



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-sixth session

12-30 July 2010

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

Fiji

The pre-session working group considered the combined second, third and fourth periodic reports of Fiji (CEDAW/C/FJI/4).

General

1. Please provide information on the process of the preparation of the report indicating which Government departments and institutions were involved and the nature and extent of their participation. Also provide information on the nature and extent of the involvement of non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations in the preparation of the report. Please indicate whether the report was adopted by the Government and submitted to Parliament.
2. Please provide information on the steps undertaken by the State party to improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex pertaining to all areas of the Convention and how such data is used in policy and programme development and in monitoring progress towards de facto equality between women and men.

Legal status of the Convention, legislative and institutional framework

3. Taking into account recent political developments in the State party, please provide information on the current legislative and institutional framework governing the State party, particularly in relation to discrimination against women.
4. In its previous concluding observations,¹ the Committee recommended that the State party incorporate a definition of discrimination in its constitutional reform and that it include a clear procedure for enforcement of fundamental rights. Please provide information on the steps undertaken by the State party in incorporating the

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly* (A/57/38, para. 47).

definition of discrimination in full accordance with art. 1 of the Convention and procedures established for enforcement of these rights.

5. Please provide updated information on initiatives carried out by the State party in order to disseminate the principles of the Convention, as well as the concluding observations of the Committee following the consideration of the initial report of the State party, including translation of these documents into the official languages of the country. Please also provide updated information on the activities undertaken by the State party in order to provide training for legal professionals, including lawyers, judges and prosecutors as well as other actors responsible for the implementation of the provisions enshrined in the Convention.

National machinery for the Advancement of Women

6. Please provide updated information on the current national machinery mandated to implement the Convention, in particular the changes encountered by the Ministry of Women which was recently downgraded to a department within the Ministry of Health and Social Services. Please also indicate what human and financial resources are allocated to the new department and the impact of these changes on the Women Plan of Action (1998-2008).

Temporary special measures

7. According to the State party's report (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, para. 123), during the reporting period no temporary special measures were put in place to accelerate de facto equality of men and women. Please describe barriers that exist in this regard and measures taken to address them.

Stereotypes and discriminatory cultural practices

8. The report (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, para. 128) refers to Fiji as a patriarchal society where generally men are perceived as leaders and decision makers while women are expected to implement those decisions and that this is true in all ethnic groups. Please indicate what concrete measures are in place, or are planned, including review of textbooks for gender stereotypes, to change the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men in line with art. 5(a) of the Convention, as well as any progress achieved in their implementation.

Violence against women

9. In its previous concluding observations,² the Committee called upon the State party to intensify its efforts to prevent and combat violence against women, including domestic violence, and to adopt relevant legislation. Bearing in mind the Committee's general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, please indicate what progress has been made to adopt legislation that expressly prohibits violence against women and steps taken to develop a comprehensive strategy to combat all forms of violence against women, including: prosecution of perpetrators; provision of assistance to victims, including shelters, access to legal aid and implementation of capacity-building and awareness-raising programmes for various groups such as the police, lawyers, health and social workers and the judiciary, as well as the public at large.

² Ibid., para. 59.

10. The State party's report (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, para. 136) refers to a recent study which highlighted the constraints encountered by the Sexual Offences Units in carrying out their mandates in an efficient and timely manner, including the lack of resources, unavailability of police officers and insensitive and hostile attitudes of officers when dealing with victims. Please describe concrete steps undertaken by the State party to address these concerns.

Trafficking and sexual exploitation

11. Please provide statistics, if available, on trafficking of women and girls and of the number engaged in prostitution, including their involvement in sex tourism. Please elaborate on laws and measures adopted to prevent and punish trafficking and exploitation of prostitution, in line with art. 6 of the Convention, as well as measures taken to provide rehabilitation and support for social integration of women who wish to leave prostitution.

12. Please provide information on the enforcement of article 166 of the Penal Code under which persons who benefit from the sexual exploitation of women are punishable.

Participation in decision-making and representation at the international level

13. The State party report (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, paras. 148-181) reflects the low representation of women in political and public life. In its previous concluding observations³ the Committee urged the State party to introduce temporary special measures, in accordance with art. 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, to increase the representation of women in national and local assemblies, and at all levels in decision-making positions. Please describe measures taken by the State party to improve the situation at local, national and international levels.

Education

14. In its previous concluding observations,⁴ the Committee recommended the introduction of targeted policies and programmes to reduce poverty, prevent early marriage, teenage pregnancies and girls dropping out of school. Please further elaborate on educational programmes which are available for girls and women who have left school before school-leaving age and graduation, particularly plans in place to expand the "Matua" programme to rural schools.

15. Please provide information on measures to facilitate collection of data disaggregated not only on the basis of sex but also by geographical location (local, subnational, national, and regional levels).

16. Please provide information on legislative and other measures taken or envisaged by the State party to allow pregnant girls and women to pursue their education. Please provide information on the situation of violence and sexual harassment of girls in schools and measures in place to address these issues.

17. Please provide information on community-based early identification and intervention services which identify girls with disabilities, including in remote areas, to ensure they attend schools.

³ Ibid., para. 51.

⁴ Ibid., para. 61.

Employment

18. The State party's report (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, para. 236) refers to the fact that "the Government is expected to examine the incomes gender gap findings with the view to encourage the restructuring of public sector income policies so that female's pay scales across industries and occupations commensurate with male pay scales for work of equal value". Please provide updated information on steps undertaken in this regard.

19. In its previous concluding observations⁵ the Committee expressed concern at the working conditions of women, particularly in the tax-free zones which was not in line with art. 11 of the Convention and called upon the State party to promote the adoption of a code of ethics for investors, including in the tax-free zone. Please provide information on the steps taken in this regard.

20. The report (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, para. 240) refers to a National Policy on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace adopted in 2008. Please clarify whether this policy applies also to non-State actors. Please provide further information on the extent to which this policy is enforced and sanctions applied to perpetrators.

21. The report (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, para. 226) indicates that women's composition in the labour market has dropped from 40 per cent in the 1996 census to 31 per cent in the 2004/2005 Labour Force Survey. Please also indicate whether there are any State-funded childcare services available to facilitate the entry of more women into formal employment.

22. Please provide information and statistics on women's labour force participation in the informal sector. Please describe the types of legal, social, or other services and protection available to women in the informal sector, and any measures to increase their accessibility.

Health

23. Please provide information and data on the access to general and mental health services for women and girls, including those from rural areas. Please also describe services provided by the State party to older women.

24. The State party's report (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, para. 279) refers to a high incidence of cancer of the cervix and breast. Please provide information on measures taken by the State party, including fund allocation to improve health-care facilities and access to regular pap smears, mammograms and other testing, to address these health factors. Please also provide information on the extent that rural women have equal access to these services.

25. Please explain what measures have been undertaken by the State party to reduce the high rate of adolescent girls' pregnancies and to provide adolescent-friendly services on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

26. Please provide information on the incidence of suicide among women in the State party and whether research has been carried out to identify factors accounting for the high rate of cases among women.

⁵ Ibid., para. 56.

27. The State party (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, para. 291) recognizes that mental illness is highly stigmatized in Fiji. Please provide updated information on the steps taken by the State party to improve the mental health support services and to ensure their accessibility by women across the country. Please also provide information on awareness and outreach programmes to address stigmatization and stereotyped generalizations in order to improve women's accessibility to mental health-care services.

28. Please explain what measures and programmes have been introduced in the country to increase public awareness of the risk and effects of sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS. Please indicate whether any of these measures are aimed specifically at women and girls.

Economic and social benefits

29. The State party recognizes (CEDAW/C/FJI/4, para. 297) that women continue to be marginalized in terms of access to credit and loans. Please specify any measures taken by the State party in order to eliminate any de facto inequality between women and men on this issue.

Rural women

30. Please provide detailed information on any programmes which have been developed to meet the needs of rural women and girls, in particular in the areas of education, vocational training, access to health services and employment. Please also describe the outcome of these programmes. Furthermore, please provide information on whether a gender perspective has been incorporated into national disaster relief strategies and national policies aimed at combating the negative impact of climate change.

Marriage and family life

31. Please provide information on any plans envisaged by the State party to raise the age of marriage of girls from 16 to 18 in order to equalize it with the age of marriage of boys in line with art. 16, 1(a) of the Convention.

Optional Protocol and Amendment to article 20, paragraph 1

32. Please indicate any progress made towards accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Please also indicate what progress has been made towards acceptance of the amendment to art. 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention relating to the Committee's meeting time.