

BAHRAIN

CEDAW

RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

(Unless otherwise indicated, the reservations and declarations were made upon ratification, accession or succession)

Reservations:

...the Kingdom of Bahrain makes reservations with respect to the following provisions of the Convention:

- Article 2, in order to ensure its implementation within the bounds of the provisions of the Islamic Shariah;
- Article 9, paragraph 2;
- Article 15, paragraph 4;
- Article 16, in so far as it is incompatible with the provisions of the Islamic Shariah;
- Article 29, paragraph 1.

OBJECTIONS MADE TO STATE PARTY'S RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

Austria, 31 March 2003

With regard to the reservation made by Bahrain upon accession:

"The Government of Austria has examined the reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women made by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain in its note to the Secretary-General of 18 June 2002, regarding articles 2, 9(2), 15(4) and 16.

The reservation to articles 9(2) and 15(4), if put into practice, would inevitably result in discrimination against women on the basis of sex. This is contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention.

The Government of Austria further considers that, in the absence of further clarification, the reservation to articles 2 and 16 which does not clearly specify the extent of Bahrain's derogation from the provisions in question raises doubts as to the degree of commitment assumed by Bahrain in becoming a party to the Convention since it refers to the contents of Islamic Sharia.

The Government of Austria would like to recall that, according to art. 28(2) of the Convention as well as customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of a treaty shall not be permitted.

It is in the common interest of States that treaties to which they have chosen to become parties are respected as to their object and purpose, by all parties, and that States are prepared to undertake any legislative changes necessary to comply with their obligations under the treaties.

For these reasons, the Government of Austria objects to this reservation made by the Government of Bahrain.

This position, however, does not preclude the entry into force in its entirety of the Convention between Bahrain and Austria."

Denmark, 28 February 2003

With regard to the reservation made by Bahrain upon accession:

"The Government of Denmark has examined the reservations made by the Government of Bahrain upon accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women regarding article 2, paragraph 2 of article 9, paragraph 4 of article 15 and article 16.

The Government of Denmark finds that the reservation to articles 2 and 16 with reference to the provisions of Islamic Sharia is of unlimited scope and undefined character. Consequently, the Government of Denmark considers the said reservations as being incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention and accordingly inadmissible and without effect under international law.

The Government of Denmark furthermore notes that the reservations to paragraph 2 of article 9 and to paragraph 4 of article 15 of the Convention seek to exclude an obligation of non-discrimination, which is the aim of the Convention. The Government of Denmark finds that these reservations made by the Government of Bahrain are not in conformity with the object and purpose of the Convention.

The Government of Denmark therefore objects to the aforementioned reservations made by the Government of Bahrain to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention in its entirety between Bahrain and Denmark.

The Government of Denmark recommends the Government of Bahrain to reconsider its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women."

Finland, 10 March 2003

With regard to the reservations made by Bahrain upon accession:

"The Government of Finland has carefully examined the contents of the reservations made by the Government of Bahrain to Article 2, paragraph 2 of Article 9, paragraph 4 of Article 15 and to Article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Government of Finland notes that a reservation which consists of a general reference to religious or other national law without specifying its contents does not clearly define to other Parties to the Convention the extent to which the reserving State commits itself to the Convention and therefore creates serious doubts as to the commitment of the receiving State to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. Such reservations are subject to the general principle of treaty interpretation according to which a party may not invoke the provisions of its domestic law as justification for a failure to perform its treaty obligations.

The Government of Finland further notes that the reservations made by Bahrain, addressing some of the most essential provisions of the Convention, and aiming to exclude some of the fundamental obligations under it, are in contradiction with the object and purpose of the Convention.

The Government of Finland also recalls Part VI, Article 28 of the Convention according to which reservations incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention are not permitted.

The Government of Finland therefore objects to the above-mentioned reservations made by the Government of Bahrain to the Convention.

This objection does not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between Bahrain and Finland. The Convention will thus become operative between the two states without Bahrain benefiting from its reservations."

France, 25 April 2003

With regard to reservations made by Bahrain upon accession:

The Government of the Republic of France has examined the reservations made by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain upon accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979. The Government of the Republic of France considers that, by making the implementation of articles 2 and 16 of the Convention subject to respect for the Islamic Shariah, the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain is making two reservations of such a general and indeterminate scope that it is not possible to ascertain which

changes to obligations under the Convention they are intended to introduce. Consequently, the Government of France considers that the reservations as formulated could make the provisions of the Convention completely ineffective. For these reasons, the Government objects to the reservations made in respect of articles 2 and 16 of the Convention, which it considers to be reservations likely to be incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.

The Government of France objects to the reservations made in respect of article 9, paragraph 2, and article 15, paragraph 4, of the Convention.

The Government of France notes that these objections shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women between Bahrain and France.

Germany, 18 February 2003

With regard to the reservations made by Bahrain upon accession:

"The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has examined the reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women made by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain at the time of accession to the Convention.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is of the view that the reservations with regard to the compatibility of the rules of articles 2 and 16 of the Convention with the precepts of Islamic Shariah raises doubts as to the commitment of the Kingdom of Bahrain to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. These reservations are therefore incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.

The reservations to article 9 paragraph 2 and article 15 paragraph 4, if put into practice, would inevitably result in discrimination against women on the basis of sex, which is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.

According to article 28 paragraph 2 of the Convention reservations incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention shall not be permitted.

Therefore, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany objects to the aforesaid reservations made by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Convention.

This objection does not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of Bahrain."

Greece, 13 June 2003

With regard to reservations made by Bahrain upon accession:

"The Government of the Hellenic Republic has examined the reservations made by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain upon accession to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Government of the Hellenic Republic considers that the reservations with respect to articles 2 and 16, which contain a reference to the provisions of the Islamic Sharia are of unlimited scope and, therefore, incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.

The Government of the Hellenic Republic recalls that, according to article 28 (para 2) of the Convention, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention shall not be permitted.

The Government of the Hellenic Republic therefore objects to the aforementioned reservations made by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention in its entirety between Bahrain and Greece."

Netherlands, 22 November 2002

With regard to the reservations made by Bahrain upon accession:

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has examined the reservations made by the Government of Bahrain at the time of its accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands considers that the reservations with respect to article 9, paragraph 2, and article 15, paragraph 4, of the Convention are reservations incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.

Furthermore, the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands considers that the reservations with respect to articles 2 and 16 of the Convention, concerning the Islamic Shariah of Bahrain, reservations which seek to limit the responsibilities of the reserving State under the Convention by invoking the Islamic Shariah, may raise doubts as to the commitment of this State to the object and purpose of the Convention and, moreover, contribute to undermining the basis of international treaty law.

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands recalls that, according to paragraph 2 of Article

28 of the Convention, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention shall not be permitted.

It is in the common interest of States that treaties to which they have chosen to become party are respected, as to their object and purpose, by all parties and that States are prepared to undertake any legislative changes necessary to comply with their obligations under the treaties.

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore objects to the aforesaid reservations made by the Government of Bahrain to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Bahrain.

Sweden, 27 November 2002

With regard to the reservation made by Bahrain upon accession:

"The Government of Sweden has examined the reservation made by Bahrain upon acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, regarding articles 2, 9(2), 15(4) and 16.

The reservation to articles 9(2) and 15(4), if put into practice, would inevitably result in discrimination against women on the basis of sex, which is contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention. It should be borne in mind that the principles of the equal rights of men and women and of non-discrimination on the basis of sex are set forth in the Charter of the United Nations as one of the purposes of the organisation, as well as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

The reservation to articles 2 and 16 make general references to Islamic sharia. The Government of Sweden is of the view that, in absence of further clarification, this reservation which does not clearly specify the extent of Bahrain's derogation from the provisions in question raises serious doubts as to the commitment of Bahrain to the object and purpose of the Convention.

According to article 28(2) of the Convention, reservations incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention shall not be permitted. It is in the common interest of States that treaties to which they have chosen to become parties are respected as to their object and purpose, by all parties, and that States are prepared to undertake any legislative changes necessary to comply with their obligations under the treaties.

The Government of Sweden objects to the aforesaid reservations made by the Government of Bahrain to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and

considers the reservation null and void.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between Bahrain and Sweden. The Convention enters into force in its entirety between the two States, without Bahrain benefiting from its reservation."

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 26 June 2003

With regard to the reservations made by Bahrain upon accession:

"The Government of the United Kingdom have examined the reservations made by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (New York, 18 December 1979) on 18 June 2002 in respect of Article 2, in order to ensure its implementation within the bounds of the provisions of the Islamic Shariah; and Article 16, in so far as it is incompatible with the provisions of the Islamic Shariah.

The Government of the United Kingdom note that a reservation which consists of a general reference to national law without specifying its contents does not clearly define for the other States Parties to the Convention the extent to which the reserving State has accepted the obligations of the Convention. The Government of the United Kingdom therefore object to the aforesaid reservations made by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Kingdom of Bahrain."