



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
17 November 2020

Original: English
Arabic, English, French and
Spanish only

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the sixth periodic report of Lebanon*

General context

1. The Committee is aware of the devastating impact of the combined economic, demographic and security challenges, and the simultaneous political and institutional crisis facing the State party. Please indicate whether the State party envisages adopting any strategy to address the impact of the continued political, economic and social instability and security challenges on the rights of women and girls, including their protection from gender-based violence. The Committee is also aware that the explosion in the port of Beirut in August 2020 has compounded the effects of those crises. Please indicate whether the State party ensures that relief and recovery programmes include measures to guarantee that women: are not subjected to discrimination when seeking access to livelihood support following the disaster; are protected against gender-based violence; are adequately represented in disaster response structures.

Impact of the pandemic on women's rights and gender equality

2. In line with the Committee's guidance note on the obligations of States parties to the Convention in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, issued on 22 April 2020, please indicate the measures implemented by the State party: to redress long-standing inequalities between women and men by placing women at the centre of the recovery as an economic diversification strategy; to meet the needs and uphold the rights of women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups and women in situations of conflict or other humanitarian emergencies; and to ensure that, in the context of lockdown measures, whether partial or total, and in post-crisis recovery plans, women and girls are not relegated to stereotypical gender roles. Please indicate the measures in place to ensure that all COVID-19 crisis response and recovery efforts: effectively address and are aimed at preventing gender-based violence against women and girls; guarantee the equal participation of women and girls in political and public life, decision-making, economic empowerment and service delivery; and are designed so that women and girls benefit equally from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care roles, that are aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Please explain how the State party is ensuring that measures taken to contain the

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 13 November 2020.



pandemic, such as restrictions on freedom of movement or physical distancing, do not limit access by women and girls, including those from disadvantaged and marginalized groups, to justice, shelters, education, employment and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services.

Reservations and the Optional Protocol to the Convention and the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

3. Please provide updated information on the efforts undertaken by the State party to review its reservations to articles 9 (2), on equal rights with respect to the nationality of children, 16 (1) (c)–(d) and (f)–(g), on equality in marriage and family relations, and 29 (1), on the administration of the Convention and arbitration in the event of a dispute, of the Convention, with a view to withdrawing them. Please indicate any progress made with regard to the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and the acceptance of the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

Constitutional and legislative framework

4. Please indicate whether the State party has taken any measures to amend its legislation to define and prohibit all forms of discrimination against women, including direct and indirect discrimination by State and non-State actors, in the public and private spheres. Please clarify whether articles 9 and 10 of the Constitution have been amended to ensure gender equality in the context of religious freedom and sectarian diversity, as recommended by the Committee in its concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the State party (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/4-5, para. 18). Please also provide information on any cases in which the Convention has been invoked by individuals or directly applied or referred to in court proceedings in the State party. Please provide detailed information on the implementation of the three-year strategic action plan of the Parliamentary commission for women and children, which has as priority objectives to undertake a comprehensive review to ensure the compatibility of legislation with the provisions of the Convention and to amend or repeal all discriminatory laws against women.

Access to justice

5. Please indicate the measures taken to facilitate effective access to justice, including affordable and, if necessary, free legal aid for women, especially rural women, including in cases of gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination, to raise awareness among women of their rights under the Convention and related national legislation and to enhance their knowledge thereon.

National machinery for the advancement of women

6. Please provide detailed information on the institutional authority of the National Commission for Lebanese Women and the human, technical and financial resources, including qualified staff, allocated to it to promote the equality of women and men. Please also provide information on its action plan for the period 2018–2022, including its key features. Please provide updated information on the system of gender focal points in line ministries and other public institutions in place in order to achieve effective gender mainstreaming throughout policies and programmes. The State party indicated in its report (CEDAW/C/LBN/6, para. 64) that a second plan of action, for the period 2017–2019, for the implementation of the national strategy for women in Lebanon, 2011–2021, was developed. Please provide data on the specific impact and outcome of the second plan of action and the national strategy for women in Lebanon. Please clarify whether the State party intends to adopt a new national strategy for women in Lebanon and the time frame for doing so.

Temporary special measures

7. The State party set out in its report statistical data on the participation of women in political and public life (*ibid.*, paras. 88–91). Please explain the measures taken or under preparation to introduce temporary special measures, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, to accelerate progress towards the achievement of substantive equality between women and men by increasing the representation of women on the lists of candidates of political parties, in Parliament, in municipal councils and in senior government and other public service positions.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

8. In its concluding observations on the previous report of the State party (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/4-5, para. 25), the Committee noted that it remained concerned about the persistence of adverse cultural norms, practices, patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in the family and in society and the role of the media in overemphasizing the traditional role of women as mothers and wives. Please explain any steps taken to put into place a comprehensive strategy, with a budget and results-oriented targets and benchmarks, to eliminate stereotypes that discriminate against women, in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention.

Gender-based violence against women

9. The Committee takes note of the national strategy to combat violence against women and girls, 2019–2029, and of the social behavioural change and communication plan, entitled “Qudwa”, targeting the prevention of child marriage, child labour and violence against women and girls. In the light of the Committee’s previous recommendations (*ibid.*, para. 28), please provide updated information on steps taken to: amend Law No. 293 of 2014, on the protection of women and all family members from domestic violence, to specifically criminalize all forms of gender-based violence against women, including marital rape, crimes committed in the name of so-called “honour” and other harmful practices; to establish a monitoring mechanism to ensure the enforcement of Law No. 293; and to ensure that Law No. 293 takes precedence over customary and personal status laws.

10. Please explain any measures in place to prosecute all acts of domestic and sexual violence against women and girls, punish perpetrators and adequately compensate victims. Please indicate the steps taken to collect data, disaggregated by age, nationality and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, on the number of reported cases of violence against women and the number of prosecutions, convictions and sentences imposed on perpetrators. Please explain any measures taken to ensure that all allegations of sexual assault and rape are duly investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned, that victims have access to appropriate redress, including compensation, and that all allegations of assault and rape by members of the security forces are investigated by an independent judicial authority.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

11. In the light of the Committee’s previous recommendations (*ibid.*, para. 30), please specify the measures taken: to review and revise the artist visa scheme of 1962 to ensure that it is not misused for the sexual exploitation of women; to effectively enforce Law No. 164 of 2011 to combat trafficking; and to amend article 523 of the Criminal Code as necessary to ensure that victims of trafficking are not prosecuted. In the light of the Committee’s general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, please specify measures taken

to strengthen data collection and establish appropriate mechanisms aimed at the early identification and referral to appropriate services of victims of trafficking, including women migrant workers, and at providing them with remedies. Please explain how the State party has ensured inter-agency coordination between the security, justice and social services to combat trafficking.

Participation in political and public life

12. The Committee takes note that women occupy 30 per cent of ministerial posts in the Government, comprise 49.3 per cent of judges and 64 per cent of diplomats. However, women remain underrepresented, in particular in Parliament and on municipal councils. Please provide information on steps envisaged to increase the number of women in elected and appointed decision-making bodies in order to achieve the equal representation of women and men in political and public life, including through the adoption of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention. Please provide, in particular, information on measures taken or envisaged, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, to introduce a system of quotas aimed at reaching a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women in Parliament and to support the campaigning of women candidates for elected positions.

Education

13. In view of the launch by the Centre for Educational Research and Development of a comprehensive curriculum review process in line with the Education 2030 Agenda of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, please provide information on measures taken to remove discriminatory gender stereotypes from curricula and textbooks, reduce illiteracy rates among women and girls and promote a culture of gender equality in schools. Please also provide information on measures taken to improve teacher training on gender equality and women's rights and to ensure that it is implemented and trickles down to all teachers in public schools. Please describe the steps taken to encourage women and girls to choose subjects and courses in the areas of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and information and communications technology. Please explain measures taken to eliminate traditional stereotypes and structural barriers that might deter the enrolment of girls and women in non-traditional fields of education, such as science and technology, at the secondary and tertiary school levels and efforts made to provide girls with career counselling on non-traditional career paths.

Employment

14. The Committee takes note of the adoption of the national plan for the economic empowerment of women, in January 2019. Please provide detailed information on measures envisaged to improve the rate of employment among women by 5 per cent in the coming five years, as indicated in the State party's report (CEDAW/C/LBN/6, para. 100). Please also provide information on measures taken to:

(a) Close the gender pay gap and enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, in line with the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), of the International Labour Organization (ILO);

(b) Improve the availability of childcare facilities and encourage the use of flexible working arrangements by women and men to promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities;

(c) Address horizontal and vertical segregation, including by promoting the equal participation of women in highly skilled jobs and senior management positions;

(d) Adopt legislation criminalizing sexual harassment in the workplace, and please also explain any measures taken to ensure that all allegations of sexual harassment are recorded and duly investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted and sanctioned.

Health

15. Please provide information on measures taken to strengthen access for women and adolescent girls to sexual and reproductive health services, including maternal health services, in particular for women and girls in rural areas. Please provide information on the incidence of unsafe abortion and its impact on women's health, including maternal mortality. Please also provide information on measures taken to legalize abortion, at least in cases of rape, incest, threats to the life or health of the pregnant woman or severe foetal impairment, to decriminalize it in all other cases and to ensure access to safe abortion and post-abortion services. Please provide updated information on measures taken to introduce age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in school curricula and provide training to teachers thereon.

Refugee, asylum-seeking and stateless women

16. Please provide information on the measures in place to ensure that the principle of non-refoulement is upheld for women and girls in need of international protection, and indicate whether there are plans to establish a clear, gender-sensitive legal framework for asylum seekers and refugees that explicitly includes gender-related claims as grounds for asylum. Please indicate whether the State party envisages reviewing the 1962 law regulating the entry into, stay in and exit from Lebanon, so as to distinguish between the protection and other needs of asylum-seeking and refugee women on the one hand and those of migrant women on the other. Please provide information on the measures in place to collect data on and to protect refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls from gender-based violence, including sexual violence, and to protect refugee girls from child and forced marriage. Please also indicate what type of support services, such as shelters, housing and those providing access to justice, are provided for refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls who are victims of violence. Please indicate whether the State party has conducted a census to ascertain the number of stateless persons in its territory and whether it is considering acceding to the Convention on the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Women and peace and security

17. The State party notes in its report that the Council of Ministers approved a national plan of action on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security and on the participation of women at all stages of peace processes, in September 2019 (*ibid.*, para. 46). Please provide information on the human, technical and financial resources allocated to ensure the implementation of the plan of action and on its monitoring mechanisms.

Women migrant domestic workers

18. The Committee takes note of the fact that the State Council, on 14 October 2020, suspended the implementation of the new standard unified contract. Please provide updated information on measures envisaged to reform the *kafalah* (sponsorship) system, the key steps and the time frame for its completion. Please also indicate the steps envisaged to extend the scope of the Labour Law to domestic workers. Please provide data on the number of cases of death of migrant domestic workers reported

to the police, as well as the number of cases brought to court, the number of prosecutions and convictions and the sentences imposed on those found to have been responsible for the deaths of migrant domestic workers. Please provide information on measures taken to:

- (a) Ensure that women domestic migrant workers are aware of their rights and have access to legal aid and protection, including shelters, as well as to effective legal recourse in criminal and civil courts;
- (b) Monitor the work of employment agencies;
- (c) Ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), pursuant to the Committee's previous recommendations ([CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/4-5](#), para. 38).

Rural women

19. Please provide updated data, disaggregated by relevant factors, on the participation of rural women in the agricultural sector. Please inform the Committee of steps taken to address the discriminatory laws and practices that prevent rural women from inheriting land. In the light of the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, please also provide updated information on measures taken to:

- (a) Integrate a gender perspective into agricultural policies, programmes and projects, including investment programmes, in order to effectively address the needs of rural women;
- (b) Facilitate opportunities for rural women to gain access to new farming techniques, farming inputs, such as chemicals, equipment, feed, seeds and energy, markets and marketing services, in addition to appropriate technology and extension services;
- (c) Expand access for rural women to low-interest loans and financial credit;
- (d) Ensure that rural women and girls have access to social protection, education and health care services, including sexual and reproductive health services;
- (e) Protect women working on an informal basis in agriculture by ensuring that they have access to social protection and labour rights on an equal basis with others.

Marriage and family relations

20. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (*ibid.*, para. 46), please provide updated information on steps taken to: (a) adopt an optional civil personal status law based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination and the right to choose one's religious affiliation; (b) require religious sects to codify their laws and submit them to Parliament for a review of their conformity with the Constitution and the provisions of the Convention; (c) establish a mechanism to appeal decisions of religious courts in the ordinary courts and ensure that religious courts do not discriminate against women in their decisions; (d) set the legal minimum age of marriage at 18 years of age for girls and boys, without exception, in line with joint general recommendation No 31 of the Committee/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices; and (e) take the measures necessary to effectively prevent child marriage among rural girls. The Committee notes that the National Commission for Lebanese Women requested experts on the personal status laws of Christian and Muslim sects to prepare a study on the main areas in which women are discriminated against and to identify the provisions that could be amended or improved. Please provide updated information

on the amendments made to personal status laws following the recommendations that resulted from the study.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

21. The State party noted in its report that a gender perspective was integrated into the component on adaptation to climate change of its sector strategies, including on agriculture, waste management and energy (CEDAW/C/LBN/6, para. 120). Please explain how a gender perspective has been integrated into national disaster risk management, relief and recovery strategies, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change. Please specify any measures taken to ensure the participation of women in decision-making processes related to climate change, disaster risk reduction and land and resources management.
