**In contribution to the report on the relation between “the right to employment” and women’s empowerment to be submitted at the 34th session of the UN Human Rights Council:**

**KEY SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT IN TURKEY**

**Fact Sheet - September 2016**

**Legal Framework**

* The New Labor Act which came into force on 10th June 2003 stipulates that no discrimination shall be applicable in employer-employee relations regarding fundamental human rights by no means including sex.
* With the amendment made to the **Income Tax Law** in 2007, tax exemption was introduced for household income generated by women from the sale of their own products at fairs, festivals, charity sales or places temporarily designated by public agencies and organizations.
* With the Law No.6111 coming into effect in 2011, affirmative actions are introduced for women in order to provide them with new employment opportunities; in this framework, the Unemployment Insurance Fund shall pay the insurance premiums of women for 12 to 54 months conditional upon specific terms, if they start working as of the age of 18. 142.892 women have benefited from the incentives concerned as of December 2015.
* In pursuant to the Law No.5510 on Social Security and General Health Insurance, those working less than 30 days a month or not on a full-time basis and not pensioned on their own insurance shall be entitled to voluntary insurance.
* On 10 September 2014, a provision regarding women working as household employees was inserted in the Law Nr.5510. Accordingly, the social security situation of those working as insured household employees as of 1st April 2015 shall be considered based on whether their monthly employment is shorter or longer than 10 days. Those working less than 10 days a month shall be considered under coverage of [insurance of occupational accidents and professional diseases](http://tureng.com/tr/turkce-ingilizce/insurance%20of%20occupational%20accidents%20and%20professional%20diseases), their premiums shall be paid by their employers and the insured employees shall be entitled to paying long term (retirement) and general health insurance premiums until the end of the following month, if they choose to. As for those working 10 days or longer in a month, premiums shall be paid by their employers within the framework of simple employment practices.
* The condition that women farmers engaged in agricultural activities on their own behalf be heads of their households so that they are considered under insurance coverage has been abolished.
* “Heavy and Hazardous Works Regulation” was repealed by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy. Hence, the jobs for which women were not previously allowed to be employed due to their heavy and hazardous nature according to the regulation have turned into opportunities of new work environments for women.
* The Prime Ministerial Circular No.2010/14 on ‘’Promotion of Women’s Employment and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men’’ imposes duties and responsibilities upon all the public institutions to strengthen the socio-economic status of women, promote gender equality in social life and promote women’s employment and ensure equal pay for work of equal value, to achieve the goals of sustainable economic growth and social development. Accordingly, a National Monitoring and Coordination Board for Women’s Employment was established within the Ministry of Labor and Social Security.
* In pursuant to the Law effective as of 10th February 2016, the following arrangements are in place regarding the personal rights of women employees and parents:
* ***The unused periods of maternity leave shall be considered while calculating gradual civil service promotion.***
* ***Provisions regarding the half-time employment rights of employees resulting from childbirth:***
* The periods of unpaid maternity leave shall be considered while calculating gradual civil service promotion.
* The workers shall be entitled to paid half-time work for 2 months for the first child, 4 months for the second and up to 6 months for the subsequent ones, starting from the end of the maternity leave and on the condition that the children are alive after childbirth. Two additional months shall be added on the mentioned period for each multiple birth.
* In case of bearing a disabled child, the employee shall be entitled to paid half-time work for a period of 12 months.
* The remuneration and premiums of the workers for the half-time employment periods shall be covered by the employers.
* Considering the half-time compensation for the employees in the periods they do not work; the daily wage shall be equal to the gross amount of daily minimum wage and be covered by the unemployment fund.
* Civil servants and workers shall be entitled to start their unpaid period of maternity leave once their period of paid half-time working ends.
* ***Provisions regarding part-time employment of working parents:***
* **A part time working alternative shall be available for the civil servant and worker parents until their each child reaches compulsory primary school age. Depending on the human resources planning process in the public and private sectors, either parent shall be able to choose this alternative once for each child**.
* ***Provisions regarding the rights to leave in case of premature childbirth and decease of mother for workers:***
* In case of premature childbirth, maternity leave of female civil servants shall be extended as long as the period of early childbirth.
* Worker fathers shall be entitled to the periods of maternity leave not used due to maternal death after child delivery, just like the civil servant fathers.
* ***Provisions regarding the rights to leave in case of adopting children:***

Parents shall be entitled to the aforementioned periods of leave on a comparative basis in case of child adoption.

**Goals and Priorities regarding Women’s Employment**

Promotion of women’s labor force participation and employment is mentioned specifically among the objectives of “The Program on the Activation of Labor Market” which is one of The Priority Transformation Programs of the 10th Development Plan put into practice in 2013. Accordingly, at the end of the planning period, women’s labor force participation and employment rates are expected to be increased to 34.9 % and 31 %, respectively.

In the National Employment Strategy (2014-2023), women’s labor force participation is expected to reach up to 41% and the rate of informal employment to be reduced to 30% by 2023.

Moreover, the 65th Government Program declares as its basic objectives to promote empowerment of women individually and socially, provide them with access to higher quality education, promote their active roles in decision-making mechanisms, facilitate their access to labor market, provide them with social security and increase the number of female entrepreneurs. As far as women’s employment is concerned, reference is made to the following specific items:

* Sustainability of incentives introduced for employment of women
* Develop and implement a Women’s Entrepreneurship Program and facilitate women’s participation in business life
* Multiply awareness-raising programs to consolidate the perspective of equal opportunities for men ad women among the employees and employers
* Implement the policies for reconciliation of work and family life

**Activities carried out so far**

***The Project on Promotion of Women’s Access to Economic Opportunities***

A project called “Promotion of Women’s Access to Economic Opportunities” covering the period of 2012-2017 has been implemented by the General Directorate on the Status of Women of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and in cooperation with the World Bank. The aim of the project is to enable women to find jobs in better conditions, identify the factors that are likely to promote their access to labor market and their entrepreneurship, put forward problems faced by women in this field and formulate policies accordingly to address these issues in order to produce concrete solutions.

***Mom’s Job, My Future Project***

Under the cooperation protocol signed between Ministry of Family and Social Policies (ASPB) and the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology and Borusan Holding Inc. Co., “Mom’s Job, My Future Project” was brought to life with a view to establishing kindergartens in Organized Industrial Zones (OIZ). The Project aims to open kindergartens in a total of 10 OIZs until the end of 2019. For this purpose, kindergartens began to serve in OIZs in Adiyaman, Afyon and the construction and furnishing work of those in Balikesir and Malatya have been completed. The subsequent two are planned to be in service before the end of 2016.

***Painter Forewomen Project***

The Ministry of Family and Social Policy launched "Painter Forewomen Project (2016-2017)" in cooperation with Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) and Betek Paint and Chemical industry Inc. Co. (Betek Boya and Kimya San. A.Ş). The underlying objective of the project is to provide employment by helping women acquire vocational skills and knowledge in different sectors. In scope of the project, 250 women in 26 provinces are expected to be provided with trainings in 2016 and a total of 500 women will thus develop professional skills and vocational qualifications.

***Turkey's Engineer Girls Project***

The Ministry of Family and Social Policy materialized "Turkey's Engineer Girls Project (2016-2020)", in cooperation with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Limak Holding. The project aims to support girls desiring to be an engineer and enable them to serve as a model in their professions.

***World Economic Forum Gender Parity Task Force of Turkey “The Equality at Work Platform”***

The Gender Parity Task Force of Turkey was established at the meeting of the World Economic Forum held in Istanbul in June 2012 under the auspices of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and co-leadership of Sabanci Holding and Dogus Holding to minimize the gap in economic participation and opportunities in Turkey by reducing it down to 10% within 3 years. **At the end of 3 years, the goal was completely achieved with the gap being closed to stand at 10,9%.** The Task Force was subsequently transformed into "Equality at Work Platform" at the press launch meeting held in January 2013.

Moreover, plenty of women in Turkey have benefited from the entrepreneurship and employment-guaranteed courses and vocational and occupational counselling services provided by ISKUR in scope of its occupational training course program.

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization (KOSGEB) has carried out significant activities to promote women’s entrepreneurship. In this scope, **“Applied Entrepreneurship Trainings”** are organized and 46% of their participants were female. Likewise, the entrepreneurs who have just started a business are also provided with support in scope of KOSGEB’s Entrepreneur Support Program. The rate of support is higher for female entrepreneurs in scope of the practice of **“New Entrepreneur Support”** where 48% of the beneficiaries were female.

***Projects conducted by Ministry of Labor and Social Security***

* Project about improving the gender equality in the working life
* Project on risk groups in the working life (professional skill-building for women)
* Project on social integration of disadvantageous people and increasing their participation in the working life.