



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of  
Discrimination against Women**

**Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under  
Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All  
Forms of Discrimination against Women**

**Combined third and fourth reports of States Parties**

**Jordan\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.  
For the initial periodic report submitted by the Government of Jordan, see CEDAW/C/JOR/1, which was considered by the Committee at its twenty-second session. For the second periodic report submitted by the Government of Jordan, see CEDAW/C/JOR/2 which was considered by the Committee at its twenty-second session.

## **Introduction**

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 3 January 1980, and ratified it on 1 July 1992. Jordan has submitted two earlier periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women dealing with its commitments and obligations in the matter of its implementation of the Convention. The first of these was submitted in 1993, i.e. one year after Jordan's ratification of the Convention, and the second in 1997. Those two reports were considered together by the Committee in January 2000.

This report contains the combined third and fourth periodic reports. It presents a summary of progress made by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women since the date of preparation of the second periodic report.

This report outlines Jordan's accomplishments in the area of the advancement of women, and it also surveys the challenges confronting the Government and institutions in their several fields of competence as they endeavour to attain their objectives and meet their commitments relating to the achievement of social justice. In addition, the report takes into account not only the articles of the Convention itself, but also the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and the outcome document of the special session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century" (2000). Lastly, this report answers the questions asked by the Committee in the course of its consideration of the first and second reports.

At this point, it is necessary to refer to the regional situation, especially in the Palestinian territories and Iraq, which is affecting the socio-economic development of Jordan and its citizens, men and women alike, both directly and indirectly. At the national level, in 1999 His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal died and was succeeded by His Majesty King Abdullah II. This monarch has continued in the footsteps of his predecessor by seeking to further development in Jordan through a number of initiatives, including the "Jordan First" document, administrative, economic and political reform and political development in general, the National Agenda, and an agency dedicated to eliminating corruption. The impact of these various initiatives on the effort to promote the advancement of Jordanian women will be discussed in this report.

## **Preparation of the report**

The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) was responsible for preparing this report, which is really two periodic reports (the third and fourth) in one. JNCW worked in partnership with government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to obtain the information and statistical data needed to prepare the report (the names of the agencies and organizations concerned will be found in annex 1). The report was submitted to all the organizations concerned (both governmental and non-governmental) at a number of intensive workshops that examined all aspects of the report before it was submitted to the Committee. This report covers the period extending from July 1997 to July 2005. The information

and statistical data set forth herein reveal the legislative, procedural and statistical progress that has been achieved in the matter of the advancement of Jordanian women. We may note at this point that the report conforms to the provisions of the document entitled "Compilation of guidelines on the form and content of reports to be submitted by States Parties to the international human rights treaties" (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.1/Add.2) issued by the Committee on 13 May 2003, having regard to the Committee's general recommendations, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Committee's concluding observations, which were presented to the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on 20 January 2000 following the Committee's consideration of Jordan's first and second periodic reports on its implementation of the Convention.

## Part I

### Article 1

*For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.*

1. In the view of the relevant Jordanian bodies and the Jordanian women's movement - which supports their work and seeks to uphold women's rights - and also in accordance with the rules of Arabic grammar, references in the text of the Jordanian Constitution denote both men and women. Consequently, the relevant bodies consider that article 6 of the Constitution ("Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination among them as regards their rights and duties on the grounds of race, language or religion") refers to men and women on a footing of equality, and hence there are no valid grounds for amending the text, inasmuch as the expression "Jordanians" denotes both men and women, without discrimination. The same reasoning applies to the other articles of the Constitution; none of them contains any discriminatory provisions except article 23, which deals with the right of all Jordanians to work and the need to enact legislation governing the protection of workers, including legislation relating to the protection of women and minors. The Committee, in its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's first and second periodic reports (paragraphs 30 and 31), called for the amendment of article 6, paragraph 1 of the Jordanian Constitution, but for the reasons outlined above, no such amendment has been introduced. Moreover, some legislators take the view that the Constitution is a symbol of national stability, and that to amend it would have an adverse impact on that stability.

2. Despite the fact that this constitutional equality has not been fully translated into the legislation currently in force in Jordan, a commitment to it on the part of the country's highest leadership is apparent in the letters of appointment addressed by His Majesty King Abdullah to successive heads of ministries. In addition, there is an active, concerted movement involving various bodies and organizations that are working to bring about the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women by calling for amendments to laws that discriminate between men and women and restrict equality and justice in Jordanian society. A clear consensus has emerged on

the need for those efforts to be accompanied by action to enhance society's awareness of the importance of such amendments, in order to attract popular support for them on the one hand, and to promote respect for and commitment to them and to prevent attempts to evade them on the other hand.

3. Since 1997, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has ratified a number of other international instruments. On 13 March 1998 it signed a Memorandum of Understanding making provision for a cooperation agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and in September 2000, it signed the Optional Protocol on children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In July 2002, Jordan ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Lastly, Jordan has ratified the Arab Charter on Human Rights developed by the League of Arab States, which was published in the Official Gazette in 2005.

4. On a related level, Jordan is committed to submitting periodic reports on its implementation of the various instruments that it has ratified, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child: a periodic report will be submitted to the relevant committee in August 2005. A report on Jordan's implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was submitted in 2004. Lastly, the Government of Jordan has prepared two national reports on human development, one dealing with Jordanian youth in 1999, and the other, entitled "Building sustainable lifestyles", in 2004. In addition, Jordan submitted a report on the Millennium Development Goals in 2004.

5. Jordanian law, with the exception noted above, treats men and women on an equal footing. In practice, however, the wording of the law has not always been reflected in its enforcement. This is clearly apparent from statistical data on the country, which reflect the gap between the sexes in respect of a number of vital indicators. We may note at this point that in recent years the Department of Statistics has undertaken various projects aimed at incorporating the gender concept into statistics in an effort to obtain a more precise picture of gender gaps in Jordanian society. The Department's most important publications to date include Women and Men in Jordan, a Statistical Portrait, which was issued in 1999, and The Status of Jordanian Women: Demography, Economic Participation, Political Participation and Violence, issued in 2004. The latter report was prepared by the Department in cooperation with JNCW, with the support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

6. Seeking greater effectiveness in its efforts to produce gender-disaggregated statistics, the Department has established a Gender Statistics Division and given it a mandate to create a gender-disaggregated data base. Such a data base will be useful to scientific investigators and workers in various fields in that it will help them identify gender gaps and determine to what extent the applicable legislation is actually being enforced. This initiative has been launched in response to the Committee's general recommendation No. 9 and paragraph 8 of the Beijing Platform for Action relating to the production by national statistical agencies of gender-disaggregated statistics in general censuses and economic surveys. The Department of Statistics cooperates with a number of international organizations in building capacities in the field of gender analysis based on social roles.

7. In this connection, it is important to be aware of the influence of the social heritage on the application of legislation that treats men and women on an equal footing. Research in this area indicates that the social structure in general is still patriarchal in nature, and that many women and their aspirations are moulded by a general social outlook involving assumptions about the women of the family being subject to the authority of the man. Indeed, women themselves have internalized that outlook. A striking illustration of this is to be found in the fact that some women, especially in rural areas, renounce their lawful inheritance rights in favour of the males of the family, because according to the prevailing custom, family assets should not go to outsiders. They do this even though they have every right to the inheritance under Islamic law as well as under Jordanian national law.

## Article 2

*States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women, and to this end, undertake:*

*(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle.*

8. After a number of amendments had been made to the Civil Status Act, the Council of Ministers adopted a new Civil Status Act (law No. 9 of 2001) designed, in accordance with recommendations submitted by JNCW, to guarantee many women's rights. Among other things, the new Act includes the mother among the persons legally empowered to notify the authorities of births and deaths, whereas under the former Act it was primarily males who were so empowered, with women family members reduced to a secondary role.

9. The new Act does not differentiate between men and women. It does not, for example, deal with them separately in the matter of the obligation to obtain an identity card, in contrast to the former Act, which contained different provisions for men and women and required only working women to obtain their own identity cards. Under the new Civil Status Act, the conditions that were formerly applicable to the matter of identity cards are abrogated. Article 41(b) of the former Act (law No. 34 of 1973) read as follows: "This provision shall be applicable to working women, but non-working women may also obtain identity cards upon request." Under article 31(a) of the new Act, every Jordanian, regardless of sex, is required to obtain an identity card. The relevant paragraph states, "Every Jordanian citizen who is over sixteen years of age shall be required to obtain an identity card from the office located in the district in which he resides. A person who is under sixteen years of age may obtain an identity card with the consent of his parent or guardian." Under article 58 of the Act, "Every Jordanian woman who is divorced, widowed, or married to a non-Jordanian shall have the right to obtain a separate family record book issued on the basis of a separate civil register entry if she so wishes."

10. With respect to the procedures involved in obtaining a family record book, the new Act allows a married woman to be the head of the family in the event of the death of her husband or his loss or renunciation of Jordanian nationality. Where the husband has more than one wife, a family record book shall be issued to each wife,

with her children, and a separate civil register entry shall be kept for each. The wife may also be the head of the family in the event of the disappearance of her husband or his protracted absence from Jordan, for civil registration purposes. Under the old Civil Status Act, in contrast, only the father, the oldest wife or the oldest son could be the head of the family. A detailed definition of the term “head of family” will be found in paragraphs 62 and 63 of this report.

11. In addition, the new Act gives Jordanian women who are divorced, widowed, or married to a husband with non-Jordanian nationality the right to obtain a separate family record book issued on the basis of a separate civil register entry if they so wish. The former Act had no explicit provisions dealing with the conditions under which a divorced woman or widow or woman married to a non-Jordanian could obtain a family record book, although in practice a woman in any of those groups was subject to the authority of the head of her family (such as her father, brother, etc.) in the same way as she would have been had she been unmarried.

12. Ever since democratic life returned to Jordan in the late 1980s, there has been a continuing effort to embody the principle of equality between men and women in Jordanian law. This effort has been pursued through organized campaigns, group action and legal studies that have submitted recommendations to the legislative authorities concerning desirable amendments to the law. While the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has not yet been adopted through constitutional channels or published in the Official Gazette, the Government is endeavouring to apply its spirit and aims by amending existing legislation and introducing new legislation designed to eliminate discrimination against women. Jordanian law now contains provisions expressly stating that women enjoy equality of rights. Examples include the Income Tax Act, the Penal Code, the Civil Status Act and the Personal Status Act. These amendments will be discussed in detail in various paragraphs of this report (see paragraphs 30, 31, 32, 62, 63, 93, 210, 211 and 248 below).

13. The Committee, in its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan’s first and second periodic reports (paragraphs 32 and 33), expressed concern about the fact that the Convention had not yet been published in the Official Gazette. Before this can be done, the Convention must be submitted to the National Assembly and ratified by it. It is worth recalling the objective circumstances surrounding Parliament’s return to political life as a legislative body. Parliament had been absent from the legislative arena for a number of decades, and its return was accompanied by pressure to consider and adopt many bills that had been drafted in the interim. Furthermore, priority had to be given to the task of reviewing and adopting a number of bills dealing with economic issues which had been drafted in response to the requirements of globalization. It is for these reasons that the National Assembly has not yet had an opportunity of considering the Convention. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the relevant Government agencies are currently reviewing all the bilateral or multilateral conventions and agreements ratified by Jordan with a view to submitting them to the National Assembly so that they can be duly published in the Official Gazette in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the Constitution. Incidentally, the experience of the Assembly’s consideration of the proposed amendments to article 340 of the Penal Code, which will be discussed in due course (see paragraphs 34 and 254 of this report) suggests that it will be essential to exert a greater national effort, at both the official and grassroots levels, and to enlist the support, backing and pressure of the women’s movement to ensure

that Parliament will adopt the Convention when it finally is submitted to it for consideration.

14. On a related level, in the context of the Government's concern to develop political life and participation in Jordan, a Ministry of Social Development has been established, with a mandate to draft a national political development strategy for the purposes of, inter alia, publishing international instruments within the country's legislative frameworks and enhancing society's awareness of them. Furthermore, a National Centre for Human Rights has been founded, the aims of which include:

- Promoting and strengthening human rights principles in Jordan both conceptually and in practice, and eliminating discrimination among citizens on the grounds of race, language, religion or sex;
- Promoting Jordan's accession to Arab and international covenants, conventions, etc. dealing with human rights;
- Tracking and monitoring developments in Jordanian legislation with a bearing on human rights, and promoting its development along lines consistent with international instruments and criteria to which Jordan has committed.

15. We may note here that JNCW regards the field of legislation as one of its most important areas of action, and consequently has included a section in its revised and updated strategy that is expressly dedicated to the issue of amending legislation which discriminates against women. JNCW studies Jordanian legislation and makes appropriate recommendations to the Legislative Bureau at the Office of the Prime Minister and other competent bodies, requesting amendments to the legislation in question to bring it into line with international instruments and guarantee equal legal rights for women.

*(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women.*

16. The Government of Jordan, committed as it is to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, makes a practice of enacting legislation that eliminates legal discrimination wherever it occurs. While there is no law that expressly prohibits discrimination against women as such, penalties for offences involving discrimination are prescribed in various Acts, including the Penal Code (enacted in 1960), under which every person who violates a woman, commits an offence against her honour, seeks to seduce her, rapes her, or fails to respect the sanctity of her private parts, or who gives in marriage or celebrates the ceremonies of marriage in the case of a girl under 15 years of age, incurs criminal liability. The Code also prescribes penalties for every person who attempts to induce a female person to engage in prostitution. The Labour Code (enacted in 1996) contains provisions expressly designed to guarantee non-discrimination against working mothers. The Code was discussed in detail in Jordan's second report to the Committee.

17. In its concluding observations and recommendations on the first and second reports submitted by Jordan (paragraphs 28 and 29), the Committee expressed concern about social and cultural practices that impeded the full implementation of the Convention. In this connection, we may note that JNCW and various NGOs are pursuing various activities aimed at enhancing awareness of the law on the one hand, and awareness of men's and women's social roles on the other hand. These

activities are conducted in the context of programmes aimed at changing stereotypical attitudes toward those roles. In addition, supporting campaigns have been conducted, as will be seen in paragraph 254 of this report.

*(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination.*

18. The judicial system in Jordan comprises three kinds of courts: religious courts, regular courts and special courts. The religious courts have competence in matters of family status (marriage, support, custody, dowry, marriage contracts, inheritance and the like). These courts are divided into Shari'a (Islamic law) courts and courts of other religions. The regular courts try all civil and criminal matters, including prosecutions initiated by the Government and cases brought against the Government. Women and men have equal rights before these courts, in accordance with the law, and any citizen, male or female, may bring a case against any governmental or non-governmental agency. Lastly, as noted, there are special courts.

19. In its general recommendations (Nos. 12 and 19), the Committee expressed concern about violence against women. In this connection, it is noteworthy that a Family Protection Division was established in the 1990s (upgraded on 2 November 1999 to the Family Protection Department) as an arm of the Public Security Directorate, with a mandate to deal with cases of sexual aggression and domestic violence by means of a special observation mechanism designed to identify such cases, having regard to the requirements of human rights. The FPD began its work in the National Capital Region, but has since expanded its area of activity, with offices in other parts of Jordan, including Irbid, Zarqa, Aqaba and Balqa, while two additional offices have recently been opened in Kerak and Madaba. In governorates where the FPD does not yet have offices, family protection units have been opened in all police headquarters.

20. In another noteworthy development, the Legislative Assembly has adopted the Family Shelter Regulations (statutory instrument No. 48 of 2004), which are concerned with a system of shelters for victims of domestic violence. The purpose of these shelters is to protect and rehabilitate battered women. Furthermore, a number of NGOs are working to support battered women by setting up telephone helplines and shelters. One of these NGOs has established a women's shelter and is operating it in coordination with various governmental agencies that are concerned with the protection of women. The shelter opened its doors in 2002, and by the end of 2003 had received 225 cases. NGOs are also concerned with the protection of abused and neglected children, and one of them has established a shelter known as Dar al-Aman ("house of safety") for the benefit of children who are at risk of violence at home.

21. In its concluding observations and recommendations on the first and second reports submitted by Jordan (paragraphs 38 and 39), the Committee expressed concern about violence against women and recommended effective action to address the issue of domestic violence. In this connection, we may note the launch of the Family Protection Project in the year 2000. The aim of this national project is to build the capacities of public and community institutions for the purpose of developing and applying a comprehensive domestic violence prevention and protection strategy. The project has been implemented in cooperation with a number of national bodies, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the



Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Awqaf, the Ministry of Information, the Public Security Directorate, the Judicial Council, and a number of NGOs. The project seeks to build the capacities of all these institutions and to develop effective procedures for them. This programme is administered by a board with representatives from all the governmental agencies and NGOs involved, under the supervision of the National Council on Family Affairs. The programme comprises four strategies: protection for the victims of domestic violence, prosecution of persons who commit acts of domestic violence, support for battered women and children, and heightened awareness of the issues of abuse in Jordanian society. There have been a number of awareness campaigns devoted to the concepts of violence, targeting the media, members of the judiciary, persons who work within the Public Security Directorate, and men and women preachers employed by the Ministry of Awqaf, and there has also been action through the Ministry of Education to heighten the awareness of students, teachers and vocational guidance personnel about these issues.

22. At the present time, the Public Security Directorate provides protection for women at risk through its correctional and rehabilitation centres. Individuals can be taken into protective custody for their own safety. Recent statistics indicate that the cumulative yearly total numbers of women placed in protective custody between 1997 and 2004 ranged between 400 and 800. In 1997 there were 402 such women; by 2001 the total had risen to 899, while in 2002 there were 885. In 2003 the number declined to 540, and in 2004 it declined further, to 524. We may note at this point that these figures may be inflated as a result of the method of record-keeping, since the same woman may be taken into protective custody and released a number of times in the course of a single year, and she is counted afresh each time. However, no more than between 50 and 70 women are being held in protective custody at any given time. This approach to the protection of women has frequently been criticized, but it is still in use for the simple reason that no more satisfactory solution has yet been devised. It is essential to look into the situation of these women and to develop a means of providing them with effective protection without taking them into protective custody. As regards girls whose lives may be at risk, the Public Security Directorate is hampered in its efforts to provide protection for them by the lack of suitable infrastructure (i.e. shelters and the like). Future efforts to develop an adequate approach to this issue must involve a concerted approach among all the bodies concerned in an effort to eliminate the underlying factors that cause the lives of these girls to be endangered.

23. It is noteworthy that social awareness of the issue of domestic violence is steadily increasing, as may be seen from the most recent studies on the matter, which indicate that a majority of individuals in Jordanian society understand that it is the wife who is the primary victim of domestic violence, and connect this with an erroneous understanding of the rights and duties associated with different social roles, and an erroneous understanding of the teachings of the Islamic religion. Media and public forums held in various parts of Jordan also indicate a high level of awareness of this issue. Moreover, some NGOs have begun to sponsor spot radio and television messages on domestic violence and violence against women generally.

24. One result of the growth of awareness of the issue of domestic violence in Jordanian society has been that the available statistics on the phenomenon have become progressively more reliable. Statistical data for the period 2001-2004

indicate an increase in the reporting of cases, as will be seen from table 1 below. Specialists in this field attribute the increase to heightened awareness among Jordanians, and hence a greater concern to report cases of abuse. The incidence of violent practices is expected to decline in the future owing to the spread of awareness of modern child-rearing methods, which will contribute to the eradication of violence.

**Table 1**  
**Women as a percentage of assault victims in cases reported during the period 2000-2004**

Year	Sexual assaults			Physical assaults		
	No. of victims	No. of women	%	No. of victims	No. of women	%
2001	321	178	55	51	22	43
2002	455	278	61	67	30	45
2003	733	397	54	157	84	54
2004	791	426	54	163	82	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>50</b>

25. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the statistical data of the Family Protection Department/Public Security Directorate indicate clearly that the perpetrator was related to the victim in 7.8 per cent of all cases of sexual assault in 2004, while the corresponding figure for 2003 was 9.9 per cent. For physical assault, the perpetrator was related to the victim in 100 per cent of all cases in 2004. This finding is attributable to the fact that the FPD deals only with cases of physical abuse where the perpetrator is a family member.

*(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation.*

26. With the exception of penalties prescribed under the Penal Code (see paragraph 246 below) and the Labour Code (see paragraph 162 below), Jordanian law in general makes no provision for penalties or sanctions for persons who discriminate against women. However, a woman who considers that she has been subjected to discrimination may have recourse to the competent courts in precisely the same way as a man. Similarly, women have the right to appeal to the Supreme Labour Tribunal from administrative decisions in matters of appointments to posts in public institutions, yearly increments, promotion, separation from employment, layoffs, disciplinary measures, disputes over pay and benefits, pension entitlements and the like. Every person, whether male or female, who brings such an appeal has the right to seek compensation for decisions or measures affecting him or her. Further evidence of the Government of Jordan's concern to guarantee women's rights and protect them from institutional discrimination may be seen in the fact that on 6 December 2004, the Prime Minister sent a note to all ministries and government agencies asking them to develop criteria that took gender into account in appointment procedures and to take measures against anyone found to be discriminating against women.

*(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise.*

27. Women have the same right as men to seek redress through the courts if they consider that any person, organization or institution has discriminated against them. There are many NGOs in Jordan that are actively seeking to enhance women's awareness of their personal and civil rights, or to support women and provide them with legal advice in the event that they should find themselves being subjected to discrimination. Despite the efforts of these organizations, with their awareness and "legal literacy" campaigns, most Jordanian women are still not aware of their legal rights. The principle of legal assistance is enshrined in article 208 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (law No. 9 of 1961) and amendments thereto. Under that article, legal assistance must be provided in all cases involving an offence punishable by death or life imprisonment with or without hard labour. The court will pay for counsel to represent the defendant if he does not engage a lawyer himself, or if he is financially unable to do so.

28. JNCW networks with governmental institutions in an effort to promote the gender concept. It seeks to ensure that every institution has a communication officer who works with JNCW to attain its goals by reporting to JNCW itself and to the institution's management on any discrimination against women in matters of hiring and promotion and monitoring any issues relating to the provision of services to women. Nor are the Commission's efforts limited to women who work in public-sector institutions; it also devotes particular attention to women who deal with those institutions. JNCW's working mechanisms will be reviewed in part III of this report. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the Ministry of Labour has established a division dedicated exclusively to issues of relevance for women workers. The division monitors all matters affecting women in the job market and follows up solutions to problems confronting working women that are reported to the Central Inspection Directorate, working in cooperation and coordination with women labour inspectors in the Ministry's offices throughout Jordan and endeavouring to protect women workers from discrimination in various economic sectors.

*(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women.*

29. Jordan is currently the scene of a continuing effort by official bodies such as JNCW and the National Council on Family Affairs, as well as NGOs, aimed at amending laws and regulations and abolishing customs and practices that constitute discrimination against women. This drive has attracted the interest and support of the country's political leadership. Most of the bodies involved are focussing on the study of existing laws and the formulation of proposals for amendments to them, buttressed by campaigns aimed at enlisting support for such amendments, while at the same time seeking to enhance the awareness of individuals in society in their various capacities as citizens or decision-makers. This awareness-raising effort is as important as legislative amendments, inasmuch as the men and women who make up Jordanian society are, as we have seen, strongly influenced by customs and social conditioning.

(a) Some statutory instruments have, in fact, been amended by the repeal of provisions that were based on custom. Under the Civil Status Act (law No. 9 of 2001), new provisions have been introduced that have expressly given women and men equal rights, and provisions that restricted women's exercise of their rights

have been abolished. These provisions will be discussed in paragraphs 62 and 63 of this report.

(b) The Passports Act has been amended by an interim law issued by the Council of Ministers. Now a woman has the same right as a man to apply for a passport of her own, without having to obtain the permission of her parent or guardian or her husband. A number of articles of the Personal Status Act have been amended as well. This Act will be discussed in paragraph 93 below.

(c) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

30. A major achievement in this area has been the repeal of articles 282, 283 and 284 of the Penal Code by interim law No. 86 of 2001, and their replacement by articles establishing equality between men and women in the matter of adultery (act, evidence and prosecution). These changes are summarized below.

1. Adultery is now deemed to be committed by the man and woman jointly, and an allegation against one cannot be ruled admissible in isolation from the other.

2. Where an allegation is ruled admissible on general grounds, such as the existence of letters or other written documents, the legal definition is now more precise. Article 283 as amended reads: "Evidence deemed to be admissible as proof of the offence of adultery shall be the catching of the adulterer and adulteress in flagrante delicto, the confession of the parties in a court of law, or the existence of documents indicating conclusively that the offence was committed."

3. Both the man and woman are now prosecuted, even though an allegation has been brought against only one of them. The wording of the former Act was, "A husband may be prosecuted for adultery as defined in the preceding article only on the basis of an allegation brought by his wife..." This has been replaced by the following amended wording: "A man or woman may be prosecuted for adultery only on the basis of an allegation made by the husband or wife, where they are still married, or on the basis of an allegation made by the person with legal responsibility for the woman in the case. Regardless of whether the allegation concerns only one or both of them, they shall be prosecuted together, along with any accomplice, instigator or other person concerned, if any. Where the allegation is found to be unfounded, the case shall be deemed to be null and void and no penalty shall apply."

31. In sum, the amendments to the Act, simple as they are, clearly convey the legislators' determination to place men and women on an equal footing in the matter of the crime of adultery. They also establish rules ensuring that a woman can be found guilty of adultery only on the strength of irrefutable evidence, and consequently abolish the recognition of letters or other written documents as admissible evidence, except where they are conclusive. However, there have been cases in which it appears that these provisions have been misapplied, and have been used to compel women to submit to outrageous procedures in order to obtain conclusive evidence by means of forensic medicine. This highlights the need for a clear legal interpretation of the provisions in question, to prevent such abuse of the law.

32. Article 340 of the Penal Code had given rise to a good deal of controversy, and there was near-universal agreement among organizations seeking to promote gender equality that the text was in need of amendment. In due course it was amended, by

the interim law referred to above. The new text makes extenuating circumstances, rather than exonerating circumstances, applicable to a person of either sex who catches his or her spouse in the act of infidelity, and abolishes the possibility of claiming self-defence in that situation. The text of the amended article reads as follows:

1. Every person who catches his spouse or one of his ascendants, descendants or sisters in the act of infidelity or an adulterous situation and kills, mortally wounds or maims for life the woman involved or her partner or both of them on the spot, shall be entitled to the benefit of extenuating circumstances.

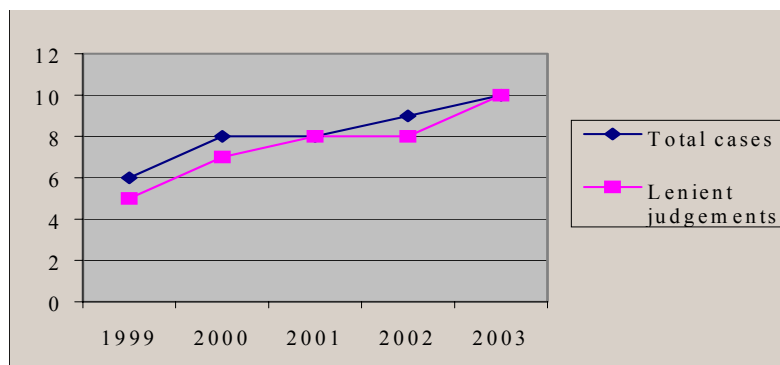
2. Similarly, every wife who catches her husband in the act of infidelity or an adulterous situation in the family home and kills, mortally wounds or maims for life the husband or his partner or both of them on the spot shall be entitled to the benefit of extenuating circumstances.

3. The right of self-defence may not be used in respect of persons entitled to the benefit of extenuating circumstances, and provisions relating to aggravating circumstances shall not be applicable.

33. We may note here that the amendments outlined above fall short of the hopes and aspirations of the rights organizations and NGOs, which would have liked to see article 340 repealed altogether, arguing that the amendments did not conform to international human-rights instruments in general. In view of the opposition of the Chamber of Deputies to the repeal of the article in question, however, governmental agencies and the legislature considered that the best course of action was to give women the same rights as men in the matter. It is noteworthy that the incidence of “honour killings” has begun to decline since the new Act came into force in 2003: there were 13 such killings in that year, down from 21 in 2002, while in 2004 there were a total of 19 cases. Figures available for the first few months of 2005 indicate that between the beginning of the year and May there were five victims. We may also note that according to a spokesperson for the Judicial Council, the Council’s records show 41 so-called “honour killings” out of a total 303 homicides during the period 1999-2003. Figure 1 below shows honour killings for which lenient judgements were handed down by the courts under article 98 of the Penal Code. It should be borne in mind that between 1999 and 2003, article 340 was not in force, and no one was convicted on the basis of it.

**Figure 1**

**Outcomes of honour-related criminal cases tried by Jordanian courts : statistical incidence of lenient judgements**



34. Some important lessons have been learned from the lobbying and organized efforts on the part of women's groups and organizations working in the field of human rights, which worked very hard in an attempt to secure the repeal of article 340 of the Penal Code. After the draft bill to amend the Penal Code had been debated in the Chamber of Deputies at one of its previous sessions, the members defeated the bill and referred it to the Chamber of Notables for further consideration. The upper house passed the bill and returned it to the Chamber of Deputies, but the latter again refused to adopt the proposed amendments. Some of those who voted against the bill argued that article 340 embodied Jordanian traditions and consequently should not be repealed, and that those who had voted in favour of it did not represent the majority of Jordanians. The draft bill was again referred to the Chamber of Notables, which passed it a second time. By this time, however, despite the fact that the draft bill still had not been either definitively passed or definitively defeated in the National Assembly (Chamber of Deputies and Chamber of Notables), the issue of the proposed amendments had roused so much public discussion, especially in the print media and among NGOs, that awareness of the issue of honour killings had been significantly stimulated among the members of Jordanian society generally. This experience clearly shows the importance of ensuring that efforts to introduce amendments to legislation go hand in hand with public education, pressure tactics and the systematic enlistment of support. At the same time, organized efforts by the women's movement to repeal and/or amend legislation that discriminates against women have undeniably borne fruit in recent years, and the movement continues to work actively to raise awareness and muster support for its campaigns.

### **Article 3**

*States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.*

35. Despite Jordan's limited natural and financial resources, the political situation, and the international developments currently affecting the region, the Government is making a major effort to develop and empower the country's human resources. As part of that effort, it has striven consistently to support the full development and advancement of women in all fields. In particular, it has supported the ongoing work of JNCW as the spearhead of its policies in the area of women's issues. An account of the establishment and mandate of JNCW was given in Jordan's second periodic report to the Committee. JNCW has endeavoured since its inception to build partnerships with government agencies and NGOs for the purpose of supporting the empowerment of women in all fields.

36. Concurrently, the year 2002 saw the establishment of a national organization known as "Jordan First", which seeks to develop various mechanisms designed, in general, to empower Jordanian youth. The first of the ten concepts formulated under the watchword "Jordan First" states that the purpose of the initiative is "to mobilize the latent strengths of individuals and society, to complete the work begun by the pioneers and first builders of the nation and initiate a new stage in its economic, social, political, cultural, educational and administrative development, and to

release the full potential of young Jordanian men and women and stimulate the creative energy that springs from their pride in belonging to their homeland.” The “Jordan First” initiative is articulated around a number of themes, one of which concerns mechanisms for the development of the Government’s action, the propagation of democratic procedures and the development of the Jordanian Parliament, including a proposed quota system to enable women to participate fully in the country’s political life.

37. The National Council on Family Affairs was established by law No. 27 of 2001. The Council’s mission is to strengthen the Jordanian family through a national vision that will support development policies and enable families to achieve their highest aspirations. The Council’s secondary goals include the preservation and stability of the family entity, action to foster a cultural, economic, social and legislative environment that is supportive of the family entity, the strengthening of the rights of individual family members in accordance with the relevant technical indicators and performance criteria, and, lastly, action to enable the family to interact positively with the impacts of new cultural, social and economic phenomena that are regional and international in scope.

38. The National Population Council has been restructured and is now the High-Level Council on Population. It is headed by the Prime Minister, and its membership includes the ministers concerned themselves, instead of ministerial secretaries. The Council has modernized the National Population Strategy, and one of its objectives is now expressly the promotion of justice and equity between men and women in all areas of life through the achievement of equality between the sexes in terms of their civil, social, economic and legislative rights and duties, combined with action to enable women to develop their full potential and strengthen their participation in sustainable development and in policy development processes.

39. The National Youth Strategy developed by the High-Level Council on Youth devotes special attention to young women, based as it is on a number of principles that apply to all Jordanian youth, male and female, in the 12-30 age group in all parts of the country, and on gender equity and balance.

40. On a related level, the Government has supported various strategies aimed at turning Jordan’s human resource strengths to account, taking into consideration the distinctive situation and needs of Jordanian women. One of the most important of these strategies is the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, which includes a number of projects, most notably a national employment project that is being executed by the Ministry of Labour. The project focuses on the country’s most remote and poverty-stricken regions, seeking to influence the target groups and persuade them of the utility of taking advantage of job opportunities available in more industrialized regions, and to that end providing the necessary facilities, including suitable housing, food and communications. By the end of 2003, approximately 1042 male and female workers had found jobs. The Ministry of Labour is also administering a training project targeting the weaving industry. The aim is to supply the job market with skilled, trained workers capable of finding jobs in the industrialized regions of the country. Lastly, we may note a national training project that is being executed in cooperation with the Armed Forces and the Vocational Training Corporation. This project is aimed at the training of 10 000 young men and 2000 young women in various fields of specialization. As of June 2003, 1654 young women and 872 young men had successfully completed their training courses.

41. In its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's first and second periodic reports (paragraph 48), the Committee expressed concern about the legal position of the Jordanian National Commission for Women. It should be noted that JNCW was established pursuant to an ordinance issued by the Jordanian Council of Ministers, and this indicates the Government's support and backing for the issue of the advancement of women and the realization of equality in all areas of life. That support is also clear from JNCW's Supervisory Board, which is made up of a number of ministers and civil society representatives and is headed by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma bint Talal, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 6 and paragraph 8 of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Council of Ministers defined JNCW's mandate in 1996 in the light of that recommendation and the Platform for Action. Experience has shown that the fact of having been established by decree and not by law has had no adverse impact whatever on the effectiveness of JNCW's work. Nor has the Commission encountered any difficulties or obstacles of any kind in its activities from its inception to the present day. As we have seen, its structure is based on full partnership with government agencies and relevant NGOs, and JNCW has consistently found that this approach is eminently suited to the situation prevailing in Jordan. Previous experience has shown that mechanisms based on units within ministries are unsatisfactory, whereas systems based on an integrated approach embracing various institutions work much better, allowing JNCW to function just as well as any other successful mechanism. Jordan's second report contained details of the mechanisms through which JNCW conducts its work, such as the Legal Committee, the governmental communication network and the Committee for Coordination with NGOs. In addition, JNCW has recently conducted a detailed study on its structure and the development of an alternative structure that would be better adapted to evolving national conditions with a view to taking more effective advantage of the available resources and putting them to more effective use.

42. In its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's first and second periodic reports (paragraph 49), the Committee recommended that JNCW be given the mandate to follow up complaints from women. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR), established pursuant to an interim bill (No. 75 of 2002), has the task of following up complaints of this kind as one of the main features of its mandate. Article 5 of the interim bill reads as follows: "The Centre shall attain its objectives by means of the following methods and procedures:

- Investigation to determine whether human rights are being respected in Jordan, in order to deal with any encroachments upon or violations of those rights, and action to follow up any measures required to that end, including negotiated settlement or referral to the executive power, the legislative power or the courts, as the case may be, to bring about the cessation of such encroachment or violation and the elimination of its effects."

43. Article 7 of the same bill provides that "The Centre shall be vigilant in order to detect encroachments upon human rights and public freedoms in Jordan, and shall take action to eliminate such encroachments." From its inception to the date of preparation of this report, the Centre had received 362 complaints involving more than 16 violations, including some relating to the right to equality and non-discrimination, the right to freedom, the demands of justice and equity, and the right to freedom of expression and opinion. The data contained in the Centre's annual



report do not indicate any complaints referring specifically to discrimination against women. It should be noted that the originators of other complaints are not broken down by sex, and consequently it is not possible to determine the exact nature of complaints lodged by women.

44. Furthermore, a Committee on the Rights of Women and Children has been established in the context of NCHR, with a mandate to “strengthen and publicize the recognized rights of women and children, and endeavour to ensure that they are respected and applied.” In pursuit of its mandate, the Committee conducts documentation and research activities and actively seeks relations of coordination and cooperation with relevant government agencies and local, national, Arab and international organizations.

45. JNCW also represents the Government of Jordan at international events relating to women’s issues. A Jordanian delegation headed by JNCW and including representatives from the leading women’s organizations participated in the special session of the United Nations General Assembly held to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing + 5). Thanks to its participatory approach, JNCW also successfully drafted Jordan’s report on its implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing + 10), which was subsequently submitted to the United Nations.

46. We may note at this point that JNCW has recently reviewed and updated the National Strategy for Women to bring it into line with various aspects of the evolving national, regional and international situations. It adopted a participatory approach in the task of formulating the main themes and objectives of its updated Strategy, after having reviewed and evaluated the original National Strategy for Women 1993-1999 in the light of achievements since that time, the evolving socio-economic situation of Jordanian women, and new developments at the domestic, regional and world levels. The work of updating the Strategy was based on a number of specialized studies which were submitted to representatives of government agencies, NGOs and experts at 15 workshops held in the northern, central and southern regions of the country. The main themes of the updated Strategy that emerged from this consultation process are as follows: legislation, human security and social protection (comprising the areas of education, health, violence, old age, disability, food security, the environment, shelter and housing, poverty, and women-headed families), economic empowerment, participation in public life, and information and communication.

#### **Article 4**

*1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.*

47. In this connection, we may note an action that is considered to be the first of its kind in Jordan, and was adopted in response to the demands of NGOs and the Committee’s recommendations for the adoption of special temporary measures to help women accede to decision-making posts. In the context of the “Jordan First”

initiative launched by His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Hussein, the Ministry of the Interior expanded the number of seats in the Jordanian Parliament from 104 to 110, the six new seats being reserved for women. In addition, article 24 of the Election to the Chamber of Deputies Act has been amended by an interim bill (law No. 11 of 2003). The original article 24 had provided that committees should be established in the various governorates of the country to perform the tasks specified in the Act. The amended version contains a new paragraph that reads as follows:

“(c) (i) At the instance of the Minister at the Headquarters of the Ministry, a special committee, chaired by a department head and including among its membership a judge appointed by the Minister of Justice and a Government official holding a rank not lower than Group II, Grade 2, shall be established for the purpose of following up the matter of the additional seats in the Chamber of Deputies reserved for successful women candidates (subject to the Division of Electoral Districts Regulations and the seats allocated to each of them) pursuant to the provisions of article 45(c) of this Act. The Minister may issue such directives as he may deem necessary to assign other tasks to the special committee where the committee’s work so requires.

(c) (ii) The committee shall take, before the Minister, the oath prescribed in subparagraph (d)(i) of this article.”

Under the same interim bill, the following paragraphs have been added to article 45 of the Act, concerning the results of successful candidates for election:

“(b) After the votes have been counted and the final results of the elections have been announced in all electoral districts and forwarded to the Minister by central electoral committees as prescribed in article 44 of this Act, the Minister shall forward to the special committee the reports relating to those results for examination and review. The Committee shall examine the numbers of votes received by women candidates who have not won any of the National Assembly seats allocated to the several electoral districts.

(c) (i) The special committee shall determine the names of the women who have won the additional seats set aside for women on the basis of the percentage of the total number of votes cast that have been won by each woman candidate in the electoral district in which she stood and comparing the resulting percentage figures. The women candidates who have received the largest percentages in each electoral district shall be deemed to have won the seats in question, regardless of whether the winner in any given case is Muslim, Christian, Circassian or Chechen, or whether she comes from one of the closed Bedouin electoral districts.

(c) (ii) In the event of a tie among two or more women candidates, the winning candidate shall be selected by lot.

(d) The Chair of the special committee shall announce openly, before the assembled women candidates or their duly appointed representatives, the names of the candidates who have won the additional seats reserved for women.

(e) The special committee shall prepare a report on all the measures it has taken and the results arrived at pursuant to the provisions of paragraphs (c) and (d) of this article and shall submit it to the Minister.

(f) If one of the seats reserved for women in the Chamber of Deputies falls vacant, a by-election shall be held in the electoral district represented by the former holder of the seat in question, in accordance with the provisions of this Act, within a period of not more than sixty days from the date on which he Chamber informs the Prime Minister that the seat has fallen vacant. The only candidates who may stand for election to fill the vacant seat shall be women who meet the conditions for candidacy in the electoral district concerned.”

48. Under the amended Act, obviously, women candidates are not denied the opportunity of competing with male candidates in the various electoral districts. On the contrary, the Act gives them the additional chance of winning one of the sex seats reserved for women in the event that they should not be successful in free competition. However, while parliamentary elections have put six women members into the National Assembly, experience has shown that the mechanism described above tends to prevent women from achieving equal success, enabling only women from sparsely populated areas to accede to decision-making posts. The women’s movement in Jordan is still working for changes to the quota system to guarantee proportional representation for women in all parts of the country. In general, it may be said that this temporary measure conforms to general recommendations Nos. 5 and 25 formulated by the Committee, and the current session of Parliament may be considered an opportunity for women to participate under a quota system designed to expedite equality between women and men. It also conforms to recommendation No. 6 of the Beijing Platform for Action.

49. JNCW, in the context of its early preparations for the formulation of alternative approaches and proposed amendments to the present Election Act, recently organized a consultative meeting at which representatives of political parties, civil society organizations, the women’s movement, the universities and the Government discussed ways of promoting participation by women in national or regional elected bodies. The outcome of the meeting was a memorandum that was subsequently submitted to the Royal Commission mandated to formulate a national agenda that will serve as a reference and strategy for successive Governments. The memorandum outlined three possible scenarios for development of the electoral system and offered solutions tailored to each scenario that would ensure balanced representation for women. The memorandum recommended retention of a quota system, but suggested that the proportion of women representatives should be not less than 15 per cent for the National Assembly, between 15 and 20 per cent for regional assemblies, and not less than 20 per cent of the seats on municipal councils.

50. As part of the Government’s efforts to promote the accession of women to decision-making posts, it has recently appointed a number of women to seats on municipal councils (some of which are filled by appointment rather than by election). It has also appointed a number of women to seats in the Chamber of Notables, which is constituted by the King of Jordan. In addition, two women ambassadors have been appointed to represent Jordan abroad. Despite these initiatives, the numbers of women involved are still relatively small and by no means commensurate with the capacities and potential of Jordanian women.

51. On a related level, in the context of governmental policies aimed at the advancement of women, the Ministry of the Interior recently appointed, for the first time, a woman as a department head, and has also appointed a woman mayor, again for the first time in the country’s history. The Public Security Directorate, for its

part, recently decided to appoint a woman, for the first time ever, as a public prosecutor in the police service. Lastly, the competent units of the Ministry of Health have appointed their first woman doctor to work in the Forensic Medicine Division. This appointment is certain to have a positive impact on the process of dealing with women who are referred to the Division in connection with court cases of various kinds. Furthermore, Ministry of Labour sources show that for the first time, a woman has been appointed as a labour counsellor with a diplomatic mission working in an Arab country. It is also noteworthy that a number of women have been appointed to field director posts with various ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture (five women appointees), the Ministry of Education (four appointees) and the Civil Service Commission (three appointees). These figures may not measure up to the aspirations of women's movements, but they do reflect a growing concern on the part of Jordanian authorities to increase women's representation in decision-making posts. The field director appointments are particularly significant, as field directors are in close touch with ordinary citizens, both men and women, in all parts of the country.

52. Jordan's Political Development Strategy is directly oriented toward more active political participation by all groups in society, including women and young people in particular. One result of this interest on the part of the Government has been a working partnership between JNCW and the Ministry of Social Development. This appeared clearly in the 2004 Conference on Political Development and Jordanian Women, which was organized at the instance of JNCW and in which the Ministry of Social Development participated. The Conference held meetings in the northern, central and southern regions of the country, and one of its most important outcomes was the adoption of a plan, prepared jointly by all concerned (such as political parties and civil society organizations) that was aimed at supporting political participation by women, both as voters and as representatives in elected bodies.

53. Similarly, in line with the Committee's recommendation on encouraging political participation by women in its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's first and second periodic reports (paragraph 45), various community institutions and NGOs are currently working through JNCW, in its capacity as a member of the High-Level Committee on Elections (a body that includes both men and women experts on women's issues, former ministers, members of the Chamber of Notables and representatives of the leading women's organizations), to develop the main lines of a strategy aimed at supporting women as candidates for electoral office. In another promising initiative, five NGOs, in cooperation with two State-run universities, have executed a project aimed at enhancing women candidates' chances of election to the National Assembly. The project includes a number of activities designed to enhance the awareness of members of Jordanian society, including young people and decision-makers in the field of the media and the legislative branch of Government. In addition, the project seeks to help women candidates by providing them with training in electoral campaign management techniques. Lastly, the project has been a useful means of organizing pressure campaigns in favour of seats reserved for women in Parliament. The last such campaign, just before the allocation of seats for women was officially adopted, took the form of a national conference in 2002, which was attended by many men and women activists in the field of women's rights.

54. Lastly, in the context of the development of public political life, in March 2005 the Ministry of Social Development introduced a draft bill containing a new Political Parties Act. The wording of the draft bill is designed to encourage women to become involved in party politics. It contains a number of incentives within the system of financial support for Jordanian political parties, based on various factors, including increased participation (over 20 per cent) by women in parties and party organizations, and party lists containing not less than 10 per cent women candidates. This clearly shows the Government's determination to take special measures to support political participation by women at all levels.

2. *Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.*

55. Maternity is regarded as a social role having particular significance and importance in Jordanian society. Accordingly, all labour-related legislation, including the Labour Code and the Civil Service Regulations, make provision for maternity leave. The Labour Code was discussed in detail in the second periodic report submitted by Jordan.

## Article 5

*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:*

(a) *To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.*

56. In its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's first and second periodic reports (paragraph 28), the Committee expressed concern about persistent stereotypical attitudes about social roles. These stereotyped attitudes are among the main obstacles to women's exercise of their rights on a footing of equality with men. Jordanian society is still patriarchal in nature, and women play a secondary role compared to men, both at the level of the family and in society in general. Organizations working to promote equality have come to realize that it is essential to work to change these social stereotypes. That realization has given rise to a number of awareness-enhancement programmes directed at all individuals in society, including men, women and young people, in order to bring about change in that area. Having regard to paragraph 29 of the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations, which is concerned with increased awareness of the role of social and cultural practices in strengthening social stereotyping, JNCW joined forces with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to entrust a Jordanian researcher with responsibility for preparing a report on the sources of such stereotyping. The report identified the factors entering into stereotyped attitudes, and noted that the most important of them were the impact of the popular heritage and the effects of the media and education. However, it also pointed to the role played by the schools and the media in changing stereotypical attitudes. The study was discussed at a national workshop attended by representatives of government agencies and NGOs, and the participants adopted a number of recommendations relating to both aspects (the media and education). As regards the media, the recommendations had to do with training for women media personnel

and action to enable them to accede to decision-making posts on the one hand, and, on the other hand, awareness training for male media personnel to help them understand the importance of changing the dominant social stereotypes. In addition, the participants recommended that the message conveyed by the media should become more balanced. As regards education, the recommendations had to do with changes to curricula, educational supervision, educational policy, and the creation of an appropriate learning environment. It is noteworthy in this connection that the Ministry of Education is constantly amending and updating school curricula in order to accommodate evolving concepts. Concurrently, the Ministry administers an institutional skills development programme for its own staff members that is aimed at heightening their awareness of gender issues and their impact on educational practice and outcomes.

57. At the level of the family, it is clear that the dominant social stereotypes continue to reinforce the secondary nature of the role played by fathers in the upbringing of children, except as regards the making of major decisions that affect the family in general and the children in their later years, such as decisions having to do with jobs for the girls or the behaviour of the boys. Recent studies have found that fathers, or male family members, play a greater role in decision-making, regardless of whether those decisions concern them or the work of female family members. None the less, the studies note that female family members do play a role in decision-making in matters with which they are particularly concerned, i.e. marriage or field of specialization in education. This decision-making power in matters of marriage and education is attributed to the fact that decisions in those areas do not constitute a threat to the system of gender-based roles, whereas decisions in such matters as choice of work and the ability to gain access to economic resources do threaten that system. As for mothers, the traditional family continues to make them responsible for tasks relating to the care of children and exclude them from the decision-making process. A recently published study concluded that family pressure restricted women's participation in decision-making: it reported that 54 per cent of a total sample of 397 women had described family pressure as a significant negative factor in their lives. The same study reported that 68 per cent of the women surveyed said that they agreed with the statement, "Housekeeping and child care are women's natural role." However, a recent study on awareness of women's rights and violence against women among students at three Jordanian universities contradicted that finding, reporting a measure of change in young men's and young women's attitudes toward women's issues. To be sure, the methodology of the study had its limitations: the sample used was small, to begin with, and was restricted to university students exclusively. Even so, its findings are suggestive and worth following up. Of the individuals making up the sample, 85.7 per cent agreed with the statement "Women have the same rights as men", and 52.5 per cent agreed that "Women have the same capacities as men in terms of work." Moreover, 61.1 per cent agreed with the statement "Violence against women is a widespread phenomenon in Jordanian society", while 93.2 per cent disagreed with the statement "Women's only role is housekeeping and child care". The statement "Education is more important for men than for women" elicited 88.8 per cent disagreement, the statement "Men have the right to beat their wives" met with a "disagree" response from 91.1 per cent of the individuals surveyed, and 89.8 of them disagreed with the statement "Domestic violence is a personal matter, and no outsider has any right to interfere."

58. It is well known that social stereotypes are the outcome of the values learned by children at an early age through the process of social conditioning within the family and the fact that daughters are given roles to play in helping to bring up their sisters and care for them. This picture was confirmed by the findings of a recent nation-wide study of young men and women: they all agreed unanimously that husbands and fathers should provide for the family and were responsible for decision-making in financial matters, whereas mothers and wives were responsible for the tasks of housekeeping and child-rearing. The process of social conditioning ensures that these traditional roles are passed on to male and female children, as the above-mentioned UNICEF study found. Table 2 below shows that male children participate in the roles of fathers and husbands. The views of Jordanian young people on these responsibilities were found to be consistent with the actual roles within families, emphasizing once again that social conditioning and the roles actually played within the family had become part of their thinking.

**Table 2**

<i>Responsibility/right</i>	<i>% family members exercising right/playing role</i>						
	<i>Father/ husband</i>	<i>Mother/ wife</i>	<i>Both parents</i>	<i>Sons</i>	<i>Daughters</i>	<i>Sons and daughters</i>	<i>Others</i>
Providing family income	90.4	0.5	8.6	0.3	-	-	-
Housekeeping tasks	0.2	96.5	2.6	-	0.6	-	0.1
Child care	0.2	89.5	9.8	-	0.1	0.1	0.3
Helping children with their duties around the house	3.4	51.1	38.2	0.8	1.3	4.5	0.5
Making financial decisions	3.4	7.9	41.1	0.2	-	0.2	0.1
Making educational decisions	50.6	2.5	60.8	0.5	-	5.3	1.2
Making decisions about number of children in family	13.3	4.1	75.1	-	-	-	4.3

*Source:* UNICEF report (2003), *Jordanian Youth: Their Lives and Views*, table 21.

59. NGOs, however, have realized the importance of the role played by the family in changing the stereotyped social roles of both men and women, and accordingly have designed and executed a number of programmes aimed at generating awareness of the importance of the role of parental care and the role of sons and mothers in bringing up both sons and daughters, focusing, not on the prevailing social stereotypes, but rather on the fact that it is important for both parents to share responsibility for their children. This is responsive to the Committee's general recommendation No. 3, inasmuch as these programmes are being delivered by various governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development.

60. In the same context, the programming of the various media continues to highlight the stereotyped role of women. A recently published study found that women in television dramas project a negative image: they are portrayed as exerting little influence, not taking the initiative, and being weak and dependent on men. In recent years, however, the media have begun to present some programmes aimed at heightening awareness of women's various roles in society and their actual role in its development. NGOs have begun to offer training courses for media producers and journalists with a view to teaching them to highlight images of women in their programming that are different from the stereotyped images. The expansion of other

Arab media through modern communication systems in recent years has also helped to convey a different view of women, in some cases through specialized programming, in others through the presentation of different images of women in regular programming. Women are now employed as hosts on sports programmes, for example, whereas formerly functions of that kind were reserved exclusively for men.

61. A Jordanian academic who recently conducted a comprehensive study on textbooks used in primary schools found that the roles of women presented in those books were largely confined to the family setting and traditional occupations, whereas the male roles portrayed in them featured political and professional activities. The findings of the study in question will be presented more fully in paragraph 123 of this report. It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Education periodically reviews school textbooks in order to add new legal information that is of relevance for children, and at the same time it modifies curricula to bring them into line with legislation currently in force. The Ministry might take advantage of the opportunity to change social stereotypes in its school books at the same time. As yet, however, it has not been feasible to make radical alterations to those stereotypes.

62. On another level, as regards the matter of legislation and its enforcement in practice, a number of studies have indicated that despite the amendments to Jordanian law that have been enacted in recent years with a view to giving women equal rights with men, in actual fact, not much has changed. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of the nation-wide study on Jordanian youth referred to above, which reported that one third of young people believed that in the event of incompatibility between the country's legislation and its social traditions, it was preferable to follow tradition rather than the law, while only two thirds of the sample of young men and women surveyed were convinced that women and men were equal before the law. A striking example of the disparity between law and reality can be seen in the amendments to the Civil Status Act and its definition of the term "head of family". According to the Act, in the event of the death of the head of the family and his wife, the eldest unmarried child (whether male or female) is deemed to be the head of the family. The available evidence, however, suggests that in practice, it is the male family members exclusively who claim the status of head of the family, even though they may be younger than their female siblings.

63. The full text of article 57(a) of the Civil Status Act (law No. 9 of 2001) indicates the altered meaning of the expression "head of family":

1. The father, but in the event of his death or his loss or renunciation of Jordanian nationality, the head of the family shall be the wife. Where he has more than one wife, a family record book shall be issued for each wife, with her children, and a separate civil register entry shall be kept for each;

2. The wife in the event of the death of the father or his protracted absence from Jordan, for civil registration purposes;

3. The eldest unmarried child in the event of the death of the head of the family and his wife.

64. Despite the reality of these social obstacles, which underline the fact that the task of changing stereotyped concepts and social attitudes will take time, other studies have reported some positive indicators suggesting that public awareness



about women's various roles has already evolved. One recent study found that women had begun to alter their stereotyped image through their receptiveness to education and employment. The women surveyed in another study said that they were keenly aware of the low esteem in which they were held by society in its dealings with them, and that it was essential, not only to amend the country's legislation, but also to strive to alter the prevailing social stereotypes and alleviate the pressure exerted by families on their female members. The latter study reported that women who were working effectively for change had become more fully aware of the importance of securing rights and better treatment from society. This finding is supported by the results of another study conducted in 2001, which showed that women in the younger age groups, in contrast to their mothers, fathers and male counterparts, did not agree with the view that women were of lesser status than men (see table 3 below). It is clear, then, that women of the younger generation take a different view of their status and role in society than their mothers, who cling to the social standards that diminish their worth. As we have seen, social conditioning plays an important part in the formation of individuals' views and attitudes, but it appears that there are other influences that are helping to change the dominant social stereotypes and beliefs, and one of those influences is the media. However, research in greater depth is needed before it will be feasible to assess the changing situation and build in systematic fashion on a stock of reliable data in order to expedite the process of changing social stereotypes.

**Table 3**

**% agreement with the view that women are generally of lower status than men among fathers, mothers and young persons (men and women)**

<i>Group</i>	<i>% agreement that « women are generally of lower status than men »</i>
Fathers in the under 40-60 and over age group	49.3
Males in the 10-24 age group	46.9
Mothers in the under 40- 60 and over age group	41.2
Females in the 10-24 age group	26.3

*Source:* Department of Statistics, Jordanian National Commission for Women and UNIFEM, The Status of Jordanian Women, 2004.

65. Significant action has recently been taken at the practical level, in the context of the Committee's general recommendation No. 6, on effective action to carry out strategies and measures to eliminate discrimination, and paragraph 6 of the Beijing Platform for Action, on economic participation by women, having regard, in addition, to paragraph 46 of the concluding observations and recommendations formulated by the Committee on Jordan's first and second period reports, in which it expressed concern at the low level of participation by women in the paid labour force. JNCW has joined forces with the German technical cooperation organization GTZ to implement a project entitled "Supporting gender equity through institutional development in Jordan". This project is aimed at incorporating gender equity into governmental and non-governmental institutions, making the workplace more gender-sensitive, and making it non-discriminatory and comfortable for women. The project also seeks to create new ways of developing institutional cultures that are equitable, enable staff members to strive for success, and harness women's skills more effectively, especially their communication and language skills, in order to

increase participation by women in paid employment and make them completely at ease in the job market.

66. In paragraph 29 of its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's first and second reports, the Committee recommended the enactment of laws to eliminate the effects of customs and traditions that assume the inferiority of women. No laws prescribing penalties relating to customs and traditions have been enacted as yet. However, the Government of Jordan has organized awareness campaigns within its own official institutions and for the benefit of NGOs, and this indicates that social change does not come about through legislation alone, but rather requires the development of general social awareness over a long period of time. In this connection, as we shall see in part VII of this report, some Government agencies are considering ways of mainstreaming a gender perspective in their official and unofficial systems with a view to eliminating discrimination against women, including not only the women who work in the agencies concerned, but also those who receive services from them. Some of these initiatives will be discussed in detail below.

*(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.*

67. In a Jordanian family, the woman is generally associated with her stereotyped social role as mother. That role is regarded as important and enjoys high esteem as a result of social conditioning. Recent research has found that young men and women consider their mothers as their primary source of psychological and emotional support, the person to whom they turn first of all. NGOs are trying to direct people's attention to the other social roles that women play in society by organizing seminars, training courses and awareness campaigns in various fields, such as women and the law, women in Jordanian politics, and women and decision-making. The most important of these courses have to do with gender awareness.

68. One of the studies on Jordanian women referred to earlier has shown clearly that the trend for women to become educated and take gainful employment has begun, albeit slowly, to have an impact on women's self-image and their view of their future capacities, and this, in turn, may affect the way they bring up their children.

## **Article 6**

*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.*

69. The laws aimed at combating traffic in women were discussed in Jordan's second report. No amendments to those laws have been enacted in the intervening years. The latest statistics available from the Public Security Directorate indicate that cases involving houses of prostitution have increased, accounting for 26.42 per cent of all criminal prosecutions during 2000-2001, with 106 cases in the former year and 134 in the latter. In 2002, 188 prosecutions were initiated, for a 40.3 per cent increase. There has been no research on the issue of prostitution in Jordan. It is noteworthy, however, that in the interim Juveniles Act (law No. 11 of 2002), article

31 of the original Act, which had to do with the definition of a juvenile in need of care and protection, has been repealed and replaced by a ten-point definition including a paragraph that reads as follows: “Children who fall into any of the categories listed below shall be deemed to be in need of protection and care... 10. Every child who is exploited for purposes of begging or activities relating to prostitution, fornication or immorality, or who works for persons engaging in those or any other unlawful activities.”

70. On a related level, data from one NGO on the subject of prostitution indicate that the working women who seek refuge with the organization for protection from violence are women who have been forced into prostitution and are at risk of various forms of violence, with no legal protection or protection for their health. The organization reviewed 50 cases of women who engaged in prostitution, and a number of common characteristics emerged, including the fact that most of them in the 16-25 age group had never had any adequate education, and that a large proportion of them were married.

## Part II

### Article 7

*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:*

*(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies.*

71. In general, the Government of Jordan has sought to respond to the Committee’s general recommendation No. 23 and paragraph 6 of the Beijing Platform for Action, which are concerned with women’s access to decision-making posts and guaranteeing women the right to participate in elected bodies and civil society institutions on a footing of equality with men. Jordanian law includes no provisions aimed at restricting women’s ability to participate. However, while women have secured the right to stand as candidates for election to all bodies whose members are elected by popular vote in Jordan, as a practical matter, the rate of participation by women in the country’s public life remains low. Women’s organizations, working through JNCW, have exerted pressure on the Government to amend the Election Act, with the result that a quota for women in the National Assembly has been introduced, as we saw in paragraph 47 above. In this connection, we may note that this issue is one that has been debated at various dialogues and forums, in the media or at round table discussions and in intellectual circles, and this has helped individuals in society become aware of it. This is clear from a series of public-opinion surveys conducted in 1999, which found that 62.7 per cent of the respondents supported the allocation of a quota for women in the National Assembly for a limited time. It thus appears that Jordanians generally have become aware of the importance of women’s participation in political action, and the importance of creating ways of facilitating and supporting such participation. This conclusion is reinforced by the findings of a study conducted at Jordanian universities by the National Centre for Human Rights: 46.3 per cent of the students surveyed said they disagreed with the statement, “Men make better political leaders than women”.

72. Women participate in the public electoral process on equal terms with men. At the recent elections held in 2003, participation by women voters was 109 per cent of the male participation rate, according to an initial study. The study attributed this high rate to a number of factors, including tribalism and the fact that tens of thousands of men were in the armed forces and public security bodies and consequently not eligible to vote under the Election Act. The elections in question were held to elect the members of the National Assembly. Fifty-four women stood as candidates, but only six of them were successful, thanks to the quota system. According to the above-mentioned study, only 2.7 per cent of all voters, male and female, cast their ballots for a woman candidate - a very low figure indeed.

73. The interim Election Act (law No. 34 of 2001) has helped remove some obstacles and facilitated procedures, thereby promoting greater participation by women. In the first place, the voting age was lowered to 18 years, whereas under the former Act it was 19 years, with the result that larger numbers of young men and women had an opportunity of participating in public and political life. In the second place, individuals' personal identity cards were accepted as proof of eligibility to vote, and this enabled women to vote and express their choice without let or hindrance. At former elections, only the family record book was acceptable as proof of eligibility to vote, and then only at one specific polling place. Furthermore, a husband could refuse to let his wife have the family record book if he so wished. The new procedure also replaces the system of voters' cards, which has sometimes been an obstacle to participation by women. In addition, under the interim Act any voter, male or female, may cast his or her ballot at any polling place within his or her electoral district. This change has made it easier for women to participate in the electoral process by eliminating the obstacles that formerly arose as a result of communication or transport problems: women frequently were unable to reach the one polling place where they had to cast their ballots because it was too far away or they had no convenient means of getting there.

74. The interim Act has thus undoubtedly made it easier for women to exercise their rights as voters. In the view of women's organizations, however, the Single Vote Act, which is the subject of widespread debate in political circles, makes it more difficult for women to be elected to Parliament. Under the Single Vote Act, every voter is required to vote for one candidate only. Given the mentality of male dominance, which is still prevalent, we find that voters, whether male or female, tend to elect male family members or male candidates, with the result that women candidates are marginalized and have less chance of winning.

75. At the same time, it is noteworthy that the top political leadership, in the person of His Majesty King Abdullah II, is endeavouring to provide women with greater opportunities of acceding to policy and decision-making posts by appointing women to the Chamber of Notables, which, as one of the two chambers making up the National Assembly (the other being the Chamber of Deputies) is a fundamental component of the legislative power. Women members account for 7.5 per cent of the total membership of the upper chamber. On the King's instructions, a Royal Commission has been established and entrusted with responsibility for examining the administrative subdivisions of the country's regions and governorates and developing mechanisms for more effective participation by citizens by enabling them to raise issues directly within elected assemblies that will work in conjunction with elected municipal councils to determine priorities for action on a decentralized basis.

76. At the level of elections for membership of municipal councils, there were 40 women candidates in the 2003 elections, accounting for 2.4 per cent of the total number of candidates. Only five of them were elected, out of a total of 588 (0.9 per cent). It should be noted that the voter turnout was low, possibly, in part, because the municipal elections were held only a short time after parliamentary elections, and this may have been one reason why women candidates were generally unsuccessful. Once again, however, the country's leaders showed that they were determined to support women: 102 women were appointed to seats on municipal councils, out of a total of 477 appointed members, to ensure that women were represented on every municipal council in every governorate in the country. Women representatives, appointed or elected, now account for 10 per cent of the total membership of local councils. This may be fairly modest in terms of the aspirations of the Jordanian women's movement, but it is unquestionably a significant step forward, especially in view of the fact that it has been accompanied by efforts to support women through training and expertise development.

77. We may note here that community organizations have displayed a good deal of interest in supporting women's accession to decision-making posts. One of the main lines of emphasis in the National Strategy for Women is participation by women in public life. Under the Strategy, institutional obstacles confronting women are to be identified and ways of eliminating them devised, and institutional capacities are to be strengthened by the incorporation of gender issues. Various NGOs have embarked on the task of enhancing Jordanian society's awareness of the importance of women's participation in political action, holding workshops on the issue in various parts of the country. These awareness campaigns are directed at all individuals in society, men and women alike, and their aim is to foster understanding of the electoral laws and obstacles that confront women in their efforts to become effective participants in decision-making processes.

*(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.*

78. Between 1997 and the present day, six Jordanian ministries have been established, and women have been represented in all of them, except under one Government. It is noteworthy that women have held non-stereotyped ministerial posts: women have served as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Planning, and Minister of Information and Communication Technology. These are posts that had historically been filled only by men and/or fell into the category of what has traditionally been regarded as men's work. Over the period extending between 1997 and 2004, five women have been appointed as Secretaries-General or Directors in a number of ministries and government agencies, including an agency with responsibility in economic matters. Furthermore, a woman has been appointed President of a State-run university in an initiative that is the first of its kind in Jordan. Women have also risen to high positions in governmental institutions: in 2004 they accounted for 3.8 per cent of all posts at the highest level, and for 6.4 per cent of Group I posts. To be sure, these figures are modest by comparison with Jordanian women's capacities and potential, and they are not commensurate with the political leadership's support for women through appointments to ministerial portfolios or posts as Directors in important, pivotal agencies. Nor do they signify accession by women to senior positions in private corporations, for which accurate data are difficult to obtain. As regards the judiciary, in 2003 there were 25 women

judges out of a total of 626 (4 per cent) working in juvenile courts, arbitral tribunals, trial courts and criminal courts. In all, 779 women work in the administrative structure that supports the various courts making up the country's judicial system, and these women account for 40 per cent of the total number of judicial administrative support personnel.

79. One of Jordan's achievements stands out in particular in this context: the election by the United Nations General Assembly of a Jordanian woman judge out of a list of 35 international judges submitted by the Security Council as candidates for election as members of the International Criminal Tribunal established to try war criminals in Rwanda. She was the first Arab judge, man or woman, ever to sit on an international criminal tribunal.

80. In an initiative that is considered to be the first of its kind, one that constitutes a response to the Beijing Platform for Action's call for the integration of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, the Government of Jordan has acceded to a suggestion from JNCW by deciding to integrate a gender perspective into its socio-economic plan for the period 1999-2003. Every chapter of the plan devotes special attention to women and their participation in all sectors, and addresses the issues of equity and equal access to resources. The Government's approach to the plan was innovative: the Office of the Prime Minister established a technical committee headed by the Secretary-General of JNCW to support the initiative relating to the inclusion of a gender perspective. The technical committee, in turn, assigned women technical experts to sit on the several sectoral committees. In all, 51 women contributed to the preparation of the socio-economic plan for the period 1999-2003, representing 20 per cent of the total number of contributors.

81. With a view to summing up the lessons that had been learned from experience with the drafting of the socio-economic plan and propagating the benefit of those lessons as widely as possible, JNCW conducted a comprehensive study of the plan as finally formulated. That study found that the plan's most important accomplishments had been:

- Its focus on the fact that women's rights are part of human rights in general, this point having been repeated a number of times in the plan;
- The fact that the general framework of the plan contained repeated recognition of objectives indicating the need for equal opportunity for both sexes in the matter of participation in public life and accession to services and benefits;
- Inclusion of special objectives to bridge the gender gap in various sectors;
- Its focus on addressing awareness issues and action to attain them;
- Its focus on the need to develop reliable gender-disaggregated data gathering and distribution systems and make those systems available to policy-makers and concerned individuals.

82. On a related level, the Government has worked through JNCW to support the process of mainstreaming the gender concept in a number of its agencies, such as the Civil Service Commission, the Lands and Surveys Directorate and the Department of Statistics. The aim of the gender concept mainstreaming process in these agencies is to ensure equity and equality between men and women throughout their organizational structures and the distinctive systems and procedures of each of them. The Civil Service Commission, for example, is concerned with hiring,

promotion and training procedures for all public-sector employees in Jordan. Accordingly, JNCW proceeded to review gender-related issues on three levels: legislative, institutional and practical, devoting a separate study to each aspect. The first of these covered all legislation relating to employment in the Jordanian civil service, including the system as a whole and the regulations governing its activities, for the purpose of inducing citizens to put an end to discrimination against women and to submit suggestions to that end. The study on institutional aspects analysed data on the human resources working within the Civil Service Commission and identified institutional procedures for women and for men. The study on the Commission's day-to-day operation, for its part, showed that unofficial practices within the Commission tended to reflect the prevailing stereotyped social concepts and assumptions and reproduced them in the work environment. On the basis of the findings of these studies, JNCW, working in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission, prepared a plan of action for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the legislation governing the Commission's work and the mechanisms regulating the work of its human resources and day-to-day practice within it.

83. In the case of the Lands and Surveys Directorate, an NGO conducted a survey on the situation of women within the organization, with the ultimate result that plans were developed for tangible changes, including in particular freedom for women to hold managerial posts and a generally more positive climate within the Directorate.

84. Lastly, the note circulated by the Prime Minister (see paragraph 27 above) has constituted a source of support for JNCW's programmes and objectives, emphasizing as it did the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective at the level of national, sectoral and institutional planning, as we have seen. A gender perspective is now a feature of development planning and the Civil Service Commission, and JNCW would like to see the Government's general budget and the budgets of service-delivering institutions analysed from a gender perspective as well. JNCW is networking with governmental ministries and agencies to give practical effect to the Prime Minister's note.

*(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.*

85. As an extension of the traditional concept of the role of women in society, participation by women in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with public and political life in Jordan continues to be slight and concentrated in associations that deal with matters of interest primarily to women and charitable associations. Table 4 below shows percentage participation by women in charitable associations at various levels. As regards cooperative associations, the available statistics indicate that women's cooperatives account for no more than 5.9 per cent of the total of 970 cooperatives in all governorates of the country, including agricultural cooperatives, housing cooperatives, multi-purpose cooperatives, women's cooperatives and other kinds. In 2004, a total of 2,715 women were members of women's cooperatives, out of a total cooperative membership of 117,465. Women thus accounted for 2.3 per cent of all cooperative members, a very low figure. No statistics are available specifically on women who are members of or participate in other cooperatives.

86. Statistical data from the Ministry of Social Development indicate that as of the end of 2005, there were 147 women's associations officially registered with the Ministry. It should be noted that the Ministry's definition of a women's association

is one having a board of directors made up exclusively of women. Besides these, there are various federations, centres and clubs licensed by other government agencies such as the Ministry of the Interior or the Council of Ministers.

**Table 4**  
**% women members of boards of directors and other bodies of charitable associations in Jordan, broken down by urban and rural areas, as of 1 October 2005**

<i>Area</i>	<i>No. of associations</i>	<i>Members of other bodies</i>			<i>Members of board of directors</i>		
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>% women</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>% women</i>
Urban	594	78,387	14,390	18.4	4,117	1,259	30.6
Rural	394	29,392	6,941	23.6	2,853	546	19.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>107,779</b>	<b>21,331</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>6,970</b>	<b>1,805</b>	<b>25.9</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Social Development reports, 2005.

87. Participation by women in political parties is low, perhaps as a result of the long absence of multi-party political life. No studies have been devoted to political parties and women's participation in their institutional and leadership structures, and no detailed statistics are available. According to the information that we were able to obtain, however, a total of 33 registered political parties in Jordan, including Islamist parties, centrist parties, nationalist parties and right-wing parties, were founded and registered between 1993 and 2001. The founding members of licensed political parties numbered 3,653, of whom 250, or 6.83 per cent, were women. The available studies do give some indicators on participation by women in party activity, and the most salient facts are as follows:

- Three parties had no women members in their institutional structures;
- In the case of five parties, women accounted for under 5 per cent of the membership of their institutional structures;
- In the case of three parties, women accounted for between 5 and 9 per cent of the membership of their institutional structures;
- In the case of three parties, women accounted for between 10 and 14 per cent of the membership of their institutional structures;
- In the case of two parties, women accounted for between 15 and 19 per cent of the membership of their institutional structures;
- Thirteen parties had no women members in their leadership structures;
- Three parties had one woman in their leadership structures;
- One party had two women in its leadership structures.

88. One recent study on gender-related aspects of Jordanian party discourse concluded that women's issues were only minimally present in the references, reports and periodicals of some parties, in contrast to their platforms calling for equality in, for example, programme planning. Some parties have women's sections within the party, but even in those cases, women's participation is regarded as a social issue only, rather than one of the party's priorities.



## Article 8

*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.*

89. Women account for 7.6 per cent of Jordan's diplomatic corps. These include two ambassadors, two counsellors, three first secretaries, two second secretaries, seven third secretaries and 16 attachés, out of a total of 229 diplomatic staff members. We may note at this point that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is concerned to have its missions to international organizations include sufficient numbers of women diplomats, and to have women adequately represented within official delegations. The Diplomatic Corps Regulations have been amended to give women diplomats the same rights and privileges as their male counterparts, both as regards financial entitlements, such as the education allowance, and as regards health insurance for their families.

90. There are no legislative barriers preventing Jordanian women from participating in the work of international organizations. As part of the preparation of this report, the offices of all international organizations working in Jordan were contacted and asked about the numbers and ranks of Jordanian women employed by them in their international activities. Unfortunately, no answers on the matter were received from any of them.

91. Lastly, in response to the Committee's general recommendation No. 8, which has to do with direct measures to ensure that women and men enjoy equal opportunities, it is noteworthy that, as we have seen, the country's highest political leadership, in the person of His Majesty the King, is supporting the advancement of women by appointing women to various assemblies and official delegations. At the same time, middle-level administrative leaders do not share this orientation, and their decisions tend to be dominated by social stereotyping, with the result that the overall trend is not in the direction of greater representation for women.

## Article 9

*1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.*

92. The Government of Jordan has accepted commitments under international instruments, including, in particular, commitments relating to the nationality of married women. Jordanian law guarantees every woman's right to retain her nationality in the event of marriage with a non-Jordanian national. The Act to Amend the Jordanian Nationality Act (law No. 22 of 1987) covers this issue in article 8.2, which reads as follows: "Every Jordanian woman who marries a non-Jordanian and acquires her husband's nationality shall have the right to retain her Jordanian nationality, except where she renounces that nationality in accordance with the provisions of this Act, in which case she shall have the right to return to her Jordanian nationality by making an application to that effect in the event of termination of her marriage for any reason." Under article 8.3 of the same Act,

every Jordanian woman “whose husband acquires the nationality of another State because of particular circumstances shall have the right to remain in possession of her Jordanian nationality.” Nor does the Jordanian Nationality Act impose any special conditions on a non-Jordanian woman who wishes to acquire Jordanian nationality. It is clear from the foregoing discussion that under Jordanian law, women have the right on equal terms with men to acquire, retain or change their nationality.

93. Every Jordanian woman has the right to obtain her own passport, without being required to seek the permission of her legal guardian or husband. That right was conferred by the interim Passports Act (law No. 5 of 2003), article 3 of which states that “Passports shall be issued to applicants who are originally of Jordanian nationality or who have acquired a certificate of nationality or naturalization.” Jordanian law does not impose any gender-based conditions upon passport applicants. Under the former Passports Act, a married woman could obtain or renew a passport only with her husband’s consent, but under the interim Act, that provision has been repealed.

*2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.*

94. It should be noted that, as stated in its second periodic report, Jordan has complied with general recommendation No. 21 by ratifying the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women. Paragraphs 34 and 35 of the Committee’s concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan’s first and second reports are concerned with the withdrawal of its reservation to article 9.2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Jordan has maintained its reservation to that article; the right to confer the nationality of children is restricted to the father alone to the exclusion of the mother. The relevant passage of the Nationality Act reads as follows: “Every child born to a father possessing Jordanian nationality shall be deemed to be of Jordanian nationality.” This provision is among the repercussions of regional and domestic political situations. However, the Act also makes provision for some exceptions: a woman may transmit her nationality to her children where the father’s nationality is unknown, where the father has no nationality, or where the child’s paternity cannot be established at law, provided in all cases that the birth has occurred in Jordan. However, in order to deal with humanitarian cases that call for special attention, the Ministry of the Interior, pursuant to instructions issued by the Office of the Prime Minister, studies all cases in which it appears that Jordanian nationality should be granted to the children of a Jordanian woman married to a non-Jordanian. In every such case, an appropriate decision is reached that takes the humanitarian need of the mother and the best interests of the child into account. Despite calls for amendment of the Nationality Act to guarantee that a Jordanian woman has the right to pass on her nationality to her children, the Government considers that the issue of nationality remains subject to a number of considerations that do not by any means imply discrimination against children. These include the political situation prevailing in the region, the fact that nationality of two Arab States simultaneously is not permissible under a decision of the League of Arab States, and the objection of some States to the granting of Jordanian nationality to the children of Jordanian women married to their nationals because those States do not permit dual nationality. However, under article 10 of the interim Passports Act, “In humanitarian or special cases, the Minister, with the consent of the Prime Minister, may issue a

regular passport for a period of five years, renewable for a further five years, but that passport shall not entitle its holder to Jordanian nationality, and the Minister may withdraw it at any time.” This makes it easier for a Jordanian woman married to a non-Jordanian to obtain passports for her children in special circumstances.

95. In this connection, an NGO recently conducted a case study on a number of Jordanian women who were married to non-Jordanians in order to investigate their situations and needs. The study found that the women in question were adversely affected by the fact that they did not have the same right as men to transmit their nationality to their children, especially where the family’s economic resources were limited. The study made a number of recommendations, most notably that women should be given the same right as men to transmit their nationality to their children. The report, its findings and its recommendations are being used in campaigns aimed at bringing pressure to bear on the Government to amend the Act.

## Part III

### Article 10

*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:*

*(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training.*

96. Jordan does not discriminate between men and women in any way in the matter of equal access to education and training. In the first place, non-discrimination is enshrined in the Constitution, and in the second place, article 10 of the Education Act provides that education shall be compulsory and free in schools of the basic education stage (up to the end of grade 10), regardless of the sex of the children concerned. There have been no amendments to the relevant legislation or regulations since the submission of Jordan’s second periodic report, and consequently the situation has remained unchanged. At the level of national strategic planning, some of the strategic plans that Jordan has developed, most notably the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and the National Strategy for Women, include sections dedicated to education and action to close the gender gap.

97. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy pays particular attention to the education of girls, emphasizing its beneficial impacts in the form of lower poverty rates, higher family planning use rates, and lower infant and maternal mortality rates, not to mention greater participation by women in gainful employment and the job market. Accordingly, the Strategy focuses on the importance of educating girls, closing the gender gap and eliminating the factors that impede enforcement of the compulsory school attendance laws in the case of girls. In addition, it devotes special attention to school infrastructure development and the development of support programmes to provide assistance for direct expenditures on such items as school uniforms, books and supplies as a means of easing financial pressure on pupils’ families. Other features of the Strategy include a school meals project for

pupils in the first six grades of primary school, with every pupil receiving a container of milk, biscuits and a fresh fruit, and a project to provide pupils in the first 12 grades with nutritional supplements.

98. One of the main lines of emphasis of the National Strategy for Women, as updated by JNCW, deals with human security and social protection, as we have seen. It dedicates a chapter to action aimed at attaining the objectives listed below.

- Development of the education system and upgrading of its internal efficiency, with mainstreaming of the gender concept;
- Development of informal education programmes, with mainstreaming of the gender concept, focusing on literacy in its various forms (basic literacy, functional literacy, computer literacy);
- Action to raise enrolment rates for education, skills development and vocational training courses;
- Action to change the prevailing social attitudes that restrict women's educational options.

99. The Ministry of Education, for its part, has developed a project to establish kindergartens in public schools in the country's various school districts. Pursuant to the Education Act (law No. 3 of 1994), and in the context of the Ministry's efforts to make kindergartens more readily available free of charge as a pre-school year for five-year-olds, 172 kindergartens accommodating 4,077 children, both boys and girls, are now functioning in a number of school districts. The Ministry has supplied 194 women teachers, distributed instruction manuals and contributed to the cost of obtaining furniture. It is noteworthy that both girls' schools and coeducational schools have received kindergarten facilities.

100. The level of services available in Jordan's kindergartens still does not meet international criteria, as the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:22, compared to the recommended ratio of 1:12. However, there is undoubtedly a general trend in the direction of action to promote early childhood development. By way of example, the National Early Childhood Development Strategy has been approved. The Strategy was prepared by a number of NGOs working in cooperation with government agencies concerned with early childhood care. A number of targets were set, including amendments to legislation with a bearing on children's welfare and various measures relating to the care of children in the early stages of their lives, beginning prior to birth. A Plan of Action has been developed to implement the Strategy, featuring, among other things, the development of school curricula that are more gender-sensitive.

101. Table 5 below shows educational levels attained by Jordanian men and women 15 years of age and over. As will be seen, the incidence of illiteracy for both men and women correlates with increasing age, reaching maximum values for the 65-and-over age group, whereas it is very low, to the point of being nearly negligible, for young people in their teens. The table also shows that the figures for men and women are quite similar, especially for the levels designated "literate", "primary" and "intermediate", whereas the figures for women are higher than those for their male counterparts at the secondary and intermediate diploma levels.

**Table 5**  
**Jordanians 15 years of age and over by educational level, sex and age group (%)**

Age group	Educational level																	
	Illiterate		Literate		Primary		Preparatory		Basic		Vocational		Secondary		Intermediate diploma		Baccalaureate	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>7.3</b>
15-19	1.5	0.9	1.2	0.7	15.6	12.6	20.2	22.2	49.3	47.6	0.9	0.0	11.2	15.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.3	8.1	5.0	5.5	4.0	36.5	28.5	2.6	0.1	33.7	38.0	3.3	10.3	7.2	11.1
25-39	2.1	4.6	2.5	2.9	12.7	10.5	23.9	22.3	14.7	14.1	1.6	0.2	15.1	16.8	10.6	16.5	16.6	12.0
40-54	4.9	21.8	5.1	8.0	16.9	17.2	26.0	21.7	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.1	14.7	12.8	12.6	11.3	19.0	7.1
55-64	13.5	58.4	13.1	10.7	21.7	11.9	16.7	8.9	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	9.9	5.4	6.6	2.2	18.3	2.5
65+	37.2	79.1	22.7	8.3	16.9	4.5	10.9	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	2.4	1.6	1.0	7.4	0.4

Source : Department of Statistics (2005), Labour and Unemployment Survey for 2004, main report.

102. In general, education in Jordan is supervised in part by the Ministry of Education (which has responsibility for private schools and Government-run schools) and in part by UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The budget of the Ministry of Education accounts for 11.39 per cent of the Government of Jordan's total budget. There are 1,531,331 pupils in all, of whom 751,337 are girls; girls thus account for approximately 49.1 per cent of the total. Table 6 below shows the distribution of pupils by supervisory authority, level of educational institution, and sex.

**Table 6**  
**Pupils by supervisory authority, educational level and sex, 2004-2005**

<i>Supervisory authority and sex</i>	<i>Level of educational institution</i>			
	<i>Kindergarten</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Academic secondary</i>	<i>Vocational secondary</i>
<i>Ministry of Education</i>				
Girls	2,571	467,117	71,239	10,778
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,780</b>	<b>916,274</b>	<b>131,057</b>	<b>24,620</b>
Girls as % of total	53.8	51.0	54.3	43.7
<b>UNRWA</b>				
Girls		64,064	UNRWA schools do not offer academic secondary education	Not available for girls
<b>Total</b>	UNRWA schools do not have kindergartens	<b>129,281</b>		<b>593</b>
Girls as % of total		49.6		-
<b>Private schools</b>				
Girls	40,974	82,864	7,993	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>86,594</b>	<b>201,390</b>	<b>17,862</b>	<b>239</b>
Girls as % of total	47.3	41.0	44.74	7.1

*Source:* Ministry of Education (2005), Education statistics for the 2004-2005 school year.

103. As will be seen from the table above, girls account for approximately the same percentage of the total school population at all levels, even though it does not quite equal the percentage represented by boys in all cases. This shows that Jordan has been able to attain the third of the Millennium Development Goals, which is "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015." Table 6 shows that most people tend to send their children to public schools, a phenomenon which the educational authorities may interpret as meaning that the education offered in the public sector is considered better than its private-sector counterpart, but which some observers have attributed to the high cost of living in general, and the cost of private schools in particular. However, the obvious disparities in the numbers of boys and girls attending private schools compared to public schools may be attributable to a number of factors, one of them being a tendency for families to be more willing to spend money on their sons' education than on their daughters' education, especially at the academic secondary and vocational levels; another may be the fact that most girls earn high marks, and consequently there is no reason to transfer them to private schools. Furthermore, discipline is better in girls' schools than in boys' schools, and this gives parents an incentive to enrol their sons in private schools, where they will be kept under better control.

104. Other Government schools include those run by the army, and relatively few girls attend these, as will be seen from table 7 below. This was only to be expected, as there are a total of 51 schools in the “other Government schools” category, and of these, 12 are for girls and six coeducational. They are distributed throughout the country, alongside Ministry of Education schools.

**Table 7**  
**Pupils attending other Government schools, by educational level and sex, 2004-2005**

<i>Other Government schools</i>	<i>Kindergartens</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Academic secondary</i>	<i>Vocational secondary</i>
Girls	61	2,023	310	1,326
Total	112	9,488	1,564	7,477
Girls as % of total pupils enrolled	54.5	21.3	19.8	17.7

*Source:* Ministry of Education (2005), Education statistics for the 2004-2005 school year.

105. Table 8 presents percentage figures for girls’ school enrolment at the successive levels in three selected years (1997, 2001 and 2003). As will be seen, the enrolment of girls at all levels (kindergarten, primary and secondary) has risen markedly. The Ministry of Education is concerned to encourage pupils to enrol in public schools, and to that end, the contributions paid by families with more than one child in school are reduced by a factor of 25 per cent. These contributions from pupils’ families cover only a small part of the cost of educating their children.

**Table 8**  
**% school enrolment for girls and boys by educational level, selected years**

<i>Level</i>	<i>1997</i>		<i>2001</i>		<i>2003</i>	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Kindergarten	27.05	13.93	28.81	27.55	No data available	
Primary	94.98	94.25	93.85	94.16	99.3	99.3
Secondary	72.22	67.22	75.61	75.67	88.4	93.7

*Source:* Figures for the 1997 school year are taken from Jordan’s second report to the Committee. Figures for the 2001 school year are taken from the Ministry of Education yearbook for 2000-2001. Figures for the 2003 school year are taken from a multipurpose family survey conducted in 2003.

106. Secondary education in Jordan comprises two main streams. The first of these is comprehensive secondary education, which is general in nature, with one group of courses that are taken by all students and another group that is divided into courses taken by students specializing in academic subjects and courses taken by students specializing in vocational subjects. The other stream is applied secondary education, which offers vocational training and preparation. The Ministry of Education has introduced a series of policies aimed at promoting vocational education; in particular, it has opened a number of new facilities and introduced more fields of specialization, with the result that the numbers of students enrolled in vocational education have grown year by year. If we consider figures for the country as a whole (i.e. all vocational secondary schools, regardless of supervisory authority), we find that 22.7 per cent of all male students at the secondary level are enrolled at vocational schools, while the corresponding figure for female students is 13.2 per

cent. These figures are comparatively low, indicating that most students still prefer not to attend vocational secondary schools, despite the Ministry's efforts to develop that sector. This situation may be attributed to the fact that the skills learned by students in these institutions are not adequately adapted to job market needs.

107. Available statistical data on the distribution of students by field of study and sex indicate that the choice of field of study continues to be affected by the prevalent stereotyped attitudes and assumptions about male and female social roles. In 2004-2005, only 107 women students out of a total of 9,979 took industrial subjects, while hotel management is not an option for women students at all. Conversely, garment manufacturing, which is regarded as a women's subject, attracted only 29 male students out of a total of 2,564. Table 9 shows the distribution of students by field of study and sex in 2004-2005.

108. Comparison with some of the figures on vocational education in Jordan's second periodic report shows clearly that there have been changes in female students' attitudes to what have traditionally been considered men's subjects. However, change has occurred very slowly, and may be regarded as a natural evolutionary process. In 1997, only four women students out of a total of 7,535 went in for industrial subjects, while the corresponding figure for 2004 was 95 women students out of a total of 10,074.

**Table 9**  
**Distribution of students by field of study and sex, 2004-2005**

<i>Field of study</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Agriculture	1,404	190	1,594
Industrial arts	9,979	5	10,074
Nursing	864	1,825	2,689
Hotel management	1,819	12	1,831
	Not offered at institutions for women, but one coeducational institution has been established		
Garment manufacturing	42	2,532	2,574
Early childhood education	Not offered	3,058	3,058
Cosmetology	Not offered	2,259	2,259
Home economics	Not offered	557	557
Traditional crafts	7	230	237
Vocational training centres	6,693	1,326	8,019
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,808</b>	<b>12,084</b>	<b>32,892</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Education (2005), Education statistics for the 2004-2005 school year.

109. On a related level, the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) offers training courses and programmes designed to teach skills in all fields of vocational training, to provide guidance and support services, and to organize vocational training activity. VTC attaches particular importance to vocational training for women: one of its strategies emphasizes more effective training opportunities aimed at enhancing women's employability and increasing participation by women in the job market through the development of programmes tailored to actual job market needs, and the preparation of guidance programmes for the purpose of eliminating the view of vocational education and training as unsuitable for women. In addition, VTC has participated in a project aimed at managerial and technical capacity-building for



women, and in that context has mainstreamed a gender perspective in its curricula and projected an image of women in vocational education on terms of equality with men. VTC has established a network of relations with government agencies, NGOs and 37 institutes that have established vocational training centres for women, who now account for 20 per cent of their clientele. During the period 1997-2003, women made up 19.9 per cent of all students enrolled in vocational training programmes in Jordan. VTC's concern to encourage women to sign up for vocational training is highlighted by its various awareness programmes on the importance of vocational training, including one directed at girls at the primary-school level and one expressly designed for parents. Furthermore, training services are being offered over a steadily expanding geographic area, and vocational training programmes are branching out into non-traditional fields.

110. As regards higher education, women and men have the same right to attend university. There is no discrimination in the matter of application and selection procedures: applicants are accepted or refused on the basis of their secondary-school marks. Table 10 below presents university enrolment figures for women as a percentage of all women in the age-group concerned since the date of submission of Jordan's second periodic report, according to the latest figures available at the time of preparation of the present report. As will be seen, the fraction of women who enrol for higher education is still low, indicating that most women in that age group either enter the job market or else marry. We may note in passing that women who do attend institutions of higher education enjoy equal opportunities with men.

**Table 10**  
**Women who enrol at institutions of higher education as a % of all women in their age group**

<i>Level</i>	<i>1997-1998</i>	<i>1999-2000</i>
Diploma	16.1%	18.7%
Baccalaureate	19.5%	13.7%

*Source:* Communication from the National Centre for Human Resources Development to JNCW.

111. Despite the continued impact of social stereotyping, which is reflected in the fields of study selected by students at the baccalaureate level, women students now go in for a wide variety of fields of specialization, including some that have traditionally been regarded as being suitable only for men, and their numbers are constantly growing. Table 11 presents data on women enrolled in various fields of specialization. The "total" column shows all students enrolled at both State-run and private universities. Women accounted for 51 per cent of all students studying for their baccalaureate at all Jordanian universities in 2004-2005. At State-run universities, women constitute 57 per cent of the total student population, whereas the corresponding figure for private universities is 32.1 per cent. The fact that relatively fewer women attend private universities may be attributable to the fact that parents must assume a heavy burden of expenditure in order to send their children to one of these institutions, and consequently they may be inclined to prefer to send their sons rather than their daughters. Another factor may be that girls usually earn high marks at their secondary-school examinations, and thus qualify without difficulty for eligibility to attend State universities.

**Table 11**  
**Students attending Jordanian universities (State and private), undergraduate level, and % women, 2004-2005**

<i>Faculty</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total students</i>	<i>% women</i>
Education and teacher training	19,628	23,690	82.9
Humanities and religious sciences	19,303	28,151	68.6
Social and behavioural sciences	3,871	6,386	60.6
Law	1,710	6,001	28.5
Engineering	5,024	20,561	24.4
Commerce and business management	10,287	32,415	31.7
Mass communication and documentation	790	1,188	66.5
Sports education	1,704	2,917	58.4
Agriculture	1,843	3,135	58.8
Pharmacy	2,897	5,667	51.1
Dentistry	730	1,341	54.4
Veterinary medicine	65	214	30.4
Fine and applied arts	1,175	2,012	58.4
Medicine	977	3,229	30.4
Natural sciences	5,800	8,501	68.2
Mathematics and computer science	8,468	22,105	38.3
Paramedical professions	4,048	9,210	44.0
Architecture and urban planning	751	1,223	61.4
Service occupations	388	673	57.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>89,459</b>	<b>178,619</b>	<b>50.1</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (2005), Statistical summary of higher education for 2005.

112. A comparison with the statistics contained in Jordan's second periodic report, which reviewed the 1995-1996 academic year, shows that the situation has evolved somewhat in the sense that more women now select fields of study that had traditionally been viewed as suitable only for men. To illustrate: women enrolled in faculties of engineering in 2004-2005 accounted for 21 per cent of all students at those faculties, while women enrolled in faculties of agriculture were 44.7 per cent of the total; the corresponding figures for 1995-1996 were 24.3 per cent and 58.8 per cent respectively.

113. For community colleges, women account for 61.1 per cent of all students enrolled. The distribution of women and their proportional representation at these institutions are shown in table 12 below. Jordan has 48 community colleges in all, including 11 for women, six for men and 31 that are coeducational. It is clear from the table that social stereotyping continues to affect both men's and women's choices of subject field to a substantial degree: women tend to enter programmes that are related to their traditional social roles, such as education, while they are much more weakly represented in other fields such as business and finance or engineering. It is noteworthy that even though hotel management is not offered at the Ministry of Education's secondary-level vocational training schools, and despite the small numbers of women who choose that field at community colleges, the fact that some women are now going in for it may reflect incipient interest in it on the part of Jordanian women students. This underlines the importance of pursuing the

effort to alter the predominant social stereotypes and encouraging women to take up hotel management, especially in view of the fact that the Government is seeking to develop and promote the tourist industry in Jordan.

**Table 12**  
**Distribution of women in community college programmes, 2004-2005 academic year**

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Total number of students</i>	<i>Number of women</i>	<i>Women as % of total</i>
Languages	405	357	88
Education	5,015	4,706	94
Engineering	2,563	219	9
Agriculture	92	12	13
Paramedical professions	4,354	2,369	54
Business and financial management	8,479	5,256	62
Data management	1,636	1,204	74
Hotel management	428	44	10
Applied arts	1,681	855	51
Islamic law and civilization	137	119	87
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,790</b>	<b>15,141</b>	<b>61</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (2005), Statistical summary of higher education for 2005.

114. The gender gap in higher education appears most clearly at the MA and PhD levels. Women accounted for only 35.3 per cent of all MA level students attending Jordanian universities in 2004-2005, and for only 26.6 per cent of the total at the PhD level. No statistics are available for women as a percentage of all Jordanian students taking MA or PhD programmes outside Jordan. Table 13 below shows that the situation has evolved since the submission of Jordan's second periodic report: between 1995-1996 and 2004-2005, women students have come to represent a growing proportion of all students at the undergraduate, MA and PhD levels.

**Table 13**  
**Women students as a percentage of all students enrolled at Jordanian universities, by degree programme: selected years**

<i>Degree programme</i>	<i>Academic year</i>	
	<i>1995-1996</i>	<i>2004-2005</i>
Undergraduate	29.5	39.4
MA	24.8	35.3
PhD	17.1	26.6
<b>Total % women students</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>33.8</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (2005), Statistical summary of higher education for 1996 and 2005.

115. As will be seen, women came to account for a substantially larger proportion of the students taking higher education programmes at Jordanian universities in the course of the period between the second report and the present one. Even so, their numbers continue to be much smaller than those of their male counterparts. This may perhaps be attributable to the fact that women have family responsibilities and must harmonize their duties at home with the demands of their education, besides

the demands of their jobs in some cases, with the result that it is difficult for them to pursue their higher education. The underlying reason for this state of affairs may be gender discrimination on the part of parents. It is also interesting to note that, as table 14 below shows, the fields of study selected by women university students are still largely restricted to those that are appropriate in terms of women's stereotyped social roles.

**Table 14**  
**Distribution of first-year students at Jordanian universities by field of study and degree programme, 2003-2004**

Field of study	Degree programme								
	Undergraduate			MA			PhD		
	Total	Women	% women	Total	Women	% women	Total	Women	% women
<b>State universities</b>									
Education and teacher training	1,591	960	60.34	630	302	47.94	193	61	31.61
Soc. and behavioural sciences	-	-	-	149	62	41.61	50	21	42.00
Humanities and relig. Sciences	-	-	-	481	164	34.10	177	33	18.64
Law	-	-	-	148	43	29.65	-	-	-
Commerce and business mgt.	-	-	-	338	89	26.33	-	-	-
Sports ed.	-	-	-	27	3	11.11	22	4	18.18
Nat. Sciences	-	-	-	178	87	48.88	26	9	34.62
Nursing and paramed.	10	9	90	62	32	51.61	-	-	-
Math. and computer sci.	-	-	-	242	59	24.38	8	1	12.50
Med. and dentistry	35	10	28.57	119	66	55.46	-	-	-
Vet. Medicine	-	-	-	6	0	0	-	-	-
Pharmacy	-	-	-	53	34	64.15	-	-	-
Engineering	-	-	-	179	28	15.64	8	0	0
Arch. and urban planning	-	-	-	10	6	60.00	-	-	-
Agriculture	-	-	-	102	32	31.37	11	2	18.18
<b>Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies</b>									
Business	68	16	23.53	112	29	25.89	34	7	20.59
Education	55	26	47.30	115	40	34.80	110	31	28.20
Law	60	8	13	86	7	8	41	5	12.2
Computer sci.	37	4	10.8	35	5	14.3	7	1	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,856</b>	<b>1,033</b>	<b>55.66</b>	<b>3,072</b>	<b>1,088</b>	<b>35.42</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>25.44</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (2005), Statistical Yearbook of Higher Education in Jordan for 2003-2004.

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality.

116. The curricula of the Ministry of Education are the same for pupils of both sexes; there is no discrimination with respect to the educational content of textbooks. In the matter of the ratio of male to female teachers, it is important to note that teaching has traditionally been regarded as a suitable profession for women, and consequently the proportions are similar throughout, except at the kindergarten level: there are no men kindergarten teachers at all, kindergarten teaching being deemed a role reserved exclusively for women. Overall, 62.6 per cent of all teachers are women. Table 15 shows women teachers as a percentage of all teachers in State and UNRWA schools.

**Table 15**  
**Women teachers as a percentage of all teachers through the secondary level,**  
**Ministry of Education schools and UNRWA schools, 2004-2005**

<i>Level</i>	<i>Ministry of Education</i>	<i>UNRWA</i>	<i>Private schools</i>
Kindergarten	99.6%	UNRWA schools do not have kindergartens	99.2%
Primary	60.2%	51.2%	81.0%
Secondary	53.2%	n.d.	39.2%
Vocational secondary	42.0%	UNRWA schools do not offer academic secondary education	12.1%
Overall % women	58.3%	49.2%	81.1%

*Source:* Ministry of Education, Education statistics for the 2004-2005 school year.

117. In 2004-2005 there were a total of 5,348 schools in Jordan, of which 3,047 were run by the Ministry of Education, 51 by other government agencies and 174 by UNRWA, while the remaining 2,076 were private schools. Schools for girls (all supervisory agencies taken together) represented 16.3 per cent of the total, while coeducational schools accounted for 60.3 per cent.

118. The Ministry of Education's schools comprised 1,075 boys' schools, 764 girls' schools and 1,208 coeducational schools in the 2004-2005 school year. A total of 279 of these include both the primary and the secondary levels, while the remaining 2,768 provide one level only. The Ministry of Education is moving ahead with its project to computerize education by providing schools with the necessary hardware and software and connecting them to the Internet. This project covers all schools in Jordan, whether for boys only, for girls only, or coeducational.

119. Table 16 below shows the distribution of Ministry of Education schools by type of tenure (owned or rented by the Ministry), number of levels (one or two) and sex. The latest available statistics indicate that the overall teacher-pupil ratio for all schools in Jordan was 1:19.6 in 2004-2005. For Ministry of Education schools the ratio was 20:1, in schools run by other government agencies it was 1:11.9, for UNRWA schools it was 1:32, and for private schools it was 1:16.2. While no such detailed breakdown was presented in Jordan's second periodic report, it appears that the situation has improved somewhat since the date of submission of that report, when the teacher-pupil ratio was 1:16.4 for girls' schools and 1:27.2 for boys' schools.

**Table 16**  
**Distribution of Ministry of Education schools by type of tenure, number of levels and sex, 2004-2005 school year**

Sex	Type of tenure			No. of levels	
	Owned by MoE	Rented	Owned and rented	One level	Two levels
Boys	919	139	17	968	107
Girls	599	150	15	642	122
Coeducational	747	437	24	1,158	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,265</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>2,768</b>	<b>279</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, Education statistics for the 2004-2005 school year.

120. In the field of higher education, Jordan's community colleges are under the authority of a number of bodies, including the Al-Balqa' Applied University, other government agencies, UNRWA, and the private sector. The number of women teachers employed by these colleges, all supervisory authorities taken together, was 568 out of a total of 1,683, or 33.7 per cent, in 2004-2005. Jordan has a total of 21 State-run and private universities, all of them coeducational, with 998 women instructors out of a total of 5,942 teaching personnel, or 16.8 per cent.

*(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods.*

121. Just over three fifths (60.3 per cent) of Jordan's schools, all supervisory authorities taken together, are coeducational. This is an increase over the figure of 54.7 per cent given in Jordan's second periodic report, reflecting a concern on the part of the competent authorities to promote education and open schools in all parts of the country. A breakdown of coeducational schools by supervisory authority shows that 38.2 per cent of Ministry of Education schools, 10.6 per cent of schools administered by other government agencies, 5.8 per cent of UNRWA schools and 95.3 per cent of private schools are coeducational.

122. The Ministry of Education periodically reviews its curricula with a view to developing them, incorporating various concepts and bringing them into line with international instruments signed by the Government of Jordan. The textbooks used in the Ministry's schools, for example, now include material on international human-rights instruments. The Ministry has taken action to ensure that women are involved in the curriculum review process, and they now constitute 50 per cent of the membership of its review committees and 40 per cent of the membership of the teams that supervise the process. The Ministry also amends its curricula and textbooks as required in order to eliminate any negative indicators that may have found their way into them. In addition, the incorporation of a gender perspective is a consistent thread running through the Ministry's electronic learning strategy. Furthermore, the Ministry is endeavouring to promote awareness of gender issues, the roles of men and women in society, the rights of women in Islam and under the law, and the experience of Jordanian women. Concurrently, the Ministry has embarked on a process of switching its general secondary schools over to a grade system, thereby offering greater opportunity for girls to enrol in it; the new system

was initiated in the 2003-2004 school year. Lastly, a data management programme is now being offered in vocational secondary schools.

123. In this connection, it is of interest to consider the findings of a study conducted by a Jordanian University professor on the Ministry of Education's curricula and the integration of a gender perspective. The investigator looked at primary-school curricula, analysing them in terms of their content and presentation, applying analysis tools to the social roles aspect. His work led him to the conclusion that social roles were most prominent in Arabic language and national history courses. He also found that the issue of male roles came up most frequently in science and mathematics courses. Moreover, social roles appeared in the lesson explanations given by teachers, both men and women, even where they were not a feature of the textbooks used. The study identified a number of role-related indicators in school textbooks; in particular, it found that:

- Women's roles constituted a limited proportion of all the roles identified;
- There was a clear division on the basis of traditional gender roles, with female roles being more private or family-oriented and male roles being more public;
- Most female roles in public life tended to focus on traditional areas such as teaching, with much less emphasis on non-traditional areas such as business, the professions or politics;
- The roles of mother, wife and daughter were the predominant family-centred female roles.

124. This study, then, indicates that non-traditional roles for women are not very frequently represented, and suggests that the prevailing social stereotyping is still deeply ingrained. However, Jordan's evolving society and new views of the country's regional and international roles are providing an impetus for radical changes to educational curricula. The Ministry of Education's successive strategies and policies have emphasized "continued evolution of curricula and textbooks in step with the changing needs of individuals and society and the incorporation of up-to-date educational concepts into them, such as health education, population education, environmental education and vocational training, and action to present a balanced picture of the family in general, and of women in particular." The Ministry of Education revises its curricula and textbooks with a view to eradicating any negative indicators that may have found their way into them, and it is developing a vocational training programme characterized by an absence of traditional attitudes toward women's work and the promotion of non-traditional occupations for women.

*(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants.*

125. Gender equality is a standard feature of directives governing study grants. King's Scholarships, for example, are based on such criteria as the applicant's average at the secondary level, his or her ranking within the governorate where he or she lives, and his or her proposed field of study. Grants aimed at enabling the Ministry of Education's male and female teachers to upgrade their skills are based on the applicant's average at his or her community college or university, his or her length of service, his or her yearly performance appraisals, and his or her proposed field of study.

126. At the higher education (BA) level, various domestic study missions are available for students (funded by the Brigade Leaders, the Boy Scout/Girl Guide movement, the Jordanian Hashemite Human Development Fund and other sources). In 2002-2003, there were 408 of these missions, and women took 315 (77.2 per cent) of them. Table 17 shows the proportion of women university students who were awarded grants for study outside the country between 1999 and 2003.

**Table 17**  
**Women students awarded grants for study outside Jordan**

	<i>Academic year</i>			
	<i>1999-2000</i>	<i>2000-2001</i>	<i>2001-2002</i>	<i>2002-2003</i>
% women	3.7	7.8	8.5	11

*Source:* Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

127. A recent study on women in institutions of higher education in Jordan found that at Jordanian public universities, 117.6 women students, on average, were awarded scholarships for outstanding performance, while the corresponding figure for men students was 59.2. The reverse was observable at private universities, with an average of 17.7 men students winning scholarships for excellence, compared to 6.3 women students.

*(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women.*

128. Illiteracy in general, and illiteracy among women in particular, has declined steadily in Jordan, thanks to intensive literacy programmes delivered by the Ministry of Education and various NGOs. The most recent available statistics indicate that in 2004, illiteracy rates were 5.6 per cent for men and 15.1 per cent for women. Illiteracy has thus declined to a substantial extent since the time of Jordan's second periodic report, the rates reported therein (for 1994) having been 9.8 per cent for men and 20.6 per cent for women. However, the target previously announced by the Ministry of Education - the illiteracy rate down to 8 per cent by 2000 - has not yet been attained. The statistics currently available indicate that the adult education centres run by the Ministry of Education, either alone or in cooperation with NGOs, are aimed primarily at women: there are 273 centres for women, compared to only 22 for men. In 2004-2005, a total of 3,456 women took literacy courses, while only 282 men did so. It is noteworthy in this connection that the success rate for men was slightly higher than the corresponding rate for women, the former being 78 per cent and the latter 71 per cent.

129. While more women than men attend literacy classes, the overall participation rate is lower than the Ministry of Education regards as desirable. Studies conducted by the Ministry indicate that this situation is attributable to a number of factors, of which the most important are inadequate material and moral incentives for people to sign up for classes, and curricula and textbooks that do not meet the needs of the target group.

*(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely.*



130. Jordan's second periodic report noted that for the 1996-1997 school year, the drop-out rate was 0.9 per cent. Tangible progress has been made since that time, as the total drop-out rate for the 2003-2004 school year (including Ministry of Education schools, other public schools, UNRWA schools and private schools) was 0.75 per cent, as will be seen from table 18 below. But while the drop-out rate has undoubtedly declined over that six-year period, the decline has fallen far short of the aspirations of Jordan's educational authorities, who would like to eliminate the drop-out phenomenon altogether. It is clear, at all events, that the gender gap in this area is to the advantage of female students at both the primary and secondary levels: the drop-out rate for female students, for the country as a whole, declined from 1.16 per cent at the time of the second report to 0.35 per cent in the 2001-2002 school year. This is unquestionably an encouraging trend on which Ministry of Education personnel can base hopes for further progress.

**Table 18**  
**Drop-out rates in the 2001-2002 school year: all schools in Jordan and Ministry of Education schools**

Sex	All schools in Jordan			Ministry of Education schools		
	Total	Primary	Secondary	Total	Primary	Secondary
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.41%</b>	<b>0.39%</b>	<b>0.55%</b>	<b>0.42%</b>	<b>0.39%</b>	<b>0.57%</b>
Boys	0.48%	0.46%	0.61%	0.49%	0.47%	0.61%
Girls	0.35%	0.33%	0.50%	0.35%	0.32%	0.55%

Source: Ministry of Education (2003), Education statistics for the 2002-2003 school year.

131. In a study conducted in 2002, a sample of 2,514 male and female ex-students between 10 and 25 years of age were asked about the reasons that had impelled them to drop out of school. More than 29.5 per cent of the respondents said that the main reason was poor academic performance, while 10.1 per cent answered that they had had to take jobs, 9.8 per cent said that they were not interested in education, 9.0 per cent attributed their decision to poverty, 9.1 per cent mentioned the high cost of education, 6.2 per cent identified the main reason as early marriage, 8 per cent said that they had completed the level of education that they had been taking, 5.2 per cent said that they had completed their studies, 2.7 per cent stated that their families did not regard education as important, 1.8 per cent said that it had been necessary for them to help support their families, 1.2 per cent said that the educational institution was too far away from their homes, 1 per cent mentioned illness or physical disability, and 6.4 per cent answered either "other reasons", "no reason" or "don't know". The findings of the study suggest that the pressures that impel boys and young men to drop out of school are heavier than the corresponding pressures on girls and young women, with the exception of early marriage, which is a reason that applies exclusively to young women.

(g) *The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education.*

132. Sports and games are part of the curriculum followed by pupils from grade 1 to grade 12 for both boys and girls; there is no discrimination in this area. There are now more women supervisors than men supervisors, and gymnasiums and playing fields are available for all.

133. At the level of higher education, a recent study has shown that men students do better than women students at winning prizes for excellence in sports: 44.6 per cent of the former have some sort of sporting achievement to their credit, compared to 25.2 per cent of the latter at public universities, while the corresponding figures for private universities are 15 per cent for men students and 6.3 per cent for women students.

*(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.*

134. Information on health concepts, including information on the concepts of reproductive health, is part of all Ministry of Education curricula at all levels. Those curricula also cover concepts relating to the rights of the child and international instruments ratified by the Government of Jordan. A recent study has found that young men and women are aware of the hazards of smoking, but are less aware of other hazards. The study also investigated young people's awareness of the issues of adolescence, and in that area their level of awareness of reproductive health was found to be low.

## **Article 11**

*1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women the same rights, in particular:*

*(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings.*

135. The principle of the equality of all citizens in the field of employment is enshrined in the laws in force in Jordan, notably the Constitution, the Civil Code, the Labour Code and the Civil Service Regulations. There have been no amendments to Jordanian law affecting women's right to employment on a basis of equality with men since the promulgation of the Labour Code (law No. 8 of 1996) and the Civil Service Regulations (statutory instrument No. 55 of 2002). Jordanian labour law and regulations govern matters relating to employment in both the public and private sectors. However, women's contribution to economic activity is not commensurate with the rights conferred upon them by the law: women participate to only a relatively small extent in the formal job market. Women with paid employment accounted for 9.3 per cent of all economically active women, who constituted an estimated 10.4 per cent of Jordan's total labour force in 2004. At the same time, a number of studies by Jordanian scholars have found that these figures do not reflect women's actual economic participation in the informal sector (including small businesses and unpaid agricultural work). Figure 2 below shows economic activity and employment rates for the 15-and-over population during the period 2000-2004. We may note at this point that economic activity and employment rates for both men and women have declined appreciably since 2003. In the case of men, there was something of an upturn in 2004, but for women, these rates have remained low. This pattern is unquestionably attributable to the economic reform programme and the accompanying trend in favour of support for the private sector and job cuts in the public sector. At all events, it would be premature at this stage to attempt to assess the impact of the economic reform programme that has been implemented in recent years.

**Figure 2**

**Productive economic activity and employment rates for men and women 15 years of age and older, 2000-2004**

Employment rate, men 15 and over,  
2000-2004

Productive economic activity rate,  
men 15 and over, 2000-2004

Employment rate, women 15 and over,  
2000-2004

Productive economic activity rate,  
women 15 and over, 2000-2004

136. At the same time, currently available statistics indicate a decline from the levels given in Jordan's second periodic report: in 1997, 16.5 per cent of Jordanian women were economically active, and women constituted 13.6 per cent of the labour force. Recent research suggests that this withdrawal of women from the job market may be due to the reluctance of the private sector to employ women in general, and married women in particular, owing to the financial burden arising from Jordan's labour legislation, including in particular the provisions relating to maternity leave, nursing breaks, and child care services at establishments employing more than 20 married women. It is noteworthy none the less that, as we shall see in paragraph 149 of this report, women are taking jobs in all parts of Jordan in constantly increasing numbers. Clearly, it is essential to strike a balance and find practical solutions that will guarantee the rights of working women in the private sector, as enunciated in international instruments, while also creating a favourable climate for private-sector investment.

137. Jordan's various national strategies reflect the Government's concern to promote economic participation by women. One of the themes of the National Strategy for Women is dedicated to the economic empowerment of women through a series of objectives and measures, most notably action to expand economic opportunities by developing vocational education programmes and encouraging the establishment of small businesses in rural and desert areas. The Strategy also aims to create an appropriate legislative climate and achieve greater participation by women in economic activity on a basis of full equality with men. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy, for its part, pays particular attention to the matter of economic empowerment through the creation of small business ventures and expanded opportunities for employment in rural areas and small towns. The aims of the Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2004-2006 are "to empower citizens, provide job opportunities, especially for young people and women, and encourage and promote private-sector investment."

138. A recent study on women working in the garment manufacturing industry in qualified industrial zones indicates that despite the poor conditions that characterize the work environment in that particular industry in those zones, it has been able to provide jobs for considerable numbers of unmarried women. As of the end of 2003, 19 408 women were employed in qualified industrial zones, representing 64 per cent of all persons employed in those comparatively recently established zones. The study found that these women workers helped to provide their families with financial support, and that this not only had an impact on the stereotyped role of women within the family, it also gave them more freedom of movement outside the home. It should be noted, however, that constantly increasing numbers of non-Jordanians are working in the qualified industrial zones, and this is adversely affecting the benefit they afford for Jordanians in terms of job opportunities.

139. At the same time, Jordan is endeavouring to create jobs for its citizens in the context of the knowledge economy, and women are increasingly present in that sector. A recently published study found that in 2002, women accounted for 28 per cent of a total of 3,764 male and female workers in the field of information and communication technologies. The same study found, in line with the results of some other studies in the same area, that women accounted for 38 per cent of the total number of persons employed in ICT in the public sector, and 22 per cent of the total employed by private-sector ICT firms. In the banking sector, women occupied 7 per cent of all ICT-related posts.

140. The matter of women's employment in the informal sector is more difficult to assess, as there are no clear-cut statistics available. Initial indications are that a high proportion (over 55 per cent) of all Jordanian women workers are employed in the informal sector, including women who work in agriculture and those who work with no contract of employment or social benefits. More detailed studies and studies in greater depth will be required before it will be possible to obtain a clearer view of the extent of women's participation in the informal sector and devise means of developing mechanisms for protecting the women who work in it.

141. In paragraphs 46 and 47 of its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's second periodic report, the Committee expressed concern at the fact that women made up only a small proportion of the paid labour force in the Jordanian economy. In response to that concern, the following remarks are in order:

- The Government of Jordan is endeavouring to upgrade effective participation by women in the economy through a variety of development strategies and plans. It also conducts media campaigns aimed at enhancing awareness of the importance of paid employment for women;
- Despite the weight of custom and tradition and the culture of shame that acts as a barrier to the employment of women in what are regarded as socially unacceptable occupations (such as domestic employment), the past few years have seen the emergence of a number of projects and activities aimed at training women (specifically low-income women) to become qualified for various kinds of work and enter the job market, and at providing encouragement for low-income women. These programmes have met with considerable success in Jordan;
- The economic reform programme has emphasized the importance of the role of the private sector, and that sector has gradually begun to take over the place traditionally occupied by the public sector in productive activities. This has had an adverse impact on women's participation in the job market, especially in view of the tendency for women to take jobs in the public sector, combined with the fact that private-sector firms prefer to employ men;
- Women's hours of work are regulated by an ordinance issued by the Minister of Labour, which prohibits the employment of women during certain hours. It states, "Women may not work between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., except in the kinds of employment listed below:
  1. Employment at hotels, coffee shops, places of entertainment, theatres and cinemas;
  2. Employment at airports, airline companies and tourist offices;
  3. Employment at hospitals, sanatoria and clinics;
  4. Employment in the field of the transport of persons and freight by water, air or land;
  5. Employment in the information technology sector and related occupations;
  6. Employment in operations relating to yearly inventory-taking, budget preparation, the liquidation and closing of accounts, preparations for cut-price sales and season openings, operations aimed at preventing losses of

perishable merchandise or other items, operations aimed at avoiding work hazards, and operations undertaken for the purpose of receiving, delivering or transporting specific items, subject to the conditions that the number of days to which the provisions of this paragraph apply shall not exceed 30 in the course of one year, and that the number of hours actually worked shall not exceed 10 in the course of any one day, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Labour and Employment Directorate regulations.

142. In paragraph 46 of its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's second periodic report, the Committee expressed concern about restrictive employment legislation in the area of night work. In response to that concern, we may note that the limitations on the employment of women in night work currently in force in Jordan conform to the criteria of ILO conventions, including in particular the Night Work Convention (No. 171) and Protocol 89. The relevant provision of Jordanian law refers to "night work for a period of not less than seven consecutive hours". The competent agency settled on that period of time after consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, and it follows that the restriction respects women's freedom of choice in the matter of employment while also serving to maintain their rights as workers.

143. At the same time, we may note that a number of studies have been conducted on the preparation of girls for participation in the labour force and the attitudes of their families to the prospect of their taking jobs. One such study found that 90.7 per cent of the members of a sample of women indicated that they wished to find employment upon graduating from a community college. As we shall see in paragraph 145 below, however, a woman's decision to take a job is subject to a number of restrictions, of which the most important are whether she can travel safely to and from her place of work, and whether the principle of separating men and women employees is applied in the work environment. The studies also indicate that the decision to accept paid employment is made first and foremost by the young man or woman concerned rather than by his or her parents, as will be seen from table 19 below. Other studies, however, have reported different findings, indicating that the consent of a women's family or husband is a basic factor in her decision to accept a job.

**Table 19**  
**Decision to accept employment, by decision-maker and sex**

<i>Decision to accept employment</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Decision made by young man/woman alone	75.4%	84.0%
Father	8.0%	11.2%
Mother	2.8%	0.6%
Young man/woman in consultation with parents	10.5%	2.8%
Other family members	0.3%	1.1%
Others	3.1%	0.3%

*Source:* UNICEF (2003), *Jordanian Youth: Their Lives and Views*.

144. Most Jordanian women who are in the labour force belong to the 25-39 age group, as will be seen from table 20 below. Women begin to enter the job market between the ages of 20 and 24, but their participation increases very quickly thereafter, reaching a peak between the ages of 25 and 39. Beyond the age of 39, a

decline sets in; labour force participation is lower for women in the 40-54 age group. We may note at this point, however, that labour force participation by women in the 40-54 age groups is likely to increase in future years because of the new Civil Service Retirement Regulations discussed in paragraph 158 below, under which the period of service making a woman eligible for a pension is increased from 15 years to 20 years.

**Table 20**  
**Jordanians in paid employment, by sex and age group, 2004**

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
15-19	1.6%	5.8%
20-24	19.9%	17.0%
25-39	58.9%	47.2%
40-54	18.2%	22.7%
55-64	1.2%	5.7%
65+	0.2%	1.6%

*Source:* Department of Statistics (2004), Labour and Unemployment Survey for 2004, main report.

145. There are no adequate statistics available on the reasons why only relatively small numbers of women enter the job market. However, it is well known that social factors closely associated with children's upbringing tend to restrict their participation. In addition, the burden of housekeeping still falls, by and large, upon women. Contributing factors include convenience of means of transport and the availability of a workplace that is near the woman's place of residence. A study conducted for the purpose of identifying limiting factors in a number of specific economic sectors (such as tourism and information technology) found that husbands, sons and other male family members played an important role in women's decisions to accept paid employment. The same study concluded that convenient and safe means of transport and a workplace located near the woman's home were also important factors. Recent statistics have confirmed that marriage tends to lead to a lower level of economic activity on the part of women in Jordan, as will be seen from table 21 below. Other studies, however, indicate that marriage does not prevent a woman from taking gainful employment, but that it may influence her choice of the economic sector in which she will work. One study, for example, found that 13.1 per cent of all married women had jobs, compared to 11.7 per cent of unmarried women. The study indicates that married women tend to work in agriculture or to run small businesses, rather than taking jobs in the formal sector. It is important to note that Jordan's general economic situation affects women's employment: owing to the difficult conditions that have prevailed in the country for the past decade, the number of new jobs available has not kept pace with the numbers of job-seekers, and the result has been higher unemployment rates for both men and women.

**Table 21**  
**Jordan's economically active population 15 years of age and over (both employed and unemployed), by sex and marital status, 2004**

<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Unmarried	15.5%	54.8%
Married	7.3%	73.3%
Other	4.9%	30.5%

<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>63.7%</b>

*Source:* Department of Statistics (2004), Labour and Unemployment Survey for 2004, main report.

146. Gainful employment for women in Jordan tends to be concentrated in a few specialized areas, and women account for 45.2 per cent of the total number of persons employed in those areas, as will be seen from table 22 below. It is particularly noteworthy that total gainful employment among Jordanian women in the public and private sectors combined rose from 10.2 per cent in 1996 to 24.2 per cent in 2004, as the table shows.

**Table 22**  
**Gainful employment (public- and private-sector establishments), by occupational category and sex, 2004**

<i>Occupational category</i>	<i>Persons employed</i>			<i>Women as % of total</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>	
Legislators, senior managers, directors	18,316	3,378	21,694	15.6
Specialists	81,683	67,338	149,021	45.2
Technicians and assistants	52,947	23,007	75,954	30.3
Typists	41,855	26,405	68,260	38.7
Commercial sales and services	61,694	8,071	69,765	11.6
Skilled agricultural and fishing occupations	1,129	0	1,129	0
Crafts and related occupations	66,997	4,026	71,023	5.7
Machine operators and assemblers	52,328	6,989	59,317	11.8
Primary-sector occupations	91,087	10,215	101,302	10.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>468,036</b>	<b>149,429</b>	<b>617,465</b>	<b>24.2</b>

*Source:* Department of Statistics (2005), Statistical Yearbook, 2004.

147. The Government has devoted particular attention to the issue of women émigrés from other countries who are working in Jordan. The Ministry of Labour, working in cooperation with an international organization, recently launched a project entitled “Émigré women working in Jordan”, which included a study on the situation of émigré women domestic workers. The study highlighted various aspects of the ways in which the rights of these workers are violated and the problems they face. The Ministry of Labour is taking action to address this situation at a number of levels, including new legislation to amend the Labour Code so that domestic services and covered and employers are required to conclude labour contracts drafted in the employee’s language as well as in that of the employer. The draft bill also makes provision for training and skills development for senior officials in government agencies and employment offices and awareness campaigns for businessmen, and it also provides for the production and distribution of a guide for émigré women workers, written in their own language, aimed at informing them about their responsibilities and duties during their period of employment in Jordan. A unified contract form is already in use, and the licensing of employment offices is now a reality.

*(b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment.*



148. The criteria used for selection in matters of employment have not been revised or amended since 1997. It is those criteria that govern selection and appointment procedures for Government employees under the Civil Service Regulations, and they rely to widely varying degrees on competence and seniority. A total of 94,003 women have applied to the Civil Service Commission for Government posts, a figure that represents 67 per cent of all applicants. A total of 4,463 women applicants were appointed in 2004, representing 49.3 per cent of all appointments for that year. In the years that have passed since the submission of Jordan's second report, the proportion of women appointees has been reasonably high; yet women have accounted for only 40 per cent of all appointments to Civil Service posts, and comparison of the numbers of men and women applicants indicates a continuing gender gap. In some instances, this may be attributable to the fact that more male applicants possessed the necessary qualifications, especially since more women than men tend to apply for posts in fields in which there are few vacancies or demand is low; this is the case for BA degree holders no less than for diploma holders. This is not to deny that discrimination on the part of selection committees may have been a factor on occasion. It is noteworthy in this connection that JNCW has completed the initial phase of a programme aimed at mainstreaming a gender perspective within the Civil Service Commission. The programme features a study on awareness of the legislation and regulations that govern the Commission's work, and investigation of the procedures, official and unofficial, that effectively discriminate against women. The Civil Service Commission is a body of the utmost importance, being responsible as it is for the selection and appointment of candidates for employment with the Government, and consequently JNCW has developed a plan of action based on the above-mentioned study. JNCW is currently in the process of initiating the second phase of its programme for mainstreaming a gender perspective within the Commission and all its regulations and procedures. Among other things, phase II will seek to make selection committees more sensitive to gender issues.

149. Close scrutiny of the statistics relating to applications for posts with government agencies reveals clearly that the numbers of women applicants are steadily increasing, in contrast to the conclusions of several studies suggesting that women tend not to look for jobs because of the social obstacles involved. Table 24 below shows that the Civil Service Commission receives more applications from women than men from all governorates in Jordan. It thus appears that even in the most conservative regions, such as desert areas or Maan and Tafila Governorates, women are indeed interested in taking paid employment, and this in turn is evidence that Jordanian society's view of women in the job market is changing. It is important to bear in mind, however, that Government employment is associated with some expectation of permanence and also affords various benefits, whereas private firms are notoriously reluctant to hire women because of the legal burdens arising from the provisions relating to the protection of women workers in the Labour Code, and consequently women tend to look for work in the public sector. Furthermore, the private sector is centralized in the capital, far from the outlying governorates, in contrast to Government agencies, which have offices in every part of the country. Accordingly, the initiative that was recently launched by His Majesty King Abdullah II with a view to establishing a decentralized system of regional councils mandated to foster economic development in the various governorates may ultimately result in the creation of more private-sector jobs in outlying areas.

**Table 24**  
**Applications from women as a % of all applications to the Civil Service Commission, by governorate, 2004**

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women as % of total</i>
Capital	12,905	26,017	38,922	66.8
Balqa	3,496	7,777	11,273	69.0
Zarqa	5,978	10,598	16,576	63.9
Madaba	1,335	3,245	4,580	70.9
Central Desert Region	513	1,387	1,900	73.0
Irbid	11,467	22,026	33,493	65.8
Mafraq	1,125	2,734	3,859	70.8
Jerash	1,772	3,276	5,048	64.9
Ajlun	1,514	3,845	5,359	71.7
Northern Desert Region	730	1,690	2,420	69.8
Kerak	2,351	5,895	8,246	71.5
Tafila	629	1,864	2,493	74.8
Maan	540	1,472	2,012	73.2
Aqaba	666	1,433	2,099	68.3
Southern Desert Region	265	746	1,011	73.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,286</b>	<b>94,005</b>	<b>139,291</b>	<b>67.5</b>

*Source:* Civil Service Commission (2005), annual report for 2004.

(c) *The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training.*

150. Both men and women in Jordan are confronted with the problem of unemployment: according to official statistics, the aggregate unemployment rate was 14.5 per cent in 2003. The rate for women in the 15-and-over age group was 20.8 per cent, while for men in that age group, it was 13.4 per cent. These figures show that the situation has improved since the time of Jordan's second periodic report, as the aggregate unemployment rate for 1997 was 14.4, while the rate for women in that year was 34.3 per cent.

151. None of the various regulations and directives in force in Jordan contains any discriminatory provisions in the matter of a woman's right to choose any occupation she wishes. Various programmes aimed at fostering awareness of job market needs are currently available, including one that is offered in the context of school curricula by the Ministry of Education and others that are offered by universities in cooperation with the private sector. These activities, however, cannot be considered comprehensive, nor are all students exposed to them. It follows that the choice of occupation is primarily the outcome of social conditioning, and that in turn means that a woman's choice of occupation is directed by traditional views on women's roles. Civil Service Commission statistical data for 2004 reveal that 37,847 of all Ministry of Education employees were women, representing 52.7 per cent of the total. Table 25 below shows the distribution of men and women employees for the various ministries and the several occupational groups within each.

152. Not only does table 25 reveal how gainfully employed women are concentrated in traditional sectors, especially teaching, it also shows that women occupy a much smaller proportion of top-level posts in Government agencies than their male counterparts. This situation is attributable to the fact that women frequently retire early, and thereby have less chance of rising in the hierarchy; furthermore, women are not given adequate opportunities of taking training and acquiring the skills that would enable them to obtain promotion to supervisory posts. Civil Service Commission statistics indicate that in 2004, women accounted for 40.5 per cent of the 977 delegates selected for study missions in Jordan and/or abroad in that year. It is noteworthy that women delegates dominated the domestic study missions, with 70.5 per cent of the total number of delegates, but that the reverse was true for missions abroad, in which women delegates represented 25.8 per cent of the total. At the same time, women represented 15.2 per cent of the 92 delegates who were sent on training courses outside the country in 2004 (no delegates, male or female, were sent on training courses in Jordan in that year). The fact that women accounted for such a small proportion of the delegates sent for study missions or training courses abroad is attributable to the social assumptions of the senior officials in Government agencies who are in charge of the delegate selection process, including the assumption that women are less suitable for study missions and training courses because of their domestic duties and their fear of being away from their families. Another contributing factor is that women themselves tend not to apply for study missions and training courses because of their social circumstances. We may note here that there are no statistics that would serve to shed light on the situation of women with jobs with private-sector firms or the training opportunities available to them. However, it is worth recalling the efforts that JNCW is making through its work with the Civil Service Commission to heighten the sensitivity of supervisory committees and delegate selection procedures in the context of its gender mainstreaming plan.

153. At the same time, a recent study has shed light on the position of women scholars at Jordanian universities (both State-run and private): it appears that women represent 12 per cent of all teaching personnel. While the percentage representation of women is low for all fields of academic endeavour, the fields with the relatively smallest numbers of women are public communication and documentation (3.5 per cent), engineering (4.6 per cent), and agriculture (4.4 per cent). The fields of specialization in which women are most extensively represented are pharmacy, with 38.1 per cent, and dentistry, with 32.9 per cent. Data on the academic ranks held by women provide some indication of their opportunities for professional advancement. In this connection, it appears that women account for 34.5 per cent of all lecturers, but progressively smaller proportions for higher ranks: 11.1 per cent of all assistant professors, 7.2 of all associate professors, and 3.4 per cent of all full professors are women.

**Table 25**  
**Numbers of permanent staff members by agency, group and sex, 2004**

Agency	Senior		I		II				Group III				IV		On contract		Total	
					Classified		Unclassified		Classified		Unclassified							
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Min. of Ed.	2	0	161	20	13,732	10,460	10,017	12,209	3,832	9,266	1,021	1,848	5,180	4,027	8	44	33,953	37,874
Min. of Health	1	0	96	6	2,204	919	2,077	1,566	2,209	2,531	754	1,268	3,559	4,134	25	8	10,925	10,432
Other ministries	99	4	572	34	5,802	901	3,695	913	6,092	1,547	2,088	1,272	16,210	3,626	1,812	855	36,370	9,152
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>21,738</b>	<b>12,280</b>	<b>15,789</b>	<b>14,688</b>	<b>12,133</b>	<b>13,344</b>	<b>3,863</b>	<b>4,388</b>	<b>24,949</b>	<b>11,787</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>81,248</b>	<b>57,458</b>
Total, group	106		899		64,495				33,728				36,736		2,752		138,706	
% women	3.8		6.7		41.8				51.0				32.1		33.0		41.4	

*Source:* Civil Service Commission (2005), annual report for 2004, except the group totals and percentage figures for women, which were calculated.

154. On a related level, the provisions of the Civil Service Regulations (statutory instrument No. 55 of 2002) are binding on all Government agencies. All promotions must be based on merit and made strictly in accordance with the Regulations, which require the application of the criteria of competence, qualifications, seniority within grade or appointment, and training programmes that the employee concerned (whether male or female) has taken. Women in Groups II and III who have received promotions account for 58.6 per cent of all 18,384 male and female employees in those groups who have been promoted. Recent statistics on promotions in Government service posts indicate that of a total of 13,193 employees who had been promoted to Group II, 7,394, i.e. 56 per cent, were women, while out of a total of 5,151 employees who had been promoted to Group III, 3,385, i.e. 65.2 per cent, were women. Of a total of 60 employees who had been promoted to Group I, eight, or 13.3 per cent, were women.

155. Lastly, there is no discrimination between male and female public service employees as regards health insurance. Under the regulations, a female employee and her children or other persons dependent upon her are eligible for insurance provided her husband is not in Government employ. The same applies to old age and disability coverage. In the private sector, every firm offers its own benefits package, but in the absence of any form of effective oversight, there is no way of determining whether any given firm practises discrimination against its male or female employees in the matter of the various kinds of insurance.

*(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work.*

156. While there are no discriminatory provisions in Jordanian law, in both the public and private sectors there are clear disparities between men and women employees in the matter of remuneration, as will be seen from table 26. The Wage Commission issued an ordinance pursuant to the provisions of article 52 of the Labour Code, setting minimum wages for persons employed in Jordan. The ordinance came into force on 1 October 1999, but the agencies concerned have raised minimum wages since the beginning of 2003. The ordinance made no distinction between male and female employees, and its provisions are applicable to all workers. This ordinance is a first step toward compliance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 13 concerning equal remuneration for work of equal value. In paragraph 46 of its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's first and second periodic reports, the Committee again expressed concern about equal pay for work of equal value. In that connection, we may note that an ordinance expressly setting equal minimum wages for men and women is expected to contribute directly to the improvement of the situation of women employees in the private sector. At the same time, some of the studies discussed above have reported a trend for private-sector firms to reduce their female employees' monthly wages as a way of offsetting the cost of the benefits to which those employees are entitled, such as maternity leave and nursing breaks.

**Table 26**  
**Average monthly remuneration earned by male and female employees of private-sector firms, 2004**

<i>Main occupational categories</i>	<i>Average monthly remuneration</i>	
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Legislators, senior managers, directors	811	427
Specialists	411	198
Technicians and assistants	262	214
Typists	238	166
Commercial sales and services	154	111
Skilled agricultural and fishing occupations	159	0
Crafts and related occupations	153	121
Machine operators and assemblers	166	99
Primary-sector occupations	135	97
<b>Average</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>172</b>

*Source:* Department of Statistics (2005), Statistical Yearbook, 2004.

157. The working conditions of public-sector employees, on the other hand, are governed by the Civil Service Regulations, and those Regulations do not discriminate between men and women in matters of grade and remuneration, which depend on such factors as qualifications and experience. Under the Unified Benefits Regulations (statutory instrument No. 23 of 1988), women and men are stated to be equal in terms of all entitlements. However, a woman employee is eligible for the family benefit only where her husband is dead or not employed by any Government agency or other agency.

*(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave.*

158. The rules governing the number of years of service that a civil servant must have completed before he or she can take his or her retirement are laid down in interim law No. 61 of 2002, the Act to amend the Civil Service Retirement Regulations. Under article 5(b)(i) of the interim Act, "The length of service entitling an employee to retirement benefit shall, as from the date of coming into force of this Act, be increased to 25 years for male employees and 20 years for female employees." The Council of Ministers has set the minimum age of retirement for employees subject to the Civil Service Regulations at 45 years for men and 40 years for women, provided the employee concerned has spent not less than two years at his or her grade before taking retirement, except employees in the Senior or Special grades. However, the legislation and regulations governing the separation of women from service have not been amended since the promulgation of the Labour Code (law No. 8 of 1996), which contains provisions dealing with arbitrary dismissal and penalties for infractions, as discussed in Jordan's second report. The same applies to the Civil Service Regulations and the Civil Service Retirement Act. It may thus be said that there is still discrimination with respect to the number of years of service entitling employees to take retirement and with respect to pension inheritance rights.

159. The matter of the right to social security is governed by the Social Security Act (law No. 19 of 2001), which provides for equality between men and women in

respect of their rights and obligations as insured persons. The Act uses the term “insured person” inclusively to denote both men and women. Under the Act, women are entitled to a number of advantages, of which the most important are outlined below.

- The minimum length of effective participation required for purposes of early retirement is set at 15 years (180 monthly contributions) in the case of women employees who have reached the age of 45 years, while the corresponding figures for men employees who have reached that age are 18 years (216 monthly contributions). For women, deductions start at 10 per cent of pension benefits, while for men, they start at 18 per cent.
- In the event of the death of a woman who is a social security contributor under the terms of the Act or who is in receipt of an illness benefit by virtue of her social security contributions, her sons, daughters and parents are entitled to inheritance rights in respect of her pension under the same conditions as would have been the case if the deceased pension recipient had been a man. A husband or widower is entitled to a share of his deceased wife’s pension only if he is totally incapacitated and has no income of his own equal to or greater than his share of the pension. Where such income is less than that share, he receives an amount sufficient to make up the difference, and the remainder of the pension is distributed to the other heirs in accordance with the provisions of the Act.
- Under the Social Security Act, a corporation has the right to withhold pension benefits or other benefits only for purposes of maintenance or a debt owed to the corporation.
- In the matter of lump-sum compensation payments, the Act gives insured women not only the right to such payments in the same cases as men, but also some flexibility with respect to other cases as well, including:
  - (i) Termination of her services and full-time care of her family because of her marriage or divorce or the death of her husband, or because she is a married woman, divorcee or widow;
  - (ii) Termination of the services of an unmarried woman, provided she has reached 45 years of age.
- In the event of the marriage of the wife or daughter of a deceased insured person who is in receipt of a share of his retirement pension, payment of that share shall cease forthwith, but shall be restored in the event that she should subsequently be divorced or widowed.
- Where a widow is in receipt of a share of her late husband’s pension and the late person’s parents are also in receipt of shares of the same pension, upon the death of either or both the parents, his, her or their share(s) shall revert to the widow for such time as she does not remarry.
- The mother of a deceased insured person shall be entitled to a share of his pension without restriction or condition, regardless of whether she has income of her own from gainful employment, a retirement pension or other source, for such time as she does not marry someone other than the retired person’s father.

- Under the new Act, where the widow of a deceased insured person is the only person entitled to inherit his pension entitlement, she receives three quarters of the pension, instead of half as was the case under the former Act.
- Under the new Act, an unborn child is added to the list of persons entitled to “inherit” the retirement pension of a deceased insured person. The sums involved are redistributed when the child is born alive.

160. With respect to paid leave, the legislation establishing equal rights for men and women employees in the public and private sectors has not been amended; the discussion of it in Jordan’s second report to the Committee remains valid. Under the Civil Service Regulations (statutory instrument No. 55 of 2002), annual leave for Government employees, male and female, is based on the grade of the employee concerned, regardless of sex. The updated Regulations also give employees the right to study leave without pay, and to allowances to upgrade their cultural, scientific or vocational qualifications. Under the Regulations, male and female employees are also equal in the matter of sick leave, which amounts to seven days, taken separately or consecutively, and may be extended subject to a report from the competent medical committee. With respect to leave without pay and the allowances for which any employee, male or female, may apply, the Civil Regulations make provision for the following cases:

- For a husband or wife: where either of them works outside Jordan or is on study leave, leave of absence, or is sent on a mission or training course outside the country;
- For a husband or wife: where either of them is transferred to a post outside Jordan;
- For a female employee: where her family situation is such that she must care on a full-time basis for her infant or other child, or for her husband or one of her parents, in the event that the person concerned should become ill or in the event that his or her state of health should make such full-time care necessary;
- For a male employee: to care for one of his parents, his wife, or one of his children in the event that the person concerned should become ill, subject to the condition that the term of such leave shall not exceed one year.

161. Employer-employee relations in the private sector are governed by the Labour Code (law No. 8 of 1996), and the Code’s provisions on paid leave have not been amended. It gives a woman the right to take one or more breaks, with pay, for the purpose of nursing her infant during the first year following the child’s birth, provided the aggregate time of such breaks does not exceed one hour in any single day. In addition, under the Code, every women who works for a firm that employs ten or more workers is entitled to leave without pay for a period of not more than one year for the purpose of looking after her children, and to return to her job at the end of that period. Lastly, either spouse is entitled, one time only, to leave without pay for a period of not more than two years for the purpose of accompanying the other spouse in the event that he or she is transferred to another job in a governorate within Jordan other than the governorate in which he or she ordinarily works, or to a job outside the country. As regards maternity leave, the provision of the Civil Service Regulations remain unchanged. The provisions of the Labour Code were discussed in detail in Jordan’s second report.



*(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.*

162. Legislative measures taken by the Government to safeguard maternity include the promulgation in 1997 of an “Ordinance concerning kinds of work in which and times during which the employment of women is prohibited” under article 69 of the Labour Code. The ordinance contains four articles specifying the industries and kinds of work in which women may not be employed, and the times when they are prohibited from working. In addition, under article 3 of the ordinance, the employment of pregnant women is prohibited in:

- Work involving exposure to atomic or nuclear radiation or X-rays during pregnancy;
- Any work requiring handling of or exposure to vapours from petroleum derivatives;
- Work involving exposure to teratogenic substances;
- Work involving exposure to ethylene in the dyeing industry, carbon bisulphide in the synthetic silk industry, cellophane and hydrocarbonated substances in petroleum refining, arsenic, phosphorus, nitrobenzene, manganese, calcium or beryllium.

*2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:*

*(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status.*

*(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances.*

163. As we have seen, private-sector firms are regulated by the Labour Code, and the provisions of the Code relating to the rights of pregnant women have not been amended: women workers are entitled to 10 weeks of maternity leave. Nor have the provisions of the Civil Service Regulations prohibiting dismissal of a woman employee on the grounds of marriage, pregnancy or maternity been amended or revised, and the provisions dealing with separation and separation procedures do not authorize separation on those grounds under any circumstances. The provisions of the Regulations under which every woman employee is entitled to 90 days of maternity leave with full pay have not been amended or revised either. Every woman employee is also entitled to leave without pay or special allowances for the purpose of looking after her husband and children or to accompany her husband in the event of his taking employment outside the country.

164. In paragraph 46 of its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan’s first and second periodic reports, the Committee expressed concern about the difference in entitlement to maternity leave in the public and private sectors. In response, we may note that the private sector is still a recent phenomenon in Jordan, and that concepts relating to the social responsibility of private firms are not yet firmly established. When the period of maternity leave was lengthened, some private employers refused to hire women, and this has had a negative impact on

women's job opportunities in the private sector. This illustrates the need for full social awareness of the importance of maternity leave, and, in particular, the need for businessmen to be aware of their social responsibilities in that area, before it will be feasible to address the issue of a longer maternity leave entitlement.

*(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities.*

165. Amendments to Jordanian legislation, including the Labour Code and the Civil Service Regulations, have left provisions relating to this paragraph of the Convention unchanged. Under the law, a firm that employs a specified number of women is required to provide child-care facilities for its women workers, but enforcement of that obligation is based on complaints from the workers concerned, and consequently there are no hard data on the extent to which those firms are complying with the law. However, Ministry of Social Development statistics do indicate that the numbers of child-care facilities have increased in recent years: there are now 825 such facilities at private firms that employ women or private agencies or associations. This represents a 38 per cent increase over the situation as it stood at the time of Jordan's second periodic report.

*(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.*

166. There have been no amendments to the provisions of Jordanian law relating to this matter, which has been discussed in detail in paragraph 162 above.

*3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.*

167. JNCW periodically reviews Jordanian legislation, and the National Council on Family Affairs analyses all laws with a bearing on the family. Based on their findings, both bodies make recommendations for appropriate amendments to legislation through the normal legislative process.

## **Article 12**

*1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.*

168. The health care sector is regarded as a high-priority developmental service in Jordan. The various development plans and strategies that have been prepared over the years have invariably devoted a section to the task of ensuring that all citizens, men and women alike, enjoy access to comprehensive health care services. The Ministry of Health is the primary official body with responsibility for health care in Jordan. In 2004, its budget represented six per cent of the Government's total budget, a 0.6 per cent increase over the situation as it stood at the time of Jordan's second report, when the Ministry's budget accounted for 5.6 per cent of the total State budget. The public sector, the private sector, community organizations and international organizations all deliver health care services. However, recent statistics

indicate that qualified health care personnel are concentrated in the private sector. In 2004, there were a total 40,046 male and female health care workers, including doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, accredited midwives and nurses' aides, as will be seen from Table 27 below.

**Table 27**  
**Numbers of qualified health care personnel working for various service delivery agencies (2004)**

<i>Delivering agency/Professional group</i>	<i>Ministry of Health</i>	<i>Royal Medical Services</i>	<i>Universities</i>	<i>Private sector</i>	<i>UNRWA</i>	<i>Total</i>
Physicians	3,250	1,082	443	7,138	95	12,008
Dentists	514	192	42	3,154	24	3,926
Pharmacists	224	201	31	6,277	2	6,735
Nurses	2,093	892	701	5,645	42	9,373
Accredited midwives	963	71	15	506	27	1,582
Nurses' aides	2,838	1,028	262	539	167	4,834
Auxiliary nurses	450	1,121	17	-	-	1,588
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,332</b>	<b>4,587</b>	<b>1,511</b>	<b>23,259</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>40,046</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Health, Statistical Yearbook, 2004.

169. Between 1998 and the date of preparation of this report, the Ministry of Health has joined forces with a number of international and Jordanian organizations to execute over 30 projects designed to develop health care services. Among the most noteworthy of these have been a health sector overhaul and restructuring project that is being implemented jointly by the Ministry of Health, Royal Medical Services, and the Jordanian University Hospital; the Healthy Villages project, which is an initiative involving a variety of governmental and non-governmental bodies and is aimed at local community development in regions that are economically, environmentally and socially disadvantaged and lacking in health care services; the primary health care initiative, which takes an integrated approach, combining health care delivery, institutional capacity-building and health surveillance and monitoring at primary health care centres; a postnatal care project; and a health care services upgrading project that is directly concerned with promoting gender equity and equality. The Ministry of Health is also working in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF to eliminate diseases and provide vaccination services for children and women in every governorate in the country. Another noteworthy initiative is a project aimed at promoting reproductive health care and breastfeeding. On a related level, various NGOs are active in the area of health awareness and the provision of health care services for various social groups.

170. In a recent development, the Ministry of Health has promulgated the Civilian Health Insurance Regulations (statutory instrument No. 83 of 2004) making certain health care services available free of charge. These include:

- “(a) Preventive administration of sera and vaccines and treatment of communicable diseases;
- (b) Maternal and child services and family planning services in accordance with directives issued by the Minister;

- (c) Medical examinations for all delegates with scientific missions and applicants for employment referred by agencies to which the provisions of these Regulations apply;
- (d) Thalassaemia screening for persons intending to marry;
- (e) Blood analysis for blood from donors;
- (f) School health services in accordance with directives issued by the Minister;
- (g) Any other services that the Minister may designate in the interests of maintaining public health.”

171. Under the Civilian Health Insurance Regulations, wives and husbands are equally entitled to benefits from the Health Insurance Fund, as are persons dependent upon them (parents, siblings or children), provided they are not entitled to benefits under any other health insurance plan. The Ministry of Health is currently conducting studies to determine the feasibility of providing comprehensive insurance for all citizens.

172. The popular sector, in the form of NGOs, also contributes to health care service delivery, especially in matters relating to reproductive health; examples include a permanent clinical services project and awareness and education programmes. Jordan has not yet been entirely successful in creating awareness of the concept of reproductive health, and most existing centres still tend to concentrate on service-related aspects; there continues to be an unmet need for qualified personnel capable of responding to young people’s awareness and information requirements in the area of human reproductive health. Accordingly, the Government has devoted particular attention to the establishment of primary health care centres in an effort to reach as many of its citizens as possible. Besides the Ministry of Health and the tasks it is mandated to perform, the Government has adopted an updated National Population Strategy, clearly indicating official interest in this area.

173. Other official agencies have also devoted particular attention to issues of health in general and women’s health in particular. The Ministry of Social Development, for example, has focused on action in the context of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy that it produced in 2002. One of the Strategy’s main lines of emphasis has to do with the provision of health care services for low-income people and improving their health status through improved prevention measures and action to ensure that the various health care delivery centres are staffed with highly qualified, skilled personnel. The Strategy emphasizes the link between poor health status and the poverty trap. Its recommendations in this area include the following:

- Bringing population growth under control;
- Providing health services and health care to poor communities;
- Working in partnership with local communities to develop health services.

174. The revised National Population Strategy issued in 2000 comprised eight main lines of emphasis, of which some of the most significant are summarized below.

- “1. Lowering the maternal mortality rate to approximately 30 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2015, and to less than 27 deaths per 100,000 live births

by 2020, by reducing levels of exposure to the risks associated with closely spaced pregnancies, early pregnancy and late pregnancy, improving opportunities for the use of safe maternity services, and expanding and strengthening the network of basic health care services, including perinatal services;

2. Lowering the infant mortality rate to approximately 20 per 1,000 live births by 2015, and still further by 2020, by preventing high-risk pregnancies, encouraging and activating the measures contemplated in the National Breastfeeding and Health Education Policy, and taking full advantage of available services to convey information more effectively;

3. Lowering the total fertility rate to approximately 2.9 children by 2010, to 2.5 children by 2025, and still further by 2020, by increasing the rate of utilization of family planning methods, making more effective use of family planning methods, and upgrading the quality of family planning services.”

175. One of the themes of the National Youth Strategy, 2005-2009 is “Youth and health”. The objectives that are to be attained under that heading are as follows:

“1. Promotion of healthy reproductive behaviour on the part of young people, support for physical and personal health, and encouragement for healthy lifestyles;

2. Effective participation by young people in action to meet their needs in the area of emotional health and achieve good health and social well-being;

3. Support for and development of reproductive health services for young people, and inculcation of the concepts of health and social preparation for sound family life in Jordanian society.”

176. JNCW, for its part, devoted a chapter in its updated National Strategy for Women to human security and social protection, and health issues are covered in that chapter. The focus is similar to that of the National Population Strategy. The objectives listed are as follows:

- Development of primary health care services for women in all stages of life;
- Strengthening of preventive programmes that address health risks for women in all stages of life, including reproductive health issues in particular, and action to propagate a healthy culture among women in various age-groups.

177. While preparing this report, especially the material relating to article 12 of the Convention, JNCW worked with an international human-rights organization that had been commissioned by the WHO to prepare a manual on the health care aspects of the Convention. Together they agreed to conduct a field trial of the manual in Jordan, and to that end they held two workshops at which it was discussed. The workshops were attended by a number of health care workers from Government agencies, NGOs, private firms and international organizations, and the manual was subsequently used as a guide to the preparation of this part of the report in so far as possible. Similarly, the Ministry of Health recently executed a project in cooperation with the WHO with the aim of reinforcing the national health data system, which is used to gather and analyse data on the health of Jordanians.

178. Public-health indicators show that Jordan has made tangible progress in attaining its health-related objectives. According to the latest figures available from

the Department of Statistics, the infant mortality rate during the period 1997-2002 was 22 per 1,000 live births, whereas Jordan's second report stated that the corresponding rate for the period covered by that report was 28 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. We may note in passing that there is no significant disparity in mortality rates for male and female infants, the former being 25 deaths per 1,000 live births and the latter 23.

179. The available statistics indicate a similar situation with respect to the under-5 mortality rate. Between 1997 and 2002, Department of Statistics figures show that under-5 mortality was 27 deaths per 1,000 children, down from 31.5 per 1,000 children for the period covered by Jordan's second report. The statistics for 2002 are not broken down by sex, but the data for 1999 show a slight disparity between boys and girls: under-5 mortality in that year was 31 per 1,000 for both sexes combined, 33 per 1,000 for boys and 30 for girls. Ministry of Health data indicate that in recent years there has been an increase in life expectancy at birth: in 2003 it was 70.6 years for men, compared to 66 years in 1996, and 72.4 years for women, up from 70 years in 1996. This improvement in infant and under-5 mortality rates for the country as a whole has been slow but steady, as will be seen from table 28 below. Between regions within the country, however, disparities subsist.

**Table 28**  
**Infant and under-5 mortality rates for three five-year periods prior to the survey, Jordan, 2002**

<i>No. of years prior to survey</i>	<i>Infant mortality</i>	<i>Under-5 mortality</i>
0-4	22	27
5-9	27	31
10-14	28	30

Source: Department of Statistics (2003), Jordan Population and Family Health Survey, 2002.

180. Currently available statistics on communicable diseases indicate that polio has been completely eradicated, with no cases having been reported since 1995. Tetanus in newborns has also been eradicated. The latest statistics show that vaccination coverage in 2002 was 94 per cent of all Jordanian children, compared to 86 per cent in 1997. A total of 34.3 per cent of pregnant Jordanian women had one or more tetanus shots during their pregnancies. Some recent studies have found that respiratory infections continue to be the main cause of mortality among children under the age of 5.

181. A number of surveys and studies have shown that the prevalence of anaemia among women in the 15-45 age group, i.e. during their childbearing years, was 29 per cent in 2002. The prevalence of anaemia for pregnant women varied: it was 11 per cent in the first trimester, 34 per cent in the second, and 43 per cent in the third. The Government has endeavoured to eliminate anaemia among women: the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the WHO, has developed a food and nutrition strategy containing, among other things, food programmes for marginal and deprived groups and programmes relating to nutrition and nutritional supplements. The Ministry of Health has been adding iron to flour since June 2002, and plans to add vitamins to flour beginning in 2006. Recent studies have shown that 46 per cent of Jordanian women take iron tablets as nutritional supplements for three months or longer during pregnancy.

182. In 2002, 99 per cent of all pregnant women had prenatal health care at least once, up from 80 per cent in 1990, while the corresponding figures for women who had made at least four visits to a clinic during their pregnancies were 90.9 per cent in 2002 and 67 per cent in 1990. In 2002, 99.5 per cent of pregnant women gave birth under qualified medical supervision, compared to 97 per cent in 1997, and 96.9 per cent gave birth in a health care facility. Only 23.5 per cent of women who had given birth visited a health care facility during the period extending between seven and 39 days following delivery in the course of the five years prior to the survey.

183. A national committee was established in 1995 to follow up the Baby-Friendly Hospitals Initiative, but the response has been relatively weak, as the initiative is being applied in only four Government-run hospitals out of a total of 16, and is not being applied in any private or military hospitals. It should be noted, however, that those four hospitals handle over 40 per cent of all deliveries in Jordan. As regards breastfeeding, its increasing prevalence reflects the concern and efforts that various organizations have put into promoting it. Some 55 per cent of Jordanian infants are fed on breast milk exclusively during their first two months of life, compared to a mere 20 per cent in 1997. Table 29 below shows percentage figures for children under the age of three years by current breastfeeding status. Experts and specialists in the field of maternal and child health consider that the average period when infants are fed exclusively on breast milk, i.e. 2.2 months, is undesirably short, and that there is a need for a more intensive effort on the part of community organizations and Government agencies to make mothers and those around them aware of the importance of breastfeeding and its beneficial effects on the health of both mother and child. The private sector should be associated with this initiative as well. The food and nutrition strategy referred to above includes clearly defined objectives relating to awareness enhancement in this area and support for breastfeeding promotion campaigns.

**Table 29**  
**Percentage distribution of children under the age of 3 years by breastfeeding status**

Age in months	Not being breastfed	Breastfeeding				
		Exclusively	Plus water only	Plus diluted fluids and juice	Plus other kinds of milk	Plus other foods
<2	7.5	54.8	9.2	6.2	22.3	0
2-3	10.0	26.1	25.4	2.7	23.3	12.4
4-5	12.5	3.2	19.3	5.1	9.8	50.1
6-7	20.2	0	3.8	4.2	2.3	69.5
8-9	26.8	0.1	1.1	1.0	0	71.0
10-11	37.6	0	1.1	0.3	1.3	59.7
12-15	48.9	0	0.3	0.2	0	50.7
16-19	66.6	0	0	0.4	0	33.0
20-23	87.6	0	0.6	0	0.6	11.2
24-27	96.1	0	0	0	0	3.9
28-31	94.7	0	0	0	0	5.3
32-35	97.8	0	0	0	0	2.2

Source: Department of Statistics (2003), Jordan Population and Family Health Survey, 2002.

184. In general, the structure of Jordanian society itself serves to inhibit the spread of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Ministry of Health statistics indicate that as of the end of July 2005, the country had 397 reported cases, up from 324 in 2003, whereas Jordan's second report indicated 174 cases. Infected women, mainly in the 20-39 age group, account for 30.23 per cent of all reported cases. The available statistics show that the most common means of transmission is sexual contact (56.4 per cent of all cases), followed by blood transfusion and related procedures (19.4 per cent). It should be noted that Jordanian men and women represent only 36.3 per cent of all reported cases, and that according to the statistics, 89.4 per cent of them contracted the disease outside the country. The Ministry of Health has established and equipped a specialized centre exclusively to provide treatment and counselling for AIDS cases, and it has also set up a telephone hotline and organized various awareness campaigns, including some that have been directed at school children, both boys and girls. In addition, the Ministry now conducts routine screening to detect cases of infection among secondary-school and first-year university students, both men and women. Recent studies have found that the vast majority of women in Jordan have heard of AIDS, regardless of age, marital status or place of residence. No distinction is drawn between men and women in respect of the Government's efforts to provide care for AIDS victims, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 15, which has to do with the avoidance of discrimination against women in national strategies for the prevention and control of AIDS. Furthermore, we may note that under the Health Insurance Regulations of 2004, all Jordanian children under the age of 6 enjoy health care coverage, and that all cancer and dialysis patients are also covered. On a related level, the Ministry of Health has recently issued directives making it compulsory for all employers of guest workers to have them undergo a complete medical examination, including screening for AIDS and infectious hepatitis, when they enter the country.

185. Women accounted for 48.7 per cent of all cases of cancer reported in Jordan in 2002, according to the most recent Ministry of Health statistics. This figure includes cancers of all kinds, including breast cancers, leukaemia and various other forms of cancer. Table 30 below shows the incidence of the ten most common forms of cancer among Jordanian women. It should be noted that the incidence of cancer among both men and women is higher for the older age groups (65 and over), which account for 28 per cent of all cases.

**Table 30**  
**Incidence of the 10 most common forms of cancer among Jordanian women, 2002**

<i>Type of cancer</i>	<i>% cases</i>
Breast	30.0
Digestive tract	17.6
Reproductive organs	11.3
Leukaemia	6.8
Endocrine system	6.4
Lymph nodes	6.3
Respiratory system	4.2
Skin	4.0
Urinary tract	3.4
Brain and nervous system	2.6

*Source:* Ministry of Health, Statistical Yearbook, 2002.



186. It is clear from the figures in the above table that breast cancer is the most common of the cancers and tumours that affect Jordanian women. Experts and specialists have emphasized the need for more awareness campaigns on self-examination, and also the importance of developing an integrated strategy for action covering the community at large and the public and private sectors in the interests of coordinated action in the matter. The facilities and infrastructure of the Ministry of Health are inadequate for purposes of early detection, but there is an NGO that provides early detection services for cancer of the reproductive system (breast cancer and cervical cancer).

187. As regards the matter of women and narcotics, statistics from the Public Security Directorate indicate that in 2004, women accounted for only 1.09 per cent of drug users, down from 6.1 per cent in 1996.

188. Turning to population issues, while the total fertility rate for Jordanian women is still high compared to the rates observed in some other countries, it has begun to decline gradually, in step with the declining population growth rate and average family size, as will be seen from table 31 below. The average age of marriage for women rose from 24 to 27.2 years during the period 1994-2003, while for men it rose from 27.4 to 29.8 years over the same period.

**Table 31**  
**Total fertility rates and population growth over the past seven years**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total fertility rate</i>	<i>Population growth rate (%)</i>	<i>Average family size</i>
1996	4.6	3.5	6.1
1997	4.4	3.4	6.0
1998	4.4	3.3	6.0
1999	3.8	2.8	6.0
2000	3.6	2.8	5.8
2001	3.5	2.8	5.8
2002	3.7	2.8	5.8
2003	3.7	2.8	5.7
2004	3.7	2.6	5.4

*Source:* Ministry of Health, Statistical Yearbook, 1996-2004.

189. A recent study on attitudes to reproductive health among women and men in the 15-24 age group found that although these young people were well educated and well informed about modern family planning methods, they were lacking in knowledge about reproductive health, and few of them could identify health-related matters that could be included under that heading. The women respondents recognized "avoidance of sexually transmitted diseases", but were otherwise uninformed about matters relating to family planning and reproductive health. The study's results included the finding that an overwhelming majority of the young Jordanians surveyed were receptive to family planning methods, especially contraceptive pills, intra-uterine devices, implants and condoms. The study also explored the matter of young people's preferred sources of information about sexually transmitted diseases and family planning: doctors headed the list, followed by parents, and then books and other printed materials.

190. As noted, the study found that most of the respondents were receptive to family planning. Some of them, however, considered that Islam did not permit the

use of contraception. The various national strategies that Jordan has developed, and the Reproductive Health Strategy in particular, which does not deal with family planning as such but is intended as a response to people's reproductive health needs, are formulated in such a way as to accommodate the Islamic religion and the country's social mores. Using this approach, Jordan has achieved tangible progress in reducing the country's average family size from 6.1 persons in 1996 to 5.4 persons in 2004. However, family size is a function partly of the social mores just referred to and partly of the preference for sons rather than daughters that is observable in some parts of the country, especially in rural areas. Recent research suggests that most families prefer to have children of both sexes, and that there is a direct link between continued reproduction and having sons or daughters only. However, families with daughters only feel greater pressure to have more children than families with sons only.

191. Family planning methods are more widely used than they formerly were, but most women use them only to a limited extent. Table 32 below shows the prevalence of family planning methods for various age groups. As will be seen, the use of family planning techniques becomes progressively more frequent with increasing age, reaching a peak with the 40-44 age group: 65.6 per cent of the women in that group practise family planning.

**Table 32**  
**Percentage distribution of married women who use family planning, by age group, 2002**

<i>Age group</i>	<i>% use of family planning methods</i>
15-19	21.3
20-24	42.4
25-29	54.0
30-34	60.1
35-39	63.9
40-44	65.6
45-49	47.5

*Source:* Department of Statistics (2003), Jordan Population and Family Health Survey, 2002.

192. Statistics for 2002 show that more Jordanian women (38.6 per cent) prefer modern family planning methods than traditional ones (17.2 per cent). The intrauterine device is clearly preferred over other modern methods at 23.6 per cent, followed by the pill (7.5 per cent). Table 33 shows the most widely used family planning methods in 2002. Recent research suggests that condoms and other male contraceptive methods are little used.

**Table 33**  
**Percentage distribution of married women by contraceptive method used, 2002**

<i>Method used</i>	<i>% women users</i>
Sterlization	2.9
IUD	23.6
Contraceptive pill	7.5
Injection	0.9
Implant	0

<i>Method used</i>	<i>% women users</i>
Foam or jelly	0.3
Condom	3.4
Periodic abstention	5.2
Withdrawal	9.3
Lactational amenorrhoea	2.6
Other traditional methods	0.1

*Source:* Department of Statistics (2003), Jordan Population and Family Health Survey, 2002.

193. A woman researcher recently conducted a study on women's attitudes to traditional family planning methods. She found that women preferred traditional methods because of their absence of side effects and health risks, and also because the women were uninformed or had picked up erroneous information. The study also found that the women in the sample had been unable to obtain full information on the use of family planning methods, modern or traditional, from health centre personnel. This points to a need for training and skills upgrading for health centre workers to make sure that they are competent to inform women about family planning. Another of the study's findings was that husbands preferred their wives to use traditional methods out of concern for their health; at the same time, however, they themselves were unwilling to use condoms.

194. Ministry of Health data indicate that the use of family planning methods is correlated with women's level of education. This is summarized in table 34 below, which shows that the higher the level of education, the more frequent the use of family planning methods.

**Table 34**  
**Frequency of use of family planning methods by level of education, 2002**

<i>Level of education</i>	<i>% women using family planning methods</i>
No education	40.6
Lower primary	46.7
Upper primary	53.5
Secondary	58.9
Post-secondary	60.3

*Source:* Department of Statistics (2003), Jordan Population and Family Health Survey, 2002.

195. It is clear from the above data that women are the group that uses family planning methods more frequently, and that those methods are not much used by women in the younger age groups. In the light of these realities, the High-Level Council on Population offers programmes aimed expressly at young men and women in the 15-25 age group in an effort to enhance their awareness of contraceptive methods and the importance of planning for the future. Two of the most important of these programmes are a project dealing with youth and healthy lifestyles and a national information and communication programme for Jordanian youth on reproductive health and planning for the future. These programmes use a variety of techniques for communicating their message, including the Internet and competitions organized in cooperation with the private sector. NGOs, for their part, are reaching out to young people in the places where they are to be found, such as

universities, schools and youth camps, to provide them with information, raise their awareness, cooperate with them, and train them to educate their peers in their turn.

196. In paragraphs 42 and 43 of its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's second periodic report, the Committee called for legislative action to permit safe abortion. It should be noted that the provisions of Jordanian law dealing with abortion have not been amended. Abortion is prohibited except on medical grounds under certain specific conditions, where the pregnant woman's health is at risk or her life in danger, and where a committee of all competent persons agrees unanimously that the procedure is necessary. There are no official statistics on the use of abortion in general or unsafe abortion.

197. There have been few studies on women in the 45-and-over age group (menopausal women), but recently a number of organizations have been showing interest in the needs of women at that stage in their lives. In the first place, two recent studies have focused expressly on the menopause, looking in particular at such questions as how much women know about it and the measures they take to deal with it. In the second place, in 2004 Jordan hosted an international conference held to explore the issue intensively. Such data as are available indicate that women in general are aware of the physiological changes that occur at that time of life and know what to expect. However, most of the women in the sample used for one of the studies referred to above, which was conducted by an NGO, regarded the menopause as a natural part of life and felt that there was no reason to consult a doctor unless the state of health of the individual concerned should make that necessary. The second study, which was also conducted by a non-governmental association, found that most of the individuals in the sample were aware of the importance of using hormone replacement therapy as a health measure. With respect to the matter of osteoporosis, the first study found that the women, in general, were not well informed about its nature and causes, although women who lived in urban areas were somewhat more aware of how it could be prevented or treated. Lastly, the same study reported that the overwhelming majority of the women in the sample did not have periodic medical examinations aimed at early detection of any of the various forms of cancer (cervical cancer and breast cancer in particular).

198. It is noteworthy that the "human security and social protection" theme in JNCW's National Strategy for Women includes a chapter on the welfare of elderly women, the importance of combined action with the appropriate organizations to meet their health needs, and the fact that it is essential to conduct studies to determine the needs of the members of that age group in various other areas. Ministry of Social Development data indicate that there are nine homes for elderly persons, including some that are exclusively for women, serving nearly 300 male and female residents. Action to identify the needs of persons in this age group and provide them with services and care in their homes is urgently necessary.

*2. States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.*

199. Reproductive health and welfare services are provided during and after pregnancy through a network of comprehensive care centres, primary care centres and secondary service delivery facilities. In 2004, Jordan had 53 comprehensive care centres, 349 primary care centres in all parts of the country, and 251 secondary service delivery facilities, as well as 260 dental clinics. One noteworthy

development has been a substantial increase in the number of maternal and child care centres, from 308 in 196 to 365 in 2004. The Ministry of Health now establishes new health care centres on the basis of criteria based on population density, distance from the nearest existing centre, and availability and convenience of means of transport. Applying these criteria, it is expanding its service delivery capability into rural and remote areas, and thereby progressively eliminating the factors of geographic distance and isolation that have sometimes made it difficult for women to reach its facilities.

200. The Ministry of Health has begun to develop Jordan's primary health care centres under a project designed to upgrade health care services through more effective training and management methods, better facilities, and a skills upgrading programme for personnel, along with other programmes aimed at health care quality enhancement and improved performance. These programmes have now been implemented at 265 primary health care centres.

201. The Royal Medical Services are an important health care service delivery agency for members of the armed forces and their dependants. Most of its beneficiaries receive care through the 10 hospitals run by RMS. The services offered by those hospitals include reproductive health care, maternal and child health care, and specialized clinics.

202. The third major health care service delivery agency in Jordan is UNRWA, which provides services for 63.8 per cent of its 1,740,000 registered Palestinian refugees. It is noteworthy, however, that only 18 per cent of those refugees live in camps in Jordan; most of the Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA possess Jordanian citizenship, with all its attendant rights and duties. Accordingly, whether they live in the camps or not, those refugees are eligible for health insurance coverage and thus have access to the full range of health care services provided by the Ministry of Health, RMS, NGOs and the private sector. The services provided by UNRWA's 23 primary health care centres are available to Palestinians living in the camps or elsewhere; they include dental clinics, family planning and maternity units, and X-ray laboratories. The personnel who staff those clinics number 902 in all. Some of them are women, but data on the numbers of women working in them suggest that women do not participate effectively in the Agency's health care activities, as will be apparent from table 35 below.

**Table 35**  
**% women employed in UNRWA health care centres**

<i>Category</i>	<i>% women</i>
Statistician	10.5
Dentist	9.1
Pharmacist	0
Assistant pharmacist	27.3
Laboratory technician	36.1
Physician	10.4

*Source:* UNRWA (2004), Annual Report of the Department of Health 2003.

203. Statistics show that infant mortality rates among Palestinian refugees in Jordan are low by comparison with those observed in some of the neighbouring host countries: in 2003, the total infant mortality rate was 22.5 per 1,000 live births. The

rate for male infants was 23.6 per 1,000 live births, slightly higher than the corresponding rate for female infants (20.8 per 1,000). For the under-3 mortality rate, no statistical breakdown by sex is available, but the total rate was also low, at 25.1 deaths per 1,000 live births.

204. UNRWA statistics also show that in 2003, 86.9 per cent of its pregnant clients visited a prenatal clinic at least four times, that 99.3 of them gave birth under medical supervision, and that 98.3 of them were delivered in a hospital. Sixteen cases of maternal mortality were recorded for all the host countries in 2003, including four in Jordan, and the maternal mortality rate for all areas served by UNRWA was 21.8 per 100,000 births. Other statistical data include a 32.1 per cent anaemia incidence rate among pregnant women in 1999 and a 99.3 per cent tetanus immunization rate in 2003. Lastly, 89.9 per cent of all women who gave birth in 2003 received postnatal care.

205. It should be noted that there are some minor disparities between the statistics relating to Palestinian refugees and those relating to Jordan as a whole. For example, in 2003 the fertility rate for the refugee population was 3.6, i.e. 0.1 point lower than the corresponding rate for the population of Jordan. In the year 2000, the age of marriage was also lower among the Palestinian refugee population at 20.3 years, compared to 25.9 years for the country as a whole in that year. Lastly, 25.1 per cent of Palestinian refugee women marry before reaching the statutory age of 18.

206. In general, health care services in Jordan are widely available and readily accessible. Statistics show that 90 per cent of all Jordanians live within three kilometres of a centre that provides health care services. Furthermore, the great majority of low-income people who are unable to pay for medical treatment enjoy comprehensive health insurance coverage: there are approximately one million people in that category. The Ministry of Health has issued new regulations making non-Jordanians eligible for a health care card on the same basis as Jordanian citizens. Ministry of Health statistics on numbers of health sector workers per 10 000 population are shown in table 36 below, while table 37 shows numbers of centres providing health care services for two reference years.

**Table 36**  
**Health care professionals per 10,000 population, 2004**

<i>Professional group</i>	<i>2004</i>
Physicians	22.4
Dentists	7.3
Nurses	17.5
Pharmacists	12.6

*Source:* Ministry of Health (2005), Statistical Yearbook, 2004.

**Table 37**  
**Change over time in numbers of centres providing health care services**

<i>Type of centre</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>2004</i>
Secondary service delivery facility	274	251
Maternal and child care clinic	316	365
Dental clinic	203	260
Primary care facility	326	349

*Source:* Ministry of Health, Statistical Yearbook, 2004.

207. We may note at this point that under the Premarital Medical Examination Regulations (statutory instrument No. 57 of 2004, issued pursuant to the Interim Public Health Act (statutory instrument No. 54 of 2002)), it is now compulsory for persons contemplating marriage to undergo a medical examination beforehand, failing which they are not allowed to contract marriage. Article 4 of the Regulations reads as follows:

“(a) The parties to every marriage contract shall be required, before entering into the contract, to undergo a medical examination at any accredited medical centre.

(b) Where it appears from the examination that both partners carry the genetic marker for thalassaemia, the centre that issued the medical report shall inform the parties of the hazards that this represents for their prospective offspring, and shall require both of them to sign to indicate that they have been so informed. The report shall contain the results of the laboratory analysis and the name, opinion and signature of the examining physician.”

208. The results of the examination do not affect the contract as such, but the engaged couple are referred to a centre for consultation and advice about the possible consequences of their marriage for prospective offspring if the medical examination suggests that course of action. In addition, the Ministry of Health has now instituted free diabetes screening for pregnant women, and in cooperation with international institutions, it organizes information workshops for Shari‘a court judges, officials authorized to perform civil marriages under Islamic law, and Christian clergymen to inform them about the law.

209. Participation by women in the health care services sector faces no barriers under Jordanian law, which provides that there shall be no discrimination between women and men with respect to the choice of field of specialization. However, prevailing social concepts tend to encourage women to prefer some fields over others. Participation rates for women in various fields in the health care sector are presented in table 38 below.

**Table 38**  
**Percentage registered women members of health care professional associations, 2002**

<i>Association</i>	<i>% registered women members</i>
Physicians	14.6
Dentists	29.9
Nurses	63

<i>Association</i>	<i>% registered women members</i>
Pharmacists	45

*Source:* UNIFEM (2004), The Status of Jordanian Women.

### Article 13

*1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:*

*(a) The right to family benefits.*

210. As we have seen (see paragraphs 135, 155 and 158 of this report), under the Labour Code and the Social Insurance Regulations, women enjoy the same rights as men in matters of allowances and health insurance. Under the Civil Service Regulations, a woman employee is eligible for family allowance benefits provided her husband is deceased or not employed in any branch of the Government or any other agency. Women and men employees are equal in respect of other benefits.

211. As regards other family benefits, such as income tax deductions, at the recommendation of JNCW, the Income Tax Act (statutory instrument No. 25 of 2001) has been amended to include provisions placing women and men on a footing of equality with respect to tax deductions, as follows:

(a) Equality between men and married women has been introduced by raising the personal exemption from 500 dinars to 1,000 dinars.

(b) Married women who are taxpayers have been given the right to claim the deductions for which provision is made in the Income Tax Act, whereas that right was formerly restricted to their husbands, and either spouse may transfer those deductions, in whole or in part, to the other spouse, where both are taxpayers (husband to wife or wife to husband, as the case may be).

(c) Married women taxpayers are eligible for the following deductions, in whole or in part:

(i) A personal exemption for herself and deductions relating to education, family support, the education of her children and other persons whom she is responsible for supporting, including her parents, where she is responsible for supporting them;

(ii) Deductions relating to her salary or wage income, and deductions relating to rent, mortgage interest and medical expenses where she can show that she has in fact been responsible for the financial outlays from which entitlement to those deductions arises.

212. The latest statistics indicate that 13.5 per cent of Jordanian families are now headed by women, but studies have shown that those families are not necessarily the least well off in financial terms. Table 39 below presents data on poverty and families headed by women compared to those headed by men, by marital status of head of family. As will be seen, women heads of families who are separated from their husbands are the most disadvantaged category of women heads of families. It is clear that social status, educational level and employment of a woman who is the head of a family are all factors of relevance for the degree of poverty affecting the



family in question. Accordingly, one section of JNCW's updated strategy is dedicated to improving the living conditions of women heads of families and facilitating the procedures available under Jordanian law to help them deal with their lives. We may note at this point that the Prime Minister has called for adoption of the individual as a basic unit of analysis, in addition to the family, for purposes of poverty surveys, and for action to facilitate the Government's procedures relating to émigré women.

**Table 39**  
**Women heads of families by marital status and incidence of poverty compared to men**

<i>Marital status of head of family</i>	<i>% women heads of families</i>	<i>Incidence of poverty among families headed by women (%)</i>	<i>% men heads of families</i>	<i>Incidence of poverty among families headed by men (%)</i>
Widow/widower	76.2	15.6	1.5	16.9
Married	16.9	14.6	97.6	14.0
Divorced	3.6	19.6	0.1	40.2
Never married	2.9	1.8	0.8	15.3
Separated	0.4	37.9	0	26.7

*Source:* Ministry of Planning and World Bank (2004), Poverty Assessment in Jordan.

213. The National Assistance Fund administered by the Ministry of Social Development provides financial assistance for low-income families, including families headed by women in particular. Under its Regulations, the Fund practises positive discrimination in favour of women in the matter of eligibility for assistance, as noted in Jordan's previous report to the Committee. According to the Fund's own statistics, families headed by women accounted for 55 per cent of all families claiming recurrent financial assistance, while 751 small business start-up grants were made available to women.

*(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit.*

214. Men and women are equal as regards the right to obtain a bank loan, provided the man or woman concerned can provide adequate security and is able to repay; no special conditions are applied to women applicants. A trend that has been observable in recent years is for financial institutions to accept the applicant's salary as security for a loan, and this has made it easier for women to obtain private bank loans, especially in view of the fact that it is much less common for women to be in a position to put up other forms of security, such as real property or land, compared to men. Even this, however, is not of much use to women with low incomes or women who do not have steady jobs. Accordingly, a number of NGOs and Government agencies have developed alternatives to conventional bank loans, in the form of what are known as sustainable development loans. A study on university student loans, meanwhile, has found that "The average number of women applicants (525.7) who receive student loans at public universities is nearly double the corresponding figure for male applicants (266), while in the case of private universities, the average number of women loan recipients (5.8) is less than half the corresponding figure for male applicants."

215. The Ministry of Social Development oversees two loan programmes: the Productive Families Programme and the Credit Unions Project Programme. The aims of the first of these programmes are to raise the living standards of families

and local communities, increase the contribution made by families to local communities' food self-sufficiency, stimulate reliance on communities' own capacities and potential, and contribute to job creation in local communities. Women account for 14 per cent of all beneficiaries under this programme, according to a recent study. The Ministry of Social Development's own statistics indicate that over the period 2001-2004, 137 projects submitted by women were approved for loans, but most of those projects featured activities consistent with women's traditional roles. The Credit Unions Project Programme, for its part, is aimed at a number of economic and social objectives relating to elimination of the problems of poverty and unemployment and improving people's living conditions in targeted communities by supporting the establishment of small businesses for the benefit of low-income families. According to the above-mentioned study, women account for 27 per cent of all participants in this programme.

216. There are a number of Government agencies, including the Widows' Asset Management and Growth Foundation, the Development and Employment Fund and the Agricultural Loans Institution, as well as various NGOs, that provide small business loan services. In addition to these, a number of loan-granting institutions have recently been established in the context of the social security system.

217. Statistics indicate that in the mid-1990s, 5.3 per cent of all small loans were made available to women, a figure that had risen to 12 per cent by 2001. To be sure, this is a relatively small proportion compared to the 88 per cent of small loans that were granted to men, but recent research has shown that institutions that make loans available exclusively to women have higher repayment and participation rates than ordinary lending firms. By way of illustration, the Women's Loan Corporation has made more than 102,000 loans to date, involving a total of over \$32 million, to 36,000 women borrowers, and has achieved a 99.6 per cent repayment rate. This may be attributable partly to the fact that women participate only to a small extent in public loan programmes (which do not target women in particular), and partly to the fact that loan applicants under those programmes are subject to very rigorous conditions. For example, they are required to have a guarantor, and that is a difficult requirement for a woman to meet, especially in view of the nature of Jordanian society and women's limited ability to obtain access to resources and connections.

*(c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.*

218. In Jordan, women enjoy the same right to participate in recreational activities, sports and games as men do. Ministry of Education schools supervise the sports in which their pupils engage, as noted earlier in this report (see paragraphs 132-133 above). The High-Level Council on Youth, for its part, runs a number of youth clubs, and has recently revised the conditions and basis of its support so that the clubs receive more financial support if they have women on their executives and boards of directors. A recent study has found that because women have only limited freedom to move about in public places, it is difficult for young women to participate in various cultural activities, such as attending public meetings, making use of youth institutions, or spend time in Internet cafés. The study also found that young Jordanian women miss having acceptable places (other than home and family) where they can get together, as for example places where they could engage in athletics and games. As a rule, women are much less extensively represented on

sports teams than men: in the 2003-2004 academic year, and average of 25.2 women and 119.6 men were represented on public and private university sports teams.

219. At the same time, a study on women in higher education has shown that the average student association at a public university has a membership consisting of 76.6 men and 18.8 women, while the corresponding figures for student associations at private universities are 89 men and 45 women. At public universities, student councils comprise an average of 26.2 male representatives and five female representatives, while the corresponding figures for private universities are 17 male representatives and 3.3 female representatives.

220. We may also note in passing that women's correctional and rehabilitation centres supervised by the Ministry of Public Security provide training and rehabilitation programmes for their inmates. The women are given training in various types of skills during the period of their detention, and they also engage in a number of cultural activities and undergo social and psychological rehabilitation.

#### **Article 14**

*1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.*

221. The economic activity of rural women, as it stands, is considered slight: only 9.6 per cent of rural women are economically active. In 2003, women employed in the agriculture sector represented only 2.1 per cent of women employed in all sectors. However, that figure is consistent with fact that in that year, the agriculture sector accounted for 2.1 per cent of Jordan's gross domestic product. Only 3.6 per cent of the country's labour force was employed in agriculture, including 3.8 per cent of all economically active men. These statistics do not include data on women working informally or without pay in the agriculture sector, or engaged in agricultural activities to produce food for their families; it is noteworthy that according to one study, women's participation in the agriculture sector is actually in the vicinity of 4 per cent. The same study has found that 12 per cent of economically active women in the agriculture sector have paid jobs as farm workers. Another study that was recently published concluded that women actually accounted for 20 per cent of the farm labour force, but that 34 per cent of them were doing unpaid work; it also found that women owned no more than 3 per cent of the country's agricultural land.

222. We may note in passing that the Ministry of Agriculture has begun to pay particular attention to the role of women in the agriculture sector, especially in the matter of services and training for rural women. The Ministry delivers these services through its Gender Unit, which has executed a number of projects on such issues as diversifying sources of income, managing agricultural resources in Kerak and Tafila, developing land in partnership, and increasing rural women's income in the eastern regions of Jordan. Despite these efforts, however, unemployment continues to be an issue for rural women, 21.8 per cent of whom were unemployed in 2004, compared to rates of 15.2 per cent for men in rural areas and 15.4 per cent for women living in urban areas.

2. *States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:*

*(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels.*

223. While the Government of Jordan's Socio-Economic Development Plan for 1999-2003 does not include a section devoted exclusively to rural women, the Government's concern for their situation is clearly apparent from the sections on agricultural development and local development. Rural women contributed to the preparation of those parts of the plan through their membership of the committees established expressly for that purpose, although it is fair to describe their contribution as largely symbolic, inasmuch as the committee that dealt with local development included no more than two women members. The Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2004-2006 includes among its objectives relating to the agriculture sector, "To strengthen the role of the agriculture sector in rural development, reduce poverty rates, check migration from rural to urban areas, and increase participation by women in development." The issue of local community development, for its part, is being addressed by the efforts of organizations working in that field to enlist the participation of women and include local community development as a separate theme in development project planning.

*(b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning.*

224. There are now health care centres in every part of Jordan, and services are widely available. Every village has its health care centre, with a physician and midwife on a part-time basis. However, it is more difficult to obtain precise data on these centres and the quality of the services they provide than it is to obtain data on their counterparts in urban areas. Early care is readily accessible: the latest available statistics indicate that 99 per cent of Jordanian women received early care from a qualified health specialist (physician, nurse or accredited midwife) while pregnant with their last child during the five years preceding the date of the 2002 population and family health survey. In this area, the disparity between rural women and women living in urban areas is negligible: 99 per cent of urban women received care, while the corresponding figure for rural women was 97 per cent.

225. Recent surveys have shown that the health situation of rural women has steadily improved. The total fertility rate for rural women in the 15-49 age group declined from 5 in 1997 to 4.2 in 2002, while the corresponding figures for women living in urban areas were 4.22 in 1997 and 3.5 in 2002. Family size is 5.5 persons in urban areas, and 6.2 persons in rural areas.

226. At the present time, 55.8 of all Jordanian married women, rural and urban areas taken together, use some form of family planning method, including 41.2 per cent who use modern methods and 17 per cent who use traditional methods. In general, women who live in urban areas display a greater tendency to use contraception than their rural counterparts, with 57.5 per cent and 50.5 per cent contraceptive use rates respectively.

*(c) To benefit directly from social security programmes.*

227. Institutions delivering social security programmes in rural areas account for no more than 1 per cent of all social security programme delivery agencies, and this is reflected in the fact that women employed in the agriculture sector who received social security benefits in 2002 represented only 9 per cent of the 8,308 insured persons employed in that sector.

*(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency.*

228. In general, it may be said that urban and rural areas are equally well served by schools. As table 36 shows, schools for boys in villages represent 50 per cent of all schools for boys in the country, while schools for girls in villages represent 42.7 per cent of all Jordan's schools for girls. Mixed schools in villages represent 40 per cent of all Jordan's mixed schools. However, only 88.8 of school-aged girls in rural areas attend school, compared to 91.7 per cent for boys.

**Table 41**  
**Distribution of schools by sex in urban areas and villages, 2002-2003 school year**

	<i>Boys schools</i>	<i>Girls schools</i>	<i>Mixed schools</i>	<i>Total</i>
Urban areas	625	457	1,853	2,935
Villages	625	341	1,240	2,206
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>3,093</b>	<b>5,141</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Education (2003), Education statistics for the 2002-2003 school year.

229. Ministry of Education statistical data for the 2002-2003 school year indicate that women teachers working in village schools represented 35.6 per cent of all women teachers employed in Jordan, while the corresponding figure for male teachers working in village schools was 40.6 per cent. These statistics are evidence of the Government's increasing attention to rural and village development. Girl pupils accounted for 50.6 per cent of all pupils attending village schools.

230. As regards training for rural women, a recent study has found that 48.5 per cent of all women in rural areas have had training in the field of agriculture - a higher percentage than is observed for men, as only 36.4 per cent of men living in rural areas have had such training.

*(e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment.*

231. There were 970 cooperative associations in Jordan in 2004, including 187 agricultural associations and 57 women's associations. However, no studies have been conducted on co-ops, and the available data are not adequate to allow us to attempt a meaningful assessment of their effectiveness in creating equal economic opportunities for women. Rural women's associations were presented in table 4 above. A point worth noting is that NGOs and international organizations working in the field of development make loans available for the purpose of helping women create their own economic opportunities. These initiatives will be discussed in paragraph 233 below.

*(f) To participate in all community activities.*

232. Owing to a lack of adequate statistical data, it is not possible to evaluate the extent of rural women's quantitative and qualitative participation in community activities. We may note, however, that women participate in various informal types of social activities, and these may well be more meaningful forms of participation than formal ones. In general, it is urgent and necessary to identify and characterize rural women's living conditions more precisely.

*(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes.*

233. Not only local and international NGOs but also agricultural credit institutions make loans available to rural women in Jordan with a view to mitigating the phenomena of unemployment and poverty and activating the role of women in diversifying sources of family income in rural areas. A number of studies have shown that 95 per cent of all loans to rural families are managed by women, and rural families with a woman breadwinner have been expressly targeted for these loans. Under the project aimed at diversifying sources of family income, loans have been made available to women borrowers from 1,707 participating rural families out of a total of 6,433, i.e. women accounted for 27 per cent of all borrowers under the project. Agricultural credit institutions also make loans available for approved projects, and to date, 816 women have been able to obtain loans, out of a total of 4166 rural borrowers. Recent studies have shown that for all forms of agricultural credit, women obtained 19.6 per cent of approved loans in 2001. The studies found wide disparities between different parts of the country, with rural women in the southern region accounting for the largest proportion of successful loan applicants, but offer no conclusions as to the reasons for the disparities among the three regions.

*(h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.*

234. According to the latest figures available from the Department of Statistics, an estimated 945,700 people live in rural areas of Jordan, accounting for 17.7 per cent of the country's population. Statistics from the same source indicate that for Jordan as a whole, 99.7 per cent of the population is served by electricity, while for rural areas, the figure is 98.7 per cent. Drinking water is distributed to 82.8 per cent of all dwellings in rural areas, and to a slightly larger proportion, 86.5 per cent, of dwellings in urban areas. Only 6.5 per cent of rural dwellings are connected to a main sewer system, but 73.4 per cent of dwellings in urban areas are served by sewer systems.

## **Part IV**

### **Article 15**

1. *States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.*
2. *States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.*

235. In Jordan, a woman is equal to a man before the law in every respect, whether as a plaintiff, defendant, witness, person charged with a criminal offence or victim of a criminal offence, and persons of both sexes have an equal right to litigate. Male and female citizens have an equal right to have their cases heard by the courts and to bring actions against any governmental or non-governmental body without discrimination. In the Shari'a courts, the testimony of one man is equal to that of two women, in accordance with Islamic law, while in the civil courts, the testimony of a woman and that of a man are deemed to be of equal weight.

236. The legal profession has never been restricted to men. Women can and do become lawyers - only in small numbers as yet, but the number of women members in good standing of the Bar Association is growing steadily, despite the fact that the practice of law has traditionally been regarded as a profession for men. In 2003, according to the Association's records, 17.4 per cent its members were women. That figure is valid for the country as a whole, but women lawyers are more numerous in some of the country's governorates than in others. In the capital, Amman, 25.8 of all lawyers are women, whereas the corresponding figure for Aqaba is 4.8 per cent, and in Tafila Governorate there are no women lawyers at all. It should be noted that these figures do not reflect the actual numbers of Jordan's women lawyers, but only those who are members of the Bar Association. Membership of the Association is reserved for practising lawyers, and it is possible that there are some women who studied law but have not gone into professional practice, and consequently do not appear in the Association's records.

237. Under Jordanian law, men and women possess identical legal capacity in all civil matters, such as concluding contracts, administering property and engaging in business. In its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's first and second periodic reports (paragraph 34), the Committee expressed concern that Jordanian law prohibited women from concluding contracts in their own name, and suggested that this restriction was inconsistent with Jordanian legislation and the status of women in Jordan. In point of fact, Jordanian law, as it has evolved over time, has never prohibited a woman from concluding a contract in her own name. A marriage contract, for example, is defined in the Personal Status Act as a contract between a man and a woman who may lawfully marry.

238. While women enjoy equal rights under the law, however, a good many women are unaware of their rights. For that reason, various community organizations and NGOs have held workshops in recent years with a view to raising women's awareness and organizing programmes aimed at informing them about their rights as stated in the law. Social pressures have undoubtedly been one reason why women have tended not to insist on their rights, and consequently it is essential to continue to endeavour to make women in particular and society in general more aware of the whole concept of gender equality, and not merely the wording of the law.

3. *States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.*

239. The provisions of Jordanian law relating to the legal capacity of women have not been amended in recent years. Women's legal capacity is not restricted in any way.

4. *States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.*

240. Jordan maintains its reservation to this section of article 15 of the Convention, although as a practical matter women do enjoy the same rights as men in this area. As stated in Jordan's second report to the Committee, the freedom to choose a residence and domicile is governed by the Personal Status Act, which, in accordance with the Shari'a, provides that a woman must live in the domicile of her husband and accompany him if he changes his domicile. On the other hand, both Islamic law and Jordanian legislation give a woman the right to stipulate in her marriage contract that her husband may not compel her to change her place of residence, require her to leave the country, or require her to live in a particular country. It is clear, then, that the law protects women by granting them the right to impose conditions of this kind. Unfortunately, most women are still unaware of that right, and consequently are not in a position to exercise it, and even women who are aware of it are subject to social and family pressures that tend to inhibit them from exercising it.

241. In paragraph 35 of its concluding observations and recommendations on the second report, the Committee called upon Jordan to withdraw its reservation to article 15.4 of the Convention. It is important to note that there is nothing whatever in Jordanian law to prevent women from concluding contracts, such as contracts of purchase and sale. The Personal Status Act does include among its provisions relating to marriage some elements derived from the Shari'a, and these will be discussed in paragraph 248 below. As regards the matter of women's freedom of movement, under Jordanian law a husband has not had the power to prevent his wife from travelling since 1976. It is thus clear that women do enjoy freedom of movement and freedom to travel on a basis of equality with men. Moreover, while it is true that there are some social barriers to women travelling unaccompanied by their husbands, as a practical matter many women do travel alone; women students, for example, frequently travel on their own to universities located at various other places within Jordan or outside the country, far from their homes.

242. We may note here that the Government of Jordan has embarked on the task of making far-reaching amendments to Jordanian laws, including the Passports Act (law No. 5 of 2003), which was discussed to in paragraph 93 above. These amendments will help bring about major changes in the area of women's freedom of movement in the years ahead, and as a result Jordan may be able to reconsider its reservation to article 15.4 in due course.

## **Article 16**

*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:*

243. Jordanian law in the matter of marriage and family relations is based on the teachings of Islam as laid down in the Shari'a (the Koran and the Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad) and the four schools of Islamic law, the most important of which is the Hanafi school. The Office of the Chief Qadi (senior judge in the Shari'a system of law) is the body with competence in matters of personal status for Muslim



citizens of Jordan, while the ecclesiastical courts of the several Christian churches oversee these matters for their respective adherents. The Government of Jordan has amended the Personal Status Act at a number of points to bring it into line with the provisions of the Shari'a (see the following paragraph for a more detailed discussion).

*(a) The same right to enter into marriage.*

244. The legal capacity to enter into marriage is subject, in the case of the marriage of a virgin, to the consent of her legal guardian, according to the Shari'a. Where the legal guardian cannot be found, or where he refuses, i.e. withholds his consent to the marriage without valid reason, the Qadi becomes her legal guardian, and he has the right to consent to the marriage. A divorced woman or widow over 18 years of age may conclude a contract of marriage without being required to obtain the consent of her legal guardian. In all cases, a woman can enter into a contract of marriage in her own name; the law does not require the contract to be in the name of her legal guardian. The law states that the parties to the contract are the man and woman; the legal guardian is not a party to it, and his consent is not a condition for its validity. The woman may seek relief from the courts if her father prevents her from marrying. As regards the Christian denominations, the Eastern Catholic churches' conditions for entry into marriage are that the consent of both parties is required, and that both must sign the marriage certificate. The Greek Orthodox canon law also requires that both parties must consent to the marriage.

245. The woman and the man have the same rights when concluding the contract. Either, for example, may add conditions, provided the conditions in question are beneficial to one of the parties and not inconsistent with the ends of marriage, and provided they do not involve anything that is prohibited by law. Either party may change his or her mind and decide not to go through with the marriage: offer and acceptance is required of each party or their respective agents when they meet to conclude the contract. Under the Shari'a, however, the situations of the man and the woman are not altogether the same. For example, a Muslim man may marry a woman who belongs to a different monotheistic religion (i.e. a Christian or Jewish woman), whereas a Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim man; such a marriage is deemed invalid.

246. To take another example, the Shari'a permits a man to marry more than one wife (he may have two, three or four), subject to certain conditions, which were stated in Jordan's second report to the Committee. In paragraph 37 of its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's second report, the Committee called upon the Government to reconsider the law on polygamy. In this connection, we may note that a number of positive legislative amendments have been introduced, which still remain within the framework of the Shari'a, as we shall see in paragraph 248 below. As a practical matter, the incidence of polygamy in Jordan is very low: in 93.2 per cent of Jordanian households there is only one wife, in 5.9 per cent there are two wives, in 0.9 per cent, three, and in 0.03 per cent, four. Polygamy is more common in rural areas than in urban areas: in 2002 there were two wives in 8.1 per cent of rural households and three wives in 1.4 per cent. All the Christian denominations regard polygamy as unlawful.

*(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their full and free consent.*

247. Under Jordanian law, a woman is free to choose her husband; a forced marriage is deemed to be what the Shari'a terms *fāsid* (literally "defective", "voidable"), i.e. in this context, valid if the parties agree to it, but invalid otherwise; a slightly different interpretation is that the contract is null and void so long as the consent of the parties has not been obtained, but if it is obtained, the contract becomes valid. If the woman persists in refusing to give her consent, the contract is invalidated. Despite the law, however, social custom continues to allow a father, or a family, to impose marriage upon the daughters of the household. Under the Jordanian Penal Code, to compel a girl under 15 years of age to marry or to aid and abet the forced marriage of a girl under 18 years of age without the consent of her legal guardian is a criminal offence. Recent research has shown that the power of the husband or the family over a woman is an unsatisfactory aspect for women in their family lives. Indeed, 24 per cent of the women interviewed identified that as the main unsatisfactory aspect of their family lives, while 16 per cent identified the lack of family support for women as the major unsatisfactory aspect, and 6 per cent identified concern with the house and children at the woman's expense.

*(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution.*

248. Jordan maintains its reservation to this paragraph of article 16 of the Convention on the grounds that it is incompatible with the Shari'a. Under Jordanian law, marriage is not based on equality of rights and duties for husband and wife, but on reciprocity, i.e. rights for the wife with corresponding duties for the husband, and rights for the husband with corresponding duties for the wife. It follows that the concept of equality between spouses cannot be made to fit into the existing legal system. By way of illustration, the wife has a right to support, and the husband has a corresponding right to require her to obey him and live under his roof. The explanatory material contained in Jordan's second report to the Committee has lost none of its relevance as regards the wife's right to a home and a dowry and the matters of divorce, conflict and discord, and arbitrary divorce. The situation of the Christian communities is much the same: under canon law, a wife is required to follow her husband and live where he lives. If she refuses, leaves her husband's home, refuses to allow her husband into the house while she is there, or refuses to travel with her husband to his new home without lawful justification, she is considered to be disobedient and loses her right to support. The Muslims and the various Christian denominations agree that a husband is required to support his wife, even if she is rich and lacks for nothing.

249. However, the Government of Jordan did enact interim law No. 82 of 2001, an Act to Amend the Personal Status Act, altering some of its provisions relating to polygamy, support for a wife with gainful employment, and the cancellation of a marriage contract. Article 6 of the Act, as amended, reads as follows:

- judge
- (a) Before a marriage contract for a second wife is concluded, the judge shall verify the following matters:
    - (i) The husband's financial ability to pay a dowry and provide support; and
    - (ii) Whether the prospective second wife has been informed that her prospective husband already has a wife.

(b) The court shall inform the first wife of the marriage contract for the second wife after the conclusion of the said contract.

250. Article 63 of the original Act, dealing with changes to a marriage contract and the effects arising therefrom, was also amended by the addition of the following words: "...provided the alteration is officially notarized before a judge." This amendment was introduced as a means of guaranteeing a woman's right to a dowry and protecting her from fraudulent treatment in the form of compulsion on the part of her husband to forgo it or reduce the amount of it. The amended article reads as follows: "The husband may increase the amount of the dowry after the contract has been concluded, and the wife may reduce it, where both parties possess full legal competence to act, and provided the alteration is officially notarized before a judge. The altered amount shall be entered in the original contract if the increase or reduction is accepted by the other party at the meeting at which the contract is concluded."

251. The matter of rights relating to the cancellation of a marriage contract was addressed by an amendment granting the wife additional freedom to cancel a marriage contract if she so desires. The amendment took the form of two additional paragraphs, (b) and (c), to article 126 of the original Act. Article 126, as amended, reads as follows:

(a) Where it appears, before the marriage has been consummated, that the prospective husband, by his own admission or from evidence, is unable to pay the initial part of the dowry, in whole or in part, the wife may ask the judge to cancel the contract. The judge shall grant a period of grace of one month, and if the dowry has not been paid by the end of that period, the contract of marriage between the parties shall be cancelled. Where the prospective husband is absent and his place of residence unknown, and where he has no property from which the dowry can be recovered, the marriage contract shall be cancelled forthwith.

(b) The wife may, before consummation of the marriage or privacy between the spouses, may ask the judge to separate her and her husband, provided she is prepared to return the dowry she has received and the wedding expenses incurred by the husband. The husband may choose whether he prefers to take the sums involved in cash or in kind. Where the husband refuses to release the wife, the judge shall rule the marriage contract cancelled, after ensuring that the dowry and expenses have been returned.

(c) The spouses may, after consummation of the marriage or privacy between them, agree to divorce. Where they do not so agree and the wife petitions for divorce, deposing that she detests living with her husband, that there is no way for their conjugal life to continue and consequently she fears that she will be unable to keep the commandments of God, that she is willing to redeem herself by renouncing all her matrimonial rights, and that she wishes to divorce her husband and return the dowry that she received from him, the court shall attempt to reconcile the spouses. If this proves impossible, the court shall appoint two arbitrators to endeavour constantly to bring about reconciliation between the spouses for a period of not more than thirty days. If by the end of that period the spouses are still unreconciled, the court shall pronounce them irrevocably divorced.

252. The matter of divorce at the wife's request (defined as divorce in return for a general release) was dealt with in the former Act, but the release was subject to the husband's consent to the divorce. Under the amended Act, his consent is not required. The interim Act gives the woman an opportunity of terminating her marriage without requiring her to prove that her husband is afflicted with some disease or defect; she is merely required to state openly that she detests living with him, and this gives her a new option that safeguards her psychological state by avoiding the need to state her reasons in detail.

253. The latest available statistics show that of 1,000 women who petitioned the courts for divorce in 2004, 239 were granted a divorce, in 521 cases the petition was withdrawn, and 242 cases were postponed to 2005. It is noteworthy that the women who successfully asserted their right to a divorce belonged to various age groups: 102 of them were under 30, women between 30 and 39 accounted for 96 of the cases, and women over 40 for the remaining 41. Statistical data on their education reveals that while most of these women were literate, 40 illiterate women also obtained divorces.

254. Article 134, which stipulated that the compensation awarded to the wife should not exceed the equivalent of one year's maintenance, was also amended, and now reads as follows:

“If a husband arbitrarily repudiates his wife without just cause and the wife requests compensation, the judge shall grant her compensation of not less than the equivalent of one year's maintenance and not more than the equivalent of three years' maintenance, taking the husband's wealth or lack thereof into account: where he is wealthy, the compensation shall be paid in one instalment, and where he is poor, it shall be paid in several instalments. This compensation shall not affect the wife's other matrimonial rights.” This amended was intended as a deterrent to arbitrary divorce: under the former Act, the compensation award was limited to the equivalent of one year's maintenance, whereas under the amended Act, the equivalent of one year's maintenance is the minimum amount that may be awarded, while the maximum is the equivalent of three years' maintenance.”

255. At this point, we should note the national programme of action conducted by JNCW, which was developed on the basis of lessons learned from previous experience in the context of awareness and support campaigns. The aim of the programme was to translate JNCW's demands into amendments to article 340 of the Penal Code and other amendments to various provisions of the Personal Status Act through a campaign to enlist support directed at all the elected members of the Chamber of Deputies. The national programme of action drew its effectiveness from the initiative of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma bint Talal, the head of JNCW, and a number of religious leaders in holding intensive meetings with the National Assembly members, and in facilitating meetings between those members and the elected women's caucus.

*(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount.*

256. As we have seen, the legally accepted and socially recognized family type in Jordan is marriage between a man and a woman, and consequently Jordan maintains

its reservation to this paragraph because it is incompatible with Jordanian law, which is derived from the Shari'a. Under Jordanian law, the nurture of children is the responsibility of both husband and wife, and the interests of the children are taken into account, as was stated in Jordan's second report to the Committee. A number of NGOs, with the support of the Shari'a court, are advocating the establishment of homes for visitation purposes; the concept has been approved by the Shari'a court, and visitation orders are being issued by the judge. Recent statistics from the Office of the Chief Qadi indicate that 1,005 visitation cases were heard by the Shari'a court in 2004, including 527 brought by men and 478 brought by women.

257. Article 163 of the Personal Status Act, under which the paternal grandfather had equal visitation rights, has been repealed and replaced by the following:

(a) The mother and the legal guardian have an equal right to visit a young child living with another person who has custody of him;

(b) In the event of disagreement over visitation, the mother and the legal guardian shall have the right to see the child once every week, the maternal grandparents, once per month, and other persons with visitation rights, once per year;

(c) The judge shall set a time and place for visitation on the basis of the child's best interests where the parties do not agree.

258. In keeping with the interests of the child, we may note that article 27 of the Penal Code has been amended by interim law No. 86 of 2001: a new subparagraph has been added, under which a judgement issued in respect of both spouses shall be executed upon each of them in turn, where the sentence is imprisonment for a term of not more than one year, to enable them to care for their children under 18 years of age, provided they have a permanent residence. There was no such provision in the original Code. Once again, we see that the Government of Jordan is committed to the best interests of children.

*(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights.*

259. There is nothing in Jordanian law to restrict a woman's right to decide on the number and spacing of her children. The Ministry of Health, the High-Level Council on Population and various NGOs organize educational workshops and programmes on family planning methods. The latest available statistics indicate that 56 per cent of all married women in Jordan now use some form of family planning, including 39 per cent who use modern methods and 17 per cent who use traditional methods.

*(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount.*

260. The provisions of Jordanian law relating to the concepts of guardianship, wardship and trusteeship still regard the father as the person legally responsible for his children, inasmuch as those concepts are indissociably bound up with the concept of responsibility for care and maintenance. In the event of the death or absence of the father or paternal grandfather, legal responsibility for the children

devolves upon their mother. As regards adoption, this practice is incompatible with the Shari'a, which encourages foster care and nurturing instead of adoption, so that the children bear their original names, rather than those of their adoptive parents.

*(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation.*

261. Despite the fact that some amendments have been made to the provisions of Jordanian law relating to a woman's choice of a profession and occupation, Jordan maintains its reservation to this paragraph of article 16 of the Convention. In paragraph 37 of its concluding observations and recommendations on Jordan's first and second periodic reports, the Committee called upon the Government to amend the Personal Status Act. In this connection, it should be noted that Jordanian law does not restrict a woman's choice of her family name: she may keep the family name she had before her marriage, in which case a note indicating that she is married will be inserted in all official records. Rather, Jordan's reservation has to do with a woman's work and her right to maintenance. The new amendment provides that where a husband has once consented to his wife's working outside the home, he may not retract his consent in the event his wife should wish to return to working outside the home after having ceased to do so for a time, or in the event of her wishing to choose a different occupation. Moreover, the wife retains her right to maintenance, in contrast to the original Act, and this, in turn, will have a positive impact on the prospect of Jordan's withdrawing its reservation to this paragraph at some future time. Article 68 of the original Personal Status Act provided that a woman lost her right to maintenance if she worked outside the home without her husband's consent. Under the interim Act, that article has been repealed and replaced by the following:

"A wife who works outside the home shall be entitled to maintenance provided:

- (i) The work is lawful; and
- (ii) Her husband consents, explicitly or implicitly, to her working, and having given such consent he may withdraw it only for a valid reason, and subject to the condition that the wife shall not be adversely affected as a result."

*(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.*

262. There is nothing in Jordanian law to prevent a woman from owning, acquiring and managing property, regardless of whether the property in question was obtained through inheritance or through a private commercial transaction. This right and its legal and practical implications were discussed in detail in paragraph 7 above. Data from the Lands and Surveys Directorate indicate that 15.44 per cent of all property owners in Jordan are women, up from 10 per cent in Jordan's previous report to the Committee. However, there are a number of social obstacles, including:

- (i) A father will sometimes renounce his ownership of property during his lifetime and distribute the property among his sons exclusively, feeling that the duty of supporting the daughters is incumbent upon him, rather than on his sons, and is the duty of the husband, not that of the wife. He thus has an incentive to divide up

the property and transfer it to his sons during his lifetime, depriving the daughters of all or part of their rightful share in it.

(ii) Fathers tend to support their sons because it is the husband who must provide his wife and family with a suitable home, and thus is compelled to buy land or a flat for use as their domicile.

(iii) For social reasons, because of custom and tradition, and out of timidity, many women, especially in rural areas, renounce all or part of their shares in the estate when their father dies, in favour of their brothers. This custom is now dying out, now that property has become very valuable, and women are more aware of the advantages of ownership than they formerly were.

(iv) The desire to keep property within the family.

2. *The betrothal and marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.*

263. The Government of Jordan has taken a number of actions aimed at eliminating discrimination against women and protecting the rights of children. Inter alia, it has raised the legal age of marriage, thereby responding to a wide-ranging campaign conducted by an NGO. The NGO in question submitted proposals for a higher minimum age for marriage to JNCW, which forwarded them to the Government. The Government, in its turn, amended article 5 of the Personal Status Act, on the minimum age at which men and women can lawfully contract marriage. The wording of the relevant passage in the Interim Act to amend the Personal Status Act is as follows: "It shall be a condition of competence to conclude marriage that the parties to the contract are of sound mind and that both of them are at least 18 years of age. However, the judge may authorize the marriage of a younger person provided the person in question is at least 15 years of age and the marriage would confer some benefit upon the parties, as specified in directives in the matter issued by the Office of the Chief Qadi." The Office of the Chief Qadi has now issued directives in the matter, reading as follows:

"The judge may authorize the marriage of a bride, groom or both where both are of sound mind and both are at least 15 years of age but one or both of them is/are not yet 18 years of age, on the basis of the following conditions:

1. The groom must be suitable for the bride in terms of his ability to maintain her and pay the dowry.
2. Where the marriage will serve to prevent some evil or ensure that an opportunity for some definite benefit will not be missed.
3. The judge must ensure that the bride has consented to the marriage of her own free will and that it will be of benefit to her, or must ascertain from a medical report, if either party is afflicted with insanity or mental deficiency, that the marriage will be of benefit to the party concerned;
4. The consent of the legal guardian is necessary for the conclusion of the contract, having regard to the provisions of articles 6 and 12 of the Personal Status Act.

5. A report must be prepared stating that the judge has examined the above-mentioned conditions and has found them duly fulfilled for the purpose of authorizing the marriage of the parties. The authorization of the marriage may then be granted in accordance with the prescribed principles and procedures.

264. It should be noted that according to the most recent available statistics, women in the 15-19 age group accounted for 29 per cent of the 53,745 women who were married in 2004. No statistics are available for the 15-18 age group. Eighteen is the minimum age for marriage under Jordanian law, as we have seen. However, this relatively high percentage highlights the need for awareness campaigns to change the stereotyped attitudes prevailing in Jordanian society. Statistics for Jordan as a whole indicate that the mean age of first marriage in the case of women has been rising (see paragraph 188 above).

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## **Annex 1**

### **Organizations and agencies that participated with the Jordanian National Commission for Women in the preparation of the third and fourth periodic reports of Jordan on its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

#### *Governmental bodies*

1. Ministry of Justice
2. Ministry of Culture
3. Ministry of Health
4. Ministry of the Interior
5. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6. Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
7. Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
8. Ministry of Labour
9. Ministry of Social Development
10. Ministry of Agriculture
11. Ministry of Education
12. Social Security Administration
13. Agricultural Credit Bureau
14. Vocational Training Corporation
15. Public Security Directorate/Family Protection Department
16. Civil Service Commission
17. Lands and Surveys Directorate
18. Civil Status and Passports Directorate
19. Income Tax Agency
20. Department of Statistics
21. National Assistance Fund
22. Development and Employment Fund
23. Central Bank
24. University of Science and Technology
25. Hashemite University
26. Al-Yarmuk University

#### *Quasi-governmental and non-governmental organizations*

1. High-Level Council on Population

2. National Centre for Human Rights
  3. National Council on Family Affairs
  4. National Human Resource Development Centre
  5. Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development
  6. Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Institute for Development
  7. Arabic Language Academy of Jordan
  8. Nour al-Hussein Foundation
  9. General Federation of Jordanian Women
  10. Jordanian Women's Union
  11. Jordanian National Association of Women's Committees
  12. Young Women's Christian Association
  13. Arab Women's Association
  14. Jordanian Women's Association for Training and Skills Development
  15. Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women
  16. International Institute for Women's Solidarity
  17. Mizan (the Law for Human Rights Group)
  18. Microfund for Women
  19. Union of Charitable Associations
  20. Jordanian Association for Family Planning
  21. Arab Cultural Association
  22. Jordanian Red Crescent
  23. Amman Chamber of Industry
  24. Amman Chamber of Commerce
  25. Jordan Loan Guarantee Corporation
  26. Philadelphia University
  27. University of Petra
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