

9 February 2005

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**Committee on the Elimination of  
Discrimination against Women**  
Pre-session working group for the thirty-third session  
5-22 July 2005

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

**Israel**

The pre-session working group, having examined the third periodic report of Israel (CEDAW/C/ISR/3), formulated the following list of issues and questions.

**Constitution, legislation and national machinery for the advancement of women**

1. In its previous concluding comments,<sup>1</sup> the Committee recommended that “the Government of Israel should ensure that the Convention was implemented throughout the territory under its jurisdiction” (para. 170). Please provide information on whether the Convention has been implemented throughout the territory under its jurisdiction, if it is directly applicable, and if it has been invoked before the courts.
2. In its previous concluding comments, the Committee “recommended that the right to equality and the prohibition of both direct and indirect discrimination against women should be reflected” in the Basic Laws (para. 172). Please provide information on steps taken in that regard.
3. In its previous concluding comments, the Committee suggested withdrawal of the State party’s reservations to the Convention. Please provide information on progress made with regard to withdrawal of reservations on articles 7 (b) and 16.
4. In its previous concluding comments, the Committee strongly suggested that the Government take necessary steps to eliminate “forced marriages, female genital

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\* The page numbering in the present list of issues and questions refers to the English version of the report.

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), part two, paras. 132-183.



mutilation, honour killings and polygamy” (para. 178). Please provide statistical data on those practices, as well as on measures taken by the Government for their elimination.

#### **Violence against women**

5. The report describes a number of legal and administrative measures on violence against women, but provides limited information on the efficacy of these measures or what specific programmes have been implemented to address violence against women. Is a comprehensive strategy to prevent violence against women in place? If so, please describe its components and its impact on counteracting violence against women.

6. The report notes (p. 44) that compared with a rising number of arrests in spousal violence cases, the rate of prosecution and sentencing to jail time for assailants remains very low. The report cites (p. 45) both an institutional lack of awareness on laws regarding intimate violence and a “partial legitimization towards wife battery”. Please provide information on what measures have been taken to institute sensitization programmes among law enforcement officials, the judicial community and the legal profession. If such measures have been instituted, what effects have been observed in respect of how domestic violence cases are investigated and prosecuted?

7. Please provide information on the budgetary allocations made for shelters and centres for treatment and prevention of domestic violence. Has there been any attempt to collaborate and partner with non-governmental agencies to provide comprehensive services and housing options to victims of domestic violence?

8. In the annex to her report of 3 March 2004 (E/CN.4/2004/66/Add.1), the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, noted two separate incidents in 2003 involving violence directed at female detainees in the Neve Tirza and Ramleh prisons (paras. 103-105). Please provide information on the outcome of these incidents, as well as an overview of the situation of women in prison, including statistical data.

#### **Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

9. Please provide any available information on the extent of trafficking of women and girls into Israel for the purposes of sexual exploitation, as well as any rehabilitative programmes and shelters put in place by the Government to support and assist them. Please include an evaluation of the successes and challenges of these programmes.

10. The report notes (p. 53) that “the State Attorney has directed the various districts to take the testimony of trafficked women in a pre-hearing, so as not to prolong their stay in the country” (p. 53). Please provide information on whether trafficked women are being deported upon receipt of their testimony. If so, has the Government taken any measures to ensure the safety of these individuals upon their return to their countries of origin or considered social reintegration programmes that would enable trafficked women to remain in Israel?

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

11. Please provide information on what measures have been taken since the consideration of the State party's previous report to increase women's participation in public life and political decision-making, including the adoption of any temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, and the Committee's general recommendation 25.

12. In its previous concluding comments, the Committee remarked (para. 158) on the concentration of power in the armed forces due to the ongoing conflict, and noted that owing to women's poor representation in senior positions, their perspectives on peacekeeping and negotiations were not utilized. Similarly, the report states (p. 66) that women serve far more months in a lower post before receiving promotions, compared with their male counterparts. Please provide information on what measures have been taken to address this disparity and to promote greater female participation in the army's senior ranks.

13. The report notes that Arab women have significantly lower levels of participation in all spheres of public life and decision-making — the judiciary, the legislature, law enforcement, the civil service, and the private sector. Please provide updated statistical data regarding Arab and Jewish women's participation in these fields, and comment on what measures have been taken to increase the active participation of Arab women in each of them.

### **Education and stereotypes**

14. The report, in reference to article 5 of the Convention, provides source data on women in the media profession, but does not provide information on addressing prevalent stereotypes or the traditional roles and responsibilities of women and men. Please explain any challenges the State party faces in ensuring compliance with articles 5 (a) and 2 (f) of the Convention, and measures taken to overcome them.

15. In its previous concluding observations (CRC/C/SR.833), the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted its concern regarding "the serious deterioration of access to education of children in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of the measures imposed by the Israeli Defense Forces, including road closures, curfews and mobility restrictions, and the destruction of school infrastructure". Please provide the Committee with statistical data on education of girls in the Occupied Territories and measures that have been taken to increase their access to educational institutions, in light of the ongoing conflict, escalating violence, and construction of the wall inside the Occupied Territories. Please describe the impact of such measures towards the elimination of discrimination against this group of girls, including whether dropout rates have decreased.

16. The report provides some disaggregated data and makes reference to the significantly lower levels of educational achievements among Arab women and girls, and the extremely low proportion of Arab women among academic staff in Israeli universities. However, the report provides no information on what government programmes are in place to advance Arab girls' educational progress or promote the inclusion of Arab women as members of the academic staff at universities. Please provide such information and information on the impact of such programmes in relation to their stated goals.

### **Employment and economic empowerment**

17. The report does not include data on the rate of poverty among women Falasha Jews and non-Jewish women. Please provide this information to the Committee, as well as describe the success of social benefit programmes in reaching and assisting these women.

18. The report states (p. 127) that significant wage gaps and the glass ceiling phenomenon persist between men and women, throughout all ranks of service and even when all variables such as hours worked and levels of education are taken into account. Has the Government instituted any measures to address these phenomena? If so, please provide the Committee with information on these measures, as well as an assessment of their successes and challenges.

19. The report provides information (pp. 113-114 and 130-131) on some laws in place to assist women in reconciling their family and work responsibilities, but notes that professional women still spend significantly more time on unpaid work than their male counterparts, especially as the number of children in the household rises. Please provide information on what specific measures the Government has adopted to promote women's participation in the workforce, as well as overcome stereotypes and reconcile the responsibilities of women and men with regard to family life and children.

20. Given the multiple discrimination faced by Arab women in the workforce, please provide statistical data on their participation in the workforce, and information on policies and measures in place to increase their participation at all levels of the labour force.

### **Health**

21. Please provide updated and sex-disaggregated data on health indicators, such as rates of infant mortality; low birth weight; maternal mortality; immunizations; and overall life expectancy among Jewish and non-Jewish populations, as well as the prevalence of diseases, including depression, among both populations. Please include a qualitative analysis of the trends and patterns with regards to the health of women in each of these populations.

22. The previous concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women all noted with concern the disparity in access to health services between Jewish and non-Jewish communities. In particular, the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted that the Israeli Defense Forces had imposed road closures, curfews and mobility restrictions, thereby curtailing Arab communities' access to medical personnel and supplies, as well as causing severe water and food shortages. Please comment on the availability of health services to Arab women and describe what measures are being taken to improve health delivery to non-Jewish women and girls, given the restricted mobility and construction of a wall inside the Occupied Territories.

23. The Committees also noted their deep concerns regarding the lack of availability of food and water resources among non-Jewish women and children, including Arab, Bedouin, and Ethiopian immigrant communities, owing to road blockades and limited access to foreclosed areas. Please provide information on

what is being done to ensure ready access to basic resources such as electricity, food and water within these same communities.

24. The report states (p. 155) that "an astoundingly low percentage of Arab women are treated by female doctors", and acknowledges Arab women's consequent reluctance to consult a family doctor or specialist, even when medical attention is necessary. Please provide information on efforts to increase the number of Arab women in tertiary education, especially in medicine and health sciences, so as to increase, within time bound-targets, the number of Arab women doctors.

#### **Rural and vulnerable women**

25. Please provide comprehensive information on the implementation of article 14 of the Convention with respect to Bedouin women and girls.

26. The report notes (p. 164) that Bedouin girls leave school at an early age owing to financial constraints. Has the State party considered instituting scholarship programmes for Bedouin and immigrant girls in order to address the lack of resources among these communities? If not, what other programmes are in place to promote Bedouin and immigrant girls' participation in the educational sector?

#### **Family and personal law**

27. Israel has entered a reservation to article 16 of the Convention that the Committee considers contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention, and by which it maintains the supremacy of Israel's religious regulation in the areas of personal status, marriage and family relations. Please provide information on plans to secure equal rights for women in those areas, as suggested in paragraph 173 of the Committee's previous concluding comments.

28. Please explain which personal status laws apply to Arab women, and provide further information on these laws with respect to a woman's rights within the family and religious spheres.

29. The report states (pp. 183 and 186) that, although the minimum age for marriage is 17, the prevalence of underage marriage, both via petition and without approval, remains high. Please explain why the law prohibiting underage marriage is not better enforced.

#### **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

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