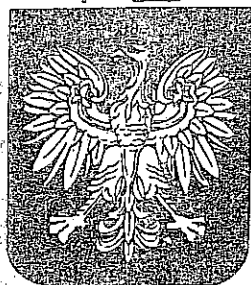


REPUBLIC OF POLAND

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE OFFICE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS AT GENEVA



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UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

Statement

by

H. E. Mr. Zdzisław RAPACKI

**Head of the Delegation
of the Republic of Poland
to the 8th session of the Human Rights Council**

Geneva, 10 June 2008

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Mr. President, Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and privilege to address this body today on the occasion of the adoption of the final Universal Periodic Review report on Poland.

At the outset, let me reiterate that, in our view, the UPR constitutes one of the *raison d'être* of the Human Rights Council. Therefore, the Council's credibility rests largely on success of the UPR process. We believe that, with strong commitment of all the stakeholders, the UPR can and will make a difference on the ground by improving the human rights situation in States under Review.

In this regard, we highly value all comments, questions and recommendations formulated in the course of the UPR process. They allow us to better identify key challenges we are facing in the field of the human rights. Let me underline that Poland commits itself to improve and further consolidate the national system of human rights protection and promotion on the basis of the UPR outcome. In this context, Poland also stands ready to share with other countries its best practices and experience concerning the human rights.

Due to time constraints, I would like to focus my statement on the presentation of Poland's voluntary commitments and pledges, while at the same time our written responses to the recommendations submitted during the meeting of the Council's Working Group on UPR are available in the room.

Our commitments and pledges are as follows:

- 1. Poland will ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of death penalty.**
- 2. We will introduce measures for streamlining the implementation of the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee.**

The Government of the Republic of Poland will extend the mandate of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Matters Concerning the European Court of Human Rights to integrate therewith decisions of the Human Rights Committee.

- 3. We are also committed to continue actions to reduce poverty and social exclusion.**

Combating these phenomena will remain a priority in our national social policy.

A new *National Program on Social Security and Social Integration for the years 2008-2010*, now under preparation, will strengthen assistance to families for the purpose of counteracting poverty and social exclusion of children. These actions are meant to equalize the opportunities of families and children, i.e. to eliminate educational deficits and improve access to services that will enable parents to reconcile their professional activities with their children upbringing. In addition, *The National Program* will determine specific goals, including, in particular, the degree of lowering the poverty index and the index of poverty risk among children.

So as to achieved that, the following actions will be undertaken:

- improvement of family incomes,
- development of the child day-care service system,
- leveling educational opportunities of and support for school-age children from poor families,
- consolidating system of assistance to families, family counseling; improvement of income support.

Development of cooperation with NGOs will also contribute to the effective combating of poverty and social exclusion.

4. Poland pledges to further improve the situation of the disabled persons.

Due to limited effectiveness of the current system of vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons, particularly with regard to vocational activation, its review will be carried out.

5. Poland will strengthen measures to reduce domestic violence.

Current solutions need to be adjusted in light of insufficient social awareness about threats domestic violence is posing to individuals, families and society as a whole, as well as insufficient assistance to victims of violence.

An annual evaluation of the implementation of *the National Program of Counteracting Domestic Violence for the years 2006-2016* will constitute the basis for its adjustment to the actual needs.

Eradication of violence from family environment can first and foremost be achieved through the implementation of programs promoting positive methods of childrearing and partnership in family, some of them which are carried out in collaboration with the European Union and the Council of Europe:

In 2008 the law on counteracting domestic violence and the National Program for Countering Domestic Violence will be amended. The amendments will result in:

- complete ban on corporal punishment; enabling financial support for the implementation of projects against domestic violence at municipal level within the framework of the National Program for Counteracting Domestic Violence,
- introduction of warrant obliging perpetrator to leave the house immediately after the incident of violence is reported by the victim,
- introduction of cost-free forensic medical examinations.

6. We will reinforce the actions to implement equal treatment of women and men

I. National Program for Gender Equality, for the years 2009-2013 will be prepared. The draft will be consulted with social partners and NGO representatives.

The draft covers the following areas of action:

- equal economic independence of women and men, including equality in the labor market,
- reconciliation of family life and career,
- participation in political life and decision-making,

- equality in the area of health care,
- eradication of all forms of gender-driven violence,
- eradication of gender stereotypes, including those in schoolbooks and school curricula,
- promotion of gender equality in external relations and development policy.

The action plan for gender equality will reinforce the achievements of the Beijing Platform for Action and relevant international conventions such as CEDAW.

II. In the years 2008-2013, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy will carry out two projects, each involving research, training and promotion: the first one devoted to the reconciliation of career and family roles of women and men, the second - concerning socio-economic activation of women at local and regional levels.

III. In accordance with draft law on equal treatment, the minister responsible for family matters and equal treatment, using data and analyses from independent research and in conjunction with other relevant bodies, will prepare a National Program for Counteracting Discrimination. The Program will determine adequate measures to:

- raise social awareness of the root causes and effects of discrimination;
- counteract violations of the principle of equal treatment;
- establish cooperation with social partners concerned, involved in implementing equal treatment.

7. Poland will continue to combat and counteract racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and hate crimes.

The phenomena of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and hate crimes are not common in Poland. However, we are determined to implement a wide catalogue of preventive measures of an institutional, legal and educational nature.

We will continue implementing and evaluating Program for the Roma community, National Program for Counteracting Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2004-2009 and the Law enforcement officer program for combating hate crimes.

Moreover, the existing network of Human Rights Advisers attached to the Police Commander in Chief and Voivodship Police Commanders in Chief will conduct ongoing monitoring of incidents, trends and crimes related to discrimination and misconduct of law enforcement authorities. They will also make analyses and elaborate proposals for improvement of the quality and methods of the Law Enforcement work.

The establishment of the institution of Human Rights Advisers attached to the Border Guard is also planned.

8. Poland will continue to participate in the World Program for Human Rights Education.

Within the first stage of the *Program*, education on human rights has been introduced into the core curricula of general education at primary and middle schools. Moreover, the Ministry of National Education has launched a number of other measures to promote education on human and the rights of child. Training to prepare activity for the advancement of human rights and

counteracting discrimination in local communities has been carried out under numerous projects.

9. Additional measures for leveling educational opportunities will be introduced.

Poland will spare no effort to enable pre-school age children to enjoy their rights, among others through creating amenable conditions for developing various forms of pre-school education, particularly in rural areas.

The planned *Strategy of the development of education in rural areas for the years 2007-2013* will be attuned to the *Government Program for the development of education in rural areas in the years 2008-2013*. The strategic aim of the program is to upgrade the quality and level of education in rural areas. Implementation of the measures facilitating access children from rural areas and small towns to quality education will continue until 2013.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by expressing our appreciation for the President of the Council, Ambassador Costea, the members of our Troika – Angola, Brazil and Japan, the states which took part in the interactive dialogue, as well as other stakeholders for their invaluable contribution to the UPR process of Poland. We do hope that this fruitful exercise will help us to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by all our citizens.

