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NGO-Coordination post Beijing Switzerland

Oral Statement 30th October 2016
Shadow report by NGO Coordination post Beijing Switzerland
On the 4th/5th Country Report of Switzerland on the implementation of CEDAW

The NGO Coordination post Beijing Switzerland comprises roughly 30 organizations, including umbrella organizations, that cover the entire political and social spectrum in Switzerland, and represents about a third of the women in Switzerland. In collaboration with other twelve organizations, we examined Switzerland's country report and the current situation of women in Switzerland and produced a shadow report.

CEDAW still isn't reality in Switzerland. Every single girl and woman, member of a minority or not, resident or foreigner, experiences discrimination and suffers because of that.

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. We all know that different things have to play together or one depends on the other to achieve equality of women and men. Today we focus on the key issues **unequal pay and poverty**.

Poverty is a female issue in Switzerland, as it disproportionately affects single mothers, elderly women and families with a large number of children.

Article 11 – unequal pay

Women are affected by unequal pay as soon as they enter the world of work. Even explicable differences in pay can involve discrimination against women.

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.

- ***Companies must be required by law to carry out wage monitoring and publish the results.***
- ***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.***

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Mitgliedorganisationen: alliance F, Bund schweizerischer jüdischer Frauenorganisationen BSJF, CEVI Schweiz, Coordination romande Suivi de Pékin, Demokratische Juristinnen Schweiz DJS, Die feministische Friedensorganisation cfd, Evangelische Frauen Schweiz EFS, Fachstelle Frauenhandel und Frauenmigration FIZ, Frauen für den Frieden, Frauenrat für Aussenpolitik FrAu, Friedensfrauen Weltweit, IAMANEH Schweiz, Juristinnen Schweiz, Pfadibewegung Schweiz PBS, Schweiz. Bäuerinnen und Landfrauenverband SBLV, Schweizer FrauenSynode, Schweiz. Kath. Frauenbund SKF, Schweizer Syndikat Medienschaftender SSM, Schweiz. Verband alleinerziehender Mütter + Väter SVAMV, Schweiz. Verband für Frauenrechte adf-svf, SP Frauen Schweiz, SWONET, TERRE DES FEMMES, Verband Christkatholischer Frauen Schweiz VCF, Verband Wirtschaftsfrauen Schweiz, Women's World Summit Foundation WWSF

- ***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.***

Article 11 and 13 – family balance and poverty

The ongoing discrimination in **child maintenance law** is specifically responsible for the poverty of single mothers and their children. 2015 legislators did not introduce the issue of income deficit, a rule that would require the shortfall in income to be equally distributed between the parents if their earnings are not enough to live on after separation or divorce – as proposed by the CEDAW Committee in 2009. As a result, the person responsible for caring for the children – which is generally the mother – must continue to bear the burden of this shortfall on its own and, if necessary, apply for social welfare.

- ***Measures must be taken to help single mothers integrate into the world of work. This requires a shift to the modern “carer-worker” model, which accounts for all ways of life and types of family and not only the two-parent family model.***
- ***The means-tested child allowance proposed by the Federal Council must be introduced as quickly as possible and designed in such a way that it replaces the missing child maintenance if the earnings of one parent are not enough to live on after separation or divorce, thus alleviating the one-sided burden of the shortfall on the single parent.***
- ***Social welfare bodies across Switzerland must waive the obligation for people to pay back support they receive when facing financial difficulties due to family commitments.***

Article 11 and 13 – social security and poverty

Social security, in particular **old-age pensions**, is linked to gainful employment. People doing unpaid care work and part-time workers are disadvantaged by current social security legislation, putting them far more at risk of poverty in their old age.

A recently published study shows that the old-age pensions of women in Switzerland are 37 % lower than those of men. That's almost Fr. 20'000.-- a year! The study identifies a couple of factors that influence the pension gap: role-sharing in couples and families, position of women in the labor market, but also changes in the pension system. The pension gap will get smaller if women and men are given equal opportunities on the labour market, while also ensuring adequate care for children at affordable prices.

- ***Old-age pension plans must take into account the working lives of people doing unpaid care work to avoid poverty in old age. The value of parenting and childcare credits, which help provide for old age, must be increased.***
- ***Raising the retirement age for women from 64 to 65 must be combined with advances in equal pay to avoid further discrimination against women.***

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