

Obstacles to Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Efforts in Ukraine

Impact of Austerity Measures and Stigmatisation of Organisations Working for Dialogue

Universal Periodic Review of Ukraine

Joint submission to the UPR Working Group 28th session (November 2017) by:

(in alphabetical order)

Alternative Youth Centre

Center for Social and Labour Research

Centre of the Future

Child Smile

East Donbas Regional Development Agency

Gender Dnipro

Theatre for Dialogue

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Submitted on 30 March 2017

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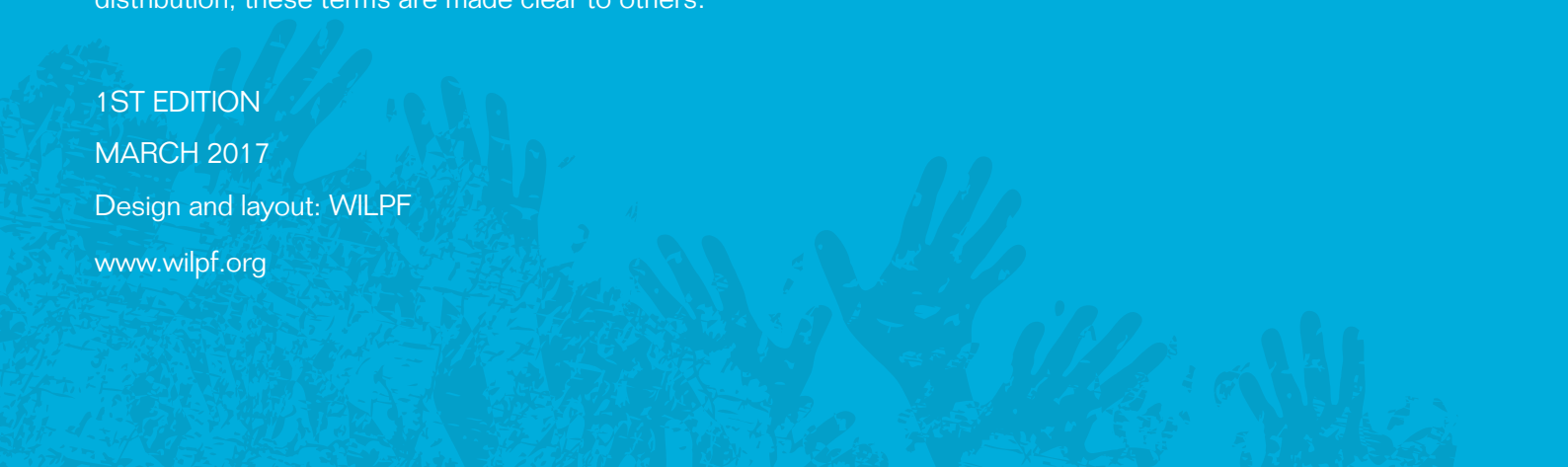
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¹ This submission was made on 30 March 2017.

I. Introduction

1. During the last two years, Ukraine has experienced considerable humanitarian consequences of the conflict in the east of the country, causing extensive suffering of civilians in the conflict area and throughout the country as a whole. Parts of the population of Ukraine are on the brink of survival. The narrowing of access to social services, arising from the armed conflict and macro-economic reforms linked to interventions by international financial institutions run against Ukraine's obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill women's equal human rights, without retrogression and using maximum available resources. Shifting the burden of care from the state to women and reducing women's access to paid work and livelihoods have significantly reduced the quality of life and safety of women.

2. This submission focuses on the obstacles to women's meaningful participation in Ukraine's peace efforts. Firstly, it draws attention to the stigmatization of organisations working for dialogue and cooperation, including women's human rights organisations. Secondly, it highlights violations of economic and social rights resulting from implementation of austerity measures relating to increased interventions by international financial institutions, mainly the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

3. The submission illustrates how the conditionalities linked to the funding provided by these institutions have disproportionately affected women and contributed to the feminization of poverty and the deepening of gender inequalities within the family and in society as a whole, thereby negatively impacting on women's ability to participate in decision-making processes. This is because firstly, women are among the primary beneficiaries of pro-social spending. For example, cutbacks in public health and social service expenditures rely on shifting the burden of care to women. Gendered social norms mean women are expected to compensate for reduced state support by spending more time to care for sick and elderly family members. This, in turn, also reduces the amount of time available for remunerated work. Secondly, due to the feminization of care in both paid and unpaid work, women tend to be employed in the sectors where most job cuts have taken place.

II. Women, Peace and Security

4. As per UPR II, Recommendation 97.52, Ukraine committed to increase the number of women in decision-making positions and to address the persisting wage gap between men and women. Austerity measures implemented in Ukraine run counter to this commitment.

5. The Ukraine launched its first National Action Plan (NAP) for Security Council resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) on 24 February 2016. The NAP aims at contributing towards the elimination of cultural barriers that hinder the full participation of women in all aspects of negotiations and resolution of conflicts and/or matters of peace and security at the national level.²

6. A key element of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security is participation of women and inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations,

² <http://peacewomen.org/action-plan/national-action-plan-ukraine> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

humanitarian planning, peace-keeping operations, and post conflict peace-building and governance. Participation means participation in every stage, in every part and every process, whether it be at the state level, in the community, or within the multilateral system. Women's participation in peace-building and prevention of conflicts is indeed among the pillar of actions of the Ukraine's NAP.³

7. The Ukraine NAP monitoring framework commits to developing analysis of practices and conditions of women's participation including on internal and external challenges (Task 1.3), as well as needs assessments for populations including in employment (Task 2.1) and social services (Task 2.2). It also commits to increasing women's participation in peace-building and peace-keeping, including in peace operations, peacekeeping, military-civil administrations in Donetsk and Lugansk oblast state, monitoring missions and international security organizations, and security and defense sectors (Task 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5). Fulfilling these commitments as well as realizing holistic action on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda requires overturning structural as well as direct obstacles and ensuring women's meaningful participation in institutions for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict from formal (track one) to community (track two or three) levels, including inclusive participation of women led civil society.

Enjoyment of economic and social rights: a necessary precondition to meaningful participation

8. One of the biggest inhibitors to women's participation is the lack of enjoyment of social and economic rights. If women do not have the economic resources to free them up to be able to be active participants in Ukraine's political life and peace and mediation efforts, to speak about women's meaningful participation is meaningless.

9. Therefore, addressing the disproportionate impact of austerity measures on women is crucial because the effective, meaningful and inclusive participation of women and women's organizations in preparations for a peace process, peace negotiations, post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building is intimately linked and interdependent with the protection and promotion of women's economic and social rights. Women will not be able to participate in peace negotiations if they struggle to meet the most basic needs for themselves and their families.

10. In order to address that impact effectively and develop gender-sensitive policies, gender-disaggregated data are essential. The statistical assessment of poverty by gender is limited in Ukraine, as the national methodology is targeted at households as units of measuring. Thus, the data on the well-being of individual household members cannot be disaggregated in terms of poverty. Based on the 2013 Household Survey, there are more female-headed households in Ukraine in most age groups, except for the population aged 25-39. A share of female-headed households is particularly large among population aged 65 and over (65 % of total households), reflecting the features of the sex-age composition of a population, with significant prevailing of women among elderly. There are also more women in the single-person households, constituting for more than 80% of such households among population aged 56 and

³ <http://peacewomen.org/action-plan/national-action-plan-ukraine> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

over.⁴

11. The poverty risks are increasing among rural population and residents of small settlements with poorly developed labour markets and lower incomes of employment. In terms of non-monetary criteria of poverty, rural residents also face multiple deprivations from access to basic services, infrastructure and education. The impact of IMF conditionalities is discussed in more detail later in this submission.

Recommendations

- gather gender-disaggregated data on enjoyment of women's economic and social rights, with a specific collection of disaggregated data on residents in rural areas and IDPs, including with regard to access to employment, health and social services, and education;
- update statistical data on the percentage of the population living in poverty, disaggregated by gender, age, number of children per household, number of single-parent households, rural/urban population;
- develop a gender indicator system to improve the collection of data in order to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at mainstreaming gender equality and enhancing women's enjoyment of their human rights; and
- collaborate with women's organisations that can assist in the collection of accurate data.

Stigmatisation of organisations working for dialogue and cooperation

12. The stigmatisation of organisations working for dialogue and cooperation is another obstacle to women's participation in peace efforts. Freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are necessary to allow civil society to play its part in constructive societal change. Negotiated agreements between conflict parties at state level can only be effectively implemented, and deliver sustainable peace in the longer term, on a basis of inter-community communication and cooperation.

13. Civil society actors engaging in dialogue across ethnic or national divides provide a valuable counter to violence and also sources of ideas and support for peace processes. As women play a much more prominent part in civil society initiatives for dialogue and cooperation than in official Track I peace negotiations, such activities also provide a valuable channel for feeding in the views of women from the community level as well as drawing on their skills and engagement to contribute to resolution of the conflict. They also provide a means to discuss the practical steps that will be needed to re-establish a peaceful and prosperous society once hostilities cease.

14. In Ukraine, local groups engaging in dialogue and cooperation, particularly cross-border,

⁴ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/24976/Country0gender0ent0for0Ukraine02016.pdf> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

are often subject to smear campaigns, being labeled as 'enemies of the state', 'traitors', 'pro-Russian' or 'pro-separatist'. Calls for civil society dialogue initiatives to be brought under the coordination and control of the government as, for example, in the video⁵ of an event with Hanna Hopko (parliament member) and representatives of Ukrainian NGOs, completely undermine the concept of civil society action. Dialogues bringing together representatives of civil society from Ukraine, Russia and the non-government controlled territories are portrayed as inherently dangerous and those engaging in such activities as either unwittingly, or wittingly, becoming agents of "the enemy".⁶

15. A number of these civil society dialogue initiatives have taken place under the aegis of the OSCE and have also included dialogue with the Office of Reforms in Ukraine and with other government authorities. Even here such activities are viewed with suspicion, and stigmatization often follows, hindering the work and making it more difficult to contribute to state efforts for constructive resolution of conflicts.

16. There are attempts to create a public opinion that dialogue processes initiated by civil society activists are outside the legal framework of Ukraine, that such dialogues contradict government policies and undermine state security. The dialogue between groups of citizens who live on opposite sides of the contact line does not contradict existing legislation; in fact, it is recommended by the recent Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers⁷.

17. Moreover, such dialogue is considered to be a part of the state policy for certain areas of Donetsk and Lugansk regions where public authorities temporarily cannot exercise their authority.

18. In particular, paragraph 13 of the action plan part of the above-mentioned regulation includes the following activities: "facilitation" of people's diplomacy "in order to maintain a constant dialogue directly between different groups living on both sides of the contact line." This activity is aimed at "attracting international organizations with experience in mediation for the peaceful settlement of conflicts, initiating dialogue between people living on controlled and on non-government controlled territory." Furthermore, the Regulation recommends "to attract young people and women in the civil movement through programs that promote their role as peace-builders, supporting civil society organizations in promoting a structured dialogue on the promotion of tolerance."

19. Thus, by conducting dialogue processes, civil society is directly following government regulations. Government authorities even draw upon these experiences and discussions for their reports on the implementation of the Regulation.

20. Cases have been reported in which some civil society actors – (members of CSOs that provided humanitarian assistance to people residing in non-government controlled territories

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6CqeR0kpUc> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

⁶ See for example the statement by Hanna Hopko that "we should not follow the scenarios of pseudo peace that will lead to more victims. And we see how Ukrainian NGOs are used in order that they will be part of the scenario written in Kremlin" (37'42 of the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6CqeR0kpUc> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

⁷ Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers, No 8-r (11 January 2017) on "Approving of the plan of measures for the implementation of some principles of public internal policy in the certain areas of Donetsk Lugansk regions where government authorities temporarily cannot exercise their powers" <http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/cardnpd?docid=249657353> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

(NGGA), and even those who have been implementing humanitarian projects in partnership with the UN agencies and international donor organizations) - who travelled to NGCA were put, without any reasons being given, in the lists of “collaborators and supporters of DNR/LNR” by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Service of Ukraine. This led to situations where activists were stopped without any reason at the checkpoints and had to spend several hours at the National Police/State Security Service.

Recommendations

- support the neutrality of humanitarian actors within the non-government controlled areas and facilitate their work;
- take steps to promote and protect civil society space and ensure a safe and enabling environment for civil society activities in order to fulfill its obligations under international human rights law;
- this should include taking concrete steps against the stigmatization of civil society actors engaged in dialogue and cooperation activities and promoting awareness-raising programs for the public and officials about the importance and legitimacy of such activities.

III. Impacts of Interventions by the IMF

21. In early 2014, the Government of Ukraine requested support from the IMF to restore macroeconomic stability in Ukraine. In early 2015, a revised economic reform programme totaling 17.5 billion USD was agreed between the IMF and the Government, requiring the restructuring of the state debt on the terms and conditions proposed by the IMF. The IMF remains the only active lender of “last resort” in Ukraine because the country does not have access to international debt markets.

22. IMF loans play now a very important role in maintaining the required amount of reserves of the National Bank of Ukraine and, more generally, in ensuring the relative stability of the financial system. Each new tranche of funding from the IMF, however, leads to additional requirements of national budget savings, including the elimination of subsidies and social guarantees.

23. The IMF’s requirements for Ukraine are based on a standard set of measures. This is based on prioritizing financial stability and reducing inflation, which is having a negative impact on social stability, sustainable economic growth and the population’s living conditions. Austerity measures implemented as part of IMF’s requirements include public sector cuts, welfare cuts, tax increases for individuals and the *de facto* elimination of fuel subsidies. For instance, as it is stated in the Memorandum with IMF, Ukraine has “optimized the school network through closing smaller schools”⁸ and has “lowered the limit on the number of hospital beds per ten thousand residents to 60 from 80”, also “[downsized] [...] hospital

⁸ See page 25 in “Ukraine: Letter of Intent, Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies, and Technical Memorandum of Understanding”, September 1, 2016 at <http://www.imf.org/External/NP/LOI/2016/UKR/090116.pdf> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

staff⁹”.

24. As per UPR II Recommendation 97.27 and 97.57, Ukraine committed to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that would also include indirect discrimination. The cuts in employment in the state sector, reductions in health and social services, family and child benefits highlighted in this report constitute indirect discrimination, since these austerity measures often impact women disproportionately.

Recommendations

- assess and rectify the negative effects of IMF conditionalities on most vulnerable or poor sectors of population;
- recognize that austerity measures impact men and women differently, even if they might seem ‘gender neutral’, because they operate in highly gendered and unequal economic and social contexts; *and* assess and rectify such gendered impacts;
- use a gender-sensitive approach in all poverty alleviation programs, as recommended by the CEDAW Committee¹⁰, and in UPR II Recommendations 97.47 and 97.48, both accepted by Ukraine; and
- harmonize the anti-discrimination legislation, which should encompass direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private sphere, as well as multiple forms of discrimination.

Impact of the Elimination of Subsidies for Fuel and Heating

25. Before accepting IMF conditionalities, the average utility bill for heating was comparatively low thanks to subsidies to energy suppliers and utility companies provided by the State. The conditionalities linked to the funding provided by the IMF have required the State to reduce fuel subsidies. Previously, subsidies were allocated to the main energy supplier Naftogaz, and prices for consumers were lower than world market prices. IMF requested the application of world market prices, which has led to higher prices for gas, heating, electricity, transportation and other goods and services related to fuel use. The corresponding increase in tariffs, whilst increasing profits for gas, heating and electricity distribution companies, has had an extremely negative impact on the living standards of much of the population. In fact, in a country in which prior to the conflict some 60-80% of households received subsidies to pay for utility bills, energy consumption has decreased by 30% compared to 2011. This reduction is not due to energy efficiency, but results directly from elimination of the fuel subsidies.

26. In 2017, citizens received new bills for heating, with the amount being five to six times higher. This massive increase is not matched by a corresponding increase in real wages and has affected not only vulnerable groups but also the so-called “middle class”, who after paying utility bills have very little budget left for clothes, food and similar expenditures. Poorer

⁹ See page 26 in “Ukraine: Letter of Intent, Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies, and Technical Memorandum of Understanding”, September 1, 2016 at <http://www.imf.org/External/NP/LOI/2016/UKR/090116.pdf> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

¹⁰ UN Doc CEDAW/C/UKR/CO/7, 5 February 2010, paragraph 37.

urban residents have no money for energy efficiency measures and modernization and most of them are living in apartments in old buildings built in the 1960s-80s.

27. Tariffs should be increasing along with increasing incomes of the population. However, the rates are constantly increasing, while income and salaries are growing at a slower rate than inflation. According to the State Statistics Committee, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from December 2010 to November 2016 was 209%, while the price index for housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels was 450% and for transport 240%. During the same period, the average pension increased only by 64%. This means in actual terms that there was a sharp increase in prices for pensioners. Further, real wages in 2015 compared to 2013 decreased by at least 25%. Thus, from 2010 to 2015 the share of household expenditures on housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels has increased by 27% with a corresponding decrease in the share of expenditures on clothing, shoes, recreation, culture, education and communications. The Ukrainian population as a whole has experienced severe impoverishment, leading to a reduction in all consumption that is not related to immediate survival.

28. "The cost of living" (subsistence minimum) is the main criterion for determining the salary rate and social benefits and subsidies and is set up on the basis of a set of food and non-foods items and services approved by the Resolution of the cabinet of Ministers No780 on 11 October 2016¹¹. The Resolution was approved in 2016, yet at present the subsistence minimum does not satisfy even the most basic needs of living. The Law on state budget in 2017 defines the subsistence minimum by January 2017 at the amount of 1600 UAH, which is about 59 USD¹² per month. In comparison, in 2012, the subsistence minimum was at an equivalent of USD 127 per month. Consequently, this reduced amount of the cost of living in fact leads to a decrease in pensions, salaries, subsidies to the low-income categories and diminishing in real income of the population. The next planned increase in tariffs in 1 April 2017 was planned on 75% parity of imported fuel plus VAT, in addition to the cost of transportation. However, the government decided to raise tariffs to 100%, a rate even higher than that requested by the IMF.

Impact of the Elimination of Fuel Subsidies in Rural Areas

29. The situation remains extremely difficult for those living in rural areas, where one third of the total population is located. The mortality rate in rural areas is much higher than in urban areas. Rural women tend to age faster and suffer from worse health than urban women. They also tend to experience more than both urban women and rural men unemployment, domestic violence and harsh living conditions including because, as a general rule in Ukraine, women earn less than men. The impact of the cancellation of fuel shortages on residents in rural areas, who rely more on gas boilers, coal and firewood than on central heating found in urban areas, is highly disproportionate. The CEDAW Committee has recently expressed concern about the disadvantaged status of women in rural areas in Ukraine.¹³

¹¹ Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Amendments to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No1149 from 08.12.2010" of 25.03.2014 <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/96-2014-п> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

¹² 1 USD = 27,19 UAH.

¹³ Un Doc CEDAW/C/UKR/CO/8, 3 March 2017, paragraph 40(a).

Recommendations

- introduce changes in the method of calculating the basic indicator in the system of social protection – the subsistence minimum - which should reflect a realistic situation;
- take into account the rates of increase of income and salary and inflation rate when increasing tariffs for heating, electricity, transportation and other goods and services related to fuel use.

Cuts in the Public Sector

30. Already before the conflict, the overall policy relating to provision of social services and employment in the state sector caused great concern. The financial effects of the armed conflict have exacerbated the situation. Although Ukrainian legislation does not contain discriminatory norms on equal access for men and women to social services, the *de facto* distribution of resources among men and women is unequal, primarily due to a much greater level of involvement of women in the household, and their role in taking care of children and of sick and elderly family members. Therefore, the lowering of social standards and narrowing of access to social services, arising from the armed conflict and macro-economic reforms, significantly and primarily reduces the quality of life and safety of women.

31. Cutting, capping or freezing wages or recruitment in the public sector is one of the most clear-cut ways in which macro-economic policy can undermine gender equality, as such policies disproportionately affect women. The policy of cutting jobs in the health, education and social services sectors primarily affects women who pre-conflict constituted up to 80% of the total number of employees. While the wages in these sectors are the lowest, women employees have previously benefited from a stable income and guarantees of social protection of workers, including pensions, paid holiday, and maternity leave.

32. As well as reducing social spending, the Government has also reduced the taxation for big businesses, whilst simultaneously increasing the tax burden on end-users, employees, and medium and small businesses. The vast majority of people affected by these changes are women, including because owners of middle and small businesses tend to be women.

Cuts in civil service employment

33. In accordance with IMF requirements, during 2014-2015, 165,000 civil service jobs were cut, with overall plans of a 20% reduction in the civil service workforce. This reduction has been undertaken through, inter alia, the reorganization of ten and closing of eight government agencies. There are plans for further downsizing of the public sector with the goal of lowering the overall spending on salary for civil servants to around 9% of GDP in the medium term. Women comprise more than 75% of the civil service, predominately in non-managerial positions.¹⁴ Accordingly, women have been disproportionately impacted - and will continue to be - by these cuts in the public sector workforce.

34. While recognizing that civil service employment and management structures require

¹⁴ <http://infoflight.org.ua/content/derzhavna-sluzhba-v-ukrayini-u-2005-2012-rokah-osnovni-pokazniki-yakisnogo-ta-kilkisnogo-skladu> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

overhauling, the job cuts should have taken place in parallel with professional re-orientation programmes for affected employees so that they could secure work in other sectors of the economy.

Recommendations

- provide professional re-orientation programmes for state employees affected by the cuts so that they can secure work in other sectors;
- gather gender disaggregated data on the impact of cuts in the civil service workforce;
- design specific interventions to leverage opportunities for women's economic empowerment and ensure that they are involved in the design of those strategies and programmes, focusing on women not only as victims or beneficiaries but also as active participants in the formulation and implementation of such policies;
- create an environment for women to become economically independent, including through raising the awareness of employers in the public and private sector about the prohibition of discrimination in employment against women, and promote the entry of women into the formal economy, including through the provision of vocational and technical training.

Cuts in the social and health services

35. As per UPR II Recommendation 97.46, Ukraine committed to take effective measures to increase budgetary allocation to the health sector. Policies undertaken as part of austerity measures run against implementation of this commitment. The CEDAW Committee has also recently reiterated the need to ensure appropriate budget allocations to health services.¹⁵

36. In 2014, 12,000 social workers lost their jobs; many of them were women.¹⁶ These cuts had extremely negative consequences for both the beneficiaries of social services and the women whose jobs were cut.

37. A year later, the State cut down 25,000 healthcare professionals, again disproportionately impacting women since the vast majority of workers in schools, hospitals and clinics are women.¹⁷

38. In the last three years, decentralization initially agreed by the government in April 2014, and as required by the IMF, has led to a significant transfer of responsibilities for the financing of education, science and healthcare to local budgets, most of which have very limited financial resources. This has led to a reduction in the number of hospital beds and hospital staff, and in many cases, local government authorities have had to close schools, hospitals and clinics due to the lack of resources. One of the most well-known examples was the closing of the hospital and several schools in the town of Romny, which caused a wave of

¹⁵ Un Doc CEDAW/C/UKR/CO/8, 3 March 2017, paragraph 39(a).

¹⁶ <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/96-2014-r> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

¹⁷ <http://www.fpsu.org.ua/nasha-borotba/novini-chlenskikh-organizatsij/6981-skorochennya-merezhi-ta-chiselnosti-pratsivnikov-zakladiv-okhoroni-zdorov-ya-e-neprijnyatnim> (last accessed on 28 March 2017)

protests and outrage across the country.

39. Cuts in public health and social service expenditures mean that women must spend more time taking care of sick or elderly family members; this reduces the amount of time available for remunerated work. As a result, women are usually forced to increase household income by working longer hours, usually in the lowest earning jobs, and to increase the hours of unpaid work to make up for shortfalls in public services.

40. In the areas close to the armed conflict, there are significant problems with access to primary medical services and medication. There are no clinics, laboratories, prenatal centers, or medical staff in the areas close to the armed conflict. Because of poor working conditions, low pay, and the reduction in numbers of medical professionals, there is a critical shortage of medical staff and medical services. In order to access medical services in district or regional urban centers in areas close to the armed conflict, those living in areas close to the conflict have to spend up to 100% or 200% of their monthly income on transport. In such a situation, many do not even try to access medical care. Further, because of the poor condition of roads, closure of roads, checkpoints and the exorbitant costs of transport, and because many consider the roads insecure, some women do not consider that it is safe to travel, even for emergency obstetric care. Specifically, according to the amendments of the Temporary Order issued by the Headquarters of the Anti-terrorist Operation, which establishes the legal conditions for crossing the contact line, public transportation via the contact line is prohibited. Thus, since June 2015, it has not been possible to cross the control points and “zero” checkpoints¹⁸ by public transport.¹⁹ Currently, there are five operating traffic corridors via the contact line; four serve both pedestrians and vehicles in Donetsk region, and one serves only pedestrians in Luhansk region.

Recommendations

- Improve access to high-quality healthcare and health-related services, and to that end; increase the budget allocation for the health sector, in addition to revising cuts in social services;
- Implement the High Commissioner’s recommendation to review restrictions on freedom of movement in the areas near the contact line, and in particular the legality, necessity and proportionality of the restrictions on movement of civilians and goods and sex and age disaggregated data on people crossing the contact line.²⁰

Cuts in the education sector

41. As per UPR II Recommendation 97.126, Ukraine committed to “ensure adequate funding

¹⁸ “Zero” checkpoint – the last checkpoint before the contact line.

¹⁹ Note that there is a difference between control points and “zero” check points in terms of the procedure. The latter are the last ones the government controlled territories, very close to the conflict line.

²⁰ OHCHR has recommended that the “Headquarters of the Anti-Terrorism Operations should reconsider the restrictions on freedom of movement imposed by the Temporary Order ensuring they are in line with international law, particularly the legality, necessity and proportionality of the restrictions on movement of civilians and goods”. Also, to collect sex and age disaggregated data on people crossing the contact line, so that the State Border Guard Service can take better measures to shorten processing time, provide necessary facilities and establish effective complaint mechanism. UN report A/HRC/34/CRP.5, of 16 March 2017, paragraph 167 (c).

for the public education system and improve availability, accessibility and quality of general education in rural areas". Austerity measures implemented by Ukraine have gone against the implementation of this recommendation.

42. Since 2013, there has been a sharp decline in state spending on education services. This has impacted both the beneficiaries of these services and the employees in this sector, who are finding it necessary to look for additional part-time jobs to supplement their income. The Government plans to reduce workers in the education sector to fulfill the IMF requirement of 'optimization' of the network of schools and educational institutions.

43. In 2016, 45 billion USD was allocated to the education system; in 2017, the Government is planning to reduce this funding to 41.9 billion USD - a reduction of approximately 7%. At the same time, the Government has undertaken to increase the salaries of teachers by 20-30% during 2017. Such an increase, together with the projected reduction in funding to the sector, can only be undertaken through the radical reduction of the number of teaching staff, increasing the working hours of teachers and thereby reducing the quality of school education.

44. Spending cuts in the educational sector has led to the closing of several educational facilities. In 2012, there were 20,090 educational institutions in Ukraine. The number has steadily decreased to 17,604 in the academic year 2014/2015 and 17,337 in the academic year 2015/2016. In particular, between 2014 and 2016, 38 schools were closed in urban areas and 231 in rural areas.²¹

45. This trend is expected to continue; there are now 2,500 schools that are candidates for closure due to their small numbers of pupils (10-100 pupils).

Access to education in rural areas

46. Currently several thousand villages in Ukraine do not have schools, which is a cause for concern because this leads to an increase of the number of illiterate children in the rural areas. On 28 December 2014 the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the Law №1577 "On amendments and termination of some legislative acts of Ukraine", which cancelled the moratorium on the closure of secondary schools adopted in the summer of 2014. In most cases this affected rural schools, because they can now be closed with a decision of the local authorities without need for consent of the general meeting or a referendum of the territorial community, as it was the case before. Also, the creation of rural schools now depends on the number of pupils.

47. Based on the UN Millennium Declaration and UN Sustainable Development Goal number 4 Ukraine is to provide "Lifelong Learning for all". The laws on "Professional development of employees" and on "Employment" include several basic provisions related to this issue, yet the system of adults' learning is not well developed.

48. As a consequence, gender-specific career paths, characterized by more part-time work and career breaks for child care among women, result in higher risk for old-age poverty

²¹ Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, <http://mon.gov.ua/usi-novivni/novini/2016/01/13/zagalnoosvitni-navchalni-zakladi-statistika-za-dva-navchalni-roki/> (last accessed on 28 March 2017).

among women. Women in Ukraine encounter therefore higher risks of unemployment in the pre-retirement ages, as employer's biased attitude to older workers is among the main forms of discrimination in employment in Ukraine.

Recommendations

- increase the budget for the educational sector and improve the availability, accessibility and quality of general education, especially in rural areas;
- assess and redress the negative impact on the enjoyment of access to education of closing educational facilities;
- develop a gender-sensitive support mechanism for adults' learning and establish an efficient system of Lifelong learning and professional re-orientation.

Pension reforms

49. In response to IMF requirements, the Government has undertaken major reform of the pension system to address the pension fund's deficit.²² These reforms include increasing the retirement age and eliminating special pensions for civil servants and other groups, including those working in hazardous conditions.

50. Specifically, the Government has significantly reduced the classification of professions eligible for enhanced retirement benefits due to the hazardous conditions in the industries in which they work. According to the State Statistics Service, the number of workers employed in hazardous industries was more than one million people in 2016. Following the adoption of Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine №461 of 24 June 2006, 40% of these workers have lost the right to their retirement pension on preferential terms. The professions that remain eligible to receive pensions on preferential terms are sectors in which men tend to dominate, including miners, nuclear engineers, pilots, and medical specialists. The slashing of the preferential pension terms should be considered in light of the fact that working conditions in most sectors have significantly worsened.

Recommendations

- undertake a human rights and gender impact assessment of the negative effects of the increase in the retirement age and the revisions of eligibility for enhanced retirement benefits, and implement alternative policies to rectify the regression in the enjoyment of economic and social rights.

Cuts in child benefits

51. The monthly payments of assistance for childcare until the age of three was *de facto* abolished in July 2014, as part of the IMF required reforms in the areas of social services. These payments, which ranged from 130 to 1032 UAH (from 11 USD to 88 USD)²³ on a monthly basis for childcare, were one of the most effective types of social assistance to families with children. In the case of low-income families and single parents, this benefit

²² In October 2016, the deficit stood at 150 billion UAH (more than 5 billion USD); Official National Bank of Ukraine rate 1 USD = 25,91 UAH (01 October 2016).

²³ Official National Bank of Ukraine rate 1 USD = 11,79 UAH (01 July 2014).

helped low-income families and single parents to survive during their time away from the labour market. In addition to this monthly payment for childcare, each family would receive a one-off payment of 30,000 UAH (2500 USD) for the birth of the first child, 62,000 UAH (5300 USD) for the birth of the second child, and 124,000 UAH (10,500 USD) for the third and subsequent child. Since July 2014, the monthly payment for childcare up to the age of three has been replaced by a payment of 41280 UAH (about 1500 USD)²⁴ for each child; this amount is fixed and not adjusted on whether it is the first, second or third child. The payment of this benefit is given in installments: 10,320 UAH are initially paid immediately after birth, and the rest on a monthly basis (860 UAH) over a period of three years.

52. According to State statistics for 2013, only 1% of men took the opportunity to take parental leave to care for children: this shows that the responsibility for childcare falls almost entirely on women. These changes primarily affect the economic independence of women, especially single mothers, and tend to particularly aggravate economic violence against women in intimate relationships.

Recommendations

- reinstate the monthly childcare benefits, in addition to increasing one-off payments made immediately after birth, paying particular attention to low-income families and single parent households;
- adjust childcare benefits to the number of children and income of the family;
- collect, assess and address gender and income disaggregated data on the impact of *de facto* termination of childcare assistance benefits until the age of three.

²⁴ Official National Bank of Ukraine rate 1 USD = 27,43 UAH (23 January 2017).

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is an international non-governmental organisation with National Sections covering every continent, an International Secretariat based in Geneva, and a New York office focused on the work of the United Nations.

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