education finished by final exams of the total number of employees, 35.1% women apprentices with final exams, 34.5% with the secondary education without final exams, 34.0% women apprentices of the total number of employees and 57.5% women with the basic education of the total number of employees.

2.3. The unemployment

The traditional women's high economic activity, accompanied by a deformed model of women's labour force in the past, was considerably reflected in the formation of so called 'women's' unemployment. The indicators of the women's share in the total number of unemployed in SR from the beginning of the economic reform (1990) show a relatively stable level and correspond to the high women's participation in the labour force. At the end of April 1997, there were 169,719 women registered at district labour offices, what represents 50.3% of the total number of all registered unemployed (at the end of April 1996, it was 50.4%). The women's unemployment rate reached 13.97% (men 12.08%, men and women together 12.96%).

At the end of April 1997, there were 38,763 women recipients of the unemployment support what represents 22.8% of the total of all unemployed women registered. Totally, (men and women) the recipients of the unemployment support represented 26.0%.

At the end of April 1997, 1,577 women took part in re-qualification courses, i.e. 71.4% of the total number of re-qualified unemployed registered persons. The development in 1991-1996.

The average yearly number of unemployed women registered at labour offices in 1996 reached 169,185 persons what represents 52.17% of the total number of all registered unemployed. Compared to the year 1995 (within the total unemployment decrease), this number decreased by -8,825 women, however, their share in the total number of all registered unemployed increased by +2.14 points (the share of unemployed women in 1995 reached in average 50.03%).

The arise and formation of opened unemployment as a part of labour market functioning evokes considerations about a higher risk rate and more disadvantageous position of women in the above mentioned processes. However, the statistical data analysis does not show any clear dependence between the sex and tendency to set up some margins on the labour market. The women's unemployment rate was always slightly higher than men's unemployment, however, in 1996 the differences became deeper and reached 2.79 points in the average. The average women's unemployment rate reached 14.12% in 1996 (in 1995 - 14.81%), at men 11.33% (12.84%) and at men and women together 12.63% (in 1995 - 13.76%).

In the registered unemployment development, with regard to the sex, a certain seasonal character may be observed, and namely the lowest number at women is in the first months of the year, increasing during summer months, while the peak is reached after the end of these seasonal works - in October - November.

According to the family status, married women significantly prevail in the registered unemployment (in a long-term perspective is over 63%) compared to married men (in a long-term perspective under 45%). At unmarried women, it represents less than 28%, at unmarried men more than 48% of the total number of all registered unemployed according to the sex. The women prevail also in the group of widows and divorced.
At the end of 1996, 42.0% of unemployed persons were registered by labour offices longer than a year (including 16.2% for the period of 13 - 24 months and 25.8% more than 2 years). Of registered unemployed women, 45.8% were registered more than a year (of it 18.1% for 13 - 24 months and 27.7% more than 2 years). Within these trends, the short-term unemployment occurs more significantly at men (in the range of three months) than at women.

The statistical dependence was not analogously proven between the sex and reason of the last job finishing, where a higher number of women was hypothetically assumed, dismissed because of redundancy compared to men. The number of women, who finished their jobs and were dismissed in 1993 - 1996 due to the redundancy, was lower than the number of men dismissed of the same reasons.

2.4. The women's position in labour law relations

The Constitution SR in the Article 12 contains that the people are free and equal in their dignity and rights. The fundamental rights and freedoms are inseparable, inalienable, imprescriptible and unbreakable. The basic rights are guaranteed to all persons on the territory SR, regardless to the sex, race, colour of skin, language, religion and belief, political or other thinking, national or social origin, membership in the nationality or ethnic group, property, sex or other position. Nobody can suffer a damage, be advantaged or disadvantaged due to these reasons.

In the Article 35 of the Constitution SR it is said: „Everybody has the right for a free choice of the occupation and preparation for it, as well as the right to make business and develop other earning activity. The citizens have the right for work. The state, in the relevant extent, provides material guarantees to citizens who cannot perform this right and they themselves did not cause it.‟

The right for fair and satisfactory labour conditions for all employees is contained in the Article 36 of the Constitution SR. The law guarantees to them especially:

a) the right for the remuneration for work, sufficient to enable them a dignified living standard, b) protection against a wilful dismissal from the job and discrimination in the employment, c) occupational safety and health protection, d) the highest admissible length of the working time, e) a relevant rest after the work, f) the shortest admissible length of paid holidays for recreation, g) the right for collective bargaining.

Pursuant to the Article 38 and 41 of the Constitution SR, the women have the right for the increased occupational safety and health and special labour conditions. The women in pregnancy are provided a special care, protection in labour law relations and corresponding labour conditions.

The Labour Code guarantees to women the right for equal position at work as to men. The women are provided labour conditions enabling them to participate at work not only with regard to their physiological assumptions but especially regarding their social function in the motherhood, at taking care about dependent children.

The labour law relations in the period of women's incapability to work because of disease, injury, pregnancy or maternity are protected by the law in a higher extent. At the birth of a child, the woman has the entitlement to the maternity leave for the period of 28 weeks and additional maternity leave for another period of 3 years with the financial support.

The Labour Code, in its seventh chapter, amends the labour conditions to women, pregnant women and mothers as follows:

a) imposes a duty upon employers to establish, maintain and improve hygienic and other facilities for women,

b) proclaims the prohibition to employ women in the underground, at mining raw materials or building tunnels and galleries and at jobs, physically irrelevant to them or detrimental to their organism, especially jobs which may be dangerous for their mother's mission and further on, it contains the
prohibition to employ pregnant women and mothers till the end of the ninth month after the birth by works which may endanger their pregnancy based upon medical statement,

c) amends compulsory rest to women between two working shifts which has to be between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. of the following day,

d) defines conditions under which a woman older than 18 years may exceptionally work in the night,

e) with regard to the prohibition to employ women at works which are physically irrelevant or detrimental to their organism, it defines protection of a working pregnant woman and mother till the end of ninth month after the birth by a temporary change to a more suitable work,

f) defines conditions to send pregnant women, taking care about low age children, to business trips,

g) defines how to consider needs of women with low age children at the change of their working time.

The equal rights of men and women are guaranteed by all general obligatory legal regulations in the remuneration area in the public and private sector for work of equal value and performance of equal activities.

At the remuneration of women in budgetary and some other organisations and bodies, the creditable period of practice is decisive for the employee's classification for a relevant wage category. In order to prevent the discrimination of women during they do their maternity duties, the legal amendment defines that the care about a child is counted for a creditable practice, corresponding to the duration of the maternity leave. resp. additional maternity leave defined by special regulations in the time of its duration, a special all day care about child with a long-term health handicap defined by a special regulation (however, six years maximum as a total of all these time periods).

The wages in the tariff level or salary category are defined by the law according to the complexity, responsibility and demands put upon the work done.

With regard to a higher number of men in leading positions, what means the classification for higher tariff levels - the women, due to the family situation, do not frequently aspire to leading positions, as a rule these positions are connected with business trips and over time work. Practically, the law protects them against it - and relatively, the majority of women is classified for lower tariff levels.

Within individual tariff levels, the difference between wages of men and women is essentially lower, roughly by 3 % (in the 11th tariff level) and up to 6.4% (in the 9th tariff level). In the group of out-off tariff classification, the difference is high (26.9% in 1995).

The result of the above mentioned facts is that the average hour earning (according to the last data obtained from the information system concerning the price for labour in the 4th quarter of the year 1996 collected in 509 organisations with 322 thousand workers), the women have a lower average hour earning by 21.6%. In a certain context, we may talk more about consequences of a positive women's discrimination here.

The difference in wages may also be caused by the difference in the performance, respectively quality of work, however, it relates both to men and women. Partial differences in the amount of men's and women's wages may also be influenced by the following facts:

The Labour Code does not allow to perform work by women which is:

a) physically unsuitable for them, b) or is detrimental to their organism, especially works which may endanger their maternal role, if the work is done in the irrelevant or harmful working environment.

As the women take care about children and family, they use advantages given to them by the Labour Code, especially as far as business trips, working time change, over time work and work in night concerns, what in its final result decreases their share in the leading work and thus, it causes essentially lower representation and less interest in the performance of leading functions.
The woman's protection in the labour law relations is guaranteed by: a) definition of dismissal reasons based upon which the employer may finish the labour law relation (job contract relation) by the cancellation or immediate dismissal, b) involvement of trade union bodies in the case of cancellation or immediate dismissal, c) protection period during which the employer cannot cancel the labour law relation, d) prolongation of the cancellation period in certain cases.

Pursuant to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and in compliance with Article III. of the Labour Code, in areas amended by the Act NC SR No. 387/1996, Coll. of Acts concerning the employment, men and women have the equal legal position, there is no discrimination or limitation because of sex. It was the same in the previous legislation concerning the employment area.

The Act NC SR No. 387/1996, Coll. of Acts concerning the employment defines specific situations related to the motherhood and care about child and family, e.g.:

(1) At judging the suitability of the employment in job agencies at labour offices, conditions for the care about child are considered: pursuant to the par. 41, part 2 of the Act NC SR No. 387 / 1996, Coll. of Acts concerning the employment, if a registered unemployed person does not co-operate with the district labour office without any serious personal or family reasons, he is excluded from the register of unemployed persons. In these cases, he will be again registered as an unemployed after the expiration of 6 months from the day he was excluded based upon his personal written application. Pursuant to the par. 41, part 4 of the Act NC SR No. 387/1996, Coll. of Acts concerning the employment in this context, the serious reason is also the place and character of husband's employment or if the place and character of the employment do not make possible to accompany child to the pre-school facility or school till 10 years of child's age. The health situation is considered for another serious reason.

(2) The care about child is also taken into account at providing the unemployment support.

For instance, the condition to get entitlement to the unemployment support is to pay contributions to the unemployment insurance at least for 12 months in the last three years before submitting the application for job: at a job contract concluded for a definite period to do seasonal works, this condition is met, if the contribution to the unemployment insurance was paid for at least 6 months during the employment in three last years before submitting the application for job (par. 46, part 1 Act NC SR No. 387/1996, Coll. of Acts on employment). Pursuant to the par. 47, Act NC SR No. 387/1996, Coll. of Acts on employment, the condition to pay the contribution to the unemployment insurance in order to get the entitlement to the unemployment support is also met, beside other, if it is a period of

- a personal care about a long-term seriously disabled child who required exceptional care or especially difficult exceptional care, if not placed in the institute for such children,

- a special care about a relative person who was prevailingly or completely immobile and was not placed in the social care institute or similar facility,

- the care about child till 5 years of his age, if a person, taking care about this child, was a payer of the contribution to the unemployment insurance at least for 12 months directly before beginning of this care.

According to the paragraph 52 of the Act NC SR No. 387/ 1996, Coll. of Acts concerning the employment, if a registered unemployed person finished the last employment without any serious reasons or finished his self-employed activities or co-operating person's activity without any serious reasons, the period of providing the unemployment support is shortened by 3 months. For these purposes, a serious reason is considered, if the employee finished the employment, self-employed person finished the operation or performance of self-employed person's activity or a co-operating person finished the co-operation with a self-employed person, because of

a) a necessary personal care about

1. a child, 2. a long-term seriously disabled child who required a special care or especially difficult exceptional care, if not placed in the institute for such children, 3. a relative person who was prevailingly or completely immobile and was not placed in the social care institute or similar facility,
b) the fact that the place and character of the employment did not make possible to accompany a child till 10 years to a pre-school facility or school,

c) the place and character of the employment of the second partner ( Other reasons, defined by the above quoted law but with no direct relation to the care about family, are not mentioned ).

(3) The law contains also measures to support the placement of citizens who did not work because they took care about a child younger than 3 years and have a problem to find a job after this break. Pursuant to the provision par. 92 , Act NC SR No. 387 / 1996, Coll. of Acts on employment, if the employer, based upon agreement concluded with the district labour office, concludes a job contract for indefinite period with a citizen after the period expired to him when he received parental allowances, the district labour office provides a contribution to this employer for a period of 12 months to cover the health insurance, sickness insurance and pension insurance and covers the contribution to the unemployment insurance paid by the employer in a full amount and compensates accommodation costs, travel costs and meals in the amount agreed. The approval to proposals to provide these contributions is in the competence of administration boards at district labour offices.

The solution of issues related to the women's employment is included into a draft of long-term priorities of labour market policies and priorities for labour market policies in 1997 defined by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic in the context of the provision of par. 3, par 2 of the Act C SR No. 387/ 1996, Coll. of Acts.

In the present development, the number of women, in the total number of unemployed persons registered by labour offices, gradually increases. With the objective to decrease the number of women registered as unemployed, resp. in order to avoid another increase in the number of unemployed women who want to work, it is necessary to develop conditions to sustain the employment, especially in branches with a high share of women's employment. At the present time, such industrial branches are textile and clothes making industry, leather processing and production of resin products, where the number of employed women in the total number of employees represented 70.8 % on December 31, 1996. Among priorities of the labour market policy, the support to the placement of citizens is provided who live in families where both partners are unemployed .

It may be said that the legal protection of women in the Slovak Republic corresponds to conventions amending the equality between sexes, labour conditions with regard to differences of the woman's organism, motherhood, education of children. In principle, it corresponds to the obligations of the Slovak Republic following from international conventions, protocols and recommendations ratified by the Slovak Republic. In conditions of our transition to the market economy, it will be not possible to liberalise the women's work completely - first, it might lead to discrepancies with conventions but especially to the damage of women's health and care about children.

Based upon inspection results provided by the state professional inspection - the Occupational Safety Office - in 1996 aimed at women's labour conditions covering approx. 5% of all employees registered in SR, 2809 failures were recorded. In 34.7 %, the women did work which threatens their maternity role ( par. 150, Labour Code), in 34.3 %, the employers did not have a permit to perform the work in night at women over 18 years ( par. 152, Labour Code), in 245 organisations, the limit of women's over time work as a prevention against injuries was exceeded, in 219 cases the women were not provided necessary personal protection aids ( par. 133, Labour Code) and also cases were found out when safety measures were enough observed at the manipulation with devices. In several cases, the regulations about compulsory working time schedule were not observed.

IV. The women's education level

The Article 35 of the Constitution SR contains that everybody has the right for a free choice of the occupation and preparation for it. Thus, the right for education comes from the Constitution and is valid without any differences in sex, equally for men and women. The School Act and Act on Universities, as last amended, enable the equality and do not allow the discrimination on all education levels.
The access to the education at secondary schools and universities is not different for boys and girls, neither the occupation choice. A special type of secondary school for girls was opened in the school year 1990 - 1991, so called „girl schools” with three study specialisations:

- business and business making (4 year study finished by the final exam),
- services and household management (3 year study without the final exam),
- dry nurse services (3 year study without the final exam).

In the school year 1993 - 1994, 81 girl state schools, 2 church schools and 1 private school were opened. The problem is to place graduates who are prepared for work in a developed market mechanism.

The percentage of girls studying at individual types of schools shows a slight decrease in the number of studying girls (beside the university study). At universities, the number of studying girls represented 49.6%.

According to the study specialisation, the university education with the orientation to natural sciences was finished by 52.8% of women of the total number of graduates, technical sciences by 31.1% (in 1980 19.3%, in 1985 28.9%), medical and pharmaceutical sciences - 64% of women, social sciences and services - 69.1% and culture and art sciences 54.2%.

The technical study specialisation show a permanent increase in the number of women. It may hypothetically assumed that the increased women's interest to study technical sciences could, beside other, reflect the total lack of study possibilities at all universities SR, accompanied by a permanent interest to study. The number of women - graduates of university and artistic specialisations - is balancing the total deficit of women in other study specialisations, especially technical ones.

A high level of women's economic involvement is closely related to their education level. More than 40% of the total number of economically active women finished the secondary education, almost a quarter of them passed apprentice exams and 15.4% have the primary education, 10.0% of women has the university education.

The comparison between men's and women's education level shows a significantly higher number of persons with a finished secondary professional education (for comparison - 35% at women, 22.9% at men) and a lower number of the apprentice education (23.8% at women, 38.7% at men). At the same time, there are 5 per cent more of women with the primary education compared to men (15.4% and 10.4%). The persons with university education have almost the same share within men's and women's economically active population. The results of the selective labour force determination in the 4th quarter of 1996, SO SR, 1997.

The education is a key qualitative sign of labour force and determining factor for position on the labour market. The lowest chance for the placement on the labour market have women with the lowest education.

The absence of education is a threatening and disadvantaging factor on the labour market. From the viewpoint of international comparison, it should be said that the women's education structure within the labour force is comparable with the European Union.

The above survey of the women's education structure in SR gives us the right to say that the society has a really high education women's potential available and up to a certain level it depends on the society which conditions will be set up for a real implementation and application of this potential.

V. Women and media

At the present time, the mass media became one of basic factors of modern man's adaptation to ongoing changes in the society. Especially, in the society being changed from its very fundamentals, the real power of mass media tools cannot be underestimated as every presented issue may become „a negative or positive problem”.

In the struggle for women's equality, determined by their own female identity, human and civic rights, a deep controversial feature and internal inconsistency in the approach persist, even they become still
more intensive: on one side, the emphasise is put upon the equality of human and civic rights and freedoms for women, on the other side, the woman's personality is a subject of a blunt commercial practice: from pornography which is the violence and deprivation of man's intimate life on paper, till prostitution and pandering, physical violence and sexual abusing.

If this situation continues to exist, and the increase of this controversial double presentation of women is even accepted, it will be a problem to consider a woman for an equal partner on the labour market, in policy and social relations.

The commercialism in mass media brings plenty of violence and mainly only one side presentation of women to the mass media market. In this situation, the balancing function is played by public law media.

The analysis of the present information level of citizens SR concerning various sides of women's life confirmed that the public is generally open to accept information about these issues and may be addressed especially in the form of documentary publicist's programs, advisory programs and contributions devoted to various spheres of interest. The preference given to genres and themes, resp. information is related to the education level reached, age, generation issue, and size of the town the citizen lives in. At addressing the society, this knowledge should be reflected to an exact addresser's definition - a target group of the issue discussed.

Media activities, aimed to accelerate the crystallisation of positive men's attitudes to equal women's position and neutralisation of negative phenomena in everyday situations in personal life, labour and public sphere of the life, appear to be urgent. The women's initiative alone, to mobilise and protect their human and civic rights, is a very important and topical task.

VI. The woman and family

From historical point of view, it may be said that the population of Slovakia prefers two long-term basic traditional relationships - the marriage and parenthood which preserve a relatively high status further on. It is confirmed by analyses done about the population demographic behaviour, demonstrating the absolute predominance of family households and complete families within them. An increasing tendency has, however, a non-married coexistence form, what was till recently a sporadic phenomenon in Slovakia.

From demographic point of view, the family in Slovakia may be characterised as follows:

The majority of adult inhabitants gets married at least once in the life, the proof of what is less than 20 % of unmarried men and only 10.4 % of unmarried women in the total number of population older than 15 years. The majority of women become mothers. The prevailing number of children is born in complete families, though in the last years, the increasing number of children may be registered, born out of the marriage, exceeding 10 % of the total number of children born alive.

The prevailing type, from the structural viewpoint, is further on two children family, the children are born relatively quickly one after another, as a rule within 20 - 24 years of mother's age.

The territory of the Slovak Republic, is however, not homogenous from the viewpoint of the demographic behaviour of the family. The differences in indicators such as e.g. the birth rate, marriages and divorces are influenced especially by the nationality and professional composition of the population, and as a rule, by size of the town.

The characteristic feature for families living in Slovakia is a considerable influence of cultural and historical traditions but also a high sensitivity to all society situation, for instance a significant birth rate increase as a consequence of pro-population measures introduced at the beginning of 70-ties or all society and economic changes after 1989.

In 1996, demographic indicators signalise a global, permanent birth rate decrease, the approximate birth rate decreased to 11.2. per mille. The positive trend in the abortion decrease ( started in 1990)
continues further on. In 1996, the approximate birth rate reached 5.7 per mille, in 1995 - 6.7 per mille. The decreasing tendency shows also the suckling mortality which reaches 10.2 per mille.

The marriage indicator in 1996 (compared to 1995) remains on the same level 5.1 per mille, the marriage age of young people goes slightly up. On the contrary, the divorces record a slight increase, if compared to 1995, and namely by 0.08 per mille and reached 1.75 per mille with the culmination of the highest number of divorces in the 4.6 year marriages. From the group of marriages with low age children, the most numerous group are families with one child. With increasing number of children, the number of divorced marriages is traditionally decreasing. Further on, the women submit proposals to divorce in the prevailing extent.

In spite of a long-term, almost 20 years lasting decrease in birth rate and number of new born children, the population of the Slovak Republic still belongs to „progressively developing „populations. More people are still born than dying. The total fertility, however, dropped below the level of 2.1, i.e. below the level guaranteeing the „simple reproduction of population”.

The changes in the politically and social and economic system at the end of 90-ties required also that the state re-evaluated its approach to the family and defined objectives and principles of the state family policy. The platform for their formation was a thorough analysis of the present situation in the family in Slovakia, the evaluation of scientific knowledge about a man as well as experiences and measures implemented for families in advanced European countries. The concept of the state family policy was accepted by the Government of the Slovak Republic in June 1996.

The basic strategic objectives of the concept concerning the state family policy are defined as follows:

- to reach a relative economic independence of families as a basis for their civic independence and application of their responsibility and choice of own future
- success of families at implementing their functions
- stability and social quality of marital and parental relations in the context of the equality and common sharing of family roles
- to accept measures which would make possible to apply the principle of the choice, resp. compatibility at parent's decision making about parental, resp. working role.

As it follows from the above mentioned objectives, the system approach to the family as a unit is characteristic for the family policy, respecting the equality of the man's and woman's position in their marital relationship and at meeting parental tasks.

The equal women's position in the family or labour law relations with men with regard to meeting parental function may be then understood as the establishment of such a legal framework which protects parental rights regardless to which of parents wants to apply them, considering real conditions in the family. Such an approach should in principle change also for instance the view to the health protection of workers in the detrimental environment what might have the impact upon the reproduction function, i.e. both in the relations to the future mother as well as father.

The women's right to use the education, to participate in the nutrition of the family, done together with fathers of common children, is conditioned both the real situation in the every family and by the offer of pre-school, school and other services for families as well as by the range of labour law relations including the issue of contributions to insurance funds during maternity leave or additional maternity leave with the interest to increase the amount of the future old age pension.

Conditions, which do not make possible to apply this right, do not have the character of discrimination measures but they represent more unfinished system of the family policy measures to support a more flexible transition of parents from the educational role to their employee's role.
In order to meet strategic objectives of the state family policy, directly following the equality between men's and women's position in family relations, at meeting tasks of the educational functions the family and due to the professional role, all three transformation social security systems contribute to it.

The space for these measures, having the character of direct financial contributions from the state sources, was established already in Principles of the state social support, accepted by the Government SR in December 1995. In the context of Principles, beside other, providing of parental allowance is considered till the age of five years if child's age (in the case of a long term severe disenablement of a child, it is till 18 years of his age). At the same time, the relevant amendment of labour law in regulations is assumed, so that the protection of rights and parents to preserve the job will be guaranteed. In order to harmonise the professional and parental role, it is considered to introduce the institute of part time jobs with conditions for its protection defined.

The support, to meet economic function of incomplete families, as a rule mother and children, will be represented especially by the social supplement, provided to this group of socially weaker families.

The principle of equal parents’ position, not depending on sex, was reflected for instance also in the pension insurance system by a draft of the institute of widower's pension and further on, equal rights are also guaranteed at the care about child during his disease, in the time of quarantine or care about other family member during his diseases in a newly proposed sickness insurance system. The equal conditions for the arise of the claim to the old age pension were accepted also in the draft for equal age limit for the arise of the claim to the pension at both sexes.

Generally, it may be said that from the viewpoint of the factual competence of the state, the application of principles of the state family policy, guaranteeing the equal men's and women's position may be found almost in all its areas - legal protection of the family and its members, social and economic guarantees, education of children and youth, preparation for marriage and parenthood and health protection of family members.

1.1. The women's and men's relation to women's position in the family and society

The sociological research done recently in the Slovak Republic confirms that the genre identity is not dominant at women at their self-identification. The women do not think about their role as only a female role but also human role. The social status and identity is frequently derived by women from the role in the society, especially mother's role, socialising and educational role, and not on the basis of a contradiction to the man's identity.

The women understand their position compared to the men's position as less advantageous, while this disadvantageous position does not consist in unequal dividing of duties but in unequal dividing of responsibility. In a high extent, the women get identified with this high responsibility and understands it as a privilege, moral predominance what follows especially from their mother's and family tasks. In spite of a less advantageous women's position, the women do not consider themselves to be „a weaker sex”, on the contrary, they consider themselves to be a part of the mankind which has to care about essential issues, have them also under the control at the same time. This phenomenon is related to the image of a right man and woman when looking at differences between the man and woman. The women, according to their idea, emphasise the intellectual dimension but at the same time, compared to men, their underline properties, prevailingly more marked as man's properties, necessary for the effective household functioning - such as the capability to make decision independently, the authority at home and in the family, the capability to enforce own opinion, i.e. the women consider themselves to be „more male” than their partners see them. The public opinion in Slovakia is that the men in the society have a more advantageous position compared to women's position. At comparing men's and women's advantages, the women's advantages are properties such as sensitiveness, responsibility, understanding, self-sacrifice, sense for the family. These properties are, however, more advantages for women's environment than for them alone.

In the professional sphere, being practically the most important, the women feel a clear discrimination at most. It is especially at hiring to the employment but also financial remuneration for work when a man earns more for equal work than a woman. The argument about the „breadwinner of the family " is still valid. The women and men define a man as primarily responsible to family's income. This opinion prevails especially at men (92%) who require this property at the „right man" while it is only 23 % at
the „right women“. At a right woman, the men appreciate more the capability to take care about the household, good education, sensitive approach to problems of other people.

Though at women, the primary and most frequent reason to be employed is the economic situation in the family and necessity of two incomes in the family, the employment function is also significant. It is the space for social communication, cultivation of social relations - these are the most frequent reasons why the women reject a permanent position in the household. The carrier and self-realisation in the profession is a motive, the significance of which grows up with the education. The idea about a possibility of the self-realisation and full value social life in other than working environment, is completely absent.

The nucleus of the conflict between the professional and family role of a woman consists especially in the fact that the choice between the household and employment is not free. The role conflict is understood as a problem of a married employed women who has to solve it herself, while the her capability to settle it is considered as a measure for woman's success. In spite of intensity of this role conflict, the significant majority of women does not consider as optimum solution to stay permanently in the household, neither under the condition that material problems would be solved. One of possibilities to solve the role conflict is a better sharing of household duties, either within the marriage couple or with other family members. This sharing is more accepted in younger age categories and cities. Using of services is still not sufficient in this area. The sociological research shows that the necessity of assistance in the household is significantly different at men and women. Almost 79 % of men define their assistance in the household as significant, but only 48 % of women confirm it, what shows the men's benevolence with themselves.

The development of partnership and co-operation in the relationship between men and women, elimination of residues of men's dominance in the society, are important assumptions to develop the democratic society. This process depends not only on men's approach but whether the women stop to think and behave as a minority.

The man develops his activities by many forms, not only by the education. For women and men, the children's education is an important form of the personal development, similarly as everything what has to do with the performance of mother's and father's role. The woman has to pay three times more for her personal development, higher job placement parallel to the family and her place in the social life, what is connected with big risks or to select the right hierarchy and time graduation in functions.

The performance of life roles in the time parallel develops a high pressure upon woman accompanied by the stress. At insufficient and financially inaccessible system of services to support the parallel performance of woman's life functions, the mutual solidarity of men and women in the family is one of the most topical and difficult challenges. It also is valid for the development of conditions to implement women's family and social tasks within the state and non-state family policy in a free and selective way.

1.2. The social security of women and families

The development in the social area was defined by favourable economic development which stabilised positive tendencies in the development of essential macroeconomic indicators.

Based upon statistical data on family accounts it follows that in 1996, the average net monthly income per one household member was 3937.- Sk in the total of all social household groups and compared with the last year, it increased by 14 %. Compared with 1989, the net monthly income per a household member increased by 92,7 %. The real value of the net monthly income per a person in 1996 represented 71 % of the value in 1989.

During the year 1996 and compared to the previous year, the price level increased by 5.8 %. The highest growth of the year was recorded in consumption prices for non food products and public boarding. The prices for food products increased by 5.8 %.
The living costs development in 1996 was adequate to the structure of the consumption basket in individual household groups. Compared with 1989, the living costs increased by 209.3%. In the year 1996, the positive trend continued to mitigate the dynamics in the growth of living costs.

In the social security area, the development was influenced by legislative measures entered into force during the year 1996: - the Act No. 308 / 1995, Coll. of Acts, amending and changing some acts in the social security area, based upon which the maximum net daily wages was increased for the calculation of the sickness benefits from 200,- SK to 250,- Sk, effective from 1.1.1996, - the Act No. 110 / 1996, Coll. of Acts concerning the increase of pensions in 1996 and about change of some acts based upon which the pensions were increased by 12% from 1.6.1996, - the Decree of the Government SR No. 194 / 1996, Coll. of Acts by which the percentage of increase in the comparable earning is amended in order to evaluate the essential earning decrease in the time from 1.7.1996 to 30.6.1997.

On December 31, 1996, 1 168 214 pensioners were registered to whom 1 387 506 pensions were paid in the total sum of 47 391 million Sk. The widow's pensions represents the second most numerous pension group, 292 574 pensions were paid off in 1996.

The Act No. 100 / 1988, Coll. of Acts on social security as amended by later regulations makes possible to receive the pension at performing the job concluded maximum for one year period. On May 1996, this possibility was used by 75 523 persons, of them 53.8% of women. The number of workers employed after their entitlement to the pension but who did not apply for it was 8 515 on May 31, 1996 - of them 4 532 women.

In the sickness insurance area, the system sickness insurance benefits are provided in the motherhood as the assistance in cash, paid off in 334 789 cases in 1996 in the total sum of 969.7 million Sk and settlement bonus in the pregnancy and maternity in 2 372 cases in the amount of 2.0 million Sk.

In the state social benefits, children allowances and supplement to children allowances, parental allowance and support at the birth of child and children bonus are provided. In 1996, costs for children allowances and supplement to children allowances represented 9 982.5 million Sk provided to 653 938 recipients for 1 264 406 children. The parental allowance was received in the average by 144 thousand recipients monthly and the costs reached the sum 2 758.9 million Sk. The support at the birth of child was provided to 58 074 persons in the sum of 174 million Sk and children bonus was paid of in 7 052 cases in the sum of 10. 7 million Sk.

The nutrition bonus, provided to dependent children in cases when a person (obliged to pay the alimony based upon court's decision) does not pay it in the amount defined, decreased from 130 205 recipients in 1995 to 95 402 recipients, i.e. by 26.73%. The decrease in recipients of the nutrition bonus is significant especially in providing of a non returnable nutrition bonus.

Within the social security, the pension insurance, sickness insurance, state social benefits and social care are implemented in the Slovak Republic.

The pension security benefits serve to cover citizen's income in the case of old age, disability or breadwinner's loss in the family. Compared to that, the sickness insurance benefits serve to compensate the income in the case of income loss from earning activities due to disease, injury, attendance of the family member, pregnancy and motherhood.

The goal of state social benefits is financial participation of the state to overcome undesirable living standard decrease of a family or citizen caused by the arise, resp. duration of certain, by the state recognised life events, resp. the existence of dependent children in the family, service in military forces or civil service.

A part of the existing social security system is also the social care within which the relevant state bodies and communities provide the assistance to citizens whose living needs are not sufficiently covered by incomes from earning activities, pension or sickness insurance benefits, resp. other incomes and to citizens who need it with regard to their health situation, age or some other serious reasons.
Pursuant to the valid legal status SR, benefits in the social security area are bound to the civic principle, and not to the differentiation principle according to the sex. The above principle, coming from the Constitution SR of the Slovak Republic, is applied in the social security within the Act No. 100 / 1988, Coll. of Acts concerning the social security as amended by later legislation as essential legal document amending conditions for the claim to social security benefits and services and equally it is so in other legal regulations amending individual social security areas.

In the Act No. 54 / 1956, Coll. of Acts on sickness insurance of employees as amended by later legislation and Act No. 88/ 1968, Coll. of Acts on prolongation of maternity leave, benefits in the motherhood and supplements to children from the sickness insurance, amended by later legislation, conditions for the entitlement to sickness insurance benefits are defined which replace the income from earning activities.

At the arise of a social event, qualified as the old age, the citizens are provided the old age pension. The arise of the entitlement to this benefit is conditioned by a necessary creditable employment period, defined at men and women in the same way. It has to be at least 25 years and the age limit is defined by the law. The age condition for the arise of the entitlement to the old age pension is defined at men and women in a different way. While at men , the general condition is valid to reach 60 years as the age limit in the III. labour category, at women this age condition is decreased to 53 to 57 years, depending on the number of children they brought up.

In the case the citizen becomes disabled or partly disabled, he is provided the disability pension or partial disability pension. Conditions for the entitlement to these pension insurance benefits are defined in the same way both for men and women.

At the death of the breadwinner, the citizens are provided by survivor's benefits and namely by widow's pension, widower's pension and orphanage pension. The present legal amendment of survivor's benefits is solved at women in a more advantageous way. They are provided a widow's benefit in the case of husband's death. Generally, the widow has the entitlement to widow's pension for a period of one year after the death of the husband. After the expiration of this period, she has the entitlement to widow's pension if she meets some of taxative conditions ( for instance, she is disabled, takes care about one dependent child, brought up children or reached the age of 50 years). Compared to that, the arise of the entitlement to the widower's pension, provided to the widower because of this wife's death, is conditioned exclusively by the widower's care about one dependent child at least.

The present legal amendment of the pension security takes into account a special woman's position at her pension entitlement also by a possibility to recognise a special entitlement benefit - a wife's pension to those women - wives who do not meet requirements to the arise of the entitlement to the old age pension or disablement pension. By recognising the wife's pension the amount of which is given by the law in one fixed sum, the impossibility to meet conditions of the employment period is taken into account which is necessary for the arise of the entitlement to the old age pension or disability pension or due to a longer care about children and husband's household.

The persons participating in employee's sickness insurance have the entitlement to sickness insurance benefits replacing their income from earning activity, i.e. sickness insurance regardless whether it is a man or woman in the case of their own temporary working incapability, necessity to take care about a child younger than 10 years, attendance of a child younger than 10 years or other ill family member or if taking care about a newly born child.

The sickness benefits are paid to the employee ( man or woman) who is recognised as temporary incapable to work because of disease or injury. The sickness benefits are provided from the first day of the temporary incapability to work because of disease or injury till the end of the incapability to work.

The support at attendancing the family member is provided in the equal amount as sickness benefits in the case if the employee ( man or woman) cannot work as he / she has to take care about a child based upon reasons given by the law or makes the attendance of a sick child till his 10 years or other sick family member. The support at the attendance of a family member is provided maximum for the period of first seven working days, if the care (attendance) is necessary during these days. At providing support for attendance of a family member, alone standing employee, who takes a permanent care
about at least one child until the age his of finishing the compulsory school attendance, is given advantages (again regardless whether it is a man or woman). He is provided benefits for more than first 13 working days, if the care (attendance) is necessary during these days.

The financial support in the motherhood is a sickness insurance benefit provided under given conditions both to men and women for the care about newly born child. It is provided from the first day in the amount of 90% of net daily income till the amount of 250,- Sk per day. The time to provide this benefit depends on whether it is received by a woman who delivered a child or other person. The time to provide financial support in the motherhood at women employees who delivered a child is 28 weeks and at women employees who are not married, widowed, divorced or alone standing due to some other serious reasons and do not live with a partner, the financial support in the motherhood is provided for period of 37 weeks. The financial support in the maternity is also provided under given conditions to a woman employee who did not deliver a child but took a permanent care about the child. The benefit is provided to a man employee under the same conditions. The time to provide the benefit in these cases is 22, resp. 31 weeks, i.e. it is shortened by 6 weeks, the woman who delivered a child spent before the date of the birth.

The women employees who perform work, prohibited to pregnant women or detrimental to their pregnancy according to the medical statement and therefore, they are temporary given a different work at which they earn less, a settlement bonus is provided in the pregnancy and motherhood in the amount of a difference between an average earning they had before they were given a different job and the earning they reach in individual calendar months after they were given another job.

Of the above evaluation of the present legal amendment of the pension security and sickness insurance it follows that the women are not discriminated as far as conditions for the entitlement to individual pension security and sickness insurance benefits concerns, on the contrary, their entitlements are set up in a more advantageous way in some cases if compared to men.

1.3. The income situation in families

The main source for analyses of the income situation in families is the income statistics - Microcensus. The last one maps the household incomes in 1991, up to date data will be available at the end of 1997. The image about the income situation in families may also be obtained from the sociological research. The last research from which data about household income were taken, was done by the Research Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in October 1996.

The analyses of income characteristics in a household with a married couple and dependent children show that in the average, a net financial income per one household member is by approx. 700 Sk monthly higher (3880,- Sk) than in incomplete families. In the structure, the labour incomes (78.6%) are represented by almost equal share, social incomes represent approx. 7% (253,- Sk per a person monthly). Other incomes represent approx. 15% of total financial incomes in the household (578,- Sk per a person monthly). On the contrary to incomplete households, where other incomes are especially represented by alimonies, in complete households, there are incomes for labour activities done based upon a contract and incomes for occasional jobs. It is evident that the complete households reach their higher income levels as a consequence of a higher number of economically active persons but also because of a higher labour load, especially put upon breadwinners in the family.

Almost a half of complete families with children states they can satisfy their basic needs over the level of the living minimum (44.3%) but almost equal number of households (46.1%) thinks they are on the level of the subsistence minimum. Satisfying of basic needs below the level of the subsistence minimum is felt by approx. 10% of the households. Roughly every sixth household considers itself to be poor (15.7%). The poverty is refused resolutely by 31.7% of complete households with dependent children, i.e. every third household. More than a half of households (52.6%) feels, however, the poverty in a certain sense. It especially concerns the feeling of poverty at satisfying needs of their children (e.g. a possibility to purchase more expensive sport equipment, possibilities to spend holidays in summer and winter camps, organisation of more expensive holidays for the family, purchase of more expensive Christmas gifts etc.).
A relatively high number of households expressed a feeling of uncertainty at looking to the near future, especially looking at the economic development. The feeling of uncertainty „certainly yes” and „more yes” have 81.2 % of this population group, while „more no” and „certainly no” have only 18.7 % of households.

From then viewpoint of social and economic guarantees, a special place in the society is given to family groups after the divorce, death of one of parents and other reasons, e.g. alone standing parents with children.

The analyses of similar income characteristics in one member households with economically active women and incomplete households with dependent children, the head of which is a woman, are as follows.

The net monthly income per a person in one member household with economically active women reached 5 800,- Sk and in incomplete households with dependent children 3 171,- Sk.

While the income situation of incomplete households is supported (beside the income from earning activity) by the income from the social security (especially sickness benefits and children allowances), at one member households, labour income represents almost one hundred per cent of all incomes. A significant income source in households with dependent children is also the other income which contains (beside other incomes) especially the alimony payments to dependent children. The analyses in incomplete families show that rather significant differences exist in their income situation, depending on causes of their incompleteness. Undoubtedly, the best income characteristics have households with widowed women with dependent children, where the income from the social security reached a high share in all incomes, and on the contrary, significantly worse income conditions were in families with divorced women with dependent children and alone standing mothers.

With regard to income situation in these households, the opinion is interesting how they perceive the situation from the viewpoint of satisfying their needs, how they look at the future economic development, whether they have a feeling of poverty in their situation.

Almost a half of economically active women with their own household (42.4 %) and almost 65 % of incomplete households with dependent children, the head of which is a woman, say that they satisfy their basic needs on the subsistence minimum level. Below the subsistence minimum level, according to subjective feelings, roughly one fifth of incomplete households and approx. 12 % of women's households satisfy their basic needs. Almost every third incomplete household with dependent children feels to be definitely poor, in one member families, it is roughly every fifth household. There is a high number of households feeling the poverty in a certain sense, in concrete life situation - 62.2 % of incomplete households and 42.4 % of women's households. Up to now, 37.9 % of households do not certainly feel the poverty, at incomplete households it is only 8.1 %.

A high uncertainty level governs in these households looking at the future economic development. The uncertainty feels (definitely yes and more yes) almost 92 % of incomplete households and 80 % of women's households. It follows from the global social position of these households and their economic conditions. Especially in families with dependent children, a high load upon women - mothers is shown here as a result of labour and mother's functions and responsibilities for the family life, cumulated together and put on their shoulders.

1.4. The housing issues of women and families

The residential policy issues and housing problems are based upon so called civic principle, and it is not possible to define clearly the problems of a direct, resp. indirect discrimination of women with regard to the housing policy area.

However, the practical experience shows, it is necessary to revise provisions in the Civic Code, especially its chapters saying about substitute accommodation after the marriage is divorced. In many cases the situation arises when in spite of the divorce, the former married partners stay live together in one flat due to the reason that one of partners refuses a substitute accommodation in a studio or smaller flat, respectively in a hostel for unmarried people. It is therefore necessary to amend relevant
provisions related to issues of residential substitution in such a way that after the marriage is divorced, the former partner is to accept the substitute accommodation also in the above mentioned form, while the right to use the original common flat should be given to that partner who takes care about dependent children.

The housing problem relates also to cases when a woman is repeatedly exposed to physical violence, either at the divorce, before it or after it. The lack of temporary (asylum) centres, resp. facilities to accommodate mothers with children still persists.

The state administration bodies, in the co-operation with the self-government in towns and villages, should participate in solving these problems.

As it follows from the Concept of the State Residential Policy till the Year 2000, the basic goal of the residential policy is to establish legislative, technical and economic conditions that make housing accessible for the population and every household may afford housing relevant to the level of its own income. Other goals of the Concept are as follow:

- in the housing quality - to stop the deterioration of the residential fund and decrease the energy consumption,
- to sustain a minimum number of flats on the level reached in the year 1991,
- to amend and unify economic rules for the management of residential fund administrators, to increase the effectiveness of sources spent, the part of what is the rent liberalisation connected with providing of housing benefits.

The Concept defines position of a citizen, community and state at guaranteeing the housing. In market economy conditions, the responsibility for own housing is transferred to the citizen. The state and communities shall develop suitable conditions for citizens to obtain the housing.

In order to improve the housing quality and renovation of the dwelling stock, conditions were established for flats owned by citizens and co-operative flats, where advantageous credits and other forms of support from the State Fund for the Housing Development and construction savings may also be obtained. Six years of the construction savings for first savers will be finished in the year 1998 and consequently, a higher spending of loans on renovation and reconstruction of flats and houses is expected. At rental flats, the renovation of the dwelling stock situation is limited by a regulated rent what does not allow to solve either the catastrophe situation at the present time.

The gradual liberalisation (de-regulation) of the rent is decisive for the management of the rental residential fund. Gradual steps in the rental liberalisation accepted in the Concept have not been applied yet.

The decisive input in the social policy to the housing area is the legislative amendment and housing benefits. The Act on housing benefits was developed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR, submitted to negotiations of the Government SR, however, it has not been accepted yet. The effectiveness of this act is bound to the rental liberalisation, and thus to the construction of rental flats for households with lower incomes as well as for citizens who need a special assistance resp. for those who are in the critical life situation.

VII. The women's health and health care about women

In the Slovak Republic, the women have equal access to medical services as men. Based upon the law, they have some specific advantages related to the reproduction health.

The health situation of the population in SR is gradually getting worse from 1960. The causes may also be seen in unsuitable way of life and negative influence of environmental factors. Free of charge curative and preventive services contributed to a gradual decrease in citizen's interest in his own health.

At the end of 1993, SR had 5 330 186 inhabitants, of it 51.2 % of women. The women in the fertile age (15 - 49 years) represented 49.7 % of the total number of women. The natural population growth has a
slightly decreasing tendency: in 1992 it represented 88.6 % of the value in 1991 and was 4.0 per 1000 inhabitants.

The women's medium life expectancy was by 7 - 9 years longer in the average than that of men in 1980 through 1992. It is generally valid that women take more care about their health than men. Roughly 26 % of women smoke compared to 43.2 % of men. In the average, the men in all age categories drink more alcohol than women. Three times more men have official diagnosis as alcohol dependent in 1980. However, it is shown that the women take medicines more frequently (especially sleeping pills, pills for calming down, against pains). A high percentage of women is interested in the healthy nutrition, though 30 % of casually selected sample were obese and 1 % extremely obese.

The most frequent cause of women's hospitalisation are complications in the pregnancy (especially during the birth and in the first six weeks after it), disease of the circulation system and urine and sexual system.

In SR, the health care about women during the pregnancy is set up by the legislation. There is a network of district gynaecological departments in Slovakia where pregnant women are examined once in a month and even more frequently, if necessary. The women deliver babies in obstetrical departments of hospitals under the assistance of gynaecologist - obstetrician. Immediately after delivery, the paediatrician takes care about the child. Thanks to the network organised in this way, the prenatal mortality rate in 1980 decreased from 18.3 to 9.3 in 1993, the neonatal mortality rate from 13.9 to 7.1 in 1993 per 1 000 children born alive. The mother's mortality rate is around the value 0.1 per 100 000 deliveries. The total decrease in the number of children born alive occurs in all women's categories. The most children are born to women in the age from 20 to 29 years.

Based upon experiences in the Clinic of Haematology and Blood Transfusion and Gynaecological Lines, roughly 50 - 60 % of women in the fertile age have a hidden lack of iron in the blood what has to do with insufficiently rational nutrition but first of all with physiological losses (pregnancy and suckling). According to the expert's estimation, 40 - 60 % of women have a hidden anaemia already in the first part of pregnancy, of them roughly one third requires a systemic treatment by leaf acid and iron preparations. Though at gravid women a duty exists to examine twice the haemoglobin level in the blood, the statistical collection and analysis of these data were not done in last 15 years.

In order to prevent anaemia, it is necessary to inform the public about a rational composition of food and detrimental effects of smoking, to treat on time infectious diseases and continue in gynaecological examinations.

Beside monitoring the blood count twice during the pregnancy, the women are examined to syphilis, the blood group and Rh-factor are determined in order to follow a possible Rh conflict. A part of the care about pregnant women is monitoring of the foetus. Practically at all pregnant women the screening of alpha-fetoprotein, ultrasound screening of in born developmental failures, and if necessary, prenatal diagnostics of a wider extent are done. At pregnant women older than 35 years with regard to a possibility of the Down's syndrome occurrence, the prenatal genetic diagnostics is indicated. The network of neonatological workplaces and intensive care units take care about risky foetuses.

The care about child after delivery is supported by the state in the form of a paid maternity leave and financial support in the motherhood. A real under-nutrition of children in the age to 5 years does not exist. The network of highly experienced district paediatricians is built in Slovakia who compulsorily follow the development, growth and diseases at children.

1.1. The women's health risks

Pursuant to the Act No. 73 / 1986, Coll. of Acts concerning the legal artificial abortion, every woman citizen SR has the right to apply for the artificial abortion till the twelfth week of the pregnancy. The woman applies for the abortion at her gynaecologist. The artificial abortion is done in hospitals for a charge set up by the law. Though the total number of abortions decreases from 1990, SR is in unfavourable light in Europe as far as the number of abortions concerns. In 1996, there were 23 863 artificial abortions what is a number comparable with the data in Europe.
The higher number of abortions compared to other European countries is obviously caused by 100% registration. It is, however, necessary to say that it is a higher number of artificial abortions compared to other West European countries while East European countries have considerably higher numbers. The increased number of artificial abortions at women younger than 19 years is not satisfactorily. It is still caused by the insufficient education to the planned parenthood.

The preventive measure in the care about women’s health is also to create favourable conditions for a free decision whether she wants to or does not want to have a child. The health education assists to it especially in the sexual education, responsible parenthood and birth control area. In these areas in Slovakia, the experts from medical sciences, psychology, voluntary organisations, educational workers and mass media participate. In the present concept of the primary and secondary education, the system education to the planned parenthood and healthy sexual life is being prepared. Partial results appear very slowly here. For instance in 1993, 3.85% of women in the fertile age used hormonal anti-baby pills and 9.3% contraceptive devices. In 1996, the hormonal anti-baby pills were used by 7.75% of women in the fertile age and 5.28% used contraceptive devices. The number of natural conception methods increases. These data are taken from regular reports by gynaecological advisory centres. The contraception, out of medical prescription, is not statistically monitored.

In SR, two cases of HIV positive women were registered, none of them was pregnant. The cases of HIV positive children have not been found out yet.

According to the last research, it is evident that the drug addict ratio between men and women is 3:1. The increased occurrence of smoking and drinking alcohol at young women and girls appears to be a very dangerous trend. The drug addiction issues are solved by the National program for the combat against drugs. This program was developed for years 1995 - 1998. The tasks within sectors are oriented to individual areas according to their own competence and common tasks are defined as well. Their concrete implementation and time schedule set up priorities in sectors for the combat against drugs in all spheres of anti-drug policy of the Government SR. This policy takes into account the conceptual and system development of the National program with the goal to decrease the demand for drugs, their abuse and prevent the offer of drugs.

VIII. The cultural and civilisation risks for women

The problem of violence against women Parallel to the guarantee of all fundamental human rights and freedoms in our legal system, we have to state that in the social practice we got lower by a significant step. It has its causes pointing out to sources of the consumption culture and ideology: to have and not to be. The massive import of sexual acceleration, especially through electronic mass media, in the situation of confused ethic and moral values and doubled controversial presentation of a women have to do with the growth of violence against women.

Of the total number of committed crimes in 1996, of 99,402 cases, the woman was a victim in 6,423 of them. Of it, the violent crimes represented 3,654 cases. From the viewpoint of the age, the highest number of crimes committed on victims was in the range from 21 - 54 years with the total numbers of 2,615 cases.

The moral crimes belong to serious criminal activities. In the year 1996, 207 violations were committed totally, while the number of 45 violations of victims in the age 7 - 15 years is alarming.

These statistical data describe the criminal activity only according to reported and prosecuted cases, resp. violence against women reported to the police and prosecuted but it does not contain a big number of violent acts where the victim did not find any courage or was under the psychic pressures (threatening, emotional blackmailing, fear because of the attitude of the society, jerking) to report about the violence. The violence against women (also at home) has to do with insufficiencies in the value area, deterioration of social and economic conditions, while the brutality of these acts increases. These facts, however, are not statistically recorded and the research, resp. investigation of home violence against women tries to map it. The victims of this violence are not always ready to answer in anonymous questionnaires as it would mean to admit a fact they are ashamed of but also to go back to moments very traumatic for them.
In the case the violence against a woman is qualified as an offence, the Act on offences admits here beside other also low fines in cash what does not meet the goal and the violence, as a matters of fact, persists. The wives alone ask for the lowest possible fine, as it goes from the family budget and the consequence is again carried by a woman who manages the budget. This does not solve the decrease of violence against women in the future. It would be useful to amend the Act on offences by a possibility to impose a duty upon the accused person to participate in programs for the prevention of violence, therapeutic interventions. In the case of crimes, the therapeutic programs should be applied in the combination of the penal prosecution with training courses. The same therapeutic assistance should be provided to victims of violence. The violation is punished pursuant to the par. 241 and 242 of the Penal Code, the limitation of personal freedom pursuant to the par. 231, Penal Code. As a positive legislative phenomenon is the possibility to judge the criminal act of violence in the marriage but the above mentioned limitations relate to its penal prosecution.

The definition of violation which says about the „intercourse” may be considered as a problem. At the present time, various forms of sexual violence appear which cannot be prosecuted according to this definition, however, they can be considerably more traumatic for a victim (sexual aberration etc.). Some similar violence may be defined as limitation of personal freedom with essentially lower penal prosecution, regardless to psychic consequences it may cause. In the international context, a request appeared to define newly the violation as well as the violation in the marriage by international legal standards what would make possible to catch up all forms of the social violence.

Another very acute phenomenon is to threaten by killing. The cases happen repeatedly that a woman perceives husband's threatening as a real danger but she is helpless at looking for the assistance. The police prevailingly does not interfere, if no harm was caused to the health. Moreover, frequently there are no eyewitnesses of such threatening and the police interferes sometimes only at the assassination attempt or after the murder is committed.

IX. The women's movement

The women's movement in SR has a long tradition starting in the last century. In 1869 in Martin, Zivena - the first union of Slovak women was established. Its goal was to involve women into the national and cultural life. The union issued a journal with the same name from 1910 on exceptionally high quality level. The members and initiators of Zivena were Slovak women writers, intellectuals, wives of national representatives. The activity of this Union played an important role at revitalisation of the national awareness of Slovak women in the time when Slovakia was under the government of Austrian - Hungarian monarchy.

The first Slovak women's journal Dennica (Daily Star) was issued from 1898 to 1914 as a monthly journal. The editor in chief was Terézia Vansová. It was oriented to village and farmer's women.

In 1950, Zivena was taken over by the Union of Slovak Women - a politically oriented organisation which existed till 1989 as the only one women's organisation.

After 1989, the women's movement became plural. Several women's organisations were established. At the present time, roughly 20 non governmental organisations develop their activities and deal with the women's issues.

In 1991 - 1992, the Governmental Committee for the Woman and Family existed with the competence to give comments to governmental documents related to women's and family issues and submit proposals to the Government, resp. certain measures to individual sectors but it did not have its own budget which would make possible a deeper professional work. This committee closely co-operated with non governmental organisations. After elections in 1992, this governmental committee was cancelled and the competence in the family area was transferred to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. In March 1996, the Co-ordination Committee for Women's Issues was established as advisory, co-ordination and initiative body of the Government SR which associates non governmental organisations dealing with women's issues, Parliament representatives (NC SR), church, research institutions, trade unions and experts for issues of women and families. Its intention is to enforce women's interests in all spheres of the society, especially by comments to drafts of legislation and individual regulations related to women's issues, resp. problems of children and families in
Slovakia. The chairwoman of the Co-ordination Committee for Women's Issues is the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR, and Vice-Chairman of the Committee is the representative of the Confederation of Trade Unions SR.

In 1996 the Parliamentary Women's Commission was established at the Committee NC SR for health care and social matters, the subject of which is to enforce women's interests within parliamentary negotiations.

Beside that the Confederation of Trade Unions SR constituted also the Women's Committee at the CTU as its consultation body on December 17, 1991. It is a voluntary open association of women representatives of CTU SR member trade unions. As far as the content concerns, the committee is in the competence of the Vice-president for internal trade union activities. At the head of the committee is elected chairwoman who is a statutory representative of the CTU SR in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Brussels.

The Women's Committee has its program of activities developed from the Program CTU SR, accepted by the Assembly in 1993 and has its annual budget allocated. The main objective of the Committee is to monitor and initiate negotiations in the social and labour law area, closely connected to special problems of employed woman and woman- mother. The platform for the implementation of interests is CESA and other irregular negotiations on the level of the MLSAF SR.

X. The international co-operation aimed at the equal position of men and women

During 80-ties, the international co-operation in the area of equal position of men and women was organised through the women's movement within the system of former socialist countries.

The Slovak Women's Union organised every two years international scientific conferences oriented to women's issues. In the international context, the Czechoslovak Women's Union in Prague was more activated than in Bratislava.

After 1989, better chances of co-operation with foreign countries became possible in individual areas related to women's position on the governmental, scientific and research level or in the women's movement. The assistance of the European Union countries is especially through PHARE program, oriented to restructuring of the labour market in the labour and social matters area and includes also women into its competence. Equally in the education sphere, the program dealing with the analysis of equal men's and women's approach to the education is financed from the PHARE fund.

All women's organisations have a possibility to co-operate with equal associations abroad on the their interest level.

The evaluation of national activities concerning the women's issues on the regional and all world level is done in the UN by the UN General Assembly, sessions of the Economic and Social Council, Commission for Women's Position, sessions of regional commissions (e.g. EEC), as well as by specialised agencies within the UN system. Here it is necessary that SR follows all the above mentioned international forums.

On the UN level, political question of women's issues are especially discussed, the professional level of the implementation of the Action Platform accepted on the 4th World Conference on Women is guaranteed first of all by national and regional organisations. here it is necessary to develop the maximum pressure to the interaction between regional and all world activities with the objective to prevent a possible duplicity.

1.1. UNO

All bodies and organisations within the UNO system deal with the implementation of the Action Platform for the period of 1995 - 2000, taking into account results of important world summits and conferences (the International Conference on population and development in Cairo 1994, Summit on social development in Copenhagen 1995, 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995,
Conference on Human Housing in Istanbul 1996, the World Food Summit in Rome 1996). Their main task is to remove gradually all economic, social and political barriers preventing the rise of women.

The UN General Assembly - as the top body - accepts political decisions concerning the continuation of activities following from conclusions of the 4th World Conference on Women. Based upon the resolution 46/161, it will deal with the report by the UN General Secretary concerning the continuation of activities related to the 4th World Conference on Women. In 1998 - 2000, the UN General Assembly will currently evaluate the implementation of the Action Platform.

The Economic and Social Council supervises all co-ordination at the implementation of the Action Platform and designs recommendations to it. As a co-ordination body - it makes assessment of the mandate of the Commission for the Women's Position.

It follows from the Action Platform that the UN Economic and Social Council should devote to the issue of improved women's position within its main session till the year 2000, further on at least one co-ordination segment and one segment of operative activities to the issue of women's rise and co-ordination of activities oriented to the equal position of women and men in the society should be implemented.

The Commission for Women's Position - as one of function commissions of the Economic and Social Council - monitors the implementation of the Action Platform within the UN system and consequently, it prepares relevant recommendations for the ESC. The Commission, in years 1995 - 2000, has a task to define the most urgent groups of issues in the Action Platform and include them into its agenda. In this context, it should be said that the Commission for Women's Position plays a key role at emphasising perspectives of the equality between men and women. In 1996 - 1999, the Slovak Republic is a member of the UN Commission for Women's Position and so it has the opportunity to get actively involved into the work done by the Commission and enter the decision making processes at the implementation of conclusions from the 4th World Conference on Women.

Other function commissions of the ESC devote within their mandates to some specific issues in the Action Platform ( for instance the Commission for Human Rights, Commission on Population etc.).

The Committee for Removal of Discrimination Against Women follows the implementation of the Convention concerning the removal of all forms of discrimination against women and informs about taken measures following from the Action Platform of the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing.

At the present time, the Slovak Republic in the co-operation with the UN Developmental Program implement a project on women „The Slovak women in movement - strategies to improve the women's position and their contribution to the development SR” and the project the Centre for equality between women in SR within which a centre with the above competence should be established in Bratislava.

The Slovak Republic participates in the international governmental project „Social-economic position of rural women in countries of the Central and Eastern Europe” with the international participation, supported by UN FAO which significantly contributed to a new view to rural women's position as an important group of women in Slovakia. Based upon the Action Platform for rural women, accepted by the UN at its General Assembly in 1995 after the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, October 14 was proclaimed for the international day of rural women, and in this year, it will be celebrated for the first time in many countries of the world including the Slovak Republic.

Within the UN Secretariat, the Division of women's advance position develops its activities investigating facts which limit the advance of women. In the period after the 4th World Conference on Women, it plays the co-ordination role at the revision of summarised medium-term plan for the rise of women in the period 1996 - 2000. At the same time, it serves as the Secretariat for the co-ordination of activities on women's advance. It also makes the information exchange and contacts with national commission and institutions to improve the women's position and non governmental organisations.
The issue of improved women's position is dealt marginally by other units of the UN Secretariat (for instance the Office for human sources management and the UN Statistical division).

With regard to conclusions of the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, the General Secretary of the UNO appointed a woman advisor for issues of equality between men and women who helps to implement the Action Platform in a close co-operation with the Division for Women's Advance.

Among another UN important institutions which devote to women's prosperity in all world measures belong:

The International Research and Education Institute for Advance of Women (INISTRAW) which sets priority research areas, supports national research capacities in women's issues and develops the research institutions network.

The Developmental Fund for Women (UNIFEM) the task of which is to incurs the economic and social development of women in developmental countries.

Specialised agencies and organisations of the UNO (FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO) in compliance with their orientation follow specific women’s issues (advance of rural women, women's employment, removal of women's illiteracy). Within the Action Platform, agencies and organisations were specialised and asked to provide a suitable technical assistance and other forms of assistance to countries of the Central and Eastern Europe with the objective to contribute to solve specific women's issues in this region.

1.2. Other international institutions

Within the Council I of Europe, the co-operation is developed with the Steering committee for equality between women and men, the result of which was organising of several international seminars and workshops. In the UN Secretariat, a high attention is devoted to the increase in the number of women at all workplaces. The women represent 35% of all UN workers at the present time, and till the year 2000, they should occupy 25% of higher functions, while totally the women should represent 50% of all employees within the UN employee's structure.

The Slovak Republic participates in the work of international financial institutions e.g. the International Currency Fund and World Trade Organisation (WTO) the task of which is beside other, to implement conclusions of the Action Platform.

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