



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

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**Responses to the list of issues and questions with
regard to the consideration of the sixth periodic
report**

Burkina Faso*

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Burkina Faso
Ministry for the Advancement of Women

Unity — Progress — Justice

**Responses to the list of issues and questions with regard to
the consideration of the sixth periodic report**

Paragraph 1 of the list of issues (CEDAW/C/BFA/Q/6)

1. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women (MPF) works in conjunction with civil society, especially through the “make-do” principle. Civil society organizations have therefore been involved as a matter of course in the production of the sixth report, as has the Parliament.

Paragraph 2

2. In Burkina Faso, the collection of national data is a matter for the Government. The National Statistics Council, which was set up under Act No. 040/96/ADP of 8 November 1996, coordinates the collection of statistical data and ensures that specific issues such as gender are taken into account. Generally speaking, the data collected through censuses and surveys is limited to global issues affecting the population and its living conditions. It does not often reflect trends in the situation of women.

3. Only in 2010 did the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD) produce a booklet under the title “Women and men in Burkina Faso”, with the support of its development partners and assistance from the Ministry for the Advancement of Women. In addition to the areas mentioned above, this publication gives an overview of the gaps which persist between men and women, to the detriment of women, in the sphere of decision-making and with regard to violence and crime.

4. A coordinating mechanism, the Permanent Secretariat of the Action Plan for the Advancement of Women (SP/PAPF), has been set up in the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, and has done much to establish focal points in all government departments and national institutions. The aim of this initiative is to encourage all government departments and institutions to identify and pursue action specifically for the benefit of women and girls, in order to improve their living and working conditions. The Permanent Secretariat is responsible for coordinating all action of this kind.

5. In order to monitor and assess the progress made through programmes for the advancement of women, regular meetings are held, on a quarterly and annual basis, between SP/PAPF and the focal points, in order to build on and pursue the achievements of these programmes.

Paragraph 3

6. Article 151 of the Constitution of 11 June 1991 states that “Treaties and agreements regularly ratified or approved have, from their publication, higher authority than laws, provided that, in respect of each agreement or treaty, the other party applies that treaty or agreement.”

7. This clause in the Constitution provides that treaties or agreements regularly ratified by Burkina Faso take precedence over domestic laws. Consequently, the status of a convention is superior to that of the country’s laws, but inferior to the Constitution.

8. There are some cases in which this clause has been applied, but mainly in employment disputes (wage discrimination, dismissal on grounds of maternity).

Paragraph 4

9. Increasing women's access to justice requires a closer relationship between the justice system and those seeking to use it. The National Plan for Judicial Reform provides for various kinds of action focused on training, communication and awareness-raising, documentation, infrastructure and equipment, and the policy on prisons.

10. There are also plans to set up a support fund for a rule-of-law State (FAED), the aim being to enhance the role played by democratic institutions and civil society in the process of consolidating the rule of law, democracy and good governance.

11. Under FAED there will be activities specifically targeted at women, for the purpose of equipping them with the knowledge and resources to exercise their obligations and rights more effectively in the process of democratization, and ensuring that they play a full part in public life.

12. The measures taken to improve women's access to justice also include the translation of legal texts of interest to women into the national languages (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Code of the Individual and the Family, etc.) and the production in national languages of collections of texts and guides on women's rights. Campaigns to disseminate these texts, and mass information and awareness-raising campaigns about women's rights, are conducted among the public at large in all the country's regions, by representatives both of the State and of civil society.

13. The Government has also been conducting literacy campaigns for women since 2009, in all the country's 45 provinces. Women who have become literate by this means will be able to improve their legal knowledge by using the legal texts in translation.

14. To improve legal aid for women, the Government and human rights organizations and defenders are increasingly training "paralegals" in rural areas, whose main task in the places where they live is to listen to women whose human rights have been violated, advise them and, where necessary, point them in the appropriate direction.

15. There has also been a directive on legal aid since July 2009, and the Ministry of Justice is presently setting up committees to institute its provision.

Paragraph 5

16. The second Action Plan comprised six programmes, as follows:

- Improving women's incomes and working conditions
- Strengthening women's human capacities, and promoting their skills
- Protecting the rights of women and young girls
- Increasing the role of women in managing the environment and their own surroundings
- Advocacy and social mobilization to draw attention to the inequalities from which women suffer
- Strengthening the institutional machinery for the advancement of women

17. Following the adoption in 2004 of the national policy for the advancement of women, the second Action Plan was brought into line with this policy, leading to the adoption of the third Action Plan for the period 2006–2010.

18. CN-PAPF held its first session in 2003, the key topic being: “Strategy for implementing the 2003–2007 Action Plan for the advancement of women.”

19. The measures in favour of women over the period 2001–2007 were:

- Providing women’s associations, groups and networks with 6,292 units of technology of about 30 different kinds, to enable them not only to carry on income-generating activities, but also and most importantly, to reduce the amount of drudgery involved in their daily tasks. The cost incurred by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women in purchasing the units over the period 2001–2007 was 1,934,040,392 CFA francs inclusive of tax (see Annex, Table 1).
- The construction of 42 women’s clubs for the benefit of local people. Five more clubs have been built through collaboration on the ground between the beneficiary population and their technical and financial partners.

Paragraph 6

20. On 8 July 2009 the Government adopted a National Gender Policy, its aim being to make of Burkina Faso “a society freed of all kinds of gender inequality and iniquity, and which guarantees all its people, both men and women, the essential safeguards for them to flourish in a social, cultural, political and economic sense”.

21. The following steps have been taken to implement the policy:

- Setting up a steering mechanism, which is currently being introduced, to monitor progress at the institutional level, comprising decision-making and advisory bodies, permanent coordination bodies, a monitoring and assessment tool, etc.
- The Action Plan for the advancement of women is currently in preparation
- The establishment of a fund for the advancement of women, financed from the national budget
- Mobilizing additional resources from Burkina Faso’s partners, etc.

22. In primary education, the implementation of BRIGHT I and II (Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls’ Chances To Succeed), a project to support the education of girls in Burkina Faso, has been financed by the United States Government through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the United States Agency for International Development.

23. The BRIGHT project has achieved:

- The construction of 132 school buildings each holding 3 classes, 396 units of housing for teachers, 264 latrines, 132 wells and 10 community-based learning centres in the 10 provinces of Burkina Faso
- The opening of 262 literacy centres (2007–2008)
- Training 7,211 staff members for the Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy (MEBA) (2006–2007)
- Giving special awards to 20 outstanding teachers (2006–2008)
- Turning round the gender ratio of girls to boys in the project schools: 9,282 girls registered, by comparison with 7,882 boys
- The project introduced through Order No. 2009-/MEBA/SG/DGEB/DPEF, to coordinate action by the various partners working to promote girls’ education

- The project introduced through a joint decree of the Ministries of Basic Education and Mass Literacy, Secondary and Higher Education and Scientific Research, Human Rights and Youth, governing the formation, composition, tasks and functions of the national, regional and provincial steering committees for the campaign on “learning without fear” and the action plan to combat violence against girls in school
24. The pilot project to build community homes for girls (MCJF) in post-primary education. The purpose of these homes is to provide places where girls at school can study, relax and live together safely, and/or receive a specific type of education and engage in practical and recreational activities.
25. The first MCJF is being built in Manga, in Zoundwéogo province.
26. The following measures have been introduced in secondary and higher education:
- In the Ministry of Secondary and Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESSRS), girls are underrepresented at these levels (in 2007/08, only 41.9 per cent of secondary school pupils were girls). The situation has however been improving in recent years. Between 2003/04 and 2007/08, the numbers of girls increased by an average of 13.5 per cent, compared with 11.5 per cent for boys.
 - In 2009, MESSRS adopted its subsectoral policy for secondary and higher education and research. Under this policy, equity is a central concern. To speed up the rate at which girls enter secondary and higher education, in 2007 the Ministry set up the National Council for Girls’ Secondary and Higher Education (CNFSS) and a technical department, called the Department for Girls’ Secondary and Higher Education (DEFSS).

Paragraph 7

27. The Government is endeavouring, through the legal system, to eliminate discriminatory customs and traditions and gender-based stereotypes. Legal provisions on this question include:
- The adoption of the law stipulating a 30 per cent quota for both sexes in the lists of candidates in parliamentary and local elections (see the reply to paragraph 15)
 - The framework education law of 30 July 2007, which states that basic education, and compulsory school attendance from the ages of 6 to 16, is a national priority. In addition, under this law everyone has a right to education without discrimination based on gender, social origin, race or religion, and basic public education is free of charge
28. As to awareness-raising, a number of initiatives have been taken, including:
- The institution of an annual International Day for families and against violence against women, with awareness-raising activities based on government documents and legislation relating to the family, organized for those living even in the remotest parts of the country. Neighbourhood activities, such as legal and social advice centres, provide a setting in which marital and family conflicts can be talked over and resolved.
 - The Government has undertaken to make combating violence a priority, through the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, the Ministry of Social Services and National Solidarity (MASSN) and the Ministry for the Promotion of Human Rights (MPDH).

- The involvement of civil society organizations (OSC), through public education and awareness-raising to prevent acts of violence; the increasing coordination of civil society activities helps to create synergy and to identify the most effective kinds of action among the public at large. Concerted action to combat violence against women is also achieved by setting up experimental and pilot schemes to coordinate efforts in this area.
- The advice and support provided by civil society organizations and the Ministry for the Advancement of Women in interviewing women and directing them towards appropriate services.
- The sustained commitment of the country's technical and financial partners, under the auspices of the United Nations system, to supporting the Government in combating violence against women.

Paragraph 8

29. The Penal Code contains provisions sanctioning violence of every kind. The priority at present is therefore to work through awareness-raising, advocacy and lobbying to change the mindsets, behaviour and attitudes which contribute most to prevailing social and cultural patterns.

30. The delay in adopting the new law on violence against women is also due to the concern on the part of the authorities to avoid producing a number of different enactments on the same subject, which would make it harder for the courts to apply them. This is the reason why all the draft legislation has been turned over to the committee reviewing the Penal Code, which is due to report by the end of 2010.

31. As violence against women is regarded as "normal" behaviour in the society, the Government has taken measures such as:

- Bringing pressure to bear for the involvement of customary and religious leaders in the awareness-raising campaigns for the elimination of violence against women
- The institution of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to be held on 25 November each year, providing an opportunity for tackling the issues involved
- Organizing television broadcasts on subjects relating to violence against women
- Organizing public forums on violence against women, especially the social exclusion of women accused of witchcraft

Paragraph 9

32. For the moment there is no legislation on domestic violence.

Paragraph 10

33. To avoid an accumulation of criminal law statutes, the draft laws on child pornography on the Internet and violence in schools have been referred to the committee responsible for reviewing the Penal Code. This review is ongoing.

Paragraph 11

34. There has not yet been any national study on violence against women. There have however been a few sectional studies, for example the baseline study on women's rights, violence against women and the use made of legal services in the area covered by PROSAD (Sexual Health Programme and Human Rights), which was carried out in 2006 in two regions of Burkina Faso, the east and the south-west.

35. According to this study, there are various types of violence against women – physical, verbal, moral and psychological. By examining the different types we can identify those which occur most commonly. For these two regions as a whole, the most frequently cited forms of violence are excessive amounts of housework (35.7 per cent of women and 38.1 per cent of men), physical cruelty (34 per cent for women and 41.5 per cent for men), and assault and battery (28.5 per cent for women and 27.8 per cent for men). Moral violence is mentioned by 32.7 per cent of women, compared with 25.3 per cent of men. Refusal to contribute to household expenses is mentioned by 21.8 per cent of women and 17.9 per cent of men.

36. As part of a project called “Justice and social communication”, concerning women in Burkina Faso, a study on violations of women's rights in marriage was carried out in 2006 by the Information, Communication and Training Network for Women (RECIF/ONG), GENIVAR and a group of young members of the Quebec Bar. The aim of the project, which ended in March 2009, was to help secure greater access for Burkinabé women to their rights by strengthening Burkinabé organizations working in social communication and human rights. The entire programme was supported by the Government of Canada, through the Office for Democratic Governance of the Canadian International Development Agency

37. This study, which focused on three regions of the country — the centre, the east and the south-west — was conducted with people working both in and outside the judicial system, including community leaders and opinion leaders.

38. The study concluded that the services available, either in or outside the legal system, do not fully meet the needs of women and men. They do not ensure that women have full access to their rights. To remedy this situation, regional coordination networks have been set up among groups which have already engaged in activities such as training community leaders and increasing cooperation between the various protagonists in the judicial and non-judicial systems.

39. A joint baseline study on violence against women in Burkina Faso was commissioned in 2008 by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), following reactions to the campaign to respond to and put an end to violence against women, launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Its overall objective was to help improve the state of knowledge about violence against women in Burkina Faso, in preparation for tackling the problem. The study covered six regions: Plateau Central, Sahel, Centre, Centre-Ouest, Boucle du Mouhoun and Hauts-Bassins.

40. This study, carried out through documentary research supplemented by a field survey, identified the scale of the phenomenon and gave an initial appraisal of the institutional and strategic approaches adopted to it within the country.

41. In conclusion, the study paved the way for a joint programme, structured around the preparation and implementation of a national action plan, which must reflect certain variables such as:

- The known types of violence against women
 - The considerable gains already made in combating violence against women in Burkina Faso, as well as the constraints
 - The particular fields of expertise of all the actors concerned, to ensure coordination of effort
 - The information and training needs of the populations and actors concerned, to ensure greater involvement in campaign activities
 - The resources needed to conduct the campaign
42. Launched in January 2010 for one year, the programme is being implemented in three regions: Plateau Central, Sahel and Hauts-Bassins.
43. The steps taken so far are: setting up community links, stepping up awareness-raising and advocacy with local officials and leaders, etc.
44. The findings of the various studies show that on paper, the law in Burkina Faso is quite protective of the rights of women and children. It is in practice that measures are lacking to ensure equality and equity between men and women, and to promote, protect and defend the rights of women in the family and in society, and protect women and girls from violence of every kind.
45. Moreover, many women withdraw their complaints almost immediately because of fear of the consequences of a court action, ignorance of the legal system and legal procedures, the slowness of the procedures, distance from court services, lack of legal aid or lack of funds.
46. Appropriate measures or kinds of action include:
- NGOs and organizations for the promotion and protection of women's rights could carry out information, awareness-raising and advocacy activities with customary and religious leaders and opinion leaders, remind them that women's rights are inalienable, and invite them to protect these rights
 - Sessions on gender training and women's rights could be organized for law enforcement personnel
 - Paralegals could be trained in all the country's regions
 - Advocacy and awareness-raising could focus on social and cultural patterns, with a view to changing people's attitudes
 - Training in the "gender approach" could be given to all those working in the education system, so as to neutralize sexist stereotypes in behaviour
 - Violence against girls at school, as through sexual harassment and early and/or forced marriage, should be combated

Paragraph 12

47. The changes taking place in the practice of excision, typically through strategies adopted by the excisors to escape the law (clandestine operations, taking girls abroad, reducing the age for excision, simplifying or abandoning public rituals), have prompted the National Committee to Combat the Practice of Excision (CNLPE) to develop initiatives and specific kinds of action aimed at eliminating excision in Burkina Faso. As well as awareness-raising and communication activities to bring about changes in behaviour, these initiatives include:

- The public commitment expressed at the highest level by the President of Burkina Faso and his wife Madame Chantal Compaoré, First Lady of Burkina Faso, Honorary Chairperson of the National Committee to Combat the Practice of Excision and goodwill ambassador for the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices (CIAF). On 25 May 2009, during the commemoration at Kaya of the 10th national day to combat the practice of excision, this culminated in a process by which religious and customary leaders, in the presence of the President, undertook to eliminate the practice.
- The adoption, on 27 May 2009, of the National Action Plan for 2009–2013 “Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation”.
- Increasing the allocation from the State budget for 2010 for action to promote the elimination of the practice of excision.
- Advocacy with the technical and financial partners for funding for the Action Plan 2009–2013.
- Stepping up the activities of the provincial committees combating the practice of excision (CPLPE) and setting up new committees.
- Bringing the pressure of the law prohibiting excision to bear on those carrying out excisions and their accomplices, by entering into partnership with the law enforcement agencies.
- Applying the law (prosecutions ...).

48. In 2008, denunciations produced the following results: 270 excisions of girls were recorded, 2 girls died, 1 girl escaped the procedure because of a denunciation, 10 excisors and 239 accomplices were arrested — 249 persons in total — and there were 113 guilty verdicts in the 115 court judgements brought to our notice.

Table 1

Guilty verdicts in 2008

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. 8 hearings on 10 December 2008 | High Court of Kaya | 4 excisors and 26 accomplices were sentenced to terms of imprisonment of between 6 and 18 months |
| 2. 30 hearings | | |
| 3. 77 hearings on 3 September 2009 involving excisions which took place on 8 September 2008 | High Court of Dédougou, in an extraterritorial hearing | 1 excisor and 6 women were sentenced to terms of strict imprisonment, and 71 accomplices received a deferred 36-month sentence |

Paragraph 13

MASSN (Ministry of Social Services and National Solidarity) situation concerning the trafficking of women in Burkina Faso

49. Since 2000, Burkina Faso has been working to combat trafficking of children. In 2001 it ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

50. As the work has evolved and for the sake of consistency with the Convention, the law on trafficking in children has been reviewed in order to take account of trafficking in persons in general, and especially in women and children, as well as similar practices such as illicit trafficking in migrants and the illicit exploitation of begging.

51. The new law, Act No. 09296AN/2008 on combating trafficking in persons and similar practices, thus makes it possible to protect all those who fall victim to traffickers, especially children and women.

52. As far as women in particular are concerned, and in the absence of any survey on the subject, experience shows that foreign women are trafficked for the purpose of exploiting them for prostitution, work in bars and clubs, and in gold mining.

53. It must be noted that the Government is aware of the phenomenon of trafficking in women, and the adoption of this new law shows that it is determined to deal with it.

Paragraph 14

54. Under article 424 of the Penal Code in force in Burkina Faso, adopted by the National Assembly in November 1996, the exploitation of prostitution is a punishable offence. A person convicted of this offence is subject to a term of imprisonment of 1 to 3 years, and a fine of 300,000 to 900,000 francs.

55. The criminal courts have several times had occasion to apply this provision.

56. The commune of Ouagadougou has carried out an inquiry into the problems of prostitution in the city of Ouagadougou. It has been found that many young girls resort to prostitution, for economic and other reasons. Awareness-raising activities are therefore being conducted to prompt them to give it up. They are also being offered support in the form of income-generating activities such as catering, sewing, fabric dyeing, etc. Steps are also being taken by the municipal council of Ouagadougou commune to close down brothels. There is however much still to be done, given the reluctance of some girls to give up the practice.

Paragraph 15

57. The law on the quota was adopted by Parliament on 16 April 2009.

58. The law provides specific measures to ensure its application, including penalties. Any party or party bloc which fails to respect the 30 per cent quota rule will lose 50 per cent of the public funds allocated to it.

59. The first elections following the adoption of the quota law will take place in 2012.

Paragraph 16

60. On the question of international representation, we note that of Burkina Faso's 28 accredited ambassadors, only 5 are women: those serving in Italy, Canada, Egypt, Tunisia and Denmark.

Paragraph 17

61. The State is making significant efforts to improve women's access to education and literacy, such as:

- Developing an action plan for women's literacy and training over the period 2007–2010, comprising a number of major initiatives

- Introducing incentives, including:
 - Building a crèche at every literacy centre, to enable the mothers to follow the literacy courses.
 - Providing reading and arithmetic books and stationery free of charge for women studying on the courses.
 - Training women in particular skill areas (FTS) to enable them to learn a range of income-generating activities (AGR). This strategy is intended not only to encourage women's attendance at the centres, but also to enable them to acquire new skills.
 - Providing funding for women who have received FTS training, so that they can begin income-generating activities.
 - Issuing certificates of literacy to women who have completed the Basic Supplementary Training course (FCB).
 - Holding a national literacy week in September each year to mark International Literacy Day.
 - Holding a National Literacy Forum every three years, to assess progress in literacy and non-formal education, draw lessons from the past and make plans for the future.
 - Training workshops in subjects such as dressmaking, bricklaying, mechanics, agriculture, stockbreeding, welding and joinery are available to those wishing to attend.

62. When their training is over, these young women are given technical and financial support from the State so that they can settle back in their home areas and thereby mitigate the problem of the rural exodus.

63. It should also be noted that voluntary and non-governmental organizations use the same alternative approach to helping young women to adapt to their situation in life.

64. The table below gives the figures for enrolments in the various centres from 2006 to 2009.

Table 2

Enrolments on innovative and alternative courses

| <i>Alternative courses</i> | <i>2006/07</i> | <i>2007/08</i> | <i>2008/09</i> | <i>Increase</i> |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| CEBNF (Centres for non-formal basic education) | 3 724 | 4 087 | 4 480 | 393 |
| Ecom | 1 877 | 2 321 | 2 964 | 643 |
| CBN | 416 | 2 596 | 6 691 | 4 095 |

Source: DEP/MEBA (Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy).

65. Enrolments at the centres for basic non-formal education have increased from a total of 4,087 at all levels in 2007/08 to 4,480 by the end of 2008/09, including 2,017 girls. This represents a positive gain of 393 students.

66. There are also community centres and schools run by civil society organizations. Centres run by the NGO Tin Tua have had 6,691 enrolments, including 1,779 women, and community schools run by the FDC organization registered 2,964 students in 2008/09,

including 1,518 girls, compared with 2,321 in 2007/08, representing a positive gain of 643 enrolments.

67. Legislative measures:

- Decree No. 2009-644/PRES/PM/MEBA/MAHRH/MASSN/MESSRS/MATD/MJE of 8 September 2009, on arrangements for non-formal education
- Order No. 2010-0015/MEBA/SG/DGAENF, on the terms of reference for those working in non-formal education
- Act No. 13-2007/AN of 30 July 2007, the framework education law
- The implementation of the education reform, covering preschool, primary and post-primary education

68. All these legislative measures help to improve access for girls and women to formal and non-formal education and to literacy.

Paragraph 18

69. As already mentioned in the report, the 10-year plan for the development of basic education (PDDEB) is a framework policy document. It is in its second phase and is drawing to a close.

Table 3

Education trends from 2000/01 to 2008/09

| Indicators | 2000/01 | 2001/02 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| TBA (overall) | 47.4 | 49.3 | 55.4 | 68.8 | 72.7 | 73.2 | 80.7 | 86.9 | 78.0 |
| TBA (girls) | 40.2 | 42.2 | 47.4 | 63.8 | 66.3 | 66.8 | 75.0 | 82.9 | 75.5 |
| TBS (overall) | 45.9 | 46.5 | 48.7 | 53.3 | 57.7 | 61.4 | 67.0 | 71.8 | 72.4 |
| TBS (girls) | 37.9 | 38.9 | 41.1 | 46.1 | 50.5 | 54.3 | 60.1 | 65.7 | 67.7 |

Source: DEP/MEBA (Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy).

Table 4

School completion rates by sex, 2004 to 2009^{a, b}

| | 2004/05 | | | 2005/06 | | | 2006/07 | | | 2007/08 | | | 2008/09 | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total |
| National total | 36.6 | 28.7 | 32.8 | 37.6 | 30.4 | 34.1 | 41.26 | 33.51 | 37.32 | 44.7 | 36.3 | 40.7 | 45.6 | 37.8 | 41.7 |

Source: DEP/MEBA (Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy).

^a The parity index is currently 0.87.

^b According to the tables above, the aims of the PDDEB have largely been achieved.

Paragraph 19

70. The immediate and concrete measures taken to remedy the obstacles to girls' access to education, and to prevent drop outs, include:

- Organizing catch-up classes during the holidays for elementary (CE) and intermediate (CM) pupils where pockets of resistance are found
- Setting up clubs where girls' attendance and success at school can be monitored
- Introducing incentives, such as:
 - Promoting school canteens to improve children's access, attendance and success, especially among girls
 - Providing children with textbooks and stationery free of charge
 - Giving awards for excellence
 - Strengthening the technical and operational capacity of the community organizations in partnership with MEBA (the Association of Mothers of Pupils (AME)/Parent-Teacher Associations (APE), and management committees (COGES) through training in their roles and responsibilities and in running micro-projects, and financial support for income-generating activities (AGR))
 - The benefits derived from these AGRs enable the organizations concerned to undertake awareness-raising and other activities which help to improve the school access, attendance and success rates of pupils, especially girls
 - Training for education personnel in gender and children's rights
 - Setting up a National Council for the Prevention of Violence in School (CNPVE) through Order No. 2009-298/MESSRS/SG/DGES
 - Developing a partnership with NGOs and voluntary organizations working for girls' education

71. In secondary education, the measures have focused on awareness-raising and advocacy. The DEFSS has carried out:

- A study on girls in secondary schools
- Awareness-raising campaigns in secondary schools on the theme of "Prevention-Sexuality-Education"
- A workshop devising advocacy strategies to speed up the rate of secondary school enrolment among girls
- A study on gender-based violence in the educational system

Paragraph 20

72. With regard to the Committee's previous recommendations in 2000 and 2005 to increase the number of women teachers, the State gives all the candidates the same chances. But the BRIGHT project favours women teachers in its schools.

73. This project has also introduced a bonus system for the best women teachers in its schools.

74. We note however that the numbers of women teachers in the education system are increasing, as the table below shows:

Table 5
Teachers in public and private primary schools

| <i>Sex</i> | <i>2005/06</i> | <i>2008/09</i> | <i>Difference</i> |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Men | 21 160 | 25 970 | 4 810 |
| Women | 9 181 | 13 013 | 3 832 |
| Total | 30 341 | 38 983 | 8 642 |

Source: Department of Surveys and Planning (DEP), Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy.

75. Numbers of women teachers have increased significantly, from 9,181 in 2005/06 to 13,013 in 2008/09, a positive difference of 3,832. This indicates genuine progress in bringing women teachers into the system.

76. As to negative images of women in school textbooks, the textbooks in question are presently being revised.

78. No measures have been undertaken in secondary schools. However, the Government has recently adopted a new teaching method called the approach by competences (APC). This new pedagogical approach calls for a review of lesson content, hence a review of textbooks, and this will make it possible to erase the negative images of women found in the textbooks.

Paragraph 21

79. Article 4 of the Labour Code of 13 May 2008 prohibits discrimination of any kind in employment or occupation.

80. This law applies to workers in the private sector. If the clause is infringed, a woman who has been discriminated against can complain to the Public Prosecutor or to the specialist arm of the labour inspectorate for the area where she lives. The labour inspectorate has competence to deal with individual and collective employment disputes.

81. Women in the public service and women who belong to the judiciary or the armed forces can submit a complaint about discrimination at work to the administrative courts, on the basis that the principle of equal access for all to public service jobs has been violated.

82. A number of such cases have been filed, and the victims have been successful, for example, in Judgement No. 03 of 5 February 2009 of the Koudougou employment tribunal, and Judgement No. 067 of 18 March 2009 of the Ouagadougou employment tribunal.

Paragraph 22

83. The informal sector is part of the overall framework for the implementation of the national policy on employment, adopted in May 2008, and the national policy on technical education and vocational training, adopted in July 2008.

84. Self-employment predominates in the informal employment sector. With 70 per cent of non-agricultural jobs, the informal sector is the leading employer in towns. It has 25 per cent of the jobs in rural areas. Women's employment accounts for over half of all informal jobs. Most women's jobs are small-scale activities such as "dressmaking", "catering" "street vending" and handicrafts.

The insecurity of women's employment

85. Women account for 47.3 per cent of jobs in the informal sector. Most of these jobs are in self-employment or domestic service.

86. In the area of employment promotion and the promotion of women's self-sufficiency, there are support funds which help women to finance their revenue-generating activities (AGR).

87. As regards the extension of social security, under Act No. 015-2006/AN of 11 May 2006, on the social security scheme for salaried workers living in Burkina Faso, those working in the informal sector or who are self-employed may take out voluntary insurance.

88. Like other member countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Burkina Faso took part in the feasibility study on the creation of a network of women economic operators in the WAEMU, which was validated in Bamako, Mali, in June 2004.

89. The Government has supported the establishment of the national body UFOB, the Union of Women Economic Operators of Burkina Faso.

90. In 2008 UFOB received technical support for training 50 women economic operators in business management, following the method "Start and Improve Your Business" (GERME), with the support of the WAEMU, training 25 women entrepreneurs in construction and public works (BTP) in managing small and medium-sized businesses (PME) with the support of the Ministry of Housing and Town Planning (MHU) in 2010, and in lobbying financial institutions for particular support for the activities of women entrepreneurs.

91. The Enterprise Centre of Burkina Faso (MEBF) supports projects undertaken by women entrepreneurs.

Paragraph 23

92. In Burkina Faso, rates of pay in the various occupations in the public and private sectors are the same for men and women.

93. Article 303 of Act No. 033-2004/AN of 14 September 2009 on the Labour Code stipulates that: "Where the conditions of work, the occupational qualifications and the output are equal, payment shall be equal for all workers, irrespective of origin, sex, age and status."

94. Labour inspectors, when monitoring the application of employment law in workplaces, must ensure that this clause is strictly adhered to.

Paragraph 24

95. As indicated in paragraph 116 of the report, although women do have technical competences these are found less frequently among women than among men.

- Fewer girls than boys enrol on scientific and technical courses, for the following reasons:
- The length of studies in the scientific disciplines
- The need to reconcile an occupation with family life
- Fewer openings

- There are too few study grants for the third cycle, in which only 30 per cent of the recipients of the grants awarded annually are girls
- These disciplines are perceived as being masculine

96. This is illustrated by the findings which follow, taken from the short survey carried out by the International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (CIEFFA) in December 2006 on school and university results for the year 2005/06 (see Table 6).

Table 6

Distribution of students according to Teaching and Research Unit (UFR) and sex

University of Ouagadougou, 2005/06

| | <i>Faculty</i> | | <i>Number of students</i> | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | <i>Males</i> | <i>Per cent</i> | <i>Females</i> | <i>Per cent</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| SJP | 2 568 | 62.34% | 1 551 | 37.66% | 4 119 |
| SEG | 3 293 | 78.1% | 923 | 21.9% | 4 216 |
| SEA | 1 242 | 94.9% | 67 | 5.11% | 1 309 |
| SH | 3 876 | 73.22% | 1 418 | 26.78% | 5 294 |
| LAC | 1 876 | 60.59% | 1 220 | 39.41% | 3 096 |
| SVT | 2 317 | 81.05% | 542 | 18.95% | 2 859 |
| SDS | 1 718 | 69.21% | 764 | 30.79% | 2 482 |
| IBAM | 216 | 48.75% | 227 | 51.25% | 443 |
| IDS | 340 | 79.62% | 87 | 20.38% | 427 |
| Total | 17 446 | 71.95% | 6 799 | 28.05% | 24 245 |

Source: Central Office for testing and secondary school competitive examinations (OCECOS).

97. Training and capacity-building programmes for girls and women do exist. Programmes for both men and women are also available outside the country.

98. There are capacity-building programmes for women working in agribusiness and in fruit and vegetable processing and conservation. They are found in both the private and the public sector, as in the Food Technology Department (DTA)/National Centre for Scientific and Technological Research (CNRST), the Institute for the Environment and Agricultural Research (INERA)/CNRST, and the Albert Schweitzer Ecology Centre. These training courses can make women more competitive on national and international markets.

99. Civil society organizations endeavour to offset a lack of competitiveness through awareness-raising and by organizing extra classes for girls enrolled on scientific and technical courses.

Paragraph 25

100. With a view to making domestic service a regular profession, the State has set up a training centre for girls who have dropped out of school. This centre offers a complete training course enabling girls to work in families and be paid the statutory minimum wage (SMIC) while retaining their independence. In addition, some NGOs and voluntary organizations conduct training, awareness-raising and follow-up of girls placed in families, to ensure they are properly treated. Codes of conduct have been drawn up and must be respected by the employers.

Paragraph 26

101. Steps have been taken to deal with the situation of repatriated women and girls. In 2003 they were provided with supplies of technology and equipment to enable them to engage in income-generating activities. They grouped themselves into associations and received technical training in the manufacture of various food products and household items. These products are regularly sold on the domestic market.

102. They can turn to the existing support funds for help in promoting their income-generating activities (AGR).

Paragraph 27

103. For the updated statistics on mortality and morbidity relating to women's health problems, and specifically reproductive health, we note the following:

Table 7

Trends in prenatal care (consultations)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>2003</i> | <i>2004</i> | <i>2005</i> | <i>2006</i> | <i>2007</i> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Per cent for 1st consultation | 70.9 | 81.9 | 80.8 | 85.3 | 93.6 |
| Per cent for 2nd consultation | nd | 62.0 | 63.8 | 61.2 | 69.9 |
| Proportion seen in the 1st trimester | 16.2 | 16.2 | 18.1 | 18.5 | 19.31 |

- The percentage of women giving birth was 54.63 per cent in 2007, compared with 43 per cent in 2006
- Contraceptive prevalence was 25.5 per cent in 2007, compared with 24.8 in 2006
- The maternal death rate in 2007 was 100.54 per 100,000 women giving birth

104. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Action is carrying out programmes for families and adolescents. The family planning programme for families has been relaunched. Awareness-raising activities are being conducted for the public at large.

Paragraph 28

105. As regards measures by the State to ensure equal access to health care and health-related services and information:

- The Health Code guarantees equal access to health care and to health-related services and information, including family health and family planning.
- The adoption on 22 December 2005 of Act No. 049-2005/AN, which spells out the components of better sexual reproductive health and specifies the equal right of citizens to enjoy it.
- Health services are provided in all the country's public health facilities on a basis of equality and equity, without discrimination of any kind.
- In all health facilities there are messages prompting changes in behaviour, and these are targeted especially at men, in order to win their support for decisions taken by women.

- Through the Yako appeal, on 14 June 2008, and the Gaoua Appeal on 16 November 2009 on the African Day of maternal and infant mortality reduction, the community was asked to make a commitment to that cause.
- The National Population Council, on each World Population Day, advocates rethinking about family planning and holds awareness-raising sessions about health and reproduction. Act No. 049-2005/AN of 22 December 2005 on reproductive health provides, in article 10, that “couples and individuals, including adolescents, have the right to make free and informed decisions on reproductive health matters, while respecting the laws in force and public order and decency”.

Paragraph 29

106. Targeted measures to combat high maternal mortality rates comprise:

- Care for women through the Minimum Package of Activities for all medical establishments, consisting of curative, preventive, promotional and rehabilitative procedures
- The introduction of a cost-sharing system, with subsidized arrangements for childbirth and for emergency obstetrical and neonatal treatment, so as to increase women’s use of health services
- An 80 per cent subsidy on contraceptive products, paid by the State and its partners
- A project to step up the recruitment of midwives
- Forming a roster of qualified birth attendants, in order to raise the skill levels of those already practising
- Providing medical establishments with the technical equipment required to treat women
- Drawing up a strategic plan to ensure the safety of reproductive health products
- Providing reproductive health services in all the country’s medical establishments
- In-service training and retraining in reproductive health for medical personnel

Paragraph 30

107. Since the second strategic framework to combat HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (CSLS 2006–2010) was put in place, a range of measures have been taken to reduce women’s vulnerability to AIDS. For example, in 2008 the theme of International Women’s Day on 8 March was “Women and HIV/AIDS: strategies to combat the feminization of AIDS” and a number of awareness-raising campaigns were organized:

- Under the second national programme for the prevention of mother-child transmission of HIV/AIDS (PTME)VIH 2006–2010, the availability of all-round prevention services was improved and geographical coverage was extended. It is noteworthy that 100 per cent of health districts and 80 per cent of outlying medical establishments now carry on prevention activities. Consequently, more and more families have access to these services. The aim is to prevent mother-to-child transmission of AIDS, and there is an increased sense of responsibility among some men who agree to be tested, although their numbers are still few.

- Act No. 049-2005/AN of 22 December 2005 on reproductive health prohibits all discrimination based on HIV/AIDS infection, and guarantees confidentiality in relations between social health workers and the infected person, who has the right to special assistance in terms of psychological and social support, advice and appropriate medical care.

108. Concerning the use of male and female contraceptives, there is a strategic plan for safer reproductive health products, and several sources of supply of condoms.

109. As to the promotion of sexual and reproductive health (SSR), services have been made available in all the country's medical establishments, health personnel have been trained in sexual and reproductive health and a plan has been devised for making reproductive health products safer.

110. Including the gender perspective in targeted actions for certain groups such as vulnerable people ensures the best possible provision for them. For example, a practice guide has been prepared for sex workers.

Paragraph 31

The legislative framework

Women's access to land

111. With a view to finding solutions based on equal access to land and providing security for all concerned, as well as sustained and effective development, in 2007 Burkina Faso adopted a national policy on land security in rural areas, and passed legislation to implement it.

112. The law on land security is intended to bring about equitable access to rural land for all those living in rural areas, both men and women.

113. Article 75 of the law provides that the State and local communities may organize special programmes for granting plots of rural land, on an individual or collective basis, to disadvantaged groups of agricultural producers, including women and young people.

114. The following steps have been taken to implement the policy and the law:

- Translating and disseminating the policy document in the three most widely spoken national languages
- Providing information and awareness-raising for all rural producers
- Specific measures for ensuring women's access to land, to low-lying ground and to areas laid out by the Government, so that 30 per cent of developed land will accrue to women

Women's access to housing

115. Both the law and regulations stipulate equal treatment of the sexes in access to housing. There are decrees issued in application of the law on the Code for town planning and construction, and also decree No. 2008-451-/PRES/PM/MHU adopting the national policy on housing and urban development, as well as Act No. 057-2008/AN on land sales.

Paragraph 32

116. The implementation of the strategic gender and agriculture development plan has made it possible to strengthen institutional capacity for rural development, so that gender can be taken into account in development policies and programmes, in order to ensure equitable access to productive resources and benefits.

117. The national shea project (PNK) has been useful in bringing women producers together in groups. Over 2,000 women's producer groups have been formed. These groups receive training sessions to strengthen their operational capacity for producing shea butter. They also receive appropriate technology to help them in their productive activities (see Table 1). In addition, 20 Centres for the Advancement of Women (CPF) have been built, equipped and made available to the groups, to provide them with a suitable setting for meetings, training sessions, discussions and productive activities. The national shea project also helps with literacy, and has built 57 centres where 20,000 women have been able to receive initial literacy training and basic supplementary training.

118. In developing their productive activities, the groups receive refundable loans on advantageous terms. To date, funds totalling CFA 21,665,000 have been paid out to 23 groups.

119. During the first phase of the project, which began in 2009, 441 multifunctional platforms were set up in 8 of the country's 13 regions, run chiefly by women's groups. Through multifunctional platform programmes, women acquire functional literacy and obtain microcredits for income-generating activities. During the current second phase, 2010–2015, the aim is to increase the number of multifunctional platforms, to at least 1,700 by 2015.

Paragraph 33

120. Measures have been taken to deal with the significant challenges represented by this area of concern, such as:

- For illiteracy: the literacy activities conducted by the Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy (MEBA) and its partners (see the replies to questions 17 and 32).
- As concerns the isolation of rural areas, Burkina Faso has given pride of place to the improvement of rural transport in its plans for social and economic development and for poverty reduction. For this reason, in October 2003 the Government adopted the National Strategy for the Development of Rural Transport, covering all regions of the country (see the annexed table).
- As regards the lack of information, the microfinance institutions conduct awareness-raising, information and training activities.
- To combat overburdening, the aim of the various technologies made available to women is to lighten their workload (see the replies to questions 5, 17 and 32).
- Customs and traditions: all the awareness-raising, advocacy and lobbying activities mentioned in the replies to questions 7, 8 and 11 help to meet these challenges.

Paragraph 34

121. A number of people argue that the Individual and Family Code should be rewritten. There are many proposals to harmonize the age of marriage. No specific action has yet been put forward.

Paragraph 35

122. The commonest methods of solving domestic disputes are mediation, marriage guidance and legal advice. In domestic violence cases, women tend to prefer mediation through family members, to whom they turn first (the in-laws, a brother or sister in-law, an uncle) or through neighbours, a friend of their spouse, a witness to the marriage, etc. At a later stage, most women seek a solution to their problems from non-judicial services such as the central or local offices of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women or the Ministry of Social Services and National Solidarity. Judicial services, representing the law enforcement institutions — the gendarmerie, the police, the Prefect, judges and lawyers — are the last to be consulted. Very rarely do women approach the judicial services as a legal means of resolving conflicts, including domestic violence.

123. Certain patterns of social behaviour explain why women tend mainly to resort to community mediation as a means of restoring their legal rights in the event of domestic violence. The fact is that they prefer a mediated solution rather than compulsion, for the sake of preserving their married life, and often in spite of the violence they have suffered. Apart from the family, other people such as customary chiefs, religious leaders or representatives of the Government (the Prefects) may be involved in the effort to reconcile couples who are at odds. These people play an invaluable role in society and in the community, as they are more readily available to help resolve conflicts.

124. However, in an individual case the various individuals involved, whether within or outside the legal system, will collaborate among themselves and proceed by stages towards the resolution of a marital conflict. Methods of dispute resolution range from counselling and guidance to recourse to the competent services and the referral of cases to the courts and to judgement. These methods depend on the nature of the case, whether civil or criminal, and the part each service can play. However, all the dispute resolution methods emphasize conciliation and respect for the woman's rights as the chief support of the family, with the result that most women who opt to go to court to settle their disputes obtain a decision in their favour and are able to regain their rights, regardless of the type of marriage contract with their spouse.

Paragraph 36

125. The following measures have been taken to sensitize opinion leaders to the rights of women in marriage, inheritance and divorce, and rights between spouses during marriage:

- Translating into national languages and disseminating the legal texts which protect women's rights
- Awareness-raising activities for the benefit of opinion leaders, through open forums, presentations, debates, meetings with advocacy groups, etc.
- Setting up networks of community leaders to combat violence against women

126. The various types of marriage are: civil marriage, religious marriage, customary marriage and free unions, or civil partnerships.

127. The different forms of marriage are monogamy and polygamy. Monogamy is the usual form, but polygamy is tolerated because of our customs and also because the law permits it.

128. Since the adoption of the Individual and Family Code in 1990, only marriages celebrated in front of a registrar are valid and capable of giving rise to claims if one of the parties fails to meet his or her obligations.