

## TURKEY

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

284. The Committee considered the initial report of Turkey (CEDAW/C/5/Add.46 and Amend.1) at its 161<sup>st</sup> and 165<sup>th</sup> meetings, on 29 and 31 January 1990 (CEDAW/C/SR.161 and 165).

285. Introducing her country's report, the representative of the Government said that discrimination against women still persisted in many countries of the world, and also in Turkey. The equality of women and men had received official recognition early in history due to the foresight of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and a series of reforms were introduced subsequently to bring women nearer to the goal of equality. She said that under the Constitution there should be no discrimination of any kind, the social structure was free-flowing and democratic and indeed more laws discriminated in favour of women than against them. She also said that in the western parts of the country, women generally shared a position of equality, whereas in the east, old, stereotyped roles of women in the society persisted.

286. An issue that adversely affected the position of women in Turkey was the population growth and the country was making great efforts to make the entire population family planning conscious. Accordingly, many non-governmental organizations were active and successful in supplying women and children with protective medical care, including contraceptives. Consequently, the rate of increase of the population was gradually slowing down. A national machinery for women's issues had been set up in 1987 and another department responsible for family affairs had recently been installed. Following the launching of a literacy campaign in 1980, the illiteracy figures dropped in absolute and relative terms, with the percentage of girl students who completed schooling on the increase.

287. Although there was no discrimination between men and women in employment, only very few women held top-level jobs as a result of the lower educational level of the average woman and of less vocational training received by women. There were very few female members of Parliament, but for the first time in history, there was a woman minister, the Minister of Labour and Social Security. In the armed forces women could participate only in the educational and administrative spheres but were not allowed to hold the post of district governor.

288. She said that maternity and child health services were free of charge and that the husband could take three days of paid leave at the time of the birth of his child. With regard to the reservations placed on articles 15 and 16 of the Convention, she said that as a result of steps taken by various women's organizations and the mass media, a committee had been set up in the Parliament to review the Civil Law and she hoped that all reservations would be withdrawn before the submission of the second periodic report.

289. Members of the Committee commended the Government of Turkey for acceding to the Convention in 1985 and submitting the report in timely fashion in 1987. In congratulating the distinguished representative for her presentation, it was noted that the report was frank and attempted to state clearly the situation of women in Turkey. In their general comments, members

of the Committee noted the discrepancy between the provisions of the Constitution and the reservations made in respect of articles 15 and 16 of the Convention with regard to certain provisions in Turkish Civil Law that were contradictory to the stipulations of the Convention. They asked about the prospects of withdrawing the reservations and also about any proposals for changing the Civil Law and expressed the hope that Turkish Family Law would soon be changed. Members formed the impression that Turkish women were not supported by a strong commitment of the Government in their struggle for equality. They asked of the role of non-governmental organizations and whether they had been involved in preparing the report. Clearer information was required about the different status of urban and rural women and about the needs of rural women in the education and health sectors. Questions were asked about the fields in which women had recorded greater advancement than men and what was meant by the “ideal” equality between the rights of women and men. Members, while applauding the reforms introduced by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, noted that the current Constitution constituted a step backwards. Commenting on the fact that women were scarcely visible in the streets in Turkey, members asked whether the reason was that Turkish women were not too active in society or whether it was prohibited or dangerous for Turkish women to walk around outside the house. They also asked about the sort of problems women encountered as a result of the social structure for women in the fields of education and employment. They also asked about the implications of the recently emerging fundamentalist movement of women in the fields of education.

290. With regard to article 2, it was noted that the report did not contain any reference to mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the principle of equality between women and men, and requested further information on the national machinery, its staff and budget. Members also asked whether the review of women’s rights was going in a negative or positive direction and felt that the comment that “discrimination was foreign to the Turkish temperament” was not appropriate, and that that remark, as well as the remark that the low number of women in high-level posts was to be explained by the “poverty of desire” showed a tendency to put the responsibility for the lack of equality on women themselves. However, such an explanation would not be accepted by the members, and it was not enough to explain the lack of concern for women’s rights by merely linguistic reasons. It was also asked whether research was made on the status of women and which were the points that disturbed the equality between the two sexes. With reference to the fact that women prisoners had allegedly been subjected to torture and rape, inquiries were made as to whether Turkish women had the same access to legal aid as men.

291. Regarding article 3, it was asked what prevented women from being appointed as governors and whether women’s organizations had a political influence. Clarification was sought as to whether the Convention could be invoked in civil and legal concerns and what the Government was doing to ensure equal rights of women.

292. The meagre information with reference to article 4 was noted, and it was asked whether the Government envisaged adopting temporary special measures. Members inquired whether specific targets were set in the fields of education, health, female participation in politics and in the employment sector.

293. On article 5, information was requested on measures to modify cultural patterns to eliminate prejudice and values which assigned stereotyped roles to women. It was asked whether the women’s

movements were active in that respect. Their reports in that respect provided contradictory data on the advancement of women, accepting stereotyped attitudes as being positive. With reference to the modest professional aspirations of married women, it was asked whether the Government was satisfied with that situation and whether women and men should not rather adopt equal responsibilities in the family.

294. Concerning article 6, members asked how prostitution was regulated, the percentage of Turkish women engaging in prostitution and whether rehabilitation of prostitute minors was envisaged and whether the prostitution of minors was given any specific legal treatment. Comments were made on the low penalty for rape arising from prostitution. A question was asked to ascertain the attitude of the public in that respect and whether there were plans by the Government to amend that legal provision.

295. Under article 7, members asked what was being done to raise the number of women in Parliament and in politics generally, why the proposal for a quota system was not received favourably, and for statistical data on the number of women in the health, legal, banking, higher administrative and business fields, and as government employees and also about the participation of women in trade unions. Questions were asked why the percentage of women members of Parliament had decreased drastically since 1935 and whether the quota of 10 per cent for women in the judiciary was accurate. If so, whether such a low quota was compatible with the concept of equality.

296. With regard to article 8, more detailed information was requested on women in the diplomatic service.

297. Concerning article 9, members inquired whether Turkish women married to aliens transmit their citizenship to their children.

298. Regarding article 10, members noticed a segregation in secondary education and asked whether fathers who cut short the education of their daughters were punishable and whether the low minimum age of marriage did not constitute a handicap to girls in the education and employment fields. Several questions referred to the high rate of illiteracy and to the reasons for the disparity between women and men concerning literacy programmes. It was asked whether the literacy rate was any different for urban and for rural women and what the situation was concerning minority groups. Members requested a breakdown by gender and percentage of youths in public and in private schools. Questions were asked as to whether co-education was obligatory, whether efforts were being made to change the stereotyped image of women and men in school textbooks, what "the travelling women's courses" meant, the subjects covered by the educational television programmes and why only a few girls sat for the competitive examinations to enter the universities. Further information on the centres for applied arts was requested. Members enquired whether sex education was part of the school curricula and whether girls were encouraged to follow non-traditional careers. It was asked whether the high percentage of the female students in the field of mass communication and the media would find appropriate jobs in order to contribute to a change of the role of women in society. Members inquired also whether the Convention and its aspirations were being publicized.

299. Under article 11, information on comparative data on salaries of women and men in urban and rural areas and further clarification on the social security system were requested. Questions were asked about the extent to which women utilized their maternity leave, whether they could return to the same job afterwards and whether parental leave existed, whether there were training programmes for women for interrupted their paid work, whether women could undertake part-time employment, whether they received unemployment compensation and as to the rate of unemployment. Clarification was sought on the data given in the report on the overall wage-earning labour force. Further information was requested on migrant women workers, on the number of women who worked in the tourist sector and on the voluntary insurance of housewives. Members asked how the problem of sexual harassment was dealt with, whether hidden discrimination in employment still existed and how the rule of equal pay for equal work was enforced both in the public and in the private sector. It was asked whether women were hesitant to take their children to nurseries.

300. Experts inquired whether girls received training and professional guidance, whether single women had the same rights in the employment sector as married women and whether married women needed their husband's consent for doing outside work, and if done without the husband's agreement, whether that constituted a ground for divorce. Comments were made on the early age of retirement for women. It was asked whether housewives were automatically covered by their husbands' social security protection and the percentage of women and men not covered by any social security system. Members inquired whether the Government was making any efforts on a bilateral basis to improve the situation of migrant workers and whether it offered special programmes to young women who migrated back to their country of origin after having received special knowledge and skills in their countries of migration. It was asked whether certain types of work were prohibited for women because of health or any other implications.

301. With reference to article 12, members sought clarification on the situation concerning abortion and inquired about the number of family planning centres, the way in which knowledge about family planning was disseminated and whether women had access to family planning services without their husbands' consent. Population and related statistics indicating the number of births per woman were sought. It was asked whether there was legislation concerning violence against women and shelters for battered women.

302. With regard to article 13, members asked how access of women to bank loans was being guaranteed.

303. Turning to article 14, members requested more information on rural women, they requested the percentage working in rural enterprises, whether such women received social security benefits, literacy training, and whether they were reached by extension workers. Other questions referred to the number of women in the carpet weaving industry, their income and social security coverage and the age at which girls started work in that industry. It was asked whether men remained the decision makers in the family, even after their migration to the cities.

304. Members noted that the reservations expressed by Turkey in respect of articles 15 and 16 reflected the extent to which discrimination still existed in those areas. Under article 15, the questions referred to freedom of movement for the woman, the choice of domicile, the possibility to travel inside the country and abroad without her father's or husband's consent.

305. Under article 16, it was noted that the reports made no mention of the family and household duties of fathers. Further details were requested about de facto unions, the grounds for divorce for women and for men, the rate of divorce and the inheritance rights of girls compared to those of boys. Members took the view that a revision of the family code with respect to the choice of the married woman's family name would be most appropriate.

306. In replying to questions raised by members of the Committee, the representative of Turkey emphasized the importance her country attached to the Convention and its determination to implement its provisions. Women's organizations, the mass media and public opinion were at times working as pressure groups on the political parties. Currently, the country was undergoing transformation through rapid urbanization, industrialization and modernization and the gradual introduction of the nuclear family. The urban women benefited to a greater extent from those changes, whereas, on the other hand, the general problem of unemployment heightened also the dimension of unemployment for women.

307. Non-governmental organizations had been informally consulted while the country report was being prepared. She noted that in Turkey, as in other countries, there was a fundamentalist movement, but their political impact was minimal. The main concern was with women in rural areas and the eradication of traditional social and economic differences prevailing in those areas. Women's associations and the mass media strongly supported literacy and family planning campaigns in rural regions and paid special attention to girls and families who migrated from rural to urban areas. She said that the statement that only a few women were visible in the streets was incorrect.

308. Turning to comments made under article 2, she said that the Constitution and several other laws were all based on the principle of equality. Although the status of women in Turkey was not entirely satisfactory, women themselves were not responsible for that situation. However, through various organizations, women had started to make their voice heard, which was a first positive sign. With regard to detained women, there was no discriminatory treatment between women and men. She said that the State Planning Organization encompassed the national machinery that had been set up in 1987 to deal with all questions regarding women. It consisted of presidents of several women's associations, representatives of various ministries and universities and worked centrally. It was consulted in the preparation of the most recent five-year plan.

309. Referring to questions raised under article 3, she said that the rule that prevented women from being appointed as governors was a remnant of the past and there was a strong tendency to change that rule. Although women's groups worked as pressure groups, their pressure was not strong enough to affect political decisions.

310. The concept of "ideal equality" referred to complete and full equality between men and women and measures were being taken to recruit more women in certain professions.

311. Turning to article 5, she stated that Turkish women gave priority to their functions as wives and mothers as a result of prevailing traditions. However, special instructive television programmes were geared towards the elimination of prejudices and customs and most men of the present generation considered life as a joint venture and assisted their wives in household duties.

312. Referring to article 6, she said that under the Penal Code the reduction of the penalty for raping a prostitute was accurate and that the court decision had created enormous reaction by women in all strata and by the mass media.

313. Turning to article 7, she said that only six women were members of Parliament and there was only one woman minister. No quota had been introduced so far in party administration or on electoral lists, and only recently one party introduced a 25 per cent quota for party bodies at all levels. In December 1989, women constituted 21.20 per cent of lawyers, 12.06 per cent in the judiciary, 31.66 per cent of physicians, 40.22 of pharmacists and 34 per cent of the teaching staff in universities.

314. Regarding article 8, she stated that 11.54 per cent of the career diplomats were women and 24.69 per cent of the high level jobs in administration were held by women, amongst whom one with the rank of Ambassador. Turkish women also played an active role in international organizations and conferences.

315. Referring to article 9, she said that mothers as well as fathers could transmit their citizenship to their children.

316. Turning to article 10, the representative said that primary schooling was compulsory for boys and girls and legal sanctions were foreseen against parents who withdrew their children from school. She provided detailed statistics on the percentages and number of girls and boys enrolled in primary and secondary level schools of various types during the years 1985 and 1986. Co-education applied to all school levels and she explained that customs, culture and the perception of the role of women determined the choice of girls for certain studies and professions. She said that no discrimination existed in the competitive examinations for entering university education. She said further that an increasing percentage of women was moving into the field of mass communications. There was also a great demand for women students in the field of performing arts. Throughout the country, campaigns which were supported by radio and television programmes had been launched to improve the literacy rate of women and one of the reasons for the higher literacy rate of men was that they learned to read and write during the obligatory military service. Finally, she said that sex education had not yet become part of school curricula.

317. Referring to questions raised under article 11, the representative said that 64.6 per cent of men and 35.4 per cent of women took part in the paid labour force, most of whom worked in farming and agriculture. She indicated the percentages of women who did unpaid work in the agricultural sector and said that neither women nor men in rural areas were covered by social security benefits. However, they could take out voluntary insurance under the self-employed workers' insurance system. Neither women nor men were covered by unemployment insurance. About 62 per cent of the population was covered by social security benefits, and about 65 per cent of all wage earners were members of trade unions. The minimum age of retirement was 50 for women and 55 for men. University teaching staff retire at the age of 67. Fathers were entitled to three days' paid leave during the child's birth, and women could take up to three years of unpaid leave after childbirth without losing their jobs. Child care facilities also existed. The rule of equal pay for equal work was ensured under the law. The income of a wife was taxed separately and labour legislation applied equally to men and women. Not many complaints for sexual harassment of women at the

work place had been received.

318. As a result of internal and external migration, women had to face many socio-cultural problems and women who returned from their country of migration found jobs appropriate to their knowledge and skills, most of them in the tourist sector. Special schools had been set up for children returning from abroad and 40 per cent of the girls who migrated back wanted to continue their higher education.

319. Turning to article 12, she said that family planning services had started in 1965, and family planning services were provided mainly by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in co-operation with the mass media and non-governmental organizations. In 1988, there were 128 family planning centres. Abortion was allowed up to the tenth week of pregnancy, and the rate of birth was 2.99 per cent. In big cities, shelters for battered wives and free legal advice were provided.

320. No difference between women and men existed regarding the access to bank loans.

321. Referring to article 14, she said that a small proportion of unpaid family workers were working in the carpet weaving industry, but she could not provide exact figures. In case of the emigration of husbands, the wives became heads of households.

322. Under article 15, she stated that women did not need their husbands' permission to travel.

323. Turning to article 16, she said that the minimum age for marriage for girls was 14, that inheritance rights were the same for girls and boys and that taking up employment against the will of the husband was not considered as a ground for divorce. She then enumerated the grounds for divorce as stipulated by law and said that pursuant to an amendment to the Family Code the woman had the right of choosing her name. She strongly hoped that the reservations placed on articles 15 and 16 would be withdrawn before the submission of the second periodic report.

324. Members of the Committee thanked the representative of Turkey for her great efforts in providing the additional information, statistics and figures in such a short time, and for her replies, which brought about a clearer picture of women regarding the articles of the Convention, they expressed their hope that the subsequent report would adhere closely to the general guidelines, that it would contain detailed statistical data and more information on the status of women in rural areas, on the progress made in employment and in secondary education and on decisions taken by the Legal Reform Committee.

## **CEDAW A/52/38 (1997)**

151. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Turkey (CEDAW/C/TUR/2-3) at its 318<sup>th</sup> and 319<sup>th</sup> meetings, on 17 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.318 and 319).

152. In her introductory statement, the representative of Turkey pointed out that the report had been prepared in a participatory way and reflected the contributions of different women's organizations. She placed women's status within the framework of globalization, which seemed to offer new hopes, but also the possibility of growing inequalities, including between women and men. She underlined that respect for the human rights of the individual, without cultural boundaries, and the concept of equal citizenship in a State governed by the rule of law continued to provide the most workable framework, as well as new opportunities, for achieving gender equality.

153. The representative noted that in Turkey, contradictions of globalization, modernization and traditionalism had an impact on the status of women in society. Constraints of underdevelopment and structural adjustment and of religious fundamentalism and claims based on ethnic rivalries presented sources of conflict with long-term prospects that may be unfavourable for the status of women.

154. While acknowledging continuing inequalities and disparities in the status of women, the representative highlighted progress and pointed to the development of a gender-sensitive agenda in Turkey. Supported by growing feminist and women's movements, women had become visible and had been expanding their sphere of action. The most arduous and urgent task facing the Government now was to respond to the demands of women, particularly the enhancement of their basic citizenship rights within a secular social order.

155. In Turkey, a secular country with a predominantly Muslim population, the equality of men and women was recognized in the Constitution and in statutes. While some discriminatory clauses in the Turkish Criminal and Civil Codes had been repealed in recent years, an overall reform of the Civil Code remained to be completed.

156. The Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women had been established in 1991 and was attached to the Prime Ministry. Despite its limited staff and budget, the Directorate acted as the coordinating body vis-à-vis government institutions, networked with non-governmental organizations and supported research and training. Gender issues were an integral part of Turkey's five-year development plan. While a number of special measures and initiatives had been introduced to strengthen women's active participation in development, more was needed to reach a larger number of women. Currently the establishment of the Under-Secretariat for Women's Affairs and Family was under way.

157. Among the challenges faced by Turkey in achieving women's equality, the representative identified the disparities in status and opportunities for urban middle-class and rural women; violence against women in the private domain; a strengthening of the contribution of the media to the advancement of women, including through an increase in the number of female professionals in this area; and the revision of educational materials, which continued to portray women in their



traditional roles as mothers and wives. Likewise, women's participation in politics and in Parliament remained low, notwithstanding the introduction of quotas by political parties.

158. Disparities in socio-economic areas remained a great concern and included women's low literacy rates, their access to education and opportunities, as well as patterns of employment. Women's low status also affected their access to health services. Particular problems persisted for Turkey's rural women in eastern and southeastern Anatolia, who continued to live in traditional social frameworks and were affected by an ongoing armed conflict and whose access to opportunities and services remained severely limited.

159. At the Fourth World Conference on Women, Turkey committed itself to withdrawing all its reservations under articles 15 and 16 of the Convention by the year 2000, a step which requires the revision of a number of discriminatory laws contained in the Civil Code. Turkey also committed itself to achieving full literacy of women by the year 2000.

### Concluding comments of the Committee

#### Introduction

160. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of Turkey for its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister of State responsible for Women's Affairs and the Family, and the exhaustive replies and information provided by the Government in response to the questions of the pre-session working group.

161. The frankness of the assessment of the status of women, particularly in the oral presentation, and the acknowledgment of persisting inequalities and disparities, indicating the Government's willingness to confront the critical issues facing women in Turkey, was appreciated by the Committee. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that the Government of Turkey had expressed its support for the adoption of an optional protocol to the Convention.

162. The Committee also appreciated the well-structured, frank and detailed report, which followed its guidelines. The Committee expressed its satisfaction that, in the course of the dialogue with the Committee, the representatives of the State party had manifested the determined political will of the Government to implement the Convention progressively. At the same time, and in a self-critical manner, the representatives described the difficulties encountered in the implementation of policies and programmes consistent with the Convention.

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

163. The reservations to articles 15 and 16 of the Convention were regarded by the experts as serious impediments to the full implementation of the Convention in the State party.

164. The difficulties emanating from globalization, modernization and deeply rooted traditionalism interplayed strongly in the context of the status of women in Turkey. Being a secular country with a predominantly Muslim population, Turkey was experiencing pressures from various political groups. The Committee recognized the serious impact that those pressures had on the condition of

women and that they served to perpetuate the existing inequality between women and men and hampered the de jure and de facto implementation of the Convention.

#### Positive aspects

165. The Committee noted that the consolidated second and third reports were prepared with the contributions of governmental institutions, specialists and academicians working on women's issues, women's groups, political parties, trade unions, representatives of the media and non-governmental organizations.

166. The distribution of the previous report to all institutions and persons concerned with women's human rights and the translation of the Convention into Turkish was welcomed by the Committee.

167. The Committee welcomed the information, reiterated in the excellent oral presentation of the delegation of the State party, relating to the draft law to amend the various articles of the Civil Code pertaining to family law, which would allow for the withdrawal by Turkey of its reservations.

168. The Committee also welcomed the information in the report relating to the Government's intention to revise the Citizenship Law.

169. The Committee further welcomed the decision of the Government of Turkey to conclude bilateral agreements with other countries that would permit Turkish citizens, women and men alike, to keep their citizenship upon marriage to a foreign national.

170. The Committee congratulated the Government for legally guaranteeing the equal right of girls and boys to free education and training. It also welcomed the recommendation of the fifteenth National Council of Education to increase compulsory and uninterrupted primary education to eight years and its decision to develop curricula and revise textbooks and teaching methods to be free of sex-based stereotypes and to eliminate gender-based prejudices from educational programmes.

171. Taking note of the extensive and detailed information and statistical data related to the situation of women in the field of employment, the Committee appreciated the fact that women were entitled to the same employment opportunities as men. It also welcomed the participation of women in the labour force in different economic activities.

172. The Committee took note of the impact of the micro-credit scheme in promoting women entrepreneurs.

173. The Committee also welcomed the commitments made by Turkey at the Fourth World Conference on Women to the effect that by the year 2000 it would:

- (a) Reduce infant and maternal mortality rates by 50 per cent;
- (b) Raise compulsory education to eight years;
- (c) Eradicate female illiteracy;

(d) Withdraw the reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

#### Principal areas of concern

174. The Committee was deeply concerned about the reservations of Turkey to article 15, paragraphs 2 and 4, and article 16, paragraphs 1 (c), (d), (f) and (g). It was also concerned with the prolonged discussions and the resistance to the reform of the Civil Code, although it appreciated that efforts had been made in that context by the General Directorate, women members of Parliament and the Ministry of Justice. The Committee urged the State party to facilitate and hasten that process so that the Law on Citizenship, the Civil Code and the Criminal Code could be brought into conformity with the articles of the Convention.

175. The Committee expressed its concern that the General Directorate had no corresponding bodies at regional and local levels.

176. The Committee was concerned at the lack of an integrated and systematic approach by the national machinery and the relevant ministries to all areas covered by the Convention, in particular with regard to women in rural areas, vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, young women and women in prisons.

177. The Committee noted with deep concern various articles of the Penal Code, including those relating to the abduction of single and married women and to adultery, which were in contradiction to article 2, paragraph (f) of the Convention. In particular, it noted that greater penalties were imposed for the rape of a woman who was a virgin.

178. The Committee noted with the gravest concern the practice of forced gynaecological examinations of women in the investigation of allegations of sexual assault, including of women prisoners while in custody. The Committee emphasized that such coercive practices were degrading, discriminatory and unsafe and constituted a violation by state authorities of the bodily integrity, person and dignity of women.

179. The Committee was concerned about the provisions of the Penal Code that allowed less rigorous sanctions or penalties for "honour killings". That concept contravened the principle of respect for human life and the security of all persons, which was protected by all the international human rights laws.

180. The Committee deeply regretted that no special temporary measures had been put in place to redress the situation of Kurdish women, who suffered double discrimination.

181. The Committee was concerned by the pervasive violence, in all its forms, perpetrated against women and girls and the inadequacy of legal and educational measures to combat such violence. The Committee was concerned that neither its general recommendation 19 on violence against women nor the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, had been taken into consideration. The law categorizing violence as "crime against public decency and public order" contradicted the spirit of

the Convention and contravened the dignity of the person.

182. The Committee was particularly concerned that juridical or educational measures that may have been undertaken by the State in pursuance of article 5, paragraph (a), in the context of violence within the family, had not been effective.

183. The Committee was concerned that sufficient appropriate measures had not yet been taken to prevent and combat the acceptance of male dominance and violence against women in rural as well as urban areas, as reflected in such practices as beating women and requiring silent obedience from them. Equally, there was a lack of concrete measures to prevent the high number of suicides among women victims of violence.

184. The Committee expressed its concern that spousal consent was required for abortion, a requirement it considered to be in contravention of article 15 of the Convention. The Committee also expressed its disapproval at the existence of brothels regulated by law and the lack of information and statistical data about the phenomenon.

185. The Committee was concerned that the Turkish political parties, trade unions and other public institutions were not sufficiently sensitive to the importance of the implementation of article 7 of the Convention and the need for representation in decision-making bodies, including Parliament and the Government, where the number of women was still very low.

186. The Committee was concerned about the Turkish Citizenship Law, which provided that a Turkish woman who decided to assume the nationality of her foreign husband would lose her Turkish nationality.

187. The Committee likewise expressed its concern at the high level of illiteracy among women and girls, especially in the rural areas, the drop-out rates of girls in schools owing to family practices, early marriages and the prioritization of boys in school enrolment and other gender-discriminatory practices in education. The clustering of women in higher education in areas regarded as suitable for women was also noted by the Committee.

188. The Committee considered with concern the very low minimum age for employment, which contravened relevant ILO conventions. The high level of unemployment of migrant urban female workers, the lack of measures to integrate them into the labour markets and the persistent occupational segregation in lower paid jobs impeded their upward mobility and further reinforced discrimination against women in the labour market.

189. The lack of legal literacy programmes to raise the awareness of rural women regarding their rights was also a matter of concern.

190. The Committee was particularly concerned at the high number of women in rural areas working in family enterprises, since their work was not recognized in the formal economy, they did not receive social security benefits and their access to health services was limited.

### Suggestions and recommendations

191. The Committee requested the Government of Turkey to take steps to address the aforementioned principal subjects of concern and to reflect progress made in its next periodic report.

192. The Committee invited the Government to review the Civil Code, particularly with regard to family law, with a view to removing the reservations to the Convention. It also suggested that the related provisions of the Penal Code be revised in order to ensure women the full protection of the law on equal terms with men.

193. The Committee invited the Government of Turkey to educate women and men towards a culture of shared obligations and responsibilities of family work and the rearing of children. In addition, information and training efforts directed at both sexes were needed to stop the perpetuation of traditional attitudinal and behavioural patterns and to create awareness of women's rights as expressed in the Convention.

194. Serious efforts were required to address violence against women, especially domestic violence, through legislation and comprehensive, gender-sensitive awareness-raising and education for the public in general and for law enforcement agencies, such as judges, lawyers and police in particular. Battered women's shelters should be established and provided with adequate financial and human resources.

195. The practice of so-called honour killings, based on customs and traditions, was a violation of the right to life and security of persons and therefore must be appropriately addressed under the law. The Government was also invited to review in a critical manner the practice of virginity examinations in cases of alleged rape; likewise, it was invited to investigate whether coerced virginity examinations had been carried out on women in the investigation of sexual attacks or abuses or in any other circumstances.

196. The Committee requested the review of the requirement of spousal consent for abortion.

197. The media should be mobilized in support of advancing the status and the rights of women, including through non-sexist and non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the media and through programmes to address violence against women. Efforts to increase the number of women in the media, particularly in decision-making positions, should be intensified.

198. The situation of minority women needed to be monitored urgently, and a systematic effort was necessary to ensure for them their full legal rights guaranteed by the Convention.

199. Temporary special measures with numerical goals and timetables should be initiated in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, in particular in the political sphere and the public sector.

200. Consideration should be given to the revision of the Citizenship Law in order to give women equal rights with men in all areas of nationality law.

201. Continuing support should be given to female students in order to increase the rate of female university graduates and their participation in non-traditional fields.

202. The Committee urged the Government of Turkey to take adequate measures to provide skills training, retraining and credit facilities or other support services that would provide employment opportunities or self-employment for urban migrant workers, to correct occupational segregation through concrete measures and to provide the necessary protection to working women to ensure their safety and healthy conditions of work.

203. Concrete training programmes aimed at increasing opportunities for women to make use of micro-credit programmes would also be necessary.

204. The Committee invited the Government of Turkey to take measures to recognize rural women's work in family enterprises for the purposes of pension entitlement. In addition, the Government should disseminate information in the Convention relating to rural women's rights.

205. The Committee requested the compilation of current data and statistics on family planning methods, the use of such methods by men and women and access to contraception disaggregated by age and sex.

206. The Committee urged the Government to disseminate widely copies of the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the present concluding comments and to translate those documents into local languages where necessary so as to ensure that all women have access to them. The Committee also requested the Government to address the concerns raised in these comments in its next report. The next report should likewise contain information on steps taken by the Government to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.