

## MONGOLIA

### CEDAW A/41/38 (1986)

69. The Committee considered the initial report of Mongolia (CEDAW/C/5/Add.20) at its 66<sup>th</sup>, 67<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> meetings, on 11 and 13 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/Sr.66, 67 and 70).

70. The representative of Mongolia introduced his country's report by giving a brief summary of the historical, political, socio-economic, cultural and geographical aspects. Since the revolution of 1921, he pointed out, much had been accomplished in the development of Mongolia and one of the most significant achievements was the realization of full equality between men and women in all aspects of life; any attempt to deny women's rights was punishable by law.

71. The representative of Mongolia pointed out that the women of Mongolia were among the first in the Orient to acquire political, economic and civil equality. Mongolian women formed 49 per cent of those working in economic and cultural activities.

72. Attention was drawn to the demographic situation and it was pointed out that children under 16 accounted for 47.1 per cent of the population and that 65 per cent of the population was under the age of 35. The representative of Mongolia pointed out that the Government had given much attention to the question of illiteracy which, before 1921, stood at 98 per cent and which was now totally eliminated. Currently, of every 10,000 persons, 2,373 attended general educational schools, 246 attended specialized secondary educational institutions and vocational schools and 130 attended higher educational establishments. In fact, every fourth person was studying.

73. In Mongolia, the representative continued, the basic provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against women had become a reality. Women enjoyed all political rights on an equal footing with men; the same rights at all levels of education, which was free; and the same rights in terms of employment and remuneration. Paid maternity leave was granted and special consideration was given to nursing mothers. As a result of systematic all-round socio-economic and health-related measures taken by the Government in the past 65 years, the country's population had increased threefold, and life expectancy had more than doubled and now reached 67.

74. The representative of Mongolia pointed out that Mongolian family legislation was designed to strengthen the family and to improve family relations on the basis of equality between men and women.

75. In Mongolia, the Committee of Mongolian Women played an important role in protecting the rights and interests of Mongolian women and it monitored the execution of decisions and legislation in the field of maternal and child welfare.

76. Mongolia, he continued, had considered that the United Nations Decade for Women was an important factor in the struggle for equal rights for women in society and for their active

involvement in the movement to strengthen peace and international security.

77. The representative of Mongolia concluded his introduction by drawing attention to a number of corrections to be made in the English translation of the country report.

78. Many experts commented that considerable progress had been attained in the years following the popular revolution of 1921, especially in the social services provided to women, as well as in legislation. Whereas the representative of the State party, in his introductory speech, had mentioned a proverb that, prior to the popular revolution, women had been treated like slaves in the household and servants to their husbands, it could be noted that the State now provided the necessary framework for the full integration of women into the socio-economic and political life of the country and for the enjoyment of equal rights of women with men in all fields of life of the society. It was asked whether women were still servants to their husbands.

79. Several experts requested statistical information on the percentage of women and men participating in political life, how many were placed in policy-making positions and how many were members of the Communist Party. In that regard, they also asked about the role of the Committee of Mongolian Women in public life, the types of activities it engaged in and whether it could make recommendations to the local or State assemblies in order to improve the status of women in the country.

80. Other experts asked what positive measures were being taken in order to see that the rights accorded to women were really implemented. As there were always discrepancies in the law and in practice, more information was requested on the system of redress, either through courts or through labour institutions. They also asked what kind of sanctions were given to those found guilty of discrimination. Since there was no mention in the report as to obstacles encountered, it was asked whether the Government felt that the present situation was satisfactory in regard to the status of women.

81. In regard to article 5, one expert requested information on the progress achieved in overcoming prejudices and attitudes detrimental to women and asked specifically if the superiority of the male sex still prevailed. It was also asked what role religion played in influencing certain attitudes and behaviour of both men and women and whether the traditional and customary practices, if any, had been overcome. Another expert noted that in the legal annexes, such as the Labour code, provided in the report, there seemed to be an over protection of women in their maternal role while the terminology used in the initial report itself made women either invisible or simple numerical averages. It was asked whether a commission entrusted with the analysis of problems such as those mentioned above had been created.

82. One expert remarked that no information had been provided on articles 6, 7 and 12 relating to the suppression of prostitution, participation in public life and health.

83. With regard to article 9, one expert requested clarification as to the right of women to keep their own nationality.

84. Many experts commended Mongolia for having almost eradicated illiteracy. More information

was requested on the percentages of women attending all institutions of learning, as well as statistical information on women and men attending institutions of higher learning in all educational disciplines. Special concern was expressed with regard to women being able to attend professional and technical institutions conventionally attended only by men. It was also asked whether the Government had taken measures both through education and the media to address the problem of sex stereotyping.

85. Also of general concern was the status of rural women, since the population in the rural areas was greater than that in the urban areas. Questions were asked regarding educational measures being taken to upgrade the skills of rural women, their cultural involvement and access to facilities which seemed to be more readily accessible to women living in the cities.

86. Several experts noted that in regard to article 11 of the Convention, statistical information was necessary on women's employment by sector and occupational group and by levels within these groups, as well as by comparison to male employment, in order to allow the Committee to have an overview of the situation. It was recognized that the principle of equal pay for equal work had already been conquered but it was questioned whether that was the actual practice in the country. One expert asked how an individual was qualified to become a workers' hero. Clarifications were also sought on the terms "manual work," "fixed work," "socially useful" and "heavy loads" and how they were determined and by whom. The representative of Mongolia was also asked if he could present the list of work which prohibited the employment of women.

87. Several experts remarked that combined measures to protect mothers, such as maternity leave prior to and after the birth of a child, and their gainful employment showed that significant advance in the improvement of the status of women in Mongolia had taken place. It was asked whether women were able to keep their employment if they decided to raise their children and take extended leave after maternity leave. One expert referred to page 8 of the report of Mongolia and asked what kind of subsidies did a family with numerous children receive. On the other hand, it was asked how women who were childless were treated. One expert asked for more information on the provisions for paternal leave, what was meant by bread-winner when referring to pensions and whether the latter referred only to men as the head of the household.

88. It was remarked that the nature of the Mongolian family, whether nuclear or extended, had not been explained in that report and that it was difficult to understand the changes that had taken place within the family structure and society. More background information was requested on the availability of family planning programmes, sex education and the participation of the father in the raising of children and in housework.

89. One expert, remarking that divorce laws constricted rather than freed women since marriage could only be dissolved by mutual consent provided there were no minor children, asked what would happen if no agreement was reached by the couple, if the couple could appeal to a court and under which provisions would a court examine the case. Another expert asked whether information could be provided on the property rights of spouses, the nationality rights of children and the consequences of divorce on the same.

90. An expert referred to article 12 of the Convention and to the fact that more details were needed

on health care facilities for both rural and urban women. It was mentioned that in order to assess progress in this regard vital statistics should be provided, such as maternal and child mortality, life expectancy of both men and women, and the availability of medical facilities, such as those required for abortion.

91. Other experts inquired about adoption laws and the benefits women received when they adopted a child. One expert asked if the subsidies received by a natural mother were different from those received by a mother who had adopted a child. Another expert requested additional information on subsidies received by a mother on maternity leave and whether a full salary was paid during that leave.

92. In responding to the questions raised, the representative of Mongolia stressed that equal rights were guaranteed in his country and that the solution of women's problems was inseparable from the general advancement of his Government.

93. With regard to questions raised on employment, the representative pointed out that, under socialism, every citizen has a guaranteed right to work and to receive payment for work in accordance with its quantity and quality. There was no unemployment and there was equal pay for equal work.

94. The representative of Mongolia stressed that all able-bodied women who wish to are permitted to study or are employed in the national economy and culture, and today there is no branch in the economy and culture where women are not employed. Women made up 49.2 per cent of the labour force in 1983, 46.6 per cent in material production and 57.2 per cent in the non-material sphere; he cited some figures for the participation of women in the labour force. In order to protect women from undertaking certain kinds of hazardous work, the Labour Code forbade the employment of women underground at work that was heavy and hazardous to women's health. A woman cannot be dismissed because of pregnancy or because she is nursing a child, nor can her wages be lowered because of those conditions.

95. With regard to questions on pension, the representative stated that the Pensions Act and the Labour Code gave all citizens the entitlement to an old-age pension: women at the age of 55 and men at the age of 60. Many people, he pointed out, did decide to continue working beyond retirement age.

96. The representative of Mongolia pointed out that illiteracy had been eliminated long before, and that compulsory eight-year education had been introduced. He also cited some statistics on education and pointed out that female students comprised 55.7 per cent of the student population.

97. With regard to the family, he replied that men and women had equal rights in family relations; all members shared in household duties; women had equal property rights; and children born out of wedlock enjoyed the same rights as other children. It was also possible for men to take special paid leave to look after a sick child, spouse or parent.

98. The representative of Mongolia pointed out that motherhood was considered a privilege and an honour. He also informed the Committee that the decision for the number of children rested with the

spouses; medical care and education were free; and crèches, education and cultural facilities were also free. Women had benefits of maternity leave and there were additional benefits for nursing mothers. It was pointed out that rural women enjoyed the same social and political rights as urban women.

99. The representative informed the Committee that a single person had the right to adopt a child providing that the person had reached the marriage age, was mentally stable, and had no legal convictions nor was subject to lawsuits.

100. With regard to questions on divorce, the representative stated that dissolution of marriage was denied when the wife was pregnant or when there was a child under one year of age (this was a measure designed to safeguard the rights of the child) or when the spouse was gravely ill or injured. Children traditionally assumed the father's name.

101. In Mongolia, the representative replied, abortion was prohibited unless there were exceptional circumstances; illegal abortion was an offence.

102. There was no prostitution in Mongolia, the representative stated, and it was a punishable offence. He also stated that rape or violence against a female were also punishable offences.

103. The representative stated that any form of discrimination was prohibited by law and complaints could be filed at the place of work or in the courts. All work places had legal advisers, unions and public organizations to monitor the implementation of legislation.

104. With regard to the question on citizenship rights, the representative explained that if a Mongolian citizen married a foreigner he/she retained his/her citizenship but could change nationality if desired. Children of such marriages were considered Mongolian citizens.

105. In response to questions about the Committee of Mongolian Women, the representative pointed out that it organized a congress every five years and was responsible for involving women in active participation in national development and for monitoring and improving educational levels of women, living and working conditions and facilities for mothers and children. The Committee had full authority to monitor the implementation of legislation in the field of maternal and child welfare.

106. In response to some additional questions, the representative of Mongolia informed the Committee that sexist publicity was prohibited in Mongolia. On the question of divorce, the interests of both spouses and children were fully taken into account in divorce proceedings. He also pointed out that while it was traditional for children to assume the father's name, the use of the mother's name was also acceptable.

107. With regard to the list of work which prohibited the employment of women, the representative stressed that such prohibition was enacted purely in the interest of the women since those jobs were considered hazardous but, with improved automation and mechanization, it was envisaged that more jobs would become open to women.

108. On the question of abortion, the representative stated that he was not in the position to

comment on whether abortion laws could be liberalized.

109. With regard to clarifying the meaning of “communist morality,” the representative of Mongolia pointed out that this was the basis that governed Mongolian society, ensuring mutual respect among family members. Since Mongolia had a socialist system of economy, the means of production were in common ownership and not only of a few, therefore exploitation did not occur and equality for all was ensured.

110. On the question about household activities being considered an economic activity, the representative of Mongolia informed the Committee that information on this would be reflected in the second report.

## **CEDAW A/45/38 (1990)**

370. The Committee considered the second periodic report of Mongolia (CEDAW/C/13/Add.7) at its 164<sup>th</sup> meeting, on 31 January 1990 (CEDAW/C/SR.164).

371. The representative of Mongolia introduced the second report by noting that it had been prepared in 1986 and circulated in 1987. In the intervening three years there had been major changes in the country in connection with perestroika which began with economic reform in 1987 and had subsequently been extended to other areas. Restructuring aimed at bringing socialism to a new stage and to shift to a more humane-centred development, including changing from command methods of administration to economic ones. There had been resistance to restructuring and the process had brought to the forefront many unresolved social problems, especially in terms of the working and living conditions of the rural population in terms of services and infrastructure.

372. There were also unresolved problems concerned with the exercise of equality by women, who constituted both half of the population and the workforce and 40 per cent of the specialists with higher education. Although de jure equality existed, in practice efforts were still required to permit women to combine their functions as mother, worker and citizen, and priority was being given to the solution of social problems affecting women, children and families. Among them were the need to improve working and living conditions of women, especially in the rural areas where conditions were less favourable than in urban areas, reduction of the work week for women with children, an increase in the amount of child-care facilities available, as the current facilities met only one fifth of the needs, improving the conditions of occupational safety and health.

373. The Government realized that the problems were difficult and would need a step-by-step approach within the scarce resources available. Some results had already been achieved, for example in December 1989 and the Presidium of the Great People's Khural enacted four decrees affecting women and children. They included amendments to the Public Health Law to give women the right to decide on the number and spacing of their children and permitting abortion in hospitals under medical supervision, amendment of the labour code to extend paid maternity leave to cover early child care with job protection and continuity in seniority (a provision which also applied to single women), amendment to the Law of Pensions, for example, to entitle women who had had four or more children and had worked at least 15 years to a full pension at 50 years of age, to entitle women and men who needed to care for children and grandchildren below three years to retire up to three years earlier and a granting of pre- and post-natal as well as child-care leave to students at higher educational establishments and vocational technical schools. A number of measures had been taken to improve the working and living conditions of women including wage increases in economic sectors where women were in the majority, a law of individual business to permit individuals, including women, to choose their own economic activity, a decree from the parliament to increase the number of cattle to be held as private property, special measures in the next five-year plan on maternal and child care, improving of working and living conditions of women, single mothers and mothers with many children, a plan to double the number pre-school institutions in the next plan period, introduction of flex-time and similar arrangements for the parents of young children, and a demographic policy.

374. She noted that political activity of women had increased and that in June 1990 the quinquennial Congress of Mongolian Women would be held and a proposal to give the Committee of Mongolian Women the right to initiate legislation, as well as to create a national machinery, were under consideration. On the tenth anniversary of the Convention, it was being published in a national mass-circulation newspaper.

375. Regarding questions on article 2, the representative noted that equality legislation was being improved by strengthening the penal code for impeding women in the exercise of their rights, *inter alia*, by providing punishments ranging from fines and loss of job to imprisonment. Similar punishments were expected for violations of provisions of the labour legislation. Women's organization representatives were expected to participate in the governance of state enterprises on matters relating to labour and social issues. There was no institution specifically monitoring achievement of women's rights, but the matter was pursued through the judicial system. There was no special research institute on women, but a growing amount of research was taking place in the main scientific research institutions.

376. On article 5, in relation to a question on the way the recognition of the common responsibility of women and men with regard to the education of their children was being assured, it was stated that both parents had obligations. In response to a follow-up question, it was stated that religion was connected with history, culture and art and was considered to be the spirit of the people. Interest in it was increasing, but it did not have a negative influence on women, either currently or historically. There were no persisting traditional practices that worked against women.

377. With regard to article 6, responding to questions on prostitution and AIDS, the representative said that there were no recorded cases of prostitution and that, moreover, pornography was banned. Mongolia was AIDS-free and efforts were being made to prevent the development and spread of the epidemic, including education in the schools and sex education.

378. Regarding questions under article 7, she stated that women had begun to be elected to public bodies in 1925 and currently comprised 24.9 per cent of the deputies to the national parliament and 28.7 per cent of deputies to local councils. Women constituted 6 per cent of the membership of the Central Committee of the MPRP. Three women were members of its central audit committee. Currently, a woman was Deputy Chairperson of the Great People's Khural and seven women were deputy ministers. The Central Committee of the Party had adopted a decree on the promotion of women to leadership posts in 1985 but it was being implemented slowly and not consistently, influenced by objective factors such as low level of preparedness for political activities and absence of social infrastructure and subjective prejudices and attitudes against that participation. Because of restructuring, the progress might be more rapid in future and could be reflected in forthcoming elections.

379. Responding to questions about international level participation in the context of article 8, she stated that women participated actively in bilateral and multilateral activities, including those relating to international peace and co-operation and the requirements were the same for both women and men. Mongolia was under represented in the United Nations Secretariat and the only Mongolian working there was a woman.



380. In response to the Committee's question on the measures through which women had equal rights with men with regard to the nationality of their children, in regard to article 9, she stated that the law made no distinction between men and women, even in cases of divorce.

381. Concerning questions about access to education under article 10, it was noted that 40 per cent of the specialists in the economy with higher education were women, up from 27 per cent in 1975. The proportion of women in institutions of higher education had been increasing steadily and women now made up 55.7 per cent, as well as 50.6 per cent of students in secondary schools and 60.3 per cent of students in vocational-technical schools. Few students of either sex dropped out of school.

382. There was no difference in wages between women and men in the same profession; it was stated in response to Committee questions on article 11, that wages depended on education level and profession. Based on a follow-up question, she noted that several areas of the economy, such as health services and general education, social and community services, were feminized. There were policies to encourage women to enter non-traditional fields such as science and technology where there were 37 per cent women, and law, where there were 35 per cent. With 40 per cent of the population under 16 and most families having four children (or five to six in the rural areas), child care was a problem. There were places for only 20 per cent of the demand; the policy of the next five-year plan was to reach 30 per cent and enterprises were being encouraged to provide their own facilities.

383. Responding to questions on article 12, it was stated that the decree adopted on 23 December 1989 was to permit women to decide on the number and spacing of their children, as specified in the Convention. Under the new legislation, abortions were permitted on request of the woman, free and without conditions, in the first three months of pregnancy. After three months, permission from medical authorities was required.

384. There were no differences between women and men in economic rights, including access to credit. The new law on individual work and the increases in wages in the medical profession, which was made up of many women, would help women's economic status.

385. Regarding article 14, problems of rural women reflected the difference between rural and urban areas in amenities although there were few relevant statistics. An expert mission of the Economic and Social Committee for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had noted the differences. Women mostly worked as livestock breeders within co-operatives and therefore were all paid. There were lower wages for some types of work and there might be unpaid work in the home in connection with personnel cattle, although that did produce income for the family.

## **CEDAW A/56/38 (Part I) (2001)**

234. The Committee considered the combined third and fourth periodic report of Mongolia (CEDAW/C/MNG/3-4) at its 504th and 505th meetings, on 29 January 2001 (see CEDAW/C/SR.504 and 505).

### **(a) Introduction by the State party**

235. In introducing the report, the representative of Mongolia informed the Committee that Mongolia had been one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 1981. She also informed the Committee that in 1998, the Parliament of Mongolia had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention. Mongolia had signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention in September 2000, and the procedures towards ratification were under way in Parliament.

236. The representative emphasized that during the 10 years since the submission of its second report, Mongolia had seen radical changes in its political, economic and social life. Mongolia had become a country with a parliamentary Government and a multi-party system. Mongolia had become party to 30 international human rights treaties and had adopted relevant policies and enacted or amended legislation in accordance with its treaty obligations.

237. The representative informed the Committee that the Mongolian Constitution prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex. The rights of women to education, employment, as well as to participate in politics, were also protected by the Constitution and other legislation.

238. Reporting on actions taken pursuant to the Convention, the representative informed the Committee that legislation had been amended and new legislation introduced in order to integrate the basic tenets of the Convention into the legislative framework and government policies and programmes. National programmes had been implemented to address the special needs of rural women, and initiatives to introduce advanced technology and create more job opportunities had been put in place.

239. The representative highlighted the Health Law, which had come into force in 1998, and the new Labour Code, which contained specific provisions prohibiting discrimination in the workplace. The Family Law had come into force in 1999 and provided for women's equal rights to inheritance, land use and ownership of livestock and other property. The representative said that the State Great Hural (Parliament) had recently adopted the Law on the National Human Rights Commission, and that, in collaboration with international organizations, the Government had launched a process of a nationwide discussion to develop a national programme on human rights.

240. The representative informed the Committee of some of the achievements in implementing the Convention in Mongolia. These included the creation of an appropriate legal environment, an increase of the participation of non-governmental organizations, the development and implementation of gender policies and the high level of education among women. Factors that had hindered the full implementation of the Convention included the lack of a specific national machinery, the high maternal mortality rate, the low participation of women in political decision-

making, the discrepancies between different geographic areas and social groups, the rise in domestic violence against women and the lack of legal literacy among women.

241. The representative concluded by reporting on Mongolia's strategies for future implementation of the Convention. These were the improvement of the national coordination and integrating mechanism, the establishment of an integrated database, ongoing analysis of existing laws, a comprehensive review of the rural sector and the strengthening of cooperation between government and non-governmental organizations to promote the legal literacy of women.

#### (b) Concluding comments of the Committee

##### Introduction

242. The Committee expresses its satisfaction at the submission of the combined third and fourth periodic report of Mongolia and the answers to the questions of the pre-session working group. It welcomes the oral updating statement, in particular the various strategies envisaged for the future implementation of the Convention.

##### Positive aspects

243. The Committee commends the Government for ratifying the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention and taking steps to ratify the Optional Protocol.

244. The Committee notes that some legislative reforms regarding women have been undertaken, inter alia, provisions prohibiting discrimination in the workplace and prohibitions that allow for women's equal rights to inheritance, land use and ownership of livestock and other property. It also notes the Government's recognition of women's non-governmental organizations.

245. The Committee commends the progress made in providing women with access to education and the achievement of high levels of participation at the tertiary level.

246. The Committee welcomes the efforts to undertake a situation analysis of women in Mongolia and to develop a national programme of action for the advancement of women, with technical support from international organizations.

##### Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

247. The Committee notes that the persistence of stereotypical and patriarchal attitudes to the role of women in the family and the community prevents the enjoyment by women of human rights and denies them the opportunity to participate fully in national development.

248. The Committee considers that the negative effects of the country's ongoing transition to a market economy are major impediments to the full implementation of the Convention.

##### Principal areas of concern and recommendations

249. The Committee notes with deep concern the deteriorating situation of women in Mongolia in a period of economic transformation. It expresses its particular concern that the Government has failed to prevent the erosion of women's rights to economic advancement, health, education, political participation and personal security.

250. The Committee urges the Government to protect and promote women's human rights and to utilize the development and technical resources available as well as the human resources of the country, including civil society and women's groups, so as to reverse this trend.

251. The Committee is concerned that poverty is widespread among women as a consequence of privatization and other factors linked to the transition to a market economy.

252. The Committee calls upon the Government to collect data and information on women living in poverty, disaggregated by age and according to urban and rural areas; to develop targeted policies and support services; to make efforts to prevent more women from falling below the poverty line; and in particular to address the situation of households headed by women.

253. The Committee expresses its concern that, although the Constitution provides for the equality of all citizens before the law, it does not reflect the definition of discrimination in article 1 of the Convention, which prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination. It also expresses its concern that there are no remedies available to women to redress violations of their rights.

254. The Committee calls upon the Government to undertake legal reforms so as to ensure that the full meaning of article 1 of the Convention is reflected in the country's Constitution and legislation, and that constitutional rights are enforceable.

255. The Committee notes that a series of laws have been enacted but have not been analysed for their potentially discriminatory impact on women. It expresses its concern that laws are not effectively enforced so as to protect women's human rights.

256. The Committee calls upon the Government to review and reform all gender discriminatory laws, in consultation with professional and women's groups. It urges the Government to strengthen law enforcement and to provide effective remedies through the courts. The Committee requests the Government to develop legal literacy programmes for the community and gender-sensitization programmes for judges and law enforcement officials.

257. The Committee notes with concern that Mongolia has not yet specifically developed gender-sensitization and legal literacy programmes for its large youth population.

258. The Committee calls upon the Government to extend its distance education programmes for the youth population to include gender education programmes as soon as possible. The Committee considers that the youth population can be an important resource in changing stereotypical and patriarchal attitudes in society.

259. The Committee expresses its concern that the high achievement levels of women in education are not reflected in their participation in legislative national and local government bodies, and in

decision-making posts in administration.

260. The Committee urges the Government to introduce temporary special measures, in conformity with the Convention, and public awareness and human rights education programmes that will create a supportive environment for women's greater participation in public life.

261. The Committee expresses its deep concern that the phenomenon of violence against women, has not been adequately addressed in laws, policies and programmes. It expresses particular concern at the long delay in enacting the proposed legislation on domestic violence.

262. The Committee urges the Government to enact the proposed domestic violence law, including marital rape provisions, to strengthen law enforcement and to develop a holistic range of initiatives to respond to violence against women in the light of general recommendation 19 and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

263. The Committee notes that a range of institutions and agencies deal with gender issues in an ad hoc manner and do not coordinate their work. The Committee expresses its concern that although the Government has recognized the weakness of the national machinery it has not provided information on new initiatives to address this problem.

264. The Committee urges the Government to establish strong and effective national machinery so that the Convention and the Beijing Platform or Action can be integrated into development plans. It considers that gender mainstreaming must be effectively coordinated and monitored. The Committee recommends that gender concerns be integrated into the work of the Commission on Human Rights and that women be appointed as members of this body.

265. The Committee expresses its concern that limited steps have been taken to combat prostitution and trafficking in women.

266. The Committee urges the Government to take steps to prosecute persons engaged in organizing prostitution and to adopt effective measures to combat trafficking in women.

267. The Committee expresses its deep concern at the negative impact of privatization on women's access to adequate health care and education.

268. The Committee calls upon the Government to ensure that these services are not reduced, and that, in particular, the areas of health and education do not suffer as a result of privatization.

269. The Committee expresses its concern that Mongolia places the responsibility of family and childcare exclusively on women particularly as the population policy encourages women to have large families. It notes that this situation encourages their marginalization in the economy and exacerbates poverty.

270. The Committee urges the Government to develop laws, policies and educational programmes that support and promote the idea of joint parental responsibility and prevent discrimination against women because of their family responsibilities.

271. The Committee expresses its concern about the high level of unemployment of women.

272. The Committee urges the Government to establish a legislative basis that ensures women equal access to the labour market and equal opportunities to work and prevents direct and indirect discrimination in employment. It calls upon the Government to implement unemployment policies aimed at reducing the unemployment of women.

273. The Committee expresses its concern with regard to women's health throughout their life cycle. The Committee also expresses its concern that economic hardship impacts negatively on women's reproductive and mental health. In particular, the Committee notes with concern the acute problem of maternal mortality, owing in part to abortions performed under unsafe conditions and the non-availability of family planning services.

274. The Committee urges the Government to maintain adequate safe, affordable and accessible physical and mental health services for women throughout their life cycle. It also urges the Government to increase access, particularly in the rural areas, to affordable contraceptives for women and men, and to provide sex education to girls and boys.

275. The Committee expresses its concern that much of the information provided in the oral and written responses was not related to the current situation of women in Mongolia.

276. The Committee requests that the Government provide pertinent information on the situation of women in its next report as well as information on the other concerns raised in the present concluding comments.

277. The Committee encourages the Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

278. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Mongolia of the current concluding comments in order to make the people, in particular government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure the de jure and de facto equality of women, as well as of further steps that are required in this regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the results of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".