



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
Forty-ninth session  
11-29 July 2011

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

### Singapore

The pre-session working group examined the fourth periodic report of Singapore (CEDAW/C/SGP/4).

#### General

1. Please provide more detailed information on the process of preparing the report, including: (a) which Government departments and institutions were involved and the nature and extent of their participation; (b) to what extent consultations were held with non-governmental organizations; and (c) whether the report was adopted by the Government and submitted to the Parliament.
2. Please provide updated information on the progress towards withdrawing the reservations to article 2, article 11, paragraph (1), and article 16 of the Convention, and an analysis of the precise scope of these reservations and their impact on different groups of women as recommended in paragraph 12 of the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/3).
3. Please provide information on the status of data collection and analysis in the country in general, and to what extent such data collection takes place on a sex-disaggregated basis. Please indicate how the Government intends to improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex pertaining to all the areas of the Convention, and how such data is used in policy and programme development and in monitoring progress towards substantive equality of women and men.

#### Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework

4. Please provide explanation on the current situation in the State party regarding the legislation related to the Convention as well as the measures taken to ensure the full and practical implementation of the previous concluding observations of the Committee. In particular, please elaborate in greater detail on the statement, in



paragraph F.5 of the State party report, that “an aggrieved party cannot invoke the provisions of the Convention in the law courts in Singapore” given that Treaties and Conventions do not automatically become part of the laws of Singapore unless they are specifically incorporated into the legal system.

5. Please provide information on the efforts carried out by the State party to provide systematic and sustained training for lawyers, judges, law enforcement officers, educators, leaders of the People’s Association, non-governmental organizations and trade unions on the Convention and its concept of de facto or substantive gender equality in order to build a culture in support of full and equal enjoyment of human rights on the basis of equality with men.

6. The Committee, in paragraph 14 of its previous concluding observations, encouraged the State party to incorporate in its national legislation a definition of discrimination against women in line with article 1 of the Convention, and also to include provisions to prohibit discrimination against women on other grounds, in particular marital status, age, disability and national origin. What efforts have been carried out by the State party to effectively implement these recommendations? Please provide information on the obstacles faced by the State party in this regard, in particular given the absence of specific gender equality and anti-gender discrimination legislation in Singapore, as indicated in paragraph 2.4 of the State party report.

7. In light of the recommendations in paragraph 16 of the previous concluding observations made by the Committee, has there been any progress in efforts to remove inconsistencies between civil law and sharia law? In this regard, have any studies been undertaken on comparative jurisprudence and legislation of other countries with similar legal systems? Please elaborate on the continuous development of the sharia law, referred to in paragraph 16.15 of the State party report.

#### **National machinery for the advancement of women**

8. Please indicate the efforts carried out by the State party to elevate the status of the Women’s Desk as well as to strengthen its mandate. Please provide updated information on its human and financial resources and whether these are sufficient to carry out its mandate. Furthermore, please explain how the Inter-Ministry Committee on CEDAW has effectively addressed discrimination against women through its work.

#### **Temporary special measures (article 4, paragraph 1)**

9. The State party report contains no update on temporary special measures. Please provide updated information on the use of temporary special measures in order to achieve the full and equal participation of women in political and public life and decision-making at all levels and in all areas, as recommended by the Committee in paragraph 20 of its previous concluding observations. What initiatives are in place to promote the participation of women in the areas of employment, education, political and public life, and the judiciary?

#### **Discriminatory stereotypes**

10. Please describe the impact of public awareness-raising campaigns to eliminate discriminatory traditional stereotypes and prejudices about the roles and

responsibilities of women in society, referred to in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.13 of the State party report. Have campaigns and training activities been organized for leaders of political parties and senior managers in the private sector, as recommended by the Committee in paragraph 32 of its previous concluding observations?

### **Violence against women**

11. In addition to the number of applications for Personal Protection Orders indicated in paragraph 24.20 of the State party report, what kinds of data are being collected on the incidence of violence against women, including domestic violence and sexual violence in the State party, and what do they reveal in terms of trends?

12. Please provide up-to-date information on: (a) the nature of reported incidents of violence against women, including domestic violence and marital rape and, if available, the number of women murdered by their husbands, partners or ex-partners; (b) the number of convictions, and the types of sanctions imposed on perpetrators; and (c) reparation granted to victims. Please indicate if the existing laws and norms on violence against women criminalize all acts of violence and to what extent the vulnerability of older women and women with disabilities was taken into consideration.

13. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure the effective implementation of the amended legislation on marital rape (paras. 16.11 to 16.14 and 24.3 of the State party report). The information should include the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions, as well as the nature of the protection provided to victims.

14. The State party report refers to the Mandatory Counselling Programme provided under section 65(5) of the Women's Charter (paras. 24.17-24.19). Please specify how many victims, perpetrators and/or family members of a victim have benefited from these services during the period under review and what has been the outcome.

### **Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

15. Has the State party taken any steps to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, as recommended in paragraph 22 of the previous concluding observations of the Committee? In addition, the Committee also encouraged the State party to review its current legal and policy measures in the light of the definition of trafficking contained in the Protocol and to ensure that victims of trafficking are not punished for violation of immigration laws and have access to adequate assistance and remedies. Please update the progress in implementing these recommendations of the Committee.

16. Please provide information on: (a) sentences pronounced in cases of trafficking in women and girls; (b) sanctions imposed to the perpetrators; and (c) reparation granted to victims, during the period covered by the periodic report. What measures are being taken by the State party to collect sex-disaggregated data on trafficking?

17. Please also indicate which follow-up has been given to the 28 cases of forced prostitution and importation of women by false pretences referred to in

paragraph 6.2 of the State party report. Has the Government conducted awareness campaigns for the general public, in particular for women and girls, regarding the issue of trafficking in persons as well as the amendments to the Penal Code aimed at enhancing the protection of young persons against exploitation for commercial sex and at combating child sex tourism, indicated on page 6 and paragraph 6.4 of the State party report?

18. Please comment on reports claiming that the State party has never investigated, prosecuted or convicted a national or permanent resident for child sex tourism. The information should include the statistical data on prosecutions, convictions and sentences pronounced, if any. Furthermore, please indicate the measure taken to combat sex tourism under the amended Penal Code and give examples of practical implementation of such measures.

### **Political participation and participation in public life**

19. What steps have been taken by the State party to strengthen women's representation in public and political life and in decision-making positions, including in the Cabinet, Parliament, the judiciary, public administration and the private sector? Please also elaborate on the measures undertaken to improve the political participation and participation in public life of women belonging to minority groups and women with disabilities.

### **Employment**

20. Please provide information on the practical implementation and the impact of measures taken to promote fair employment practices, as listed in paragraphs 11.1 to 11.3 of the State party report. In the State party report statistical data on the gender wage gap are limited to the median salaries of male and female civil servants (para. 11.7). Please provide such statistical data for female and male employees in all sectors for the period under review. Please also indicate whether the State party envisages adopting a legislation to ensure equal pay for work of equal value?

21. What measures have been taken to ensure that all programmes to enhance work and life balance are targeted at both men and women in the public and private sectors to further support the equal sharing of family and work responsibilities?

22. The State party report indicates in paragraph 11.4 that sexual harassment is punishable under the Penal Code and the Miscellaneous Offences (Public Order & Nuisance) Act. Please provide information on the number of cases of sexual harassment in the workplace reported by women, as well as of relevant investigations and prosecutions.

23. Please provide updated information on the activities of and the resources allocated to the Continuing Education and Training system established by the Workforce Development Agency referred to in paragraphs 11.24 and 11.25. Is this system fully functional? How many women have benefited from this strategy during the period under review? Which are the criteria applied to accept participants to Continuing Education and Training centres?

24. In light of the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, following his mission to Singapore in April 2010 (A/65/295, para. 76),

please indicate the measures taken to protect the right of employment of women belonging to ethnic minority groups.

25. In its previous concluding observations (para. 24), the Committee expressed concern about the lack of legal protection afforded to foreign domestic workers and their vulnerable situation, in particular with regard to the regular pregnancy testing, the prohibition to marry Singaporeans, the lack of a mandatory day off per week and a restriction on the freedom of movement due to the security bond. Please update any progress in tackling such problems by the provision of effective legal protection. This information should include updated data on the number of investigations, prosecutions and the nature of punishment for employers who ill-treat or abuse their foreign domestic workers under the amended Penal Code or the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act.

### **Health**

26. What concrete measures have been taken to increase the coverage of family planning services and education, including affordable access to contraceptives, education on sexual health and rights and training for health extension workers, medical personnel and women's groups? What have been the outcomes of the behavioural intervention programme, referred in paragraph 12.15 of the State party report, to enable women to take greater control over their sexual health?

27. The State party report refers to women-specific health programmes, including targeted HIV/AIDS education for at-risk groups (para. 12.14). Please provide information on these programmes, including the implementation measures, the impact and sex-disaggregated data on the beneficiaries of these programmes.

### **Disadvantaged groups of women**

28. In paragraph 26 of its previous concluding observations, the Committee expressed concern at the situation of foreign wives of Singaporean citizens, especially with regard to violence and abuse, their right to work and their residence status in the country. Please provide information on the efforts carried out by the State party to protect the situation of these women, including in terms of citizenship applications and shelters available for them in cases of violence and abuse.

29. Please provide information on measures taken to protect and promote the rights of women with disabilities and eliminate discrimination against them, especially in employment, education and health care. Does the State party envisage extending the Compulsory Education Act to non-citizen children and children with disabilities?

30. The State party report provides little information on refugee, asylum seeking and migrant women. Please provide information on their situation and the legal protection afforded to them in all areas covered by the Convention. Are there gender-based trainings provided to officers in the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority and other law enforcement officials?

31. Please comment on reports with regard to prevalent and systematic discrimination against women based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the social, cultural, political and economic spheres in the State party. What measures are being undertaken to address these problems, especially with a view to destigmatizing and promoting tolerance to that end.

**Optional Protocol**

32. Please indicate any progress made with respect to the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and the acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention concerning the Committee's meeting time.

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