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Women’s Status in the Netherlands

American Nicaraguan School

Commission on the Status of Women

Secondary Schools' United Nations Symposium

The Netherlands, known as a progressive and nondiscriminatory nation in regards to societal affairs, is currently working towards achieving equity amongst the sexes1 . The Netherlands has taken action to pursue the promotion of equal rights, equal opportunities, equal liberties and responsibilities of men and women. The main issues that most women in the Netherlands face are that they do not have economic independence due to their part-time labor, which leads to a low share of women in top positions, a high rate of physical and sexual assault 2, and a relatively high wage gap, which delays a country’s development.

The employment rate for women in the Netherlands is 70.4%, which is exponentially higher than the European Union average of 58.6% in 2012. Out the women in the Dutch labor market, 76.9% sought part-time labor because of their role in taking care of children. Most women in the Netherlands work 50.6% of a full-time working schedule, meaning 20 hours.3 Due to the fact that most Dutch women do not work full hours, they earn 16.9% less than men because they work less hours, have lower work positions and fewer working experience. The Dutch labor market is currently segregated, as most women are inclined to pursue health care, education and the hospitality industry2 . The OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) proposes that the most effective ways of closing the gender gap is for women to increase the hours of paid labor. For this to be achieved, men would have to sacrifice more hours of unpaid labor to help the household and public childcare would have to become more available 4 .

Physical and sexual violence is another major issue that women, unfortunately, have to face on a daily basis in the Netherlands2. In the Netherlands, eighty-four percent of young adult women have become the victims of sexual harassment according to a statement by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science of the Kingdom of the Netherlands7. A study performed by Maastricht University revealed that 4 in 10 Dutch women under the age of 25 have forcibly been subjects to many forms of sexual contact, ranging from kisses to rape. The young women that have been assaulted are at high risk of developing psychological issues that include depression and PTSD.5 Due to the alarming statistics regarding sexual violence, the Government of the Netherlands signed and ratified the Istanbul Convention, which has a main goal of preventing and combating any form of violence towards women. This convention highlights the importance of spreading awareness and proposes “shelters, support services, and legal and medical assistance" to aid women that have suffered from sexual and physical violence6.

Endnotes

1 Women, girls and human rights in the Dutch development cooperation and foreign policy. (2008, March 7). Retrieved November 1, 2016, from <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/IWD2008_Keynote-DutchAmbassador.pdf>

2 The Policy on Gender Equality in the Netherlands (European Parliament, September 2015) :: General Secretariat for Gender Equality. (2015, September). Retrieved October 31, 2016, from <http://www.isotita.gr/en/index.php/news/536>

3 The current situation of gender equality in the Netherlands- Country Profile (2013). Retrieved October 31, 2016, from <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/epo_campaign/131205_country_profile_netherlands.pdf>

4 THE NETHERLANDS - OECD. (n.d.). Retrieved November 1, 2016, from [http://www.oecd.org/netherlands/Closing the Gender Gap - Netherlands FINAL.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/netherlands/Closing)

5 Four in 10 young Dutch women have been sexually assaulted: Research - DutchNews.nl. (2015, July 29). Retrieved November 1, 2016, from <http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/07/four-in-10-young-dutch-women-have-been-sexually-assaulted-research/>

6 Netherlands takes action on violence against women and domestic violence. (2012, November 16). Retrieved November 1, 2016, from <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2012/11/16/netherlands-takes-action-on-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence>

7 Women, girls and human rights in the Dutch development cooperation and foreign policy. (2008, March 7). Retrieved November 1, 2016, from <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/IWD2008_Keynote-DutchAmbassador.pdf>