In the Netherlands

The Netherlands, as one of the founding members of Equal Futures Partnership, focusses domestically on the increase of the participation of women in the political and private sector and to counter (domestic) violence against women.

Increased economic participation of women

Domestically, participation of women, in particular in the political arena and in the private sector, is open for improvement. Percentage of women in parliament is 42% and in the Cabinet is 30%. We aim to increase the percentage of women on boards of directors in the private sector, from 9 per cent to 30 per cent in the near future.

To help achieve this and augment self-regulation, the government is promoting the ‘Talent to the Top’ initiative, through which private and public organisations have to commit to concrete objectives.

Combatting violence against women

Furthermore, to enhance the safety of girls and women, we developed a nationwide approach to ‘domestic violence’.

The Netherlands has been implementing a country-wide policy on combating domestic violence. To date a coordinated approach to combat domestic violence is in place at national level. Municipalities play an important role in the execution of this policy.

The Netherlands’ approach is based on three elements:

- A targeted approach to offenders;
- Strengthening the position of actual and potential victims (through prevention, identification, and the provision of shelter and aftercare);
- Breaking the generational cycle of domestic violence.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science and the municipalities work with social media to encourage young voluntary ‘changemakers’ to sign up and support the We Can Young campaign (We Can End All Violence Against Women). The We Can Young campaign will run from 2012 to 2014 and aims to make young people resistant to and take a stand against sexual and other violence, and to deal with conflict and relationships.

Internationally

At the international level, the Netherlands supports (young) women to play a stronger political, economic and public role in their societies, in particular during and after the political transitions in the Middle East and North Africa.

At present the Netherlands supports initiatives to empower women worldwide through its FLOW program and the National Action Plan UNSC res. 1325.

Special effort is made in the Northern Africa and Middle East region where the Netherlands supports multilateral, national and local partners to improve the position of women in the states in transition.

Currently the government of the Netherlands works with Hivos and PwC on a new program: Women on the frontline. The nature of this initiative is to support female participation in politics and strengthen the position of women in the countries in transition. The Netherlands believes that through this initiative, a strong civil society will be able to effectively work on its agenda for equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the MENA region.

The Women on the frontline initiative is open for other partners to join.