



The Swedish Government's  
**National Action  
Plan for  
Gender Equality**



REGERINGSKANSLIET



## Foreword

Despite a long history of active, purposeful commitment to gender equality, Swedish society is still characterised by a gender-based power structure that places women and men in an asymmetric relationship in which power is unequally divided. Men have always constituted the 'norm' – against which all others are measured – and women everywhere have been forced into subordinate roles. If we are to achieve a society capable of guaranteeing equality between women and men, this power structure must be dismantled.

Moreover, efforts to promote gender equality have for too long been directed exclusively at women, as if *they* were the problem and it was *their* responsibility to adapt to men's lifestyles and modes of thought. But gender equality is not about conforming to male values; it is about building new, equal relationships predicated on equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for *women and men*. If women and men are to live, work and participate in the life of the community on equal terms, the active collaboration of both sexes in the task of promoting gender equality is essential, as is constant, unremitting effort at every level of society.

In May 2003, the government submitted a report (*Jämt och ständigt* – Skr. 2002/03:140) on gender equality policy to the Swedish Riksdag (parliament). It contained a gender equality action plan drawn up in collaboration with the Left Party and the Green Party, and presented in abridged form in the present publication.

The plan should be regarded as a living document. During the government's term of office it will be supplemented and further developed. As work progresses, new insights will be gained, making it necessary to review, clarify, refine and develop the proposed measures and approaches contained within it. Society is changing rapidly, with all the usual repercussions for gender equality. Many of the areas addressed in the plan will call for additional know-how and analysis before appropriate action can be taken.

It is the government's intention to report to the Riksdag on the outcome of this undertaking during its current term of office.

*Mona Sahlin*

*Ulla Hoffmann*

*Maria Wetterstrand*

## Aims and objectives of Swedish gender equality policy

The overall objective of Sweden's policy on gender equality is to ensure that women and men have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities in all significant areas of life.

The gender-based power structure must be combated

Despite a long history of active commitment to gender equality our society is still distinguished by a gender-based power structure. Efforts to promote gender equality must be given a more feminist orientation. We must be aware of the existence of a gender-based power structure that makes women subordinate to men. The government must regard 'male' and 'female' as social constructions, i.e. patterns of behaviour determined by a person's upbringing and culture, by economic conditions, power structures and political ideology. Gender patterns are created and perpetuated at the personal and social level. This state of affairs has remained unchanged despite the fact that women are now better represented; in a few spheres of activity the gap is actually closing. If we do not succeed in breaking down the present gender-based power structure we will fail to achieve a gender equal society.

Promoting gender equality internationally

Efforts to promote gender equality on a global scale are closely linked to action at national level.

UN measures aimed at ensuring that human rights can be enjoyed by women in a globalised world are all the more vital in the prevailing conservative, strongly reactionary ideological climate, an environment not conducive to women's rights or progress towards gender equality. The work of the EU is being given priority in view of its immense significance for development in our part of the world.

It is essential that the issue of men and gender equality be highlighted in the context of international cooperation.

Gender equality in all policy areas

To be successful, gender equality policies, principles, aims and goals must be mainstreamed in all policy areas and exercise a formative influence on our society and everyday lives. It is among other things through our economic, education, family and labour market policies that gender equality takes shape and creates results.

Gender mainstreaming

The introduction of gender mainstreaming places greater responsibility for implementing gender equality policy on all central government bodies. A ministry or authority with responsibility for a given operation or policy is required to introduce a gender perspective into that activity. Although this strategy is essential and has proved successful it can only work satisfactorily if responsibility is combined with clearly defined, verifiable goals, know how and support. This is not always the case today. As a result, gender equality measures are often treated by government authorities as a separate concern, unrelated to mainstream activities, *ad hoc* in character and not firmly rooted in everyday operations. There must be a substantial improvement in the quality of gender equality work.

Enhancing control of gender equality policy is a vital task for the government. As stated in the action plan, the government intends to further develop policy aims and procedures. Apart from more effective implementation, its objective is to ensure that a gender equality perspective is present in all policy areas and permeates all government policy-making.

Focus areas for the current electoral period

Although gender equality policy must be broadly based, a set of priorities – which may vary from time to time – must be defined. Five focus areas, which will be highlighted during the government's term of office, have been identified. These areas, defined in greater detail below, are:

- Representation; equal access to positions of power and influence,
- Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value,
- Violence committed by men against women, prostitution and trafficking in women for purposes of sexual exploitation,
- Men and gender equality, and
- Sexualisation of the public sphere.

## Representation - equal access to positions of power and influence

One of the goals of Swedish gender equality policy is equal access by women and men to positions of power and influence. Equal representation of women and men in decision-making bodies is central to democracy. Both sexes must be represented in all areas of society and at all decision-making levels if they are to have an equal say in the development of their society. Equality of influence also ensures a broader basis for decision with regard to social policy issues.

As a result of purposeful, focused efforts to enhance women's power and influence within the community, Sweden is now a world leader in terms of the proportion of women representatives in directly elected political bodies. This applies at national, regional and local government level.

With regard to equal representation in positions of power outside the public sphere, however, development has been very slow. This applies especially to representation in the corporate sector, on company boards and in leading management positions. Women seldom have power or influence over the direction or organisation of a company's operations. The higher education system is another area of unequal gender balance. Much of our society's development continues to be controlled and directed by men, whose experience remains normative. This applies particularly to nominations, appointments and decision-making processes.

A conscious, sustained policy produces results. The government has consistently promoted equal representation on the

boards and committees of central government authorities and state-owned companies. As a result, the proportion of women agency heads rose from 3 per cent in 1988 to 32 per cent in 2000. The relative number of women at senior management level in the Government Offices and central government will continue to rise during the government's term of office.

The government is also engaged in constant dialogue with the business sector in an effort to develop and implement measures to change the present situation. It is a matter of enhancing the visibility of unequal gender balances and bringing about change based on the relevant facts. Legislation is also an option.

But achieving and maintaining gender balance in management groups, company boardrooms and high-ranking positions is not enough. It must also be borne in mind that not all top jobs and senior management posts confer the same degree of power and influence. The crucial task is to ensure that women and men genuinely exercise equal power and influence, and that women are not restricted to subordinate positions in decision-making bodies.

## Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value

Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value has always been a priority issue in Swedish gender equality policy, alongside equal access to positions of power and influence. If they are to enjoy true freedom and independence, women must be able to support themselves. This ability is thus a fundamental condition of gender equality. Nevertheless, women are still paid significantly less than men. A comparison of conditions in the labour market as a whole shows that on average women earn approximately 82 per cent of what men earn. If the figures are given standard weightings, i.e. adjusted for occupation, education and training, age and labour market segment, pay levels for women as a proportion of pay levels for men are as follows: 99 per cent in the local government sector (municipalities), 93 per cent in the regional government sector (county councils), 92 per cent in the central government sector and 90 per cent in the private sector. The income gap is mainly due to the traditional segregation of the labour market, where 'female occupations' in the public sector and the care and social services are particularly low-paid. If we compare pay for equal work of equal value, however, we find that the difference between incomes for women and men is not as great. Disparities may nonetheless lack legitimate justification and be gender discriminatory under the terms of the Swedish Gender Equality Act (*Jämställdhetslagen*). Gender-related pay differences not based on objective criteria contravene the act.

Wage formation is a matter for the parties in the labour market. Pay discrimination undermines women's ability to support themselves and impairs their career prospects in the Swedish labour market. It is also related to other factors which serve to weaken the position of women in the market, such as health problems, insecure contractual arrangements, little say in decisions affecting working conditions and the workplace, and the lower status of work performed by women.

Longstanding efforts to do away with the gender-linked study and career options that have led to a gender-segregated labour market have met with moderate success. It is vital that more is learned about ways of pursuing these efforts more effectively. A gender-segregated market is not only inefficient; it is also a deterrent to growth. Traditional assumptions about male and female attributes and abilities determine career choices and the opportunities on offer in the labour market and limit people's ability to extend and improve their individual skills or develop their creativity – the

presence of which always denotes a flourishing labour market.

Measures against gender-based pay differentials have also been called for under the terms of the Gender Equality Act. Workplaces with ten or more employees are required to draw up a gender equality action plan based on a survey of gender-based pay differentials within the company. These must then be analysed and dealt with. As the act only governs relations between individual employers and their employees, it is not an instrument for effecting displacements in pay levels between female- and male-dominated segments of the labour market. It was designed to be used by local parties in the market to level out gender-based pay differentials under one and the same employer. Public sector employers should set an example by applying the rules in the act prohibiting unwarranted gender-based wage differentials.

Compliance with the law has improved as regards identification and analysis of gender-based pay differentials by individual employers and the adoption of appropriate measures. However, the act has failed to make inroads into structural pay differentials caused by *value discrimination*, i.e. the practice of rating jobs differently according to whether they are traditionally male- or female-dominated.

The Gender Equality Act should be reviewed and reassessed to determine whether it can be further tightened. However, efforts at national level will be required if gender-based pay differentials are to be countered successfully. This will require implementation of a national action plan for the entire labour market. It is vital that such a plan take account of 'horizontal' as well as 'vertical' differentials, i.e. those due to gender segregation in the market and those arising from normative assumptions about what constitutes 'men's work'. It must also take account of the principle that wage formation is a matter for the parties in the labour market. Resolute action aimed at promoting a better understanding and assessment of pay differentials and wage formation will be needed to deal effectively with the problem. Measures must also have the support of the parties in the labour market and be guided by the instruments set out in the act.

## Violence committed by men against women, prostitution and trafficking in women for purposes of sexual exploitation

The Platform for Action adopted at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 stated that physical, sexualised or psychological violence against women is a serious obstacle to the achievement of gender equality, development and peace. Violence committed by men against women also constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms and impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of these rights and freedoms. It is also a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women, and to the prevention of the full advancement and participation of women in society. Violence committed by men against women occurs in all social classes and occupational categories and is directed against all women regardless of age or circumstance. Violence against older women and women with physical or mental disabilities have attracted little attention.

Every year, more than 20,000 women file reports of physical abuse at the hands of men with whom they have or have had a close relationship. Efforts to combat violence of this kind must be based to a greater extent than previously on more rapid, clear-cut measures against the men involved and better support for the victims.

Sexual harassment in working life, schools and institutions of higher education continues to be a major problem. More attention must be focused on this form of violence than at present and legislative provisions and sanctions must have more impact.

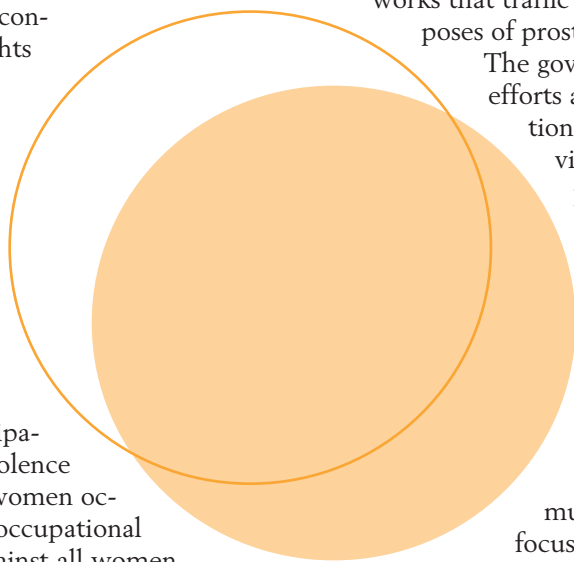
Prostitution in Sweden is regarded as a form of sexualised violence by men against women. Sweden has a responsibility to women and children who are victims of prostitution and trafficking. The basic driving force behind this form of trafficking – the factor which makes it economically feasible – is the demand generated by men for women and children for purposes of prostitution and sexual exploitation. If men did not consider

that they had the right to buy and sexually exploit women and children, prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes would not occur. The criminalisation in 1999 of the purchase of sexual services constitutes implicit recognition that prostitution not only amounts to sexual exploitation of women and children, but is also a serious social problem with damaging consequences for the individual victims and for society as a whole. The fight against trafficking in women for sexual purposes must be waged on three fronts: preventive measures, assistance to and protection of women and children who have been trafficked, and criminal sanctions for the groups and networks that traffic in women and children for purposes of prostitution.

The government has long prioritised efforts at national, regional and international level to combat all forms of violence by men against women, prostitution and trafficking in women for sexual purposes. If these are to be comprehensive and effective, measures must be adopted across the policy spectrum. The ultimate objective is to completely eradicate violence committed by men against women.

Work at international level must continue, with particular focus on trafficking and prostitution.

The Swedish government considers that efforts to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, should be undertaken in cooperation with other countries, and that best results are achieved through cross-border collaboration.



## Men and gender equality

“The fish are the last to discover the ocean,” as US sociologist and researcher into men and masculinity Michael Kimmel often points out when attempting to bring home to men the realisation that in the context of the gender power system, they *are* the norm and have always been so. Efforts to promote gender equality have long focused on women, the subordinate sex in this system. But equality is about *women and men* having the *same* rights, responsibilities and opportunities. The creation of a gender equal society will not be achieved unless men *and* women work together to transform the conditions that govern the lives of both sexes.

Men must acknowledge that existing relations of power serve to perpetuate an undemocratic system which affects all members of society. By making men and gender equality a priority policy area, the government is seeking to emphasise the importance of this recognition.

The inclusion of men in gender equality work raises issues which are furnishing new insights into the future development of gender equality. Many men do not recognise themselves in descriptions of them by members of the feminist movement. But a growing interest in gender equality among men has put new perspectives on the issue.

What is expected of men in contemporary society is revealed in expressions like “the primacy of the male norm”, “the hegemonic masculinity”, or “the male stereotype”. It is partly in response to these expectations that women and men show divergent behaviour patterns that develop at an early age and persist throughout life – “from the cradle to the grave”. It is because of these expectations that men enjoy greater privileges in terms of power and higher pay, even as these benefits limit the range of options open to them. Thus, men find it difficult to break into areas traditionally defined as ‘female’ occupations. Where they do so, however, they often rise to managerial positions fairly rapidly or end up performing duties traditionally defined as ‘male’ – as a result of the same expectations.

Violence committed by men against women is the ultimate consequence of the values inherent in a society characterised by male dominance and female subordination. Although gender-based power structures will assume different forms depending on levels of awareness in a given culture, all of them embody traditional values of some kind and perpetuate the existing order. When implementing policy in this area, male values must be called into question and critically examined. Research into men and masculinity will help increase our knowledge of the subject and is an important factor in efforts to bring about change. More men must be actively engaged in gender equality work and be prepared to openly oppose violence committed by men against women if we are to achieve a gender equal society.

When the present gender-based power structure has been dismantled, the existing order – under which men enjoy a shorter life expectancy than women, are responsible for most of the crimes committed, perform less well at school, are behind most of the ongoing destruction of the environment and perceive themselves as victims of gender discrimination if they differ – will come to an end.

It is issues such as these that the government aims to use as a basis for its efforts – to which it has also given priority – to involve men in gender equality work. The government intends to pursue these issues and take active steps to ensure that the questions and problems arising in connection with men and masculinity, as well as the issues relating to violence committed by men against women, are raised and discussed in international forums.



## Sexualisation of the public sphere

The increasing use of women's bodies to draw attention to and sell goods or services is testimony to the growing sexualisation of modern society. Women and girls are objectified and sexualised in advertisements, in the mass media and on the internet. Men are also portrayed in these media in ways that reflect prevailing gender prejudices, thus helping to create and perpetuate male stereotypes.

Every day we are deluged by the media as a whole with images and messages equating masculinity with power and femininity with subordination and passivity. This is a worrying development which poses a serious obstacle to the achievement of gender equality.

Recent advances in media, communication and information technology have meant vastly increased access to all forms of information and its indiscriminate dissemination among people of all age groups, on underground trains and buses, in the streets and other public places and in virtually every Swedish home. Content which used to be difficult to find – like pornography – is now almost impossible to avoid. Pornographic sites on the Internet normalise the sexual exploitation by men of women and children.

Efforts by central government and other authorities to promote gender equality are being undermined by the dissemination of sexualised images and the exploitation of women in pornographic representations. Not even children are spared. The marketing practices used to advertise fashions for children and young people are modelled directly on those employed in adult fashion promotion. With its overt

sexual references and strong erotic undertones, the imagery ascribes contradictory and unfamiliar roles to children.

Although no clear-cut connection has been established between the content of such media messages and its effect on the public, constant exposure to these images clearly contributes to their normalisation, to a blunting of sensibilities and the dangerous

prospect of growing inured to sexual oppression, harassment and sexualised violence. The situation gives cause for concern and a great deal more knowledge is needed.

## Action plan for the current term of office

The following is a brief summary of the measures set out in the government's report on gender equality, (*Jämt och ständigt* Skr. 2002/03:140). The summary is divided into policy areas. These are used in a number of administrative contexts, including the budgetary process.

### Efficient and effective government administration

#### *Personnel policy development*

The government aims to intensify personnel policy work in an effort to increase gender equality in this area. Efforts to ensure equal scope for promotion and development and reduce unwarranted pay differentials between women and men will continue. Measures must be followed by corresponding action at government agency level.

#### *Government powers of appointment*

The government intends to include in its annual report to the Swedish Riksdag (parliament) a statement on the number and percentage of women and men employed as agency heads, e.g. directors-general, county governors and museum directors, as well as the total number employed in each category.

#### *Ethical rules for civil servants*

In the government's view, ethical matters should be continually raised and discussed by government agencies in order to enhance awareness of the role and responsibilities of government employees. Such efforts are particularly relevant in light of the adoption of the Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services (*Sexköpslagen*).

#### *Public procurement*

The government intends to evaluate the use of anti-discrimination clauses in agency procurement contracts with a view to implementing public procurement measures aimed at strengthening gender equality.

#### *Development of official statistics*

The government has commissioned Statistics Sweden to compile a comprehensive analysis and appraisal of existing gender equality statistics in terms of scope and volume. The government will decide, on the basis of this assessment, whether

the provision on gender-disaggregated statistics in the Official Statistics Ordinance (*Statistikförordningen*) requires further definition.

### Tax administration and collection

The government intends to focus on gender equality issues in a forthcoming evaluation of the impact of various tax regulations.

### The judicial system

#### *Measures against child marriage*

The government intends to propose measures aimed at preventing child marriages and forced marriages.

### The police service

#### *Greater knowledge and awareness*

The government is considering proposals aimed at making the police service more aware of conditions for women and men in society.

#### *Recruitment to the Police College*

The government is monitoring recruitment of police trainees. Training should be designed to attract more women recruits to the police service.

#### *Recruitment of senior women police officers*

The government is closely following the current rise in the number of senior women police officers.

### The prosecution service

In the government's view, the high percentage of women public prosecutors should be reflected in the number of women in senior positions in the prosecution service.

### The courts

#### *Recruitment of judges*

The government will actively seek to increase the percentage of women senior judges.

#### *Training*

Training within the judiciary on gender equality issues will be stepped up.

#### *Treatment of offenders*

The government is closely monitoring the work of the National Prison and Probation Administra-

tion in the gender equality field. These include measures aimed at agency personnel and efforts to rehabilitate offenders convicted of violence against women.

## **Criminal law**

### *Sex offences*

The government is currently considering proposals to change existing penalties for sex offences.

### *Trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes*

The government is currently considering proposals to extend criminalisation of trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes.

### *Improved protection for women and children exposed to violence and sexual abuse*

The government is considering a proposal designed to strengthen protection for women and children in danger of becoming victims of violence and sexual abuse.

## **Foreign and security policy**

The government intends to step up efforts to highlight gender equality aspects of its foreign and security policy.

## **International development cooperation**

The government will continue to take active steps to bolster the gender perspective in international development cooperation.

## **Cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe**

The government intends to further strengthen and broaden its efforts to promote gender equality in this policy area. Measures include knowledge enhancement within relevant authorities and cooperation partners in Sweden and cooperation countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

## **Integration policy**

The government intends to strengthen the gender equality aspects of its integration policy. Efforts will include the introduction of vigorous measures aimed at ensuring that girls and young women at risk of honour-related violence have access to sheltered accommodation.

## **Metropolitan policy**

The government intends to strengthen the gender-equality aspects of its metropolitan policy by making these concerns an integral part of the management by objectives process.

## **Migration policy**

### *Deferred adjudication of immigration and asylum cases*

The government intends to evaluate the amendments (approved on 1 July, 2000) to the Aliens Act (*Utlänningslagen* 1989:529) concerning the granting of residence permits on grounds of links to Sweden.

### *Refugee status for persecution on the grounds of sex or sexual orientation*

The government intends to propose appropriate legislative amendments to enable people who have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their sex or sexual orientation to be regarded as refugees.

### *Personnel training in issues relating to women's grounds for asylum at agencies responsible for aliens*

The government is monitoring agencies responsible for aliens to establish whether and to what extent women's need for protection in the asylum process is being addressed.

## **Health and medical care policy**

The government is anxious to ensure that knowledge and awareness of conditions for women and men in the health and medical care sector is disseminated by the authorities responsible for the services as part of continuing professional development programmes, and that this knowledge is applied in practice. It is vital that a gender perspective be an integral part of the common basic value system. General policy and mission statements should therefore emphasise awareness of gender equality issues and concerns during the reception, care and treatment of patients.

## **Public health**

The government intends to place gender equality issues and concerns at the centre of future public health measures.

## Child policy

The government intends to further highlight gender considerations in connection with its efforts to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, i.e. seek to ensure that girls as well as boys are guaranteed the rights laid down in the Convention in accordance with their respective needs and abilities.

## Policies for the disabled

The government intends to further extend support for knowledge enhancement measures and continuing professional development programmes in municipal and country councils in line with its policies for the disabled and the need to address conditions for men and women.

## Policies for the elderly

The government intends to introduce a gender perspective in its policies for the elderly in an effort to ensure that women and men receive the same levels and quality of care.

## Social services policy

The government is considering measures aimed at strengthening gender equality in the social services.

## Compensation in the event of incapacity for work

The government intends to review the current state of knowledge with regard to gender-related disparities in connection with sick leave and, on the basis of its findings, propose areas where new research should be initiated and encouraged. It will also be considering proposals on the elimination of unwarranted gender-related disparities in connection with assessments by local social insurance offices for rehabilitation programmes.

## Economic family policy

### *Parental insurance inquiry from a parental and child perspective*

The government intends to appoint a committee of inquiry to consider ways in which the parental insurance scheme can be made more flexible and further facilitate access by children to both parents.

### *Changes to the parental insurance scheme*

The government intends to raise income tax for parental insurance when government finances

permit. It also intends to propose a rise in the minimum parental insurance benefit.

## Labour market policy

### *Gender-segregated labour market*

The government has appointed a committee of inquiry on gender segregation in the labour market.

## Working life policy

### *Commission for the National Mediation Office*

The government has instructed the National Mediation Office to confer with parties in labour market – in consultation with the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman – on matters of gender equality in connection with pay negotiations.

### *Greater security of employment for people on parental leave*

The government is considering proposals aimed at enhancing employment security for employees on parental leave.

### *Right to full-time employment*

The government intends to appoint a committee of inquiry to examine the possibility of introducing the right to full-time employment.

### *Fixed-term employment contracts*

The government is considering proposals to deal with problems in connection with fixed-term employment contracts.

## Gender equality policy

### *Gender equality policy inquiry*

The government is to appoint a committee of inquiry to evaluate the objectives, direction, organisation and impact of its gender equality policies. The committee is to submit proposals on objectives and outcome indicators for gender equality policies, assess the role and tasks of public authorities in this area and submit proposals on the future organisation and direction of gender equality work.

### *Mainstreaming gender equality in the Government Offices*

An action plan for gender equality integration in the Government Offices will be drawn up.

### *A gender equality perspective in all policy areas*

The government has decided to conduct a gender equality analysis of all policy areas with a view to defining objectives and outcome indicators.

### *Gender equality in the budgetary process*

The government aims to give greater prominence to the gender perspective in the budgetary process.

### *Evaluation of the analysis of the impact of gender equality policy in committee reports*

The government will commission an evaluation of the committee's analysis of the impact of gender equality policy.

### *Representation on governing boards and committees*

During its term of office the government intends to evaluate the methods currently used to expedite the work of promoting equal representation of women and men on governing boards and committees.

### *Equal pay*

The government will propose a national action plan aimed at the elimination of gender-discriminating pay differentials. The effect of recent amendments tightening the Gender Equality Act will be evaluated.

### *Violence committed by men against women*

The government will continue its efforts to counter violence committed by men against women. A special expert will be appointed to evaluate the common agency tasks defined in the government bill on violence against women (*Kvinnofridspropositionen*) from a gender-power perspective.

A special investigator will also be appointed to look into the reconstitution of the National Center for Battered and Raped Women as a national institute. The inquiry will also consider the question of a national emergency helpline for victims of male violence.

### *Prostitution and trafficking in human beings*

The government is to propose a national action plan for the continued fight against prostitution and trafficking in human beings, especially women and children.

### *Sexualisation of the public sphere*

The government intends to stimulate efforts to build up a body of knowledge and expertise on the sexualisation of the public sphere and to appoint a group of experts to address related issues.

### *Men and gender equality*

The government intends to make further efforts to highlight the issue of men and gender equality in the context of international cooperation.

### *Continued efforts in connection with gender-based labelling*

The government will give further consideration to inquiry committee proposals on gender-based labelling of products and services.

## **Education policy**

### *The need for leadership with a gender perspective*

The government regards the need for leadership in this area – a guiding influence imbued with a conscious gender perspective and a determination to change existing gender inequalities – as a vital issue for the authority responsible for policy implementation.

### *Skewed gender distribution in top jobs at institutions of higher education*

The government has recently proposed measures aimed at rectifying skewed gender distribution among vice-chancellors and heads of universities and university colleges, and intends to closely monitor efforts by these institutions to bring about change in these areas.

### *Gender distribution at staff level*

The government intends to closely follow efforts by schools and institutions of higher education to rectify skewed gender distribution at staff level within the entire education system.

### *Discrimination and abusive or offensive treatment*

The government considers that pre-schools, schools, adult education institutions and universities and university colleges must endeavour to ensure that people of different origins and backgrounds are included in the life of the community. In practice, this means combating all forms of abusive or offensive treatment, including sexual harassment.

### *Girls and boys at risk*

The government wishes to underline the importance of effective and extended dissemination of knowledge and awareness about conditions for vulnerable girls and boys including instructive examples. In the government's view, it is vital that measures and progress in this area be closely followed up.

### *Special investigator to propose legislation on sexual harassment in pre-schools, schools and adult education institutions*

The government plans to commission a special investigator to propose legislation prohibiting discrimination in the school system.

### *Equal Treatment of Students in Higher Education Act*

The government aims to closely follow efforts at universities and university colleges to comply with the provisions of the Act concerning Equal Treatment of Students in Higher Education (*Lagen om likabehandling av studenter i högskolan*).

### *Student welfare inquiry*

The government has instructed the Committee of Inquiry on Student Welfare (S 2002:13) to assess the feasibility of introducing a child supplement benefit for students with children.

### *Quality in the education system*

The government considers that follow up and evaluation of quality in education must be strengthened throughout the system, from pre-schools to institutions of higher education. Gender equality is a significant issue in the context of ongoing efforts to achieve quality goals in education. In the government's view, municipal councils should take account of gender equality concerns when assessing quality standards in the school system. Consideration should also be given to gender issues in pre-schools and school-age child care when these, too, become subject to quality accounting requirements.

### *The need for statistical material and quality indicators*

The government has instructed the National Agency for Education to develop standard indicators for quality accounting in pre-schools, schools and adult education institutions. Each area of activity has its own distinctive characteristics, and indicators – covering aspects such as democratic values, gender equality, abusive and offensive be-

haviour, bullying and pupil and parent participation – should be designed accordingly.

### *The need for knowledge and competence*

Staff who are knowledgeable and competent with respect to gender equality issues and concerns are vital to the quality and development of pre-school, school and adult education. Teachers play a key role in meeting official requirements and in making lifelong learning possible.

### *Gender equality in pre-school*

The government intends to present new proposals aimed at stimulating and supporting efforts to speed up realisation of gender equality aims and objectives at pre-school level.

### *National head teacher training programmes*

The government does not consider that current guidelines and objectives for government training programmes for head teachers are clearly defined with respect to gender equality. These should therefore be clarified by the Swedish Agency for School Improvement. In the government's view the responsible authority should also make it clear that knowledge and awareness of gender equality concerns and issues are essential to democratic, inquiring and communicative leadership.

### *Training of educational resource staff in gender equality and gender issues*

The government has allocated funds for the training of educational resource staff in gender equality and gender concerns. The initiative is aimed at promoting understanding, awareness and competence in this area and at enhancing the quality of pre-school and school activities and education with respect to gender equality. The government aims to have at least one trained person in every Swedish municipality by 2004.

### *Gender and gender equality concerns in higher education*

The government wishes to emphasise the importance of gender and gender equality studies in higher education and is considering new proposals aimed at encouraging the inclusion of gender and gender equality issues in courses of instruction.

### *Performance, choice and gender*

Most gender equality measures being adopted in the education system are aimed at girls and women. The government considers that more efforts and measures in this area should focus on boys

and men in an effort to break away from the traditional gender-based behaviour patterns and roles that, for example, lie behind poorer performance by male students and gender-linked subject choices. Gender inequality limits the ability of both sexes to realise their full potential as human beings, consistent with their own abilities.

### *Choice and recruitment*

In the government's view, there is a pressing need to combat systems at every level in the education system that perpetuate gender-based stereotypes and attitudes.

### *Flexible learning*

In the government's view, flexible learning can be used to promote gender equality and thereby increase the number of men taking part in local authority adult education.

### *Validation*

The ministerial communication Validation, etc.: Continued development of adult learning (Ds 2003:23 – *Validering m.m. – fortsatt utveckling av vuxnas lärande*) proposes that a commission be appointed for a four-year period to undertake and support the development of validation procedures outside the higher education system. Validation involves the recognition and documentation of a person's real knowledge and skills. The government intends to report back to the Swedish Riksdag in connection with this issue.

### *Guidance*

The ministerial communication Validation, etc. Continued development of adult learning (Ds 2003:23) also proposes that the National Agency for Education be commissioned to scrutinise local authority efforts to provide the public school system with suitable guidance. The government will report back to the Swedish Riksdag in connection with this issue.

## **Cultural policy**

### *The gender dimension in museum activities*

The government aims to continue efforts to strengthen the gender dimension in museum activities.

### *Better conditions for women film-makers*

The government intends to continue efforts to improve conditions for women film-makers.

### *Conditions for artists*

The government has requested a report on possible disparities in conditions for men and women who work as artists.

## **Youth policy**

### *Review of current youth policy*

The government is to review its current policies for young people. One of the aims of the review is to mainstream gender equality concerns in this policy area.

### *Appropriations for leisure and recreation from a gender equality perspective*

The government will continue to encourage efforts by municipal authorities to analyse the distribution of funds for leisure and recreation activities from a gender equality perspective.

## **Policy on grassroots organisations**

### *Grants for sport*

The government intends to continue efforts to ensure that grassroots organisations are accessible to all on equal terms. Girls and boys, women and men must have equal access to popular sports organisations.

### *Support for organisations*

The government aims to establish whether and how successfully popular, grassroots organisations have been mainstreaming gender equality concerns. It will also look into ways to strengthen support for women's organisations.

## **Housing policy**

Prominence must be given to gender equality concerns in the forthcoming planning and building legislation review.

## **Environment policy**

### *Agenda 21 and Habitat*

The government is seeking to mainstream gender equality concerns in Agenda 21 and Habitat.

### *Gender equality aspects in the nature conservation field*

The government is considering measures to bolster

the gender equality perspective in local authority and local nature conservation. More knowledge is needed to ensure effective integration of gender equality concerns into nature conservation work.

### *Environment and health*

The government is considering intensified measures to ensure that women and men are accorded equal consideration when food is assessed for health risks. Research into the effects on both women and men of chemical substances in food must be intensified.

### *The UN Environment Programme (UNEP)*

The government will actively promote efforts to strengthen the gender equality orientation of the UN Environment Programme.

### *Gender equality indicators after Johannesburg*

The government will actively encourage the production of gender equality indicators and their use in connection with UN efforts to promote sustainable development.

### *Ten year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production*

The government intends to commission the Environmental Protection Agency to study the effects on women and men of environmental policy instruments.

### *Other programmes for international environmental cooperation*

The government intends to continue highlighting gender equality issues in the context of international environmental cooperation.

## **Transport policy**

The government intends to establish intermediate goals and indicators as part of its efforts to achieve the objective of a gender equal transport system.

## **IT, telecommunications and the postal service**

The government has announced preparations in connection with the appointment of an IT commission which, among other things, will be expected to adopt measures aimed at mainstreaming gender equality issues and concerns.

## **Trade and industry policy**

### *Representation in the enterprise sector*

The government must seek to promote a more gender equal enterprise sector and adopt suitable measures to that end. The government will also examine the feasibility and suitability of framing legislation aimed at improving women's representation on company boards. Efforts will be made to improve statistics on gender distribution on company boards and at management level.

### *Promoting women's entrepreneurship*

The government plans to allocate funds to promote women's entrepreneurship. It will also seek to ensure that information and guidance in this sphere is suitably adapted to the abilities and needs of both women and men.

### *Gender-disaggregated statistics on entrepreneurship*

The government will promote the production of sex disaggregated statistics on entrepreneurship.

## **Animal policy**

The government has commissioned the Board of Agriculture to carry out a survey of structural changes within the veterinary profession. The government also intends to submit proposals on the further development of the horse sector.

## **Sami policy**

The government intends to focus on ways of further strengthening gender equality in the course of ongoing work in connection with the report of the committee of inquiry on the Sami parliament.

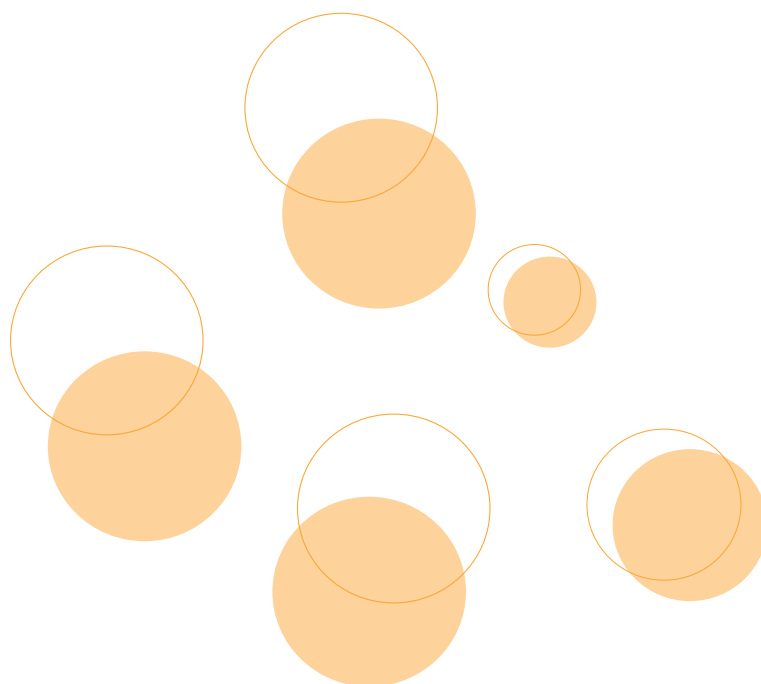
## **Democracy**

The government intends to step up efforts to mainstream gender equality issues and concerns in its policies for democratic development.

## **Minorities**

The government intends to strengthen the gender equality perspective in the minorities' policy area.





REGERINGSKANSLIET

**Ministry of Industry, Employment  
and Communications, Sweden**

S-103 33 Stockholm

[www.industry.ministry.se](http://www.industry.ministry.se)