



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

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Concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Norway

1. The Committee considered the seventh periodic report of Norway (CEDAW/C/NOR/7) at its 803rd and 804th meetings, on 1 August 2007 (see CEDAW/C/SR.803 (B) and 804 (B)). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/NOR/Q/7 and the responses of the Government of Norway are contained in CEDAW/C/NOR/Q/7/Add.1.

Introduction

2. The Committee commends the State party for the timely submission of the seventh periodic report, which followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of periodic reports and took into account the Committee's previous concluding comments. The Committee commends the State party for the written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-session working group, and the oral presentation and further clarifications given in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee.

3. The Committee commends the State party for sending a delegation headed by the Director General of the Ministry of Children and Equality. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the frank and open constructive dialogue held between the delegation and the members of the Committee.

4. The Committee notes with appreciation the written submission on the seventh periodic report of the State party by the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (the national human rights institution).

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's recognition of the positive contribution made by women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to the preparation of the report. It notes, however, the absence of Norwegian NGOs at the session, apparently for lack of funding.



Positive aspects

6. The Committee notes with appreciation that a number of initiatives have been undertaken to remove the barriers to achieving gender equality faced by migrant women and girls, particularly the passage of the Anti-Discrimination Act of 3 June 2005.

7. The Committee welcomes the State party's adoption of a new Plan of Action against Human Trafficking, which was introduced in early December 2006, and its ratification of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

8. The Committee welcomes the State party's launch in 2006 of its Plan of Action for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

9. The Committee commends the State party for its establishment of a system of domestic violence coordinators in all 27 police districts to ensure that the police show understanding and insight in their dealings with victims and their families; a countrywide system of mobile violence alarms; and a pilot project for a "reverse alarm" for violent offenders who have violated a ban on visits.

10. The Committee notes with appreciation that the State party has further expanded the gender budgeting approach to encompass all ministries, each of which is required to carry out a gender equality assessment of its specialized budget area and report thereon in its budget proposals.

11. The Committee commends the State party on increasing its focus on gender equality in its development cooperation policy, while noting that the Convention should serve as a normative framework underpinning the State party's efforts in this area.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

12. While recalling the State party's obligation to systematically and continuously implement all the provisions of the Convention, the Committee views the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding comments as requiring the State party's priority attention between now and the submission of the next periodic report. Consequently, the Committee calls upon the State party to focus on those areas in its implementation activities and to report on actions taken and concrete results achieved in its next periodic report. It also calls upon the State party to submit the present concluding comments to all relevant ministries, other government structures at all levels and parliament, in order to ensure their full implementation.

13. The Committee remains concerned about the status of the Convention in the domestic legal system. While it appreciates that the Convention and its Optional Protocol were incorporated into the Gender Equality Act in 2005, the Committee recalls its recommendation from the previous concluding comments that the State party include the Convention and its Optional Protocol in the Human Rights Act, which would ensure that the provisions of the Convention prevail over any conflicting statutes and that the Convention has the same legal status as other United Nations human rights treaties incorporated therein.

14. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary steps to incorporate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into the Human Rights Act so as to ensure that elimination of discrimination against women is addressed as a core human rights obligation. It also recommends that the State party increase its efforts to raise awareness about the Convention and its Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations among judges, prosecutors and lawyers to ensure that the spirit, objectives and provisions of the Convention become well known and regularly used in judicial processes.**

15. While appreciating that the State party has a long-standing policy of gender mainstreaming in all fields covered by its central administration, the Committee notes with some concern that the new scope of action of the Anti-Discrimination and Equality Ombud may result in insufficient focus being given to discrimination against women. The Committee notes that the effectiveness of the new machinery for equality will be evaluated by the end of 2008. While appreciating the National Action Plan for Women, the Committee remains concerned that the plan is not based on the normative framework of the Convention.

16. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that all policies and the National Action Plan for Women are based on the objectives and the provisions of the Convention and that the national structure responsible for promoting gender equality and the advancement of women fully and expertly addresses the specificity of discrimination against women, as provided for in the Convention, and is well placed to monitor progress and constraints in the practical realization of the principle of substantive equality of women and men in the enjoyment of their human rights.**

17. While welcoming the State party's innovative activities to address the social conduct of women and men and related stereotypes, such as the design and use of programmes for teaching and discussion and a joint research project of the Nordic countries to promote an understanding among youth of gender equality issues, the Committee is concerned that stereotypical cultural attitudes persist. These stereotypes are reflected in particular in women's position in the labour market, where they predominate in part-time work, and in their educational choices, particularly in higher education.

18. **The Committee recommends that the State party take additional measures to eliminate traditional stereotypical attitudes, including through sensitization and training of educators and school counsellors and sustained awareness-raising campaigns directed at both women and men, and at young people. Considering the important role of the media in regard to cultural change, the Committee recommends again that the State party encourage the media to project a positive image of women and of the equal status and responsibilities of women and men in the private and public spheres.**

19. While welcoming legal and other measures taken to combat violence against women, including the amendments to the Penal Code (2006) and the Police Act (2004) and the adoption and implementation of the Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence (2004-2007), the Committee remains concerned about the prevalence of violence against women, including domestic violence. While commending the State party on its collection of data on the number of women murdered by their intimate partners, the Committee regrets the limited data and information available with

regard to the age and ethnicity of victims, and the lack of any assessment of additional measures needed to prevent such murders.

20. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 19, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that comprehensive measures are in place to address all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, recognizing that such violence is a form of discrimination and constitutes a violation of women's human rights under the Convention. The Committee calls upon the State party to study and analyse all cases of violence against women, especially those that result in murders of women, and to ensure the adoption of effective measures to prevent violence against women and protect women from violence. It also calls upon the State party to reconsider its intended position not to enact a specific law on domestic violence. The Committee further calls upon the State party to ensure the collection of comprehensive statistical data disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity, and by type of violence and the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim.

21. While commending the State party on its legislation and measures taken to address the issue of trafficking, the Committee is concerned about the lack of statistics and data on trafficking in women and girls. It is also concerned about the prevalence of trafficking, despite the measures taken by the State party, and that any increase in trafficking in women may lead to an increase in the exploitation of prostitution of women.

22. The Committee requests the State party to provide in its next report comprehensive information and data from the newly established National Coordinating Unit for Assistance and Protection for the Victims of Human Trafficking about trafficking in women and information on the impact of measures taken and results achieved under the new Plan of Action against Human Trafficking. The Committee also recommends that the State party continue its bilateral, regional and international cooperation so as to further curb this phenomenon. The Committee calls on the State party to take appropriate measures to suppress the exploitation of prostitution of women and take measures to rehabilitate and support women who want to get out of prostitution, and make a detailed impact study of its plans to criminalize persons who buy sex.

23. While appreciating the fact that of 19 cabinet ministers, 9 are currently women and that the representation of women in parliament and in county and municipal councils is relatively high, the Committee is concerned at the low numbers of women mayors, professors and judges at all levels of the judiciary. It notes the lack of statistics on the participation of migrant and minority women in political and public life and in academia.

24. The Committee urges the State party to continue to take measures to accelerate women's full and equal participation in all aspects of political and public life and decision-making, especially as mayors and judges and in academia. It calls upon the State party to use temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations 25, on temporary special measures, and 23, on women in political and public life. It encourages the State party to ensure that the representation of women in political and public bodies reflects the full diversity of the population and includes migrant and minority women. The

Committee requests the State party to provide data and information on the representation of women, including migrant and minority women in political and public life and in academia, in its next periodic report.

25. The Committee remains concerned about women's disadvantaged situation in the labour market, as reflected in a persistent wage gap between women and men, the predominance of women in part-time work and significant job segregation.

26. The Committee urges the State party to prioritize the realization of women's de facto equal opportunities with men in the labour market, so as to achieve compliance with article 11 of the Convention. It urges the State party to take proactive and concrete measures to eliminate occupational segregation, both horizontal and vertical, and to narrow and close the pay gap between women and men. It calls upon the State party to monitor trends, including through the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex, skills and sectors in part-time versus full-time work, as well as the impact of measures taken and results achieved, and to take the necessary corrective steps. The Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts for the reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities and for the promotion of equal sharing of domestic and family tasks between women and men.

27. The Committee regrets the lack of comprehensive information and data disaggregated by sex, race, ethnicity and age about the prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

28. The Committee calls on the State party to provide detailed disaggregated statistical and analytical information about women and HIV/AIDS in its next periodic report.

29. While noting that the State party has continued to place the issue of forced marriages and female genital mutilation on the political agenda, and adopted and implemented successive plans of action, the Committee remains concerned about those practices.

30. The Committee requests the State party to continue its efforts to eradicate those practices and to regularly monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation and impact of its laws and action plans.

31. The Committee is concerned about the lack of a legal framework for de facto unions and the resulting precarious situation in which women in such unions may find themselves when their relationship breaks down and there is a need for a division of property and assets without the benefit of adequate prior contractual agreement. The Committee is also concerned about the new amendments to the rules relating to recognition of paternity, under which cohabiting fathers no longer need the approval of the mother to recognize the paternity of her child.

32. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women are guaranteed equal rights with men to property and assets accumulated during de facto unions when their relationship breaks down. It also recommends that the State party carefully monitor the impact of the new amendments to the rules relating to recognition of paternity for cohabiting fathers and to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

33. The Committee notes with concern that under the Marriage Act, county governors may on extraordinary grounds grant a dispensation from the age requirement of 18 to enter into marriage.

34. The Committee urges the State party to apply strictly the marriage age of 18 years and requests information in the next periodic report and statistical data disaggregated by sex and ethnicity on the dispensations that have been granted, as well as information on the grounds invoked.

35. The Committee is concerned that the report contained insufficient data disaggregated by sex, race, ethnicity and age, in all areas of the Convention. The Committee notes that such data would have further clarified the de facto situation of different groups of women, in regard to all areas covered by the Convention, and the impact of governmental policies and programmes aimed at eliminating discrimination against them, and trends over time.

36. The Committee requests the State party to include adequate disaggregated statistical data and analysis in its next report so as to provide a full picture of the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. It also recommends that the State party regularly conduct impact assessments of its legislation, policies, plans and programmes to ensure that measures taken lead to the desired goals, and that it inform the Committee about the results achieved in the implementation of the Convention in its next report.

37. The Committee urges the State party to continue to utilize, in its implementation of its obligations under the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, which reinforce the provisions of the Convention, and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

38. The Committee also emphasizes that full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It calls for the integration of a gender perspective and explicit reflection of the provisions of the Convention in all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Goals and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

39. The Committee notes that the adherence of States to the seven major international human rights instruments¹ enhances the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the Government of Norway to consider ratifying the treaty to which it is not yet a party, namely, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

40. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Norway of the present concluding comments in order to make the people, including government officials, politicians, parliamentarians and women's and human rights organizations, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de jure and de facto equality of women, as well as the further steps that are required in that regard. The Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate

¹ The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the Committee's general recommendations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

41. The Committee requests the State party to respond to the concerns expressed in the present concluding comments in its next periodic report under article 18 of the Convention, which is due in September 2010.
