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NGO-Coordination post Beijing Switzerland

## **Shadow report by NGO Coordination post Beijing Switzerland on Switzerland's 4th and 5th country report Briefing Lunch 1st November 2016**

I'm pleased to speak to you as representative of the NGO-Coordination post Beijing Switzerland. The underrepresentation in decisionmaking bodies, the remaining stereotypes, unequal pay, the unfair taxsystem, poverty, violence against girls and women are the issues that we feel need to be implemented most urgently in order to achieve de facto equality or that still require major changes. Today we focus on the key issues

### **Equal pay, stereotypes and underrepresentation (Art. 4, 5 und 11 CEDAW)**

In the world of work women still face wide-ranging discrimination. Little has changed in terms of the unequal distribution of power and money, of paid and unpaid work. Women are affected by unequal pay as soon as they enter the world of work. These inexplicable differences in pay for women entering the world of work are clearly pure discrimination; career breaks and performance are not plausible reasons. Inequality of pay is a very important issue, as it also has a detrimental impact for the decision who of the parents works how much and on women's position in the social security system. Their working lives are characterised by unpaid work, career interruptions or part-time work. 78% of part-time employees are women. 43% of part-time employees work hours that amount to less than 50% of a full-time position, which puts their financial independence and old-age pension at risk. When they start a family, this situation is exacerbated by the classic trap which often is chosen because of stereotypes and unequal pay: women work less and men work more. A wage gap thus emerges which is then impossible to close. The aim is to achieve equal pay and transparency in pay-related matters.

We ask for following recommendations:

- ***Companies with more than 50 employees must be required by law to carry out wage monitoring and publish the results as the Federal Council proposed in October 2016.***
- ***All companies and administrations must prove that men and women are equal in terms of their pay. If pay equality does not exist, corrective measures and penalties must be defined.***
- ***A tripartite wage commission that carries out spot checks must be appointed. The steps must be the same as with the Competition Commission (COMCO): monitor, investigate, impose penalties.***

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Prevailing stereotypes are one of the fundamental problems that still stand in the way of gender equality in Switzerland. This is illustrated by the fact that it is still difficult to reconcile work and family life, that women still have to deal with multiple responsibilities and that the majority of women who are in employment work part-time and/or in the low-wage sector. When it comes to who is primarily responsible for family-related tasks or who assumes a leading role in working or political life, the stereotypes still ring true. Tackling stereotypes in education, career choices and the media will remain key to breaking down fundamental inequalities in society.

Equality between women and men in the media in Switzerland is still lacking in structural terms and in terms of content. This is problematic, as advertisers and the media play a decisive role in cementing gender stereotypes.

We ask for following recommendations:

- ***In order to avoid communicating stereotypical role models, an information and education strategy for media professionals is needed, comprising guidelines, quality criteria, professional rules and other monitoring mechanisms for gender-neutral media coverage.***
- ***Schoolbooks and the media must consistently ensure that they present women and men in a way that does not foster stereotypes.***
- ***The media and advertising must break with gender stereotypes and refrain from using sexist advertisements. In addition to the existing commission, other institutional instruments are required.***
- ***The Federal Act on Radio and Television must contain more specific statements regarding the depiction of genders and must explicitly refer to the representation of women.***
- ***Intensive measures must be continued to promote equal representation of women in all areas and at hierarchical levels of the media. It is particularly important to introduce specific female quotas (min. 33%) in all administrative, programming, supervisory and regulatory bodies.***

Women continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions in administration, the private sector and politics. The under-representation can no longer be attributed to a lack of qualifications. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes are widespread and are also reflected in career choices.

All voluntary attempts to increase the number of women on administrative and executive boards have failed to have the desired effect. Measures are discussed briefly, but never implemented in a sufficiently systematic manner. This is also illustrated by the reform of the legislation on companies limited by shares, which merely aims to see a minimum of 30% of either gender on the board of directors of major listed companies and only 20% at executive board level and does not go far enough, as it does not stipulate obligatory quotas or the option of imposing sanctions. Binding ratios are the only way to achieve gender equality and to speed up a change in mindset.

We ask for following recommendations:

- ***Both genders must be represented equally at all management and decision-making levels in companies listed on the stock exchange, in companies with more than 250 employees, in state-owned enterprises or in companies with public shareholders.***
- ***Compelling control mechanisms must be introduced to achieve these goals and effective legal sanctions (ranging from fines to the dissolution of the body in question [administrative or executive board]) must be imposed if companies fail to achieve them in order to speed up the process of implementation.***

Vivian Fankhauser-Feitknecht, president of the NGO-Coordination post Beijing Switzerland and executive member of alliance F, alliance of Swiss women's organisations