



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

Twenty-seventh session

3-21 June 2002

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

**Report provided by specialized agencies of the United
Nations on the implementation of the Convention in areas
falling within the scope of their activities**

Note by the Secretary-General**

Addendum

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

1. On behalf of the Committee, the Secretariat invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on 17 April 2002, to submit to the Committee a report on information provided by States to FAO on the implementation of article 11 and related articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which would supplement the information contained in the reports of the States parties to the Convention to be considered at the twenty-seventh session.
2. Other information sought by the Committee refer to activities, programmes and policy decisions undertaken by FAO to promote the implementation of article 11 and related articles of the Convention.
3. The report annexed hereto has been submitted in compliance with the Committee's request.

* CEDAW/C/2002/II/1.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

Annex

Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its twenty-seventh session

[Original: French]

Congo (Brazzaville)

1. According to the 2001 census, the population of the Congo is estimated at 2,846,279 inhabitants; comprises more than 50 per cent young people and is highly urbanized (60 per cent). Many refugees of diverse nationalities live in the Congo, including nationals of Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, as well as members of various foreign communities coming mainly from West Africa and Lebanon.
2. According to FAO estimates for 2000, 37.5 per cent of the population live in rural areas and 40.7 per cent of the economically active population work in the agricultural sector. Some 61 per cent of economically active women work in the agricultural sector.
3. The overall situation in the Congo at the beginning of the twenty-first century is characterized by a deterioration of the main socio-economic indicators over the past two decades, exacerbated by widespread destruction resulting from an unprecedented series of civil wars (1993-1998).
4. From a social standpoint, these tragic events have created a new class of poor people which includes displaced persons, orphans and disabled war veterans, estimated at more than 700,000 people. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security estimates that one third of the economically active population is unemployed. There has also been a resurgence of communicable diseases, including the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
5. Despite the availability of a young labour force and a huge potential for agricultural development, including 10 million hectares of cultivable land and a vast network of water resources, only some 3 per cent of cultivable land is farmed. Apart from private industrial sugar cane plantations (10,000 hectares), Congolese agriculture is essentially traditional and small-scale.
6. Agricultural exports of coffee and cocoa are virtually non-existent. Since food production is lower than domestic demand, the deficit is met by massive food imports currently valued at nearly US\$ 145 million.
7. What is more, there has been a marked deterioration in the country's agricultural and food situation in recent years, owing to the conflicts which have had a serious impact on the national economy in general and on agriculture, forestry and, above all, livestock production in particular.

The FAO programme in the Congo

8. During the 2001 agricultural year, FAO implemented a total of 13 projects under the supervision of the Representative and the Coordinator of emergency agricultural operations of which six primarily involved the distribution of agricultural implements and inputs. All these projects were executed in close cooperation with the Government and with national and international non-governmental organizations.

9. In addition to the programme for the distribution of agricultural inputs and implements to vulnerable households, the 2001 agricultural year saw the implementation of seed multiplication programmes and programmes to integrate women and young people in agricultural activities.

10. Women have suffered terribly from the conflict in the Congo. The vulnerability and isolation of many of these women exposes them not only to the usual discrimination but also to all kinds of violence. The emergency agricultural operations conducted by FAO in recent years have sought to guarantee populations affected by the conflict sufficient food production to ensure their survival. Such assistance generally involves the free distribution of seed and agricultural implements. In this type of operation, women account for the majority of beneficiaries; it is they who constitute the majority of victims and who, moreover, are responsible for the household's food production. This reality clearly influences the choice of types of seed and implements. Preference is largely given to growing local and exotic market-garden varieties. Among the criteria governing the preparation of lists of beneficiaries, top priority is given to the gender dimension (women heads of household, families where the male is temporarily absent, women who visit nutrition centres, women's groups caring for vulnerable persons, and so forth), and training on the ground is largely targeted at a female audience (particularly training in market gardening techniques).

World Food Day and TeleFood

11. Presided over by the Minister for Agriculture, World Food Day was celebrated in Brazzaville on 16 October 2001. Large numbers of small farmers, women and young people took part. The day was marked by the presentation to the Minister for Agriculture, by his wife and the Ambassador of the United States of America, respectively, of a US\$ 3,500 contribution by women to the first TeleFood (see www.fao.org/food) held in the Congo and of materials for the organizers of the seed multiplication programme.

The Dimitra Project: rural women and development

12. In addition to the above projects and programmes, FAO is compiling a list of civil society organizations that work with rural women. The Dimitra database (see www.fao.org/sd/dimitra) provides an overview of each of the organizations listed, as well as the projects implemented. Dimitra is an information and communication project implemented by the FAO gender equality and development service. Its aim is to highlight and demonstrate the importance of rural women's contributions to sustainable development and food security. The project also seeks to raise development actors' awareness of gender issues, with the aim of furthering equality between women and men and achieving fair and equitable development for all.