



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Implementation of articles 21 and 22 of the Convention

Reports by specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities

Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

Summary

In accordance with article 22 of the Convention, the specialized agencies of the United Nations system have been invited to submit to the Committee, at its seventy-third session, reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities. The present report contains information on the measures taken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to implement the provisions of the Convention in the countries whose national reports will be considered by the Committee at its seventy-third session.

* CEDAW/C/73/1.

** The present report was submitted late owing to delayed inputs from other sources.



I. Introduction

1. At its seventy-third session, the Committee will consider the periodic reports of Austria, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guyana, Mozambique and Qatar.

2. As a specialized agency of the United Nations system, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) contributes to the building of peace, the alleviation of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture and communication and information. In accordance with the medium-term strategy for the period 2014–2021, gender equality was designated as one of the two global priorities for UNESCO. The priority is being pursued through a two-pronged approach: gender-specific programming and the mainstreaming of gender equality perspectives into all fields of competence of UNESCO.

3. UNESCO has a major role and responsibility within the United Nations system in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In accordance with article 10 of the Convention, States parties are to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure that their rights are equal to those of men in the field of education. The right to education lies at the heart of the mission of UNESCO and is an integral part of its constitutional mandate.

4. Efforts by UNESCO to promote the empowerment of women, women's rights and gender equality are guided by its medium-term strategy for the period 2014–2021, its biennial and quadrennial programme and budget documents, its organization-wide action plan on the gender equality priority for 2014–2021, which supports and guides the implementation of its global gender equality priority, the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and resolutions and international and regional instruments relevant to the areas of action of UNESCO.

5. The commitment of UNESCO to pursuing its gender equality priority is facilitated by the Division for Gender Equality in the Office of the Director General. As the UNESCO focal point for gender equality, the Division provides policy guidance and recommendations to senior management and the programme sectors on mainstreaming gender equality considerations into UNESCO policies, strategies and programmes; carries out capacity-building; monitors gender parity and work-life balance within the secretariat; and develops and establishes partnerships with other United Nations bodies, regional bodies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, private foundations and private sector partners that support initiatives for the empowerment of women and gender equality.

II. Measures taken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to implement the provision of the Convention in the countries whose reports are to be considered at the seventy-third session

A. Austria

6. Austria is not a party to the Convention against Discrimination in Education of 1960 and did not respond to the ninth consultation of member States on the implementation of the Convention.

7. Austria is a representative parliamentary democracy and a federal republic that is divided into nine provinces. For each of the nine provinces, a department for women's affairs and/or gender equality has been established.

8. The School Organization Act of 1962 and its subsequent amendments specified that Austrian schools should foster the development of the talents and potential abilities of young people in accordance with ethical, religious and social values, by providing them with an education corresponding to their respective stages of development and courses of study.

9. Article 14 (5a) of the Federal Constitutional Law stipulates that democracy, humanity, solidarity, peace, justice, and openness and tolerance towards people are the elementary values of all schools, on the basis of which they can secure the highest possible level of education for the whole population, independent of origin, social situation and financial background, permanently safeguarding and developing the optimal quality of education.

10. Article 14 (6) of that Law further specifies that:

Schools are institutions in which pupils shall be educated together according to a comprehensive fixed curriculum and in which, in connection with the imparting of knowledge and skills, a comprehensive educational goal is strived for ... Admission to public school is open to all regardless of birth, sex, race, status, class, language and religion, and in other respects within the limits of the statutory requirements. The same applies analogously to kindergartens, day homes and student hostels.

11. Sex-disaggregated data are used by the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs to produce an annual gender index that provides an overall understanding of gender-based differences and inequalities and how they are structured. The provinces are not mere administrative divisions, but have some legislative authority distinct from the federal Government, for example in matters of culture, social care, primary education, youth affairs, environmental protection, hunting, building, transport planning and zoning ordinances. At the provincial level, all nine provinces have passed resolutions for implementing gender mainstreaming.

12. Over the past few decades, the educational level of women has significantly increased. Slightly more women than men held a university degree in 2015.

13. There remains a large disparity between women and men in the study of certain disciplines. Women are overrepresented in veterinary medicine (80 per cent), the humanities (74 per cent) and fine and applied arts (64 per cent). In technical and scientific subjects, the percentage of female students is very low.

14. Existing measures aim to overcome barriers to access to scientific and technical training courses and professions. With the establishment of the "My Technology" platform in 2015, a central online resource was launched to provide information about the existing workshops, excursions, competitions, counselling services, mentoring programmes and job information days currently on offer, as well as the teaching materials, compendiums and training offered.

15. In order to encourage girls to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics, from the age of 6 years they are invited to "Girls' Day", which is organized in the public sector each year. Since 2006, this has been held under the auspices of the federal ministries and subordinate departments on the basis of a Ministerial Council decision, allowing the participating girls to gain real experience and an active insight into the public sector. "Girls' Day Mini" has been organized since 2015 and targets girls in the kindergarten age group of 4 years and over. The

equivalent “Boys’ Day” focuses on enabling boys to become familiar with professions in social institutions.

B. Cabo Verde

16. Cabo Verde is not a party to the Convention against Discrimination in Education and did not respond to the ninth consultation of member States on the implementation of the Convention.

17. The Constitution of 1992, as amended in 2010, recognizes in its article 1 (2) the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction as to sex, and ensures the full exercise of fundamental freedoms by all citizens. No one may be privileged, favoured, disadvantaged, deprived of any right or exempted from any duty owing to their sex (art. 24).

18. Under article 7 (e) of the Constitution, it is fundamental for the State to progressively remove the economic, social, cultural and political obstacles that hinder true equality of opportunity among citizens, especially discrimination against women in the family and in society. Article 48 on the freedom of expression and information states that these are to be limited by the prohibition of any form of discrimination, particularly against women. Article 88 (2) states that the State has the duty to ensure the elimination of conditions that discriminate against women and to guarantee the protection of their rights.

19. The Constitution also guarantees the right to education and the right to equal opportunities to school access and achievement. Basic schooling is compulsory, universal and free. In total, the Constitution contains more than 10 articles that address specific aspects of the right to education.

20. The education system is mostly governed by the Basic Law on the Education System, which was adopted in 1990. This law reaffirms the principles of free and compulsory education and states that public school should be considered a priority.

21. In 2013, Cabo Verde adopted the Act on Children and Adolescents (Act No. 50/VIII/2013), which further guarantees the right to education for all. Article 5 enshrines the principles of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination by stating that all children and adolescents are equal under the provisions of the law. Other articles provide for specific safeguards. For example, article 47 (2) states that pregnancy cannot be used as a reason for expulsion from an educational institution.

22. UNESCO is implementing a project in West Africa, including in Cabo Verde, aimed at supporting ministries of education and local education authorities to improve and scale up comprehensive sexuality education. UNESCO disseminates and supports the use of the revised United Nations International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, which identifies the characteristics of effective comprehensive sexuality education programmes, recommends essential topics and learning objectives that should be covered in curricula on comprehensive sexuality education for all learners and outlines approaches for planning, delivering and monitoring programmes on comprehensive sexuality education.

C. Côte d’Ivoire

23. Côte d’Ivoire, a party to the Convention against Discrimination in Education since 24 November 1999, responded to the ninth consultation of member States on the implementation of the Convention.

24. In the preamble of the Constitution, adopted on 8 November 2006, the State expresses its commitment to promoting equality between women and men. Article 4 states that all citizens are born and remain free and equal before the law, and that no one may be privileged or discriminated against on the basis of 17 criteria, including sex. In line with article 35, both the State and public communities ensure the promotion, development and protection of women. They must take the measures necessary to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Article 32 states that the State is committed to guaranteeing the specific needs of vulnerable persons and to taking the measures necessary to prevent the vulnerability of children, women, mothers, older persons and persons with disabilities. It is committed to guaranteeing the access of vulnerable persons to health-care services, education, employment, culture, sports and leisure.

25. Concerning education, article 9 of the Constitution states that everyone is entitled to education and vocational training and article 10 that school attendance is compulsory for children of both sexes under the law. The State is also taking the measures necessary to integrate the Constitution, human rights and public freedoms into school and university programmes (art. 28).

26. Act 2015-635 on Education, Orientation and Vocational Training, adopted on 17 September 2015, guarantees that, in the framework of public education, school enrolment is compulsory for children of both sexes between the ages of 6 and 16 years (art. 2-1). Ministerial Order No. 0111/MENET/CAB of 24 December 2014, related to the code of conduct signed by employees of the Ministry of National and Technical Education, forbids all forms of discrimination, including on the basis of gender (art. 5 (6)), as well as all comments that insult, humiliate and discriminate against schoolchildren (art. 5 (7)). Article 21 of the Ministerial Order states the need to respect this code of conduct in order to guarantee the rights to education and ensure the protection of both girls and boys.

27. Decree 2012-488, signed on 7 June 2012, established committees of management of educational institutions in order to create the conditions for a better functioning of educational institutions. Among their programmes, the committees are responsible for the provision of toilets for each sex in schools, the development of “second chance schools” for all, but with special attention paid to women, and the establishment of local and rural schools to reduce gender inequalities. In the framework of the ninth consultation of member States on the implementation of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, Côte d’Ivoire reported on the building of local secondary schools to reduce inequalities in gender and in socioeconomic and geographical origins in relation to access to the first cycle of secondary education, and the related retention and completion rates. The construction programme saw a record number of 80 secondary schools opening in 2014/15. The policy also aims to adapt educational facilities to the needs of rural areas and female pupils.

28. Côte d’Ivoire also adopted a strategic plan for accelerating girls’ education, which includes actions to prevent school pregnancies (the “Zero Pregnancy at School” programme). The Government has established monitoring committees to enable girls to gain access to and remain at school, which includes the mobilization of communities, especially women’s associations in the form of clubs for the mothers of female pupils. Since 2011, female educational institutions have been revitalized, increasing from 100 in 2011/12 to 116 in 2014/15, with the number of pupils in literacy classes increasing by 629.13 per cent.

29. Côte d’Ivoire also reported having launched initiatives to challenge gender-stereotypical educational choices.

30. UNESCO is implementing a programme to increase literacy and the empowerment of 500 rural women in Dianra, Béré Region, and another to tackle

pregnancy in schools in order to raise the awareness of and involve local populations, especially young girls and boys.

D. Democratic Republic of the Congo

31. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a party to the Convention against Discrimination in Education and responded to the ninth consultation of member States on the implementation of the Convention.

32. Education is governed by the National Education Framework Act (No. 86-005 of 22 September 1986), under which schooling is compulsory at the primary level.

33. Regarding primary and secondary education, Ordinance No. 88-092 of 7 July 1988 institutes a State examination with a view to obtaining a secondary school diploma; Ordinance No. 91/232 of 15 August 1991 sets out the administrative regulations governing teaching staff in primary, secondary and vocational education; and Ordinance No. 91/231 of 15 August 1991 establishes the administrative regulations governing the primary, secondary and vocational education inspection body. The Directorate-General for Non-Formal Education was created by Ministerial Order No. 0231/2006 of 22 December 2006.

34. Regarding higher and university education, Ordinance No. 82-004 of 6 February 1982 amends Ordinance No. 81-028 of 3 October 1981 on the awarding of academic degrees in higher technical institutions, and Ordinance No. 81-160 of 7 October 1981 sets out the status of staff of universities and higher education institutions.

35. According to the Constitution in force since 18 February 2006, no Congolese person may, in matters of education and access to public service or in any other matters, be subjected to any discriminatory measure, whether resulting from law or from an executive act (art. 13). Furthermore, all persons have the right to school education, with primary education being compulsory and free in public schools (art. 43). Through education, teaching and dissemination, public authorities also have a duty to promote and ensure respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the duties of citizens as set out in the Constitution (art. 45).

36. The UNESCO “Better Education for Africa’s Rise” programme aims to establish equitable and responsive technical and vocational education and training systems to equip young people and adults – both women and men – with relevant skills for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning.

37. At the beneficiaries level, the sectoral focus of national projects is on initiatives that target the access of young people to new and/or updated technical and vocational education and training programmes relevant to their needs and those of the labour market, in close collaboration with enterprises and local stakeholders. The project will measure the impact on young beneficiaries in terms of increased employment and quality of work. It is expected that at least 1,000 young women and men (200 in each country in which the “Better Education for Africa’s Rise” programme is being implemented) will benefit directly through updated curricula, trained teachers, improved infrastructure, guidance and attachment to enterprises focusing on specific sectors selected for their potential for job growth.

E. Guyana

38. Guyana is not a party to the Convention against Discrimination in Education and did not respond to the ninth consultation of member States on the implementation of the Convention.

39. The Constitution of 1980, as amended in 2009, enshrines the right to education in its article 27, which provides that:

Every citizen has the right to free education from nursery to university as well as at non-formal places where opportunities are provided for education and training. It is the duty of the State to provide education that would include curricula designed to reflect the cultural diversities of Guyana and disciplines that are necessary to prepare students to deal with social issues and to meet the challenges of the modern technological age.

40. The main laws on education are the Education Act, enacted in 1876, the President's College Act of 1990 and the University of Guyana Act of 1963. According to article 27 of the Education Act, "no fees shall be charged at any school receiving a government grant in respect of elementary instruction given to any pupil".

41. In 2017, a World Bank report revealed that only 53 per cent of females between 15 and 64 years of age participated in the labour force in Guyana, compared with 80 per cent of males of the same age. In order to contribute to addressing this, the National Task Force for the Prevention of Sexual Violence was established.

F. Mozambique

42. Mozambique is not a party to the Convention against Discrimination in Education and did not respond to the ninth consultation of member States on the implementation of the Convention.

43. Article 35 of the Constitution of 2004 enshrines the principles of equality between citizens before the law: they enjoy the same rights and are subject to the same duties regardless of their sex. Article 36 states that men and women are equal before the law in all spheres of political economic, social and cultural life. Article 39 states that all acts intended to create division, situations of privilege or discrimination on the basis of sex shall be punished by law. Article 88 states that education shall be a right and a duty of each citizen.

44. The Act on the National System (No. 6/1992) expresses the same ambition as article 88 of the Constitution.

45. The Act on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (No. 7/2008) states, under article 38, that every child has the right to education, with equality in terms of school access and attendance. This article also states that no child is to be excluded from school for reasons of gender.

46. Under article 40, the Act on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child requires the State to create, in a progressive manner, the conditions for all children to be ensured access to basic education that is free and compulsory and the extension of free and compulsory education to the secondary level.

47. Within the implementation of the United Nations joint programme on action for girls and young women in Mozambique, aimed at strengthening sexual and reproductive health and rights and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, UNESCO leads the implementation of activities relating to comprehensive sexuality education. These activities support the Ministry of Education and Human Development to strengthen the implementation of curricula on comprehensive sexuality education, whereby selected teachers are taught to train other teachers, using a comprehensive curriculum that effectively addresses HIV and sexual and reproductive health.

48. UNESCO is also implementing a project on an integrated approach to literacy and adult education to empower young women and their families through learning in rural and peri-urban communities in Mozambique. The project contributes to enhancing the literacy skills of both children and adults and reducing gender inequality and illiteracy rates among women by providing basic education and vocational and entrepreneurial skills for vulnerable young women, families and communities in two districts in Nampula Province (Memba and Erati) and one in Maputo Province (Boane). The project is building on lessons learned from an integrated approach for adult education programme that UNESCO piloted in Mozambique in 2010 in five districts of Nampula and Sofala Provinces.

G. Qatar

49. Qatar is not a party to the Convention against Discrimination in Education, but did respond to the ninth consultation of member States on the implementation of the Convention.

50. Articles 34 and 35 of the Constitution of 2003 provide that citizens are equal in terms of public rights and duties, stating that discrimination is prohibited on the grounds of sex, race, language or religion and ensuring the equality of citizens.

51. The Constitution also enshrines the right to education for all citizens and states that “the State shall endeavour to make general education compulsory and free of charge” (art. 49).

52. Compulsory Education Act No. 25, adopted in 2001 and amended in 2003, is at the core of the education system regulations. It states that education is free of charge and compulsory for all children, from the beginning of the primary stage to the end of the preparatory stage, or upon reaching the age of 18 years.

53. In its report to the ninth consultation of member States on the implementation of the Convention, Qatar states that education is “one of the main pillars of gender equality in the State of Qatar”, that “the State is committed to the achievement of gender equality and parity in enrolment in education and in benefiting from all the various opportunities that it provides” and that “that commitment is clearly reflected in the legislation and strategies adopted by the State, which are free of any kind of discrimination whatsoever”.

54. In that report, Qatar shows the very close enrolment rates in compulsory education, as well as similar literacy rates for both sexes among adults aged 15 years and older (98.4 per cent of literate men and 98.3 per cent of literate women in 2015).

55. In the 2015/16 academic year, a school for banking studies was opened to provide women with qualifications and integrate them into the economic sector. This project responds to one of the challenges reported by Qatar: the lack of specialist schools for technical and vocational education and training for girls at the secondary level.

56. Despite this progress and these efforts, data show that most academic leadership positions are held by men.

57. UNESCO is implementing a project in the region on empowering women through media and information literacy. This activity seeks to build the capacities of young people, particularly young women, to teach them to understand and use media critically, responsibly and positively in today’s digital era.