

### **Words matter**

*"...traditional gender roles and stereotypes continue to have a strong influence on the division of roles between women and men in the home, in the workplace and in society at large, with women depicted as running the house and caring for children while men are depicted as wage-earners "* states the Report on Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in the EU.

Through generations, a woman's role has changed tremendously. Women are making a positive impact on today's societies. Nowadays women have made inroads in fields such as politics, engineering, medicine, business; sectors formerly dominated by men.

It is exactly for this reason that the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is concerned about a local advert titled 'Rent a Wife'. This name categorises and stereotypes women as highlighted in the EU Report and impinges on the progress that women have made in their careers and in their participation in the economic development of this country.

Stereotyping not only hinders women's capacity to develop their abilities in professional careers but also limits their life choices. It also enforces the mentality that women and men should perform gender-segregated roles. Having 'Rent a wife' as a company name keeps perpetuating the stereotype that it is the exclusive role of the women to take care of the household whilst men take on the financial responsibilities in the relationship. These messages not only disadvantage women but also men who are already working in this field and can prove detrimental to their job opportunities and to other men who choose to work in this sector.

The NCPE keeps reminding all stakeholders that the Equality for Women and Men Act (Chapter 456) which safeguards equality in the workplace states that it *"shall be unlawful for persons to publish or display or cause to be published or displayed any advertisement, or, otherwise, to advertise a vacancy for employment which discriminates between job seekers or to request from job seekers information concerning their private life or family plans..."*.

Stereotyping and inequality in the workplace are a menace to society as they limit people's freedom and choices. Traits associated with women and men keep the traditional stereotypes alive. However, women and men should have a level playing field with the same opportunities to progress in the sector of their choice.