



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Pre-session working group

Fortieth and forty-first sessions

16-20 July 2007

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

#### Lebanon

The pre-session working group examined the third periodic report of Lebanon (CEDAW/C/LBN/3).

#### Preparation of the report

1. Please indicate whether non-governmental organizations, particularly women's groups, were consulted during the preparation of the report; and whether the report was presented to Parliament or any designated high-level authority.

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

2. What steps has the Government taken to implement the recommendations contained in the second paper on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in Lebanese laws, released by the National Committee for the Follow-up on Women's Issues in 2005, and described in the report (para. 317)?

3. According to the report, "there is an absence of funds allocated to institutional mechanisms or programmes exclusively for women" (para. 84). Please indicate the percentage of the national budget allocated to the National Commission for Lebanese Women, as well as other programmes for women. Also indicate whether, besides the National Commission for Lebanese Women, other focal points or units dealing with women's issues or with responsibility for gender mainstreaming exist elsewhere within the governmental framework.

4. Please indicate what initiatives the Government has taken towards adopting a unified personal status code which is in line with the Convention and would be applicable to all women in Lebanon, irrespective of their religious affiliation, as recommended by the Committee in its previous concluding comments (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/2, para. 24).



**Violence against women**

5. In its previous concluding comments the Committee called on the State party to amend article 562 of the Lebanese penal code, which allows for the mitigation of the penalty for crimes committed in the name of honour, and to adopt specific legislation on violence against women (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/2, para. 28). Please indicate efforts made by the Government in response to this recommendation.

6. The report includes a number of challenges and/or recommendations to combat violence against women which have been identified during a series of meetings, workshops, lectures and forums on violence against women held in 2005 (paras. 126-129). What measures have been taken to implement these recommendations so as to effectively combat violence against women?

7. What steps has the State party taken towards introducing a law on domestic violence as well as a plan of action to address the problem of violence against women, in line with the Committee's general recommendation 19?

**Trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution**

8. The report notes that in October 2005, the Lebanese Ministry of Justice launched draft measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, which "are designed essentially to support the mechanisms of the Penal Code in combating trafficking in persons in accordance with the spirit of the [United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime] and [its] Protocols" (para. 56). Please provide information on these draft measures, and clarify which ones have been implemented, and their impact.

9. According to the report, "great efforts are required to treat the causes that drive women to prostitution, and empower women professionally" (para. 140). What steps has the Government taken in response to this assessment?

10. According to the report, Lebanese law forbids clandestine prostitution and punishes those who engage in it (para. 131). The law, likewise, punishes those who live off the earnings of prostitutes. Please provide information about the alternative livelihood options available for women who wish to leave prostitution. Please also indicate what measures the Government has taken to address the demand side of prostitution.

**Participation in decision-making**

11. According to the report, "in the draft electoral law which the Government charged a special consultative committee to draw up in 2005, there is a trend towards a consensus on allocating 20 per cent of the seats to women on the electoral lists in parliamentary elections" (para. 81). What is the status of this draft law?

12. The report points out "a reduction from 18 to 14 of the numbers of female candidates in the parliamentary elections of 2005 compared to those of 2000", and notes that "female candidates formed no more than 3 per cent of the total number of candidates" (para. 150). Please provide information on the measures taken by the Government to encourage women to become more actively involved in politics in the various elections, including any temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, and the Committee's general recommendations 23 and 25.

13. Please indicate what steps the Government has taken to encourage the media to provide equal opportunity to female and male candidates (see para. 154 of the report).

14. In its previous concluding comments, the Committee expressed its concern about the very low level of representation of women in decision-making positions, particularly in elected and appointed bodies at all levels, including the administrative and foreign services (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/2, paras. 31 and 32). Please indicate the Government's initiatives to accelerate women's participation in elected and appointed bodies, including the administrative and foreign services, and any temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations 23 and 25.

### **Education and stereotypes**

15. The report notes that "in Lebanon, 63.2 per cent of students at all levels are enrolled in the private education sector, while 36.82 per cent of students are enrolled in the free, public sector". The report also notes that "enrolment of girls in the public sector exceeds enrolment in the private sector (53 per cent compared to 48.2 per cent)" (paras. 171 and 172). Please provide information on the quality of public education in Lebanon, in both rural and urban areas, especially that of girls.

16. The report indicates that, in university education, "a disparity exists in favour of males in enrolment in the specializations of technology, engineering, computers and business administration" (para. 187). Similarly, in intermediate and secondary education, "the proportion of female students enrolled in general sciences is low in comparison with the proportion enrolled in literature and humanities, and life sciences" (para. 179). What measures has the Government taken to encourage girls and women to pursue non-traditional studies and careers?

17. According to the report, "[t]here are disparate efforts to include gender in university curricula and colleges of health, in particular, but the recognition of courses in women's studies in Lebanese universities is still at the preparatory stage" (para. 104.4). Please indicate what measures have been taken to ensure that gender perspectives are systematically included in university curricula, and that courses in women's studies are fully recognized.

18. The Committee, in its previous concluding comments, expressed concern about the pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted traditional and cultural stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family, in the workplace and in society (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/2, para. 29). Please provide information on actions taken to implement the Committee's recommendations (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/2, para. 30) and indicate what has been the impact of such actions.

### **Employment and economic empowerment**

19. In its previous concluding comments the Committee expressed concern that, "despite law reform in the field of employment, women remain disadvantaged in the labour market which is characterized by strong occupational segregation, and the persistence of a gender wage gap" (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/2, para. 33). What steps has the Government taken to implement the Committee's recommendations

(CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/2, para. 34), including measures to promote the sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men?

20. The report notes that “there is still discrimination against women in the area of taxation, as a married woman is treated as unmarried and does not benefit from the tax allowance enjoyed by a married man or male head of household” (para. 200). What measures have been taken to eliminate discrimination against women in the area of taxation?

21. The report notes among the Government efforts to address the situation of female migrant workers “a draft law drawn up recently by the Ministry of Labour and put before the Cabinet prior to referral to the Chamber of Deputies, requiring that domestic workers be subject to the provisions of the Labour Code” (paras. 217 and 217.1). Please provide information on the status of this draft law. This should summarize the content and scope of the law, the anticipated time frame for its adoption, as well as whether all women migrant workers will be covered.

22. According to the report, in November 2005, the Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with international bodies and associations, organized a workshop on raising awareness of the situation of female domestic workers in Lebanon (para. 111). What efforts has the Government made to implement the 10 recommendations produced by this workshop, and what has been their impact so far?

### **Health**

23. The report notes that “The distribution of health services in Lebanon is uneven and does not reflect the geographical distribution of population” (para. 244). Please describe the measures taken, or planned, to improve the distribution of health services across the country, and trends in the availability of such services since 2000, and women’s access to and use of such services.

24. Please provide information on the steps which the Government is taking to improve young women’s access to reproductive health care and services, and provide information of trends in access since 2000. What steps has the Government taken to reduce women’s deaths resulting from clandestine abortions?

25. What measures has the Government taken to integrate a gender perspective in programmes on HIV/AIDS?

### **Rural and vulnerable women**

26. The report notes that “Lebanese law excludes agricultural labour from the provisions of the Labour Code [and that] special legislation has been drawn up for agricultural labour but this has not yet seen the light of day” (para. 280). Please indicate what is the status of this special legislation being drawn up for agricultural labour, the timetable for its enactment, and the anticipated impact of the law on women.

27. At its thirty-sixth session, held from 7 to 25 August 2006, the Committee adopted a statement regarding the situation of women in the Middle East and expressed serious concern over the hostilities which took place in the Middle East. In this statement, the Committee called upon all parties to comply with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

against Women. Please provide information about the impact and long-term effects of the armed conflict on women and measures taken by the Government of Lebanon to address the needs of displaced women and children, and ensure women's full and equal participation in all aspects of peace, security and public life in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325.

**Nationality**

28. The report indicates that “non-governmental organizations affiliated to the Lebanese Women’s Network launched, in the autumn of 2005, ... ‘My nationality is a right for me and my family’ campaign, aimed at changing the provisions in the Lebanese Nationality Law that discriminate between the sexes” (para. 164). Does the Government intend to benefit from the momentum generated by the campaign in order to take steps to change provisions in the Lebanese Nationality Law that discriminate against women? Please provide details, including a timetable for legislative reform.

**Optional Protocol**

29. The report notes that “no decision has yet been taken [concerning the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention]” (para. 29). Please describe any progress in this regard, since the preparation of the report. Please also indicate when the State party intends to accept the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention pertaining to the Committee’s meeting time.

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