



Republic of Cape Verde

55th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Consideration of the report submitted by Cape Verde

Geneva, 16 July 2013

Intervention by H.E. Mrs Maria Cristina Fontes Lima,

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health

Honorable

Members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

It is with great satisfaction and great sense of responsibility that the State of Cape Verde represented here by the delegation that I have the honor to address, is presented in this forum to share the progress and challenges on the path to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. Satisfaction yes, because in spite of the enormous difficulties of bringing about change in areas involving habits and sociocultural factors rooted as this is the area of gender equality, Cape Verde has been able to implement policies that have contributed to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, translated in the development of an appropriate legal framework and the creation of institutional and social conditions which ensure its application. But here we present ourselves well aware of the responsibility that we still have to continue on the same path and improve our responses and indicators. We expect the dialogue that we have in this room, will contribute to the enrichment of solutions and measures we preparing to face new challenges.

In addition to the report submitted in 2012 and the responses forwarded to this Committee, I have the pleasure of spending a few more time to enunciate measures and changes that however we completed

At the Legislative level, in addition to constitutional and institutional laws that promote gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, produced between 1975, when the country gained its independence, and 2012, which were described in reports submitted to this Committee by the State of Cape Verde, we are pleased to share with you the news of the recent approval of the Ministry of Defense's Ordinance No. 25/2013, which came into effect on April 18, 2013. It "*regulates the specific conditions arising from military service performed by female citizens.*" Specifically, it eliminates the factors of inequality based on gender, gives women the same freedoms and guarantees accorded to men, and safeguards women's rights as regards motherhood.

As noted in the responses to the questions raised by this Committee to the Combined Report presented in 2010, the Special Law on Gender-Based Violence, which came into effect in March 2011, enabled the State of Cape Verde to take an important step towards promoting Gender Equality, and positioned itself, once more, against any violence based on perceptions, constructs, attitudes and behaviors incompatible with human rights and women's rights in particular, reaffirming its commitment to fight it and defining policy measures for its criminalization, prevention and eradication, in line with the United Nations recommendations, namely to promote and ensure women's access to justice, fight impunity, improve access to support services, and strengthen national capacity to prevent and deal with the problem.

In the wake of the passing of the aforementioned Law, we designed (2011 – 2015) and are

implementing a Program that aims to create the necessary conditions – infrastructure, qualified human resources, institutionalization of new practices, and raising awareness of society in general – to implement the Law. The Program includes three main areas of intervention – prevention of gender-based violence, strengthening of support services for victims, and institutional strengthening.

In the context of the implementation of this program, several measures have been taken. As a result, at present, in addition to the services provided by the institutions that comprise the inter-institutional network for victim support and protection (SOL Network), the State Assets Services have provided spaces (called Halfway Houses) that function as places that accommodate victims, in case of emergency. Under construction, with completion scheduled for 2014, is the first Shelter, a project co-financed by the Government, in partnership with a civil society organization. Also during 2013, three Centers to Support Victims of Gender-Based Violence will be created, to ensure the provision of integrated psychological, legal and protection services.

The Pilot Project for Rehabilitation of Men Accused of Gender-Based Violence was completed in June 2013. It was implemented by the Ministry of Justice, in partnership with national institutions promoting gender equality. The objectives of this project are: to hold men accountable for the crime of GBV; to assist men who commit violence in building non-violent resources and skills in interpersonal relationships; and to promote reflection on gender, masculinity, violence and Human Rights. The Pilot results were very positive, so the first phase of this service's generalization will begin in September 2013. Thus, by September 2014, this rehabilitation service will be provided in 11 of the country's 22 municipalities. High incidence of GBV complaints ranks first among the selection criteria for the first phase of generalization.

Currently, preparations are being made so that the Training Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and the Prevention and Eradication of Gender-Based Violence – targeted at professionals in sectors involved in applying the Law (Education, Media, Healthcare and the National Police) – will start to be implemented in September 2013. The second phase of the Training Plan for Community Leaders will also start in September 2013, to publicize the Law and ensure implementation in all municipalities throughout the country.

In implementing the program, the State continues to work in close coordination with civil society organizations, most notably the NGO *Laço Branco*, given its commitment and strong social impact, especially in introducing new paradigms of masculinity and promoting non-violent attitudes in neighborhoods that have high violence rates, particularly in the capital. Currently and based on that partnership, a National Campaign (with media coverage and with the aim of community intervention) called “*A mim é pai*” (I am a dad) is being implemented, to promote responsible fatherhood. With the use of radio and television spots and lectures, it encourages the development of more responsible positions and attitudes by fathers and their co-responsibility in the care of children. The work carried out with this organization is a good example of efforts to engage men in promoting equality and a great gain in the partnership between the State and Civil Society.

It is important to note that based on the results achieved, besides political engagement, efforts were also made in terms of Planning and Evaluation. After the Evaluation of Plans that were effective in the 2005–2011 period, an Action Program for Gender Equality Promotion (2011–2012) was developed. At present, the 3rd National Plan for Gender Equality Promotion and the 2nd National Plan to Fight GBV are in the final stages of preparation. In both cases, the process of document analysis has been completed and

enquiries are being made in order to collect data in the field. The development of this enquiry phase has the direct support of the Network of Women Parliamentarians, which, after receiving training on issues related to women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting, has been actively engaged in promoting gender equality. It is currently developing an enquiry process having the constituencies as reference, putting the focus on the status of implementation of the GBV Law, in partnership with the Association of Women Lawyers.

Recognizing that the development of public policies has to be supported by objective information, another area that has received particular attention is statistical production. Thus, the 3rd Demographic Survey on Sexual and Reproductive Health, which includes a specific module on Gender-Based Violence, will be conducted later this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The commitment of Cape Verde's Government in promoting women's rights and constructing gender equality is reflected in the 2011–2016 Government Program, which states that gender equality promotion is one of its four interlinked pillars and that it is a key element for economic growth, poverty eradication and to achieve the remaining MDGs.

The Action Program for Gender Equality Promotion (2011–2012) favored gender mainstreaming as an intervention strategy at different levels of governance. To materialize this strategy, the *Género+* (Gender+) Project was prepared, and one of the results obtained with its implementation was the preparation of an Equality Plan at one of the largest Semi-Public Enterprises in the country: CVTelecom. At the level of local governments, 4 Municipal Plans for Gender Equality and a Good Practice Guide for their preparation were

developed, which enables the remaining municipalities to develop similar plans, with technical autonomy.

Creation of the Gender Observatory is also part of the gender mainstreaming strategy, because it enables continuous monitoring of gender indicators' evolution. Also included within this strategy and to meet the guidelines of the Beijing Platform for Action, which refers to the need to "*develop suitable statistical means to recognize and make visible the full extent of women's work and their contributions to the national economy, including in unremunerated and domestic sectors,*" the National Statistics Institute conducted the first Time Use Survey in Cape Verde.

The results of this survey, released on June 7, put at the disposal of different users information that show that, in Cape Verde, as in other countries, gender roles, sexual division of labor and the public policies in place continue shifting most of the burden of unpaid work to women, especially the poorest. On the heels of the survey results release, we conducted a workshop attended by technical and decision teams from various national planning bodies and sectors that implement policy guidelines in the areas of labor and social protection, as well as university representatives. During this workshop, the need to design new public policies was recognized. Such policies must be focused on creating a care system, which emphasizes the care of children and the elderly, promotes the reconciliation of work and family life, accords special attention to caregivers, and values the economic contribution of unpaid work, which, in the case of Cape Verde, represents 74% of the overall workload.

Another important input from this survey was the visibility given to the contribution of families to ensure social welfare, positively influencing a change of the discourse in

circulation, which holds families exclusively responsible for the care crisis facing the country. The engagement of academia has also contributed to this change, including the University of Cape Verde's Laboratory for Gender Research, which has promoted research and debate focused on the family and gender relations.

Another important element in the mainstreaming strategy is the fact that the Network of Women Parliamentarians' Action Plan includes, among its activities for 2013–2014, the submission of a proposal to change the legal framework for the preparation of the public budget, with the aim of legally requiring the use of a gender perspective in the planning and budgeting at central and local levels.

Other important measures related to mainstreaming include the disclosure of information that enables analysis processes with a gender approach. In this context, we highlight the publication, in March 2013, of the second edition of a Pocket book entitled "*Homens e Mulheres em Cabo Verde: factos e números 2012*" (Men and Women in Cape Verde: facts and figures 2012), as part of the "March, Women's Month" celebrations.

The mainstreaming effort materialized also in the use of a gender approach in drafting the new, recently completed National Plan for Health Development and the Seminar on Equity in Planning and Health Sector Action, which included technical teams from the Health Ministry's central services, the Physicians Association, students in the Nursing program at UniCV, as well as some of their teachers.

Another sector that opted for the use of a gender approach in planning and implementation of activities is the water and sanitation sector. This is of particular importance due to the direct impact that its actions have on improving women's living

conditions. Note that the Institute that will coordinate the sector is currently being established. Among the Institute's operating principles is gender equality promotion at all levels of management and service delivery.

In terms of economic opportunities, a strategy was recently drafted with the aim of improving the Business Environment, which also stipulates the use of a gender approach in actions to be taken. Also underway is the implementation of the "Female Entrepreneurship" project, which aims to support the economic empowerment of young women, especially in areas with the highest unemployment rates. At the same time, specific projects, involving partnerships among the government, NGOs and international organizations, continue to be carried out, with the aim of promoting women's autonomy and economic empowerment.

Clearly focusing on the rural world, the second Fight against Poverty Program (POSER) gives special emphasis to actions among rural women. On the other hand, in designing Agribusiness development, which seeks to modernize agricultural processes and practices, a study was conducted on the value chains with development potential using a gender approach. Also note the prospects for adopting a new conceptual framework and improved tools for collecting and analyzing information in the agricultural sector, under the leadership of the National Statistics Institute, to carry out the 2014 Agricultural Census.

Currently being implemented is the "Construction of a Common Agenda for Gender" project, developed in partnership with women candidates (elected or not) in the 2012 municipal elections. This project anticipates increased participation of women in decision-making processes during the 2016 local and national elections, as well as the development of skills that enable their engagement in gender equality promotion, and increased level of

demand as regards commitments to gender and the empowerment of women to be put at the center of their parties' political agendas.

Dear Committee members

Despite the gains, we believe that much remains to be done. The persistence of a patriarchal society, which ranks and values men and women unequally, linked to an intense economic change process, poses new challenges, which require incisive policies that take into consideration the different needs of women and men in Cape Verde.

We have the political will to do so and we have a civil society increasingly organized and committed to a principles and values which is centered in a human dignity enshrined in our constitution and in key international instrument on human rights including CEDAW.

Thank you very much