
**Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women
Seventeenth session
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**Concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women: Argentina**

Second and third periodic report

273. The Committee considered the second and third periodic reports of Argentina (CEDAW/C/ARG/2 and Add.1 and 2 and CEDAW/C/ARG/3) at its 355th and 356th meetings, on 22 July 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.355 and 356).

274. In introducing the reports, the representative of Argentina pointed out that the country had undergone profound changes since the National Government had taken office in 1989. During that time, programmes on health, education and social welfare had been transferred to the provinces in order to strengthen the federal system.

275. The reform of the National Constitution in 1994 was an important step towards the achievement of equality for Argentine women. Most international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, now have constitutional status and are therefore considered complementary to the rights guaranteed in the text of the Constitution. Furthermore, the new Constitution promotes affirmative action in order to achieve de jure and de facto equality. It also reaffirms the need for special security regulations to cover women during pregnancy and lactation.

276. The representative indicated that the National Women's Council had developed a strong policy for monitoring the application of the Quotas Act, which had led even to the presentation of legal actions demanding that lists of political parties which did not comply with the requirements of the law be declared non-official.

277. The representative stressed the high status of the National Women's Council, which was at the ministerial level and reported directly to the President. The Council had recently focused on decentralizing its structure by strengthening the machinery of the provinces. Thus far, provincial councils for women had been established in 9 of the 24 provinces. The National Council also provided technical assistance and training to support the machinery at the provincial level.

278. Regarding the status of women in the labour market, the National Women's Council had established close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, aimed at promoting women in the labour force.

279. To disseminate information on the rights of women, the National Women's Council had distributed 35,000 free copies of a bimonthly magazine and a CD-ROM containing information on the national and international legislation in the field of women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action.

280. The representative informed the Committee about measures taken to prevent violence in the family and to assist the victims of violence. Special centres for information and advice and permanent telephone services had been established. An agreement between the National Women's Council and the Ministry of Justice had proposed a training programme for councillors and officials who deal with victims of violence. Together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the National Women's Council had launched a national training programme on violence against women.

281. The representative stated that, at all educational levels, women constituted more than 50 per cent of the students. The Ministry of Education and Culture had established a special entity in charge of women's affairs. Its activities included the revision of curricula, training of staff in the provinces and a research competition relating to women in the educational system.

282. The representative indicated that women's health had improved throughout the last decade. The life expectancy of women increasingly exceeded that of men and maternal mortality rates had gone down. The Ministry of Health had launched training programmes to promote women's health issues.

283. To support rural women, a project providing training and credit facilities for women farmers was set up in 1989.

284. The Secretariat of Natural Resources had declared its commitment to including a gender perspective in all programmes and policies, as requested in the Beijing Platform for Action.

285. The representative informed the Committee that measures had been taken for the full implementation of the integrated system of retirement pensions of housewives approved by Law 24.828. Furthermore, bills had been presented to the National Congress to regulate labour relations concerning domestic employees and their retirement system.

286. The representative concluded by stating that legal measures were in preparation to ensure that women received alimony; a bill creating a national register of those in default of alimony payments had already been passed by the House of Representatives and was pending in the Senate.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

287. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the detailed responses provided by the Government of Argentina to all the questions sent in advance, as well as the updating of the information contained in the second and third periodic reports which the delegation had provided during their presentation.

288. The Committee was very appreciative of the fact that the delegation had reiterated the firm stance taken by the Government, as part of democratization, regarding its willingness to continue to develop a political ideology of equality for women and to ensure the full implementation of the Convention.

Positive aspects

289. The Committee welcomed the consolidation of democracy in Argentina.

290. The Committee commended the Government for granting the Convention a normative status on a par with the Constitution.

291. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Constitution recognized the competence of the National Congress to adopt affirmative-action laws so as to guarantee equality of opportunity and treatment.

292. The Committee applauded the increase in the number of women parliamentarians, as a result of the effective application of the Quota Act.

293. The Committee applauded the constitutional recognition of the right of persons affected, of the High Commissioner and of associations to take speedy amparo proceedings against acts or omissions that harmed or threatened rights recognized by the Constitution.

294. The Committee also noted with satisfaction the creation of the Federal Women's Council and the National Women's Council, organs entrusted with the task of promoting and coordinating policies of equality.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

295. The Committee expressed concern that women had been adversely affected by the economic reforms and by the amendments to the labour and social-security laws adopted recently.

296. The Committee was concerned about the persistence of stereotypes with regard to the social roles of women and men.

Principal areas of concern

297. The Committee noted that reform of the Penal Code, which would bring it into line with the provisions of the Convention, was still pending.

298. The Committee expressed concern at the fact that the percentage of women pursuing technical careers continued to be low.

299. The Committee was concerned because the reports of the Government of Argentina lacked data and analysis concerning the situation of women subjected to

slavery and exploitation for the purposes of prostitution.

300. The Committee was concerned about the very low number of women occupying managerial posts in the private sector.

301. The Committee was concerned about the fact that the rate of unemployment for women (20.3 per cent) was five percentage points higher than that for men (15.7 per cent).

302. The Committee noted with concern that there were no regulations governing the labour relations of domestic employees.

303. The Committee expressed concern at the fact that there were no regulations to penalize sexual harassment in the workplace in the private sector.

304. The Committee was concerned about the fact that, despite economic and social development in Argentina, maternal mortality and morbidity due to childbirth and abortion remained high.

305. The Committee was concerned about women in rural areas having less satisfactory living conditions than those in urban areas.

Suggestions and recommendations

306. The Committee recommended that the Penal Code be reformed as soon as possible to bring it into line with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, its general recommendations and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.

307. The Committee suggested that the Government's plans for equality should be pursued and strengthened and that their results should be evaluated in a more systematic way. Efforts to that end should be reflected in the next periodic report.

308. The Committee recommended that programmes designed to eliminate stereotyping of the social roles of women and men should be sustained and reinforced. Efforts should be made to increase the number of women pursuing technical careers and occupying positions considered to be a male preserve, and to ensure that men share with women the task of caring for the children.

309. The Committee recommended that services for the care of young children who had not yet begun compulsory schooling should be increased and regulated.

310. The Committee suggested that programmes to increase awareness among the police, judges and health-care professionals concerning the gravity of all forms of violence against women should be maintained and strengthened.

311. The Committee requested the Government of Argentina to include in its next report legal and sociological information relating to article 6 of the Convention.

312. The Committee requested the Government of Argentina to provide information on measures taken to avoid, in both the public and the private sectors, discrimination in access to employment and to enforce ILO Conventions No.100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value and No. 156 concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities.

313. The Committee suggested that labour relations of domestic employees should be regulated.

314. The Committee recommended that sexual harassment occurring in the workplace in the private sector should be penalized.

315. The Committee suggested that, in accordance with its general recommendation 17 (tenth session)² and with the Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Argentina should place a value on unremunerated work and include it in national accounts by means of satellite accounts.

316. The Committee recommended that sex-disaggregated statistics relating to education, employment and social security should be supplemented, in particular by including the number of teachers at the various levels of the education system; the number of students receiving grants; part-time work; the number of open-ended contracts and those of a specific duration; average pay; and average retirement pension.

317. The Committee recommended that programmes designed to promote employment of women, particularly young women, should be intensified.

318. The Committee suggested that increased measures of all types should be taken to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity.

319. The Committee recommended that legislation which penalized mothers who had abortions should be reviewed.

320. The Committee recommended the strengthening of programmes and services directed towards rural women.

321. The Committee requested the Government of Argentina to disseminate these comments widely throughout Argentina, so as to make individuals aware of the measures that have been taken to implement the Convention and the remaining steps required to achieve de facto equality for women.