

General debate - Judith Tielen

Social development and justice

Dear chair, dear delegates,

Let me first thank you all for attending this assembly, and especially Uzbekistan for hosting it all.

Then let me ask you parliamentarians, something about social development and justice.

How did you convince your people to trust you and vote for you? What promise or promises did you make? Was it about social development for all the people in your country, all your voters, including women?

We parliamentarians, representatives, are making many promises. I do too.

My name is Judith Tielen, and I am a member of parliament in the Netherlands, a small country in the top 20 of economic welfare.

I myself promised to stand and fight with my voters for them to become economically free, by ensuring good jobs and sufficient income, enabling successful entrepreneurship and supporting good health.

And if needed, accessible health care.

In other words, yes I also promised social development and growth. To all Dutch people.

Also for Dutch women. Especially for Dutch women.

Because the key barriers for social development in a country are mainly, almost exclusively barriers for women. Also in my country.

Women are at a higher risk for poverty, women are at higher risk for bad health and insufficient care and women are at a frightening high risk for domestic violence and harassment.

My country ranks quite well on gender equality.

But no, there still is no equality:

- Most people are still convinced that women are better than men in taking care for the kids
- Most employers only offer small and insecure jobs to women
- Large income drops fall upon women after giving birth or following a divorce
- Health care professionals too often treat female bodies as smaller males, resulting in all sorts of unhealthy complications
- Freedom in life is much smaller for women

Do you recognise that in your own country?

Although I am an optimistic person, I am not optimistic about gender equality.

In these times the gap between men and women seems to be enlarged. I don't like to say it, but conservative, male tendencies, even forces are making the gap between men and women bigger, at the cost of women. In these times they question basic women's rights, and try to diminish them. In these times the social development of women is at stake.

I am worried. Are you?

I call on us all, women parliamentarians, and yes, also you male politicians, to recognise the fact that social development starts with recognising and fighting for women's rights, with breaking barriers for women's income, prosperity and freedom, with offering women more opportunities to prosper and lead.

I call on you to recognise that and live up to that.

Every day.

Remember the promise you made!

Thank you.