



# 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

Thirty-ninth session

23 July-10 August 2007

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

#### Jordan

1. The pre-session working group examined the combined third and fourth periodic report of Jordan (CEDAW/C/JOR/3-4).

#### Constitution, legislation and national machinery

2. The Committee, in its previous concluding comments, urged the Government to publish the Convention in the Official Gazette and to initiate legislative action to make the Convention enforceable in courts.<sup>1</sup> However, the report (CEDAW/C/JOR/3-4) points out that the Convention has not yet been adopted through constitutional channels or published in the Official Gazette, ascribing such delay to the National Assembly's lack of opportunity to consider it (paras. 12 and 13). In the light of the fact that the Arab Charter on Human Rights which was ratified subsequent to the Convention has already been considered and published in the Official Gazette (para. 3), please explain the delay in consideration of the Convention by the National Assembly and its publication in the Official Gazette.

3. The report indicates a hesitation to amend article 6 of the Constitution, which explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, language or religion, as well as prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex (para. 1). In addition, the report states that there is no law that expressly prohibits discrimination against women (para. 16). Please indicate the steps being considered, within a given time frame, to remedy this situation in the light of obligations under the Convention.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/55/38)*, part one, chap. IV, sect. B, para. 171.

4. The Committee, in its previous concluding comments, recommended strengthening the decision-making and enforcement powers of the national machinery.<sup>2</sup> The report states that the national machinery has conducted a detailed study on its structure and the development of an alternative structure to take more effective advantage of available resources (para. 41). Please provide information on the study's recommendations and indicate how these recommendations are being implemented, including how they will result in strengthening the decision-making and enforcement powers of the national machinery.

5. The report notes that there are three types of courts in Jordan: religious courts, civil courts and special courts (para. 18). Please indicate whether training sessions have been conducted to sensitize the judges in all such courts on gender equality, non-discrimination and obligations under the Convention.

6. Jordan continues to have reservations to articles 9(2), 15(4) and 16(1)(c), (d) and (g) of the Convention despite the Committee's previous recommendations that the State party review these reservations with a view to removing them.<sup>3</sup> Please indicate whether there have been any joint efforts at the regional level (League of Arab States or Arab countries) and at the cross-regional level (among countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference) to expedite efforts towards the removal of these reservations.

### **Participation of women in public life and decision-making**

7. The report indicates the low representation of women in political life (para. 47) and discusses a memorandum presented to the Royal Commission by the Jordanian National Commission for Women that recommended establishment of a quota system for women (para. 49). Please indicate the steps taken to implement these recommendations and the anticipated time frame of any relevant amendments to the Election Act. Please provide information on any other proposals to increase the representation of women in elected bodies, including the Parliament.

8. According to the report, while the King supports the advancement of women by appointing them to various assemblies and official delegations, the decisions of mid-level administrative leaders tend to be dominated by social stereotyping and "the overall trend is not in the direction of greater representation for women" (para. 91). Please indicate the steps being taken to change the orientation of Government leaders and to encourage the appointment of women to Government posts and the judiciary, including through temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations Nos. 23 and 25.

### **Violence against women**

9. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recently expressed concern about the absence of reliable information and data on domestic violence (CRC/C/JOR/CO/3). Please indicate the efforts being made to collect data on the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., para. 187.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., paras. 173 and 175.

prevalence of all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, honour crimes, rape and sexual violence.

10. Please indicate whether the enactment of a law on domestic violence is part of the Government's comprehensive strategy on domestic violence under the Family Protection Project (para. 21) and, if so, provide details of such a law, including the time frame anticipated for its adoption.

11. The report gives some data on the number of cases of sexual aggression and domestic violence reported to the Family Protection Department (para. 19 and table 1). Please indicate the number of these cases that resulted in prosecutions of the offender and the number that resulted in convictions, and trends over time.

12. The report indicates that the practice of placing women in protective custody continues (para. 22) despite the Committee's recommendation that such a practice be replaced by other types of protection for women.<sup>4</sup> Please provide details of efforts that are being made to replace the practice of protective custody of women, including the number of shelters that have been, or are being, established in various parts of the country and their capacities and financial resources, the security measures employed at these shelters and services provided.

13. The report indicates that lenient judgements are handed down in almost all cases of honour killing under article 98 of the Penal Code (para. 33 and figure 1). Please indicate the steps being taken to investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators of honour crimes and to ensure that all honour crimes, in particular those that are premeditated, do not benefit from leniency of judgement under article 98.

### **Trafficking in women**

14. The report does not provide any information on the incidence of trafficking in women. Please provide such information, including data on the number of women and girls who are trafficked to, from and through Jordan.

### **Employment and poverty**

15. The report shows a decline in the levels of economically active women from 16.5 per cent in 1997 to 10.4 per cent in 2004 and attributes this decline to the reluctance of employers to employ women owing to the financial burdens in the labour legislation relating to maternity leave, nursing breaks and childcare services (paras. 135, 136 and 149). In addition, the report also indicates that private sector firms have a tendency to reduce the monthly wages of their female employees as a way of offsetting the cost of maternity benefits and nursing breaks (para. 156). Please indicate the steps being taken to address these discriminatory practices.

16. Please provide information about the impact of trade liberalization and free market policies on women's employment.

17. The report indicates that the Jordanian National Commission on Women is implementing a project entitled "Supporting gender equity through institutional

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., para. 179.

development in Jordan” which is aimed at making the workplace more gender-sensitive, non-discriminatory and comfortable for women (para. 65). It also mentions that a woman’s decision to take a job is subject to a number of restrictions, such as whether she can travel safely to and from work and whether the workplace is gender segregated (para. 143). Please indicate how these restrictions are being addressed, including in the above-mentioned project. In addition, please indicate if a law or policy on sexual harassment in the workplace is being considered and, if so, give details of the proposed law or policy and the expected time frame for its adoption.

18. According to the report, the Ministry of Labour is working on amendments to the Labour Code to protect the rights of migrant women domestic workers in Jordan (para. 147). Please indicate the time frame of adoption of these amendments; the relevant aspects of such amendments that will protect the rights of migrant domestic workers; and the measures that will be put in place to effectively enforce such legislation.

19. The report shows that women occupy very few top-level posts in Government agencies and attributes this to women’s lack of training opportunities and early retirement (para. 152 and table 25). Please indicate the measures in place, including any temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 25, to give women civil servants training opportunities, discourage early retirement and encourage promotion, and indicate trends over time.

20. Please provide information on how the Convention has been used in the preparation of the national anti-poverty strategy and how the strategy’s implementation will also enhance implementation of the Convention.

21. In the fourth introductory paragraph of the report reference is made to the regional situation, especially in the Palestinian territories and Iraq. How does the regional situation referred to impact on the human rights of women, especially their socio-economic rights, and the implementation of the Convention?

## **Education and stereotypes**

22. The report indicates that a study on textbooks used in primary schools found that stereotypes of women’s roles were perpetuated in the books (paras. 61, 123 and 124). The report further notes that while the Ministry of Education revises its curricula with a view to eradicating any negative indicators (para. 122), it has not yet been feasible to make radical alteration to these stereotypes (para. 61). Please explain why the elimination of stereotypes from textbooks has not been feasible, and indicate the steps being taken to overcome any obstacles and eliminate such stereotypes.

23. The report notes that a study identified media as bolstering widely held gender stereotypes (para. 56). The report further indicates that the programming of the various media continues to highlight the stereotyped role of women (para. 60). Please provide information on efforts undertaken by the Government to encourage the media to eliminate traditional gender-role stereotypes and promote gender equality, and indicate the impact of such efforts.

24. The report states that, according to available statistical data, women's choice of field of study continues to be affected by prevalent stereotyped attitudes and assumptions about male and female social roles (para. 107). Please describe the strategies and targets in place, including any financial incentives, for increasing the number of female students in non-traditional fields of study, such as industrial subjects and hotel management, including the impact of such strategies and trends over time.

## **Health**

25. The report indicates that women in the 20-39 year age group account for 30.23 per cent of all reported cases of HIV/AIDS (para. 184). Please indicate whether existing programmes to combat HIV/AIDS integrate a gender perspective and whether special measures for prevention are in place that target women, including awareness-raising campaigns in the media to sensitize women about the risks of HIV/AIDS.

26. The report mentions that young people had low awareness of reproductive health (para. 134). In addition, it indicates that family planning methods are not widely used (para. 191). Please indicate steps that are being taken to increase awareness of reproductive health issues among youth. Also indicate measures to increase knowledge about, and provide easy and affordable access to, family planning information, including a range of contraceptive methods for both women and men.

## **Marriage and family relations**

27. The discussion under articles 15 and 16 of the report shows that women do not have equal rights with men in laws on personal status, especially marriage, divorce, child guardianship, inheritance and choice of residence. However, the report indicates that the Jordanian National Commission on Woman is dedicated to amending legislation that discriminates against women (para. 15). In addition, in its previous concluding comments, the Committee recommended amendment of relevant laws and removal of reservations to the Convention.<sup>5</sup> Please provide details of the steps taken to give effect to the Committee's recommendations, specifying any proposed reforms of the above-mentioned laws (including reforms based on more progressive interpretations of sharia) and their relevant time frames.

## **Rural and refugee women**

28. The report states that while the socio-economic development plan (1999-2003) included sections on agricultural and local development, it did not focus on rural women (para. 223). Please indicate if and how the current socio-economic development plan and the national anti-poverty strategy address the needs of rural women, especially in the light of the Committee's recommendation in its previous concluding comments to integrate rural women in national development.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., paras. 173 and 175.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., para. 189.

29. Other than providing information on health and health-care services (paras. 202-206), the report does not provide information on Palestinian refugee women or indicate whether these women face particular challenges in various areas, including education, employment and economic opportunities, and whether particular measures have been taken to address such challenges. Please provide this information.

### **Optional Protocol**

30. Please indicate any progress made with respect to ratification of, or accession to, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

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