



**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 eighty-eighth session, reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities.

* [CEDAW/C/88/1](#).

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



I. Introduction

1. The right to education, which lies at the heart of UNESCO's mission, is enshrined in international human rights law through numerous legally-binding international treaties.
2. UNESCO's work on education and gender equality is guided by the UNESCO Strategy for gender equality in and through education (2019–2025), which focuses on system-wide transformation to benefit all learners, and targeted interventions to support girls' and women's empowerment. The Strategy aims to achieve UNESCO's vision to enable girls and boys, women and men and all learners, to realize their rights and potential in and through education. The right to education of girls and women is a high priority for UNESCO, with the Organization promoting gender equality in participation in, within and through education. To achieve this, the Organization provides technical support to its Member States to align constitutional, legislative and policy frameworks with international normative instruments and commitments and supports the development and implementation of gender-transformative strategies that tackle key barriers to girls' and women's participation in quality educational opportunities.
3. The Organization also monitors the status of national constitutions, legislation and regulations related to girls' and women's education rights across the world through "HerAtlas" – an interactive online tool that constitutes a valuable resource in compiling this report. UNESCO's initiative "Her Education, Our Future" – to which HerAtlas contributes – is designed to accelerate action on girls' and women's education by leveraging political and financial commitments, and leadership.
4. From a more general perspective, the "Observatory on the right to education" monitoring tool (currently inaccessible as a technical upgrade is underway), which sheds lights on inequalities in countries by publishing data on implementation of the right to education at national level, has also provided useful documentation for this report.
5. To monitor and advocate for the right to education without discrimination, UNESCO regularly monitors the implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education through periodic consultations, requesting Member States to submit national reports on the measures taken to implement the Convention and Recommendation. To follow up effectively on the information obtained, an analytical report synthesizing the findings of the national reports is then prepared. The latest Consultation on the Convention and Recommendation resulted in the submission of 82 national reports. The information contained in the national reports has served as a source for the elaboration of the Global Report 'From right to country level action' and is also used for this report. The next consultation is being launched early 2024 and will conclude in 2025.
6. UNESCO has therefore a major role and responsibility within the United Nations system for the implementation of a number of the provisions contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in particular Article 10, which provides that: "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education".

II. Measures taken by countries under review

Brazil

7. Brazil ratified the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education on 19/04/1968.

8. The Constitution enshrines the right to education for all within the territory without discrimination based on sex or gender.

9. Brazilian law explicitly guarantees compulsory and free primary and secondary education for a duration of 12 years. Additionally, the law guarantees one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education.

10. The civil code sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 years, but marriage is permissible from the age of sixteen with the authorization of both parents or the legal representatives of the child.

11. The Statute on Children and Adolescents protects them from corporal punishment and cruel or degrading treatment in educational institutions, but no explicit protection against psychological and sexual violence in the education sector has been identified.

12. The minimum age of employment is 16 years of age, which is aligned with the end of compulsory education.

13. According to the latest data of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), in 2021 the gross enrolment rate in primary education was at 103% globally, 102% for girls, and 105% for boys, while the gross enrolment rate in secondary education was at 107% globally, 110% for girls and 103% for boys.

14. According to UIS' latest data, in 2020 expenditure on education of Brazil represented 5.77 % of GDP and 11.56 % of total governmental expenditure.

15. Brazil submitted a national report on the measures taken to implement the Convention against Discrimination in Education to the most recent 10th Consultation (2020–2021). It is strongly recommended that the country participate in the current 11th consultation on the Convention against Discrimination in Education (2024–2025).

16. According to the national report submitted by Brazil to the 10th Consultation on the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education: “From a gender perspective, an average of 55% of higher education admissions were accounted for women, and 59% of the people concluding a higher education course are women as well. Data from the decennial population censuses indicate that the reversion of the gender gap in the completion of higher education occurred in Brazil in the 1970s.”

Estonia

17. Estonia has not ratified the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

18. The right to education for all without discrimination based on sex is enshrined in the Constitution.

19. Primary and secondary education is compulsory for nine years. The Constitution guarantees that education is free of charge in state and local government general education schools for nine years. The Education Act specifies that secondary education is ‘tuition-free’. No legal provision has been identified that guarantees at least one year of free or compulsory pre-primary education.

20. The minimum age of marriage is 18. While there was previously an exception allowing marriage at 15 with judicial consent, it was repealed in 2022.

21. The Gender Equality Act ensures the equal treatment of men and women in education, and equal treatment is defined as there being no discrimination based on sex, including less favourable treatment of a person relating to pregnancy and parenting. The Child Protection Act prohibits the physical punishment of a child in all settings, while the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act protects from mental and physical violence. However, no provision regarding sexual violence at school has been identified.

22. The minimum age of employment is fifteen although subject to the obligation to attend school, and until 16 the child can only engage in light work. Therefore, the minimum age of employment is aligned with the end of compulsory schooling.

23. According to UIS' latest data, in 2022 the gross enrolment rate in primary education stood at 99% globally for girls and boys, while the gross enrolment rate in secondary education was at 113% global, 115% for girls and 110% for boys.

24. According to UIS' latest data, in 2021 expenditure on education by Estonia represented 5.91 % of the GDP and 14.25 % of governmental expenditure.

25. Estonia submitted a national report on the measures taken to implement the Convention against Discrimination in Education to the most recent 10th Consultation (2020–2021). It is strongly recommended that the country participate in the current 11th consultation on the Convention against Discrimination in Education (2024–2025).

26. According to the national report submitted by Estonia to the 10th Consultation on the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education: “In Estonia, there are various initiatives by private and third sector actors, as well as state-initiated activities to increase girls’ interest towards ICT. As all of these initiatives are recent, their impact is yet to be evaluated. These initiatives include HK Unicorn Squad (developed as a private initiative), aiming to increase girls’ (aged 7–14) interest towards technical fields, robotics and STEM fields; Tech Sisters (third sector initiative), aiming to increase girls’ and womens’ interest towards IT and technology; Digigirls, developed for girls (grades 7–12), is a series of events, mostly as workshops, to introduce ICT fields, designing apps, web environments etc; and StartIT (an initiative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications), to encourage girls and young women to study and work in IT fields. Several general state-initiated awareness-raising programmes have also been initiated.”

Kuwait

27. Kuwait ratified the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education on 15/01/1963.

28. The legal framework enshrines the right to education for Kuwaitis only. The Constitution of Kuwait contains a general non-discrimination provision, including on the grounds of sex, but there is no such principle in the national legislation.

29. The legal framework guarantees 12 years of free education for Kuwaiti boys and girls, including 9 years of compulsory primary and intermediate education from the age of 6, and 3 years of secondary education. However, children living in remote areas are exempt from compulsory education under Article 4 of the Law No. 11 of 1965 concerning compulsory education. Pupils who have not completed primary school by the age of 14, or intermediate school by the age of 16, are also exempt from compulsory education, in accordance with Ministerial Ordinance no. 50203 of

1965. No legal provision has been identified that guarantees free compulsory pre-primary education.

30. Under the Personal Status Law, the minimum age for marriage is fifteen for girls and seventeen for boys.

31. The Regulations and Systems of Student Affairs provides that married girls are removed from schools when they are married and the Ministerial Decree No.85/97 “regarding the system of registration, deletion, re-enrolment and transfer in adult education and literacy centres” provides that they can only re-enter via the adult education system. Even though pregnancy is not explicitly mentioned, it therefore excludes pregnant women from the education system. Corporal punishment is prohibited in the School System Regulations. No legal provision has been identified that protects from gender-based violence in educational institutions.

32. According to the Private Sector Kuwait Labour Law, the minimum age of employment is 15 years of age, therefore after the age of completion of compulsory education which is 14 years.

33. Kuwait submitted a national report on the measures taken to implement the Convention against Discrimination in Education to the most recent 10th Consultation (2020–2021). It is strongly recommended that the country participate in the current 11th consultation on the Convention against Discrimination in Education (2024–2025).

34. As highlighted by the 2020 GEM report, the challenge to the right to education for women in Kuwait lies in the statelessness of Bidoon individuals, who lack recognized nationality and face barriers to accessing public education due to restrictions on enrolment and limited options in under-resourced private schools. Changes to Kuwait's nationality laws, including the revocation of citizenship rights for children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis, have exacerbated the issue. Despite government initiatives to address the situation, such as proposals for citizenship grants, significant obstacles remain, with recent efforts to register Bidoon children in public schools having been rejected. This challenge reflects a broader regional issue, where similar barriers exist for women married to foreigners in other Arab countries – inhibiting their ability to pass on nationality to their children and thereby restricting access to education and other essential services.

Malaysia

35. Malaysia has not ratified the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

36. Malaysia's Constitution does not enshrine the right to education. It contains a general principle of equality of all before the law, and prohibits discrimination against citizens on the basis of gender (in particular). It also provides that there shall be no discrimination in the administration of any educational institution maintained by a public authority, but sex is not mentioned as a ground of prohibited discrimination. No legal provision enshrining the right to education or prohibiting discrimination in education have been identified.

37. According to the Education Act, primary education is compulsory for six years, starting at age 6. No legal provision ensuring free education or one year of free/compulsory pre-primary education has been identified.

38. The minimum age of marriage under civil law is 18 years for non-Muslim girls and boys, but the Chief minister can permit marriage of a girl who is at least 16 years old. Muslim marriages are governed by the Sharia, according to which girls

can marry from sixteen and boys at eighteen, or before if the judge has granted permission.

39. Corporal punishment is not listed as one of the punishments provided by the Educational Institutions (Discipline) Act, but it is not explicitly prohibited. Meanwhile, a headteacher caning a student is not considered as using criminal force under the Penal Code. No other disposition on violence in schools have been identified.

40. In the State of Peninsular Malaysia, no general minimum age of employment has been identified. However, “young people” aged at least 15 years may be employed in several cases, which is not aligned with the end of compulsory education. UNESCO has not been able to access the law concerning the employment of children and young persons in the federal territory of Labuan.

41. According to UIS’ latest data, in 2022 the gross enrolment rate in primary education was at 98% global, 98% for girls and 98% for boys while the gross enrolment rate in secondary education was at 85% global, 87% for girls and 82% for boys.

42. According to UIS’ latest data, expenditure on education of Malaysia represented 3.51 % of the GDP and 20.15 % of total governmental expenditure in 2022.

43. Malaysia submitted a national report on the measures taken to implement the Convention against Discrimination in Education to the most recent 10th Consultation (2020–2021). It is strongly recommended that the country participate in the current 11th consultation on the Convention against Discrimination in Education (2024–2025).

Montenegro

44. Montenegro ratified the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education on 26/04/2007.

45. The legal framework enshrines the right to education and provides for equality between men and women.

46. Basic education is compulsory and lasts nine years, from six to 15 years old according to articles 4 and 5 of Law on Primary Education, 2002. The Constitution provides for basic education free of charge. No provision regarding free or compulsory pre-primary education has been identified in the legislation.

47. According to the Family law, the minimum age of marriage is set at 18 years, but the court can lower this to 16.

48. While not explicitly mentioning educational institutions, the Law on gender equality of 2007 prohibits discrimination based on pregnancy and maternity in all spheres of public life and in relation to all rights, which can apply to the right to education. Between the General Education law and the Law on gender equality, the law protects from corporal punishment and all kinds of gender-based violence in educational institutions.

49. The minimum age of employment is set at 15 years according to the Labour law, which is therefore aligned with the end of compulsory education.

50. According to UIS’ latest data, in 2022 the global (female and male) gross enrolment rate in primary education was at 101% while, in secondary education, it stood at 91%.

51. Montenegro did not submit a national report on the measures taken to implement the Convention against Discrimination in Education to the 10th

Consultation (2020–2021). It is strongly recommended that the country participate in the current 11th consultation on the Convention against Discrimination in Education (2024–2025).

Republic of Korea

52. The Republic of Korea has not ratified the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education. It is recommended that the country ratify it.

53. The legal framework enshrines the right to education for citizens without discrimination based on sex and gender.

54. The Framework Education Act of 1997 guarantees nine years of compulsory primary and secondary education starting at the age of six. The Constitution provides for free-of-charge compulsory education. The Early Childhood Education Act guarantees three years of pre-primary education free of charge, but not mandatory.

55. According to the Civil Act, the minimum age of marriage is 18 but exceptions are permitted where there is parental consent. No absolute minimum age is not specified.

56. According to the Single-Parent Family Support Act and Higher Education Act, support is provided to pregnant girls and parenting girls, whether they choose to suspend or to continue their studies. The legislation provides protection from all kinds of violence – including psychological, physical and sexual violence – in schools as well as from corporal punishment, as it is prohibited to inflict physical and psychological pain.

57. The minimum age of employment is 15 years, according to the Labour Standards Act, which is aligned with the end of compulsory education. Furthermore, any minor under the age of 18 years who attends elementary or secondary school cannot be employed at any work.

58. According to UIS' latest data, in 2022 the global, female and male gross enrolment rate in primary education was at 99% while in secondary education, it stood at 98%.

59. According to UIS' latest data, expenditure on education represented 5.4 % of GDP and 14.31% of total governmental expenditure in 2021.

60. The Republic of Korea submitted its national report on the measures taken to implement the Convention against Discrimination in Education to the 10th Consultation (2020–2021). It is strongly recommended that the country participate in the current 11th consultation on the Convention against Discrimination in Education (2024–2025).

Rwanda

61. The Republic of Rwanda ratified the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education on 28/12/2000.

62. The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda guarantees the right to education for Rwandan citizens only and enshrines the principle of equality regardless of sex.

63. The Republic of Rwanda's Law determining the organization of education n°010 (2021) only guarantees the right to education at primary school, where it is compulsory and free for a period of six years starting from the age of six years old. Additionally, this law calls for pre-primary education from the age of three, lasting three years, but it is neither compulsory nor free.

64. The Law governing Persons and Family n. 32 (2016) sets the minimum age of marriage at 21 years without exceptions.

65. The Law relating to the protection of the child n. 71 (2028) recognizes harassment and severe punishment of a child as an offence, but there is no explicit protection from corporal punishment in educational institutions and no explicit protection against psychological and sexual violence in the education sector has been identified.

66. In accordance with the Law regulating labour in Rwanda n. 66 (2018), the minimum age of employment is 16 years old, while compulsory education is required only until 12 years old. Thus, the minimum age for compulsory education does not correspond to international standards.

67. According to UIS' latest data, in 2022 the gross enrolment rate in primary education was at 135% globally, 135% for girls, and 135% for boys, while the gross enrolment rate in secondary education was at 42% global, 45% for girls and 38% for boys.

68. According to UIS' latest data, expenditure on education of the Republic of Rwanda represented 4.14% of the GDP and 12.20% of governmental expenditure in 2023.

69. The Republic of Rwanda submitted a national report on the measures taken to implement the Convention against Discrimination in Education to the most recent 10th Consultation (2020–2021). It is strongly recommended that the country participate in the current 11th consultation on the Convention against Discrimination in Education (2024–2025).

70. According to the national report submitted to the 10th Consultation on the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education, the country has taken specific measures to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women in and through education, by relying on “policing community to fight against any early pregnancy, some affirmative action is taken to support girls and women through the education system”, as well as constructing “girls’ room in each school with provision sanitary pads and other related facilities”.

Singapore

71. The Republic of Singapore has not ratified the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and should be recommended to ratify it.

72. The Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (1965) does not comprehensively enshrine the right to education, and the principles of non-discrimination and equality only apply to citizens based on the grounds of religion, race, descent, or place of birth. There is no provision based on sex or gender.

73. The Compulsory Education Act (revised 2001) provides for 9 years of compulsory primary and secondary education starting at the age of six, encompassing six years of primary and three years of secondary education – only for citizens. The Education (Schools) Regulations (revised 2013) outlines specific fees attached to schooling; therefore, Singapore does not guarantee free primary or secondary education. Furthermore, the legal framework does not guarantee compulsory or free pre-primary education.

74. The minimum age of marriage is 18, with exceptions. Under the Women’s Charter (revised 2009), the Ministry of Social and Family Development can grant a special marriage licence with parental consent so that a minor (no minimum age is specified) can marry. In addition, the Administration of Muslim Law Act (revised

2009) permits an akadi (official of religious standing) to authorise the marriage of a girl under the age of 18 who has attained puberty.

75. In accordance with the Education (Schools) Regulations (revised 2013), corporal punishment in educational institutions is prohibited for girls only. However, under the Women’s charter (revised 2009) this prohibition can be lifted when corporal punishment is found to be “necessary”. No information regarding other protection from violence, such as sexual, physical or psychological violence have been identified.

76. The minimum age of employment is 15, which is aligned with the end of compulsory schooling.

77. According to UIS’ latest data, in 2021 the gross enrolment rate in primary education was at 100% global, 100% for girls and 100% for boys, while the gross enrolment rate in secondary education was at 103% global, 103% for girls and 103% for boys.

78. According to UIS’ latest data, expenditure on education by the Republic of Singapore represented 2.39% of the GDP in 2022 and 13.06% of governmental expenditure in 2021.

79. Singapore did not submit a national report on the measures taken to implement the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education to the most recent 10th Consultation (2020–2021). It is strongly recommended that the country participate in the current 11th consultation on the Convention against Discrimination in Education (2024–2025).
