



Economic and Social Council

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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Pre-sessional working group

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Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

List of issues in connection with the consideration of the fourth periodic report of Iceland concerning articles 1 to 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/ISL/4)

Iceland

I. General information

1. Please indicate how the effects of the financial and economic crisis since 2008 have impacted on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, in particular the rights to work, social security, housing and education, and what steps the State party has taken to ensure that economic, social and cultural rights are fully realized as provided for in the Covenant.

Article 2, paragraph 2 - Non-discrimination

2. Please indicate whether the State party intends to establish a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. Please indicate what measures have been taken to combat and prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities, in particular with respect to the right to education, housing and social assistance.

Article 3 - Equal rights of men and women

3. Please indicate the impact of measures taken to combat the persistent and significant wage gap between women and men, as mentioned in paragraphs 20 to 70 of the State party's report and to increase the representation of women in decision-making positions, in particular in the Foreign Service, the judiciary, and academia. Please also provide information on cases, if any, that have been referred by the Centre for Gender Equality to the Complaints Committee on Gender Equality, as provided for in the Gender Equality Act 2008.

II. Issues relating to the specific provisions of the Covenant (arts. 6-15)

Article 6 - The right to work

4. Please clarify whether steps are foreseen to ensure that temporary work permits are issued for a specific type of work/remunerated activity and specific time, rather than with a specific employer. Please also clarify whether an employee alone may bring an appeal against decisions by the Directorate of Labour on applications for temporary permits or revocations of such permits.

Article 7 - The right to just and favourable conditions of work

5. Please clarify whether the State party has introduced a national minimum wage, and, if so, indicate whether it applies to migrant workers.

Article 8 - Trade union rights

6. Please provide information on measures taken to improve the existing procedures for collective bargaining, with the aim to promote free and voluntary collective bargaining and to ensure that compulsory arbitration is avoided.

Article 9 - The right to social security

7. Please provide information on social benefits programmes since 2007 aimed at families in poverty, including single-headed families, as well as on guarantees in place to ensure that benefit levels provide an adequate standard of living for such families.

Article 10 - Protection of the family, mothers and children

8. Please clarify why, in 2005, the Committee on Penal Issues ruled there were not sufficient grounds for adopting a special criminal provision on domestic violence. Please provide information on the implementation and the impact measured of the action plan on domestic violence 2006-2011. Please specify whether this action plan has focused on the provision of adequate medical and legal services and assistance to victims. Please indicate whether the State party has developed national public information campaigns and stimulated broader public discussion with the aim to address attitudes and stereotypes leading to violence against women. Please also indicate which measures are being taken to reach out to immigrant women and inform them of their rights in the context of domestic violence.

9. Please provide information on steps taken by the State party to ensure that cases of sexual abuse of children are investigated, and that perpetrators are prosecuted. Please also provide information on measures taken aimed at prevention of sexual abuse of children. .

10. Please indicate which steps are being taken to combat trafficking in human beings, and clarify whether a national plan of action has been adopted. Please indicate whether measures have been taken to adopt specific training and sensitization programmes for law enforcement personnel and border guards, as well as public awareness-raising campaigns on trafficking in human beings.

Article 11 - The right to an adequate standard of living

11. Please provide information on measures taken to address the increasing number of families with children living below the low-income threshold, especially single parent families.

12. Please provide information on the action plan established, as mentioned in paragraph 134 of the State party's report, following the 2009 report of the working group set up to monitor the social and financial consequences of the economic crisis for families and individuals in the State party.

Article 12 - The right to physical and mental health

13. Please provide information on the extensive budget cuts to the health sector since 2008, as well as on steps taken to address adverse effects of these cuts on the right to health, in particular with regard to children in rural areas and children with disabilities.

14. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that children of immigrants are integrated into the health system and that they are provided with health information, including in their native languages.

Articles 13 and 14 - The right to education

15. Please provide information on the extensive budget cuts in the school system since 2008, both with regard to pre-schools and primary schools, resulting in reduction in staffing, merging of class groups, and cancellation of courses. Please also provide information on measures taken to address the negative effects of these cuts on children, especially children with special needs.

16. Please provide information on steps taken to address the high dropout rate in upper secondary education of students with an immigrant background.

17. Please provide information on measures taken to improve facilities in the school system for children with disabilities and with other special needs.

18. Please provide information on measures taken to improve the opportunities for non-Icelandic mother tongue pupils to learn Icelandic within the school system.

Article 15 - Cultural rights

19. Please provide information on steps taken to encourage participation in cultural life by disadvantaged and marginalized groups and individuals, including children from families living in poverty and migrant children, as well as older persons and persons with disabilities.
