



**International Convention on
the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination**

Distr.
GENERAL

CERD/C/431/Add.6
17 February 2003

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

**REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER
ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION**

Seventeenth periodic reports of States parties due in 2002

Addendum

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN*

[1 November 2002]

* This document contains the sixteenth and seventeenth periodic reports of the Islamic Republic of Iran, due on 4 January 2000 and 2002 respectively, submitted in one document. For the fifteenth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the summary records of the meetings at which the Committee considered that report, see documents CERD/C/338/Add.8 and CERD/C/SR.1338, 1339, 1357.

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**SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH PERIODIC REPORTS OF THE
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN ON THE INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

Introduction

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) formally joined the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) when it submitted its instrument of ratification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 29 August 1968, and since that time has on several occasions submitted periodic reports on the implementation of ICERD to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
2. Iran's last report, containing its thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth periodic reports, was submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 6 October 1998 (CERD/C/338/Add.8), which was considered by the Committee on 8 and 9 August 1999. The members of the Committee made their final comments on the report during this session.
3. In October 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the national authority in charge for preparing the periodic report, set up a national committee to compile the sixteenth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran on ICERD, inviting representatives from organizations involved in one way or another in the campaign against racial discrimination, including the Judiciary, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the Management and Planning Organization, the Presidential Office for Less Developed Areas, the Presidential Center for Women's Participation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and the Islamic Human Rights Commission.
4. The purpose of this committee was to examine the final comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/SR.1357), to receive the reports of individual organizations, and to compile the sixteenth periodic report.
5. The aforementioned committee categorized the final comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination according to the domain of activity of the various organizations involved, presenting the latter each with the relevant portion of the commentary. Directed by the prerogatives and methodology set out within the general guidelines on form and content ratified by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the members of the national committee were instructed to contribute their report and views toward compilation of the periodic report.
6. In the course of numerous sessions, held at regular intervals, the members of the national committee incorporated the reports of their respective organizations into a single report, known as the periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
7. The sixteenth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran mostly describes the measures taken over the preceding three years to implement ICERD.

I. GENERAL

8. In Iran six ethnic groups - Azeri, Kurd, Lur, Arabic-speaking, Baluchi, and Turkmen - live with their respective customs, traditions and dialect among the Persians. The different ethnic groups within Iran always bear in mind the words of the Prophet of Islam, who said: "O people, your God is One. You all come from Adam, and Adam from soil; and the most esteemed among you by your Creator will be the most pious among you. The Arab is not superior to the alien, nor the alien to the Arab; white to red, nor red to white, except in piety."

9. In line with the above general principle, Iranian society is a successful example of fraternal and friendly cohabitation between different peoples. Promotion and strengthening of this situation remains a major Government priority, towards the realization of which numerous activities have been dedicated.

Population

10. According to 2002 statistics, the population of Iran is estimated to stand at 65,540,224. The proportion of women and men is 49 and 51 per cent, respectively. The geographic spread is 65 per cent urban and 35 per cent rural. Iran has 28 provinces, the populations of which are given in table 1 below.

Table 1
Estimated population of Iran's provinces in 2002

Province	Population	Centre	Province	Population	Centre
Ardebil	1 204 410	Ardedil	Khuzestan	4 506 816	Ahvaz
Bushehr	798 639	Bushehr	Kohguiluyeh and B'ahmad	627 517	Yassouj
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	794 077	Shahr-e Kord	Kordestan	1 492 007	Sanandaj
East Azerbaijan	3 378 243	Tabriz	Lorestan	1 671 706	Khorram-abad
Esfahan	4 316 767	Esfahan	Markazi	1 300 778	Arak
Fars	4 135 251	Shiraz	Mazandaran	2 742 885	Sari
Gilan	2 310 033	Rasht	Qazvin	1 066 317	Qazvin
Golestan	1 555 058	Gorgan	Qom	971 280	Qom
Hamedan	1 710 627	Hamedan	Semnan	563 959	Semnan
Hormozgan	1 235 816	Bandar Abbas	Sistan and Baluchestan	2 006 170	Zahedan
Ilam	550 971	Ilam	Tehran	11 689 301	Tehran
Kerman	2 215 376	Kerman	West Azerbaijan	2 774 804	Orumiyeh
Kermanshah	1 962 176	Kermanshah	Yazd	841 370	Yazd
Khorassan	6 094 888	Mashad	Zanjan	936 985	Zanjan

11. Given the absence of any division based on race or ethnicity in any walk of life, ethnic characteristics are not elicited during official censuses. No precise figure can therefore be presented as to the population of the various ethnic groups in Iran. In general, however, the majority of the populations of East and West Azerbaijan, Ardebil and Zanzan are of Azeri origin; the majority of the populations of Kordestan and Kermanshah and Ilam, and part of the population of West Azerbaijan, are Kurdish; the majority of the populations of Lorestan, Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad, and Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari are Lur; the majority of the population of Sistan and Baluchestan is Baluchi; part of the population of Khuzestan is Arabic-speaking; and part of the population of Golestan is of Turkmen origin.

12. There is a growing trend towards settlement of nomadic tribes inside Iran, and the Government provides them with certain services to encourage voluntary settlement. Majority of nomadic tribes are of Azeri, Lur or Kurdish origin.

13. Iran is also home to a large population of refugees. Conditions in the neighbouring States of Afghanistan and Iraq over the last years have not encouraged refugees to return. According to the identification plan carried out in 2001, there are 2,563,827 refugees currently inside Iran, 91 per cent of whom are Afghan, 8 per cent Iraqi, and the remainder from other countries. There are also an estimated additional 200,000 illegal or unregistered refugees in Iran.

14. The Government of Iran, in spite of a shortage of means and resources and the lack of sufficient international funding, will take steps to maintain a suitable standard of living for the refugees until such time as they can be properly and voluntarily repatriated. Some of these steps are described further in this report.

II. INFORMATION RELATING TO ARTICLES 2 TO 7

Article 2

15. Article 19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran specifies that “the people of Iran, regardless of tribal or ethnic origin, enjoy equal rights; and colour, race, language and the like do not constitute a privilege”. The Government has maintained its policies and actions to ensure that this principle is realized.

16. In the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth reports of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the broad principles concerning the protection of minority rights and details of activities in this regard were laid out. The present report gives details of certain developments with respect to legislation and large-scale planning in this domain.

17. The State Expediency Council, which, under the Constitution, is responsible for macro policy-making, ratified the State’s general policies towards ethnic groups in its session of 1/10/1380 [31 December 2001]. This act lays the foundation for a dialogue of religions to promote mutual understanding, strengthening common ground, and prevent religious feuds.

18. The State Expediency Council also passed the following motion during the aforementioned session: “The people of Iran, regardless of class, tribe, language and religion, are a united nation, respectful of cultural peculiarities but supportive of national cultural identity and the convergence of individual cultural identities with the national culture. In order to strengthen this national culture, executive policies must focus on processes that promote sustained social solidarity, cultural practices, and an evolving relationship between the latter and national culture.”

19. Another motion was ratified to the effect that the life, property, land, security and other rights of every person are protected in all their aspects by the framework of Constitution. One of the main axes of Islamic Republic of Iran policy regarding ethnic groups is to lay the ground for sociocultural unity based on the Constitution, whilst another is to cleanse our culture of all ethnic superstition as well as control the factors that lead to national schism.

Measures taken in less developed areas inhabited by ethnic groups

20. The fifteenth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination gave details of certain measures taken to improve economic, social and cultural indicators in less developed areas inhabited by ethnic groups. The Committee welcomed these measures. These measures have been continued through newer and more effective channels in recent years.

21. Significant investment by the Government as part of the first and second five-year economic, social and cultural development plans [ESCDP1 and ESCDP2] (1989-1993 and 1995-1999) was channelled towards peripheral regions, where ethnic groups tend to reside, to improve basic social (health and education) and infrastructural (transport and communication) services and promote job creation, and help lessen deprivation in the peripheral regions of the country and include them within the process of intrinsic development.

22. The view of these points, ESCDP3 (2000-2004) has provided for the nation’s peripheral and far-flung regions - labelled less developed or undeveloped under the programme - in terms of the strategies and legislation needed to accelerate development in these regions during the third and subsequent ESCDPs.

23. In addition to the legislation embedded in the third ESCDP5, specific working guidelines have been devised for the development of underdeveloped regions in the country, which have been added to the ESCDP3 Act, for action by the Government.

24. In order to speed up development in the aforementioned regions, special measures have been devised as part of chapter 8 of the ESCDP3 Act (income-expenditure system at provincial level).

25. The note under article 75 of the ESCDP3 Act states: “During the course of the Third Plan, the allocation of annual credit to the provinces, especially the less-developed provinces, must be arranged so that the provincial development budget (for the provinces as a

whole) equals 26 per cent (26%) of the annual national development budget during the first year of the Plan and grows at an annual rate of 6 per cent (6%), to reach 50 per cent (50%) of the national budget by the final year of the Plan.”

26. Article 76 of the ESCDP3 Act states that “a specified percentage of the Treasury’s deposit income for each province will be allocated to the provision of development credit as part of that same province’s annual budget, and all or part of each province’s current expenditure as provided for in the annual budget legislation will be funded out of the remaining percentage of that province’s income. In proportion to each province’s income and expenditure, the aforementioned percentages will be determined by the Cabinet based on recommendations by the Management and Planning Organization”.

27. In implementing the aforementioned legislative items, the Government, whilst taking into consideration the substance of the above note (6 per cent annual increase in the budget of provinces), will move, within the framework of the aforementioned article 76 by laws, to ratify coefficients, according to which the provinces’ share of development expenditure during the Third Plan will be calculated, and delivered to the Planning and Development Council in each province, to be distributed among the latter’s districts. It is worth noting that the above coefficients are an amalgam of each province’s development indicators in various sectors: the more developed a province, the smaller its allocation coefficient. For example, the coefficients of income deduction for the provinces of Tehran, Esfahan, Qazvin, Markazi and Yazd - all among Iran’s developed provinces - during ESCDP3 are 15, 31, 43 and 47 per cent, respectively. The corresponding coefficients for the less-developed provinces of Ilam Kohguiluyeh and Bouyerahmad, Kordestan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Ardebil and Lorestan are 368, 300, 251, 241, 244, 187 and 175 per cent, respectively. Every year, therefore, a significant amount of investment will be channelled towards less developed provinces. The remarkable increase in development funding for these provinces over recent years merely confirms this fact.

28. In addition to increased funding to meet the needs and solve the problems of the country’s less developed provinces through the channels described, specific funds have been set aside within the annual national budget for less-developed provinces inhabited by ethnic groups in order to promote human development and socio-economic conditions in these provinces. A tangible example is the funding, more than 10 billion rials, given to the province of Sistan and Baluchestan over and above all funding conventionally allocated to deprived provinces. It is worthy of mention that Sistan and Baluchestan is the only province to benefit from Cabinet-ratified regional development instrument, which was the outcome of a crisis outline study in 1988, entitled “Developing the Eastern Axis”. Based on this instrument, which encompasses general principles and long-term strategies for the development of the province over a period of 20 years, special development funding has been allocated to Sistan and Baluchestan in the fields of human development, exploitation of water resources, infrastructural development (ports and docks), and expansion of the commercial sector.

29. Table 2 shows expenditure in 1999 and 2000 in the four provinces with the ethnic populations - namely Sistan and Baluchestan, Kordestan, West Azerbaijan, and Golestan - in the fields of education and development, health care, and rural development and reconstruction, which encompass such activities as electricity and water supply, road construction, and structural improvement of rural spaces.

Table 2

Special development credit for SMP provinces: 1999-2000 (millions of rials)

Province	Sistan and Baluchestan	Kordestan	West Azerbaijan	Golestan
1999	29 700	20 110	18 900	8 020
2000	32 000	23 000	20 800	8 950

30. Table 2 shows that, in 1999 and 2000, on top of conventional government investment in the human and infrastructural development of rural spaces in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups, further investment has also been channelled into these regions from the special fund for less developed regions. As can be seen from table 2, Sistan and Baluchestan has a significant greater share of this funding than the other three provinces.

31. Credit allocation and development activities in less developed regions have certain special characteristics, which are described below:

- Credit is allocated on a 100 per cent basis, payable by the Treasury to the relevant executive bodies by the end of each year, so that they are able to schedule their activities appropriately and fulfil them completely;
- Special credit for these regions is in addition to what has been provided in provincial and national budgets, and is allocated to allow these regions to close the development gap between them and the rest of the country;
- Current and monitoring costs may not be paid for out of the special funds allocated to these regions, and must be provided for out of the other credit resources in the province; and
- The performance of executive bodies in these regions is reported in writing to the President of the Republic, the Cabinet, and the highest executive authority in the province, with performance assigned positive or negative scores and evaluated in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

32. In the programmes and measures devised for less developed regions, special attention is paid to the condition of women. One of the organizational tasks undertaken by the Presidential Center for Women's Participation (PCWP) is "to lay foundations and plan for greater participation by rural and nomadic women in the local economy and promote their role within the family".

33. Article 158 of the ESCDP3 Act addresses women and the duties of the PCWP. Paragraph D describes one of the duties of the PCWP as follows: In order for women to benefit from various social services, in the financial, legal, advisory, and educational domains, appropriate projects should be submitted and passed on to the relevant executive body for implementation following ratification, with priority being given to women in less developed areas who have to take care of themselves, and other vulnerable social groups.

34. According to the note to article 1 of the executive regulations for article 158 of the third ESCDP5, “in implementing these regulations, priority should be given to women who are either alone or who have to take care of themselves in less developed areas”.

35. A number of projects have been implemented in this regard. For example, a project entitled “A comparative study of the socio-economic condition of women in the provinces of Bushehr, Sistan and Baluchestan, Kordestan, and Golestan” has been completed with the help of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This project focused on certain key areas of concern to the experts concerning the empowerment of women, namely welfare, awareness, access, and participation. Thus, studies of these regions have five main axes: demography, use of welfare and education services, social and economic participation by women, and the gender status of women.

Measures taken to improve the living conditions of nomadic tribes

36. Under the State budget system, and within the framework of development credit, there is a section by the name of Multipurpose Zone Development Operations (MZDO), of which the comprehensive nomadic development programme is a part. The funds and measures forecast in this programme are exclusively directed towards human development, infrastructural services, and improvement of the socio-economic condition of nomad people across the country.

37. Within this framework, support, manufacturing and infrastructural services, including road construction and the management of tribal routes within the boundaries of nomadic regions, aid to nomad cooperatives with the goal of giving nomad tribes the benefit of essential consumer goods, health-care services for nomad families, and veterinary services for their cattle is provided.

38. From the beginning of ESCDP2, the Government has been taking steps to control the random settlement of nomadic tribes and to steer and organize their movements. The main point of these measures is to identify, for the benefit of these tribes, summer and winter “reservations” that are both able to support agriculture and within easy access of routine services. These reservations are known as “development foci” or “homelands” for nomadic people, and have been identified and studied with the help of government funding. Once the evaluation phase is complete, basic infrastructural services, such as water and electricity supply and road construction, are provided. During the last phase, nomadic tribes are encouraged, with the Government’s help in securing housing and employing, to settle in these areas. At present,

development focuses of this type have been established in the province of Fars (clan Qashqai, in the Bokan area) as well as in the province of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari (clan Bakhtiari, in the Chelgard area), and the province of Khuzestan in the district of Shushtar (Kowsar).

39. Table 3 shows development funding allocated under the MZDO chapter between 1999 and 2001. It is worth noting that a portion of this credit is channelled as “Southern Islands and Special Zones Development” investment, towards the social and infrastructural development of Iran’s southern islands, in the Persian Gulf, which are the home of Iran’s Arabic-speaking group.

Table 3

**Development credit for MZDO at national/provincial level
in 1999-2001 (millions of rials)**

Year	1999	2000	2001	Total	Average growth
Credit	179 398	216 068	249 409	644 875	18 per cent

Article 3

40. The Islamic Republic of Iran is opposed to any policy based on racial discrimination, and has fought against this phenomenon at both national and international levels. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a member of the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and the Convention against Apartheid in Sport.

41. Iran was an effective member of the international movement to eliminate the apartheid regime in South Africa. Thereafter, Iran has persisted in its campaign against the traditional as well as contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

42. Iran took an active part in the preparatory and final stages of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, between 31 August and 7 September 2001. In view of the importance attached by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to combat against racism and racial discrimination, Iran hosted the Asian Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference. This Meeting was held in Tehran from 19 to 21 February 2001.

43. Iran was also a very active member in the Preparatory Committees and the World Conference. It was also a member of the bureau of the Preparatory Committees, the general committee of the World Conference, and the chairman of the Drafting Committee at the World Conference.

44. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes in the importance of the full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and will persist in its efforts to this end at both national and international levels.

Article 4

45. According to article 9 of the Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, regulations under treaties signed by the Government in accordance with the Constitution, are legally binding. Therefore all the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, including article 4, are automatically incorporated into Iranian domestic legislation without need for new legislation, and constitutes legal reference in court.

46. Nevertheless, in order to determine punishment for the cases referred to under article 4, the Bill for the Punishment of the Propagation of Racial Discrimination was ratified in 1977. According to article 1 of this act, “Dissemination of any ideas based on discrimination on the basis of race, gender, racial hatred, or incitement to discrimination thereto through any of the mass media against any group that is different in race, gender, colour or ethnicity, or any support including financial support, for racist activities is banned. Anyone in breach of this law will be guilty of misdemeanour and liable to up to six months’ imprisonment or a fine of between ten thousand and fifty thousand rials, except where the act committed is liable to a more severe penalty under a different law, in which case the more severe penalty is applicable.”

47. In accordance with article 2 of this act, “Any person organizing or administering a group or society for the purpose of promoting racial, ethnic or gender discrimination, or in order to incite hatred, enmity or conflict on grounds of race, ethnicity or gender, is guilty of misdemeanour and liable to between 3 and 12 months’ imprisonment or a fine of between ten thousand and one hundred thousand Rials. The penalty for accepting membership of any such society will be equal to the minimum sentence described above.”

48. In spite of the freedom of the press in the Islamic Republic of Iran, dissemination of racist ideas through the press is prohibited. Article 2 of the 1985 Press Act outlines the mission of the press. Paragraph C of this article considers it the mission of the press to reject false and divisive doctrines, and bans the press from putting up different sectors of the public against each other on the basis of such issues as the cultural, political or racial differences that currently exist in Iran.

Article 5

49. In the fifteenth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran to CERD, the laws and principles that accord ethnic groups the full enjoyment of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights were described in detail. In the present report, reference is made to certain new laws in this domain, together with practical measures taken by the Government to realize these rights.

Participation in political life

50. The Islamic Republic of Iran guarantees, through elections provided for by the Constitution (Assembly of Experts, Islamic Consultative Assembly [Parliament], Presidency of the Republic, and District Councils), the participation of all the people in the decision-making process.

51. Table 4 shows the participation rate of the public in the sixth term of the parliament elections (2000), eighth presidential elections (1999), and first district council elections (1998) and confirms the extensive participation of the people of provinces inhabited by ethnic groups in these elections. The figures given below are the proportion of total votes cast to the population eligible to vote in each province.

Table 4
Participation percentage in parliamentary, presidential and district council elections

Province	Parliamentary elections	Presidential elections	Council elections
Ardebil	70	58	74
Bushehr	76	71	73
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	85	65	88
East Azerbaijan	67	53	65
Esfahan	60	60	54
Fars	73	68	68
Gilan	77	65	72
Golestan	78	75	78
Hamedan	68	63	65
Hormozgan	71	76	79
Ilam	87	77	93
Kerman	76	70	80
Kermanshah	71	63	75
Khorassan	73	56	67
Khuzestan	67	59	66
Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad	96	76	99
Kordestan	70	53	87
Lorestan	78	65	77
Markazi	68	63	64
Mazandaran	75	68	75
Qazvin	70	74	74
Qom	66	76	50
Semnan	76	78	72
Sistan and Baluchestan	68	70	85
Tehran	46	68	39
West Azerbaijan	71	56	72
Yazd	70	89	65
Zanjan	73	68	70
Total percentage	65	66	64

52. In accordance with article 64 of the Constitution, "The number of deputies to be elected to the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament) shall be two hundred and seventy; and beginning on the date of the 1989 referendum, 20 deputies may be added to this figure every 10 years, on the basis of demographic political, geographic or other circumstances."

Accordingly, in 1999, that is, before the sixth parliamentary elections, the number of seats in the Parliament increased from 270 to 290, with an adequate share being given to provinces inhabited by ethnic groups, such that 9 of the 20 new deputies were elected from these provinces.

53. In view of this increase in the number of parliamentary seats, the number of deputies elected to the sixth Parliament from provinces inhabited by ethnic groups is detailed below in table 5.

Table 5
Number of deputies from provinces inhabited by ethnic groups in the sixth Parliament

Item	Province	No. of deputies
1	Ardebil	7
2	Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	4
3	East Azerbaijan	19
4	Golestan	7
5	Ilam	3
6	Kermanshah	8
7	Khuzestan	18
8	Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad	3
9	Kordestan	6
10	Lorestan	9
11	Sistan and Baluchestan	8
12	West Azerbaijan	12
13	Zanjan	5
	Total	109

54. The current Iranian Parliament has 44 deputies of Azeri origin, 13 of Lor origin, 14 Kurdish deputies, 3 Baluchi deputies and 4 Arab-speaking deputies.

55. As pointed out in the last periodic report, in accordance with article 7 of the Constitution and in order to promote popular participation in public affairs as well as decision-making and planning at local level, the Councils Act was ratified by the Parliament on 22 May 1996.

56. Accordingly, the First Council Elections were held on 26 February 1999 across the country. The councils have been active throughout the three years that have passed since then.

57. Table 6 shows the number of candidates and elected deputies in each province at the First Council Elections. The participation rate for these elections can be seen in table 4.

Table 6**First council elections: candidates and elected deputies**

Province	No. of candidates	No. of council seats	Province	No. of candidates	No. of council seats
Ardebil	8 430	3 334	Khuzestan	15 887	5 199
Bushehr	4 448	1 348	Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad	6 195	2 371
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	5 242	1 682	Kordestan	11 772	4 458
East Azerbaijan	19 028	6 375	Lorestan	10 180	4 201
Esfahan	16 196	3 567	Markazi	7 943	2 683
Fars	22 281	6 960	Mazandaran	22 266	7 098
Gilan	23 641	6 595	Qazvin	5 917	1 862
Golestan	9 661	2 930	Qom	1 666	360
Hamedan	9 422	3 183	Semnan	3 208	883
Hormozgan	6 368	2 486	Sistan and Baluchestan	9 972	4 230
Ilam	4 506	1 256	Tehran	16 935	2 546
Kerman	14 129	4 449	West Azerbaijan	16 369	6 262
Kermanshah	12 958	4 822	Yazd	3 998	1 088
Khorassan	39 982	12 786	Zanjan	7 538	2 525

58. Based on a survey carried out for the purpose of the present report, the ethnic provenance of council members in the provinces inhabited by ethnic groups was determined and is shown in table 7. The table does not include council members in other provinces, such as Tehran, who are nevertheless of ethnic origin.

Table 7**Ethnic provenance of district council members in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups (in percentage)**

Province	Azeri	Kurdish	Lor	Arabic-speaking	Baluchi	Turkmen
Ardebil	100					
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari			51			
East Azerbaijan	100					
Golestan						36
Ilam		84	14			
Kermanshah		92				
Khuzestan				28		
Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad			82			
Kordestan		83				
Lorestan			100			
Sistan and Baluchestan					83	
West Azerbaijan	75	25				
Zanjan	100					

59. In order to promote participation by women from less-developed regions, the PCWP has been focusing on this issue, and has implemented two projects to this end during the last two years:

- The Women’s Participation Development Plan, was carried out nationwide in 2000 in accordance with the agreement exchanged between the PCWP and the Ministry of the Interior. The goal of the WPDP was to increase women’s abilities through capacity-building and special training in order to promote their participation throughout the country, particularly in less-developed regions, and thereby lay the foundations for the establishment of women’s NGOs across the country; and
- The Rural Women’s Participation Development Plan, with its focus on less developed areas, was initiated in 2001 as a joint effort by the PCWP and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Political organizations

60. The increasing emergence of political organizations throughout the country has been quite apparent over the past few years. Also remarkable is the number and level of activity of such organizations in the provinces. The number of registered political organizations has grown from 34 in 1997, of which five were outside Tehran to 166 in 2001, of which 51 are centred outside Tehran. Of the 46 political organizations outside Tehran that have obtained certification between 1997 and 2001, a significant majority are centred in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups including East and West Azerbaijan, Chaharmahal and Bakhitiri, Lorestan, Golestan, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, and Ardebil.

61. In addition, a number of organizations registered in Tehran have attempted to open branches in the provinces. Some 500 branches of various political parties and organizations are currently active at provincial level.

62. Furthermore, licences have so far been issued for more than 350 NGOs and public associations for ethnic groups. These associations are active in numerous social, cultural, executive and political domains, as well as providing a range of services.

Freedom of speech

63. Freedom of speech, information exchange and scientific activities of ethnic groups are encouraged in Iran, through the publication of books and periodicals, and the organization of book fairs.

64. Between 1999 and 2001, 503 book titles were published specifically for ethnic groups in Iran, of which 222 were in Kurdish, 216 in Azeri, 16 about the Kurdish people, 47 about the Azeri people, and two books on the Baluchi people.

65. One of the Government’s policies, to promote the publication of books in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups, has been to organize book fairs in areas with significant Kurdish, Baluchi, Azeri, or Lor groups. Ten book fairs have been organized for ethnic groups between 1999 and 2001, with the aim of promoting book-reading among them; an aim that has

been successfully achieved in the country's less-developed provinces. For example, more than 200,000 book titles in total were on show in the four provincial book fairs held in East and West Azerbaijan. Three provincial book fairs have also been held in Sistan and Baluchestan, two each in the provinces of Kordestan and Kermanshah and one in Ilam.

66. Of note also are the special amenities made available at the annual Tehran international book fair to publishers from ethnic groups.

67. There has also been a boom in the publication of journals and periodicals at both national and provincial level in recent years. Seven titles in a variety of Azeri, Lor and Kurdish dialects are published and are free to express their views and opinions and to discuss the legal, social, cultural and political issues of their choice. One may refer to *Ra'ye Mellat* and *Shoura* in Khuzestan, *Abidar* and *Sirvan* in Kordestan, *Mahabad* and *Navid-e Azerbaijan* in West Azerbaijan, and the weekly *Shams-e Tabriz* in East Azerbaijan. The aforementioned titles enjoy the same paper allocation, subsidies and print support as other publications.

Employment

68. In addition to the articles of law banning discrimination in the field of labour rights, described in detail in the fifteenth periodic report, it should be added that article 6 of the Labour Act prohibits any discrimination on grounds of colour, race or language.

69. Similarly, Iran was a signatory in 1964 to ILO Convention No. 111 (1958) on discrimination in employment and occupation, and has since periodically presented reports to that organization in this regard.

70. It is worth noting that, with regards to implementation of ILO Convention No. 111 in Iran, the ILO monitoring apparatus has never reported any instance of ethnic discrimination as regards labour and labour rights.

71. The Government has taken special measures to improve the employment situation in the provinces inhabited by ethnic groups, the less-developed provinces. Chapter 6 of the ESCDP3 Act, which addresses employment policies, proposes certain items aimed at encouraging job creation in these regions. Article 50 exempts investors in less-developed regions from government tariff and duties, as well as contributing a share of the interest on banking facilities obtained by investors.

72. Article 138, paragraph *a* item 6 of the ESCDP3 Act provides for the protection of public investment in job creation schemes in less developed regions. Article 137, paragraph *d* of the same act charges the Government with the task of creating jobs in rural districts, especially within less-developed regions.

73. Another concession made to the provinces inhabited by ethnic groups, as part of the less developed regions' initiative, has been to provide private investors who set up manufacturing or service units in these provinces, with banking facilities with low interest rates.

74. From the mid-1980s onwards, every year a significant share of imposed banking facilities is set aside, in the form of minimal commissions (in comparison with standard banking commission and interest rates), based on amendments to the annual budget legislation, for less developed provinces. Between 1990 and 2000, approximately 28 per cent of the total amount of such facilities, equal to 7,035 billion rials, was set aside for less-developed provinces. In 1999 and 2000, 1,500 and 1,350 billion rials, respectively (25 per cent of overall banking facilities) were allocated to less-developed provinces.

75. On the other hand, given the level of manpower activity in these regions, effective steps have been taken, with the help and coordination of the relevant organizations, to improve the wage situation of all the public sector staff employed in these regions in order to attract and retain the required workforce. These measures have smoothed the way for the recruitment of skilled specialists into these regions.

76. An interesting point is that regions classified as less developed by ESCDP1 but not by ESCDP2 retained government support in the field of job creation and, up to the end of ESCDP2 still enjoyed special tax exemptions for manufacturing and job-creating units, as well as note 3 banking facilities. They were thus just no longer eligible for “deprivation eradication” development credit.

77. In order to improve the efficacy of development activities carried out in deprived regions over recent years and to increase the economic ability of the inhabitants of these regions and prevent unrestrained emigration, special facilities have been set aside for job creation out of the resource allocation for various subsidized banking facilities (note 3, note 50, paragraph *b*, note 62, paragraph *b*, note 46, and note 11) in annual budget laws. Seventy per cent of the anticipated interest on the special facilities for these regions is paid by the Government. These facilities are granted under specific conditions to candidates by agent banks, selected by the Central Bank of Iran and under the supervision of the Registry of Deprived Regions that is attached to the office of every Governor-General. With monitoring and follow-up by the Less Developed Regions Office at the Ministry of the Interior, and the sympathetic cooperation of the relevant authorities, some 90 per cent of the facilities thus allocated between 1990 and 1999 have actually gone to these regions.

78. The Government’s tax reform bill provides for the permanent exemption from taxes of all guilds and professions in less-developed regions, as well as all manufacturing and mining units being exempt from taxes for twice as long as other regions.

79. In order to attract and preserve specialized manpower, all government employees working in less-developed regions will benefit from a special recruitment bonus as well as separate facilities payable on the same grounds.

80. Based on the executive policies ratified in ESCDP3, owners of existing workshops and workshops starting up during ESCDP3 will be encouraged to employ more workers through a system of rebates in the employer’s share of social security premiums (up to 20 per cent in less-developed regions) and tax rebates.

81. In order to create employment in rural areas, in less developed regions especially, a fund has been set up with Government and public investment to promote rural employment with interest-free loans.

82. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) has taken steps to boost the activity of "job centres" in rural districts, in order to obtain a better picture of the job market in these areas as well as lay the foundations for employment and provide prospective employers and employees with the required services. Accordingly, more than 60 private job counselling centres have been granted licence to work, of which 31 are situated in less-developed regions. These centres gather data on the demand and supply situation in the labour market, and therefore potential opportunities for job creation, and pass them on to the MOLSA to assist in the planning and implementation of appropriate projects by the relevant authorities and the private sector.

83. Enquiries by the MOLSA has been made to elicit any information on discriminatory practices at work on grounds of race or ethnicity. No specific case of racial or ethnic discrimination in work related issues has been reported.

84. Article 120 of the Labour Act allows for refugees with a valid entry visa and work permit to work freely in Iran. The present laws do not in any way discriminate against refugees in terms of the rights and benefits to which they are legally entitled, nor do current investigation procedures differentiate between Iranians and alien nationals.

85. Alien refugees are currently occupying some 1,200,000 job opportunities in Iran.

86. Measures have also been taken to address more deeply the issue of women's employment in less-developed regions and provinces inhabited by ethnic groups. There is the plan to establish cooperatives for rural women producers, jointly implemented by the PCWP and the Ministry of Agriculture's Bureau for Rural and Nomadic Women's Affairs. This project has already been completed in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Kermanshah, Ilam, Lorestan, Hormozgan, Khuzestan, East and West Azerbaijan, and Ardebil.

87. Similarly, there is a project to create and strengthen women's cooperatives in 2001, to be implemented by the Ministry of Cooperatives in such provinces as Sistan and Baluchestan, Kermanshah, Kordestan, Ilam, Lorestan, Hormozgan, Khuzestan, Bushehr, Golestan, East and West Azerbaijan, and Ardebil.

Public health, medical care, social security and social services

88. The Government has continued over the past three years to improve the health-care situation in less-developed regions.

89. Chapter 25 of ESCDP3 concerns health care. Article 192, paragraph *a*, item 4 of ESCDP3 maintains that the Government is in charge of inpatient health care in less-developed regions.

90. Even though the privatization and autonomy of medical units is one of the major goals of the State health-care sector, the above item underlines the pivotal role of the Government in the provision of health care in these regions.

91. The Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MOH) has benefited from the help of international agencies in dealing with the deficiencies that exist in less-developed regions. For example, in the current five-year (2000-2004) joint programme with the United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA has earmarked US\$ 2.5 million for reproductive health promotion in the provinces of Kordestan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Golestan, Bushehr, and the district of Eslamshahr in Tehran province, for a period of five years.
92. Similarly, as part of the five-year joint programme with UNICEF (2000-2004), a disparity reduction programme is being implemented in the five provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Kordestan, West Azerbaijan, Kohguiluyeh and Bouyerahmad, and Hormozgan, with funding equal to US\$ 1,512,000.
93. Other noteworthy measures have been the Universal Mobilization Plan for Medical Insurance and the Rural Insurance Re-organization Plan. These have provided insurance coverage for all the 22 million rural and nomadic people in Iran, with 75 per cent of hospitalization costs and 70 per cent of specialist outpatient costs being paid for without receipt of any premium.
94. Certain benefits have been foreseen in order to induce health-care workers, including physicians, to move to less-developed, especially rural, areas. These benefits include housing for physicians working in rural health centres, hardship bonuses for working in less developed areas, and a reduction in the obligatory period of service in a rural area that is owed by each physician upon graduation.
95. At present, candidates from less-developed areas have a 10 per cent quota of vacancies for different clinical residency programmes and a 10 per cent quota of vacancies for MSc courses in medical-related subjects. Trainers, who are members of a faculty of dentistry in a less-developed region and have at least three years' teaching experience, can gain entrance to specialist dental courses that are needed in their region, provided they obtain at least 80 per cent of the mark of the free candidate that has filled the last vacancy on that course or programme.
96. In order to fill the shortage of faculty members at the School of Pharmacy in Ahvaz, 25 per cent of places on each of the doctorate-level courses at the faculty are allocated to native candidates from the province of Khuzestan.
97. In addition to the Government's measures in health care, food security has also been a matter of concern for the Government. This is achieved through subsidies on essential goods to the inhabitants of less-developed regions. Article 197, paragraph *c* of the ESCDP3 document states: "In order to eliminate malnutrition in low-income households, the subsidy payable on essential goods will be increased in the case of the needy, rural inhabitants, and the inhabitants of less-developed regions."
98. Similarly, the MOH last year implemented a project in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan and Kohguiluyeh and Bouyerahmad, to evaluate and promote proper nutritional habits in girls and young women aged 15-19.

99. The Government has also taken major steps to address the health-care needs of refugees. At present, more than 95 per cent of refugees live among the native population, and the remainder in refugee camps. The latter 5 per cent are divided between 28 “guest-towns” or camps in 12 provinces, with a total of 27 health centres providing them with the necessary services. These centres are staffed by 39 physicians, 4 dentists, and more than 150 paramedical staff.

100. The level of international aid to refugees, who have been living in Iran for more than 20 years, has been insufficient. Health-care assistance for the entire refugee population of Iran (more than 2.5 million) by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the current year has been just US\$ 30,000.

101. Refugees living in cities have the full use of the same medical facilities as native Iranians. They are in no way restricted in their access to these facilities.

102. All migrant and refugee children benefit from the vaccination programme offered by health centres nationwide, and by mobile vaccination teams in more distant rural districts.

103. The health and nutrition section of schools offers a number of services to their refugee pupils, including eye and hearing tests, and dental and tongue checks, not forgetting the primary health-care facilities available to all refugees in every camp or city in Iran.

104. Over the past two years, two projects, to improve reproductive health and primary health-care services in the refugee population, have been implemented with the help of UNICEF and UNFPA, and funding by the United Kingdom Department of Foreign and International Development (DFID). At present, 29 health camps have been set up, within the framework of these two projects, around the cities of Zahedan, Zabol, Mashad, Pakdasht, Varamin, Eslamshahr and Shahr-e Rey, which have the highest density of Afghan refugees. More than 800 health liaison volunteers are also active in these regions. These camps deliver services to both Iranians and Afghans living within their radius of activity, with Afghan refugees accounting for approximately 50 per cent of inhabitants in these regions.

105. In order to improve the quality of health care offered to Afghan refugees scattered among the native population, a comprehensive plan has been devised for the construction of more than 180 health bases and 300 health homes, with the relevant proposal submitted for funding to the relevant international agencies.

Trade unions and associations

106. The Government actively encourages the creation of NGOs, cooperatives and trade associations, more seriously so in less-developed areas and provinces inhabited by ethnic groups.

107. In 1996, there existed 58 manufacturing, service and cooperative centres in the province of Kordestan, 8 of them in Sanandaj, the provincial capital. At the same time, seven cultural societies had been set up by the provincial commission for women’s affairs. In the same year, a women-only cooperative began to offer support services to abandoned women and children, unemployed women, female-headed households.

108. Of the 18 cooperatives in the province of Sistan and Baluchestan, 13 are located in the provincial capital and 5 in dependent districts, with two cooperatives operating jointly in the capital and other provincial districts.

Education

109. The general plans of the Ministry of Education and Development (MOE) and the Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) for extension of the right to education to Iran's minorities have been discussed in detail in the last report. These two bodies have been continuing their efforts to increase literacy. Table 9 shows the growth in literacy in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups during the past five years.

Table 9
Growth in literacy rate in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups

Province	Literacy (percentage)		Percentage growth
	1996	2001	
Ardebil	73.3	85.2	11.9
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	77	81.1	6.1
East Azerbaijan	75.4	80.7	5.3
Golestan	77	83.3	6.3
Ilam	76.7	83.5	6.8
Kermanshah	76.6	83.5	6.8
Khuzestan	76.9	82.3	5.4
Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad	75.5	83.6	7
Kordestan	68.3	77.6	9.3
Lorestan	74.8	85.7	10.9
Sistan and Baluchestan	57.3	65.8	8.5
West Azerbaijan	69	75.9	6.9
Zanjan	74.8	78	3.2

110. The increase in per capita pupil expenditure (PCPE) in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups has been higher than that for pupils elsewhere in the country, and this underlines the special status enjoyed by schoolchildren in these regions. PCPE for the 13 such provinces was 77,934 rials in 1991, increasing to 404,694 rials in 1996, and 1,025,830 rials in 2000. In comparison, PCPE for the country as a whole was 76,450 rials in 1991, 391,295 rials in 1996, and 1,031,241 rials in 2000.

111. In order to support and provide special services for frontier regions and to eradicate deprivation in these regions, the Frontier Regions Education and Development (FRED) council was established in 1991. This council publishes a review titled *The Growth of Frontiersmen*, which discusses topics relevant to education and development in frontier regions and provinces inhabited by ethnic groups.

112. The FRED council has so far managed to procure 844,334 books to equip 6,731 school libraries in frontier regions. This council has also organized nine focused camps for 12,500 and five non-focused camps for 27,966 schoolchildren from frontier regions.

113. The MOE is also continuing its efforts to improve the educational situation of nomadic communities. The number of classrooms in these communities has increased from 6,560 in 1998-1999 to 8,414 in 2001-2002, representing a growth of 28.26 per cent. During the same period, the number of nomadic schools and training centres has risen from 3,815 to 5,392 units, an increase of 41.33 per cent.

114. Sixty-one thousand (61,000) books and 300,000 magazines and periodicals have been allocated to libraries in nomadic schools. Furthermore, dozens of cultural, literary and scientific conferences and seminars have been organized to promote reciprocal understanding and raise the level of knowledge and culture of nomadic schoolchildren.

115. The pertinent higher-education authorities have also adopted policies of qualitative and quantitative development, notably by establishing institutions of higher education throughout Iran (especially in less-developed regions), devising rules and regulations to provide higher education applicants in less-developed regions with better amenities, and attracting a skilled, effective workforce to these regions.

116. After the Islamic Revolution, the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT), maintaining a policy of disparity reduction and social equity, established at least one institution of higher education in every less-developed province, seeking through this move to meet the need for a specialist native workforce. Accordingly, we have witnessed the establishment since 1991 of universities in the provincial capitals of Kordestan, Ilam, Hormozgan, Bushehr, and Semnan, and in the townships of Rafsanjan and Zabol. These measures not only strengthened existing institutions but also improved the educational standing of these regions, particularly in higher education.

117. Of the 20 universities situated in, essentially, regions inhabited by ethnic groups, 38 per cent were established before the Islamic Revolution, 23 per cent during the first decade of the Islamic Revolution (1979-1989), and the remaining 39 per cent between 1989 and 1999.

118. With the establishment and development of universities and other higher education institutions in these regions, the Government can be described as following the ensuing general policies:

- Promotion of universities with the aim of reforming and improving the quantitative and qualitative indicators of higher education;
- Quantitative expansion of higher education, through compilation of comprehensive ten-year development plans;
- Tuning higher education to native needs;
- Consideration for the socio-economic fabric of the region, and a province's need to develop higher education;
- Reform of the structure of the student population within university teaching groups;

- Planning greater cooperation between the country's newly established and older universities, in order to expand the scope of educational courses, and guide dissertations and research activities;
- Expanding higher education in less-developed regions, with the aim of eliminating underdevelopment, creating jobs, and developing culture; and
- Encouraging development programmes in higher education at technical diploma and undergraduate level, with the aim of rapidly overhauling the specialist structure of less-developed regions.

119. Table 10 shows the population of various provinces as a percentage of the national population, the number of university candidates in each province as a percentage of the national total, and the number of university places secured by each province as a percentage of the national total. This table clearly highlights the success of the MSRT in increasing the number of successful applicants for university places from less-developed regions as well as provinces inhabited by ethnic groups.

Table 10

Population, university applicants and university places secured in each province, as a percentage of the national total (1997)

Province	Population	University applicants	University places secured
Ardebil	1.9	1.7	1.8
Bushehr	1.2	1.1	2.2
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	1.3	1.3	3.4
East Azerbaijan	5.5	5.6	1.4
Esfahan	6.6	6.8	9.1
Fars	6.3	6.5	1.5
Guilan	3.7	4.1	1.6
Golestan			
Hamedan	2.8	2.4	1.2
Hormozgan	1.8	1.0	2.9
Ilam	0.8	1.4	0.9
Kerman	3.2	3.5	4.3
Kermanshah	2.9	3.2	1.3
Khorassan	10.1	9.4	4.1
Khuzestan	6.2	5.4	1.7
Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad	0.9	1.1	0.8
Kordestan	2.2	1.6	1.3
Lorestan	2.7	3.1	1.3
Markazi	2.0	1.8	6.9

Table 10 (continued)

Province	Population	University applicants	University places secured
Mazandaran	6.8	8.6	1.8
Qazvin			
Qom	1.4	1.3	2.3
Semnan	0.8	0.9	2.4
Sistan and Baluchestan	2.9	1.4	3.4
Tehran	18.5	20.5	5.3
West Azerbaijan	4.2	3.5	10.4
Yazd	1.3	1.4	3.4
Zanjan	1.7	1.3	7.7

120. The clearest examples of the fair quota approach in higher education are the issues of regionalization and the assignment of general university-entrance examination (GUEX) quotas to each region. With the approval of these two plans, the MSRT not only achieves its prime goal of disseminating culture and knowledge, but also facilitates access to higher education for all levels of society, thereby striking a balance between the “have” and “have not” regions of the country.

121. The regionalization of higher education was one aspect of the fair quota approach, which gained favour after the Islamic Revolution. The Cultural Revolution Centre approved the division of the country into nine higher education regions, with in mind a fair allocation and balanced distribution of higher education resources in the country, and thus eliminating one aspect of deprivation in provinces without higher-education resources. The regional division was performed in such a way that each region contains at least one large, well-developed province, or at least one with the potential for growth, and one less-developed province.

122. The allocation of a set share of GUEX places to different regions and organizations was another axis of the fair quota principle. Based on this, a set quota of university places were reserved for applicants from less-developed regions. Thus, 35 per cent of university places were set aside for regions deemed to possess inadequate educational amenities or otherwise classified as less-developed. Accordingly, the following provinces were classified as wholly less-developed: Bushehr, Hormozgan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Lorestan, Ilam, Kohguiluyeh and Bouyerahmad, Sistan and Baluchestan, Kordestan, and Khuzestan. The following provinces were classified as less-developed outside their respective capitals: East Azerbaijan, West Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazandaran, Khorassan, Kerman, Zanjan, Semnan, Yazd, Markazi, Esfahan, Kermanshah, Hamadan, and Fars.

123. It was also agreed that graduates who had benefited from the less-developed region quota system, should serve in that same region for twice the length of their university course, and in any case for no fewer than five years.

124. The adoption of these policies on a nationwide scale extended coverage to the entire population, including regions predominantly or significantly populated by Kurds, Baluchis, Arabic-speaking or nomads, with additional support provided where necessary. Thus, 35 per cent of university places have been earmarked for such provinces as Kordestan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Ilam, and Khuzestan.

125. A look at the statistics for the provinces under consideration shows that regionalization and the fair quota system have enabled them to perform much more creditably in the GUEX. In other words, the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT) has largely succeeded in achieving its aims.

126. Table 11 shows the overall and successful number of university applicants in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups in 1994 and 1999.

Table 11

Overall and successful number of university applicants, and overall number of university students from provinces inhabited by ethnic groups (1994 and 1999)

Province		University applicants (total)	University applicants (successful)	Total number of students
Kordestan	1994	15 512	1 739	4 406
	1999	21 639	3 178	8 797
	Percentage growth	39.5	82.7	99.6
Ilam	1994	13 002	1 010	2 320
	1999	17 970	2 093	6 940
	Percentage growth	38.2	107.2	199.1
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	1994	15 234	2 129	7 517
	1999	17 112	2 052	9 893
	Percentage growth	12.3	-3.6	31.6
Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad	1994	12 256	1 262	792
	1999	14 814	1 296	2 832
	Percentage growth	20.8	2.7	257.5
Khuzestan	1994	63 464	5 544	23 438
	1999	71 804	7 376	28 439
	Percentage growth	13.1	33	21.3
Sistan and Baluchestan	1994	15 013	1 319	16 269
	1999	17 945	2 505	19 871
	Percentage growth	19.5	89.9	22.1

127. Table 11 shows that the number of university applicants has grown significantly between 1994 and 1999, with Kordestan experiencing a growth of 39.5 per cent, Ilam of 38.2 per cent, Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad 20.8 per cent, and Sistan and Baluchestan a growth of 19.5 per cent. It is thus clear that the cultural and scientific environment was adequate to nurture a desire for further education in the inhabitants of these provinces.

128. The proportion of successful university applicants in these provinces also experienced growth between 1994 and 1999. This underlines the improved scientific foundation of pupils at middle school level and the efforts of the MSRT in this regard.

129. The striking point in the provinces under consideration is their prevailing cultural make-up, which has been the source of certain problems as far as further education is concerned. The refusal of parents (and families) to allow their children to continue their education, combined with tribal customs, represents one of the main obstacles in the way of young people wishing to further their education. Fortunately, the data at hand for the years 1994 to 1999 point to a turnaround in this position, no doubt underpinned by the expansion of universities locally, the increased student capacity of universities located in these regions, an improved educational environment inside universities, and the greater willingness of families to allow their children to go to university, in the knowledge that a better life hinges on higher academic qualifications.

130. Special support, in the form of refresher classes and preparatory courses for GUEX candidates, as well as education counselling centres, have also helped improve the performance of deprived regions and nomadic communities.

131. In order to make optimal use of all the talent and potential of pupils in less-developed provinces, it was agreed that boarding secondary schools be established by public sector universities in these provinces in order to attract, support and strengthen the native talent pool, which may otherwise fail to emerge for want of money.

132. According to data obtained by universities in less-developed regions between 1991 and 2001, a total of 15,285 schoolboys and 8,925 schoolgirls had studied at the 10 university-affiliated middle schools of Ilam, the Persian Gulf, Razi, Zabol, Sistan and Baluchestan, Shahr-e Kord, Kordestan, Lorestan, Hormozgan, and Yassouj Universities.

133. In order to improve the educational situation in nomadic communities, a "nomadic" quota has been introduced into GUEX since 1994.

134. In order to raise the scientific and executive capabilities of higher education institutions in less-developed regions to the same level as the country's elite universities, the MSRT ratified a "Plan to Support Universities and Institutions of Higher Education in Less Developed Regions" in February 1999, which provides for a range of support measures for faculty members working in less developed regions, including bonus promotions, study leaves at home and abroad, scholarships and housing loans.

135. A combination of the aforementioned plan and other assistance has managed to stabilize the flow of faculty members through these regions, with effective measures now in place to attract and maintain quality academic staff.

136. Table 12 shows the increase in the number of faculty members in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups, between 1994 and 1999.

Table 12**Percentage growth in the number of faculty members (1994-1999)**

University	1994	1999	Percentage growth	University	1994	1999	Percentage growth
Ilam	29	93	220	Kordestan	47	111	136
Razi (Kermanshah)	147	223	51.7	Lorestan	63	132	109.5
Zanjan	79	130	64.5	Ardebil	34	87	155
Sistan and Baluchestan	388	396	2.1	Yassouj	-	45	-
Shahr-e Kord	58	149	156				

137. In a survey carried out specifically for this report, native people filled 33.3 per cent of administrative posts in the University of Kordestan. Of the remaining 66.7 per cent of posts filled by non-native people, 50 per cent were filled by people from a similar cultural and ethnic background to, or a thorough knowledge of, the native population of Kordestan. Thus, only 16.6 per cent of posts were occupied by people who were neither native nor particularly familiar with the prevailing culture and customs of this province.

138. In the province of Sistan and Baluchestan, 60 per cent of administrative university posts are filled by indigenous people, a fact that has gone a long way towards solving the problems, which existed there.

139. The Islamic Free University (IFU), as a private higher education institution, has striven mightily since its establishment to promote culture in less-developed regions and provinces inhabited by ethnic groups, mostly by setting up new campuses in them.

140. The IFU has a total of 13 campuses in the three provinces of Ardebil, East and West Azerbaijan; 3 in the provinces of Ilam, Bushehr, and Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari; 10 in Khuzestan; 8 in the provinces of Zanjan, Semnan, Sistan and Baluchestan; 3 campuses in Kermanshah and Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad; and 8 campuses in Guilan, Golestan, and Lorestan.

141. The number and distribution of IFU students in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups at the end of the 2000/01 academic year are shown in table 13.

Table 13**Islamic Free University Students (2000/01 Academic Year)**

Province	Number	Male	Female	Native	Non-native
Ardebil	10 274	5 670	464	5 939	4 335
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	6 309	3 713	2 596	4 921	1 388
East Azerbaijan	855	582	303	722	163
Golestan	9 666	5 098	4 568	7 702	1 964
Ilam	218	115	103	141	77

Table 13 (continued)

Province	Number	Male	Female	Native	Non-native
Kermanshah	5 064	2 758	3 306	4 147	917
Khuzestan	37 094	31 189	15 875	23 090	13 974
Kohgiluyeh and Bouyerahmad	9 282	5 961	3 321	4 714	4 568
Lorestan	17 448	8 881	8 567	15 769	1 679
West Azerbaijan	2 455	1 501	954	409	2 046
Zanjan	16 078	8 998	7 080	10 157	5 921

142. The IFU grants a number of benefits to attract academic staff to less developed regions, including special bonuses, housing loans, vehicle loans and other welfare benefits, as well as priority placing for academic scholarships to attend Ph.D. courses.

Participation in cultural activities

143. Given the rich cultural heritage of a number of ethnic groups in Iran, it is vitally important to address the cultural and artistic needs of these communities and to promote cultural activity within them.

144. Chapter 21 of ESCDP3 addresses art and culture, and provides for a number of measures in this respect. Article 155, paragraph *a*, item 2 of this plan charges the Government with the task of establishing cultural and sporting facilities in less-developed regions.

145. The Government has also taken a keen interest in arts festivals. Over the last two years, six thematic film festivals have been held in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups, with specific sections of the festivals dedicated to the performance of locally made films and to honouring local film-makers. One may refer by way of example to two social film festivals in Khuzestan, two family film festivals in West Azerbaijan, and two comedy film festivals in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari.

146. It should be noted that provincial and student drama festivals are also held every year, with all ethnic groups actively participating in these events.

Article 6

147. Article 20 of the Constitution guarantees equal protection under the law for men and women. Article 34 of the Constitution states that “any citizen may have recourse to a competent court for justice. All citizens have the right of access to the courts and no citizen may be prevented from seeking justice from a court to which he/she has a legal right of recourse.

148. The fifteenth periodic report of the IRI gave a detailed review of the legal principles underlying the right to litigation and the obligation of courts in dealing with cases submitted to them by individuals whose rights have in any way been violated.

149. In addition to the courts, the proper functioning of which safeguards the human rights of individuals, three other legal entities play an active part in receiving complaints and grievances by the public and ensuring proper application of the Law, and thus any breach of individuals' rights. The three entities are the Article 90 Commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Administrative Justice Tribunal and the State General Inspectorate.

150. Regarding the Article 90 Commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, article 90 of the Constitution states that "Any person with a complaint about the function of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Executive, or the Judiciary, may submit his or her complaint in writing to the Islamic Consultative Assembly. The Assembly must address this complaint, provide a satisfactory response and, where the complaint concerns either the Executive or the Judiciary, obtain a satisfactory response from the party concerned, all within an acceptable deadline, and to announce its findings to the public whenever warranted."

151. Article 44 of the "Internal Procedures of the Islamic Consultative Assembly" states that "in accordance with Article 90 of the Constitution, a commission titled the Article 90 Commission shall be formed in order to deal with grievances concerning the functioning of the Assembly, the Executive or the Judiciary, and to realize the aims set out under Article 90".

152. The Commission can enter into correspondence or approach directly any of the three constitutional powers in the Islamic Republic, as well as any institution connected in any way with any one of the three, and to request an explanation in cases where the authorities directly concerned have failed to provide (a satisfactory) one. All the aforementioned entities are obliged to provide a satisfactory response in the shortest possible time to any query by the Commission. Reports by the Article 90 Commission are read out in open session, after initial submission to the Bureau Officers of the Assembly.

153. The Article 90 Act (ratified 1986) defines the organization, jurisdiction and authority of the Commission. Article 3 states that, "If a complaint requires further investigation, the Commission may dispatch one or more inspectors, chosen by the Assembly speaker from among serving deputies. The pertinent authorities are obliged in this case to cooperate fully with these inspectors."

154. Article 5 of the same act states that, "After adequate investigation and confirmation of the claimed offense, the Commission may request a competent court to address the matter as a matter of priority. The court in turn must inform the Commission formally of its conclusions and judgment."

155. Regarding the Administrative Justice Tribunal (AJT), article 173 of the Constitution states that "a tribunal, titled the Administrative Justice Tribunal, shall be established, under the supervision of the Head of the Judiciary, in order to deal with complaints and grievances by the public against government officers, units or regulations, and to adjudicate in such cases".

156. Article 11 of the Administrative Justice Tribunal Act (1981) defines one of the jurisdictions of this tribunal as dealing with the complaints, grievances or objections by entities real or legal concerning:

- Decisions or actions taken by government offices, including ministries, government organizations, institutions or companies, municipalities, revolutionary bodies and any institution connected to them; and
- Government and municipal procedures or other rules and regulations, on the reasoned grounds that they contravene either the law and the rights of the individual, in cases where the rights of the individual have been breached because these procedures or regulations contravene the law, or because the issuing authority did not have the competence to apply these regulations, or else either exceeded or withheld his or her powers in doing so.

157. Article 21 of the Administrative Justice Tribunal Act states that, “Government offices, including ministries, government organizations, institutions or companies, municipalities, revolutionary bodies and any institution connected to them, have a duty to abide by the part(s) of the Tribunal’s judgment that concern(s) that office. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from government and legal service.”

158. Regarding the State General Inspectorate, article 174 of the Constitution states that, “Based on the right of the Judiciary to oversee the optimal course of affairs and ensure the correct implementation of laws in administrative apparatuses, an organization, named the State General Inspectorate, shall be established under the supervision of the Head of the Judiciary”. The act defining the organization, authority and jurisdiction of the Inspectorate was ratified in October 1981, and the executive procedures in December of the same year.

159. According to the aforementioned act, the SGI performs two types of inspection: one type consists of the continuous monitoring of all ministries and government offices, the armed and police forces, government institutions and companies, municipalities, and revolutionary bodies (article 2, paragraph *a*, of the act). The second consists of extraordinary inspections, which, according to article 2, paragraph *b*, of the same act, “takes place upon an order by the Head of the Judiciary or upon a request by the Article 90 Commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, or the minister or officer in charge of the unit(s) in question, or in any other case deemed necessary by the General-Inspector or the Head of the Judiciary”.

160. The SGI also receives complaints directly from the public. If deemed justified, then the General-Inspector appoints an inspector or inspection team to verify the situation (articles 9 and 10 of the rules and procedures of the State General Inspectorate).

161. The note to article 2 of the State General Inspectorate Act states that, “In inspections carried out as the result of a complaint, one copy of the inspection team’s report confirming that an offense has taken place is forwarded to the Administrative Justice Tribunal for action.”

162. Article 6 of the same act states that “should legal prosecution become necessary, the case in question is referred by the inspector or head of the inspection team via the SGI to the local prosecutor’s office for action. If it is the prosecutor or magistrate himself who is being prosecuted, then the case is referred to the Head of the Judiciary for action”.

163. In addition to the above entities, the Islamic Human Rights Commission is also active as the national institution for promotion and protection of human rights inside the country. The IHRC was established in 1994 and has since completed a number of projects with the aim of promoting human rights. In addition to the educational programmes run by it, which will be detailed in the section on education, the IHRC is currently implementing a plan specifically to combat ethnic and religious discrimination. The goal of this plan is to safeguard all aspects of the human rights of ethnic groups and religious minorities whilst maintaining and reinforcing national solidarity.

164. The following approaches will be used to implement the above plan:

- Compile programmes for joint collaboration with the minority leaders and the leaders of minority organizations, in order to involve the minority elite as much as possible in solving their problems;
- Research into Islamic religious references and minority literature in order to devise suitable solutions to existing problems and pave the way for more in-depth studies of minority rights;
- Cultural and sociological studies, adapted to the profile of each province, as research support for executive-cultural programmes carried out within the framework of this plan; and
- Organization of debating workshops for minority groups in Tehran and the provinces, in order to promote joint problem-solving approaches.

165. In addition to the above-mentioned organizations and procedures, the Bureau for follow-up and monitoring the implementation of the Constitution was set up by the President in 1998 to monitor the trend of the implementation of the Constitution and to seek and find ways and means of the further implementation of the Constitution.

166. Based on inquiries made for the purpose of this report, there has not been a case based on CERD that has been referred to ordinary tribunals, the AJT, or the SGI.

Article 7

167. Numerous measures have been taken to promote tolerance and friendship between the different ethnic groups in Iran, and to disseminate the culture of human rights, especially the culture of non-discrimination. These activities are categorized in three domains: cultural, educational, and support for organizations active in the field of human rights.

Cultural activities

168. To lay the proper foundations for an introduction to the cultural and historical patrimony of the different ethnic groups that live in Iran and promote interaction and communication between these ethnic groups, a number of fairs and festivals have been organized across the country. This approach has been favoured by the Government as an effective tool with which to achieve the goals described above.

169. Given that 2001 has been named the Year of Visiting Iran, a number of large tourism festivals were organized in provinces inhabited by ethnic groups, including festivals with the following themes:

- tourism, religions, tribes and dialogue among civilizations, Orumiye, August 2001;
- tourism, handicrafts and ethnic art, Zanzan, August 2001;
- tourism, culture and nomadic customs, Shahr'e Kord, July 2001;
- tourism and the flora of Kordestan, Sanandaj, October 2001;
- tourism and the attractions of Sistan and Baluchestan, Chabahar, January 2002; and
- tourism and local and traditional art, Bushehr, November 2001.

170. The National Heritage Organization is seeking to build museums of ethnography in every province inhabited by ethnic groups. One may refer, by way of example, to the museums of ethnography in Ardebil, Sanandaj and Bushehr, inaugurated in 1999 and 2000 (the last two), respectively.

171. The NHO has also organized a number of fairs and festivals in order to introduce the broad public to the culture and customs of different ethnic groups in Iran. The following is a list of the themes of some of these events:

- the sociology and culture of the people of Sistan and Baluchestan, Tehran, 2000;
- dedication banquets among Iranian tribes, January 2001;
- Nowrooz and the dialogue among civilizations in connection with different ethnic groups in Iran, Arg-e Bam, March 2001;
- tourism and the culture of the isles and the sea, Hormozgan, March 2001;
- the archaeology of Iran: South-East District, Sistan, May 2001;
- the archaeology of south-eastern Iran, Zahedan, Tehran, May 2001;
- tourism, civilization, and the historical and natural attractions of Zagros, Lorestan, July 2001;

- touristic attractions and civilization of Ilam, September 2001;
- the traditional art of Sistan and Baluchestan, Tehran, 2000;
- Sistan and Baluchestan Fair, Laleh Park (Tehran), 2001;
- the ethnography of Ilam, Ilam, May 2001;
- photographic exhibition of the ethnography of Khuzestan, Ahvaz, May 2001;
- the ethnography of Kermanshah, Kermanshah, May 2001;
- ethnographic artefacts of Kermanshah, West Islamabad, May 2000;
- the ethnography of Hormozgan, Bander-e Kang, May 2000;
- Baluchi needlework and costumes, Sistan and Baluchestan, May 2000;
- the ethnography and jewellery of Kurdish women, Kordestan, Marivan, 2000;
- traditional Turkmen costumes, Tehran University, January 2001;
- unearthed Azeri inscriptions, NHO, February 1999; and
- tanning in Azerbaijan, NHO, May 2000.

Education and information

172. Following consideration of the fifteenth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in August 1999, the comments of the Committee on Iran's fifteenth report were published on 1 September 1999 in a number of mass circulation dailies in order to raise awareness of ICERD and Iran's responsibilities under it.

173. The mass circulation daily Etela'at gave extensive coverage in its 20 September 1999 and 21 September 1999 issues to Iran's fifth report to the Committee and the recommendations made by the latter.

174. The national press published many articles on the subject of racism and ICERD at the time of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

175. The comments and recommendations made by the CERD Committee concerning the fifteenth report of the Islamic Republic of Iran were passed on by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the highest authorities in the land as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations.

176. Human rights education, particularly as regards ICERD, has been the subject of a number of measures during the past two years. During this time, the IHRC has organized programmes on four levels, with Iran's international commitments in the field of human rights, with regards to the contents of ICERD in particular, being the major topic of discussion at all four levels, which consist of:

- Specific social groups that, by virtue of the authority vested in them, have a deep influence on people's rights, for example, judges, prison wardens, the security forces and the police;
- Human rights advocates across the country, who have joined the network of IHRC advocates and who regularly circulate an educational and instructional newsletter. This network is expanding continuously;
- Training courses for human rights trainers, aimed at the provinces; and
- Widespread education of the public through the written and broadcast media.

177. Within the framework of an agreement recently concluded between IHRC and UNDP, training courses are to be held in each province for the first two groups mentioned. One of the international documents, which will undoubtedly be discussed in these courses, is ICERD.

178. Below is a list of some of the educational programmes run by the IHRC in recent years:

- Seven courses on "Human rights and the duties of judges"; overall attendance, 3,300 eminent judges and other judicial authorities;
- Three courses on "Human rights and the duties of prison wardens in the Islamic Republic of Iran"; overall attendance, 300 chief prison wardens from across the country;
- Three courses on "Human rights and the duties of law enforcement officials"; overall attendance, 300 members of the police and security forces; and
- Human rights trainers training course: attended by 15 candidates, who successfully passed the Human Rights Trainers test in July 2000.

179. The topics taught on these courses included international human rights regulations and introduction to Iran's international commitments in the field of human rights.

180. In February 2001, the Office of the Governor-General of Tehran initiated 80 educational projects on civic ethics and human rights instruments, with the help of the human rights desk at Shahid Beheshti University. These courses were aimed at the Governors and Director-Generals of Tehran province, and covered such topics as civil rights and the Constitution, the rights of religious minorities, alien nationals, women and children's rights, and the variety of international documents in this domain, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

181. The International Affairs Department of the Judiciary intends, in the near future, to train judges in the field of international law. Furthermore, the Judiciary and the United Nations Development Programme are together compiling a number of projects to provide staff training for the former.

Associations and institutions that promote tolerance and unity

182. The Government encourages groupings and associations that work to disseminate national culture, combat ethnic and tribal fanaticism, and promote national unity and understanding. Such institutions have enjoyed remarkable growth recently.

183. The Cultural Center for Ethnic Groups was established by the Tehran municipality in 2001. This Center has performed various festivals, and programmes in order to introduce the culture and traditions of different ethnic groups and to promote the culture of tolerance, understanding and friendship. Some of the events organized by CCEG are as follows:

- on the Bakhtiari tribe, July 2001; the Great Festival of Iranian Ethnic Groups, January 2002; week of the provincial cultures, February 2002; local film and theatre festival, July 2002; native music festival, August 2002; and local games and sports, August 2002.

184. There are other groupings which clearly have been created with the goal of fostering harmony, social justice, national unity, and human rights advocacy, as one can deduce from their names. Other political organizations and parties, large and small, state as their goal and mission realization of the Constitution and advocacy of the rights of all citizens (particularly their civil and political rights). The names of some of these political parties and organizations are given below: the Islamic Iranian Solidarity Party; the Iranian Jurists' Society for the Defense of Human Rights; the Islamic Iranian Participation Front; the Independence Party; the Friendship Society; the Islamic Iranian Unity Party; the Society for the Defense of Women's Human Rights; the Justice Party; the National Unity Party; the Iranian Harmony Party; the Justice-seeking Party; and the Association for the Defense of Citizens' Rights.

185. There are also a number of non-political associations and institutions, which actively promote national unity, and accord, international cooperation or advocacy of refugee rights. They include: Association for the Protection of Single-Parent Afghan Refugee Families; the Iranian Women's Solidarity Party; the Association for the Protection of the Displaced and Injured Women and Children of the World; the Iranian Ladies' Legal Solidarity Party; the Iranian Human Rights Association; the Women's Human Rights Society; the Solidarity Party (defence of women and children's rights, adolescent and legal issues); the Iran Peace Center; the Association for Defense of the Victims of Violence; and 24 bilateral friendship societies (Iran and other countries), organized under the auspices of the ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs.
