



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Pre-session working group

Forty-fifth session

January-February 2010

List of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of periodic reports

Egypt

The pre-session working group considered the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of Egypt (CEDAW/C/EGY/7).

General

1. The report contains information on the process of preparation of the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of Egypt. Please describe how representatives of civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations, participated in the process. Please also inform the Committee if the report was presented to Parliament or any designated high-level authority.
2. According to the State party report, “despite the successes achieved, collection of complete sex-disaggregated data remains deficient in some areas”. Please elaborate on the cooperation efforts between the National Council for Women, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics and the Information and Decision-Making Support Centre under the Council of Ministers. In this context, what other measures are being taken to improve data collection to ensure that sex-disaggregated data includes all women, including women from rural, minority and migrant populations? Could you please provide examples of the new, typological indicators introduced to measure gender equality?
3. According to the State party report, a committee comprising the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Council for Women and relevant agencies was formed to study the possible withdrawal of Egypt’s reservations to articles 2, 9 and 16 and “the concerned national agencies are currently coordinating to formulate a uniform national vision for arriving at a suitable formula for withdrawing the Government’s reservation to article 2”. In light of the Committee’s previous concluding observations, please provide the Committee with an update in this respect.

4. In its previous concluding observations, the Committee requested the Government of Egypt to widely disseminate the concluding observations in respect of the third and combined fourth and fifth periodic reports. Please provide further information on the measures undertaken to make administrators, officials and politicians as well as civil society, the general public and the women themselves, including rural women and women of different ethnic and minority groups, aware of the steps taken to guarantee de jure and de facto equality between women and men.

Legislative and institutional framework

5. While noting that the Convention is part of domestic legislation, please provide information on whether provisions of the Convention have been invoked before national courts during the period under review, providing examples of pertinent case law.

6. Please indicate whether a definition of discrimination against women, encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination, in line with article 1 and extending to acts of discrimination by public and private actors, in accordance with article 2, has been incorporated in domestic legislation.

7. The State party report refers to the establishment, in 2001, of an Ombudsman Office to receive and monitor women's complaints and to handle problems impeding women's effective participation. The report also notes that the Ombudsman's Office figures prominently in the NCW's work and that it is the official channel through which any Egyptian woman may report any discriminatory practice to which she is subject. Please provide statistical information, if available, on the number of complaints received since the establishment of the Office, the nature of these complaints, and the results obtained. Furthermore, please provide information on any other mechanisms and remedies available to women, including at the regional and local levels, who wish to complain about gender-based discrimination.

National machinery

8. The report refers to a strategy for the NCW covering up to the year 2015 which is practical in its orientation and designed to empower women comprehensively. Please provide more information on the content and implementation of the strategy, how implementation is monitored and evaluated and its impact in terms of achieving the goals of the Convention.

9. Please provide further information on the new approach adopted by NCW in the context of national planning, including participatory planning with, inter alia, grass-roots participation of women along with NGOs, local councils, etc., as referred to in the State party report.

Stereotypes

10. Under several articles, the report notes the pervasive impact of culturally entrenched stereotypes on the enjoyment by women of the rights protected by the Convention, including in the areas of education and employment and in their participation in decision-making. With reference to the Committee's previous concluding observations, please elaborate on the measures adopted and activities undertaken to raise awareness of gender roles in society as a whole, which aim at

bringing about change in behaviour and eradication of negative stereotypes and discriminatory cultural practices.

11. Further to the Committee's previous concluding observations, please provide more information on the efforts undertaken to improve the image of women in the media and the impact of such measures on media content. Please provide more details on the media strategy that has been formulated. Please also provide more information on the composition and activities of the Media Watch Unit, which is now a permanent part of the organizational structure of the NCW's media department, as well as the financial resources allocated for its effective functioning.

Violence against women

12. The Committee, in its previous concluding observations, expressed its concern that although efforts have been made, there is no holistic approach to the prevention and elimination of violence against women. According to a report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (E/CN.4/2003/75/Add.1, para. 718), marital rape is not illegal and the law does not prohibit sexual harassment. Please inform the Committee how the State party plans to address this issue, as well as women's access to justice and services, in order to fulfil its obligations under the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 19. Is the State party considering enacting laws criminalizing all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, marital rape and sexual harassment? Furthermore, please clarify the content of article 17 of the Egyptian Penal Code.

13. Please provide information on the availability of health and social services of women victims of violence. Please elaborate on the measures taken to build capacity and raise awareness through programmes for various groups (including the police, lawyers, health workers and the judiciary) and the public at large. Please also provide, if available, statistics concerning the number of complaints, investigations, prosecutions, convictions and penalties imposed on the perpetrators and any compensation awarded to the women victims of violence or their families.

14. Please provide further information on the impact of the national campaign to counter female circumcision. The report indicates that a law prohibiting and criminalizing female circumcision is being drafted. Please inform the Committee whether such a law has been adopted or, if not, please indicate a time frame for its adoption.

Trafficking and prostitution

15. Please provide information on the prevalence of trafficking in women and girls for purposes of sexual and economic exploitation, including updated information on domestic legislation and its implementation, as well as on other mechanisms at the national level to prevent and punish trafficking in women and girls. In this respect, please provide more information on the composition and activities of the national coordinating committee established to combat and prevent trafficking in persons, as well as human and financial resources allocated for its effective functioning.

16. Please provide statistics, if available, on the number of women and girls engaged in prostitution. According to the State party report, a number of articles of the Egyptian Penal Code still discriminate between men and women in crimes of

prostitution. What is the status of the draft law amending the relevant Penal Code articles formulated by the NCW, in cooperation with a number of private associations, and submitted to the Ministry of Justice? Please elaborate on measures taken to provide rehabilitation and support for the social rehabilitation of women who wish to leave prostitution. Please also provide information on measures taken to provide specialized training on trafficking for members of the police, border guards and the judiciary, and give information on the effectiveness of these measures.

Participation in decision-making and representation at the international level

17. The State party report provides information on the participation of men and women in political and public life. Further to the statement in the report that in some areas, society still believes that politics is a man's game, not a woman's game, and prefers to be represented by men in Parliament, please elaborate on concrete measures carried out, and measures envisaged, to achieve women's full and equal participation and representation at all levels of Government, in the Parliament, the judiciary and academia, as well as at the international level, taking into account the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, and general recommendation No. 23, on women in public life.

Nationality

18. The State party report indicates that the Nationality Law has been amended under Law No. 154 of 2004, granting gender equality regarding the transfer of Egyptian nationality to the children of a man or woman who marries an alien. Please indicate the steps taken by the Government in respect of the nationality of children born to Egyptian mothers and Palestinian fathers.

Education

19. The State party report notes that the average number of females and males enrolling in primary education has generally declined in a number of rural and remote villages with small populations and that a gender gap favouring males continues to exist in some areas. Please provide data and information on the education levels and access to education of women and girls from rural areas, minorities and non-Egyptian nationalities, including migrant and refugee communities.

20. The State party report indicates that there are still female dropouts in rural and remote areas. Please provide further information on the major causes of girls and women discontinuing their education and the measures being taken to prevent such dropouts.

Employment

21. Please provide information on policies put in place by the State party aimed at accelerating de facto equality of women in the area of employment and indicate what steps have been taken to implement such policies. In this respect, please provide further information on the activities of the equal opportunities units in the various ministries, established to ensure that women enjoy their constitutional rights and to counteract discrimination against women in the workplace.

22. Please describe the types of legal, social, or other services and protection available to women in the informal sector. Please clarify to the Committee whether

women in the informal sector, as well as women in the private and agricultural sectors, are protected under the Labor Standard Law of 2003?

Health

23. The State party report refers to a number of measures taken to combat AIDS, including a National Programme to Combat AIDS and the establishment of a Higher Committee to Combat AIDS. Please clarify if the above-mentioned programmes include measures such as sex education in schools, awareness-raising campaigns and training of medical service providers. Please also indicate the percentage of women and girls affected by HIV/AIDS as compared to the male population.

24. Please provide information and data on the access to general and mental health services for women and girls, including those from rural areas, minorities and non-Egyptian nationalities, such as migrant and refugee women. Please also provide information on maternal mortality and morbidity rates for all women, including trends over time. Please provide more information on family planning services, including availability of contraceptives, especially in rural and remote areas.

Rural women, vulnerable groups of women

25. The State party report provides information on the situation of rural women and identifies some of the challenges, i.e. their high illiteracy rate, the generally low economic level in rural Egypt and the fact that most rural women lack national personal ID number cards which limits their chance of obtaining work and State services. Please provide further information on the special policies and programmes developed to address these challenges and meet the needs of rural women. What measures are being taken to increase the participation of rural women in community development efforts and decision-making, including in local councils of the villages?

26. Please provide more information on the human rights situation of elderly women and women and girls with disabilities, in respect of education, employment, health-related issues and access to health services, as well as protection from violence. Similar information should be provided in respect of female foreign domestic workers.

Marriage and family relations

27. Please provide further information on steps taken to ensure equality between women and men in matters of personal status regarding marriage, divorce, consequences of divorce, and inheritance.

28. The State party report acknowledges that polygamy is still being practised. Please indicate whether the State party is considering abolishing the practice of polygamy, in accordance with article 16 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations.

Optional Protocol

29. Please inform the Committee if the special committee established to study the Optional Protocol to the Convention has completed its report and, if so, please describe its results. Is the State party considering ratification of or accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention?