



REFERENCE: DB/follow-up/Egypt/67

21 September 2017

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur for Follow-up on Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honour to refer to the examination of the seventh periodic report of the Arab Republic of Egypt at the Committee's forty fifth session, held in February 2010. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations were transmitted to your Permanent Mission (CEDAW/C/EGY/CO/7). You may recall that in the concluding observations, the Committee requested the Arab Republic of Egypt to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 16 and 24 of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report received with a 16-month delay in July 2013 (CEDAW/C/EGY/CO/7/Add.1) under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its sixty-seventh session, held in July 2017 in Geneva, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in paragraph 16 of the concluding observations, that the State party “give high priority to the completion of the necessary legislative reforms and to modify, or repeal, without delay and within a clear time frame, discriminatory legislation, including discriminatory provisions in the Penal Code and the personal status law”: The State party mentioned that the National Council for Women (NWC) was preparing a draft law to amend Law No. 118 /1981, which would allow working women to receive the same social allowance for children as male workers in the Government sector. It also informed that under the Constitution and law, women enjoy equal rights with men with respect to all health-care services. Finally, the State party indicated that during the NWC conference “Egyptian women and the President”, which involved governorates, governmental and non-governmental associations and institutions, as well as representatives of foreign agencies, the recommendation to strengthen women's rights and avoid undermining of promulgated laws in this sense was issued.

The Committee welcomes the initiative taken to amend legislation on social allowance in order to remove discriminatory dispositions. It also welcomes the reaffirmed commitment to strengthen women's rights through legislation. It however regrets the lack of information on measures taken to initiate a more comprehensive legislative reform, repealing other discriminatory dispositions, such as in the Penal Code and the personal status law. The Committee thus considers that it has not received **sufficient information to assess** whether the recommendation has been implemented.

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In relation to the recommendation that the State party “increase its efforts to sensitize the parliament, as well as public opinion, regarding the importance of accelerating legal reform aimed at achieving formal equality for women and compliance with the Convention”: The Committee **did not receive any information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

With regards to the recommendation that the State party “continue to increase support for law reform through partnerships and collaboration with religious and community leaders, lawyers, judges, unions, civil society organizations and women’s non-governmental organizations”: The Committee **did not receive any information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to paragraph 16 of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

1. Complete the necessary legislative reforms and modify, or repeal, without delay and within a clear time frame, discriminatory legislation, including discriminatory provisions in the Penal Code and the personal status law.
2. Increase efforts to sensitize the parliament, as well as public opinion, regarding the importance of accelerating legal reform aimed at achieving formal equality for women and compliance with the Convention.
3. Increase support for law reform through partnerships and collaboration with religious and community leaders, lawyers, judges, unions, civil society organizations and women’s non-governmental organizations.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 24** of the concluding observations, that the State party “give priority attention to combating violence against women and girls and to adopting comprehensive measures to address such violence, in accordance with its general recommendation No. 19. Such measures should include the expeditious adoption of a comprehensive law criminalizing all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, marital rape, sexual violence, sexual harassment, institutional violence and crimes committed in the name of honour”: The State party reported that representatives of civil society, experts and the Ministry of Justice have formulated a proposal for a law to combat violence against women, which was brought before the legislature for adoption.

The Committee welcomes efforts made towards the adoption of a law to combat violence against women. However lacking information on the scope and content of this proposal and it not yet having been adopted, the Committee considers that the State party has taken some steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

In relation to the recommendation that the State party “include the development of a coherent and multisectoral action plan to combat violence against women”: The State party informed that the NWC, together with several Government bodies and non-governmental organizations, prepared a national strategy for combating violence against women. It indicated that this strategy seeks to strengthen laws and regulations to prevent and combat violence against women, protect and support battered women and their families, and to prevent all forms of violence through awareness – raising and education. The State party added that an action plan to combat violence against women was approved in 2012 and that through this action plan, a unit to combat violence against women within the Ministry of Interior was created.

The Committee welcomes the efforts undertaken to develop a comprehensive national strategy for combating violence against women, the adoption of a corresponding action plan and the creation of an implementation unit. The Committee considers that the State party has taken significant steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “amend articles 17 and 60, as well as other applicable provisions, of the Penal Code to ensure that perpetrators of violence against women do not benefit from any reduction in penalty”: The State party indicated that through the promulgation of Law No. 11 (2011), provisions of the Penal Code were amended to introduce harsher penalties for the crime of harassment, including online harassment. It added that the NWC cooperates with civil society to raise awareness, particularly of families of girl victims of violence and rape, on the importance of undertaking and completing criminal proceedings.

The Committee welcomes the amendment of the Penal Code to introduce harsher penalties for the crime of harassment, including online harassment. It takes note of the cooperation with civil society to raise awareness on the importance of completing criminal proceedings in cases of violence and rape. However regretting that the legal measures taken exclusively address the crime of harassment, the Committee considers that the State party has taken some steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

In relation to the recommendation that the State party “increase the number of shelters and ensure an adequate geographical distribution thereof”: The State party informed that through its action plan to combat violence against women, the Prime Minister agreed to support the Ministry of Social Affairs to achieve its goals of providing adequate protection for women victims of violence.

The Committee welcomes the support granted to the Ministry of Social Affairs to achieve its goal of providing protection to women victims of violence. It however regrets the absence of measures to increase the number of shelters and ensure adequate geographical distribution thereof. The Committee thus considers recommendation **has not been implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party: “lift age limitations on access to shelters for victims of domestic violence”: The Committee did not receive any information to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

In relation to the recommendation that the State party: “provide data on and information on trends in the prevalence of various forms of violence against women, disaggregated by age and by urban and rural areas”: The State party reported on a NCW survey of 13 500 women, showing that 82% had been subjected to verbal or physical harassment in the street or on the telephone, that approximately 85% consider that sexual harassment is one of the main issues affecting women and that 91% of women believe that the way a women dresses or walks in the street is not the reason behind sexual harassment. It added that 95% of respondents consider that a lack of morals and the absence of security are the cause of societal violence. It also informed that through the action plan to combat violence against women, the responsibility of providing information, statistics and reports on crimes of violence was given to the Ministry of Interior.

The Committee welcomes the initiative to conduct a survey on the issue of sexual harassment and takes note of the figures provided. It also notes that data collection on the prevalence of and trends in violence against women is now attributed to the Ministry of Interior. However lacking information on measures taken to ensure that data disaggregated by age and urban / rural areas is collected, the Committee considers that the State party has taken some steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to paragraph 24 of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

1. Expedite the adoption of a comprehensive law criminalizing all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, marital rape, sexual violence, sexual harassment, institutional violence and crimes committed in the name of honour.
2. Amend the Penal Code, including its articles 17 and 60, to ensure that perpetrators of all forms of violence against women do not benefit from any reduction in penalty.
3. Increase the number of shelters and ensure an adequate geographical distribution thereof.
4. Lift age limitations on access to shelters for victims of domestic violence.
5. Collect and provide data on and information on trends in the prevalence of various forms of violence against women, disaggregated by age and by urban and rural areas.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Hilary Gbedemah  
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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women