



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

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/SEN/2/Amend.1
21 August 1992

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women (CEDAW)

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Second periodic reports of States parties

Senegal*

* For the initial report submitted by the Government of Senegal, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.42 and CEDAW/C/5/Add.42/Amend.1; for its consideration by the Committee, see CEDAW/C/SR.122 and CEDAW/C/SR.126, and Official Records of the General Assembly, forty-third session, Supplement No. 38 (A/43/38), paras. 548-609; for the second periodic report submitted by the Government of Senegal, see CEDAW/C/SEN/2.

1. It is widely recognized that women, as a workforce, play an important part in the production, distribution and processing of agricultural produce in Senegal. In this respect, furthermore, they have been considered as a motive force in the struggle for self-sufficiency in food.
2. Although this state of affairs seems to be obvious on the micro-economic level, it is often the case that there is neither remuneration nor consideration of it within the national accounting process.
3. This misunderstanding proceeds as much from certain cultural features as from problems associated with the definition and collection of data relating generally to female activities.
4. These two factors have usually led to a failure to estimate the number of economically active women and to the underemployment of female human resources. Work carried out by certain organizations is aimed at identifying the bias and constraints opposing the recognition and promotion of the involvement of women in the economic development effort on the basis of the relevant measurement of their contribution to economic activities.
5. In this respect, consideration of the status of women in the national economic life by means of such parameters as demography, socio-cultural and institutional factors and also the effects of the present economic constraints may constitute a suitable basis for analysis.

1. DEMOGRAPHIC WEIGHT OF SENEGALESE WOMEN

6. The general census of 1988 showed that women make up a little more than 51 per cent of the total population of Senegal (or 3,539,000 out of 6,892,000 inhabitants). More than three fifths (3/5) of them live in the rural areas.
7. The preponderance of women is to be explained firstly by external migration, which basically affects the men in the countryside, and then by the male death rate. These factors are reflected by the sex ratio which is 95, as an overall figure, and which tends to decrease appreciably from a lower age bracket to a higher age bracket.
8. The female population of Senegal is, in the same way as the whole population, relatively young since more than 57 per cent of the women are less than 20 years old (as opposed to 58.5 per cent of men).
9. According to the 1978 Senegalese Fertility Survey (ESF 78), 80 per cent of Senegalese women contracted their first marriage before the age of 20, and 30.5 per cent before they were 15 years old. The mean fertility rate is close to 6.9 children per woman of child-bearing age.
10. The increase in the regional migratory flows has a certain effect on the status of rural women. And, as a result of the rural exodus, which is growing with the present economic difficulties, the daily chore of maintaining and feeding children is becoming more and more frequently and exclusively the domain of rural women, whose activity now goes beyond just the housework or labour in the family-owned fields. Thus, rural women are turning more and more towards activities assuring monetary income.

II. SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

11. Senegalese women are facing a set of constraints which reflect the position and status imposed upon them by both religious and traditional systems.

12. These standards tend in effect to confine them to their single role as wife and mother. In this way, the woman is called upon to perform almost all the domestic and household chores, including looking after the children.

13. The result is that, despite the changing attitudes and the advances made in promoting women, marriage and motherhood are still the prime values of their acknowledged status. This is certainly instrumental in the very early age of marriage and the importance of fertility in the minds of women as well as in the aspirations of the latter with regard to a working life outside the family setting.

14. Illiteracy and the low level of education among women is both a sign of, and a reason for, the position that they occupy as a result. It is calculated that 82 per cent of women are illiterate, as against 62.6 per cent of men. Furthermore, only 36 per cent of girls between 7 and 12 go to primary school, as against 51 per cent for boys of the same age. It can be added that, even when the girls do go to school, only a small number of them rise above the elementary level by virtue of the discrimination they experience in the pursuit of their studies. As a result, the higher one goes on the educational level, the lower the proportion of girls. This situation is a specific reflection of the socio-cultural fact that women are first and foremost wives and mothers.

15. On the legal plane, Senegal has modern legislation which is rather beneficial to women and able to protect them against forms of segregation and submission to which they might be subject. But the strength of tradition, as well as the force of habit, militate against application of it on a daily basis.

III. ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SENEGAL

16. The context described above underscores certain aspects of the constraints and obstacles that stand in the way of giving more effective consideration to the role of women in economic life. It brings to light, among other things, the contrast existing between their demographic weight and their economic weight. There are, however, factors, the development of which not only throws light on the contribution of women to national economic activity, but also opens up new prospects for their advancement.

17. Indeed, the rural exodus following the economic crisis has given rural women a greater sense of responsibility on the economic and monetary level. It has also speeded up the process of urbanization of the country, the effect of which, as is known, is a rapid growth of the informal urban sector, which occupies an essential place in the employment of women.

18. An ILO report in 1989 (ILO, 1989) shows that among 72,000 permanent and seasonal paid jobs in the private and semi-public sectors, the proportion of those held by women was only 8 per cent in 1986. Among the permanent female workforce, this percentage varies between 14.1 (retail trade) and 2 per cent

(buildings and public works). As far as seasonal employment is concerned, it seems that while women are relatively well represented in the food industries (17 per cent) and hotels and restaurants (15 per cent), they are almost or entirely absent from other branches of activity such as transport, buildings and public works, textiles, etc.

19. The public sector, conversely, is an appreciable source of modern employment for women. They represent in effect nearly 15 per cent of the civil service, even though the bulk of them are to be found in education (25 per cent of the employed) and health (1/3). It is true, furthermore, that it is in the public sector that access by women to posts of responsibility has become a proven fact, before being gradually extended to cover the private and semi-public sectors.

20. The new methods of recruitment for the civil service and the restructuring of the semi-public enterprises and units of the private sector have strengthened the role of the informal sector as the main purveyor of jobs for women.

21. This is also true of the initiatives supported by the public authorities (women's groups) which are aimed at overcoming the difficulties involved in their new responsibilities in the modern socio-economic life.

22. Nevertheless, the consideration of women cannot be effective unless it is conducted in the global sense, i.e. with the inclusion of the important work done by women in the household.

23. Further, despite the needs for harmonization stemming from the United Nations National Accounting System together with the quest for greater consistency between the accounting systems of States and other standardized statistical systems such as the balance of payments, public finance statistics and so on, the disregard for domestic work has hindered a genuine reflection of the share of women in the production of national wealth.

24. It should be added that the validity of a National Accounting System resides not only in its adaptability to the economic and social reality, but also in its capacity to assist with the most important decision-making.

25. Again, from the standpoint of the coming sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, Senegal reaffirms its will to join in any debate making it possible to define a National Accounting System that makes greater allowance for the activity of women.

THE STATUS OF DISABLED WOMEN

26. According to the initial results of the general census of 1988, the position of women in this domain is as follows:

- 15,014 women with motor disability
- 11,725 women with visual disability
- 3,442 women with leprosy
- 5,631 mentally handicapped women
- 27,891 women with other disabilities.

27. By virtue of the institutional and legislative provisions in force in Senegal, no form of discrimination between disabled men and women is objectively possible.

28. Social welfare is conducted by the competent services, though admittedly within a context marked by a certain scarcity of budgetary funds.

29. It is in face of this constraint that the Ministry for Women's, Children's and Family Affairs has put into effect the so-called "Productive Family" strategy, which aims at furthering the self-advancement of families on the basis of their own motivation and their capability and potential with the aim of helping them to become gradually integrated into a lasting process of development.

30. What we have to do in effect is to accompany the transition from a policy of assistance to a policy furthering private initiatives and geared to self-sustained promotion of the family community.