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**Israel**

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Israeli National Commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission

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Mr. President,

I am Advocate Mariam Kabaha, the Israeli National Commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission for the last 7 years.

The Commission is a unit within the Ministry of Economy and Industry, established in 2008 by virtue of ***The Equal Employment Opportunities Law***. It is mandated to promote equality and to eradicate discrimination in the Israeli labor market.

Israel has made great strides in promoting and protecting the fundamental values of equality, inclusion, and diversity in the workplace, and in fighting against discrimination in all its forms.

The law in Israel explicitly forbids discrimination in employment on various grounds, including gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, reproductive issues, personal status, age, parenthood, nationality, state of origin, place of residence, personal views, political affiliation and reserve service.

The Commission has two main mandates: a legal enforcement power and the implementation of awareness-raising.

Regarding legal enforcement, the Commission handles inquiries and complaints, and provides legal advice and representation in court to victims of violations of equal employment legislation.

Let me provide you with three recent examples:

- First, the Commission filed a lawsuit against a governmental company that discriminated against a candidate based on his national origin, during the recruitment process.

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- Second, a petition is currently pending before the Court, against the Israeli police, that discriminated against a woman due to her gender, hindering her promotion.
- And third, the commission is preparing to file a lawsuit in another case involving discrimination of a transgender person in the recruitment process.

In 2022, the Commission received and handled around 1,400 (fourteen hundred) inquiries and complaints.

In addition to its formal legal roles, the Commission invests great efforts in raising social awareness and encouraging employers to embrace diversity and equality in the workplace.

Regarding women's equality, the Commission issued guidelines to employers, on how to implement the latest **amendment to the *Male and Female Workers (Equal Pay) Law***. According to the amendment, private and public employers with 518 or more employees, have an annual duty to publish reports about the gender wage gap in their workplace.

Furthermore, the Commission is implementing **the gender equal employers'** award, which recognizes employers, who promote equal integration of women in their workplace.

And, as part of Israel's commitment to the inclusion of women and girls in STEM, the Commission trains **high-tech** companies to promote gender-diverse employment with special emphasis on Arab women.

Regarding the Arab population, the Commission is a partner in a program for "**diversifying teacher's rooms**", through the integration of Arab teachers in Jewish schools. It connects the teachers with the schools, and assists with their integration, potentially opening the door for a significant increase of teachers from the Arab community working in Jewish schools. The program also fosters crucial encounters between different groups, enabling them to overcome the social barriers and prejudice, prevalent in Israeli society.

Since 2017, the Commission has operated voluntary **training programs for employers** aiming to enhance diverse and inclusive recruitment in the workplace.

In 2022, the Commission also launched for the first time a **diversity ranking in the business sector**. This ranking measures diversity among the company's employees, and managerial actions that promote an inclusive work environment. Companies made significant efforts to be featured in this first publication, showing the potential of positive change this initiative can achieve.

As you have heard, we have done a lot. Yet, there are still many challenges and much more work to be done, especially in increasing the representation of minorities in the Civil Service.

Mr. President,

Israel believes that a diverse and inclusive labor market can have an immense contribution to the economy and the society. The workplace is not only a source of income, but also a space for personal and professional fulfillment. A place where everyone can and should prove their capabilities and skills, as well as to meet people from different backgrounds, connect and overcome social barriers.

Despite challenges, Israel will continue to work towards a society where everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed, where diversity is celebrated, and where discrimination and bias have no place.

Embracing and promoting equality is not only a moral imperative, but a necessary step towards creating a fair and thriving society.

We thank you for your attention and call on all states to redouble efforts for this important cause.