



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

Distr.: General  
23 November 2015

Original: English

---

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

**Sixty-third session**

15 February-4 March 2016

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under  
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms  
of Discrimination against Women**

**List of issues and questions in relation to the combined  
fourth and fifth periodic reports of Vanuatu**

**Addendum**

**Replies of Vanuatu\***

[Date received: 23 November 2015]


---

*Note:* The present document is being circulated in English, French and Spanish only.

\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

15-20623 (E) 181215



Please recycle 



## **I. Discrimination against women provisions**

1. The incorporating of a specific definition provision of discrimination against women in the Constitution has not been yet undertaken, however State has taken prerequisite steps in acknowledging gender equality and women empowerment through the implementation of the National Development Vision “A just, Educated, Healthy and Wealthy Vanuatu”, further progress is attained through the Council of Minister approval on the implementation of the National Gender Equality Policy for Vanuatu on 6 July 2015 to 2019.

2. The approval of the implementation of National Policy on Gender Equality 2015 to 2019 now affirm the Government’s commitment towards gender equality across all sectors and at all level of society. From these developments, there is anticipation for the enactment of principal legislation and alignment of current status to reflect legal obligation stipulated under articles 1 and 16 of the Convention.

3. The amendment to Municipalities Act in 2013 has allowed for a 30 per cent quota for women’s representation within the municipal councils of Vanuatu. This legislation has seen an increase in the number of women within the municipal councils in a given time. Since independence in 1980 (35 years ago), four women have been elected to the Luganville Municipal Council and three women have been elected into the Port Vila Municipal Council. With the introduction of temporary special measures in 2013, five women have been elected into the Port Vila Municipal Council on January 2014 and five women were elected into the Luganville Council on July 2015.

### **Measures taken in implementation**

4. Department of Women’s Affairs through the Ministry of Justice and Community Services will spearhead the implementation of the four main strategies under the national policy’s framework developed through strategic partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government ministries, provincial governments, development partners, civil society organizations and faith-based organizations. The Department of Women’s Affairs will also support stakeholders who are better positioned or have the expertise and resources to lead the implementation of the strategies identified in this policy.

## **II. National mechanism for gender equality**

5. The National Gender Equality Policy was approved by the Council of Ministers on 6 July 2015. As part of its decision and approval of the policy, the Council agreed under point 4 of its decision minutes, to allocate financial resources needed to the Ministry of Justice and Community Services and the Department of Women’s Affairs to effectively implement the policy over its life time (2015-2019).

6. The restructuring of the Department is currently in draft and to be finalized by the first quarter of 2016 reflecting the technical capacity and assistance that has been sought from the secretariat of the Pacific Community for developing an implementation framework including the financial resourcing requirement both for implementation of the policy.

7. Changes in discriminatory legislation in particular are the amendment in the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 39 of 2013, section 10 of the Act is substituted to the effect allowing gender equality in the citizenship eligibility. Thus, a non-citizen married to a ni-Vanuatu is now eligible to apply for citizenship after two years of living together.

#### **Customary law compliance**

8. The enactment and application of Customary Land Management Act 33 of 2013 reflect the attempt to define customary ownership of land and the statutory procedures in acquisition of land through lease. The Act comes into force purposively to address issues of uncertainty in the customary ownership of land through the procedural measures provided by the Act as to ensure that customary right, women's right to customary land are not alienated unless appropriate procedures as stipulated under the Act are adhered to.

9. Women's participation in adjudication, is silent under the Act, Customary Land Management Officer now encourages women participation in decision making as adjudicators and member of the "Nakamal" where certainty of ownership is attained.

### **III. Access to justice**

10. Under Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and External Trade funding is being made available under the Law and Justice Development programme 2010-2016 in assisting the Vanuatu Police Force and the Ministry of Justice and Community Services and its justice agencies in developing a justice network and has established a high-level working group in addressing women's access to justice.

11. There has been struggle in the implementation of authorized persons and registered councillors under the Family Protection Act. To address these concerns, the Ministry of Justice and Community Services has secured partnership with donor partners (Australian Agency for International Development) and bilateral support for the Police Force and Magistrate and Judiciary in conducting trainings as well the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Regional Rights Resource Team in providing additional training to magistrates, lawyers, police and judges on addressing violence against woman through the implementation of the Family Protection Act.

12. Implementation and monitoring of appointed authorized persons is currently on the ground in pilot sites under the Ministry of Justice and Community Services in partnership with donor partners and the Department of Foreign Affairs and External Trade in spearheading the review of the enforcement and implementation mechanism.

#### **Legal assistance**

13. Further to mandate under section 5 of the Public Solicitor Act in provision of legal assistance and Supreme Court discretion to grant legal assistance to eligible person, there is no additional statutory mechanism in provision of legal assistance.

14. The advisory functions of Department of Women's Affair, Vanuatu's Women's Centre, Family Protection Unit and the appointed authorized person under Family

Protection Act now provide first-instance assistance in accessing justice. The establishment of cases under this advisory function affirmed the eligibility of women in accessing legal assistance provided through the Public Solicitor Office as well through private legal representation.

15. The Vanuatu Women's Centre has provided legal assistance to the victims of gender-based violence and sexual-based violence for the past three years through legal assistance in court and court fee fund, funded by Department of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Australia. The budget for the last financial year (June 2014 to June 2015) was 2,812,500 Vatu of which 200,000 Vatu was allocated to accommodate for victims in terms of transportation and shelter in the event of domestic violence.

#### **Judiciary decisions**

16. The persuasive decision of the Supreme Courts in cases, *Joli v Joli* and *Noel v Toto* has reflected the Judiciary established and binding common law principles in ensuring that women are granted equal rights to land and division of matrimonial properties.

17. It now accepted that marital rape is an offence capable of being committed by man on his lawfully wedded wife. The Court accepts that no longer must a woman submit to her husband whenever he demand or ask for sex. The advancement of women's right is established in the case of *PP v Deidei (2013) VUSC 57* asserting the prosecuting of alleged rape occurring within marriage.

### **IV. National machinery for the advancement of women**

18. The steps taken to date include the following:

(a) A National Gender Equality Policy has been completed and with the new structure in place will allow from new funding resources to be sourced both for human resources, technical and programme implementation;

(b) Funding has been sourced for the positions of Gender Adviser and a Gender and Protection Coordinator within the Department of Women's Affairs from Australian Government. These positions are being advertised and recruitments to be made by the end of this year 2015 especially to increase staff capacity for the promotion of Gender Equality and for Gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes across all sectors and levels of government.

### **V. Temporary special measures**

19. Discussions on promotion of temporary special measures have taken place through voter education awareness and training. Women contestant training and policy documents and statements on increasing women's political participation in all legislated bodies in the country and for scholarships criteria awards.

20. In 2013, a 30 per cent quota for women was legislated by amending the Municipality's Act and implemented in 2014 for women's representation in all municipal council of Vanuatu.

## **VI. Stereotypes and cultural practices**

21. The outcome of the National Law and Justice Summit was the development of the National Law and Justice Sector Strategy, 2010-2017 with different strategic areas on addressing women's rights and discrimination against women. The access to justice, victim support and juvenile justice are the pillars of the strategy and a working group has been appointed from the different sectors within government, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations whose responsibilities are to implement the programme activities under these pillars.

## **VII. Violence against women**

22. The Ministry of Justice and Community Services has taken on board instruction of the Judge Harrop decision in the case *Public Prosecutor v AR (2015) VISC 31* in facilitating the amendment of section 95 of the Penal Code increasing the maximum penalty for incest to 15-20 years imprisonment. The Ministry in consultation with Public Prosecution Office, Family Protection Unit, Women's Centre, Vanuatu Correction Services, a Council of Ministers paper has been submitted for the review and amendment on 12 September 2015 and now awaiting on the Council's approval for the amendment. The review and amendment of section 95 on the maximum penalty will assist the Court in arriving to an appropriate sentence against the seriousness of offence related to act of incest.

23. The Ministry of Justice and Community Services are now looking at lobbying for amendment of section 97 (1) offence involving unlawful sexual intercourse with a child under 13 years of age, be increased to life imprisonment, and section 97 (2) involving victims under the age of 15 years, to 15 years imprisonment and section 92 ought to be amended. Abduction for the purpose of unlawful sexual intercourse should be increased to 12 years imprisonment.

## **VIII. Family Protection Act implementation**

24. Implementation of the Family Protection Act for the past six years has shown significant gain as the Act is being implemented and enforced through the regulatory statutes and procedures of the police and the judiciary. Remedies enforced by Courts under the Act has been successfully carried out and there are no been without challenges.

25. The appointment of authorized persons and registered councillors under the Family Protection Act facilitates the access to justice. The Ministry of Justice and Community Services in partnership with donor partners are currently engaging in strengthening in capacity development of authorized persons and registered councillors as to equip them to be efficiently functioning in the remote locality, facilitating referral mechanism to authorities.

## **IX. Trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution**

26. Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act is currently become an interesting piece of legislation under the spot light of the International

Organization for Migration (IMO) office. The Regional Programme Officer for Pacific for IMO's African, Caribbean and Pacific-European Union Migration Action initiative in consultation with the Ministry of Justice and Community Services and Vanuatu Police Department in October 2015, now affirms that the IOM office has commenced facilitating the recruitment of TA to provide assistance in scoping study in Vanuatu to establish baseline data on smuggling and trafficking in persons.

27. Powers have been given to the Finance Intelligence Unit under section 6 of the Anti-monetary Laundering and Counter-terrorism Financing Act No. 13 of 2014, powers to enter into agreement with other countries for collection and sharing of information, data and referrals on any criminal activity and serious crimes including money laundering and violation of human rights such as human trafficking and prostitution. Section 4 of the Act also states that even where no agreement nor arrangement in place, Finance Intelligence Unit can undertake investigations on any criminal activities on the establishment of reasonable grounds to suspect that these activities are taking place in other countries, entities, organizations or people suspect of engaging in the act. The agreements are being signed with Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Palau and the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Region. The Office is now working on cooperation arrangements with Asian and European countries.

## **X. Participation in political and public life**

28. In increasing number of women in elected and appointed bodies in Vanuatu, the following steps have been undertaken:

### **Internationally**

29. Vanuatu made a submission to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on promoting gender equality within the operations and discussion framework of the Convention in 2012. In aligning to this submission, Vanuatu's delegation to the nineteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, in Warsaw in 2013, was 16 participants of which 50 per cent were men and 50 per cent were women.

30. The submission called on all parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to take decisive action to reach a "critical mass" of women in the bodies pursuant to the Convention.

### **Regionally**

31. Vanuatu was part of the regional undertaking signed the Forum Leaders Declaration on Gender Equality in 2012 where a ten-year funding by the Government of Australia was made available towards women's leadership, economic empowerment and gender mainstreaming and emerging issues on gender and climate change commencing in 2013.

### **Nationally**

32. A Council of Minister's paper was approved in 2014, "COM 156/2014" making it mandatory for all statutory and public institutions to have 30 per cent women's representation in their boards and councils.

33. A nationwide survey on women's representation and leadership in all sectors of the country within the existing structures of the community, local government and national government levels by the Department of Women's Affairs commenced on June 2015 and to be completed by March 2016.

34. A women's leadership database has been developed to capture the information collected.

35. A Department of Women's Affairs website has been developed and to be launched on November 2015 will inform everyone on the work, included researches undertaken by the Department.

### **Women's representation**

36. The strategies on increasing women's representation in Parliament are being discussed for the upcoming 2016 national elections and yet to be endorsed and approved by the Council of Ministers. Funding from Australian Government has been sourced under "Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development" Development Programme for Women contestant trainings and mentoring programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for elected women leaders for 2013-2016.

37. A series of training, advocacy and lobbying were undertaken on temporary special measures included the following:

- (a) A forum organized with the political party leaders in 2004;
- (b) A national study on gender profiling of political parties in 2010. This study was undertaken to identify behaviour and measures undertaken since its independence in 1980 in promoting women's political leadership in Vanuatu;
- (c) A Women's Contestants Training was undertaken for the 2012 National Election Women Contestants on November 2012;
- (d) Presentation of Concept paper on the Introduction of Reserve Seats within Municipality Councils of Vanuatu to the Development Committee of Officials on October 2013;
- (e) Research study on women's political participation in Vanuatu: a diagnostic study of the 2008 and 2012 general elections, 2013;
- (f) Port Vila municipal council women's contestant training in 2014;
- (g) Luganville municipal council women's contestant training on June 2015;
- (h) A television interview with the Electoral Office on General Voting through Open Seats and Reserve Seats from November to December 2013 prior to the Port Vila municipal elections on January 2014;
- (i) A television interview with Ulrich Symtoh, Lord Mayor, Port Vila municipal council on the impact of Reserve Seats for the Port Vila municipal council on 28 August 2015;
- (j) Reserve Seats in Vanuatu: An analytic report on the processes and impact of Reserve Seats within the Port Vila Municipal Council, 2015.

## **XI. Nationality and citizenship**

38. The amendment of Citizenship Act is captured under paragraph 7 above, reflecting the progress made in amending the discriminatory clause. The eligibility to apply for citizenship attached to 10 years of residency apply to both gender (parents) and rights deem to vest in the children's of the eligible applicant under the Act.

## **XII. Education**

39. According to the 2014 Ministry of Education and Training Annual Statistical Digest, Gross Enrolment Ratio, 62 per cent of girls are enrolled in early childhood care and education, 117% female attended primary, 44 per cent female enrolled in secondary schools and 36 per cent female attended tertiary institutions in country or abroad through scholarship programmes.

40. Grants to primary schools (years 1 to 6) are to be provided to implement the Government's policy to reduce or eliminate school fees (that is, parental contributions) and to minimize direct financial barriers to children's enrolment in primary education. The cost of contributions levied on parents by primary schools to meet basic operational costs is one of the key reasons some children miss out on basic education. Vanuatu introduces the Universal Primary Education policy in its 2010 budget process onwards, to phase out parental contributions by increasing government grants to primary schools. The school grants initiative was introduced to years 1 to 6 of primary schooling in 2010. The Gender Equity in Education Policy 2005-2015 is pushing for secondary schools and technical institutions to allow girls returning to schools after giving birth.

41. The implementation of the National Curriculum Statement 2010 set basis to integrate gender aspects across all subject syllabuses, teacher's guides and other additional learning resources development in 2011-2015. The Vanuatu new curriculum which integrates gender in all curriculum learning resources is schedule for implementation in 2016.

42. The Ministry of Education and Training working closely with the Vanuatu Education Support Programme Inclusive desk to deliver more awareness on importance of girls attending schools and going for further studies and also establishing women's networking group to encourage more educational women to leadership roles. The Scholarship Training Unit is also conducting awareness to all secondary schools throughout the years in encouraging girls to further their studies.

## **XIII. Employment**

43. The draft employment relations bill is a consolidated outcome document from the reviews of the Employment Act of 1983, the Trade Unions Act and Trade Dispute Act. It is focussed on a human rights approach so that processes, systems, benefits and disputes of employment are clear, transparent and benefits are enjoyed by everyone and not limited to maternity protection. Part 9 of the draft bill provides for the equal employment opportunities and benefits for both men and women by:

(a) Prohibiting discrimination in the particular grounds of actual or supposed personal characteristics or circumstances;



- (b) Ensuring equal rates of remuneration for work of equal value;
- (c) Specifying lawful discrimination.

44. The current bill has undergone further discussions since 2012 especially to agree on establishing criteria and processes of calculation of benefits and between employees and employers before finalization and adoption.

#### **XIV. Criminalize sexual harassment**

45. Under paragraph 76 of the draft employment relations bill, establishes the processes and responsibilities for employers and employees on the issues of sexual harassment at the work place but will require a new law in order to criminalize sexual harassment activities at the work place.

#### **XV. Health**

46. According to the Demography and Household Survey of 2013, the Knowledge of Contraceptive methods is high in Vanuatu, with 91 per cent of all women and 98 per cent of all men knowing at least one contraception method. The most commonly known method was the male condom with 84 per cent of women and 95 per cent of men reporting that they knew this method. The current use of contraception is low in Vanuatu and large families are the norm. Women are most likely to use a common contraceptive method of female sterilization with 54 per cent of married women between the ages of 25 to 29 years reported to have used this method at the time of survey. A variation in the use of modern contraceptive is observed between urban of 42 per cent and rural of 35 per cent women but use varies most noticeably in relation to numbers of children they had. At least 7 per cent of married women with no children, 36 per cent of married women with one or two children, 42 per cent of married women with three or four children and 40 per cent of women with five or more children. Contraceptive use is less prevalent among married women in the lowest quintiles of 29 per cent than among women in the highest quintiles, ranging from 32 per cent in the middle quintile to 45 per cent in the fourth quintile. The Survey indicates that 76 per cent of antenatal care is provided by a doctor or nurse/midwife. Almost 50 per cent of women in urban and over 50 per cent in rural areas received more than four antenatal visits, the minimum number recommended by the World Health Organization. For childbirth care, 89 per cent of births take place in a public health facility by skilled professional birth attendant, compared to 10 per cent deliver at home by traditional birth attendant and 1.5 per cent deliver in a private facility by a doctor or midwife.

47. According to the Demography and Household Survey of 2013, the use of media are currently being used to disseminate family planning information in Vanuatu and 23 per cent of women and 37 per cent of men reported that they had heard family planning messages on the radio. Television and newspapers are also a common source of family planning messages. The use of field workers has proven to be effective means of providing family planning information. This strategy and the use of media will continue to be promoted for reproductive health-care services.

## **XVI. Health policy**

48. The Reproductive Health Policy of 2008: Reproductive Health Strategy 2008-2010, the Evidence-Based Guidelines in Family Planning for Health Workers and the National Strategic Plan for HIV and STIs 2008-2012 are out dated and require review and revision to incorporate updated priorities and processes and to facilitate more integrated programming. Staff shortages are impacting on the service of reproductive health programmes at the dispensaries especially on family planning commodities and aid posts are reported as not sufficiently meeting their SRH and family planning promotion and referral responsibilities.

## **XVII. Rural women**

49. Procedures on convening Land Tribunal Unit under Customary Land Management Act 33 of 2013 “Act” affirm Women’s participation as mandatory as per definition of “Nakamal” and the Customary Land Management Office supervisory duties of ensure that Women’s voices on their right to Land are heard before any decision are made. In 2014, the Customary Land Management Officer’s office has able to secure partnership with Department of Foreign Affairs and External Trade-Australia Aid to fund the operation of training of adjudicators of Land Tribunal Unit, and the Office confirm women’s participation.

## **XVIII. Measures taken in awareness**

50. On 13 May 2014, a public awareness discussion with over 500 women from the main Port Vila town and surrounding communities by the Ministry of Lands on the Land Reform Act of 2013 and in particular, in allowing women:

- (a) To gain better understanding on the new land laws in Vanuatu;
- (b) To provide and improve understanding on how the new laws affect Women;
- (c) To provide better understanding on opportunities that the new laws provide for greater participation by women in decision making about customary land and land dealings in Vanuatu.

51. Formation of Land Tribunal (Villages/Nakamal Tribunal to Area L/Tribunal) under the Act reflect the assurance on participation of Women in their voice heard and as well as part in adjudicating. In pursuing the purpose of Act to establish certainty of ownership through fair adjudication, the Customary Land Management Officer in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (Australian Agency for International Development-funded programme) has been conducting training of adjudicators and have affirm the participation of Women’s who in Efate, Santo being appointed as qualified adjudicators appointed under the Act.

## **XIX. Disadvantaged groups of women**

52. The National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2008-2015 has been reviewed this year, 2015 and specific actions such as leadership, trainings on

addressing women with disabilities are being incorporated into work programme of its partners such as the Department of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health.

53. The Vanuatu Government is making legislative and administrative reforms a priority in creating a favourable environment for persons with disabilities. Several legislations that have been adopted by the Government includes the Vanuatu Family Protection Act of 2008, the amendment of section 95 of the Penal Code of 2015, The 2013 Amendment to the Municipality Act and introducing Reserve Seats for Women within the Municipality Councils of Vanuatu, the 2013 Land Reform Act and the Citizenship Act of 2013 providing equal opportunities for men and women. The National Education Act, the Vanuatu Inclusive Education Policy 2001, Gender Equity in Education Policy 2005-2015, National Gender Equality Policy 2015-2019 and in partnership with Australian Government since 2010, the Technical and Vocational Education was established and with inclusive education policy, the programme is being piloted in the provinces of Sanma, Malampa and Torba on the empowerment of persons with disabilities on skills training and promoting inclusiveness in community programme trainings.

## **XX. Natural disasters, impacts of climate change and internally displaced persons**

54. National disasters impact women in that they are more likely to die or injured than men for example, TC Pam in March 2015 saw a record of 11 deaths of which the majority are women and children. There were also reports of sexual- and gender-based violence, trauma, loss of pandanus plantation and extensive damaged to crop gardens which had reduced economic opportunities from women.

55. The Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030 is the first joint national policy on climate change and disaster risk reduction. The gender and social inclusion is one of five cross-cutting issues of the policy. Cross-cutting issues are defined as "those that by their nature are relevant to and impact all aspects of climate and disaster policy" (Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2015:26). Cross-cutting issues are to be integrated into all programmes and activities, and applied in planning, designing and implementing climate change and disaster risk reduction initiatives. The policy acknowledges the disproportionate impact of climate change and disaster risks have on women due to their social and economic status. It also recognizes the importance of women's participation in policymaking, decision-making and implementation. The participation of people with disabilities, the elderly, youth, those in remote locations, from diverse cultural groups and other vulnerable groups is also recognized by the policy.

56. There are three specific gender actions identified in the policy:

(a) Developing practical strategies to address gender and social inclusion issues within the climate change and disaster risk reduction context at all levels via government and stakeholder collaboration;

(b) Government and civil society organizations allocating human resource positions, officers and budget towards the fulfilment of international obligations and activities, including forming gender balanced delegations;

(c) Selecting and prioritizing actions based on transparent vulnerability criteria and using internationally recognized tools (e.g. environmental impact assessment, gender-analysis, cost-benefit analysis).

57. To this end, a gender perspective has been incorporated into the final Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy although ongoing efforts are required to ensure commitments are carried through to implementation. The Ministry of Climate Change, Department of Women's Affairs and the National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction are working in collaboration to support further initiatives and strategies that enhance the gender-responsiveness of climate change and disaster risk reduction activities, policies and legislation in Vanuatu.

58. Through the National Disaster Management Office, through the Operational Procedure for all Working Clusters have been developed and trainings are being held by all stakeholders on the management and operation of the clusters. The Gender and Protection clusters, are coordinating the Shelter Sub-committee with the assistance of IOM in developing Operational Procedure System on how displacements and statelessness could be integrated into the overall cluster systems within the National Disaster Management Office plans. A national position funded by IOM for the Shelter coordinator within the National Disaster Management Office has been advertised in November 2015.

## **XXI. Marriage and family relations**

59. Under the Family Protection (Amendment) Act No. 7 of 2011, role of the Department of Women's Affairs is limited in the appointment of authorized persons and registered councillors. The enforcement mechanism of these appointments is provided for under the Act. The Department has been involve in the implementation of training over the past six years, now the Ministry of Justice and Community Services in partnership with Department of Foreign Affairs and External Trade/SRMJ (Australia Aid) now facilitate the development of a sustainable implementation and enforcement mechanism.

60. The Ministry of Justice and Community Services will facilitate the stream lining of responsibility to Constitutional bodies and Statutory authorities under the justice sector as to assure that there is equal and shared participation in the implementation of authorized persons and registered councillors at the community level.

61. The current position of Matrimonial Act and the binding decision of the Courts in application of Common law of the right of women to property are binding and still applicable. There are no current development in the facilitating of equality of right legislation which specifically spell spouse right and responsibility.