



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the initial report of Qatar*

General

1. The initial report of Qatar ([CEDAW/C/QAT/1](#)) indicates that organized civil society activity in the State party is a new phenomenon and that to date no women's association has been formed in the State party (para. 45).¹ According to the information before the Committee, there is no environment conducive to the establishment of non-governmental organizations in the State party, and national legislation imposes restrictions and heavy costs and therefore makes registration difficult for women's-rights organizations. Please indicate whether the State party has plans to amend its national legislation to create an enabling environment conducive to the establishment of women's-rights non-governmental organizations, which is important for the promotion of gender equality. Please indicate whether the report was adopted by the Government and presented to the Parliament.

Reservations

2. The report indicates that the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, the institutional mechanism with responsibility for the advancement of women, takes a rights-based approach to issues concerning women (para. 128). Please update the Committee on efforts of the State party, and the Council in particular, to review the reservations and declarations it entered into at the time of its accession to the Convention with a view to withdrawing and/or narrowing them, noting that some of them are considered incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. Please also provide information on whether it is working in collaboration with other countries with similar social, cultural and legal systems that have succeeded in withdrawing and/or considerably narrowing down their reservations to the Convention.

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group for the fifty-seventh session, meeting from 29 July to 2 August 2013.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the initial report of the State party.



Legal status of the Convention

3. The report indicates that, according to article 68 of the Constitution, “the Convention carries the force of law, due regard being had to the reservations and declarations set out in the instrument of accession” after being published in the Official Gazette (para. 1). Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that women in the State party are aware of their rights under the Convention and are able to invoke those rights, including through the lodging of complaints through the legal system when their rights have been violated. Please also provide information on cases brought before the courts on discrimination against women and the outcomes of those cases, and indicate whether the Convention has been invoked before the courts.

National human rights institutions

4. The report indicates that the National Human Rights Committee, which was established by Amiral Decree No. 38 of 2002 as an independent national body for the promotion and protection of human rights, has received complaints about abuses of human rights, including women’s rights, and has addressed most of them (para. 61). Please provide information regarding the number of such complaints obtained and the outcomes of such cases. Please also provide information on the gender composition of the Committee, as well as measures taken to raise awareness among women about the existence of the mechanism. Please also indicate whether assistance is available to women filing complaints.

Temporary special measures

5. The report indicates that the State party intends to do more to empower Qatari women in various areas of life and to create an enabling environment that supports women (paras. 135 and 136). However, it does not provide a clear picture of the application of temporary special measures in the State party and reflects a lack of understanding of temporary special measures. Please provide information on the use of temporary special measures by the State party, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 25, so as to promote and accelerate the realization of substantive equality of women with men.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

6. The report acknowledges the persistence of gender stereotypes in the country; however, it provides little information on concrete actions taken by the State party to eliminate prejudices and customary and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women, including by ensuring that its policies and programmes do not perpetuate gender stereotypes. Please provide information on efforts undertaken, through awareness-raising and educational campaigns addressing religious and community leaders, parents, and teachers, to counter stereotypical attitudes towards girls and women, including those who experience multiple forms of discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity, age, disability or other characteristics.

Violence against women

7. The report indicates that the Supreme Court for Family Affairs has adopted a “bold policy” on violence against women (para. 153). It also indicates that the State party has no separate legislation on violence against women or domestic violence (para. 157), although the results of various surveys conducted by the State party acknowledge the prevalence of violence against women, including domestic violence. Please provide information on the steps taken to adopt specific legislation to criminalize all forms of violence against women, including marital rape. Whereas the report indicates that there are no women’s associations in the State party (para. 45), it also refers to the poor coordination between governmental and non-governmental organizations that are responsible for protecting women from domestic violence (para. 455). Please clarify what, according to the State party, is the role of non-governmental organizations in the protection of women against violence, and provide detailed information on the nature, status and number of those so-called non-governmental organizations.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

8. The Criminal and Labour Code of the State party contains some provisions related to human trafficking, but the State party lacks a specific law to address trafficking in persons and exploitation of prostitution. Please provide information on whether the State party is envisaging the adoption of a specific and comprehensive law on human trafficking and the establishment of procedures for victim identification and a mechanism for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of trafficking offenders. Please describe concrete activities undertaken under the national strategy to combat human trafficking, established since 2003.

Participation in political and public life and decision-making

9. The report provides information on provisions made in the “Qatar National Vision 2030” document, for women’s capacity-building and the promotion of women’s participation in economic and political life, particularly in decision-making (para. 133). The report also indicates that at the time of reporting, a general development strategy was being formulated for the period 2011-2016. In the light of the fact that there are no women in the State party’s legislature, please provide information on concrete measures taken and/or envisaged by the State party to ensure women’s political representation in that body, including through quotas. Please also provide information on the number of women in the judiciary, as well as on concrete measures to promote women in the judiciary and in senior positions in the Foreign Service, including as ambassadors and heads of missions abroad.

Nationality

10. The State party entered a reservation to article 9, paragraph 2, which prevents Qatari women married to foreign husbands from transmitting their nationality to their husband and children. Please provide information on the number of stateless persons/children as a result of the implementation of Nationality Act No. 38 of 2005, as well as information on measures taken to withdraw the reservation to article 9, paragraph 2, of the Convention, in order to provide women equal rights with men with regard to nationality. Please provide updated data, disaggregated by sex, and information on the number of applications for Qatari nationality and the

number of foreign spouses granted Qatari nationality since 2007. Please also provide information on whether the State party is working in collaboration with countries with similar social, cultural and legal systems that have succeeded in amending their legislation with regard to nationality in line with the Convention.

Education

11. The report acknowledges that there are still no technical or vocational schools for women in the State party (para. 238). The report also indicates that the overwhelming majority of women graduates obtain degrees in literature and the humanities (para. 231). Please provide information on measures taken to provide technical and vocational training for women. Please also provide information on measures taken to encourage women to take non-traditional subjects. In addition, please provide information on plans to revise the school curricula to eliminate references that maintain or reinforce gender stereotypes, and indicate whether the State party intends to provide training to teachers to sensitize and raise awareness on the negative impact of stereotypes and ways in which it hinders the full enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights. The report is silent on the access of immigrant women and girls to education at all levels. Please provide information and data on their access to education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Employment

12. The report indicates that at the time of reporting, the draft of a bill on domestic workers and persons in related occupations was being finalized and reviewed by a committee made up of representatives of several ministries and Government bodies (para. 305). Please provide updated information on the current status of the draft bill. Please also provide information on measures taken by the State party to improve the protection of migrant workers under the sponsorship system and to establish more effective complaints and dispute settlement mechanisms. In addition, please provide updated information on measures taken or envisaged by the State party to ensure flexibility for migrant workers in terms of changing their sponsor, and provide data on the number of migrant workers, including domestic workers, who have successfully applied for a change of workplace.

13. The report indicates that there are restrictions on the hours women are allowed to work, as well as a prohibition on their doing hazardous work (paras. 279 and 280). Please provide information on measures taken to address discriminatory practices in employment in order to improve women's participation in the labour market. Please also provide information on the obstacles preventing women from reaching leadership positions, as well as on measures taken to address the concentration of women in certain occupations and training courses.

Health

14. The report indicates that there are no official data on rates of contraceptive use in the State party, that knowledge of contraceptives may be limited and that the use of family planning methods (male condoms) is not more than 20 per cent (para. 336). Please provide information on measures taken by the State party to address low use of contraceptives, such as increasing their accessibility and availability and raising awareness among women and girls on modern contraceptive methods and family

planning, as well as facilitating access to health services and reproductive health centres for women and girls, including women migrant workers.

15. The report indicates that the State party's Criminal Code prohibits "deliberate" abortion (para. 358). Please provide clarification as to the circumstances under which abortion is legally allowed.

Equality before the law and in civil matters

16. Please provide information on formal and informal procedures for women travelling outside the State party. Please also provide information on whether women need to be accompanied by a male guardian when travelling abroad, whether they need a permission of a male guardian prior to departure, and measures taken to change existing perceptions regarding women's freedom of movement. In addition, please provide information on the authority of male guardians, such as with regard to education, employment, marriage and family relations.

Disadvantaged groups of women

17. The report is silent on the situation of Bidoun (stateless) women. Please provide information on their situation in relation to access to health, education, employment and social benefits, as well as all other areas covered by the Convention. Please also provide information on the situation of migrant women workers in relation to access to health, employment and social benefits, as well as to freedom of movement.

Marriage and family relations

18. The report indicates that the consent of both parties and the girl's guardian and permission from a judge are required for the marriage of girls younger than 16 (para. 422). Please provide information and statistical data on how many marriages for girls younger than 16 are approved each year, the ages of the husbands in those marriages and the specific criteria used by judges to validate such marriages.

19. The report indicates that divorces are essentially initiated by men, on the basis of their wishes alone (unilateral *Talaq* divorce) and that a husband may authorize his wife to have a condition written into the marriage contract whereby she also has the right to ask him for a divorce (*Khula* procedure) (para. 438). Please provide information and statistical data on the percentage of unilateral divorce pronouncements, the amounts of compensation paid to women by men after divorce, and the amounts of compensation paid to men by women seeking *Khula* divorce. Please also provide information on the criteria used to determine the amount of *Khula* compensation women must pay, and on measures taken to limit the amount of *Khula* compensation required.

20. According to the information before the Committee, article 173 of the new Family Code stipulates that mothers lose custody of their children at predetermined ages (13 for boys and 15 for girls), while article 168 of the law specifies that mothers lose their right to custody if they remarry men who are not close relatives of the ward. Please provide information on whether the State party is considering granting mothers equal rights to legal guardianship of children.

21. The report indicates that at the time of reporting, the State party was examining a bill on judicial procedures in family inheritance cases, which, if

adopted, could bring an end to the difficulties that women encounter in family cases (para. 456). Please provide updated information on the content of this bill and its current status.

Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20, paragraph 1

22. Please indicate any progress made towards accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Please also indicate what progress has been made towards the acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, relating to the Committee's meeting time.
