

CEDAW 7TH Periodical Report for the Country, Constructive Dialogue Process
The opening presentation of Honorable Dr. Fatma Betül SAYAN KAYA, The Minister of
Family and Social Policy
13 July 2016-Geneva

Honorable Chairperson, Esteemed Members of the Committee, Distinguished participants,

Before I start my opening remarks; I would like to extend our Minister Dr. Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya's best regards to all of you.

Madam Minister is unable to be here today because of her busy schedule in the Parliamentary Sessions.

It's a great honor and pleasure for me to present you the CEDAW 7th Periodical Report of Turkey.

We are here today as a large delegation including representatives from our Permanent Representation , the Family and Social Policy, the Foreign Affairs, the Interior, the Justice, the Labor and Social Security, the National Education, the Health, and the Food, Agriculture, and Livestock Ministries.

The concluding remarks received following our 6th periodical country report, we have prepared and forwarded to your Committee our interim report in October 2012, 7th periodical country report in November 2014,

and finally our answers to the list of issues in February 2016 in accordance with the procedures of preparing a report and in coordination with our Ministry.

During the process of preparing these reports, with NGOs being in the first place, we have organized meetings with universities, representatives of public organizations and institutions; moreover, we have received comments of the related stakeholders on the text prepared after the meetings.

We have also participated in the meetings conducted by NGOs within the framework of preparing shadow reports.

The final comments and all recommendations given by CEDAW Committee to date were translated into Turkish, published on the web site of our Ministry.

Meetings were organized with NGOs in order to introduce the concluding observations; the related institutions and (female) members of parliament were informed.

In addition to the information communicated to the Committee, I'd like to further inform you, the Honorable members of the Committee about the current situation of our country.

[Human Rights and Institutional structuring]

Turkey has been extensively receiving migration for the past few years and continuing its fight against terrorism in addition to the problems resulting from the migration.

However, Turkey has not compromised on its reform process of human rights and with a **"human rights for everyone with no discrimination"** approach Turkey has realized legislative regulations required for enabling everyone to equally and completely exercise their human rights.

Turkey has also established institutional structures and empowered its commitments at an international level.

Turkish society is not a juxtaposition of communities or groups.

Rather, Turkey consists of the amalgamation of individuals with different backgrounds, **who have accepted this land as their homeland for centuries.**

Indeed, the equality of individuals are guaranteed under the article 10 of our Constitution which states "Everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds".

This understanding of equality was further strengthened through the constitutional amendment in 2010 in order to allow for temporary special measure policy to prevent discrimination against women, children, disabled, and old people.

Again 2010, the right to individually appeal to the Constitutional Court was granted to apply constitutional provisions.

The Constitutional Court has been receiving individual appeals ever since September 23, 2012.

The court has realized outstanding judicial opinions in the field of human rights.

For example, the verdicts which stated that women could not give their own surname to their children in their custody after divorce, were reversed by the Constitutional Court within the framework of prohibition of discrimination.

Again, the Court has delivered verdicts which enabled women to solely use their maiden name after they get married.

Through the legal reform packages employed in the last five years, amendments were conducted in Turkish Criminal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, Anti-Terrorism Law, and Press Law, and thereby the steps taken to prevent discrimination were further strengthened.

Through the Democratization Package declared in September 30, 2013, fundamental rights and freedoms were extended via some administrative and legal amendments.

Some provisions preventing discriminations were added to Turkish Criminal Code.

Hate crime is included within the Turkish Criminal Code and now there are heavier penalties for committing discrimination and hate crimes.

In order to enable everyone to equally and completely exercise their human rights, institutional appeal mechanisms were also strengthened.

Established in 2012, the National Human Rights Institution of Turkey were restructured as the National Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey in 2016.

In addition to its current duties the re-established Institution is also going to function as “Anti-discrimination and Equality Institution” .

Another important development is the establishment of The Ombudsman Institution in 2012 , including a woman lead auditor responsible for women and children related issues.

Honorable Members and Distinguished participants,

Our country tackles with various terrorist groups’ bloody attacks simultaneously.

One of the main responsibilities of a state is to protect its citizens and to preserve the safety environment and public order.

Within that framework we pay maximum attention to enable the freedom- safety balance. All of the measures are taken under legal framework.

While our security forces are tackling with the terrorists, necessary measures are taken which enable our citizens to receive the **least damage and efforts** are done in order to ensure **their fundamental human rights**.

Moreover the damages of the terror-stricken are compensated by the state and our citizens' access to fundamental public services continue with no interruption.

[Women rights]

Honorable Members and Distinguished participants,

Besides the steps taken in the field of human rights, **I'd also like to inform you about the work we conduct regarding women rights.**

Primarily, as recommended in the final comments of our 6th periodical country report, I'd like to state that we have actively participated in the monitoring process of Beijing+20 and we have followed the Beijing+20 themed 59th Commission on the Status of Women through a committee, which included the extensive participation of NGOs, with an elaborately prepared country report.

Again within the framework of monitoring Beijing+20, our country hosted the meeting of "Ending Violence Against Women: Building on Progress to Accelerate Change" in 9th-10th of December, 2015 in İstanbul.

In addition, in the process of recognition of UN Sustainable Development Goals, Turkey has been one of the countries that supported "gender equality" as a stand-alone goal.

I can proudly say that Turkey has the legal grounds required to obtain sustainable development goals and takes necessary administrative measures to achieve these goals.

Honorable Members and Distinguished participants,

Similar to our previous reporting period, our 7th reporting period has experienced the sustainability of the political determination required to implement laws in order to prevent discrimination against women.

We have been working towards renewing the laws and taking steps to raise awareness and to have strong institutions for implementing the laws.

As the highest political document, the 10th Development Plan evaluates various objectives, goals, and policies regarding gender.

The establishment and reconstruction of our Ministry in 2011 was one of the significant steps taken for having strong and reliable institutions to prevent discrimination against women .

With the aim of bringing an integrative perspective towards social policies and services, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy has a structure which produces policies, standardizes its services, monitors, and audits.

Our Ministry's General Directorate on the Status of Women has been re-organized to include social services for women within its scope of work.

So that it started to work as a national mechanism that not only making policy but also provides demand-oriented services through closely monitoring the needs of women with an interdisciplinary approach which provides integrated preventive and protective services.

The fact that our Ministry's General Directorate on the Status of Women, which had 64 personnel prior to the establishment of the Ministry, has 102 personnel at its headquarter and 2000 personnel at provincial level and has a budget 15 times more than before, with a view to provide quality social service and to prevent all types of violence and discrimination against women in our country.

[Combatting violence against women]

Honorable Members and Distinguished participants,

Combatting violence against women is an issue, of which our country takes responsibility and fought within the framework of "**zero tolerance**" principle by receiving support from all parties.

Considering its international commitments, our country altogether combats violence against women and takes any necessary legal and administrative measures in every field to protect the victims.

Turkey is one of the countries who firstly signed and the first country to ratify the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which is an international document for violence against women and open for signature in 2011 at Istanbul.

As you know one of the honorable members of CEDAW Committee – Ms Feride ACAR, was unanimously elected as the president of GREVIO.

We have no doubt that the contribution of honorable presidents with her experiences on monitoring the İstanbul Convention, will be priceless.

Following the approval of the Convention, "the Law 6284 on protection of family and preventing violence against women",

Which was prepared in cooperation with NGO's, legal societies, and universities and was based on the Istanbul Convention, went in effect in 2012.

Through this law, the definition of violence and victim of violence were comprehensively organized in accordance with the Convention.

In order to quickly and effectively respond to the cases, civilian authorities and police forces are allowed to take precautionary measures.

Through this law, it is projected to establish Violence Monitoring and Preventing Centers to provide various services based on one-stop- shop system, 7/24.

These centers were piloted in 14 provinces and now these centers currently offer services in 47 provinces nationwide.

The number of people who have received services from these centers since 2013 is 84,100.

Considered as being one of the fundamental elements of our country's fight against violence against women, the number of guest-houses for women, which was 43 in 2011, is now 101. This number goes up to 137, with women's guest-houses of NGO's and municipalities.

137 guest-houses can host 3,437 women in total.

In order to enable Law No. 6284, Women Guest-houses, and Violence Monitoring and Preventing Centers to work more effectively, governing regulations went into effect.

Moreover, with the aim of effectively protecting victims of violence and monitoring protective measures, "Electronic Support Systems",

Which uses security button and electronic bracelet devices, are also under pilot implementation.

Within the scope of combating violence against women , an impact analysis has been conducted since 2012 in order to evaluate the efficiency of Law No. 6284 and to determine the problems experienced while implementing this law.

Considering the results of impact analysis, it is planned to carry out works to overcome the problems related to the implementation of the Law.

On the other hand, "Research on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey", which was conducted for the first time in 2008, was repeated in 2014 in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies and programs for combating violence against women in the past 6 years.

Furthermore, we are still working towards developing an integrated database in order to follow and record those who received services from Women Guest-Houses and Violence Monitoring and Preventing Centers and the measures taken within the scope of Law No. 6284.

In order to combat violence against women in coordination and through an integrative and comprehensive manner,

The second "National Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women" was implemented from 2012 to 2015 and regularly monitored.

The Violence Monitoring Committee, which gathers within the scope of Circular of the Prime Ministry, organized its 9th Meeting with the participation of NGO's, interested public institutions and organizations and universities in December, 2015.

The Third Action Plan, covering the period between 2016 and 2019, takes up 5 following areas for reform.

These are; making legislative regulations and increasing their effectiveness; raising awareness and transforming mentality; providing protective and preventive services and empowering victims of violence; regulating and implementing health services; and developing policies and inter-institutional cooperation.

Honorable Members and Distinguished participants,

We are aware of the fact that discrimination against women and the subsequent violence against women cannot be totally eliminated only through legal and administrative regulations.

The activities we conducted for raising awareness in our previous report period increasingly continue in this reporting period as well.

Within that framework, in cooperation with all interested parties, various trainings are given to the personnel working at public institutions, which provide services to women victims of violence, in order to raise their awareness regarding the issue.

Thanks to these trainings, we have been able to reach 71.000 police officers, 65.000 health personnel, 326 family court judges & prosecutors, and 47.600 religious officials.

In relation to the significance of men's participation in combating violence against women, we still provide trainings within the scope of the protocols signed with the Ministry of National Defense, the General Command of Gendarmerie and Presidency of Religious Affairs.

Thanks to the trainings given within the Ministry of National Defense, we reached 463.000 private soldiers and non-commissioned officers.

It is planned to conduct trainings towards raising awareness for 450.000 private soldiers and non-commissioned officers within the body of the Ministry of National Defense.

In addition to the support that will be given to women victims of violence through the “Combating Domestic Violence Project”, we are aiming to cooperate between local NGO's and governmental & local authorities.

Provincial Action Plans are prepared and workflow and standards of service units are developed within the scope of the project.

In order to raise awareness for gender equality and increase the quality of the services provided to women and children victims of violence, training programs for service providers are carried out.

Through the new educational materials prepared on a sectorial basis,

1.150 personnel from the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Justice received training.

In the ministries, supervision trainings are also given in order to ensure the sustainability of trainings, moreover monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are also established.

[Participation to the decision making mechanisms]

Honorable Members and Distinguished participants,

In our country, the participation of women to decision making mechanisms is not at the desired level, yet continuously increases each year.

The increase in the number of women in parliament and also in local authorities is a positive development.

In 2009 there was no women metropolitan municipality mayors, however, with the last local elections in 2014 the number of women metropolitan municipality mayors increased up to 10 %.

This increasing trend can also be seen in official appointments.

In diplomatic assignments, which are one of the most significant elements of bureaucracy and in which men are dominant, 37 of 232 ambassadors working for Turkish ministry of foreign affairs are women ; and 9 of 74 consul generals, are women.

Also in academia ; here is a high participation of women which is 43 percent.

[Increasing women employment]

In order to transform the role of women in family and community in such a way that it will not prevent their participation to economic, public and social life important measures are taken in the development plans and governmental programs;

Projects, national actions plans and campaigns are also carried out together with the legal amendments conducted primarily with the contribution of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy and of all parties.

I'd like to inform you about the new regulations in our country:

The new legal amendments carried out in February, 2016 consist of the unpaid leave of state officials counted as progression in seniority,

giving employees the right to work part-time due to maternity,

granting working parents the right to work part-time.

Through these regulations, it is aimed to protect the rights of working women, protect motherhood, and to balance the care responsibilities between parents.

We are also continuously working towards giving insurance premium support to employers, promoting women to participate in vocational courses, supporting women entrepreneurs, popularizing nursing services in order to increase the employment of women.

In addition to those up-to-date information, in the past ten years in Turkey women's participation in workforce and women employment have made progress thanks to the comprehensive implementations and policies pursued in order to support women employment in all fields.

Our 10th development plan has been most instrumental in this sense.

In 2004, women's participation to the workforce was 23 %, in 2015 this number is 31.5 %.

This determination of Turkey is also supported by the steps taken at international level.

Under our country's term presidency of G20 in 2015, Women 20 (W20) was realized as a separate initiative which focuses on supporting economic growth in a comprehensive and gender-sensitive manner.

In the W20 summit organized in our country, an important document was finalized.

This document helps G20 to meet the commitments previously made for the participation of women to economic and social life and contributes to create an economic growth that will be gender sensitive, comprehensive and permanent in upcoming terms.

[Education]

Honorable Members and Distinguished participants,

In Turkey, a great progress has been made in the school enrollment rate of women and girls in the past ten years.

Throughout the years, the illiteracy rate of women decreased.

The gender ratio was 93.% in the academic year of 2005-2006; this ratio increased 103.% at middle school level in the academic year of 2015-2016.

This progress was made thanks to the projects and campaigns through nation-wide mobilization as well as providing **conditional educational cash transfer within the scope of temporary special measures for girls.**

Moreover in 2012 secondary education integrated to the compulsory education system which enables increase in girls enrollment at secondary education.

While the secondary education enrollment rate of girls was 69 % in the academic year of 2012-2013, this ratio increased to 80 % in the academic year of with the new educational system.

We are working towards eliminating discrimination against women and girls in educational settings and developing an understanding of gender equality at schools.

An example of these activities, which are conducted at all levels from elementary to university is "Commission for Women Studies and Problems at Academy", which was established within the Board of Higher Education.

The Commission is disseminating this position paper among all universities.

This position paper consists of the steps that should be taken to raise awareness for discrimination against women among students, personnel, and academicians; to mainstream gender equality perspective in the works of the institution; and to construct safe campuses.

[Health]

Turkey has obtained apparent success in decreasing maternal mortality through implementing the accurate health policies.

Maintaining that success will continue to be one of the fundamental objectives of our country regarding women's health.

It is also aimed to provide women-friendly services for birth and reproduction and raise healthy generations through "Mother Friendly Hospital Program", "Postnatal Care Program" and reproductive health services.

I can proudly say that 97 % of women in Turkey receive prenatal care and give birth at hospitals.

Thanks to this approach, which is focused on women's health and institutional care, the infant mortality rate has also decreased by 24% in the past five years.

[Migration]

Honorable Members and Distinguished participants,

Turkey has been pursuing an "open door" policy by protecting those, **who had to leave their homeland as a result of the war** and conflicts in their countries right next to our geographical border.

We are providing more than two and a half million Syrians, who are under temporary protection in our country, **with the same opportunities and services we offer to our own citizens.**

270,000 Syrians shelter in 26 temporary sheltering centers.

Not only their fundamental needs such as security, shelter, food, healthcare, clothes, education are provided and also they are given psycho-social support in this context.

The old, the handicapped, children, women and men living in the shelters are treated as individuals and supported within the bounds of possibility.

After individual interviews, they are referred to the related institutions depending on their needs.

100,000 people living at these centers have received psycho-social support.

The Syrians living outside these shelters are also under protection measures and can make use of healthcare and education opportunities.

The amount of financial support we have allocated from our internal resources for Syrians living in our country **have reached up to 11 Billion Dollars.**

Mainly the personnel giving psycho-social support to the Syrians under protection as well as all personnel working at camps have been given awareness regarding violence against women, gender equality, and early marriage within the context of “Support Training for Those Who Support”.

Also, awareness raising activities for Syrian women living in the camps have been carried out.

Turkish and Arabic leaflets, which give information about violence against women, marriageable age, civil marriage, and women rights, have been distributed in the provinces with camps.

Relieving the displaced people is our humanitarian responsibility.

Out of 20 people coming to our country, who were displaced and had to leave their countries, only 1 of them receive international support.

Turkey is aware of its responsibility for that matter and does its part to the fullest.

However, world countries **should do their share for humanity and future.**

Honorable Members and Distinguished participants,

It is no doubt that there are no parties to the Convention who are perfect in terms of totally eliminating discrimination against women.

The Republic of Turkey is extensively making efforts to enable every women in our country to exercise their right to equality as stated in our laws and to prevent all types of discrimination against women.

In the upcoming term, thanks to the **constructive dialogue** with your honorable Committee, **we believe that the efforts for eliminating discrimination against women in Turkey and world will become more comprehensive and fruitful.**

I would like to end my remarks by once again extending my deepest regards. **Thank you for listening.**