



**Commission on the Status of Women
55th Session
New York, 22 February – 4 March 2011**

**STATEMENT TO PLENARY BY MS MARIA STRATIGAKI
THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR GENDER EQUALITY,
HELLENIC REPUBLIC
New York, 24 February 2011**

Mr. Chair

Distinguished Delegates,

1. It is an honour for me to address the 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on behalf of the Greek Government and especially on its first session since the creation of UN Women, the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women.
2. The Greek Government and Prime Minister Mr. George Papandreou, extend their warmest congratulations and support to Ms Michelle Bachelet and to the work of UN Women for the advancement of women and for the benefit of humanity.
3. There is one point that I would like to make at the beginning of my intervention with regard to the global level. Our analysis and perspectives since the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of many World Conferences, Commissions and meetings, could have not foreseen with relation to the Information Communication Technology. The gender dimension of ICT in political activism.

4. I would like to highlight the role of Information Communication Technology (ICT) – worldwide web: google, e-mail, facebook, youtube, myspace, twitter, mobile phones, in the quest of the people in the Middle East and Northern Africa for democracy and human rights and the role of women and especially young women in the struggle for democracy, participation and women's human rights.

Mr Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

5. In this era of economic crisis the Greek government encounters tremendous difficulties, struggling to overcome the crisis and boost development. Our national mechanism, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality has launched a Programme for Substantive Gender Equality for the period 2010-2013 which has been drafted with four strategic goals in mind:

- Protection of all women's rights through the promotion of gender equality and the orientation of interventions towards groups of women facing multiple discrimination.
- Prevention and combating of all forms of violence against women.
- Support of women's employment and their economic independence.
- Support of art creation that promotes gender equality.

6. At this point the Greek Government is working intensively on the following agenda:

- A Draft Bill on Substantive Gender Equality to fill in gender equality legislation gaps and to reinforce gender mainstreaming in public policies and quota in politics.
- A 24-hour SOS hotline will be launched on March 8th International Women's Day, providing counselling and first aid to women victims of violence.
- A funding programme for NGOs to promote action plans in the critical areas of violence against women, multiple discrimination, environment and innovation, women and the media.

- With regard to the issue of women's access to ICT, we are planning the provision of personal computers, access to internet and training of basic internet skills to 20.000 - women aged from 40 to 65 who are unemployed or economically inactive.

Mr Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

7. Multiple discrimination is an area of deep concern of the Greek Government. An area difficult to tackle, because of the consequences of the economic crisis on vulnerable groups (aged women, women belonging to minorities, women immigrants, refugees); but not only due to the economic crisis. Amongst these groups migration and refugees are of particular urgency. Poverty, hunger, sexual violence, climate change, environmental destruction, are the root causes for immigration of thousands of people, women and men, leaving their countries in hope of a better future. A country like Greece, a receiving country, in the middle of a huge economic crisis, needs the full support of all EU countries and cooperation of all neighbouring regions in order to establish a comprehensive policy to address increasing migration.

Thank you