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Thank you to Raquel Wexler for her efficiency in convening this study and today I see the grace with which she manages pressure!

Today, we celebrate the legacy of the UDHR and its progeny, the CEDAW and CRC. There is no better way to mark this historic day than by reflecting on the transformative impact of human rights norms on legislative reform in different parts of the world. This report is a journey to the countries in the EECA region and explores some of the strengths and weaknesses of the narratives on gender based lawmaking. The report explores the reality of these new laws and policies and analyzes whether these laws have in fact fulfilled their promise through implementation and enforcement. Though much has been achieved in this region, the report is a call to action to close the gaps revealed in the analyses.

This report is based on the national legislative analyses conducted by national consultants in seventeen countries in the EECA region. To refer to briefly to the genesis of this study, national consultants were provided with a detailed questionnaire which addressed questions concerning the right enshrined in the CEDAW and other intersecting human rights treaties such as the CRC, CRPD and ICESR. The national reports responded to this substantive questionnaire.

The CEDAW was used as a powerful litmus test or benchmark to analyze the gender sensitivity of these laws and the prism of the CEDAW was used to monitor their compliance with international standard setting norms. Today's discussion of the EECA laws will be made in the context of other comparative laws which will form a backdrop when relevant.

The CEDAW's most transformative potential has been the way it has guided gender-sensitive lawmaking around the world.

Cornerstones of the CEDAW:

1) Thus the CEDAW is unique in that it is the first human rights convention to address both public and private acts and dismantle the artificial dichotomy between the public and the private spheres. The CEDAW in Article 2(e) that CEDAW covers all discriminatory acts "by any person, organization or enterprise." No longer are private acts of violence such as domestic violence immune from state accountability. The EECA needs to hasten its compliance with CEDAW and ensure that Domestic Violence laws come into force.

2) The CEDAW Covers both formal and substantive equality- equality of opportunity and equality of result- which calls for temporary special measures action and other forms of

concrete steps to remedy a legacy of discrimination against women. The laws in the EECA are yet to create concrete steps to transcend traditional gender barriers.

3) CEDAW also covers both direct and indirect discrimination, or *de jure* (discrimination in the law itself) and *de facto* which covers the disproportionate impact of gender neutral laws. In effect, CEDAW covers both the intended and unintended consequences of laws. Although most countries in the EECA region prohibit de jure discrimination little has been done to close the gap between laws on the books and laws in action.

Constitutional Reform- The Fountainhead of All Laws

Several of the countries in the region reference human rights conventions in their constitutions, and these conventions are directly applicable in domestic laws. Although Constitutions in Armenia Moldova, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan provide a broad based equal protection clause that covers multiple grounds of discrimination, there are few examples where these international conventions have been invoked in courts. In the absence of that, neither these Constitutional provisions or Human rights norms have been made justiciable or given teeth.

Several countries outside of the EECA region have also enshrined international laws in their Constitutions. Some of these countries allow international human rights law to guide the interpretation of statutes. For example, the **South African** Constitution mandates that international law must be used to guide the interpretation of the law and that comparative laws may be used as interpretive tools. This clearly allows the use of international human rights laws to be invoked as concrete tools in court and can be a model for the EECA region too.

In 1991, in **Columbia**, and 1994 in Argentina women's groups mobilized to place united CEDAW principles into the Constitution during the constitutional reform process. The CEDAW is now invoked in challenging gender discrimination in courts in both countries.

Although several of the Constitutions in the EECA have embraced the equal protection clause of the CEDAW, and have an anti-discrimination/equal protection clause, with the exception of Turkey, few countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have invoked these norms in court. Thus what it seems is that the letter and not the spirit of the CEDAW has been embraced.

Equal Protection Lawmaking

One of the positive trends in the EECA region has been the development in drafting of anti-discrimination laws. Although some parliaments are yet to pass these drafts, they represent a unique opportunity to address the gaps in existing law and to create laws that are consistent with the form and substance of CEDAW.

A few gender equality laws have included a strong equal protection clause that dismantles both direct and indirect discrimination in accordance with CEDAW. The The

Kosovo Anti-Discrimination Law (ADL), for example, allows for special, temporary measures to promote gender equality and defines the principle of equal treatment expansively to cover multiple grounds of discrimination based on sex, race, national origin, language etc.

The Kosovo Law on Gender Equality calls for the acceleration *de jure* and *de facto* equality and to guarantee the protection of equality principles between men and women.

Other laws that embody some of these principles include:

The Romanian Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (2002) **Tajikistan law, On State Guarantees of Equal Rights of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for Their Implementation (2005)**, and the **In Ukraine, the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men** of 2005 defines discrimination broadly as covering both action and inaction.

On the other hand some of these laws are only in the realm of the aspirational.

The Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of Moldova prohibits sex discrimination, but is largely declaratory and aspirational in nature. The law defines what affirmative action is but does not establish affirmative action measures or a quota system. However, the Moldovan Government is currently in the process of drafting a general law on anti-discrimination. It is important to seize this opportunity to fill in the existing gaps in the legislature.

Similarly, the Republic of Bulgaria's Protection Against Discrimination Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, but focuses inadequately on vulnerable groups such as Roma women.

The Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina outlaws direct and indirect discrimination. But while the law provides for special measures, none have yet been established. As a result, the country lacks even a single woman minister and has a cabinet dominated by male decision-makers.

One characteristic inherent in EECA lawmaking efforts is the absence of strong mandates in the law. For example, the Women's Committee of **Uzbekistan** is completely advisory and its recommendations and conclusions are not mandatory and do not have binding authority. **Likewise, under the Moldovan law on gender equality The role of the national machinery is primarily an advisory role without adjudicatory or investigative powers.**

To examine some of the critical elements of the CEDAW as translated into different areas of lawmaking:

Equal Rights to Citizenship

Equal rights to citizenship is an important hallmark of gender equality and the CEDAW. Unequal rights to citizenship negatively affect women and their children's rights to residency, benefits, public education, health care and sometimes land ownership.

In keeping with Article 9 of the CEDAW women in all of the countries under review, enjoy equal citizenship rights with their male counterparts, irrespective of the grounds on which such citizenship was acquired. No laws discriminate against women's rights to transfer their citizenship to their children. However, in reality, children of mothers of different nationalities, such as the Roma community, are subject to discrimination when accessing services such as health care.

Women's Access to Political Office

In the spirit of Article 7 of the CEDAW, several countries have introduced a quota system to enhance women's political participation as a way of overcoming gender imbalance in political office. However, in practice a larger number of women are placed among the last candidates on party lists thus diluting the power of these provisions.

Kosovo Law on Gender Equality provides that women should constitute no less than 40 percent in all bodies, including the legislative, judicial and executive branches. This is a good practice that should be replicated in other countries.

Similarly, Romania's local election law mandates that the election list must include 30 percent of candidates from the less-represented sex. This law includes penalties for non-compliance. This carrot and stick approach is a model initiative that should inspire other countries in the EECA too. Similar provisions are required by Serbia.

However, a fatal flaw is that even when the law stipulates that the parties ensure that women and men are equally represented on the lists of candidates as in Moldova, more women are placed among the lower rank of candidates on the party lists, thus making it much more challenging for women to become Members of Parliament.

In order to achieve equality of result, it is not enough to remove formal gender barriers. More has to be done to make a good faith effort to achieving equality of result.

Protective Measures and Gender Equality in the Workplace

Special measures for women established in Eastern Europe and Central Asia largely play a protective function and do not necessarily facilitate the empowerment of women or the equal workplace participation of men and women. These provisions may reinforce negative stereotypes of women as being in need of protection. Women's employment opportunities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are also limited by laws and regulations that prevent them from performing certain physically arduous jobs. For example, in Belarus, women are restricted from engaging in a galaxy of work opportunities based on their gender. Similarly, Uzbekistan limits women from accessing certain types of employment deemed harmful to their physical and biological functions. In Turkey, Moldova and Tajikistan too the law restricts women from specific over time and travel related jobs. There seems to be an over-inclusion in the identification of these industries as dangerous to women. This creates a fear that women might be shut out from lucrative

industrial employment opportunities against their will and relegated to traditionally female employment fields.

Although it is important for the law to regulate hazardous employment environments, these protections should not provide blanket prohibitions that keep women from seeking employment in these work categories. Instead, regulatory and protective provisions should be extended to both women and men employees, so that women would not be disadvantaged in employment.

Laws that view women only, or primarily, in their care giving function can also disservice women's advancement in the public and private spheres. Several countries including Bosnia and Herzegovina Labour Code may grant a mother—at her request—special leave to care for a child until the child reaches his/her third birthday. Although this is a very positive and welcome provision it is important to extend this to fathers as well. Given that a similar provision to the father is absent in the law, these provisions reinforce stereotypes of women as the sole caregivers of children.

Similarly, the Belarus Labour Code, Uzbekistan law and the Bosnia Herzegovina law grants some benefits to only those fathers who are raising children without their mother. This undermines the notion of the joint care of children and the equal parenting rights and duties as enshrined in CEDAW and CRC.

Within all this, there is a tension between protecting the special needs of women and achieving equality of employment between men and women. Special protection reinforces negative stereotypes because women are perceived as fragile and more deserving of work in the home, rather than advancement toward managerial positions. It is therefore important to design protective measures which shape a more dynamic conceptualization of women's roles.

It is also important that the laws drafted in the EECA reflect the view of both parents as equal in their caregiving roles and provides equal opportunities for work and family responsibilities to both genders.

Work Family Reconciliation

Transformative gender equality in the public sphere can be achieved only through gender equality in the private sphere. New legal reforms, such as the Ukraine law on gender equality, define gender equality in both public and private life—including in the family.

Unequal care giving policies result in the feminization of part time work. As a consequence, around the world, women are trapped in low-paying, low-ranking jobs that negatively affect both their own and their families' development.

CEDAW and CRC Committee jurisprudence have articulated the critical role gender equality in its numerous forms and quality child care play in reconciling work and family obligations. Around the world care giving laws are being re-envisioned in the image of both men and women:

Tajikistan, Kosovo and the Kyrg Republic have directly addressed in legislation the need to consider family responsibilities of employees of both sexes. The Kosovo law goes even further to embody the principles of gender equality in child care responsibilities and takes into consideration the need for parental leave in the event that a child is hospitalized due to sickness.



A quick look out side of the region:

The recently drafted **Gender Equity law in Vietnam**, which became operationalized in July 2007,¹ provides for gender equality both in public and private spheres makes an effort to *Address Gender Stereotypes in the Family*. The Vietnamese law makes provisions for both men and women to take time off to care for sick children. Vietnamese law is also commendable in that it mandates conditions to be created for male laborers to have full paid leave when their wives give birth. the law also provides that work in the family is the duty of both men and women and that both boys and girls should participate in family work.

Yet, at the same time, the law does not go far enough to address those stereotypes and in fact indirectly reinforces them through its assignment of care taking responsibilities to each gender. For example, Article 14 of Chapter 2 provides that: “[f]emale officials, public servants bringing along their children at less than 36 months of age when participating in the training and fostering courses are given assistance and support as provided by the government.” Article 32(f) further supports the concept of child care assistance for women laborers participating in training: “[t]o support female laborers who bring along their children at less than 36 months of age, to participate in the training and fostering activities.” Unfortunately, Article 32(f), as well as Article 14, only allow female officials and public servants to bring their children when participating in programs. This provision assumes that when male employers participate in training programs, a mother would be at home to care for the young children. This provision seems to reinforce patriarchy in its contradiction of the spirit of Article 11 of the law, which guarantees the equality of men and women in all fields of family life.

According to an analysis by the U.K. Equal Opportunities Commission, the lack of shared caring responsibilities between women and men is the single biggest cause of the pay gap. Supporting fathers in taking more responsibility for caring for children, therefore, is a key component in achieving gender equality.

The Need for Legislating Parental Leave

Successful work/family reconciliation measures have included parental leave and childcare. However, rarely in the EECA is parental leave extended to men.

¹ An English translation of this law is with the author.

In Turkey a draft law on parental leave, which proposes to extend workers' six months of unpaid leave to twelve months to be shared between spouses, is waiting to be passed by the Parliament. If passed, this will be a model to be emulated by other countries.

Looking outside of the EECA, parental leave also strengthens the child's tie to both parents as required by the CRC.

The **Icelandic Act** makes it clear that the reason behind parental leave is to strengthen children's access to parents. . . The stated goals of this law include the establishment of equal opportunities for women and men to be reached, by among other things: enabling both women *and* men to reconcile their occupational and family obligations.

As far back as 1986, the **Commission on the European Community** labeled the sharing of family responsibilities and occupational responsibilities are pivotal to the promotion of true equality at work.

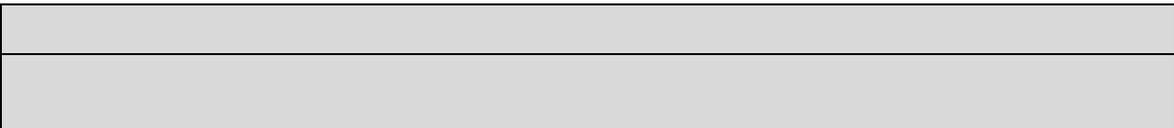
One of the creative ways in which **Sweden** attempted to ensure the sharing of family responsibility was to introduce paid parental leave. Thus, **Sweden** was one of the first countries to alter the way in which men and women's roles in the family were normalized. Sweden's reconceptualization of sex role stereotypes and socialization of boys and girls created a paradigm shift in understandings of the dual roles of men and women in work and family.



Legislation like the newly promulgated **Law on Guaranteeing Equality between Women and Men in Spain**, passed in March 2007, is instructive to the EECA as it has taken the lead in transforming gender roles by shaping both men and women's work and family aspirations.

The highlights of the new Spanish law include 15 days of paternity leave which will expand to a month in 2013 for new fathers. This leave cannot be transferred to the mother and the father loses the leave if it is not taken.

Thus in the EECA too new reformist projects must ensure that the workplace must be reinvented to recognize gender equality and the role that both parents play in child bearing and child rearing and new caregiving laws must be reimagined in the image of of both the father and the mother. This is pivotal to efficiency and equality in the workplace and the home



Differential Retirement Ages

The differential retirement practices for male and female workers plague some of the employment laws and regulations in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. Unequal retirement ages create the assumption that women are weaker than men, and thus disadvantage women's advancement in the labour market. Early retirement policies might also result in differential pension and retirement benefits which in turn affects the well being of families.

Unequal retirement laws where women are required to retire 2- 5 years before men still remain in the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Turkey, Moldova and Ukraine.

A way to balance competing interest may be to take a leaf from the Israeli law.

Israeli law equalizes the retirement ages but allows women the option of retiring five years ahead before the set date. Although this is a creative way to leave both options open, the better choice would be to give both men and women the equal option to retire at an earlier age.

In other countries, like India and Japan, where women in certain areas of employment like foreign service were asked to retire at marriage or child birth, the CEDAW was used in court to dismantle unequal retirement of women.

Sexual Harassment Law making

No country under review has a specific or stand-alone sexual harassment law. Countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina attempt to cover sexual harassment in the Gender Equality Law. Despite the fact that these laws articulate sexual harassment, a stand-alone sexual harassment law will be a more powerful tool to address sexual harassment and provide concrete remedies for violation of the law.

When drafting sexual harassment laws, EECA countries will served to look outside to the strengths and weaknesses of other country sexual harassment laws.

The South African Employment Equity Act (EEA) 1998 is groundbreaking legislation for battling sexual harassment that can be instructive to the EECA. The law employs a comprehensive approach by defining prohibited conduct, providing detailed procedures to address the problem and prevent its recurrence and measures against retaliation.

The Indian draft law on sexual harassment is an outgrowth of the famous *Visakha* judgment by the Supreme Court in which used the CEDAW to define sexual harassment. In this judgment the Supreme Court directed that workplace regulations consider a host of provisions to outlaw sexual harassment. This draft law is a product of civil society activism and is still a work in progress; the process will of some interest to EECA's own law making process.

Model laws around the world prohibit sexual harassment in numerous environments, including informal sectors, schools, universities, institutions and custodial situations.

Equal Access to Education

Unequal access to education is both a cause and a consequence of gender discrimination.

Several countries in the EECA guarantee the equal right to education in their legal system. Despite equal access to education and equal guarantees in education, gender stereotypes in pedagogical subject matter remain. Very little is done in the curriculum to facilitate gender equality in the private and public spheres.

For example, although the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova ensures the right to education, and several provisions of other Moldovan laws calls for equal access to education and training for both women and men the gender roles captured by images in textbooks and the curriculum still tend to assign women their traditional roles. The portrayal of activities undertaken by women and girls are limited to serving food, growing flowers, teaching, caring for children, the sick and the elderly.

The Kosovo law seems to go furthest in guaranteeing equal rights to education, several recent law reform initiatives have included creative provisions to address gender stereotypes through education.² The Kosovo Law on Gender Equality also recognizes that negative portrayals of women in the media may cause or reinforce the stereotyping and subordination of women and girls and requires the media to convey positive portrayals of women.

In Kosovo, the law requires that that both boys and girls be encouraged to participate equally in all sport and leisure activities during educational hours. The law also addresses issues such as the high dropout rate of girls from school. Further, the law also provides that teaching about family life issues, including reproductive and sexual health, is to be compulsory in schools.

Domestic Violence

Although the legal framework for combating domestic violence has improved, very few countries have adopted national anti-domestic violence laws. **This is in stark contrast to developments in other parts of the world. For example in Asia almost all countries have a stand alone domestic violence law. In Bangladesh and China, are efforts are being mobilized to draft national domestic violence laws.**

Many of the EECA countries have draft domestic violence laws before parliament. Despite these good faith efforts to reform the legal system, unless corresponding gender

² Croatia's Gender Equality Act of 2003; Ukraine's Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men.

sensitization programmes are formulated and adequate support systems are put in place, these laws will provide inadequate protection to women victims of violence.

Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina have stand-alone Domestic Violence Law. The enforcement of these laws however must be strengthened.

In Belarus, the author of the Country Report writes poignantly that “family conflicts are one of the most common reasons for which the police are called, but their role in dealing with complaints of violence in the family is traditionally one of limited intervention.”

Although very few countries have separate domestic violence laws, many countries, such as Kazakhstan, have draft domestic violence laws under consideration in Parliament.

In drafting DV laws must keep in mind the need for clarity and strong implementing provisions in the law.

Recommendation 19 of the CEDAW and the CEDAW Committee makes clear that the definition of DV be expanded to cover a broad category of violence including physical, sexual or psychological and economic and should include can include threats, intimidation, coercion, stalking, and humiliating verbal abuse.

Similarly, domestic violence law making must cover a broad category of persons in the family or household. The term family has undergone numerous changes and a more realistic dynamic definition of a family includes members beyond a traditional nuclear family. Idealized notions of what should constitute a family should be set aside in order to capture the reality of what constitutes a family including those living together and in intimate partner relations.

The **South African Domestic Violence Act of 1998 is instructive in that it** extends the protection of the law to a broad category of persons in a domestic relationship, including persons who are married; persons of the same or opposite sex who are living together or have lived together; parents of a child or persons who have parental responsibility for a child; family members related by consanguinity, affinity, or adoption; or parties who are engaged, dating, or in a customary relationship including whether they are in an actual or perceived romantic, intimate, or sexual relationship of any duration; or persons who share or recently shared the same residence.

Domestic violence laws and in some cases cover all those living in the family home including domestic workers, as under **Indonesia’s Law Regarding the Elimination of Violence in the Household**, passed in 2004.

The New Zealand Domestic Violence Law of 1995 goes far enough to cover psychological abuse in relation to a child who has witnessed acts of violence or is at risks of witnessing violence.

Several domestic violence laws around the world are marked by counseling and legal aid services. For example, The Malaysian Domestic Violence Law of 1994 provides one

stop crisis centers which entitle victims of domestic violence to compensation and counseling.

A distinctive feature of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of Taiwan feature of the Taiwanese Act is the way in which all local governments are authorized to create a Domestic Violence Prevention Committee and to maintain a Domestic Violence Prevention Center and to establish among other things a 24 hour hotline; psychological support, housing, counseling, etc. The engagement of local communities in combating domestic violence is a thread that runs through this law.

In Korea, the law includes counseling and legal services; mandatory investigation by police; establishment of counseling centers or protective facilities; medical facilities to provide treatment for physical and mental injuries and training for law enforcement and monitoring of law enforcement; and police are required to take emergency protection measures for victims by restraining a perpetrator from violent behavior or referring victims to domestic violence counseling centers, protective centers, or hospitals.

The introduction of the Domestic Violence Law has a powerful transformative potential only if it is guided by the CEDAW and DEVAW.

Reproductive Health

Only a handful of countries in the region have stand-alone reproductive health laws. The Kosovo Law on Reproductive Health is one of the few stand alone laws on reproductive health. Moldova too has a law on Reproductive Health and a National Strategy on Reproductive Health which reflect the international WHO standards in the field and cover women and men equally. However, due to lack of resources for implementation, the law remains mostly declaratory.

HIV/AIDS Lawmaking

The guarantees under Article 12 of CEDAW cannot be fulfilled unless legislative measures are taken to combat sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS. Although most countries have some kind of programme or policy on HIV/AIDS, these policies lack a clear gender perspective or fail to address the greater vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS due to their subordinate roles or the fact that women are disproportionately concentrated as caregivers of HIV-positive family members.

More than any other disease, HIV/AIDS has exposed the discrimination that makes women more vulnerable to infection. Thus, countering the prevailing gender stereotypes that increase risky behaviours and the multiple and intersecting grounds of discrimination against women must be a major factor in addressing HIV/AIDS in women.

Child Marriage

Finally, one of the negative features of the landscape of laws in some of the EECA countries is the retention of child marriage in contradiction to the CRC and CEDAW. Turkey, Armenia and Ukraine allow marriage under the age of 18. In Moldova, Bulgaria Serbia and Tajikistan, although the minimum age of marriage have been raised to 18, permission can be obtained by the Court for persons aged 16 and up to marry. Although the family law defines 18 as the minimum age of marriage in the Russian Federation, under special circumstances marriages can be entered into at age 16.

Although some laudable attempts were made to reverse this trend and several countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have within the last few years raised the age of marriage for both men and women to 18 the law still allows the age of marriage to be lowered on certain grounds.

Every country in Eastern Europe and Central Asia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which declares unequivocally that “a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.”

The statutory age of marriage is one the most pressing and urgent areas of law reform and a clarion call must be heard to address this. The statutory age of marriage in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia must be uniformly raised to age 18 in compliance with CEDAW and CRC.

A precedent that might be interesting to examine will be the recent Indian law on the prevention of child marriage passed in late 2006. In India where 65% of girls are married under age passed a law outlawing child marriages, the minister of State for Women and Child development stated that: “We need to remove this biggest obscenity of child-child and child-adult marriages” The main features of this bill include appointments by state governments for the establishment of child marriage prevention officers. The new bill provides for maintenance of the minor girl until her remarriage. Every child marriage, whether solemnised before or after this Act came into force, would be declared void at the option of the contracting party.

Conclusion:

This panoramic sweep of legislative reform reveal the importance of CEDAW as a powerful impetus for lawmaking and as a benchmark to measure the validity of those laws. Without the CEDAW there would be no barometer to evaluate those laws.

In the final analysis, even when laws on the books are strong, they have little impact unless corresponding implementation mechanisms are established to redress wrongs and provide remedies for rights violations.

Although efforts to define and reframe equality have been part of a large trend in Eastern Europe and Central Asia many countries that were reviewed do not define gender discrimination, thus leaving it open for arbitrary and capricious interpretations

This report also reveals a tension between protecting the special needs of women and achieving equality of employment between men and women. It is important to design protective measures that foster a more dynamic conceptualization of both men and women's roles. The best response to reform of protective legislation for women is to extend protective legislation to both men and women. Also workplace policies should create more opportunities for men to assume family responsibilities

In this vein, it is also important to outlaw differential retirement policies that call for women to retire earlier than men, and give the opportunity for both men and women to retire early if they wish.

Lastly, the unequal and low ages of marriage are among the most discriminatory provisions in some of the laws in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. One of the first steps taken should be to bring the minimum age of marriage in line with CEDAW and CRC and ensure that the minimum age of marriage is made mandatory.

Around the EECA, human rights norms have been the inspiration for legislation. However, the value of the CEDAW and the human rights framework extends beyond its usefulness in informing legislation, as it also provides accountability in challenging violations of the law and rights, serves as a benchmark in monitoring the fulfillment of rights, and functions as an organizing tool to catalyze communities into taking action. As Amartya Sen argues, “[t]he implementation of human rights can go well beyond legislation....” It is now time for their realization.

It is time now to turn the rhetoric of legal reform in to reality in order to fully realize the powerful potential of those promises enshrined in Conventions that EECA states are party to.