

CSW 53 – Intervention of The Netherlands on the review theme

Mr Chairperson,

One of the key areas in which the Netherlands' Government would like to achieve better results regarding gender equality, is the participation of women in decision-making processes. The situation is far from ideal. Although the participation of women in Dutch Parliament is rather satisfying (around 40% in the Lower House and 35% in the Upper House), in all other areas, public and private, the participation is very low.

Therefore, the Dutch Government puts a lot of effort in increasing the participation of women in decision-making.

Mr Chairperson, the Netherlands doesn't adhere to a quorum.

The Netherlands however does believe in setting clear objectives.

Voluntary but not free of obligations.

In May 2008, over 50 organisations, in the public as well as in the private sector, voluntarily signed up to a Charter, called Talent to the Top. The Netherlands is very pleased that apart from the central government so many organisations from all areas of Dutch society, have joined the Charter. We hope that by the end of the year 2009 over 100 organisations and businesses will have signed up to the Charter.

By joining the Charter, organisations commit themselves to develop or continue a clear strategy for the influx and through-flow of women in management positions. The signatory companies determine quantitative goals for their own organisation, review their achievements and report about them to a so-called Monitoring Commission. The Monitoring Commission will report each year to the Minister of Emancipation and it will announce the results of the signatories in the media by specifically referring to the names of the organisations and companies concerned.

It goes without saying that the Government wants to be an exemplary employer. In governmental Advisory Bodies it is now compulsory to ensure a proportional representation of men and women. Any new appointment must respect this principle. The objective for the central government is to achieve that at least 25% of the senior civil service positions in 2011 consists of women. In order to reach that goal in 2011 the Dutch government is using a range of tools such as networks, deployment of recruitment agencies and an action programme to interest, develop and commit female candidates.

Finally, I would like to mention the Dutch Corporate Governance Code (Code Tabaksblat). The so-called transparency benchmark for Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship focusses specifically on the indicator "Number of women in top positions".

In conclusion, the Netherlands Government strongly believes that increased transparency can encourage companies to actively aim to make greater use of female talent but of course we can only increase the participation of women by

combining several policy measures at the same time. In this respect I am very interested to learn about the views and best practices of other countries in this field.