
Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women
Ninth session
22 January - 2 February 1990
Excerpted from: Supplement No. 38 (A/45/38)

Concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women: Mongolia

Second periodic report

370. The Committee considered the second periodic report of Mongolia (CEDAW/C/13/Add.7) at its 164th meeting, on 31 January 1990 (CEDAW/C/SR.164).

371. The representative of Mongolia introduced the second report by noting that it had been prepared in 1986 and circulated in 1987. In the intervening three years there had been major changes in the country in connection with perestroika which began with economic reform in 1987 and had subsequently been extended to other areas. Restructuring aimed at bringing socialism to a new stage and to shift to a more humane-centred development, including changing from command methods of administration to economic ones. There had been resistance to restructuring and the process had brought to the forefront many unresolved social problems, especially in terms of the working and living conditions of the rural population in terms of services and infrastructure.

372. There were also unresolved problems concerned with the exercise of equality by women, who constituted both half of the population and the workforce and 40 per cent of the specialists with higher education. Although de jure equality existed, in practice efforts were still required to permit women to combine their functions as mother, worker and citizen, and priority was being given to the solution of social problems affecting women, children and families. Among them were the need to improve working and living conditions of women, especially in the rural areas where conditions were less favourable than in urban areas, reduction of the work week for women with children, an increase in the amount of child-care facilities available, as the current facilities met only one fifth of the needs, improving the conditions of occupational safety and health.

373. The Government realized that the problems were difficult and would need a step-by-step approach within the scarce resources available. Some results had already been achieved, for example in December 1989 the Presidium of the Great People's Hural enacted four decrees affecting women and children. They included amendments to the Public Health Law to give women the right to decide on the number and spacing of their children and permitting abortion in hospitals under medical supervision, amendment of the labour code to extend paid maternity leave to cover early child care with job protection and continuity in seniority (a provision which also applied to single women), amendment to the Law of Pensions, for example, to entitle women who had had four or more children and had worked at least 15 years to a full pension at 50 years of age, to entitle women and men who needed to care for children and grandchildren below three years to retire up to three years earlier

and a granting of pre- and post-natal as well as child-care leave to students at higher educational establishments and vocational technical schools. A number of measures had been taken to improve the working and living conditions of women including wage increases in economic sectors where women were in the majority, a law of individual business to permit individuals, including women, to choose their own economic activity, a decree from the parliament to increase the number of cattle to be held as private property, special measures in the next five-year plan on maternal and child care, improving of working and living conditions of women, single mothers and mothers with many children, a plan to double the number of pre-school institutions in the next plan period, introduction of flexi-time and similar arrangements for the parents of young children, and a demographic policy.

374. She noted that political activity of women had increased and that in June 1990 the quinquennial Congress of Mongolian Women would be held and a proposal to give the Committee of Mongolian Women the right to initiate legislation, as well as to create a national machinery, were under consideration. On the tenth anniversary of the Convention, it was being published in a national mass-circulation newspaper.

375. Regarding questions on article 2, the representative noted that equality legislation was being improved by strengthening the penal code for impeding women in the exercise of their rights, *inter alia*, by providing punishments ranging from fines and loss of job to imprisonment. Similar punishments were expected for violations of provisions of the labour legislation. Women's organization representatives were expected to participate in the governance of state enterprises on matters relating to labour and social issues. There was no institution specifically monitoring achievement of women's rights, but the matter was pursued through the judicial system. There was no special research institute on women, but a growing amount of research was taking place in the main scientific research institutions.

376. On article 5, in relation to a question on the way the recognition of the common responsibility of women and men with regard to the education of their children was being assured, it was stated that both parents had obligations. In response to a follow-up question, it was stated that religion was connected with history, culture and art and was considered to be the spirit of the people. Interest in it was increasing, but it did not have a negative influence on women, either currently or historically. There were no persisting traditional practices that worked against women.

377. With regard to article 6, responding to questions on prostitution and AIDS, the representative said that there were no recorded cases of prostitution and that, moreover, pornography was banned. Mongolia was AIDS-free and efforts were being made to prevent the development and spread of the epidemic, including education in the schools and sex education.

378. Regarding questions under article 7, she stated that women had begun to be elected to public bodies in 1925 and currently comprised 24.9 per cent of the deputies to the national parliament and 28.7 per cent of deputies to local councils. Women constituted 6 per cent of the membership of the Central Committee of the MPRP. Three women were members of its central audit committee. Currently, a woman was Deputy Chairperson of the Great People's Hural and seven women were deputy ministers. The Central Committee of the Party had adopted a decree on the promotion of women to leadership posts in 1985 but it was being implemented slowly and not consistently, influenced by objective factors such as low level of

preparedness for political activities and absence of social infrastructure and subjective prejudices and attitudes against that participation. Because of restructuring, the progress might be more rapid in future and could be reflected in forthcoming elections.

379. Responding to questions about international level participation in the context of article 8, she stated that women participated actively in bilateral and multilateral activities, including those relating to international peace and co-operation and the requirements were the same for both women and men. Mongolia was underrepresented in the United Nations Secretariat and the only Mongolian working there was a woman.

380. In response to the Committee's question on the measures through which women had equal rights with men with regard to the nationality of their children, in regard to article 9, she stated that the law made no distinction between men and women, even in cases of divorce.

381. Concerning questions about access to education under article 10, it was noted that 40 per cent of the specialists in the economy with higher education were women, up from 27 per cent in 1975. The proportion of women in institutions of higher education had been increasing steadily and women now made up 55.7 per cent, as well as 50.6 per cent of students in secondary schools and 60.3 per cent of students in vocational-technical schools. Few students of either sex dropped out of school.

382. There was no difference in wages between women and men in the same profession; it was stated in response to Committee questions on article 11, that wages depended on education level and profession. Based on a follow-up question, she noted that several areas of the economy, such as health services and general education, social and community services, were feminized. There were policies to encourage women to enter non-traditional fields such as science and technology where there were 37 per cent women, and law, where there were 35 per cent. With 40 per cent of the population under 16 and most families having four children (or five to six in the rural areas), child care was a problem. There were places for only 20 per cent of the demand; the policy of the next five-year plan was to reach 30 per cent and enterprises were being encouraged to provide their own facilities.

383. Responding to questions on article 12, it was stated that the decree adopted on 23 December 1989 was to permit women to decide on the number and spacing of their children, as specified in the Convention. Under the new legislation, abortions were permitted on request of the woman, free and without conditions, in the first three months of pregnancy. After three months, permission from medical authorities was required.

384. There were no differences between women and men in economic rights, including access to credit. The new law on individual work and the increases in wages in the medical profession, which was made up of many women, would help women's economic status.

385. Regarding article 14, problems of rural women reflected the differences between rural and urban areas in amenities although there were few relevant statistics. An expert mission of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had noted the differences. Women mostly worked as livestock breeders within co-operatives and therefore were all paid. There were lower wages

for some types of work and there might be unpaid work in the home in connection with personal cattle, although that did produce income for the family.