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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

Pre-session Working Group for the thirty-second session

10-28 January 2005

**List of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of
periodic reports**

Turkey

The Pre-session Working Group, after examining the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Turkey (CEDAW/C/TUR/4-5 and Corr.1), formulated the following list of issues and questions.

General aspects, legislation and national machinery

1. The report mentions (p. 3) the recent economic crisis in Turkey. What measures have been taken by the Government to ensure that attention is paid to gender perspectives in the country's structural adjustment programmes and macroeconomic policies? In particular, provide current data, disaggregated by sex, on the percentage of the Turkish population living in poverty, and the number of households living in poverty headed by women.
2. The report describes a number of legal reforms that have occurred in recent years, including amendments to the Constitution, the adoption of a new Civil Code in 2001, and the enactment of the Law on Protection of the Family in 1998. Please provide information on the implementation of these new laws, in particular the challenges encountered, and how the new laws contribute to the practical realization of equality for women.
3. The report notes (p. 7) that further reforms are needed to amend remaining discriminatory provisions of the Constitution, the Criminal Code, the Citizenship Act, the Civil Servants Code, the Labour Code and the Social Security Code. Please provide updated information on recent amendments to the Constitution and on other measures taken to review, amend or repeal existing discriminatory laws.
4. In its concluding comments on the combined second and third periodic reports submitted by Turkey, the Committee expressed concern that the Directorate General for the Status and Problems of Women had no corresponding bodies at the regional and local levels.¹ The report under examination notes that the Directorate General

continues to function without an organizational law (p. 3) and that it is funded to a large extent by external sources (p. 13). Please describe the structure, human resources, place and rank of the Directorate General within the administration and the means at its disposal to support the integration of a gender perspective into all public policies. Also, please indicate the obstacles that continue to hinder the strengthening of the Directorate General, and whether the Government has considered allocating additional resources to it to enable it to discharge its mandate.

5. Please indicate whether the Government elaborates and adopts plans, at periodic intervals, to implement the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (“Beijing Platform for Action”).²

Violence against women

6. The report refers to the 1998 law on the Protection of the Family, which was adopted to curtail domestic violence (pp. 4 and 7) and to proposed amendments which the Directorate General has submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister for consideration (p. 7 of the report). Kindly provide an assessment of the results and the impact of the law, and describe the content and status of the proposed amendments to it.

7. What kinds of data are being collected on the incidence of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence, and crimes committed in the name of honour in Turkey, and what do they reveal in terms of trends?

8. The report describes the services and programmes available to provide support and assistance to victims of domestic violence (p. 14). Kindly indicate whether counselling and rehabilitation programmes for male perpetrators of violence, including men who are serving or have served sentences for violent offences against women, are available.

9. The report states that shelters for women victims of violence are limited (p. 14). What measures is the Government taking to support and encourage local authorities to ensure that such shelters are established in sufficient numbers and provide a good quality of service, in all parts of the country?

10. The report states (p. 15) that training of security forces, health-care personnel and other public servants who deal with women victims of violence and educating women and girls in regard to their legal rights is a high-priority goal in combating violence against women. The report describes a number of measures that have been taken in this regard. Describe any measures taken by the Government aimed at society at large to prevent violence and to change attitudes, customs and practices that perpetuate violence against women, and also describe the impact of any such measures.

11. In its concluding comments on the combined second and third periodic reports, the Committee stated that the practice of so-called honour killings, based on customs and traditions, was a violation of the right to life and security of persons and therefore had to be appropriately addressed under the law.³ The report under examination notes that an extensive effort has been made by the Government and by non-governmental organizations to open a public debate on honour crimes (p. 15). What has been the impact and effectiveness of this effort, and of any other measures taken?

12. Please provide data on the incidence of violence, including sexual violence, committed against women in custody or in detention. What measures are being taken to protect women in police custody and women prisoners?

Trafficking and prostitution

13. The report states that brothel owners are responsible for taking the necessary measures to prevent sexually transmitted diseases in accordance with the Public Health Law (p. 17). Has the Government taken measures to monitor the health of women in brothels? What measures have been taken to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS among prostitutes engaged in clandestine prostitution?

14. Please provide data on the number of women and girls who are trafficked for purposes of prostitution to, from and through Turkey. The report states that, between 1996 and 2002, 23,422 foreigners were expelled because they were prostitutes (p. 18). How many of these expelled persons were women, and has the Government taken measures to ensure the safety of these individuals upon their return to their countries of origin?

15. Please provide information on the rehabilitative and protective measures in place for women victims of trafficking for purposes of prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, including a description of the effectiveness of these measures.

16. What measures have been taken to provide specialized training on trafficking to members of the police and the judiciary?

Minority women

17. In its concluding comments on the combined second and third periodic reports, the Committee stated that the situation of minority women needed to be monitored urgently and that a systematic effort was necessary to ensure for them their full legal rights guaranteed by the Convention.⁴ Please provide data on the economic, employment, health and educational situation of minority women, including Kurdish women and women of foreign origin, and on their participation in decision-making at all levels, as well as information on the effectiveness of measures taken to improve their situation.

Women in political and public life

18. The report states that women continue to be underrepresented in executive and elected bodies at the local and national levels, as well as in political parties and in the diplomatic service (pp. 18-20). What measures, including temporary special measures, have been taken by the Government to improve women's participation at all levels and in all sectors of government, in particular in the political sphere and the public sector, and what has been the impact of such measures?

Employment and poverty

19. The report notes that the participation of women in the labour force had shown a downward trend, dropping from 30.5 per cent in 1995 to 25.9 per cent in 2000 (p. 30). What is the trend to date? Please provide current data on the participation of women in the labour force, disaggregated by sector, and information on the measures taken by the Government to counteract the decline.

20. The report describes the “discrepancies in the quality of coverage” under the three main social security schemes in Turkey, and notes that the standardization of the social security schemes is included in the programme of the fifty-eighth Government (p. 34). Also, the report indicates that the concept of “household head”, although removed from the Civil Code in 2001, continues to be a requirement in accessing social security programmes for independent agricultural workers, which disadvantages women (p. 34). Similarly, the report indicates (p. 39) a similarly disadvantageous provision in article 203 of the Civil Servants Law (657). Please provide information on the progress made — highlighting in particular changes (if any) to the legal framework of the social security system — and its impact on women. Kindly provide updated information on the status of the revision of the Civil Servants Law and on the discontinuance of the “household head” concept in accessing social security programmes.

21. The report states that women hold nearly 65 per cent of jobs in the informal sector (p. 30) and that women’s labour force participation continues to be highest in the agricultural sector, where they are predominantly unpaid family workers (p. 31). In light of the Committee’s concluding comments on the combined second and third periodic reports,⁵ what specific measures have been taken to ensure that women working in the informal sector, including rural women working in family enterprises, have direct access to social security benefits?

22. The report states that women in the private sector who are married, pregnant or have children may be denied employment and face discrimination in promotion or access to in-service training, and notes that no effective regulatory mechanisms exist, other than that of an investigation upon a complaint (p. 33). Please provide information on what measures have been taken or are being contemplated to address these problems.

23. What measures have been taken or implemented to combat sexual harassment at work?

Education

24. The report states that persisting patriarchal values and unfavourable economic conditions adversely affect the educational status of girls (p. 22). The report notes that women and girls continue to lag behind men and boys at all levels of education and that significant discrepancies exist in the literacy levels of women and men, particularly when rural-urban, regional and age differences are considered (p. 21). What targeted measures, including temporary special measures, have been taken by the Government to overcome these problems, in particular in rural areas, and what has been the impact of such measures?

25. The report notes that students are directed to single-sex vocational and technical high schools providing traditional male and female occupational training. Please describe the efforts of the Government to address the problem of sex segregation in education and to encourage women to pursue non-traditional studies and careers.

26. What measures has the Government taken to ensure that restrictions regarding the ban on the wearing of headscarves in educational institutions do not affect the equal right of women to educational opportunities?

Stereotypes

27. The report seems to indicate that discriminatory gender stereotypes and attitudes remain pervasive in Turkey, continuing to perpetuate violence against women and to impact negatively upon women in many areas, including education, employment and health. What measures have been taken or are being contemplated by the Government systematically to address and combat discriminatory stereotypes and attitudes in all public policies?

28. The report states that the media continues to produce and perpetuate sex-role stereotyping that is discriminatory towards women (p. 13). Are there specific programmes for sensitizing media professionals and managers, and has the Government encouraged the media to adopt a code of self-regulation in regard to sex-role stereotyping?

Health

29. The report indicates that male participation in reproductive health programmes is insignificant (p. 38). What measures are contemplated or have been taken by the Government to encourage and enhance the participation of men in such programmes?

30. The report states that, as a result of unmet needs in family planning, 35 per cent of couples in Turkey either do not use an effective, or any, family planning method (p. 38). In accordance with the Committee's concluding comments on the combined second and third periodic reports,⁶ please provide current data and statistics on the types of family planning methods available and the use of such methods in both rural and urban areas, disaggregated by age and sex. What measures have been taken or are being contemplated to increase the availability and accessibility of contraception?

31. In its concluding comments on the combined second and third periodic reports, the Committee requested the review of the requirement of spousal consent for abortion.⁷ Has such a review taken place? If so, please provide further information on the outcome.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), part one, para. 175.

² *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), part one, para 195.

⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 198.

⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 204.

⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 205.

⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 196.