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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties to the Covenant, in
accordance with Council resolution 1988 (LX), concerning rights
covered by articles 10-12

JORDAN

[1 October 1986]

Articles 10-12 of the Covenant

Article 10 concerning family rights

A. Principal laws and regulations:

1. The Child Welfare Act (No. 34) of 1972.
2. The Personal Status Act (No. 61) promulgated in 1976.
3. The Civil Service Act of 1960.
4. The Jordanian Labour Act (No. 21) of 1960, as amended by Act No. 2 of 1965.
5. The Juvenile Rehabilitation Act (No. 102) of 1971.

B. Information

1. The welfare and education of minors.

The State attaches special importance to family welfare. In addition to the obligations laid down in the Labour Act, some ministries have also established maternal care centres, several of which are situated in the governorate of Balqa. The Child Welfare Act (No. 34) of 1972 also helps to promote the health, social and intellectual welfare of children from birth up to the age of 18 years and the Department of Social Affairs, in co-operation with UNICEF, has established a number of day nurseries.

2. The right of women to choice of spouse.

The Personal Status Act (No. 61) of 1976 gives Jordanian women ample opportunity to express their views on this subject:

Women have the right to break off their engagement, since they are on an equal footing with men in this respect (art. 4);

The Act stipulates that a woman shall not be compelled to marry a man older than herself (art. 7);

The Act safeguards the right of women to apply for divorce under certain conditions.

3. The granting of special protection to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth.

Under article 107 of the Civil Service Act, pregnant female employees are entitled to up to one month's maternity leave, with full pay and allowances, on the basis of a medical report certified by the competent medical commission.

Under the Jordanian Labour Act, female employees of enterprises are entitled to leave during the three weeks preceding the expected date of their confinement and the three weeks following delivery, provided that they have worked in the enterprise for not less than 180 days during the 12-month period preceding the expected date of confinement.

In 1977, the Jordanian Government requested assistance from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities in order to establish family planning services at 75 child welfare centres and 127 hospitals. The Government's endeavours in this respect were co-ordinated with those of the Jordanian Family Planning Association and other private voluntary associations operating in the social sphere with a view to improving the situation of women.

4. Protection of children and young persons from economic and social exploitation.

Article 48, paragraph 1, of the Jordanian Labour Act stipulates that no child under the age of 13 years shall be permitted to work in an enterprise. Paragraph 2 of the same article stipulates that no child over the age of 13 years shall be permitted to work in an enterprise unless the doctor responsible for the issue of medical certificates states that the child is

medically fit for employment. Paragraph 3 of the article further stipulates that no child shall be employed in an enterprise for more than six hours a day.

With regard to the welfare of young persons, Jordan has several rehabilitation institutions for the protection, guidance and vocational training of minors.

Article 11: Improvement in the standard of living

This is amply illustrated by the principal economic indicators, particularly the growth of the Kingdom's gross domestic product from JD 218 million to JD 1,487 million at current prices during the period 1973-1983, and the growth of the gross national product from JD 241 million to JD 1,848 million during the same period. Making allowance for inflation and population growth, these figures indicate an improvement of 224 per cent in the standard of living of Jordanian citizens during that period. In 1983, the average individual income amounted to JD 631 per annum.

Article 12 of the Covenant, concerning the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

Jordan attaches special importance to safeguarding the health of its citizens. As a result of constant endeavours, one hospital bed is now available for every 90 citizens and there is one doctor for every 867 citizens, one registered nurse for every 1,768 citizens and one registered midwife for every 8,620 citizens, as can be seen from statistics published by the Ministry of Health for 1985. One of the principal indications of health progress in Jordan is the reduction in the infant mortality rate from 86 per thousand in 1972 to 69 per thousand in 1983.

With a view to maintaining an appropriate standard of health in Jordan, the Jordanian Ministry of Health is taking measures to prevent the introduction of contagious diseases into the country. For example, when the AIDS disease was reported in a number of States, the Ministry of Health took the following steps to prevent it from spreading to Jordan:

Measures to ensure that serum, plasma and blood derivatives imported from abroad are free of the AIDS virus by carrying out laboratory tests prior to importation from the country of origin.

A standing committee, known as the Committee on Disease, was established under the chairmanship of the Director of the Laboratories, Blood Bank and Internal Medicine Department and comprising two representatives from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Jordan and the Royal Medical Services.

All new information and scientific facts on this disease are monitored and transmitted to the medical specialists concerned.

At the present time, Jordan has 99 health centres, 278 rural clinics, 93 maternal and child care clinics, and 18 centres for the treatment of respiratory complaints. Since 1966, Jordan has also been operating a health insurance scheme under which all civil servants, government employees, retired persons and members of their families are entitled to benefit from the comprehensive health services that are provided either free or at a symbolic charge at the clinics and hospitals operated by the Ministry of Health.

Jordan is still suffering from a manifest shortage of registered female nurses and midwives. About 80 per cent of all 946 Jordanian nurses are working at the three hospitals in Medical City, University of Jordan Hospital and Al Bashir Hospital. One third of Jordan's requirements in regard to nursing personnel are met by recruitment abroad (the Philippines, India and Pakistan). There is also a shortage of registered midwives, since there is only one midwife for every 9,000 inhabitants and one midwife for every 400 deliveries that take place in Jordan.