***Information provided by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine in response***

***to the Questionnaire of the Working Group***

***on discrimination against women and girls***

Creating equal opportunities for women and men with the view to work and employment is an important component of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, implementation by Ukraine of the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

The difference in income and opportunities for men and women deprives the economy of development opportunities and significantly reduces the country's human capital.

Given that women make up 54 percent of Ukraine's total population, gender equality is a key issue in the development and use of human resources.

At the end of 2018, the gap in the average wage of women and men in Ukraine was 22.3%, while in financial and insurance activities this gap was 35%. Almost the same level of remuneration for women and men exists in the areas that do not provide high earnings: administrative and support services, functioning of libraries, education.

At the same time in Ukraine a sufficient legal framework has been formed to create the conditions for empowering women in the workplace.

The Labor Code prohibits any discrimination in the field of work - violation of the principle of equality of rights and opportunities, direct or indirect restriction of the rights of employees on a wide range of features, unrelated to the nature of the work or the conditions of its performance.

The Law of Ukraine On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men provides women and men with equal rights and opportunities in employment, promotion and retraining.

The Law of Ukraine On Employment prohibits ads or advertisements for work that are discriminatory. It is forbidden to make any claims of discriminatory nature in job advertisements, as well as to require job seekers to provide information about their personal lives. The Law of Ukraine provides for the inclusion in collective agreements of provisions ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men. Guidelines for employers and trade unions are prepared to assist employers in implementing workplace equality policies, which include anti-discrimination, sexual harassment and gender audits.

The General Agreement on the Regulation of Basic Principles and Standards for the Implementation of Socio-Economic Policy and Labor Relations in Ukraine for 2019-2021, signed this May, provides for gender audits at the enterprises, institutions and organizations.

Ways of addressing inequality in the area of ​​work and employment are determined by the Government-approved Human Rights Strategy, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the State Social Program for Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, and the National Action Plan on the Recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

The main tasks of these documents are to:

- reduce the gaps in the average wage of women and men;

- improve safety and health;

- increase the competitiveness of vulnerable groups of population - internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, women living in rural areas, as well as to accelerate their adaptation to new economic relations;

- promote the development of flexible modes of employment, entrepreneurship and self-employment, taking into account gender, age, place of residence, educational, professional level, level of material security, special circumstances of life;

- overcome discrimination in the field of work and employment, including the protection of mothers against discrimination in employment, as well as women breastfeeding;  
- create conditions for combining paid work and housework, increasing the employment rate of women aged 25-44 with children under 5 years of age.

The lack of legal awareness of citizens on gender discrimination, as well as lack of awareness of procedures, bodies and institutions that counteract gender-based discrimination in various areas - from preventing domestic violence to counteracting gender rights violations at workplace – remain a problem. Often, they cannot detect gender discrimination in family life (including cases of violence), at work and in society. Relevant legislation is being improved to address this issue, the network of Free Legal Aid Centers is being expanded, and women are operating in anti-discrimination bodies (for example, the Expert Council on the Prevention and Combating of Gender-Based Discrimination at the Ministry of Social Affairs).

Rapid development of technology and science requires the introduction of new changes in the organization of work and increases its intensification, which in turn requires responsible political decisions aimed at ensuring an effective combination of work and family responsibilities for both women and men.

One of the main principles underlying the policy of labor reform is, in particular, the promotion of harmonization of work and family responsibilities by employees.

In order to implement the Association Agreement with the EU as well as Council Directive 2010/18 / EU of 08.03.2010, the Government of Ukraine has drafted the Law On amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine regarding the provision of additional guarantees related to the combination of family and work responsibilities.

This draft Law provides for equal conditions and opportunities for parents to fulfill their responsibilities in the upbringing and care of children (in particular, as regards the extension of the right to part-time parental consent to father and reduced working hours), restrictions on the involvement of workers with young children or children with disabilities into night or overtime work, during setting of a probationary period when applying for a job, etc.

Considering that the provisions of national legislation are generally consistent with the provisions of ILO Maternity Protection Convention No.183, for the implementation of clauses 1330 “Improvement of the system of protection against discrimination on grounds of sex” and 1342 “Legislative prohibition of any discrimination in the field of work, including during recruitment” of the Action Plan on Implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine, of the One Part, and the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the Other Part, our Government is developing legislative amendments aimed at ratifying Convention No.183 (*Ref.: in Ukraine, paid maternity leave is at least 18 weeks (Article 4 of Convention No. 183 provides for a minimum period of 14 weeks).*

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