



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

Distr.
LIMITED

CEDAW/C/1996/L.1/Add.9
30 January 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
Fifteenth session
15 January-2 February 1996

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION

Draft report

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Addendum

IV. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

B. Consideration of reports

5. Third periodic report

Ukraine

1. The Committee considered the third periodic report of Ukraine (CEDAW/C/UKR/3 and Add.1) at its 302nd meeting, on 29 January 1996 (see CEDAW/C/SR.302).

2. In introducing the report, the representative of Ukraine highlighted the changes that the country had undergone since the report's submission in 1991, in particular, the transition from a totalitarian to a democratic regime. The Government was in the process of establishing a national machinery for the advancement of women and several bodies had been set up to study the social situation of women and to protect women. There had also been an increase in women's non-governmental organizations. Currently women accounted for 54 per cent of the population.

3. The representative stated that the legislation of Ukraine was consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reported on parliamentary hearings held in July 1995 at which the implementation of the Convention had been discussed in detail. She mentioned the high level of education of women but noted that preference was given to men over women in leadership posts and that women were also not well represented in executive positions. There were no women ministers and no women in the presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and women held only 4 per cent of the seats in Parliament. Women were equal to men in professional training; they had equal access to social, political and cultural activities; they received equal wages and benefited from conditions that made it possible for them to combine work with motherhood, including part-time work and other special benefits.

4. The representative mentioned several laws and measures that had been adopted to improve the situation of families with children and that a law on children would soon be enacted. She also spoke about the severe economic crisis, which had had a major impact on the situation of working women and had increased the threat of poverty. Seventy-four per cent of the unemployed were women.

5. The representative pointed out that Ukraine was undergoing the deepest demographic crisis of the last decade. In the age group between 20 and 50 years the mortality of women was more than three times higher than that of men and the difference in lifespan between women and men had reached 10 years, to the detriment of women. The representative outlined the serious health problems of adolescent girls and said that the number of abortions exceeded the number of births. She said that a national programme of family planning had been launched in September 1995, including making contraceptives available.

6. The representative mentioned the setting up of a network of services and allocation of funds for dealing with negative genetic radiation factors associated with the Chernobyl incident.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

7. The Committee expressed appreciation for the frank presentation of the third periodic report of Ukraine and welcomed the effort to provide updated information during extensive replies, which supplemented in large measure the statistical data that should have been included in the report.

8. The Committee regretted that the report did not follow the Committee's general guidelines and did not take into account its general recommendations.

Positive aspects

9. The Committee considered that the holding of a parliamentary hearing in 1995 to discuss specifically issues related to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women showed the importance attached by

the State to the Convention and the Committee's work. It further appreciated the publicity effect of such a step.

10. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Ukraine had ratified all major human rights treaties and had also adopted a new Act on the Effect of International Agreements on Ukrainian Territory in December 1991, by which all international treaties ratified automatically became part of domestic legislation. The Committee commended the fact that the country attached great importance to human rights in general.

11. It was also noteworthy that the Government had made commitments at the Beijing Conference on important issues relating to family life problems faced by women as a consequence of economic transition and had already established regional bodies to oversee the implementation of such special projects.

12. The Committee expressed its satisfaction at the fundamental and positive changes that had recently taken place in Ukraine as described in the oral presentation. It welcomed in particular the adoption of several legal measures to implement the provisions of the Convention.

13. The Committee commended the adoption of the new constitution guaranteeing equality of men and women in all spheres of life in accordance with the Convention.

14. The Committee welcomed the fact that women with disabled or young children enjoyed early pension benefits under Ukrainian law.

Principal subjects of concern

15. The Committee found the persistence of certain cultural patterns and social gender stereotypes to be a major issue affecting the implementation of the Convention.

16. While acknowledging the good intentions behind legal measures adopted to protect maternity, the Committee is of the view that such measures are overprotective of women, rather than empowering to them, and could have a negative effect on the status of women in a market-oriented economy.

17. The Committee noted that there was no clearly formulated policy on women and that national machinery on gender issues was still at an embryonic stage of development. While Ukraine had several entities at the national level to oversee issues relating to women and children, the Committee was concerned that most of those bodies seemed to emphasize welfare of, and protection for, women rather than social and economic empowerment. It was also unclear from the report what enforcement mechanism the Government and parliamentary bodies had to eliminate discrimination against women.

18. The Committee had serious concerns about the deep demographic crisis in the country, in particular, the high mortality rate for women and the fact that the number of abortions exceeded the number of births.

19. The Committee was very concerned about the sexual stereotyping and overprotective labour legislation, which had not proved effective from a public health point of view. This further curtailed reproductive rights of women.

20. The Committee noted the limited access to contraceptives in rural areas, which was indicative of the lack of effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning for regulating fertility of women. It was further noted that this led to unsafe abortions, threatening the life of a large number of women.

21. Further concern was expressed at the fact that the rate of women's economic activity had declined significantly in recent years. Women constituted 80 to 90 per cent of the unemployed and female occupations were characterized by substantially lower wages than those paid to men.

22. The Committee had a serious concern regarding the health of the Ukrainian people in general and of women in particular. The problems of sustaining normal pregnancy, of birth defects and of infertility due to radiation poisoning and stress-related difficulties weighed heavily on women.

23. The Committee was concerned about the prevailing low proportion of women in decision-making positions.

24. The Committee noted the absence of measures or plans that would enable men to share parental responsibilities on an equal footing with women.

25. The Committee noted with concern that the minimum age for marriage was not the same for girls as for boys.

26. The Committee was concerned about the growing rate of suicide and deaths related to alcohol poisoning.

Suggestions and recommendations

27. The Committee requested an explanation of "partial non-compliance" with articles 2, paragraphs (d) and (f), 3, 5, paragraphs (a) and (b), 7, paragraph (b), 8 and 14, paragraphs (a) (b) and (h), as stated in the third periodic report and changes in their implementation status in the next report.

28. The Committee recommended that in subsequent reports further information and the status of implementation of commitments made at the Beijing Conference should be provided.

29. The Committee recommended that in view of the successful incorporation into domestic legislation of all international treaties ratified by the country, equal rights as well as human rights education should be made mandatory for judges and law enforcement agencies in Ukraine.

30. The Committee recommended that the Government provide more detailed information in the next report on violence against women, including rape, wife battering, child abuse, incest and other forms of physical and psychological violence against women.

31. The Committee further recommended that Ukraine provide statistical information on minorities living in the country, in particular on Crimean Tartars.

32. The Committee urged the Government to review and amend the legislation that allowed the activities of numerous sex services and the practice of hiring women as dancers, waiters or other staff to work abroad, often leading to prostitution, and to take measures to prosecute criminal offenders and to rehabilitate the victims through education, training and support services.
