

## **Gender and MDGs - Integration of the gender approach in Moroccan economic and social policy**

Except for life expectancy all social and economic indicators for Moroccan women are worse than for men. In the Gender-related Development Index of the UN Human Development Report for 2004, Morocco remains No. 100 (of 144), well behind the other Maghreb states. Moroccan women are at a considerable disadvantage when it comes to basic and vocational and technical education, health, employment and social status. Apart from the persistent influence of traditional behaviour patterns, discrimination against women is mainly caused by restricted access to resources and participation. Women are disadvantaged as recipients of state and private services and particularly as employees in private enterprises in terms of pay, employment conditions and career opportunities.

Promoting gender equality is an integral component of the general political modernization efforts under King Mohamed VI. There has been a decisive improvement in the legal position with the new civil status law (Moudawana) as of January 2004. The broad public is still not informed about the implications, however, and no binding regulations have so far been drafted and applied for implementing the new law.

Since the middle of 2003, GTZ has supported the State Secretariat in charge of the Family, Childhood and Handicapped, the NGO network and AFEM, the association of Moroccan women entrepreneurs (social gender audit as a quality standard measure in private enterprises) in developing a nationwide gender strategy. It prepares studies, reports, databases and white papers on gender aspects (e.g. gender and poverty). These are provided to the most important political decision-makers (e.g. parliamentarians and ministers). Besides this, the project supports the development of methods and instruments (e.g. gender audits, gender budgets at municipal level or user-oriented gender instruments).

The TC project is the first and so far only one supported by a donor organization in Morocco that has gender mainstreaming as its major thematic focus and applies this to three different areas (public administration and policy, NGOs and the private sector). How large a contribution the project can make to improving the economic and social situation of Moroccan women at the end of its full term (May 2009) depends largely on how far women are willing or able to avail themselves of these improved public services.