



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

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF  
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN  
(CEDAW)

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER  
ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL  
FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Second periodic report of States parties

MOROCCO\*

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\* For the initial report submitted by the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, see CEDAW/C/MOR/1, considered by the Committee at its sixteenth session.

The Kingdom of Morocco

Ministry of Human Rights

Second periodic report

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

JULY 1999

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PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION ON MOROCCO

1. Country and population

(a) Country:

Morocco is located in the north-west corner of Africa. It is an Islamic country; the official language is Arabic; its area is 710,850 square kilometres. Its eastern border is with Algeria and its southern border with Mauritania. It has a coastline of 3,466 kilometres, along the Mediterranean in the north and the Atlantic in the west.

(b) Population:

According to the 1994 census, the population of Morocco is 26,023,536, of which 50.3 per cent are women and 49.7 per cent are men. During the period from 1982 to 1994, the annual average growth rate was 2.1 per cent. Average population density per square kilometre is 36.7.

In 1995, the Centre for Demographic Studies and Research (CERED) estimated the population of Morocco at 26,386,000 and average population density at 37.1 per square kilometre.

Life expectancy at birth is currently 68.5 years, while the fertility rate for 1994 was 3.28 (2.56 in urban areas and 4.25 in rural areas).

The child mortality rate for 1990 was estimated to be 57 per 1,000, as compared with 76 per 1,000 in 1987 and 91 per 1,000 in 1980. The rate is currently 45.5 per 1,000 in urban areas, while it is twice as high in rural areas, being 90 per 1,000 births.

The maternal mortality rate for the period from 1985 to 1991 was estimated at 332 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared with 359 per 100,000 live births during the period from 1978 to 1985. The current maternal mortality rate in rural areas is 392 deaths per 100,000 live births, whereas it is no more than 268 deaths per 100,000 live births in urban areas.

Population distribution in Morocco has changed dramatically in both urban and rural areas. In the latter, the population has increased by 54 per cent, but in the former, it has increased four-fold, so that urban populations now represent 51.4 per cent of the population of the country, while only 48.6 per cent of the population lives in rural areas.

This may be explained by the increase in and pattern of urbanization in Morocco, the increase in rural migration, which has been reinforced by the increasing proportion of migrant women, and the implementation of the decentralization policy, which has contributed to the urbanization of many rural areas.

The population of Morocco is also very young: 37 per cent of the population is under 15 years old, 48 per cent is under 20 years old,

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65.5 per cent is under 30 years old, while only 4.4 per cent is aged over 65 years. The largest number of young people live in urban areas, where they represent half the population.

In 1994, 55 per cent of the population aged 10 years and older were illiterate. The percentage, amongst women in particular, rises considerably in rural areas.

(c) The economy:

The Moroccan economy has seen sustained growth, which in 1997 averaged 4 per cent. However, that growth remains subject to changes in the international situation and revenue from agricultural crops.

In 1995, according to national population and labour statistics, there was a labour force of 10,006,436 or 37.9 per cent of the total population. Of that force, 4,982,080 lived in urban areas and 5,024,356 in rural areas. In the same year, 16 per cent of the labour force was registered as unemployed (22.9 per cent in urban areas and 8.5 per cent in rural areas). Young people, women and university degree holders are particularly affected by unemployment.

With regard to the standard of living in Morocco, differences between the richest and poorest social classes are diminishing. However, such differences between the various social levels remain high, as do the differences between standards of living in urban and rural areas.

Morocco is a developing country with a medium to low income. Gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated at \$1,000. During the period from 1956 to 1998, the average annual increase in GDP was 1.8 per cent. The agricultural sector continues to dominate the country's economic activity, employing more than half of the labour force.

2. The general political infrastructure

Pursuant to the Constitution of 1962, revised by referendum on 4 September 1992 and adopted by referendum on 13 September 1996, Morocco is a democratic and social constitutional monarchy. The King is the supreme representative of the nation and the symbol of its unity. He is the guarantor of the perpetuation and continuity of the State. He is Defender of the Faith, and ensures respect for the Constitution. He is protector of the rights and liberties of the citizens, social groups and organizations.

Parliament is the legislative power. Since the amendments to the Constitution in 1996, Parliament has consisted of two Chambers: the Chamber of Representatives and the Chamber of Advisers. Members of the Chamber of Representatives are elected by direct universal suffrage, while three-fifths of members of the Chamber of Advisers are elected in each region by electoral colleges made up of representatives of local collectivities. The remaining two-fifths of members are elected in each region by electoral colleges made up of elected members of trade chambers and members elected at national level by an electoral college consisting of wage earners' representatives.

The Government consists of the Prime Minister and ministers, and is answerable to the King and the Parliament. Subject to the Prime Minister's authority, it implements the law and is also responsible for administration. The King appoints the Prime Minister and, upon the latter's recommendation, appoints the other members of the Cabinet. Once the King has appointed the Government, the Prime Minister appears before Parliament to present his planned programme of work (the Government Statement). This programme must include the main outlines of the work which the Government intends to undertake in all spheres throughout the country and, in particular, with regard to political, economic, social, cultural and foreign affairs. The programme is discussed in each of the two Chambers of Parliament before being put to the vote in the Chamber of Representatives.

The judicial authority is independent of the legislative and executive powers. Magistrates are appointed by Dahir on the proposal of the Supreme Council of the Magistracy which, pursuant to Article 86 of the Constitution, is presided over by the King. The Supreme Council of the Judiciary ensures implementation of the guarantees granted to magistrates with regard to their promotion and discipline. Magistrates on the Bench may not be removed from office or transferred other than in accordance with the law.

The administration of the Kingdom has been divided into regions, prefectures, provinces and urban and rural collectivities. The regions are divided into 10 wilayas, which contain between 13 and 24 divisions. There are 31 provinces, which are further sub-divided into urban and rural administrative areas.

The local collectivities elect councils for a six-year term by a single majority vote or by direct universal suffrage. These councils have democratic authority over social affairs, pursuant to the provisions of the law.

The councils of the prefectures and provinces elect the members of the administrative councils using a system of proportional representation. Only council consultants participate in these elections.

These councils include representatives from professional organizations, chambers of commerce, industry and services, and chambers of traditional industry, agriculture and fisheries. Each organization elects one representative.

The subregional councils are composed of representatives elected by the local communities, the professional chambers and chambers of wage-earners. They include Members of Parliament who have been returned for the region and the heads of Prefecture and Province Councils, who attend only in an advisory capacity.

### 3. The general legal framework for the protection of human rights

#### 3.1 The Constitution

Since 1992, the Moroccan Constitution has contained the following statement in its preamble:

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Aware of the need to integrate its work with that of the international organizations, the Kingdom of Morocco fully adheres to the principles, rights and obligations arising from the charters of such organizations, and reaffirms its determination to abide by the universally recognized human rights.

### 3.2 The legislative, administrative and other authorities involved in the field of human rights

Each of the Moroccan authorities is empowered, as part of its duties, to apply the principles of human rights as they are internationally understood, and is bound by the requirements of the international conventions to which Morocco has become a party and by respect for the basic rights provided for under the Moroccan Constitution. Safeguarding and ensuring respect for human rights is part of the mandate of the judicial authority.

On 8 May 1990, the Advisory Council for Human Rights was established. Its role is to assist the Head of State in dealing with all human rights-related issues by putting forward ideas and suggestions on specific human rights matters.

In January 1991, a special department for general freedoms was created within the Ministry of the Interior, known as the department for the training of cadres and technicians and for general freedoms. As part of its duties, this department monitors implementation of legal provisions related to general freedoms and takes all the organizational measures necessary to clarify and explain anything that is obscure or unclear and to master the legal requirements related to general freedoms. It is also involved in providing judicial assistance to enable the Ministry of the Interior to resolve disputes concerning general freedoms and is studying all the relevant international instruments and conventions.

In 1993, the Ministry of Human Rights was established with a view to preparing means to promote and mechanisms to guarantee human rights, bringing domestic legislation into line with the requirements of the international human rights instruments and spreading a culture of human rights throughout society. It is also responsible for expanding and supporting dialogue and consultation with national and international human rights groups.

The Consultative Council in charge of social dialogue follow-up, established on 24 November 1994, consists of representatives from the Government and the economic and social sectors involved in this dialogue. The Council works alongside and under the direct control of the Head of State. Its goal is to ensure sustained communication between the representatives of the various parties, in order to study social requirements and reach agreed, appropriate solutions which the Council may then submit to the Head of State in the form of recommendations.

As part of the Ministry of Social Development, Solidarity, Employment and Vocational Training, a Secretariat of State has been established with responsibility for social protection, the family and children. Included in its mandate is the advancement of the family, women and children, the improvement of social living conditions for elderly persons, the provision of support to groups

involved in the field of social work and the promotion of social partnership with local groups and non-governmental organizations through effective communication with the relevant ministries.

Within the same Ministry, a Secretariat of State in charge of Humanitarian Action has also been established. This Secretariat is responsible for educating and raising the awareness of members of the population who are vulnerable to social ills and for formulating suitable assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes in order to achieve social advancement and prevent and combat social evils.

### 3.3 Remedies available in case of human rights violations

Every citizen who has suffered a violation of his rights has access to a number of remedies, some of which are routine and others exceptional. Appeals may be brought before Communal and District Courts, Courts of First Instance and Courts of Appeal. The decisions of the last may be overruled by the Supreme Court.

In order to reinforce the powers of the judicial system in safeguarding respect for the rule of law, Administrative Tribunals were established in 1991. Their mandate includes the investigation of contractual and administrative disputes and the determination of claims for compensation for prejudice caused by the acts or activities of public entities or by arbitrary decisions taken by the administrative authorities.

## 4. Publications and the media

The activities of various Government sectors are used as an occasion to publish human rights-related documents. Non-governmental organizations, political parties and unions also publish materials that play an essential part in raising awareness and promoting a culture of human rights. The media also play an important role in exposing human rights violations, in addition to their continuing contribution to the spread of a culture of human rights.

The Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of National Education are cooperating in the preparation of the pedagogical materials necessary for a widespread culture of human rights in educational institutions.

Morocco undertakes to publicize the international human rights instruments to which it becomes a party. All the documents relating to such instruments are available to those in authority and to military officers, and direct reference may be made to them by the judiciary and the administrative authorities.

The basic principle observed by the judiciary when dealing with international conventions is that they take precedence over domestic laws. Moroccan lawyers have applied this principle when amending national law to bring it into line with human rights-related agreements. They would certainly apply this principle if a case involving the issue was brought before them, providing that the judgement for which enforcement was being sought thereby did not conflict with the Moroccan general system. This stipulation has led Morocco to

make reservations to some provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Morocco's position on the principle of equality between men and women may be illustrated by the following two examples:

Because they did not comply with undertakings, the Supreme Court has rescinded provisions in article 336 of the draft code of penal procedure which required a wife to obtain authorization from a magistrate to bring a suit against her husband.

The judiciary has also decided to recognize the right of a married woman to remuneration for the performance of her marital duties. She may also seek compensation for the performance of those duties after the marriage has been terminated. This decision has been adopted by a number of the authorities in Morocco.

In 1999, as part of the commemoration of International Women's Day, the Secretariat of State in charge of Social Protection, the Family and Children prepared a national programme covering a variety of informative and awareness-raising activities and a number of women-related projects. The aim was to raise national public awareness of the role of women in development, establish the principles of equality and the advancement of women and consider the means necessary to enable women to participate effectively in the decision-making process and the bearing of responsibilities.

This day was also marked by the organization of a national festival, presided over by the Prime Minister, together with several other ministers. The festival was called "Women: the best partners for the future" (see Annex). On this occasion, it was announced that a number of measures had been taken by the Moroccan Government with a view to promoting the status of women.

## PART TWO: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION (ARTICLES 6-15)

### ARTICLE 6: THE SUPPRESSION OF ALL FORMS OF TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND EXPLOITATION OF PROSTITUTION OF WOMEN

There are still very few statistical data and studies available on the practice of female prostitution and public solicitation by women, for not only is it illegal, but it is also socially unrecognized as a phenomenon. Researchers are therefore faced with various obstacles in attempting to gain information on the subject and acquire full knowledge of its every aspect. The establishment of programmes and strategies aimed at combating the practice is therefore extremely difficult.

In section VII of the Criminal Code, however, the Moroccan legislature has adopted various measures to combat prostitution, public solicitation and the corruption of young persons of both sexes, including the following:

Any person who incites, encourages or facilitates the prostitution or public solicitation of male or female minors under 18 years of age or who is an accessory thereto in the case of persons under 15 years of age shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of between two and five years and a fine (art. 497).

Any person who assists or protects the practice of prostitution or public solicitation, lures individuals into either practice, takes any form of share in whatever a third party obtains through either practice or engages the services of, inveigles or takes into his care a minor or adult with a view to either practice shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of between six months and two years and a fine, as shall any person who surrenders a person to either practice or who acts as a mediator of any description between a person engaged in either practice and any person who exploits or finances others to such end (art. 498).

The penalties stipulated in the above section are increased to a term of imprisonment of between two and five years and a fine in cases where the crime was perpetrated against a minor under 18 years of age, coercion or deception was employed or authority exploited in committing the crime, the perpetrator was carrying arms or was a spouse or ascendant of the victim, had authority or guardianship over him or her or was a paid servant of the victim or of any of the aforementioned persons or was a religious official or leader. The penalties are similarly increased for any person who seeks the assistance of one or more persons in assaulting a minor and any person charged by virtue of his position with helping to combat prostitution or safeguard health, protect young persons or maintain public order (art. 499).

Article 501 provides for the penalty of a term of imprisonment of between two and five years or a fine for owners, managers or persons in charge of hotels, boarding houses, bars, clubs, dance halls, places of entertainment or any other venue used by or open to the public if they customarily receive in such venues or their annexes any person or persons who engage in prostitution.

Any person who openly entices males or females with a view to inciting them to public solicitation (art. 502) is liable to a term of imprisonment of between one month and one year and a fine, and any person who tacitly and habitually permits the practice of public solicitation by persons who engage in prostitution in premises or venues over which he exercises any form of control and which are not used by the public is liable to a term of imprisonment of between one month and two years and a fine.

On 9 June 1973, Morocco ratified the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

On 28 June 1982, it also ratified the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and, on 21 June 1993, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Despite all these reformative measures and Morocco's international commitments to combating the practice of prostitution and public solicitation, particularly among women, that practice continues to be a widespread phenomenon, especially among vulnerable and marginalized groups (such as deserted women,

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divorcees, widows and single mothers), although it is also not unknown for it to occur among other groups of women in varying degrees in accordance with their age, educational attainment, social environment and geographical location.

During the 1990s, however, the public authorities on the one hand and civil society and the media on the other devoted special attention to combating this phenomenon, in which connection a number of cases were taken severely in hand by the public authorities and justice system.

The media and, in particular, the print media, made efforts to investigate and report widely on the subject. Moreover, they helped to mobilize public opinion against the phenomenon and raise awareness of the social and economic damage which it causes, together with its adverse and disturbing impact on the status of women and on their physical and mental health.

Relevant in this context is the case of a young girl who was held captive against her will in a Moroccan town and who, for many years, was used for purposes of prostitution and public solicitation before she attained adulthood. This case prompted action on the part of the media, women's organizations and legal organizations with a view to raising awareness of the danger of this phenomenon and ensuring that the justice system is uncompromising in its punishment of offenders.

#### ARTICLE 7: EQUALITY IN THE POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE OF THE COUNTRY

##### 1. The right to vote in all public elections and referenda

Since the 1960s, the political rights of Moroccan women have been recognized in the highest law of the State, namely, the Constitution, and specifically so in article 8, paragraph 1, which explicitly provides for the equal enjoyment of political rights by men and women.

Paragraph 2 of the same article also provides for the right of any person of either sex to vote, provided that he or she has attained the age of majority and enjoys his or her civil and political rights. The right of women to vote is regarded as a fundamental right which is widely exercised in practice, since large numbers of women participated in all of the elections held in Morocco and frequently accounted for half of all voters.

The fact that registration in the electoral rolls and voting are both compulsory under the electoral laws helped to maintain this proportion and increased the participation of women in the communal and legislative elections held in Morocco during the latter half of 1997. In addition, the Moroccan Government and the political parties carried out an intensive information campaign through the various media urging all male and female citizens to exercise this right.

2. The right of women to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of Government

This right is articulated in article 12 of the Constitution, which provides for the right of all citizens to assume public office and positions. Citizens are also equal in regard to the conditions required to hold such office. This right, however, is still infrequently exercised inasmuch as it does not reflect the level of involvement in public life that women have attained or the qualifications which they possess for that purpose. This explains the poor representation of women in decision-making bodies, whether in the representative institutions, the executive and administrative apparatus or the economic field.

The slight increase in the proportion of women candidates in the communal elections is attributable to the growing presence of women in the judiciary and their increasing involvement in public life. Moreover, some women's organizations have recruited women with a view to furthering their interest in directing public affairs. A training course was held for women from the various political parties, the aim of which was to familiarize them with electoral mechanisms and the techniques of running a successful election campaign. Although a number of female community advisers polled a high proportion of votes, no woman succeeded in assuming the office of chairperson of a municipal council or village community. Moreover, women gained only two of the 275 seats in the Chamber of Advisers, which has no women in its bureau and no women chairpersons of its committees or advisory groups.

The Chamber of Representatives

	1993		1997	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Women candidates	36	1.07	69	0.6
Women elected	2	0.6	2	0.6

Percentage of women candidates and women elected in the legislative elections

In the legislative elections of 1997, candidates were competing for 325 seats in the Chamber of Representatives, only two of which were won by women, even though the number of women candidates had risen to 69, compared with 36 in 1993, 15 in 1984 and a mere 8 in 1977.

(a) Decision-making positions in the representative institutions

(i) Community councils and the Chamber of Advisers

A slightly larger number of women participated in these elections: the total number of women candidates was 1,657, representing 1.62 per cent of the overall number of candidates (whereas in 1992, it had been no higher than

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1.16 per cent). In addition, 83 women nationwide succeeded in winning a communal seat, thus representing 0.34 per cent of the overall number of candidates.

The breakdown of women advisers by political organization is as follows:

<u>Political organization</u>	<u>Number of women advisers</u>	<u>Total number of advisers</u>
Union constitutionnelle (UC)	6	2 992
Rassemblement national des indépendants	17	4 829
Istiqlal	11	2 796
Union socialiste des forces populaires (USFP)	17	1 565
Mouvement populaire (MP)	7	2 667
Parti national démocrate (PND)	5	1 704
Mouvement national populaire (MNP)	4	2 275
Parti du progrès et socialisme (PPS)	2	184
Without political affiliation	8	3 111
Other	<u>6</u>	<u>114</u>
TOTAL	<u>83</u>	<u>22 237</u>

Source: Moroccan Review of Local Administration and Development, "Texts and documents" series, No. 13, 1997.

Furthermore, women gained no seats in the bureau of the Chamber and there are no women chairpersons of any representative committee or group. This is a reversal of the situation in the previous Chamber when one of the two women parliamentarians was a member of its bureau and the other was appointed as the chairperson of a parliamentary committee.

(ii) Obstacles

The poor representation of women in the elected chambers is attributable to a number of causes and, in particular, the following:

- The prevailing mental attitude that politics is for men, coupled with the predominantly male character of authority;
- The widespread illiteracy which contributes to the low level of political awareness among women;
- The poor awareness of women's rights and the vital importance of their participation in decision-making;

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- The heavy burdens on women, which are such that their employment outside the home makes little impact on the redistribution of work on the basis of gender;
- The lack of any national strategy combining the will of the political parties, women's organizations and the State with a view to eradicating all obstacles to the contribution of women in the political field;
- The poor representation of women in the leadership structures of the political parties;
- The candidacy of women in constituencies where they have no chance of winning, and
- The absence of any rigid laws to curtail phenomena which impede women's access to decision-making positions.

(iii) The strategy for action

In its statement to the Chamber of Representatives and the Chamber of Advisers, the new Government pledged to strengthen mechanisms and institutions that would enhance and increase the democracy of the country's social and economic life. It also pledged that, in consultation with all political elements, it would implement initiatives enabling the country to improve national and local balloting methods and, ultimately, eliminate any source of political opposition to ballot results.

The Government has emphasized that it will endeavour to elaborate a strategy enabling women to assume positions of responsibility and political decision-making, in accordance with the rights enshrined in the Constitution.

A number of leading women personalities, non-governmental organizations and the women's sections of political parties have carried out research and studies, organized discussions and seminars and established specialist centres to provide women with guidance and assistance which, in the medium- and long-term, will effectively help to remove the obstacles to women achieving true representation in the elected chambers and the political decision-making bodies.

The Democratic Society of Moroccan Women has established a centre in Casablanca for training women leaders, with a view to ensuring that women gain access to and continue to occupy decision-making positions, strengthening women's leadership qualifications and equipping them with the knowledge and means to assume positions of responsibility with decision-making authority. A further aim of the centre is to feminize the institutions and decision-making mechanisms of power and politics and provide opportunities for reflection on and discussion about strategies to ensure that women accede to decision-making positions.



Executive and administrative decision-making positions

In 1994, a woman was appointed as the head of the High Delegation for Disabled Persons and, for the first time in Morocco, women took up positions as secretaries of state in two successive Governments: there were four women secretaries of state in the Government of 13 August 1997 and two in the Government of 14 March 1998.

The positions of minister and secretary-general of a ministry have not yet, however, been assumed by any woman and there are no women governors or prefects of any of the administrative districts or regions.

Women account for 34.5 per cent of the teaching staff in the first and second levels of basic and secondary education and 23.79 per cent of teachers in higher education. Nevertheless, there are still no women in the position of academy director and very few women in the position of dean or rector of any of the universities in Morocco.

The provisions of the regulations governing the Civil Service Act make no distinction between men and women and it is now slightly easier for women to assume senior positions, although the proportion of women in administrative decision-making bodies is still lower than desired, as illustrated in the following table:

Decision-making bodies	Males	Females	Total
Director	321	9	330
Head of division	838	39	877
Head of department	2 199	163	2 362

Source: Centre for Demographic Studies and Research (CERED), 1998.

Fewer than three in 100 directors are women and only four of 400 heads of division are women. Women also account for only 7 per cent of heads of department.

Six of the nine women directors are in ministries dealing with social matters such as education, employment, health, environment or in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, while there are no women directors in ministries dealing with economic and financial matters.

Decision-making positions in the judiciary

In 1998, a total of 391 women judges were working in the Courts of First Instance, the Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court, in addition to 46 female trained legal assistants, 6 women judges in the Ministry of Justice, one woman judge in the High Court of Justice and one woman president of the Commercial Tribunal.

Out of a total of approximately 6,400 lawyers, 1,065 were women, including eight advocates of the Supreme Court. Of the 3,073 experts in the justice system, 133 were women. In addition, 52 sworn translators were women, as were 58 of a total of 210 notaries public. Five women were also assistant crown prosecutors.

The following table shows information on the distribution of women officers in senior positions in the judiciary in 1997:

	Court of First Instance	Court of Appeal	Supreme Court	Administrative Tribunal
Women judges	182	143	17	8
Women justices		59	21	
Women divisional presidents		10		
Women first assistant crown prosecutors	2			
Women assistant crown prosecutors	35			
Women deputies of the Attorney-General		14		
Women vice-presidents of court	22			

The first woman president of the Court of First Instance was also appointed at the end of 1998, the position having been previously occupied exclusively by men. In June 1999, a woman for the first time assumed office as a member of the Constitutional Court.

Although women have taken up positions in the judiciary, they do not yet occupy any of the decision-making positions in this field. There are, for instance:

- No women divisional presidents in the Supreme Court;
- No women in the highest judicial body of the Military Tribunal;
- No women heads of the Department of Public Prosecution and no attorney-generals or crown prosecutors who are women;
- No women who perform the functions of an examining magistrate.

Economic decision-making positions

The fact that women have the means to be productive has furthered their involvement in economic activity and their effective participation in development. The number of businesswomen, women entrepreneurs and women shopowners has gradually begun to increase in urban areas and in large- and medium-sized towns in particular, as has their presence in the commercial world in general. Nonetheless, they still represent no more than 0.8 per cent of economically active women, whereas men involved in the commercial world constitute 4.6 per cent of economically active men. In addition, women workers still constitute no more than 5 per cent of the total number of workers.

Of the women entrepreneurs, 30 per cent are in the agricultural sector and 20 per cent are in traditional industry and the services sector (see Annex).

The success of women entrepreneurs in traditional industry is attributable to several factors, including a series of model programmes implemented by the State Secretariat in charge of Traditional Industry, which helped to establish women's trade organizations at both local and provincial levels. These programmes also supported the women's cooperative movement in the field of production: there are 74 such cooperatives, with a total of 2,954 women members. Of these cooperatives, 39 are in the agricultural sector and 45 in dressmaking and embroidery. The State secretariat has also implemented other model projects targeting women artisans in rural areas, with a view to supporting female small entrepreneurs and enabling them to obtain microcredit by means of a simplified procedure entailing none of the difficulties which they experience in their dealings with banking institutions. Women entrepreneurs, however, do not yet receive financial support on an equal footing with men, which reduces their chances of concluding contractual agreements.

Several studies have established that self-financing and financing provided by the family are the main source of funding for over 77 per cent of women entrepreneurs and that banks are the primary source of finance for only 12 per cent of such women. In rural areas, women's potential enjoyment of the right of ownership and the right to benefit from bank loans is restricted by social attitudes and cultural values.

A major obstacle facing women entrepreneurs in agriculture is the difficulty entailed in owning land and obtaining loans. In this context, the National Fund for Agricultural Loans was established in 1989 as a loan system for rural women wishing to invest in agriculture, traditional industry or rural housing. It finances 90 per cent of the cost of projects and has less stringent conditions for the guarantees required to obtain such loans. A higher value still needs to be placed on this system, however, if the needs of rural women in this field are to be met.

(b) Participation in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country

The number of women in leadership, party and union structures and in non-governmental organizations concerned with the country's public and political life is still limited. Although their representation in this field varies in

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accordance with the context, it remains generally poor. Leadership of the political parties, for example, is confined to men. The number of women in other party structures varies, but is still insignificant. The same situation applies in other contexts (legal, cultural and vocational organizations, trade unions and so on).

This situation, however, has been largely responsible for prompting prominent Moroccan women to create a particular niche for themselves through which they strive to mobilize women into affirming their rights and raising public awareness of women's issues. Since the mid-1980s, there has been a widescale revival of the women's collective movement, as demonstrated by the multiplicity of women's organizations, the wide variety of areas in which they are involved and the different groups targeted by their activities.

According to a study carried out by a female Moroccan researcher (see Annexes), 27 women's organizations were established between 1970 and 1984, whereas there were no more than five such organizations prior to that date. Now amounting to well over 30 in number, these can be divided into five categories:

- Social organizations aimed at developing women's vocational, cultural and human skills;
- Vocational organizations aimed at raising training levels among women and increasing their vocational activity;
- Cooperative organizations aimed at creating and developing a system of cooperation and solidarity among women and preparing them gradually for cooperative work;
- Theme-driven organizations stemming from political organs, aimed at raising women's awareness and preparing them to assume an active and effective role in the dynamic social changes under way;
- Legal organizations aimed at combating all forms of discrimination against women, defending their rights and supporting women victims of violence and women who have suffered an infringement of any of their rights.

These organizations have succeeded in playing an essential role in raising awareness of women's rights, as well as in stimulating dialogue on and drawing public attention to those rights. They have also established partnership agreements with various Government sectors and international bodies for the completion of projects aimed at promoting the rights and status of women in Moroccan society.

Several of these organizations, however, continue to suffer from lack of material resources and from the inability of their actors to create frameworks and provide guidance. They also continue to lack dedicated frameworks and the appropriate infrastructure.

Several ministries have established training programmes and allocated budgets in support of civil society organizations, including women's

organizations, with a view to preparing women to play a partnership role in the implementation of their development programmes.

In this context, the Ministry of Social Development, Solidarity, Employment and Vocational Training and the European Union concluded an agreement to take measures to implement a consolidated project with an estimated budget of 44 million dirhams in support of non-governmental organizations. This project is intended to strengthen the institutional aspect of these organizations in order to prepare them for partnership in all development projects aimed at impoverished and marginalized groups, priority being given to projects targeted at women, children and young persons.

Within the framework of its new structure, the Ministry for Human Rights is to establish, for the first time, a special body for non-governmental organizations, particularly legal organizations and women's organizations, with a view to developing a strategy for providing them with support and entering into partnership and cooperation with them in the interests of the defence and promotion of human rights.

ARTICLE 8: EQUALITY IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE  
AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

1. Women in the diplomatic corps

The 1956 act establishing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation grants women equal rights with men, together with opportunities to be involved in all Ministry activities. While there were no more than five women in the diplomatic corps in the 1960s, as of 20 May 1999 there were 309. Nevertheless, this is very few when the number of positions occupied by men is taken into consideration, as the following table shows:

Positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation  
disaggregated by gender

Grade	No. of employees Female	No. of employees Male	Total	Percentage of positions occupied by males	Percentage of positions occupied by females
Senior positions	9	150	159	94	6
11	44	294	338	87	13
10	160	504	664	76	24
9	5	31	36	86	14
8	91	212	303	70	30
Total	309	1 191	1 500	82.83	17.16

With the exception of two women at the level of director, the majority of women at minister plenipotentiary grade occupy lesser positions, of no higher level of responsibility than head of department, whereas there are a large number of male employees at counsellor and head of division grade, as the following two tables illustrate:

Positions of responsibility in the civil service

Position	Male	Female	Total number of positions vacant	Total number of positions of responsibility	Males %	Females %	Proportion of positions vacant
Director	13	2	0	15	86.66	13.34	0
Head of division	34	5	4	43	79.06	11.62	20.82
Head of department	70	14	14	98	71.42	14.29	14.29
Total	117	21	18	156	75.00	13.46	24.86

Positions of responsibility in the foreign service

Position	Male	Female	Number of positions of responsibility	Males %	Females %
Ambassador	68	0	68	100	0
Consul	34	0	34	100	0
Secretary	04	01	05	80	20
Head of Chancery	61	2	63	96.82	3.18
Total	167	3	170	98.23	1.17

As these tables show, there are no more than 21 women in positions of responsibility, or 13.46 per cent. There are two directors, five heads of division and 14 heads of department, whereas 117 positions of responsibility, or 75 per cent of such positions, are occupied by men. There are only 93 women occupying 12.25 per cent of diplomatic and consular positions in the foreign service department of the Ministry, compared with the 666 men occupying such positions on 20 May 1999, as the following table shows:

Positions in foreign service disaggregated by gender

Grade	No. of employees Female	No. of employees Male	Total	Percentage of positions occupied by males	Percentage of positions occupied by females
Senior positions	4	93	97	95.87	4.13
11	17	177	194	91.24	8.76
10	46	282	328	85.98	14.02
9	0	12	12	100.00	0
8	26	102	128	79.69	20.31
Total	93	666	795	12.25	87.75

The following table illustrates the continuing under-representation of women at all levels of the administrative hierarchy:

Positions of all grades in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 and Cooperation disaggregated by gender and assignment

(Civil service and foreign service)

Unit	Male	Female	Total	Males %	Females %
Civil service	1 068	615	1 683	63.45	36.55
	1 039	251	1 290	80.54	19.46
Total	2 107	866	2 973	70.87	29.13

The appointment of women to diplomatic and consular positions remains subject to a number of considerations. Women married to members of the diplomatic corps are not eligible for such positions and are obliged to request leave of absence in order to accompany their husbands on a foreign tour of diplomatic duty.

With regard to the appointment of women as ambassadors, in the 1960s Morocco was one of the first countries to appoint a female ambassador: from 1965 to 1969, Her Royal Highness Princess Aisha was Ambassador to the Court of St. James (United Kingdom), and from 1969 to 1972, she served as the Ambassador to Italy. However, since that time, and notwithstanding the fact that in 1997 the number of women employed in the diplomatic corps had reached 173, no woman has been appointed to an ambassadorial post.

Moroccan women have participated in many international and regional conferences and, in particular, those concerning women's issues. They have also been involved in the work of the General Assembly and other United Nations

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bodies: women have represented Morocco on certain United Nations committees and have, on occasion, acted as Chairmen or rapporteurs.

#### ARTICLE 9: EQUALITY UNDER NATIONALITY LAW

The Moroccan Nationality Code adopted pursuant to the Dahir of 6 September 1958 governs Moroccan nationality. Article 1, paragraph 1, of that Code provides that the requirements of international treaties and agreements to which the country is a party take precedence over the provisions of domestic law.

The Moroccan Nationality Code grants women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. It also guarantees the equality of men and women with regard to recognition of an original nationality. However, it does not permit a Moroccan woman to confer her nationality on her husband if he is the holder of another nationality. Similarly, the Code does not give women the right to confer their nationality automatically on the children they have borne to a foreign father, except when the father is unknown or stateless. This applies wherever the delivery took place when the father is unknown, but applies only to children born in Morocco when the father is stateless (article 6, paragraph 2 of the Moroccan Nationality Code).

Morocco therefore makes a reservation to article 9, paragraph 2 of the Convention, except as it applies to a child born in Morocco of a Moroccan mother and an alien father, who may acquire Moroccan nationality, providing that he makes a statement, two years prior to reaching majority, to the effect that he wishes to acquire that nationality, and providing that his residence at the time when he makes that statement is well-established.

#### ARTICLE 10: EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

##### 1. Equality of opportunity

Education policy in Morocco is based on a number of principles that have been publicly stated in legislative and regulatory texts and in the official pronouncements of the public authorities, including the following:

- The right to education on a basis of equality between the sexes is enshrined in successive Constitutions (article 13 of the 1992 Constitution and the revised Constitution of 1996).
- Education is mandatory for every Moroccan child over the age of seven (Dahir 071-63-1 of 13 November 1963).
- All types of public education are free at all levels.

However, despite all the efforts made in this sector and the significant budget appropriations consecrated thereto, difficulties remain with regard to universal schooling and achieving parity between urban and rural areas and between girls and boys.



In rural areas, the percentage of children of school age attending school is very low, with the ratio for girl children being much lower than that for boys. This situation, notwithstanding a perceptible reduction in illiteracy figures, has a direct bearing on levels of female illiteracy.

Among the main problems in this respect are the following:

- The infrastructural reorganization policy, which has had a negative effect on school enrolment in general and, in particular, the enrolment of girl children, especially in rural areas.
- The increasing cost of schooling, notably for families on restricted incomes.
- The increase in school drop-out rates, most seriously at primary level.
- The persistence of certain traditional mental attitudes, which continue to consider girls' education as of secondary importance.
- The paucity in rural areas of basic infrastructure including roads, water and electricity.
- The distances children have to travel to school and the lack of secondary schools, above all in rural areas.
- Employment and early marriage amongst rural girls.

Nevertheless, there has been some improvement in the number of girls receiving schooling at all levels, as the following table, which gives the figures for each level, indicates:

Total number of students at all educational levels  
and proportion of female students

Year	1994/95 Females			1996/97 Females		
	Total	No.	%	Total	No.	%
Religious schools	599 266	153 286	25.58	610 417	163 774	26.83
Preschool	197 403	87 991	44.57	236 058	105 269	44.59
Primary level of basic schooling	2 895 737	1 197 339	41.35	3 034 408	1 280 699	42.21
Secondary level of basic schooling	901 589	372 828	41.35	945 851	393 813	41.64
Secondary	363 604	156 041	42.92	382 284	167 925	43.93
Higher	266 032	105 666	39.72	273 108	109 977	40.27

Source: Moroccan statistical report, 1997.

According to the data provided in the above table, the number of female students rose slightly in the period from 1994 to 1997, at a rate of some 1.25 per cent in religious schools and 0.02 per cent in preschool. There has been a consistent rise in the numbers enrolled in the primary and secondary levels of basic schooling, at a rate of 0.86 per cent and 0.29 per cent respectively, while secondary level enrolment has increased at the rate of 1.01 per cent. Enrolment in higher education has, however, only increased by some 0.55 per cent.

While there has been an increase in the numbers of the economically active female population, some sectors of society are severely under-represented. The main reason for that is the educational orientation of females: the statistics show that girls enrolled in school are still, in the main, directed towards the fields of study that most closely resemble the traditional female roles in society, such as teaching, nursing, the social sciences and unskilled jobs in offices and commerce.

Therefore, regardless of the fact that females represent some 44 per cent of those enrolled in secondary education, they represent no more than 2 per cent of those studying mechanical engineering and 2.3 per cent of those studying agricultural engineering, whereas they constitute 53.6 per cent and 54.4 per cent respectively of those enrolled in arts and language courses and 54.4 per cent of those studying economics and management.

When it comes to vocational training, in academic year 1996/97, 25,262 out of 73,602 students were female, or 34.32 per cent. The largest concentration of female students, some 8,515, was in training for the production of traditional goods, closely followed by administration and management - 7,541 -, weaving and ready-made clothes - 2,685 - and traditional service occupations - 2,229.

The statistics show that females are hardly represented in some sectors: females represent only 0.73 per cent of those working in the sea fishing sector, 2.63 in the mining sector, 4.79 per cent in agricultural industry and 4.28 per cent in the mechanical, metallurgical and electrical industries.

## 2. Illiteracy and the project for school enrolment and the eradication of illiteracy

### (a) The current situation

According to the official results of the 1994 population census, 67 per cent of all women over the age of 10 are illiterate. Amongst girls aged between 10 and 14, the ratio is 47 per cent. In urban areas, 51 per cent of the female population is able to read and write, and amongst girls aged between 10 and 14, that number rises to 82.9 per cent. Only 1.7 per cent of women aged 75 and over were literate. In rural areas, 89.1 per cent of all women were unable to read or write, and amongst girls aged between 10 and 14, the ratio was 74.5 per cent.

Illiteracy is most widespread amongst rural women. The table hereunder shows the extent of the discrepancy in educational levels between men and women and between urban and rural areas:

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Education disaggregated by gender and location

Year	Urban areas		Rural areas	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
1982	30	57	68	95
1994	25	49	61	89

Source: General Population and Housing Census 1994.

(b) Strategies

The Ministry of National Education has prepared a strategy that aims to achieve the following goals:

- To raise female school enrolment to 80 per cent by the year 2000.
- To ensure that 80 per cent of rural girl children remain in the educational system, at least until completion of the first level of primary schooling.
- To eradicate illiteracy in girls and women.

In order to realize this strategy, the Ministry is making every effort to encourage girls' school enrolment by increasing public demand for schooling and involving the educational authorities and the institutions of civil society in raising awareness of the importance of girls' education.

To this end, a number of measures have been taken with a view to encouraging the enrolment in school of girls in rural areas, including the following:

- Books and educational supplies have been distributed.
- There has been an increase in the number of propaganda drives.
- Increasing numbers of school canteens have been established: the Government has decided to provide canteen services for 930,000 rural school children during academic year 1998/99.
- Schools have been brought closer to children.
- An evaluation has been conducted of the appropriateness of the curriculum to the economic and social climate and its ability to project a positive image of the role of girl children and women in building society.
- Female school teachers have been employed.

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Furthermore, in partnership with specialized international organizations, a number of projects employing such measures have been undertaken, including the following:

- The training of school teachers for work in rural areas.
- The creation of income-generating activities for fathers.
- The provision of drinking water and electricity to selected educational establishments: it is intended to provide 1,350 school units with electricity by academic year 1998/99.
- The building of sanitary conveniences.
- The creation of mobile school libraries.
- The organization of training courses for administrative and teaching staff and for educational superintendents.

In addition, agreements have been reached with a number of non-governmental organizations for collaboration in many areas, including universal education, the eradication of female illiteracy and the development of preschool education in rural areas for girl children in particular.

As part of the programme of social priorities and the Government policy aimed at social development for the most seriously disadvantaged social sectors, foremost among which are girl children in rural areas, the Ministry has also worked to develop a policy to involve Government departments, local communities and non-governmental organizations in creating, organizing and operating schools in priority areas chosen from 14 regions, and in increasing school enrolment rates, lowering the ratio of girls dropping out of the basic schooling levels and undertaking activities in the area of universal education (see Annex).

The following table shows the results of literacy programmes during the period from 1994 to 1997.

Programme	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	Total for 1994-1997
Introductory stage	68 416	78 037	86 353	224 806
Supplementary stage	23 156	29 453	32 262	92 874
Men	51 013	59 474	68 500	135 375
Women	40 562	48 016	50 115	164 305
Rural areas	37 144	46 822	50 868	134 834
Urban areas	54 431	60 668	67 747	182 846
Total benefiting	91 572	107 490	118 615	317 680

Source: The Ministry of Social Development, Solidarity, Employment and Vocational Training.

- The women's affairs department within the Ministry of Youth and Sports is, for a two-year period, providing literacy classes for women and girls with no previous schooling. At the request of those who have benefited therefrom, these classes are to be extended for one further year. The classes are being taught by 262 staff specially trained by the Ministry for the purpose. The department organizes numerous campaigns directed towards women, with a view to raising their awareness of the importance of female education.
- The public authorities have also, as part of the national cooperation programme to benefit impoverished girl children outlined by the Ministry of Social Development, Solidarity, Employment and Vocational Training, created an extensive network of centres throughout the country principally intended to be used for training, awareness-raising, education and the eradication of illiteracy.

Some of those centres specialize in education and employment. They organize special programmes for the eradication of illiteracy and reproductive health, which are open to girls with no previous schooling and to those in the most vulnerable sectors who have been denied schooling. To date, these centres have been used by 18,000 females, including 4,200 from rural areas.

As part of its eradication of illiteracy programme, the Ministry has concluded partnership agreements with many non-governmental organizations and, in particular, those whose programmes target women.

### 3. Ways and means of eradicating outdated stereotypes of gender roles in the education system

School books and curricula contain numerous stereotypical concepts which discriminate against both sexes, validate women solely as mothers and housewives, and where the only public offices in which women are portrayed are teaching and nursing, on the understanding that those two professions most closely resemble the traditional roles of women, which are limited to raising and caring for children.

As part of the partnership agreement concluded in 1994 between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry in charge of Human Rights, intended to support and disseminate a culture of human rights, a comprehensive human rights curriculum recognizing the basic principles of human rights, including the principle of equality, has been prepared for all levels of education. Trials of that curriculum will be conducted and it will be used throughout the country with effect from academic year 1999/2000.

A complete inventory has been made of concepts that either reinforce or are incompatible with human rights and the principle of equality between men and women in 122 of the school books in current use at basic and secondary levels on five core subjects, namely, Islamic culture, Arabic language, French language, social sciences and Islamic philosophy and thought.

Once this inventory had been made, a comprehensive report was drawn up identifying books and lessons that contain concepts which are incompatible with

human rights and which must be withdrawn or amended. A method for dealing with them was specified at the same time. This report was submitted to the Ministry for National Education with a view to enabling the necessary amendments to be made to scholastic texts with effect from the beginning of the 1999/2000 academic year.

The educational programme on human rights will, in 1998/99, include the organization of 100 training courses for 4,000 inspectors responsible for some 100,000 teachers. These courses will be held throughout the country and will benefit not only the inspectors but all those in their departments.

Furthermore, the Ministry in charge of Human Rights is preparing to publish reference books which will be easy-to-use educational tools available for the use of specialists and others to assist them in playing their various roles in spreading a culture of human rights. It will publish a special compilation of the international human rights instruments ratified by Morocco, followed by a second book in the form of a reference guide to human rights.

The Ministry will also publish and make available to legal and rights experts a specialized journal to assist them in playing their various roles in creating, extending and making universal a culture of human rights.

It should be noted that university institutions and, in particular, political science, law, economics and social science faculties, have a role to play in spreading humanitarian concepts and values and propagating a culture of human rights. Arts and humanities faculties, being places where ideas about humanity and universal values are exchanged and where many important studies, symposiums and publications in this field originate, have a similar role.

A university research group on women's studies has been formed in one of the departments of the Faculty of Arts in Rabat University. In the past two years, a research and training unit specializing in these types of studies has also been formed at the third level of schooling, and it is expected that, during the current year, the specialization will become available at post-graduate level.

At the suggestion of the United Nations Economic and Social Council's Subregional Development Centre for North Africa, the Ministry of Higher Education, Professional Training and Scientific Research will, in October 1999, organize a national competition, for which prizes will be awarded, for the best original text about women and gender, open to 1,500 students.

#### ARTICLE 11: EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

1. Paragraph 1 (a): The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings

Moroccan law enshrines the principle of the equality of both sexes in the field of employment, a principle which is also enshrined in various legal and institutional applications, article 12 of the Moroccan Constitution having provided for equality in the assumption of public offices and positions and in the right of citizens to seek education and employment. The Constitution thus

proclaims two fundamental elements in the field of employment, both of which pertain to the right to employment as a socio-economic right. It also emphasizes the equality of citizens of both sexes.

Morocco has ratified a number of international instruments which affirm the equality of the sexes in the field of employment.

It is worth noting that article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 11 concerning Discrimination in Employment and Occupation provide for the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts.

Various amendments have been made to Moroccan law in order to counteract discrimination against women and impairment of their freedom in employment. In this respect, the abrogation of article 726 of the Code of Obligations and Contracts should be mentioned. This article stipulated that a married woman could not hire out her services as an infant nurse or for any other purpose without the consent of her husband. Moreover, the husband had the right to rescind any hire contract entered into by his wife without his approval, pursuant to Act No. 95-15, implemented by Dahir No. 83-96-1 promulgated on 1 August 1996.

In the current employment bill, which affirms the principle of the equality of the two sexes, article 8 provides that any discrimination in treatment on grounds of race, colour, nationality, political or national affiliation or social origin which is such as to infringe or deviate from the principle of equal opportunities and treatment in the field of employment or occupational pursuit, particularly in relation to recruitment, work administration, social benefits, disciplinary measures and dismissal, shall be prohibited.

In consideration of the foregoing, the Labour Act contains no provisions which permit discrimination between women and men, thus conferring upon all workers the right to enjoy equal opportunities in employment and in the exercise of their functions. Legal equality, however, does not mean that discrimination does not exist in practice, particularly in the independent and informal sectors.

2. Paragraphs 1 (b), (c) and (d): The right to enjoyment of the same employment opportunities, free choice of profession, equal remuneration, promotion and the right to receive training and vocational training

Article 1 of the Dahir promulgated on 24 February 1958 concerning the regulations governing the civil service provides for equality between men and women in the assumption of public office and for non-discrimination between the two sexes in the selection criteria, except as stipulated in or resulting from basic or special laws.

These principles are observed in the various statutes relating to all State structures, as well as those of local communities and public institutions. The exceptions contained in some statutes in regard to certain employees is not, however, regarded as an infringement of the principle of the equality of the two

sexes, imposed as they are by the nature of the work concerned, which usually requires candidates with specific qualities and characteristics to assume the positions in question. The exceptions are not based solely on gender, as they expressly exclude any person, whether man or woman, who does not satisfy the necessary conditions.

In general, the special statutes make no distinction between members of either sex for whom the same working conditions are provided in civil service positions and Government posts in medical, diplomatic and educational organizations and in specialist areas such as financial inspection, the judiciary, merchant trade, transport, the High Audit Council and so on. As for military positions, various measures have been adopted to facilitate the admission of women to the social and health departments of the army.

It is worth mentioning that somewhat fewer exceptions currently apply in certain sectors, owing to the fact that the principle of equality is now more widely established. Accordingly, Moroccan women have succeeded in breaking into a number of sectors which were previously monopolized by men. For instance, there are women uniformed police officers who carry out public security duties in the urban force. There are also women officers in the police force specializing in juvenile crime and in the traffic police. In 1999, their numbers were augmented by the graduation of a group of women police officers, who were stationed as follows: 26 in Casablanca, 15 in Marrakesh, 15 in Meknes, 6 in Agadir, 4 in Fez and 17 in Rabat. It should also be pointed out that there are women in the civil defence force and in decision-making bodies, and that Morocco now has its first woman train driver.

With regard to the statute concerning postal employees and information technicians, there is a draft decree prescribing the elimination of all discrimination between men and women at the grade of postal delivery worker, women having been granted the right of equality with men in recruitment, promotion, appointment to Government positions and social benefits. Of the posts in this sector, 21 per cent are held by women.

With regard to the postal sector, it is worth mentioning its endeavours to ratify resolution 7 adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference, held between 23 March and 1 April 1998, on gender and telecommunication policy in developing countries. This resolution gave rise to a number of recommendations, including the following:

- That the benefits of telecommunications and the emerging information society are made available to all men and women in developing countries on a fair and equitable basis;
- That the recruitment, employment, training and advancement of women throughout the telecommunication field should be encouraged;
- That gender perspective should be integrated in the campaign for a universal right to communicate.

In 1998, the first group of 40 women firefighters and social aid workers graduated from the training school of the civil defence force. In addition, the



position of the delegate for tourism in Morocco was assumed by a woman, also in 1998. Women have also assumed positions such as the representative of the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of National Education in Casablanca and the representative of the Ministry of Health in Tangiers. A woman has been appointed as the president of the Court of First Instance and is the first woman to have acceded to that position, which was formerly the presence of men.

The number of women in some of the predominantly male sectors has noticeably increased. Concerning the field of communications, for example, 264 female professional journalists working throughout all sectors of the print media, radio, television and news agencies held press cards in 1994 whereas 20 years previously, in 1989, there were no more than 66 female journalists. These statistics do not include women, such as assistants, who work in this field on an occasional basis.

The presence of women has extended to the technical communications sectors: there are now 19 female technicians engaged in audio-visual work.

It is noteworthy that the Press Act of 1958 comprises unified guidelines that make no distinction between men and women, any of whom may publish a newspaper or magazine simply by presenting a licence to the Court of First Instance. Moroccan women have therefore been encouraged to publish newspapers and specialist magazines on news, culture, economics and art subjects. According to statistics produced in 1998, a total of 31 newspapers and magazines are published by women, including three titles in Arabic and three in French on women's issues.

With regard to application of the same criteria to selection in matters of employment, entry to public positions is by competitive examination, as regulated by article 21 of the regulations governing the civil service, which stipulates the conditions to be satisfied by candidates of either sex, without distinction, on the basis of article 12 of the Constitution.

In connection with economically active women, analysis of data on working women in 1997 shows that 31.9 per cent were employed in shipping, forestry and maritime fishing, 25.6 per cent in the traditional and skilled industries, 19.9 per cent as labourers, manual farmworkers and in fishing and 15.3 per cent as servants, compared with 7.6 per cent of men employed in the last category.

With regard to economic activity, 26.5 per cent of economically active women are employed in industry: 41 per cent in urban areas and 17.3 per cent in rural areas. Women are in great demand in the textile and food industries, as well as in agriculture, which is the main occupation in 52 per cent of cases. As for the distribution of economically active women by employment sector, 84.2 per cent of women are employed in independent establishments, followed by the civil service, local communities and the social development sector, in which 7.9 per cent of women played a part in 1996, compared with 13.9 per cent of men.

Women account for 32 per cent of the total number of civil servants. Of this proportion, 32.7 per cent are in the Ministry of National Education, 45.4 per cent in the Ministry of Health, 56.7 per cent in the Ministry of the Interior and 18.8 per cent in the Ministry of Public Works.

Although there are significant numbers of women in the civil service, most of them occupy only low grades: according to the statistics produced by the Ministry of Finance for 1996, 22 per cent are employed at grades 1-6, while 23 per cent are employed at grades 8-10 and only 13.1 per cent at grade 11 or higher.

The Dahir of 24 April 1958 concerning the regulations governing the civil service guarantees women the same rights as men in matters of recruitment and promotion. The chances of promotion to administrative decision-making positions are still poor, however, as women executives are marginalized and receive only late promotion. Moreover, they are given no opportunity to carry out work involving the production of reports.

#### Equal remuneration

In 1979, Morocco ratified ILO Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value. It also ratified ILO Convention No. 26 concerning the Creation of Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery and ILO Convention No. 99 concerning Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery in Agriculture.

The minimum wage was prescribed pursuant to the Dahir of 18 June 1936 and was subject to the division of Morocco into four wage areas. A distinction was also made between the minimum wage for women and for men. Pursuant to the Decree of 15 January 1972, however, the minimum wage is now a uniform amount throughout the entire country. The minimum wage was applicable in the industrial and commercial sectors, but has now been extended to include the agricultural sector. The Dahir of 20 December concerning the wages of domestic workers fixes the minimum wage with a view to guaranteeing such a wage, although the difficulty entailed in fixing that wage is appreciable.

Decree No. 1-75-21 of 30 August 1975 makes a distinction between low wages for men and women and fixes the minimum wage on the basis of living standards and the financial capacity of the establishment concerned to consider the demands of workers' and employers' organizations. The question of increasing the level of the minimum wage is a focus of discussion between the above organizations in the National Committee for Social Dialogue.

Wages are fixed by means of individual or collective contracts of employment or by means of internal law in compliance with general law. This contractual system is based on the principle which stipulates that it is wrong to discriminate between workers in cases where the employment conditions, vocational training and output are all equal. Various measures relating to wages have been adopted, including:

- The establishment of a consultative body with a view to wage-fixing, in addition to which the mechanisms for consultation were determined in the agreement concluded between social partners in August 1996;
- The promulgation of a decree on 1 July 1996 increasing the amount of the minimum wage by 10 per cent.

Changes in the minimum wage between 1991 and 1997

Agricultural sector				Industrial, commercial and services sector			
Year	Percentage change	Hourly wage	Monthly wage	Year	Percentage change	Hourly wage	Monthly wage
1-4-94	10	37.60	977.60	1-4-94	10	7.26	1 510.08
1-7-97	10	41.36	1 075.36	1-7-97	10	7.98	1 659.00

Although men and women benefit equally from the minimum wage, it is impossible to overlook the discrimination which occurs openly in the private sector and in veiled form in the public and semi-public sector. The results of a study conducted in 1995 in the textile sector, which is a major employer of the female workforce, show that women receive an average wage equivalent to 50 per cent of the minimum wage. In the industrial sector, the wage differences between the sexes range between 30 and 40 per cent. The same study emphasizes that women receive the same wage as men, even if they are better qualified. Furthermore, 32.8 per cent of urban women working in the industrial sector live below the poverty threshold, whereas the same is true for only 22.6 per cent of men.

As for the public sector, in 1995, 5.4 per cent of civil servants were in the highest wage category of those earning 120,000 dirhams and over, equivalent to a gross monthly wage of 10,000 dirhams. The number of women in this category stood at no higher than 2.6 per cent, compared with 6.7 per cent for men, thus highlighting the situation which distinguishes men in the administrative ranks. The differences are much sharper in the informal sector, which remains on the margins of the labour-regulating laws.

Although women have made considerable strides forward in entering sectors or positions of significance, many of their number are still illiterate, as is reflected in the nature of their work: in 1996, 48.8 per cent of women were engaged in "private and domestic services" and 43.8 per cent in "manufactured products".

There is also severe discrimination in wages and general working conditions against impoverished and marginalized women. This phenomenon is particularly serious among young female domestic servants, who are inhumanely exploited and subjected to various forms of ill-treatment, even in cases where they are no older than 10 years of age. A number of cases have been referred to the courts, including some involving deaths. The necessary measures must therefore be taken to extend the protective employment laws to include domestic servants.

In this respect, a number of positive initiatives should be mentioned, among them Morocco's ratification in September 1998 of ILO Convention No. 138, which stipulates that children under 15 years of age should not be admitted to employment.

Article 4 of the draft labour act also provides for the elaboration of a special system by which to determine employment and working conditions for domestic servants, regulate the relationship between employees and employers and fix working conditions in the sectors which are of a purely traditional nature, all with a view to combating the illegal employment of women in shameful conditions. Although non-contractual employment is binding on both parties, it favours the employer and not the worker.

In this connection, civil society has undertaken various initiatives to organize study days and carry out research with the aim of raising awareness among citizens and urging them to respect the law in order to ensure protection and a decent livelihood for this segment of society.

#### Vocational training

The benefit of vocational training is a recognized right of both men and women. The vocational training sector has made tangible progress owing to the amendments introduced since 1984 and the ensuing opportunity to change the prevailing ideas and criteria concerning vocational training, which was regarded as the refuge of school failures and drop-outs. Since 1984, a great deal of attention has been devoted to vocational training insofar as it serves as a link between the world of education and the economic world, as well as a means of incorporating young persons into an economically active life and providing an opportunity to ensure their advancement by way of keeping pace with technical and scientific developments. The proportion of women trainees in the public sector has grown substantially, reaching 35 per cent in 1995 and 45.2 per cent in 1996, compared with 25 per cent in 1984.

Vocational training benefits from bilateral or multilateral cooperation programmes, such as those of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which, as part of its 1998 pilot programme to combat poverty and in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Development, Solidarity, Employment and Vocational Training, established a vocational training centre and a women's integration centre in Marrakesh in order to enable women to benefit from basic training and literacy classes.

The training centres in the private sector are typically more responsive to women, although the geographical distribution of the reception centres does not permit the same nationwide opportunities. A major cause of disparity is the preponderance of such centres in the centre and north-west of the country, which does not encourage the opening of enterprises or industries in other economic areas.

Although the national laws stipulate the principle of equality between the sexes in regard to vocational training, the differences in practice are attributable to the policy employed in drawing up national plans. The solution to the problem may be to use the approach of a comprehensive national development policy aimed at integrating women into development. In that connection, reference has already been made to the elaboration of a national plan to integrate women into development that addresses all aspects of concern to women.

3. The right to social security and unemployment benefits

The social security system was established pursuant to the Dahir of 31 December 1959. The current law, regulated by the Dahir of 27 July 1972, applies to all establishments in the textile industry and recognizes that women employees have the right to enjoy the same short- and long-term benefits as those granted to men.

Short-term benefits include family allowances and daily allowances for illness or accidents that are not subject to the legislative acts concerning industrial accidents and occupational diseases. Long-term benefits include retirement pensions, invalidity pensions and survivors' pensions.

As a result of the administrative reform, women civil servants are able to take early retirement, at their request, after 15 rather than 21 years of service.

The surviving spouse, on satisfaction of the conditions stipulated in the Law of 1971 and the Dahir of 1989, has the right to a survivor's pension. Women are not granted a widow's pension by virtue of being the spouse of an employee unless the marriage took place at least two years prior to the husband's death, the date when he ceased economic activity or the date of his invalidity, provided that the invalidity was occupation-related. The condition concerning this time period is waived if children were produced from the marital relationship. Women civil servants may receive their salaries in conjunction with a widow's pension or an invalidity pension. Women employees also enjoy a daily maternity allowance, which is deemed to be in lieu of salary.

Family allowances and health care assistance are income supplements provided with a view to helping women who shoulder the financial responsibility for children. If the wife is the only beneficiary of social security, the allowances are granted to her, whereas if both spouses are beneficiaries, the allowances are paid to the husband in his capacity as head of the household, in accordance with the provisions of article 1 of the Code of Personal Status.

In view of the intended purpose of family allowances, they are paid to the person who shoulders the financial responsibility for children. If these allowances are not used for the purposes specified, they may be denied to the beneficiary and transferred to a competent person or eligible institution by the Administrative Council for Social Security. Generally speaking, with the exception of women civil servants and women in military service, 25 per cent of women benefit from the allowances provided by the National Social Security Fund, a figure which indicates that the enjoyment by men and women of the right to social security is only relatively recent. As in the case of certain economic and social rights, the reason for this lies in the status of development in Morocco, which is impeded by the same obstacles facing developing countries in their efforts to achieve full guarantees for those rights.

Unemployment benefit

Moroccan law is lacking in this area in the case of both sexes, which is a major problem in view of the worsening unemployment situation. According to the

findings of the National Study of Population and Labour, conducted in 1995, there were 1.5 million economically active females aged 15 and over among the total of 9.4 million unemployed. In comparison with the National Study of Family Living Standards, conducted in 1990-1991, the conclusion to be drawn is that the number of unemployed female inhabitants has risen significantly, at an average of 36.4 per cent.

Women are more prey to unemployment: the number of unemployed women rose by more than 51.4 per cent over five years, compared with a rise of 28.8 per cent in the case of men. Although the national unemployment rate stands at 16.9 per cent, women are more adversely affected, representing 19.24 per cent of the unemployed in 1995, whereas in 1990-1991, the ratio was only 13 per cent. In 1995, the ratio of unemployed men was 14.4 per cent.

Taking into account the fact that economically active females are aged between 15 and 24 years, the percentage of unemployed women is lower than that of unemployed men; in 1995, it was 22 per cent compared with 24.3 per cent in the case of men.

4. The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction

Respect for the principle of equality at work and free choice of work did not preclude the legislator from observing certain exceptions that would protect women and safeguard moral decency. As such, these measures cannot be deemed to constitute a form of discrimination against women. Such exceptions have appeared in many legal texts and are intended to prohibit the employment of women in night work and in mining activities, in accordance with article 22 of the Dahir of 22 July 1947 concerning service and employment regulations. They also prohibit the employment of women in the prenatal and post-natal periods and in work which involves pushing or pulling loads specified in accordance with the Ministerial Decree of 30 September 1950.

Although the Labour Act contains a number of protective measures, it also contains a number of gaps and loopholes. As a result, women may be employed in conditions which are unsafe, particularly for those who are pregnant, and children may be employed without the guaranteed benefits which should be provided.

The gaps in the Labour Act are exemplified by the fact that the protection it provides is restricted to female employees and women in the industrial and commercial sectors, who receive the guaranteed benefits available in these sectors, whereas it makes no special provisions with regard to the right to health and safety in the agricultural sector and lays down no health criteria, even concerning the protection of women employees from the chemical substances commonly used in farming, which is the biggest employer of the female workforce.

In the same context, the safeguarding of moral decency is not highly effective in the absence of penalties for the sexual harassment of women. Legislation is currently moving towards the enactment of laws which prohibit sexual harassment at work or elsewhere, and of the misdemeanour of incitement to

prostitution, as defined by the law and which, if committed in the workplace, is subject to heavier penalties.

5. Paragraph 2: Prevention of discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity

(a) Prohibition of dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status

In view of the importance which Moroccan law attaches to maternity and the institution of marriage, the legislator has adopted various measures to counteract arbitrary dismissal on the basis of marriage or maternity.

In this respect, it is worth referring to Decision No. 1300 issued by the Supreme Court on 20 July 1983, which annulled the condition in force at Royal Air Maroc requiring that its female employees should be unmarried.

The legislator provided protection for married women against dismissal in the event of childbirth: an employer may not terminate the employment contract of a female employee during her pregnancy or for 12 weeks after she has given birth, provided her pregnancy is confirmed by a medical certificate. If the employer rescinds the contract, he is punishable in accordance with the provisions stipulated in article 59 of the Dahir of 2 July 1947, which also stipulates that a woman who is dismissed has the right to compensation. The penalty for dismissal of a female employee on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity is a term of imprisonment of between one and six months and/or a fine of between 10,000 and 50,000 dirhams. A female employee who is arbitrarily dismissed in such circumstances also benefits from legal aid, pursuant to article 18 of the Dahir of 2 July 1947.

(b) Maternity leave and benefits

Section XVIII of the Dahir of 2 July 1947 and section XV of the Dahir of 24 April 1973 stipulate that a contract of employment cannot be rescinded on the grounds that an employee has ceased work as a result of childbirth. The legislator therefore decreed that pregnant women are entitled to 12 weeks of leave during the prenatal and post-natal periods combined, which may be extended by two weeks on presentation of a medical certificate stating that the employee is suffering from an illness caused by the pregnancy or birth which prevents her resumption of work. Article 19 of the Dahir of 2 July 1947 provides that women who are visibly pregnant may leave work without holiday entitlement and without payment of separation allowances.

In order to protect pregnant women employees and mothers of children under two years of age, the legislator singled them out for special monitoring by the resident workplace doctor, in accordance with the provisions of article 11 of the decree promulgated on 8 February 1957.

Administrative amendments played a considerable role in providing better protection for women in the event of childbirth by extending periods of maternity leave and increasing the amount of the daily allowance payable during such leave. In accordance with the provisions of article 37 of the Dahir of

27 July 1973, as amended by the Dahir of 9 November 1992, women employees who are on maternity leave receive allowances equal to their full monthly wage for a period of 12 weeks. Women who are able to prove that they contributed 54 days during the six months which preceded the cessation of work for reasons relating to childbirth also benefit from these provisions.

In addition to maternity leave and benefits, women are granted a break of one hour per day, divided between morning and afternoon, for the purpose of breastfeeding, a concession which is granted for a period of one year from the date of the child's birth. This hour is additional to the rest periods stipulated by regulation and is paid for as work time. The legislator also decreed that a special room should be set aside for breastfeeding purposes in every establishment or within the immediate vicinity in the case of establishments employing fewer than 50 women over the age of 15 years.

At the international level, reference should be made to Morocco's participation in the efforts made by the international community during the 86th Session of the International Labour Conference to review ILO Convention No. 103 and Recommendation No. 95 concerning Maternity Protection. On that occasion, a number of conclusions were approved in connection with maternity leave, material allowances, medical allowances, employment protection, non-discrimination and protection of nursing women. During the same session, Morocco endorsed the notions of taking into consideration the principle of parity and of ensuring equal opportunities to benefit from all ILO technical cooperation programmes.

6. Encouragement of the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities

In order to support parents in fulfilling their family role alongside their work responsibilities, various administrative reforms were introduced in earnest of the legislator's desire to improve this situation. The administrative reform of 1993 granted women the opportunity to be associated with their husbands in the context of provisional retirement for a two-year period, with the possibility of five renewals, in addition to other types of provisional retirement.

It was also made easier for married female civil servants to work together with their husbands in another country. The reform of 1994 permitted a male civil servant married to a female civil servant whose place of work is in a location other than his to cease work on a temporary basis should he wish to do so. Women employees benefited from the most recent reform, known as the Civil Service Statute of 1997, which includes provisions relating to the mobility of employees, administrative leave, sick leave and unpaid leave, as well as provisions relating to recruitment for three rather than five years and post-recruitment integration.

In order to enable mothers to fulfil their social roles and work obligations, the Moroccan Government has encouraged the establishment of a greater number of nurseries and crèches. Most of these facilities are attached to the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs (Health, Youth and Sports, and National Cohesion). In 1995, there were 485 crèches catering for 23,219 children and employing 1,164 permanent staff.



In accordance with the demographic profile, some 25 per cent of crèches attached to the Ministry of Social Affairs were located in urban areas. In 1997, the Ministry of Youth and Sports supervised a total of 298 nurseries, including 108 in rural locations, catering for 30,000 children. In 1995, the Ministry of National Education was responsible for running 3,926 modern educational establishments catering for 197,403 children, in addition to 28,095 Qur'anic schools attended by 599,266 children.

Despite the efforts made, however, there are still few nurseries and crèches which are State-owned. The private sector compensates for this lack, although the high cost of such private nurseries in relation to national purchasing power means that they are reliant on the affluent social groups.

#### ARTICLE 12: EQUAL ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

##### 1. The elimination of discrimination against women in the field of health care and access to family planning services

Since independence, Morocco has pursued a policy aimed at developing and promoting health services and ensuring that these are available to every citizen. Moroccan law provides for the right of all citizens to obtain and benefit from health care inasmuch as it is a human right, as is indicated by the legislative enactments and institutions created since the early 1990s with a view to strengthening efforts made at Government level in the field of human rights (see Part One).

In order to achieve the objectives of sustainable development, successive Governments have expressly supported and endeavoured to strengthen the equality of men and women in all fields. Morocco has made material progress in the field of health, despite shortcomings in certain sectors and in connection with various social groups and economic regions. Improvement is perceptible in the rise in the number of doctors, nurses and hospital beds, which has implications for the health indicators, particularly in regard to increased life expectancy at birth and mortality reduction. In 1996, there were 106 hospitals and 563 urban health centres and 771 rural health centres in the public sector. During the seven years between 1990 and 1996, spending on public health grew by 44 per cent from 1,820 million dirhams to 2,624 million dirhams. Nevertheless, the health budget remains a small part of the State budget.

Between 1990 and 1996, the number of doctors increased from 5,711 to 9,397, as a result of which the number of doctors per 100,000 inhabitants rose from 25 in 1990 to 35 in 1996. At the same time, the number of hospital beds rose from 24,970 in 1990 to 26,451 in 1996 and the mortality rate fell from 10.6 per cent in 1980 to 6.3 per cent in 1997. In addition, over half of the women of childbearing age use a form of contraception.

The improvement in the health status of Moroccan women has been inconsistent, in that the main indicators remain poor in spite of the positive results which Morocco has achieved. The mortality rate of 228 per 100,000 live births, for instance, is still one of the highest in Africa. Moreover, major discrepancies continue to exist between urban and rural areas in terms of the

distribution of health services and facilities, which, coupled with social and economic discrepancies, stand in the way of equal enjoyment of the right to health. In 1996, the life expectancy for urban women had improved by an estimated 21.3 years, compared with 14.6 years for rural women.

In order to combat maternal mortality, the Ministry of Health identified as one of its prime objectives the need for prolonged and more consistent improvement of family planning services and departments on the basis of the national family planning programme, which is of key significance in this area in view of its potential to allow women to avoid unwanted pregnancy or pregnancy at either a very young or overly advanced age.

Major national achievements worth mentioning are the incorporation of family planning services into health care schemes, the strengthening of reproductive health strategies at provincial level, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, improved quality of services, enhanced participation by the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society, and the strengthening of research, media activities, education and communication.

As a result of Government policy, the rate of contraceptive use increased from 35.9 per cent in 1987, to 41.5 per cent in 1992, 50.3 per cent in 1995 and 58.8 per cent in 1997. Modern contraceptive methods in particular are now more widely accepted, as illustrated by the increase in their use from 28.91 per cent in 1987 to 42.43 per cent in 1995. The contraceptive pill is, however, the most common method, used as it is by 70 per cent of women, whereas only 5 per cent use other methods such as condoms or contraceptive injections.

Despite this increase, differences between urban and rural areas continue to prevail: the rate of contraceptive use stands at 65.8 per cent in urban areas and at no higher than 50.7 per cent in rural areas, for reasons attributable to the educational, economic and social disparities between the two environments. As for the impact of education on contraceptive use, studies show that women in rural areas who have the benefit of a basic education are 11 times more likely than illiterate women to use contraception. In urban areas, women with a basic education are four times more likely to use contraception than their illiterate counterparts.

With regard to the impact of economic and social levels on contraceptive use, the economic activity of women and the new technologies present in the home encourage family planning. For example, one study conducted on this topic, showed that in 1996, the use of contraceptives in households possessing a car or television increased from 44 per cent to 52.8 per cent in rural areas and from 52.7 per cent to 63.6 per cent in urban areas. Furthermore, 8.9 per cent of rural women who are illiterate refuse to use contraceptives, whereas only 3.7 per cent of women who have the benefit of a secondary or higher education refuse to do so. This difference is also evident in urban areas, where only an extremely small proportion of women, amounting to 1.6 per cent of those with higher education, refuse to use contraceptives, compared with 6.6 per cent of uneducated women. The cultural complexities which prevail in the family environment may serve either to help or hinder the benefit which women gain from the services provided by the national family planning programme.

2. The provision of appropriate services in connection with pregnancy and confinement

In view of the importance attached to reproductive health, Morocco elaborated a strategy for the achievement of crucial objectives between 1996 and 2000, as a result of which maternal mortality fell significantly and the number of pregnancies and deliveries supervised by health facilities increased. In towns and urban centres, 73.8 per cent of women receive prenatal care, as against 29.7 per cent in villages, a percentage which is lower still in impoverished rural areas, such as those covered by the Social Priorities Programme. In the areas of Dakkalah and Abdah, for instance, it is no higher than 14.8 per cent. As already mentioned, educational, economic and social levels have a major impact on access to health facilities and benefits gained from the services which they offer.

Despite the growth in health care, differences between urban and rural areas still prevail: contraceptives are used by 65.8 per cent of women in urban areas, and by no more than 50.7 per cent in rural areas. The rate of prenatal care in those same areas also increases in line with the educational attainment of the head of the household: from 26.4 per cent among the uneducated in urban areas to 80 per cent among those with a higher education, constituting 67.9 per cent and 90.7 per cent respectively. The proximity of health facilities is a further factor in terms of access to the benefit of prenatal care.

Marked progress has been made in regard to the number of deliveries supervised by health facilities, in which connection the same geographical, economic and social differences apply. In urban areas, 70 per cent of deliveries take place under medical supervision. In 1996, the rate in towns and urban centres was between 50 and 90 per cent, whereas in rural areas, it was no higher than 17.5 per cent. A doctor or trained midwife is present at three quarters of deliveries in urban areas and at only one fifth of all deliveries in rural areas. Most of the women who do not benefit from prenatal care or supervised delivery are from deprived rural areas and belong to the social groups which suffer from financial difficulties, unemployment and illiteracy.

In 1995, 53.8 per cent of women benefited from the national programme for prenatal immunization against tetanus, compared with 53.8 per cent in 1992. In urban areas, 66 per cent of women benefited, compared with 56.8 per cent in rural areas.

The incidence of poverty-related diseases is relatively high. Anaemia, for instance, affects 31 per cent of women of childbearing age and 45 per cent of pregnant women.

The obstacles presented by geographical, economic and social differences impede efforts to ensure equal access to social services and health care. The uncoordinated location of health facilities and their preponderance in urban centres, for instance, is a form of discrimination as far as living standards are concerned: there is one doctor in the private sector for every 10,000 rural inhabitants, compared with one doctor for every 4,900 urban inhabitants.

It is noteworthy that 89 per cent of doctors in the public sector practice in urban areas, whereas only 11 per cent of the doctors affiliated with the basic health establishments provide services to rural and semi-urban areas. While the number of nurses in the health sector has risen considerably, their geographical distribution varies widely, with one nurse for every 2,200 urban inhabitants and only one nurse for every 4,000 rural inhabitants. Approximately 14 per cent of rural inhabitants do not have the benefit of any health facilities at all. In order to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas, the Ministry of Health relies on a group of about 1,130 peripatetic nurses.

Although the number of basic health establishments increased from 940 in 1985 to 1,326 in 1995, rural women still derive only limited benefit from health services, which are often inaccessible, a matter which must be reviewed. In essence, the problem is due to the large distances which inhabitants must travel in order to have access to health facilities: 40 per cent are forced to travel at least 10 kilometres and no more than 18 per cent live within three kilometres of such facilities.

The shortage of medicines is also an obstacle to enjoyment of the right to health, particularly as there is only one pharmacy for every 4,600 inhabitants. In addition to the foregoing, there are only 461 gynaecologists, of whom 198 work in the public sector and 263 in the private sector, a ratio of one gynaecologist to every 1,500 women of childbearing age. Health care during prenatal and delivery stages is therefore restricted.

In the same context, it is worth mentioning the small number of qualified midwives, of whom there are only 30. Of these, 30 per cent practice in university hospitals and 30 per cent in the private sector. Moreover, the 200 midwives per year who have been given fast-track training have not subsequently been given employment.

In regard to combating sexually transmitted diseases, including acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome (AIDS), Morocco has implemented a national programme that is focused on decentralization and encourages participation and coordination with non-governmental organizations, and cooperation with specialized international organizations and the European Union. The national programme is based on the creation of a new structure for notification of the AIDS virus, the supply of the drugs needed for sufferers and training activities for health professionals, teachers, the media and other elements of civil society. In Morocco, the number of AIDS cases is still limited, whereas almost 60,000 new cases of sexually transmitted diseases are recorded each year. A major obstacle in this field is the lack of specialist doctors, of whom there are only 156. Of these, 74 work in the public sector and 82 in the private sector.

Geographical variations are one of the main problems encountered in implementing the national programme to combat sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS. In the provinces of Rabat and Casablanca, there are 54 specialist doctors who practise in the public sector, whereas at least 40 regions have no such doctors. There are also various other gaps and failings in the sense that awareness-raising is poor, campaigns often being one-off rather than ongoing activities.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that traditional practices harmful to the health of women, such as mutilation of the genital organs, are not performed in Morocco.

In the absence of legal barriers whereby women are not permitted to benefit from health care services on an equal basis with men, geographical, economic and social differences constitute a form of discrimination which impedes the optimum enjoyment by a large number of women of the right to health. Consequently, the women who gain the least and suffer most are those from rural areas or marginalized social groups.

In this respect, various studies and research projects have highlighted the feminization of poverty, given that over 52 per cent of marginalized families are supported by a women. Furthermore, a gender comparison of the differences throws light on the marginalization of women on the basis of various indicators, such as the urban unemployment rate, estimated at 29.6 per cent among women in 1994, compared with 17.1 per cent among men, and the rate of unpaid domestic labour in rural areas, which affects 84.2 per cent of women, compared with 35.9 per cent of men.

In order to limit the feminization of poverty and its pernicious consequences, the Government has concentrated on the formulation of an integrated social programme that prioritizes efforts to combat this phenomenon, which is now substantially increasing among rural women. This programme also comprises guidelines for Social Development Fund projects in support of small income-generating production schemes which attach particular importance to impoverished women.

The chief obstacles to women's enjoyment of full health care, including reproductive health, are as follows:

- The significant proportion of illiteracy among women and the low levels of education which they attain, particularly in rural areas. Approximately 7 million Moroccan women, or 67 per cent, are illiterate, compared with 41 per cent of men. In other words, five out of every 10 women are illiterate. In rural areas, illiteracy among women is almost universal, with only one woman in 10 being able to read and write;
- This situation is more serious among young girls: approximately 2 million of whom between the ages of eight and 16 years, mostly from rural areas, do not benefit from the right to education (see art. 6);
- Women's access to health facilities, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, needs to be reconsidered with a view to encouraging them to continue to attend such facilities;
- The persistent spread of false notions about the side effects of contraceptives;

- Poor coordination between Governmental and non-government sectors, and
- The restricted financial resources available to media, education and communication programmes and the poor social, qualitative and field research carried out nationwide.

It is therefore essential to base future health strategies on the following:

- Expanding the health network to include coverage of rural areas;
- Supplying basic health establishments with medications, doctors and nurses;
- Strengthening the programme to combat maternal mortality, and
- Creating mechanisms to finance treatment through sickness insurance for all citizens, particularly impoverished, marginalized and low-income groups.

#### ARTICLE 13: FINANCIAL CREDIT AND FAMILY BENEFITS

##### 1. The right to family benefits

The legal and institutional measures taken to combat discrimination against women in economic and social life have been mentioned in earlier parts of the report, which also highlighted all the procedures adopted in order to guarantee the right to health, education, employment and family allowances (arts. 10, 11 and 12).

##### 2. Equal access to financial credit

In respect of access to financial resources such as bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit, women continue to encounter various obstacles which have repercussions on their ability to work as small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs and in independent activities. There are still far fewer women than men in these areas, as indicated in the part of the report focusing on the status of women in economic decision-making bodies (art. 7). These obstacles to women's access to financial resources have no legal basis, but are the result of the discrimination from which women suffer on a daily basis.

According to one survey conducted in order to assess the limitations affecting small-scale women entrepreneurs and the degree of confidence placed in them, 15.6 per cent of the women questioned rated the difficulty of obtaining bank loans as the fifth greatest economic and financial obstacle. The majority of those questioned believed that the problem was due to the commercial nature of the banks.

The Association Marocaine d'Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise (AMAPPE) has established a unit to promote women's projects and help women

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entrepreneurs to overcome all the obstacles that may affect the establishment or running of their enterprises. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank also determined that women would participate in and benefit from 30 per cent of their projects. At Government level, Parliament ratified by consensus the bill concerning small loans in November 1998.

In this context, the valuable initiatives of civil society should not be overlooked. With assistance from UNICEF, the Moroccan Association for the Revival of Female Entrepreneurship established a centre, "Espace des Femmes", to support female entrepreneurship. This centre aims to offer classes for women in handicrafts, literacy and small-enterprise management.

In addition, the Zakura institution, foremost among those endeavouring to revive the small loans sector in Morocco, in 1998 granted over 13,000 loans, worth an estimated 13 million dirhams throughout the country. As a group, women are the main beneficiaries of this programme, which was essentially directed at women running projects in the fields of commerce, sewing, tailoring, rug-making and pottery, as well as projects for the establishment of small schools or growing of vegetables. The loan officers at Zakura also organize training courses in the management, supply and further development of projects through a progressive system of small loans. The Amana Association for the Revival and Promotion of Small Enterprises granted 5,940 loans in 1998, 36 per cent of them to women.

In rural areas, the main obstacles to female entrepreneurship in agriculture lie in the difficulties entailed in acquiring ownership of land which can be used to guarantee loans. In 1998, the Social Security Fund therefore established a loans system for rural women who wish to invest in agriculture, traditional industry or rural housing (previously discussed in detail under article 7 on the status of women in economic decision-making bodies).

3. The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life

In this connection, the public authorities have put in place suitable structures for the use of citizens, managed by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. As a result, the number of such institutions rose from 200 in 1986 to 252 in 1995, representing an increase of 26 per cent. In the same year, in the context of domestic tourism, the Ministries also provided 23 reception centres, comprising 1,962 beds, in which young persons are able to stay when travelling in groups on cultural tours. The number of young persons benefiting from the educational, cultural and sporting activities organized by these centres has substantially increased: from 5,680 in 1980 to 22,282 in 1995, with female participants accounting for 25 per cent of the number.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Development, Solidarity, Employment and Vocational Training, the women's centres provided by the Institute for National Cooperation have slowly increased: from 340 in 1985 to 386 in 1995, equivalent to a rate of only 8.2 per cent. In addition, their distribution on the basis of the place of residence of the groups targeted by

their activities is still uneven: in rural areas, for instance, there are only 119 centres, representing 32 per cent of the total. The public authorities have also involved local communities in providing financial support for sports and cultural clubs and have endeavoured to develop international cooperation in this area.

For their part, non-governmental organizations have also endeavoured to provide various recreational, sports and cultural activities. The number of these organizations grew considerably, as did the number of those involved in them. In 1995, there were over 3,121 such organizations, compared with 2,041 in 1990 and 1,425 in 1985, and 74,266 persons were involved with them in 1995, compared with 42,650 in 1985.

Non-governmental organizations also played an important role in connection with summer camps and tourism arrangements, both inside the country and abroad. A total of 42 tours took place in 1990, compared with 38 in 1991, 40 in 1992, 34 in 1993 and 35 in 1994 and 1995. The participants on these tours increased on two separate counts: numbers increased from 292 in 1980 to 750 in 1990 and 655 in 1995, while the proportion of women participants increased to between 40 and 50 per cent.

The activities organized in this field, whether by Government or non-governmental organizations, were nationwide and were regulated by laws which permitted young persons to pursue sports, cultural and educational activities in clubs, associations and cultural centres. There are no provisions in these laws which discriminate between the sexes in this connection, although equality is still far from being achieved in practice for various socio-economic reasons, including family obstacles, the poor purchasing power of citizens and infrastructural differences in institutions, based on the location of their main offices.

#### Sports activity

The Moroccan Government has made great efforts to integrate women into sporting life by creating structures attached to the Ministry of Youth and Sports and introducing special initiatives. Morocco's initial report stated that it was compulsory for both sexes to engage in sports in educational establishments at both primary and secondary levels.

Moroccan women may also become involved in sports at a high level, particularly in athletics, gymnastics, judo, swimming, tennis and basketball. As a result of this active presence in high-level sports, the Moroccan flag has been raised at a number of regional and international sporting events and Olympic medals have even been won. The status of Moroccan women in sport is constantly being strengthened, as shown by the results which they have achieved in the most recent sporting events.

Women have also succeeded in being promoted to positions of administrative decision-making in sports associations and national federations. Large numbers of women have also won awards from the athletics federation, although their numbers have declined, in recent years. In 1991-92, for instance, a total of



2,807 awards were made to women, rising to 2,929 in 1992-1993 and 4,001 in 1994, whereas the number fell to 2,589 in 1994-1995.

The Moroccan Government encourages the promotion and protection of cultural and artistic life without discrimination on the basis of gender. It has established the High Council for Culture, an advisory institution which aims to discuss the substance of cultural policy and make proposals concerning the choices and focal points of priority in cultural work.

Infrastructure in Morocco, however, is still flimsy and uncondusive to cultural activity, the cinema, theatre and music, together with antiquities, libraries and the media, being regarded as the main pillars of cultural life. The public authorities encourage reading, having made efforts to double the number of publishing houses from 40 in 1984 to 80 in 1990. They have also made efforts to increase university and private acquisitions, thereby substantially assisting in the dissemination of culture and promotion of studies and research. All such resources can be consulted by all citizens, without discrimination against women.

With regard to the protection of literary and artistic copyright, the legislator has decreed various provisions providing protection to authors of either sex, writing on any subject. Of these, the most significant are the Dahir of 7 October 1932 concerning the regulation of legal deposit, the Dahir of 29 July 1970 concerning the protection of literary and artistic works and the provisions of articles 575 and 579 of the Penal Code.

In view of quantitative and qualitative developments in the field of intellectual property, resulting from the use of new technology which facilitates access to works (computer programmes, digital technologies and the internet), and in view of the international obligations of our country, amendment of the Literary and Artistic Copyright Protection Act is now essential in order to bring it into line with the international conventions to which our country has acceded. Foremost among these are the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, part of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades (GATT). Within the context of coordination and cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), such amendments are also essential in order to supplement the protection of related rights provided by GATT and for the protection of databases and computer programmes.

In the field of sports, recreational and cultural activities, there are no provisions which discriminate between the sexes. Economic and social discrimination greatly impedes women's enjoyment of the right of equality conferred upon them by law, and there are still several traditional discriminatory practices which limit the potential for the effective integration of women into this area. Several groups of the Moroccan population continue to regard sports as a male activity or as a waste of time which women could instead employ in learning handicrafts and other domestic-type activities. There are also still strong economic obstacles which limit the potential of large numbers of women with little purchasing power to enter cultural, sporting and other areas of life.

The infrastructures and facilities available are, furthermore, concentrated in urban areas, a factor which limits women's enjoyment of their right to pursue recreational, cultural and sports activities. Further financial support must be forthcoming from communities if they are to play a catalytic role in raising awareness among citizens of the importance of removing all social resistance to the involvement of women in communal life.

#### ARTICLE 14: RURAL WOMEN

##### 1. The current situation

Reference has been made in previous paragraphs to the particular problems faced by rural women, especially in the fields of education (art. 10), employment (art. 11) and health (art. 12), and emphasis placed on how problems in these various areas are significantly compounded for this group.

According to the results of the National Family Census carried out by the Centre for Demographic Studies and Research in 1995, the rate of illiteracy among rural women was 87.5 per cent (according to the 1994 General Population and Housing Census the rate was 89.1 per cent), as compared with 50.67 per cent among men.

The unemployment rate among rural women was less than 2.5 per cent, as opposed to 5.9 per cent among men. This cannot be taken, however, to indicate that rural women have been completely integrated into the labour market, because it is difficult to ascertain the rate and nature of unemployment in rural areas, given that the labour of 67 per cent of economically active rural women is, essentially, performed within the family, which is the case for only 28.5 per cent of men.

While the fertility rate in rural areas fell from 4.23 per cent in 1982 to 3.69 per cent in 1994, the maternal mortality rate remained high, with 332 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared with 268 in urban areas. The main reason for this, as indicated in the paragraphs on article 12, is the inequitable distribution of health infrastructure and medical personnel in urban and rural areas, to the detriment of the latter.

##### 2. Measures taken to ensure equal participation in and benefit from development

Pursuant to the Government statement on strengthening the position of women, programmes have been developed with a view to eradicating illiteracy, enrolling girl children in school and assisting destitute women, especially in rural areas. With the explicit goal of including women, a strategy for integrated rural development has also been developed. A number of Government agencies have already been able to realize some of the above goals by maintaining existing programmes designed for similar purposes and formulating new plans and strategies to overcome the shortcomings of previous attempts and address the most urgent current demands.

The National Strategy for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 has made rural women a top priority (see part four of the Report) and has carried out special programmes in every Government sector. In this regard, attention should be drawn to the following:

The Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Maritime Fishing has created over 20 female co-operatives for small-scale cattle-raising and traditional crafts projects, with over 540 members. The Ministry has also allocated a special budget to regional development programmes for rural women.

The Secretariat of State in charge of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action has, in one village, conducted a pilot programme designed to highlight the traditional skills of women weavers. This programme was carried out with the cooperation of local craftswomen, an Austrian organization and the Secretariat of State in charge of Handicrafts. This joint project has brought benefits at all production stages. It has helped to increase the income of craftswomen in the region and has also improved the quality of their product.

Craftswomen in the rural pottery trade in the north of Morocco have also benefited from the introduction of gas-powered traditional kilns and social services provided by the Secretariat of State with a view not only to improving economic and social conditions but also to protecting the environment from damage caused by the excessive use of wood and other organic material in firing pottery.

Finally, the Secretariat of State contributed to a study on industrial development carried out on behalf of the United Nations. That study was designed to examine the economic and social situation of women contractors, in the carpet sector in particular, and determine what incentives are necessary, and was followed by an evaluation session.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports, through the independent units established by its Special Division for Women's Affairs, has conducted an experimental programme in villages in the south, the goal of which is to imbue women with a sense of demographic awareness and train them in the manual tasks involved in embroidery, knitting and weaving. In view of the success of this experiment, it has been extended to other parts of Morocco.

The Ministry has also devised short- and medium-term strategies for the following:

- The promotion of education and eradication of illiteracy among girl children.
- The establishment of a national fund for the support of educational institutions in rural areas.
- The creation of four projects for the provision to rural institutions of small loans for the development of solar-powered kilns, the manufacture of ready-made clothes and for projects in the fields of nursing, beauty culture and canned goods.

As part of its programme to eradicate the widespread poverty and begging in rural areas, the Secretariat of State in charge of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action devised a strategy to achieve the following goals:

- To combat the phenomenon of the feminization of poverty, with regard to rural women in particular, through repairing, renovating and outfitting existing reception centres provided by the public sector, local communities and volunteer organizations.
- To establish a social development fund to support small income-generating projects which will devote special attention to rural women.

(Note: The aforementioned and other Government sectors have programmes for the improvement of the condition of rural women which have been referred to in the paragraphs dealing with articles 10, 11, 12 and 13).

#### ARTICLE 15: EQUALITY IN CIVIL MATTERS

Article 8 of the Moroccan Constitution states that men and women shall enjoy equal political rights. The principle of equality between the sexes is also implicit in the preamble to the Constitution and in the public policy statements made by His Majesty the King, which include a statement to the effect that it is incumbent upon the Moroccan woman, whose steadfast virtue and piety is well known, to demonstrate to Muslim women and the women of the world in general that Islam, which is based on three foundations, namely, the Book of God, the Sunna of God's Prophet and community, is not incompatible with either freedom or progress.

His Majesty has also stated that, the suffering of Moroccan women, whether or not they are mothers, demonstrates that the basic principle of the legislation introduced by Islam to the effect that everything that is not prohibited is permitted, has not been properly applied. It is not permissible to contravene religious teachings or the Hadith and Sunna based on the Prophet's daily life, or his statement to the effect that women are the equals of men before the law, while the Holy Qur'an states that they "[women] are a vestment for you and you are a vestment for them".

Having acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Morocco adopted new legislation in accordance with the principle of equality. Such legislation was included in the reforms of 10 September 1993, administrative ordinances and Government programmes designed to promote that principle.

The reforms of 10 September 1993 dealt specifically with women's civil rights and position in the family, as did the amendments to the Code of Personal Status, the Dahir of obligations and contracts, and the Dahir on Civil Procedure.

These amendments affirmed women's rights to enter into marriage only with their full consent, and included such measures to ensure that consent had been

given as the requirement that consent be given and the woman's signature be appended to a summary of the marriage contract in the presence of the proper authorities, thus eliminating all possibility of coercion. The amendments also curtail polygamy.

The regulations governing power of attorney and child custody have been modified in order to better serve the interests of the child. Custody is awarded to the mother in preference to the father, whereas the father is more likely to be made the legal guardian. A number of regulations were also introduced in order to curb the abuse of divorce.

The Government is making every endeavour to ensure the success of these reforms and, in particular, by means of the following:

- Coordination among the judges responsible for applying the Code of Personal Status, with a view to giving these reforms the true effectiveness desired by His Majesty the King.
- Regulation of the situation of the family and of women in the light of these reforms, as part of an agreement with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The reforms have been reinforced by additional measures, included in the Financial Code of 1998/99, guaranteeing the right to litigation. Article 22 of the Financial Code stipulates that all suits related to personal status brought by women who have been divorced or deserted shall be heard free of charge.

Equal access to the courts is available to all, women and men, and is subject to the same conditions. Women have the unrestricted right to bring civil suit and take all legal steps on an equal footing with men. The judiciary pays particular attention to cases involving women and investigates them as a matter of priority.

The Code of Criminal Procedure considers women equal to men in all aspects of the law, except as provided in Section 336, paragraph 2, concerning the need for a woman who wishes to bring a civil rights suit against her husband to obtain the permission of the court before which the case is to be brought. This requirement is not, however, obligatory. The draft code of penal procedure aims to regularize this situation by granting women the possibility of pursuing procedural steps and defending their rights, including the right to bring civil claims against their husbands without limitations or conditions.

Judicial action has already exceeded the provisions of Section 336 of the Code of Penal Procedure, as is indicated by decisions emanating from the Supreme Court.

The courts have, similarly, firmly established their recognition of a married woman's right to her labour. This is a well-established rule in many parts of Morocco.

Moroccan women have a right equal to that of men to dispose of their property. They may administer, manage and protect their assets in complete freedom and are not subject to any gender-related restrictions.

Women have the right to perform all functions related to the administration and protection of their financial assets without their husbands' supervision. In particular, the Code of Personal Status supports the principle of the division of assets between spouses and does not adopt the exception made by the Maliki school of Islamic jurisprudence to the effect that, other than for the purpose of the division of assets, a married woman may not dispose of more than one third of her financial assets as a gift without the consent of her husband.

In complete contrast to its original provisions, the most recent amendments to the Commercial Code and the Code of Obligations and Contracts give women the right to hire out their services and engage in commerce without their husbands' agreement. Article 17 of the new Commercial Code confers the right to engage in commerce without a husband's agreement, and any arrangement which contravenes this provision is considered null and void.

Similarly, Article 726 of the Code of Obligations and Contracts, which made a woman's employment conditional upon her husband's approval and gave the husband the right to cancel any labour contract concluded by his wife without his agreement, has been abolished.

With regard to contracts, Moroccan law strives for equality between men and women and considers any regulations contravening this principle to be null and void.

With regard to inheritance, the Code of Personal Status upholds the principle that a woman's share of inheritance should be half that of a man. This is based on the following verse of the Qur'an: "God charges you concerning your children to bequeath to the male the equivalent of the portion of two females." Most inheritance laws are based on the text of the Holy Qur'an, which precisely defines the portion to which all heirs are entitled.

With respect to freedom of movement, this principle is established by Article 9 of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of movement for all citizens without discrimination based on sex. However, the freedom of movement guaranteed by the Constitution is subject to some reservations, particularly in the Code of Personal Status, in view of the importance of this issue in protecting licit cohabitation and guaranteeing family stability. Section 34 of the Code of Personal Status considers that licit cohabitation is one of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities of a married couple. It is also stipulated in article 1 of the Code that marriage is a permanent and legally binding covenant between a man and a woman, the goal of which is to preserve virtue and increase the nation's population by establishing a family, protected by the husband, following a well-established pattern that ensures that the two parties to the contract shoulder their responsibilities with equanimity, peace, love and respect.

The first article of the Code contains provisions which confirm the principle of the primacy of the husband in the administration of his household and in the choice of place of residence.

The amendments made to the Code of Personal Status of 1993 may be seen as a move towards ending sexual discrimination. Article 102 of the Code stipulates that boys must be under the care of a guardian until the age of 12 and girls until the age of 15, when they may choose which of the adults with a legal right to custody they wish to reside with, whether it be the father, mother or some other person, in accordance with the provisions of Article 99. This article stipulates that guardianship is the duty of both parents as long as they remain married. In the case of divorce, the mother has first right to custody of her child. If the mother is not given custody, it passes to family members in the following order: father, maternal grandmother, mother's sister german, mother's half sister from the same mother, mother's half sister from the same father, paternal grandmother, maternal or paternal great-grandmother, the sister of the child, paternal aunt, the father's paternal aunt, the father's maternal aunt, daughter of the brother, daughter of the sister, paternal grandfather, son of the brother, paternal uncle, the paternal uncle's son. Priority is given to relatives from the same parents, followed by those related on the mother's side and, finally, those related on the father's side.

The new provisions of Article 102 of the Code of Personal Status represent a genuine development in the emancipation of adult women with no father who were previously subject to legal guardianship until such time as their marriage was either agreed upon or consummated.

Finally, there is a powerful political will to firmly establish the principle of equality between the sexes in all areas, not only the area of personal status. The best indicator of this is the multiplicity of valuable public demonstrations, studies and efforts directed towards this end, which have bolstered the efforts of Government and civil society and raised the issue of women from an obscure abstraction to a social question which is of pivotal legal importance and a top Government priority.

### PART THREE: INFORMATION ON VULNERABLE GROUPS OF WOMEN

#### 1. Women heads of household

The high percentage of divorced and widowed women is one of the major reasons for the large number of households headed by women, which represent 15.6 per cent of all households (18.3 per cent in urban areas, 12.1 per cent in rural areas).

One of the principal characteristics of this type of household is that it lives below the poverty line. Women head 59.5 per cent of poor families as compared with 50.4 per cent headed by men, as the following table shows:

Percentage of poor families disaggregated by sex and place  
 of residence of head of household

	<u>Percentage of poor families</u>	<u>Distribution of poor families %</u>
<u>Place of residence of head of household</u>		
Urban Areas	46.8	51.0
Rural Areas	58.4	49.0
Total	51.8	100.0
<u>Sex of head of household</u>		
Male	50.4	82.2
Female	59.5	17.8
Total	51.8	100.0

Source: The Centre for Demographic Studies and Research (CERED 1997).

Statistics also show that the vast majority of female heads of household are illiterate: 89.5 per cent, as opposed to 61.5 per cent of men. In general, there are few data or studies on this category of family and its living conditions, and no special programmes for it.

Measures taken to combat the feminization of poverty are covered in paragraph 6 of this part of the report. Families headed by women will naturally benefit from these measures, since they represent a large proportion of the poorest class.

2. Divorced and widowed women

According to the Family National 1995 Census, there are more than 900,000 widowers and widows and approximately 300,000 divorced men and women. However, the higher death rate among males and the ease with which social and economic circumstances allow men to remarry mean that the proportion of females in this group is substantially higher than that of males, as illustrated by the following table:

	<u>Population</u>		
<u>Family Status</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>1982 General Census of Population and Habitat</u>			
Widowed	775	702	91
Divorced	331	234	75
<u>1995 National Family Census</u>			
Widowed	943	874	92
Divorced	337	287	85

Source: 1982 General Census of Population and Habitat and 1995 National Family Census.



The ill effects of divorce or bereavement are most marked among women. This is due to several factors, including the high level of illiteracy among divorced and widowed women (more than 75 per cent), and their lack of the necessary qualifications for integration into the labour market and the procurement of well-paid jobs. Their independence is also limited by the fact that in 50 per cent of such cases women are forced to live with another family member in order to support themselves and their children.

Families headed by divorced or widowed women are among the poorest. Statistics have recorded the fall in the standard of living of such families and their children after separation from the husband or his death. This is particularly marked in divorce cases where the husband fails to make child support payments. While legal provisions and guidelines for pursuing such men and forcing them to take responsibility for supporting their children exist, the courts' lack of the material and human resources necessary to prosecute thousands of child support cases means that no action is taken in such cases and that the relevant laws are not applied. As a result, this class of family does not benefit from these laws and guidelines. Furthermore, as the majority of divorced women lack material resources, they are unable to pay prosecution costs.

In order to overcome this situation, the Moroccan Government has, in a Parliamentary statement, committed itself to work to improve and accelerate legal processes in accordance with the affirmative sections of the Code of Personal Status and to reform the Code itself in order to improve the status of women in Morocco and, in particular, the status of women whose vulnerability stems from the injustice of the provisions of the Code relating to divorce and the complexity and slowness of the legal process.

The Financial Code of 1998/99 exempts from all taxes and fees all personal status suits brought by divorced or deserted women, and affirms the equality of all before the law. This is in order to lighten the burden of such women and encourage them to defend and derive full benefit from their rights.

### 3. Women with disabilities

#### (a) The rights of disabled women in national legislation

It should, in the first place, be noted that all the rights appearing in national legislation regarding women in general also apply to disabled women. Therefore, the various legal formulations used in this context apply to disabled and all other women.

The Moroccan legislator, in view of the special situation and needs of disabled persons, and in accordance with the current state of comparative law with regard to guaranteeing the rights of such persons, has enacted two special codes relating to disabled persons, namely, the code concerning social care for blind and visually impaired persons, and the code concerning social care for disabled persons. Regulations regarding practical enforcement of these two codes have also been issued. A special agency, namely, the Secretariat of State in charge of Disabled Persons, (formerly the High Delegation of Disabled Persons) has been created and given responsibility by the legislator for

devising a comprehensive overall strategy, free of discrimination based on sex, and coordinating the various relevant sectors in order to integrate this group into the fabric of society.

(i) Education

While the rate of illiteracy among women is high in comparison to men, the rate of illiteracy among disabled women is higher still. This is because many disabled children, especially girls, are denied their right to an education for various reasons, including the following:

- The lack of disabled persons' entrances in schools.
- The distance between educational institutions and residential areas, especially in the countryside.
- The unsuitability of the educational services offered by the national education system for the educational needs of disabled children and failure to provide special education programmes or appropriate environments.
- The inability of families, especially poor families, to bear the extra costs of educating a disabled child, including expenses for books and special hearing, mobility and writing devices.
- The difficulty of transportation.

The code concerning social care for blind and visually impaired persons does not directly specify the provisions to be made for this group, other than in part four, paragraph 1, which gives public institutions responsibility for their education and for providing them with qualifications for suitable professions. This is the only provision regarding education in the code. On the other hand, the code concerning social care for disabled persons (which covers all types of disability) contains four articles that affirm the right to education and training (arts. 1, 12, 13 and 14), stating that this right is to be considered a national responsibility and duty to be carried out by all ordinary educational and training institutions wherever possible, or through the creation of special facilities, insofar as the administration's resources permit.

The Code also provides that the special circumstances of disabled persons must be taken into consideration, that they must be provided with facilities that enable them to benefit from the services provided by these institutions, that exams must be administered in a way that takes their medical condition into account, and that the administration must encourage the creation, expansion and supervision of special institutions for the education and training of disabled persons.

(ii) Vocational training

While only limited numbers of women in general attend either public or private professional training institutes, virtually no disabled women attend

such institutes. There are a number of reasons for this, including the following:

- The lack of disabled persons' entrances to such institutes.
- The lack of programmes, equipment or training facilities specially adapted to their medical conditions.
- The reluctance of women to take part in professional or vocational training.
- The distance of the education centres from the homes of disabled persons.

(iii) Work

Unemployment is higher among disabled women than among other economically active groups of women. This is due to a number of reasons, including the following:

- Lack of access to education;
- Lack of opportunity to acquire the skills and certification necessary to enter the labour market; and
- The negative image in society of disabled persons and unwillingness of business-owners to employ them.

With regard to laws concerning social care for disabled persons and the way society should deal with their right to work, Section 4, paragraph 2, of the code concerning social care for blind and visually impaired persons grants preference to this group for positions appropriate for their medical circumstances in both the public and the private sector. Section 6, paragraph 3, provides that all necessary support must be given to production cooperatives formed by disabled persons and that Government agencies, local communities and public institutions must purchase all their requirements from such cooperatives. Section 5 deals with the retraining of employees who have lost their sight or become visually impaired, in order to enable them to fill positions appropriate to their condition rather than being forced into retirement or removed from the civil service. This policy also applies to disabled female civil servants.

Article 17 of the code concerning social care for disabled persons affirms the principle of non-discrimination in access to employment on the basis of disability. Article 18 provides that an employee or labourer who suffers from a disability which prevents him from carrying out his usual work must be assigned to some other work which is compatible with his disability and be provided with retraining for the new job. Articles 19 and 20 list some of the public and private sector jobs for which preference is to be given to disabled persons and specifies the percentage of such jobs to be set aside for them. Article 11 encourages the administration to support cooperatives formed by disabled persons

and extends to them all necessary aid, including by purchasing supplies for Government agencies and local communities from such cooperatives.

With regard to the enforcement provisions, article 15 of these provisions urges Government agencies to create sheltered workshops for the retraining of disabled persons, while article 16 requires lists to be prepared of posts for which disabled persons may have priority, together with the percentage of such posts to be set aside for them out of all the posts for which financial appropriations have been made in the budgets of the Government administration and its subsidiaries.

(b) The strategy for the promotion of disabled women of the Secretariat of State in charge of Disabled Persons

(i) The National Plan of Action

In order to carry out the Moroccan Government's undertaking before the Chamber of Representatives and the Chamber of Advisers to work to protect disabled persons and strengthen and improve the bases for their acceptance, training and support, the Secretariat of State in charge of Disabled Persons has prepared a National Plan of Action aimed at the social integration of male and female disabled persons, while at the same time giving priority to disabled women, in view of the unique conditions and difficulties they face.

In the area of education, this plan aims, inter alia, to integrate sections for male and female disabled students into normal educational institutions, train specialized educators, create audio libraries and publish textbooks in Braille. Practical measures are to be taken to ensure that special attention is paid to the education and training of disabled girls.

With regard to training and employment, the Secretariat of State in charge of Disabled Persons has made grants available to organizations, including women's groups, that work for the integration of disabled persons, with a view to helping them to educate and employ such persons.

In conjunction with the Aïn Shukak community in the Sefrou region and the Menasra community in the Kenitra region, preparations are currently being made to implement two projects to benefit disabled rural women. The projects involve the creation of a centre for professional training, with a view to integrating disabled and other women into the labour market and organizing them into production co-operatives or small businesses. The Secretariat also provides funds for the purchase of tools and equipment which increase the independence of disabled women and enable them to engage in work which produces a steady and reliable income, such as sewing, weaving and other similar machines. It has also organized awareness-raising days in the towns of Khemisset, Salé and Serrat in order to make both the public and private sectors aware of the importance of employing disabled persons and encourage donor agencies to extend loans to disabled persons who wish to start small businesses.

In cooperation with the International Labour Office, the Secretariat has organized a tripartite national conference bringing together employers, national

unions and other sectors involved in employment, in order to discuss ways to facilitate the entry of disabled persons into the labour market.

On 30 April 1999 the Secretariat organized a study day on the condition of disabled women, with the aim of focusing on the unique features of this condition and the areas in which action can be taken to protect and advance the rights of disabled women.

(ii) Training programme centred around local community

This programme was adopted in 1995, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNFPA and has been implemented in the three towns of Settat, Khemisset and Salé. The aim of the programme is to integrate disabled persons into their local community in such a way as will guarantee their rights and confirm the principles of equality of opportunity and social justice. The provision of training services, including education, training, employment, health care and assimilation services is coordinated at local level. After a three-year evaluation period, this programme will, in the future, be gradually extended to all parts of the country.

It is worth noting that there has been an increase in the number of associations set up in order to benefit disabled women which, working alongside the Secretariat of State in charge of Disabled Persons, as do other disabled persons-related associations, play an effective role in educating disabled women, raising their awareness and directing them towards the various services available.

The Secretariat of State in charge of Disabled Persons provides support for such associations, with the purpose of promoting the common development of Government sectors and civil society.

(iii) Changes in legislation

The Secretariat of State in charge of Disabled Persons is currently reviewing the legislative and executive texts relating to disabled persons, with a view to ensuring that disabled women and those caring for disabled children are able to enjoy all the rights and facilities which will assist them in overcoming the difficulties they face as a result of their disabilities.

To that end, a national council has been established bringing together the various relevant Government sectors and non-governmental organizations and authorities that specialize in the fields of law and Islamic jurisprudence.

4. Women who have been deserted

This group consists of women whose husbands have left the marital home without warning and without divorcing their wives. The law provides such women with the right to file suit for divorce. The process is, however, lengthy and slow, due, in large part, to the demand that women must produce evidence to prove that the husband has left and that they had no idea that he was intending to do so. Divorce can only be granted when it has been established that the

husband has been absent for one year and that there have been no reported sightings of him during that period.

This group of women is in the same position and suffers from the same difficulties as those referred to above in relation to divorced and widowed women, but for a minimum of one year after the disappearance of the husband and the granting of divorce do not have the same options, including remarriage, for dealing with their problems.

5. Single mothers

This group of women is marginalized in society because they have given birth outside marriage. This causes some of them to disembarass themselves of their children once they have given birth, either by leaving them in the hospital or by killing them. The doctor who attends the delivery is, furthermore, obliged to inform the police when an unmarried girl gives birth in hospital.

It is the children of these women who suffer most from the situation. Since their family name should by law be that of the father, they have no identity, because that name can only be acquired in the context of marriage. Should the father admit paternity of the child, he risks imprisonment. That being the case, he is encouraged to deny paternity and shirk his responsibility to recognize his offspring. An amendment to the Dahir governing civil status has made it possible for such children to take the family name of their mothers, provided that the male members of her family agree that the illegitimate child may bear their family name.

In view of the marginalization of single mothers and their straitened economic circumstances, they are one of the groups most likely to be involved in prostitution. There is a distinct lack of institutions able to provide support and protection for this group of women and enable them to become positively and effectively integrated into society. With the exception of a few national and international organizations which concern themselves mainly with the children of such women, and some women's groups that are making strenuous efforts in this regard, care for these women is still singularly lacking.

As part of the national campaign to combat violence against women (see Part Four of the report, below) the non-governmental organization Terre des Hommes, in cooperation with the Moroccan women's human rights defence group, organized a debate on the difficult situation of single mothers, with a view to drawing attention to the severity of the attendant social problems and the urgent need to address them.

That debate gave rise to a number of recommendations, including the following:

- That all the international conventions relating to the human rights of the child and women should be published in the official gazette, and national legislation brought into line with their provisions.

- That a child should be given an identity at birth, together with the right to use his mother's family name until such time as his father chooses or is legally directed to recognise him. The child's birth must be registered in order to enable him to enjoy all such rights as schooling and health care.
- Registry offices should be opened in all maternity centres throughout the country and registration procedures facilitated.
- A network of support and counselling centres for battered women should be set up in order to assist them in caring and providing financial support for their children.

6. Measures taken to combat the feminization of poverty

Pursuant to its commitment in the Government statement to Parliament to take steps to strengthen social cohesion by protecting the family and combatting the feminization of poverty, the Government of Morocco, by creating the Social Development Fund (see annexes), seeks to achieve local development, increase the capacities of its local partners and provide support for small income-generation projects of particular interest to women.

Pilot projects to combat poverty in urban and semi-urban areas have been put in place in Tangiers, Casablanca and Marrakesh by the Ministry of Social Development, Solidarity, Employment and Vocational Training, in cooperation with UNDP. These projects aim to test different approaches to social development based on partnership between the various actors in the public and private sectors and in civil society. They are also expected to produce integrated plans for the development of resources and improvement of basic services, as well as for the protection of the interests of vulnerable groups.

These projects accord priority to special care for young people and women, and centres have been set up in Tangiers and Marrakesh in order to provide protection from AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. Sewing workshops have also been established in Tangiers and Casablanca, and in Marrakesh a centre has been set up for vocational training and the integration of women through basic education and literacy classes.

The Secretariat of State in charge of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action organized a Solidarity and Eradication of Poverty Week during the period 16-24 October 1998, under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Muhammad, with the cooperation of UNDP, Government departments and elements of civil society. The aims of the Week included the following:

- To increase awareness in all classes of society of the importance of solidarity.
- To make a contribution to the establishment of a new culture in support of humanitarian action and of trust between the actors in the social field.

- To mobilize resources and contributions in kind and of services with a view to the following:
- To formulate effective projects to combat begging.
- To repair and equip shelters belonging to the public sector, local groups and voluntary groups.
- To focus on programmes for the eradication of poverty and humanitarian action in all Government departments.

For this purpose, an ethical committee was established under the presidency of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Muhammad, in order to oversee the administration of the financial resources contributed for the realization of the stated goals during this campaign.

PART FOUR: INFORMATION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND MEASURES  
TAKEN TO ELIMINATE IT

1. Legal measures aimed at eliminating violence against women

Under Moroccan law, violence is defined as any act of wounding, striking or any other form of assault, regardless of whether the action in question results in injury or disability of any kind (article 400 of the Criminal Code).

All forms of physical violence against women, including killing, striking, wounding or any other form of assault, however slight, are subject to penal sanctions (arts. 401-404).

Under article 484, the non-violent sexual molestation or attempted molestation of any minor person under the age of 15, whether male or female, is punishable by a term of imprisonment of between two and five years.

Under article 485, the violent sexual molestation or attempted molestation of any person, male or female, is punishable by a term of imprisonment of between five and 10 years. Where the victim is a minor under the age of 15, the offender is liable to a term of imprisonment of between 10 and 20 years. Rape is punishable by a term of imprisonment of between five and 10 years, and of between 10 and 20 years where the victim is a minor under the age of 15 (art. 486).

Under article 494, the use of blandishments, violence or threats to effect or to seek to effect the abduction or seduction of a married woman, or the removal of a married woman from the place where she is living at the behest of her lawful guardian or tutor, or the incitement of another person to use such blandishments, violence or threats for such purpose, is punishable by a term of imprisonment of from one to five years and a fine of 120,000 dirhams.

Under article 608, every act of violence or common assault is punishable by a period of detention of from one to 15 days or a fine of from 20 to 200 dirhams, or both.



Despite these penal sanctions, Moroccan women have continued to be subjected to an increasing incidence of violence as a result of a number of factors which may be summarized as follows:

- The regrettable cultural heritage: beating has traditionally been regarded as a means of instruction and correction;
- The view that women are inferior, and that consequently it is necessary to correct them by the use of force;
- The reluctance of battered women to speak out;
- Women's ignorance of their rights, and the fact that there are few Government or non-governmental institutions that shelter or protect battered women.

## 2. Practical measures aimed at eliminating violence against women

Non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, working in partnership with a number of Government departments and agencies, have played an important role in sensitizing public opinion to the various forms of violence directed against women in Moroccan society, and in encouraging battered women to speak out about their experiences, by organizing numerous seminars and discussions in connection with the issue, and also by initiating legal action.

In addition, they have founded four women's centres, two in Casablanca and two in Rabat, where a battered woman can obtain not only sympathy and support but also legal and psychological counselling.

The Moroccan Government, for its part, has committed itself, in a statement to Parliament, to the preparation of an array of programmes aimed at protecting women from all forms of violence and abuse.

That commitment has been given material form in programmes developed by various Ministries. The Ministry in charge of Human Rights, for example, is to establish shelters for battered women in various parts of the country. The legislative measures aimed at eliminating violence against women, which are part of the national strategy for integrating women into development, include a proposal for the enactment of laws unambiguously prohibiting the phenomenon of sexual harassment and clearly defining the concept of violence in criminal law, including violence within the context of marriage.

In the context of the programme relating to human rights education in schools, which is being implemented jointly by the Ministry in charge of Human Rights and the Ministry of National Education, a comprehensive survey has been conducted with the aim of identifying concepts that are incompatible with human rights and concepts that tend to enhance them, including human rights in the area of gender equality and the rights of women.

During the coming year, the Ministry of National Education will be working to emend school textbooks with a view to fostering the spread of a human rights culture. This is a measure calculated to contribute to changing mentalities and

cultural behaviour among both men and women, in the context of the elimination of the above-mentioned legal provisions predicated on the assumption of the superiority of one sex over the other, which legitimizes the use of violence against women.

Moreover, on 18 September 1998 the Ministry of Justice and UNFPA signed a partnership agreement under which the phenomenon of violence against women is being observed and analysed through a series of research projects, the findings of which will be turned over to decision-makers, investigators and professional organizations.

In addition, on 15 and 16 July 1998 a Round Table on Reproductive Rights and Health was organized by the High Council on Population, under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Provision and Planning and in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNFPA. A prominent theme on the agenda of that Round Table was the issue of women and violence, and a number of recommendations were adopted in that connection, which may be summarized as follows:

- A study of the social and psychological effects observable in women who have been the victims of violence;
- Re-examination of school curricula and textbooks with a view to the complete elimination of all negative images of girls and women and the inclusion of the concepts of human rights in general, and the rights of women in particular;
- Establishment of shelters for battered women;
- Empowerment of women with respect to decision-making in the areas of social, political, legal and economic development;
- Strengthening of measures designed to protect the rights of children, girls and women, and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against them, by working to harmonize the requirements of international instruments with domestic law.

In the context of the campaign against violence toward women organized by UNIFEM, which ran from 31 July to 15 December 1998, the Secretariat of State in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children, working in partnership with all Government departments and agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned with the issue, conducted a 16-day (24 November-10 December 1998) nation-wide information campaign on eliminating violence against women. The object of the campaign was to sensitize public opinion through media messages on the various forms of violence against women and the adverse effect of that phenomenon on their dignity and fundamental rights.

On 21 April 1999, a workshop was organized to evaluate the campaign and to consider ways and means of setting up a practical programme designed to combat the phenomenon of violence against women with a view to its ultimate eradication.

We may recall at this point that the national strategy for integrating women into development (see part six of this report) emphasized the need to strengthen the fundamental legal and political position of women and to take various practical measures, including a far-reaching sensitization and awareness-generation campaign aimed at public opinion in order to attenuate the phenomenon of violence against women, bring national legislation into harmony with international instruments, and promote the establishment of research centres specializing in the provision of legal assistance and guidance for women.

PART FIVE. MOROCCO'S DECLARATIONS ON AND RESERVATIONS TO CERTAIN  
ARTICLES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL  
FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The current Moroccan Government undertook, in the context of a statement made before both chambers of Parliament, to work to harmonize Moroccan law with international instruments. It also undertook, on that same occasion, to enhance the legal position of women on the basis of the principle of equality of opportunity and the application of international instruments and declarations ratified by Morocco. Lastly, it committed itself to a gradual revision of the Moudouana (Code of Personal Status), insofar as such revision was not incompatible with the values of the Islamic religion.

These commitments, taken together, may be regarded as an important indication that Morocco's declarations on and reservations to certain articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are likely to be withdrawn in due course.

At the same time, Government departments and agencies and the universities on the one hand, and the institutions of civil and political society on the other, have undertaken a major programme of studying the Shariah and examining its contents in order to elucidate the humanitarian values that are such a prominent feature of our Islamic faith.

The libraries and universities of Morocco are overflowing with studies and research papers on issues of the Shariah and the relationship between its provisions and those of positive law on the status of women. Furthermore, scholarly colloquia and conferences on the same subject are held from time to time. For example, the Ministry of Religious Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs devoted the fifth session of the Islamic Awakening Assembly (which it convenes every year) on 29 and 30 October 1999 (see Annex) to a discussion of the topic "The rights and duties of women in Islam". At this particular session, the participants were invited to discuss the following:

- Historical issues in the evolution of the status of women;
- Educational, social and legal issues relating to the cultural, religious and historic roots of the existing situation;
- Other issues relating to polygamy and inheritance.

Concurrently with the session, a committee of scholars was established, comprising religious scholars and activists from various women's organizations and politico-cultural awareness groups, with the mandate of examining women's issues in the light of the Shariah.

A non-governmental women's organization known as "Jusur (bridges), the meeting-place of Moroccan women", recently held a symposium on "The women's issue and ijtihad (interpretive judgement) in Islam". Representatives of every possible point of view on women's rights were invited to attend, to discuss the legal situation of women and how it might evolve in accordance with new approaches to ijtihad in Islam.

Each of these various initiatives has been aimed, basically, at propagating an Islamic culture that acknowledges equality between the sexes. They have also constituted efforts in the direction of revising the Moudouana along lines compatible with the principles and teachings of the Shariah.

PART SIX. THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO  
DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF FOLLOW-UP TO THE BEIJING  
DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

In this connection, the Secretariat of State in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children, working in coordination with the World Bank, has prepared a short- and medium-term National Strategy for integrating women into development (see the Annex for the full text of the Strategy).

The following are some of the priorities on which the Strategy is based. All of them are relevant to the integration of women into the economic, political, cultural and social areas of life, in which at present they are underrepresented:

- Strengthening the legal, economic, social and political status of women;
- Education and literacy;
- Reproductive health and basic health education;
- Gainful employment, training and poverty.

This Strategy is aimed at enhancing the social, economic, political and legal status of women in Morocco by providing those who are active in these various areas with a meaningful, effective work tool that they can use to attain that end.

The realistic and practical Strategy was adopted following a broadly based consultation and acceptance process. Furthermore, the Strategy takes into account the fundamental elements of the Moroccan identity and the country's economic and structural capabilities. The Strategy relies simultaneously on international and national authority:

- International authority derived from the stated position of the international community, notably the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and international legal instruments, including both those relating to human rights in general and those relating to the status of women in particular;
- National authority derived from the political will manifested in the Government's expressed determination to enhance the legal, political, economic, cultural and social status of women.

Another aim of the Strategy is to provide the Government and all parties concerned with a effective methodology for educational purposes.

#### Practical measures that have been taken to implement the Strategy

- A follow-up committee has been established, made up of women representatives of organizations working in the field of social action, the family and women, as well as a number of investigators and representatives of Government departments and agencies concerned with the status of women.

Membership of the committee is permanent, and every member has full powers to take appropriate decisions.

The committee was established with three ends in view:

- Contributing to the identification of the Strategy's characteristic concepts and the definition of their content;
- Consultation among all partners, including both members of the committee itself and non-members;
- Furthering of the intended work and activities, and encouraging the various concerned parties to reach agreement on the Strategy.

The committee has set up a technical subcommittee to provide coordination between experts and the follow-up committee, and to prepare and oversee the formulation of the Strategy.

Four workshops were organized for discussion and consultation on the issues that were subsequently approved as the basis of the Strategy and have since given rise to a series of proposals relating to the several fields identified as deserving priority in the context of the effort to integrate women into development (see Annex).

The Strategy was presented and approved in the context of a national symposium held on 19 March 1999. The symposium, which was organized by the Secretariat of State in charge of Social Protection, the Family and Children, in cooperation with the World Bank, was chaired by the Prime Minister and was attended by a senior officer of the Bank and a number of Ministers.

A ministerial committee has been established to study the various measures set forth in the Strategy with a view to activating their implementation.

We may note at this point that somewhat earlier, on 28 February 1997, the National League of Women Employees of the Public and Parapublic Sector, which is a non-governmental women's organization, had submitted to the Government of Morocco a forward-oriented strategy for the advancement of women (see Annex) after having organized two workshops, held in Rabat on 27 and 28 June 1996, on the theme "Evaluation of strategies and programmes for the advancement of women in Morocco".

This initiative led to the formation of a follow-up committee to formulate the strategy after analysis and evaluation of programmes and projects that had been executed and those that were currently being executed by various parties concerned with the issue, including public agencies, elected bodies, political parties, non-governmental women's organizations and international organizations.

The membership of the committee included the most important women's organizations and non-governmental associations, representatives from various political parties and other prominent persons who had taken part in the two workshops, as well as a number of leading experts in the fields of law, Shariah, economics and human rights.

Kingdom of Morocco  
Ministry in charge of Human Rights  
Minister's Office

Annexes to the second periodic report on implementation  
of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of  
Discrimination against Women

- Documents introducing the Women's Leadership Training Centre (CLEF).
- Documents relating to a training course on "Women and the elections" organized by women's associations with a view to enabling more women to stand as candidates and be elected at the local elections of June 1997 (in Arabic and French).
- Documents relating to the fifth session of the Islamic Awakening Assembly, devoted to the topic "The rights and duties of women in Islam" (newspaper articles), 29-30 October 1998.
- Programme of the seminar organized by the Moroccan Human Rights Organization on "Islam and human rights", 27-29 November 1998.
- Documents relating to the international symposium organized by "Jusur, the meeting-place of Moroccan women" on "The women's issue and ijtihad in Islam", 19-20 June 1999.
- Two research papers by Dr. Aïcha Belarbi (Secretary of State in charge of Cooperation) on the women's movement in Morocco (in Arabic and French).
- A number of media reports on women.
- The Strategy for integrating women into development (in Arabic).
- Publications of the Ministry in charge of Human Rights on:
  - Agreements ratified by Morocco in the field of human rights
  - The Geneva Conventions to which Morocco has acceded in the area of international humanitarian law
  - The Convention on the Rights of the Child (two copies, Arabic and French)
- Informational materials on:
  - a human rights curriculum;
  - training units in the field of human rights education.

- Newspaper articles on the national campaign to eliminate violence against women, 24 November-10 December 1998.
- Posters relating to:
  - The Government celebration of 8 March 199-
  - The programme of the national campaign to eliminate violence against women
  - The Government's statement
  - The employment bill
  - Statistical information on Morocco for 1997
- Two REMALD publications:
  - The general elections of 1997
  - The legislative elections of 1997
- Introductory report prepared for the workshop organized by CERAB and UNRISD, with support from UNDP, 26 July 1995.

"The urban female workforce as a competitive advantage for Morocco," by Professor Saad Belghazi (INSEA).

- A summary report on a research project dealing with women and business in Morocco.
- Survey commissioned by l'association ESPOD, funded by the Agency for International Development (USAID).
- Conducted by LRS under the direction of Mohamed Al Aouad in October 1992.
- "The family in Morocco: family solidarity networks," CERED 1996.
- "A vulnerable population category: socio-demographic profile and spatial distribution," CERED 1997.
- "Matrimonial status and family strategies," CERED 1997.
- "Gender and development: socio-demographic and cultural aspects of sexual differentiation," CERED 1998.
- "The new Moroccan constitution of 1996: innovative aspects and outlook," REMALD publications, "Current issues" series, No. 10.
- BAJ: Reproductive health



- "Social indicators, 1996," Statistics Directorate
- "Social indicators, 1997," Statistics Directorate
- General census of population and housing, 1994: Statistics Directorate
- 1994 census: Ministry in charge of population.

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