



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

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

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

**Implementation of articles 21 and 22 of the Convention on the
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

**Reports by the specialized agencies on the implementation
of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
Discrimination against Women in areas falling within the
scope of their activities**

**Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization**

Summary

In accordance with article 22 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the specialized agencies have been invited to submit to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, at its fifty-fifth session, reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities.

* CEDAW/C/55/1.



I. Introduction

1. At its present session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women will examine the national reports of the following countries: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Serbia and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Educational statistics for these countries are provided in the annex to the present report.

2. As a specialized agency of the United Nations system, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) contributes to the building of peace, alleviation of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, and communications and information. In accordance with the medium-term strategy of UNESCO for the period 2008-2013, gender equality is designated one of its two global priorities. The priority of gender equality is pursued by UNESCO through a two-pronged approach: (a) gender-specific programming; and (b) mainstreaming of gender equality perspectives in all of its fields of competence.

3. Within the United Nations system, UNESCO has a major role and responsibility in relation to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, article 10 of which stipulates that States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education. The right to education is at the very heart of the UNESCO mission and represents an integral part of its constitutional mandate.

4. The efforts of UNESCO to promote women's empowerment, women's rights and gender equality are guided by its medium-term strategy for the period 2008-2013, its biennial programme and budget document, its organization-wide Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2008-2013 which supports and guides the implementation of activities related to the global priority of gender equality, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, and resolutions and international and regional instruments relevant to its areas of activity.

5. The commitment of UNESCO to pursue the priority of gender equality is facilitated by the Division for Gender Equality in the Office of the Director-General. As the UNESCO focal point for gender equality, the Division provides policy guidance and recommendations to senior management and the programme sectors for mainstreaming gender equality considerations into UNESCO policies, strategies and programmes; carries out capacity-building; monitors gender parity and work-life balance within the secretariat; and develops and establishes partnerships with other United Nations bodies, regional bodies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, private foundations and private sector partners that support women's empowerment and gender equality initiatives.

II. Measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention in the countries whose reports are to be considered at the fifty-fifth session

Afghanistan

6. Afghanistan has been party to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education since January 2010. Afghanistan was not asked to report to UNESCO in connection with the seventh consultation on the measures taken for its implementation, since that consultation covered the period prior to 2010, that is, before Afghanistan became a party to the Convention.

7. Article 43 of the Constitution of Afghanistan (2004) guarantees the right to education to all citizens of Afghanistan, which is free of charge up to the bachelor's degree level (e.g. undergraduate level) in State educational institutions. The legislation covering education (Education Law of 2008) defines the main objectives of education, which include ensuring equal rights to education and training for all citizens of Afghanistan through the promotion and development of universal, balanced and equitable education, and strengthening respect for human rights, protection of women's rights, democracy and elimination of every kind of discrimination. Article 4 of the Law specifically stipulates that (a) intermediate (basic) education (covering grades 1-9) is compulsory; and (b) preschool, basic, secondary, technical, professional, vocational and higher education in public educational institutions is provided free of charge. The National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan 2010-2014 reveals the vision of the Afghan Government, which is to develop human capital based on Islamic principles, national and international commitments and respect for human rights by providing equitable access to quality education for all people in order to enable them to actively participate in the sustainable development, economic growth and stability and security of Afghanistan. To do this, the Government facilitates educational opportunities for children and adults, without discrimination, across Afghanistan.

8. There has been a huge expansion in school attendance throughout the country since 2001. Girls and boys are back to school in unprecedented numbers and more girls are attending school currently than at any time in Afghanistan's history. School enrolment grew from about 900,000 to nearly 6.4 million.¹ The percentage of girls in schools grew from almost zero per cent in 2001 to over 37 per cent in 2007. Tens of thousands of female teachers were also receiving training. Thousands of schools were being built every year, and one million young people and adults were expected to take part in adult literacy programmes over the ensuing three years.

9. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a population among the least educated and large gender disparities exacerbated by geographical disparities in relation to access to education. It is estimated that 75 per cent of the population lives in rural areas, with about 50 per cent below the age of 18 years. Afghanistan has thus one of the highest proportions of school-age children in the world. Statistics show that there were no girls enrolled in schools in 2000 in areas under Taliban control, as girls were not allowed to attend them. In the five years

¹ Afghan Ministry of Education, National School Survey 2008.

prior to 2008, however, the enrolment of girls had rapidly increased to 37 per cent.² About 2.2 million girls are currently enrolled in school. In urban areas, enrolment in primary school is higher than in rural areas and the ratio of girls to boys attending primary school is almost 1:1. According to the National School Survey 2008, the average school enrolment rate in rural areas is 27 per cent for girls, compared with 44 per cent for boys. Girls still face many challenges which prevent them from accessing school, such as long distances between their homes and schools, restricted movement, shortage of female teachers, poor facilities and, most important, the little value placed on female education. The Afghan education system is not yet fully inclusive; however, a promising beginning has been made as more and more girls continue to enrol in school and the number of female teachers increases. Although the disparity has narrowed, the enrolment of girls still lags far behind that of boys, particularly in rural areas.

10. In order to promote quality basic education for all children in Afghanistan, particularly for the most vulnerable based on the principle of the right to education, UNESCO has been focusing on two specific objectives: to better inform policy on inclusive education; and to strengthen capacities to create inclusive, learning-friendly environments. UNESCO is co-chairing the Inclusive Education Coordination Working Group together with the Afghan Ministry of Education. With the support of UNESCO, the Ministry of Education has conducted an inclusive education needs and rights assessment for Afghanistan which informs policy incorporated in the national education action plan, moves inclusive education forward and addresses the needs of children vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization with the view of achieving the goals of Education for All initiative.

11. Mainstreaming gender equality issues into the reconstruction process in Afghanistan, particularly through education, is a major comparative advantage of UNESCO. As a member of the Afghanistan Girls' Education Initiative within the broader framework of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, UNESCO is providing support to the Afghan Ministry of Education in developing and disseminating a communication strategy on girls' education to support the implementation of the National Education Strategic Plan. The UNESCO Office in Kabul is providing support for the promotion of gender parity and equality in Afghanistan, most notably in relation to the work being undertaken by the Gender Studies Institute based at Kabul University, which was established with the support of UNESCO. UNESCO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recently provided support to the Institute in conducting a multi-province research project at universities in Afghanistan, which is aimed at documenting the experience and nature of gender-based violence within educational institutions in Afghanistan in order to inform policymakers and take concrete action at the policy and university levels. UNESCO is also a part of the Gender Working Group of the United Nations country team and the Gender Donor Coordination Group and is an active member of the Afghanistan Girls' Education Initiative.

12. Despite improvements, the status of women in Afghanistan continues to be a source of concern. Women still face serious challenges as regards access to basic services, such as health and education, the justice system and the labour market. To build the capacity of women to contribute to the social, political, cultural and

² Ministry of Education, *The Development of Education: National Report of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan* (Kabul, 15 October 2008).

economic development of the country, UNESCO has been assigning high priority to women in its programme planning and implementation, focusing on women's empowerment in its provision of literacy classes (62 per cent of the beneficiaries are women), its research activities and in the promotion of free media.

13. One of the most recent major results achieved in the area of education relates to the support provided by UNESCO to the Afghan Ministry of Education in developing its planning capacity at the central, provincial and district levels, which enabled the training of over 1,000 staff from the Ministry in basic educational planning and monitoring and reporting, thus facilitating the drafting of provincial education plans. UNESCO, in collaboration with UNDP, provided support the Gender Studies Institute at Kabul University in conducting research on the role of women in the economic and agricultural development of Afghanistan. The study is in its final stages and will be released in 2013. In the area of communications and information, a project has been implemented dealing with the building of capacity of media organizations in the remote areas of Afghanistan, with a focus on community radios run by women.

14. Within the framework of the UNESCO Participation Programme, three projects related to gender equality and women's empowerment have been approved at the request of the Afghan National Commission for UNESCO: (a) a workshop and campaign for increasing girls' enrolment in schools in Nangarhar, Daykundi, Samangan, Takhar, Badakhshan and Laghman provinces; (b) capacity-building in the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs using creative approaches, including modern information technology facilities, to empower women, enabling their greater participation in the political, economic, cultural and social life of the country; and (c) capacity-building training programmes in regard to management and communication, gender equality and computers for the staff of the Afghanistan National Commission for UNESCO.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

15. Bosnia and Herzegovina is party to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education but did not report to UNESCO for the seventh consultation on the measures taken for its implementation.

16. According to the Dayton-Paris Agreement, since 1995 Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two political entities, the Bosnian-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnian Serb-led Republika Srpska, each with its own political structure (cantons and municipalities) and administration.

17. Article 2 of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1994, as amended in 1997) states that the Federation will ensure the application of the highest level of internationally recognized rights and freedoms, including the right to education. Similarly, article 38 of the Constitution of Republika Srpska (1992, as amended in 1996) provides the guarantee and protection of human freedoms and rights, including the right to education, in accordance with international standards.

18. In accordance with the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education (2003), among the principles and general objectives of education is that of ensuring equal educational opportunities regardless of gender, race, national identity, social and cultural origin, family status, religion, psychophysiological and other personal traits. The Law guarantees to every child equal right of access to and equal

opportunities for participation in appropriate education, without discrimination. Equal access and equal opportunities include ensuring equal conditions and opportunities for all (art. 4). Article 16 stipulates that primary education shall be mandatory and free of charge for all children. Mandatory education shall begin at 6 years of age and shall last without interruption for a period of eight years. Article 17 specifies that secondary education shall be accessible to all, on the basis of performance in the primary school, personal interest and abilities. Secondary education shall be free of charge in public educational institutions.

19. UNESCO activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are implemented mainly through collaboration with the United Nations country team and the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a joint project in the areas of social inclusion, environment, economic governance and human security. The main results were achieved within the context of the joint programme on improving cultural understanding in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which focused on improving policy and strategic planning in the cultural and educational sectors, developing statistical tools for data collection and improved programming, analysing cultural industries and their contribution to development in Bosnia and Herzegovina, strengthening the capacity of local municipalities to create an integrated supply of cultural tourism, providing support for intercultural dialogue in schools and the media, renovating and rehabilitating cultural heritage with a view to promoting respect for diversity and developing greater respect for interculturalism, and increasing awareness of cultural commonalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina through actions focused on strengthening cross-cultural understanding.

20. Under the UNESCO Fellowships Programme, a fellowship has been granted to a woman researcher from Bosnia and Herzegovina for a research project in the area of information and communications technology, entitled “Media as a tool of democratization: promoting free media in post-conflict society”.

Cape Verde

21. Cape Verde is not party to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and did not report to UNESCO for the seventh consultation on the measures taken for its implementation.

22. Article 50 of the Constitution of Cape Verde (1992, as amended in 2010) guarantees to all individuals the freedom to learn, to educate and to teach. This freedom includes, inter alia, the right to attend educational establishments and to teach without discrimination, as provided by law, to choose subjects and courses, and to create schools and educational establishments. The Constitution prohibits the State from basing educational curricula on philosophical beliefs and political or religious ideologies and from teaching religion in public schools. Families have the right to educate their children according to the ethical and social principles arising from their philosophical, religious, ideological, aesthetic, political or other convictions. The State does not possess the exclusive right to teach and educate, recognizing that communities, social groups and individuals are free to establish schools and educational establishments, as provided by law. Article 78 of the Constitution guarantees to all individuals the right to education. Education must stimulate creativity, encourage democratic participation in national life, and promote tolerance and solidarity. The State guarantees equality of opportunity in regard to access to and success at school. Basic education is mandatory and free of charge.

The State encourages and supports the creation of institutions and public and private associations which promote education and the defence of national culture. The Constitution (art. 80) also guarantees equal rights for men and women in the field of physical education and sports.

23. New legislation in the area of education sets out the basic principles for the organization and functioning of both the public and private educational systems. The Framework Act on Education (2010) reaffirms as a general principle the right of all individuals to have free access to the education system, irrespective of gender, age, socioeconomic status, intellectual or cultural level, religious belief or philosophical conviction (art. 6). In this context, the State has a duty to promote progressively equal access for all to the various levels of education as well as equal opportunities as regards access to school. This legislation also sets out the concept of an education system characterized by plurality and diversity that takes into account collective and individual values, needs and aspirations, making the educational process more relevant to Cape Verdean life and culture. In order to create the necessary conditions for the realization of the rights of citizens with regard to education, the State has a duty to ensure that the public education system is developed and improved, while prioritizing compulsory education. The legislation provides that the Government shall promote equal access for men and women to all levels of education, as well as sporting activities. The aforementioned provisions remove any uncertainty regarding the equality of men and women in the area of education and culture. Moreover, in order to ensure the right to education, the Constitution gives the State responsibility for promoting education at all levels, and establishes the conditions for universal access to the various levels of education and to scientific research and artistic output. To achieve these aims, the State ensures the right to equal opportunities in terms of access to and success at school. Primary school education in Cape Verde is mandatory between the ages of 6 and 14 years and free for children aged 6 to 12.

24. Universal primary education is now a fact in Cape Verde. During the past decade, the country experienced very favourable macroeconomic and demographic conditions in regard to its children's schooling, characterized by low population growth rates, close to European standards, and by an increase in national resources and expenditures allocated to the sector of education. These are all favourable indicators for the initiative aimed at providing free and compulsory basic education to children aged from 6 to 8 years, a plan which was formalized in the new law on basic education. Relieving families of the financial burdens related to school fees, including in the first cycle of secondary education, further promotes education for all, particularly for children from the most disadvantaged families.

25. Some disparities still exist between urban and rural areas in terms of access to post-primary education. However, in comparison with other African countries, the gross enrolment ratio of girls in secondary education tends to be higher than that of boys.

26. Among recent activities related to gender equality issues and education, curriculum developers were trained in the use of the Reference Manual on Education for Peace, Citizenship and Human Rights and in the integration of conflict and disaster prevention into educational policies. In addition, educational officials were trained in the integration of sexuality education into curricula, the use of participatory teaching methods in regard to sexuality, and in socioculturally appropriate comprehensive sexuality education using contextualized, locally

appropriate content. UNESCO has recently evaluated the status of HIV and sexuality education, with a focus on the gender component. The main conclusion of the study is that national primary and secondary school curricula take gender equality seriously but need to link it more explicitly to sexual and reproductive issues to have an impact on young people's health and well-being. These conclusions were shared with the Ministry of Education during a workshop to build capacities to improve sexuality education curricula, which included addressing gender inequalities and gender-based violence. In the same area, a project has been implemented dealing with the issue of translating gender into concrete, gender-sensitive actions, such as school health and sexuality education, and incorporating it in HIV/AIDS and Education for Sustainable Development policies, strategies and plans, and the initial training of secondary school teachers.

Cuba

27. Cuba is party to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education but did not report to UNESCO for the seventh consultation on the measures taken for its implementation.

28. Under article 51 of the Constitution of Cuba (1976, as amended in 1992) everyone has the right to education. This right is guaranteed by the free and widespread system of schools, including semi-boarding and boarding schools, and scholarships of all kinds and at all levels of education. In addition, all educational material is provided free of charge, which gives all children and young people, regardless of their family's economic position, the opportunity to study. Adults are also guaranteed the right to education, also free of charge and with specific facilities regulated by law, by means of adult education programmes, technical and vocational education, training courses in State agencies and enterprises and advanced courses for workers. Article 52 of the Constitution guarantees that everyone has the right of access to physical education, sport and recreation. Enjoyment of this right is assured by including the teaching and practice of physical education and sports in the curricula of the national educational system and by the broad nature of the instruction and means placed at the service of the people, which enables sports and recreation to be practiced on a mass basis.

29. A number of statutes regulate both education and the educational system. According to legislation, primary education (which lasts six years) and basic secondary education (which lasts three years) are mandatory. Education is the responsibility of the State and is free of charge. Education is accessible by all Cubans, without distinction and privileges.

30. A number of UNESCO initiatives in Cuba have mainstreamed gender equality issues at all programme levels, both nationally and regionally. Activities have been carried out at the intersectoral, multisectoral and inter-agency levels with regular programme resources and those received from extrabudgetary sources, such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Governments of some donor member States. For example, within the framework of the campaign of the United Nations Secretary-General entitled "UNiTE to End Violence against Women", a series of actions fostering gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights was carried out in Cuba in a joint effort with UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The UNESCO regional office in

Havana has also been implementing activities within the framework of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, including the promotion of women in audiovisual productions undertaken in the context of the programme entitled “Las Cámaras de la Diversidad” and through the SIDACULT programme. Within this framework, a project has also been implemented, resulting in the production of guidelines on using cultural tools in the fight against gender-based violence and HIV /AIDS in Cuba.

31. UNESCO was an active partner in the drafting of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Cuba, in particular in ensuring that gender equality was mainstreamed throughout the framework of actions proposed. Several publications and audiovisual materials addressing gender equality issues have been produced and distributed to universities, legal departments, police forces and hospitals.

32. Within the framework of the UNESCO Participation Programme, a project was launched in 2012 with local non-governmental organizations to promote the social participation of adolescents and youth at the local level, with an emphasis on gender equality. Under the UNESCO Fellowships Programme, six fellowships have been granted to six women scientists from Cuba for research in the area of natural sciences and engineering.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

33. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is not party to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

34. According to article 13 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2006), in the area of education no discriminatory measures shall be taken against any Congolese citizen, be it the result of a law or of an act of executive power, on the basis of his or her religion, family origin, social status, residence, political opinions or convictions, race, ethnic or tribal origin, or cultural or linguistic minority status. Pursuant to article 43 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to education. Parents have the right to choose the type of education to give their children. Primary education is mandatory and free of charge in public institutions. Under article 45, public authorities have the obligation to promote and to ensure, by virtue of education, respect for human rights, fundamental liberties and the civic duties enshrined in the Constitution. According to the Framework Law on National Education of 1986 (currently in the process of revision), education is mandatory for children between 6 and 15 years of age.

35. Since 1997, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been facing a serious deterioration of the educational system, thus the current Government has elaborated a framework national plan for its reconstruction. This plan affirms education for all as an absolute priority and defines the ultimate goal of the new type of education as ensuring that women and men are competent and educated in the spirit of humanistic, moral, spiritual, cultural and civic values, as well as creative, in a new democratic, equitable, prosperous and peaceful Congolese society. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is adopting a sector-wide approach in establishing a decentralized education system. With support provided by UNESCO through a capacity-development programme on educational planning and management, the country is revising the normative frameworks of its three education subsectors:

(a) adult and non-formal education; (b) primary, secondary and professional education; and (c) higher education.

36. The fundamental objective of the activities of UNESCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to ensure primary education for all. The tendency is towards a general increase in the enrolment rate. However, mainly due to poverty, a significant number of children, mostly girls and children from poor families, are excluded from the benefits of the primary education, which has seriously compromised the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The second objective is the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In spite of some progress made at the normative level, namely, the amendments to the family law and the establishment of a national plan on gender equality, inequality and discrimination based on gender remain a serious problem that affects the entire development process.

37. Within the framework of the national stabilization and reconstruction plan for war-affected areas (STAREC), implemented with the assistance of the United Nations system of organizations, a number of UNESCO projects are focused on the consequences of violence against women and provide medical, legal, psychological and social support for the victims. One of these projects consists of a combination of policy and action-related research activities involving students and focuses on different perceptions of and motivations for sexual and other violence against women. This project allowed the creation of a scientific database meant to serve as the basis for the design of a strategy to integrate combating sexual and other violence against women into the curricula in schools and universities. Within the framework of the projects developed by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), an analysis of different programmes in primary and secondary education took into consideration the dimension of sexuality education. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a HIV and sexuality education programme analysis was conducted together with several local stakeholders. The analysis took into account various programmes, including those designed by the Ministry of Education, the Central Service of Family Life Education and main religious organizations, as well as programmes launched by non-governmental organizations active in the area of HIV and sexuality education. The analysis focused on differences between these programmes and how they are linked with the technical tool, *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education*. One of the main findings was the need to highlight more issues related to gender and, in particular, gender-based violence. In the area of communications and information, a programme involving promotion of the access of women to new information and communications technologies and the Internet as a factor in development was designed and implemented by UNESCO.

38. UNESCO is focusing its support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the following main issues: promotion of the culture of peace; prevention of conflict; promotion of gender equality; prevention of sexual and gender-based violence; and women's participation and leadership in UNESCO domains. Several programmes have been launched, including a programme using a sociocultural approach to sexual and gender-based violence, as well an innovative programme that works with universities to engage male students as ambassadors for the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence. The latter programme has involved the production and validation of new teaching modules on gender equality and violence prevention, which are now being used in universities in the provinces of North and South Kivu.

Lessons learned from the pilot project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are also used to inform the planning of a project to develop teaching and training courses on women's political participation and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in other African countries. In the area of women's participation and leadership, a programme has been implemented supporting the participation of women in the electoral process; projects on the development of rural radio stations for youth and women are also under way. In this area also, a brochure on women's rights has been issued in the four national languages and has been widely distributed throughout the country.

39. UNESCO is closely involved in the establishment and development of the Regional Research and Documentation Centre on Women, Gender and Peacebuilding for the Great Lakes Region in Kinshasa, particularly in relation to women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, and prevention of gender-based violence. This initiative is part of the strategy to develop partnerships with academic, policymaking and civil society networks, in particular through the establishment and development of a series of regional and international gender equality research and documentation centres as centres of excellence for research and teaching on gender equality and for the collection and diffusion of documentation and resources through virtual networks and libraries. UNESCO also provided support to member States of the Great Lakes Region in establishing their national associate centres through planning meetings with the ministries concerned, as well as training in regard to the establishment of virtual libraries.

40. Within the framework of the UNESCO Participation Programme, a project has been approved dealing with a campaign for awareness-raising and reinforcement of the capacities of rural women for adaptation to climate change and for protection of the environment. Under the UNESCO Fellowships Programme, four fellowships have been granted to women researchers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo for research in the development and administration of microenterprises.

Dominican Republic

41. The Dominican Republic is party to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education but did not report to UNESCO for the seventh consultation on the measures taken for its implementation.

42. Article 39 of the Constitution of the Dominican Republic (2010) elaborates the principle of equality before the law and states that all persons are born free and equal, shall receive the same protection and treatment and shall enjoy the same rights, freedoms and opportunities, without discrimination for reasons of gender, skin colour, age, disability, nationality, family ties, language, religion, or political, philosophical, social or personal conviction. Women and men are equal before the law. Any act with the purpose or result of lessening or invalidating the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of equality in the fundamental rights of women and men is prohibited. All necessary steps shall be taken to ensure the eradication of inequality and discrimination due to gender. The State shall promote and guarantee a balanced participation of women and men as candidates for elective positions, and at the management and decision-making levels in the public sphere, the judiciary and agencies of the State with a supervisory role. Article 63 of the Constitution guarantees the right to education and states that all persons have the right to education under equal conditions and opportunities and without any limitations

other than those deriving from their aptitude, vocation and aspirations. Parents have the freedom to choose the type of education for their minor children. The State guarantees free public education, which is mandatory at the primary and basic levels and for the first cycle of the secondary level, that is, for a duration of eight years. The General Law on Education (1997) further elaborates the obligation of the State to ensure equality of educational opportunity, as well as equity in providing educational services.

43. Major activities of UNESCO in the Dominican Republic in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment include participation in the planning of the United Nations country team by identifying four priority areas for joint projects: (a) promotion of social and economic inclusion; (b) women's empowerment and rights; (c) protection of the rights of children, adolescents and youth; and (d) environmental sustainability and integrated risk management. In particular, UNESCO assisted the introduction of a broader gender vision into project design, implementation and evaluation; actively participated in the United Nations gender focal point group; played a leadership role and worked with artists in the campaign of the United Nations Secretary-General to end violence against women ("Yo digo NO"); and worked to expand the cultural tools programme to include gender and violence against women.

44. UNESCO is working in close cooperation with the University of Santo Domingo in establishing the UNESCO Chair on Water, Gender and Governance, which will address the role of women in relation to local knowledge of water governance. Once formally in place, the Chair will enlarge the network of water and gender chairs in the region and worldwide.

45. Within the framework of the UNESCO Participation Programme, three gender equality and women's empowerment-related projects were approved at the request of the National Commission of the Dominican Republic: (a) a literacy programme for women with disabilities in rural regions; (b) a project on the contribution of information and communications technologies in ending violence against women in the Dominican Republic; and (c) education on and promotion of a culture of peace and tolerance and non-violence against women in 10 provinces of the Dominican Republic by means of music. Under the UNESCO Fellowships Programme, a fellowship has been granted to a woman scientist from the Dominican Republic for research in the area of environment, namely, water management for coastal sustainability.

Serbia

46. Serbia is party to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education but did not report to UNESCO for the seventh consultation on the measures taken for its implementation.

47. Under Article 21 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (2006), all are equal before the Constitution and law. Everyone shall have the right to equal legal protection, without discrimination. All direct or indirect discrimination based on any grounds, particularly on race, sex, national origin, social origin, birth, religion, political or other opinion, financial status, culture, language, age, mental or physical disability, shall be prohibited. Special measures which may be introduced to achieve full equality of individuals or a group of individuals in a substantially unequal position compared to other citizens shall not be deemed discrimination. Further, under article 71 of the Constitution, everyone shall have the right to education.

Primary education is mandatory and free, whereas secondary education is free. All citizens shall have access under equal conditions to higher education. The State shall provide free tertiary education to successful and talented students of insufficient means, in accordance with the law.

48. Article 6 of the Law on the Foundations of the Education System (2009) stipulates that every person shall have the right to education. Article 91 specifies that one year of preschool education as well as elementary education (grades 1-8) and secondary education shall be provided free of charge in public educational institutions. According to article 97, all children shall be enrolled in a preschool institution one year before starting the first grade of elementary school. Compulsory education also covers elementary education (grades 1-8). On the basis of this law, a series of statutes has been issued, which constitutes the normative basis for the education system in different educational sectors, starting with preschool education, through elementary, secondary, vocational and tertiary, and on to higher education, including a statute that prevents discrimination against persons with disabilities and ensures equality in the field of education. In accordance with these normative texts, the education system must provide children, students and adults with equality and accessibility of education without any discrimination or segregation based on gender, or social, cultural, ethnic, religious or other affiliation, place of residence, financial status, or health conditions, developmental difficulties and impairments. Also, the education system must provide equal opportunities for education at all levels and types of education, in keeping with the needs and interests of children, students and adults, without any obstacle to continuation and completion of education and lifelong learning. Among the objectives of education defined by these normative texts is the development of respect for racial, national, cultural, linguistic, religious, gender and age equality, of tolerance, and of respect for differences.

49. In the context of cooperation between UNESCO and other United Nations agencies in projects related to Serbia, the country is part of a new generation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, moving from a situation of development assistance to one of partnership for development. Within this framework, experts and representatives of the country are regularly invited to take part in activities at the regional and global levels. Under the United Nations country partnership strategy for Serbia which involves 19 United Nations agencies, programmes and activities will be implemented in three priority areas: (a) strengthening good governance; (b) sustainable development and social inclusion; and (c) regional stability and cooperation.

50. Under the UNESCO Fellowships Programme, with co-sponsorship from L'Oréal, a fellowship has been granted to a woman scientist from Serbia for research in the domain of medicine, namely, urine proteomics in kidney disease and urothelial cancer.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

51. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is party to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and reported to UNESCO for the seventh consultation on the measures taken for its implementation.

52. The framework for the education system in the United Kingdom is set out in a number of acts of Parliament, as well as other regulations of the authorities of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The provision of compulsory education free of charge for all within a specified age group (5-16 years) is

fundamental to the education system in the United Kingdom. Concerning the implementation of international human rights standards, including those related to the right to education, the most important legislative acts are the Human Rights Act of 1998 and the Equality Act of 2006. The Human Rights Act incorporates into law nearly all of the rights contained in the international human rights instruments and gives citizens a clear legal statement of their basic rights and fundamental freedoms. With regard to education, the Act states that nobody should be denied the right to education. Parents also have the right to ensure that their religious or philosophical beliefs are respected when public bodies provide education or teaching to their children. The Equality Act introduces a number of measures to promote equality across a broad range of areas, including the establishment of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights; these measures aim to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people and promote and protect human rights. The Commission enforces legislation on equality in regard to age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender status, and encourages compliance with the Human Rights Act. The revised Equality Act of 2010 brings together and replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws and includes a new public sector equality duty (the “general duty”) that replaces previous, separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality.

53. The United Kingdom has enacted a law that specifically targets racial discrimination in all areas of social life, including in education. The Race Relations Act of 2000 makes it unlawful for public authorities, including schools and educational institutions, to discriminate when carrying out their functions. It imposes a general duty on specified bodies, including the governing bodies of schools and higher education institutions, to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunities and good relations among people of different races.

54. The United Kingdom has the highest rate of teenage births in Western Europe. In an attempt to comply with its obligation to ensure school attendance while recognizing that suitable educational provisions other than regular school may be required to accommodate the needs of school-age parents, the Government provides a range of alternatives. For example, education in a specialized unit for pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers, further education or home tuition are some of the options available, it being understood that the authorities are not to impose any one option on a student but to consult them, their parents or carers and their school to secure a package which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and individual needs. This policy makes it clear that pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion from school.

55. The United Kingdom has developed several interesting practices regarding inclusive education. For instance, the revised inclusive framework introduced by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) has contributed to a growing awareness of the benefits of inclusion and has led to concrete improvements. This Act extended the application of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to schools, further education and higher education institutions, making it illegal for them to discriminate against disabled students in relation to admissions, exclusions and education and associated services, and requiring them to make reasonable adjustments to their policies and practices to prevent students with disabilities from being treated less favourably and placed at a substantial disadvantage. Schools and local authorities are also required to plan ahead to ensure that information is available in alternative forms for pupils with disabilities and that access to the school itself is made possible for all students.

Annex

**Educational statistics for countries reporting to the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against
Women at its fifty-fifth session: gross enrolment ratios of
females and males, and gender parity index**

Country	Year	Gross enrolment ratio, primary education		Gross enrolment ratio, secondary education		Gross enrolment ratio, tertiary education		Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio, primary education	Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio, secondary education	Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio, tertiary education
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	(all programmes)		
Afghanistan	2008	74	114	20	47	..	..	0.65	0.43	..
	2009	74	110	26	53	1	5	0.67	0.49	0.24
	2010	79	114	30	60	..	..	0.69	0.51	..
	2011	81	114	34	62	..	..	0.71	0.55	..
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2008	106	105	93	91	39	31	1.01	1.02	1.29
	2009	106	104	94	92	41	31	1.02	1.02	1.3
	2010	88	87	91	88	41	31	1.02	1.03	1.3
	2011	91	90	91	88	43	33	1.01	1.03	1.29
Cape Verde	2008	108	115	91	82	14	10	0.93	1.11	1.31
	2009	106	115	93	78	17	13	0.92	1.19	1.35
	2010	105	114	95	80	20	16	0.92	1.19	1.29
	2011	105	114	97	83	24	17	0.92	1.17	1.37
Cuba	2008	101	103	91	91	149	89	0.97	1	1.67
	2009	102	104	89	89	145	87	0.98	0.99	1.67
	2010	102	104	89	90	119	72	0.98	0.99	1.65
	2011	100	102	90	91	101	61	0.98	0.99	1.65
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2008	85	101	26 ^a	46 ^a	3	8	0.84	0.56 ^a	0.36
	2009	86	100	27	49	3	9	0.86	0.56	0.31
	2010	87	100	28	48	..	..	0.87	0.58	..
	2011	89	103	29	50	5	10	0.87	0.59	0.45
Dominican Republic	2008	105	112	84	71	..	..	0.93	1.19	..
	2009	102	118	84	74	..	..	0.86	1.13	..
	2010	102	115	81	72	..	..	0.88	1.12	..
	2011	102	112	81	72	..	..	0.91	1.13	..
Serbia	2008 ^a	101	101	92	89	55	42	1.00	1.03	1.30
	2009 ^a	97	98	93	90	56	44	0.99	1.03	1.29
	2010 ^a	96	96	92	91	56	43	0.99	1.02	1.30
	2011 ^a	95	95	92	91	57	44	1.00	1.02	1.32

Country	Year	Gross enrolment ratio, primary education		Gross enrolment ratio, secondary education		Gross enrolment ratio, tertiary education		Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio, primary education	Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio, secondary education	Gender parity index for gross enrolment ratio, tertiary education
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	(all programmes)		
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2008	106	107	101	98	67	48	1	1.02	1.41
	2009	106	106	103	101	69	49	1	1.02	1.4
	2010	107	107	106	105	70	50	0.99	1.01	1.38
	2011	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (www.uis.unesco.org).

^a Data not available; national estimate.