



**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

Fortieth and forty-first sessions

16-20 July 2007

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

Iceland

1. The pre-session working group examined the fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iceland (CEDAW/C/ICE/5 and CEDAW/C/ICE/6).

General

2. Please provide detailed information about the process of preparing the fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iceland. That information should indicate which governmental and non-governmental institutions were involved in their preparation, the nature and extent of their participation, and whether the reports were adopted by the Government and presented to the Althingi (Parliament).

Legislative, policy and institutional framework

3. Please provide further information about the role and functions of the Centre for Gender Equality and its relationship to the Gender Equality Council and the Gender Equality Complaints Committee referred to on page 8 of the fifth periodic report, as well as information about its budget and human resources, and how the work of the Centre contributes to implementation of the Convention.

4. In light of the non-binding nature of the opinions of the Gender Equality Complaints Committee (p. 10 of the fifth periodic report), please provide information about whether the Gender Equality Complaints Committee or eventually the Centre for Gender Equality undertakes any systematic follow-up to ascertain the impact of opinions on cases where violations of the Gender Equality Act have been found.

5. The fifth periodic report indicates on page 5 that the Supreme Court and other courts refer increasingly to international human rights conventions when applying and interpreting Icelandic law. Did any of the Supreme Court decisions to which the sixth periodic report referred to in part I mention the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or to article 15 of Regulation 47/2003, which is said to be based on article 1 of the Convention?

6. Please provide information about results of any preliminary evaluation that might have been undertaken at the mid-point of the action plan on gender equality for the years 2004 to 2008 (see p. 13 of the fifth periodic report and the section on article 2, subparagraph (c) in part I of the sixth periodic report).

7. Which of the recommendations of the monitoring committee appointed by the Prime Minister's Office referred to on page 15 of the fifth periodic report have been implemented? In addition, what concrete actions were taken in the area of education and awareness-raising concerning gender equality and gender mainstreaming for civil servants involved in policy-making at all levels (see p. 40 of the fifth periodic report)?

Violence against women

8. In its previous concluding comments,¹ the Committee expressed concern at the light penalties for crimes of sexual violence, including rape. Please provide updated information, including statistics, on sentences imposed for crimes of sexual violence, including rape. In addition, the fifth (see p. 34) and sixth periodic reports indicate that there is a significant disparity between the numbers of investigated cases of sexual offences, prosecutions and sentencing. Please explain the disparity and provide information as to whether investigative procedures have been evaluated for their sensitivity and whether the Government has ensured that support services are adequate for women who bring complaints.

9. Please provide more detailed information, including statistics, on the use and effectiveness of restraining orders (see pp. 31 and 32 of the fifth periodic report).

10. Please provide further details about the project on the theme "Men taking responsibility", including the evaluation and follow-up, and any assessment of the effectiveness of the project undertaken by the special project management team (see p. 19 of both the fifth periodic report and the sixth periodic report).

11. What is the status of the directions on responding to sexual harassment referred to on page 18 of the fifth periodic report that were to have been prepared by the Centre for Gender Equality in collaboration with the Administration of Occupational Health and Safety? Have there still been no cases brought under Gender Equality Act No. 96/2000?

12. Please provide also updated information on cases involving sexual harassment, which have been addressed by the Gender Equality Complaints Committee and on those brought to courts (see p. 60 of the fifth periodic report).

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/57/38), part one, para. 245.

Trafficking in women and girls

13. Please provide information on implementation of the 2003 Act that banned trafficking in human beings (see p. 17 of the fifth periodic report), including whether there have been any recent court cases on trafficking in women, in light of the Committee's concern, expressed in its previous concluding comments² that Iceland may have become a country of destination for trafficking in women.

14. Please describe the 2006 amendments to the Police Act (see the sixth periodic report) and information about its implementation.

Stereotypes and education

15. Please provide information about implementation of Gender Equality Act No. 96/2000 in relation to reconciliation of family and work life and in relation to the establishment of equality programmes and special arrangements regarding gender equality in the employment policies of institutions and enterprises with more than 25 employees to establish (see p. 26 of the fifth periodic report). Also, please give an indication of the effectiveness and impact of the Act in these specific areas.

16. What has the Ministry of Justice done to raise public awareness of women's human rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in particular (see p. 17 of the fifth periodic report)?

17. The fifth periodic report indicates on page 45 that gender equality plans were adopted or were being developed by universities in Iceland. What are the main objectives of these plans and what have been the results achieved so far through their implementation?

18. What has been the impact on women and girls, including in rural areas, of the measures taken to diversify educational choices as well as of the vocational training opportunities?

Participation in political and public life and representation at the international level

19. In its previous concluding comments,³ the Committee noted that, although progress was made with regard to women's political representation, women were still underrepresented in elected office, senior positions and the diplomatic service. The Committee was also concerned that very few women were university professors. The fifth periodic report (see pp. 38-41 and 45) and the sixth periodic report indicate that women continue to be underrepresented in political and public life, including in the judiciary, in universities and at the international level. Please indicate whether the introduction of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, is being contemplated or utilized in the area of women in decision-making positions in any sectors where they remain underrepresented.

² Ibid., para. 247.

³ Ibid., para. 243.

Employment

20. In light of the increased knowledge and understanding about the wage gap gained through surveys and analysis (see the sixth periodic report), what further actions have been taken or contemplated to efficiently tackle this persistent disadvantage that women experience?

21. Has the survey on the importance of part-time employment, non-permanent employment and jobs that are undertaken outside of normal places of work, referred to on page 55 of the fifth periodic report, been carried out? If so, what are its main findings and what, if any, responses have been developed to address the prevalence of women among part-time employees?

22. What actions, if any, have been taken as a result of the survey on women in the fisheries sector referred to on page 22 of the fifth periodic report and in the sixth periodic report?

23. What has been the impact on women employees of the job evaluation scheme introduced in Reykjavik in 2004 (see the sixth periodic report)?

24. Please provide information in terms of targets, compliance, monitoring and sanctions, about the law amending the Limited Companies Act, No. 2/1995, with subsequent amendments, which introduced a provision under which steps shall be taken to ensure that the boards of state-owned limited companies consist of as nearly as possible equal numbers of men and women (see the sixth periodic report)?

Health

25. In its previous concluding comments⁴ the Committee expressed concern at the high level of alcohol consumption among women, and the level of alcohol and drug consumption among young people, including girls. Please provide information on the impact on women of campaigns designed to reduce consumption of drugs and tobacco and the findings of the experiment referred to on page 20 of the fifth periodic report that specifically targeted young girls.

26. The fifth periodic report indicates on page 68 that no programmes on HIV/AIDS are targeted specifically at women and girls. Please provide data and information on the number of women and girls living with HIV/AIDS as compared to men and boys, as well as information on trends over time in this regard.

Rural women

27. Please provide a description of the results of the examination carried out into certain provisions regarding ownership in the agricultural and farming sectors referred to on page 21 of the fifth periodic report, as well as information about the results of the study entitled “Women leave — men remain”, if they have become available (see p. 72 of the fifth periodic report).

28. Please provide information about the status of the project prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the Farmers’ Association in order to

⁴ Ibid., para. 251.

make farmers of both sexes aware of their social and economic rights (see p. 71 of the fifth periodic report).

29. The sixth periodic report indicates that grants from public funds aimed to stimulate business development in the rural areas have been of less benefit to women than to men and that women are underrepresented in funds' allocation committees. What concrete actions have been taken to ensure that women benefit equally from support available from public funds?

Optional Protocol

30. Please describe governmental measures planned or in place to raise awareness about the Optional Protocol and encourage its use.
