

Translator s note: After question 25 in the original Arabic text, the numbering of the questions does not coincide with the numbering in the list of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of periodic reports (CEDAW/PSWG/2005/II/CRP.1/Add.8). The English text follows the numbering used in the latter document.

General

Question 1

- Both the initial report and the second periodic report were prepared by the National Commission for Lebanese Women, assisted by a group of experts who worked under nese

recruitment, promotion, pay rises, vocational training and dress.” (See second periodic report, part two, chapter 1.II.1.A, first paragraph.)

- The term “the insured”, contained in article 14 of the Social Security Act, is now also construed to

3. Human and financial resources of the National Commission for Lebanese Women

Human resources:

- **Members:** The General Assembly of

Question 8

- The provisions of the Lebanese Penal Code, including, as a matter of course, the articles which are discriminatory to women, are currently under comprehensive review. It should be emphasized, however, that the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Administration and Justice, which is tasked with this matter, operates on the principle that men and women are equal (see second periodic report, part two, chapter 2.III.2).

Question 9

- Article 522 of the Penal Code is one of the articles which, by a decision of the Subcommittee mentioned in connection with question 8, is to be abolished. (Annexed hereto is a copy of the letter No. 2182, dated 14 February 2005, from the Secretary-General of the National Commission for Lebanese Women on the subject. See also the second periodic report, part two, chapter 1.II.2).

Question 10

- The violence against women referred to on page 51 of the initial report (CEDAW/LBN/1) appeared under the rubric of employment and the economy. In the same paragraph, violence in the workplace was cited as another form of violence against women, focused primarily on “real” salaries, promotion, training and
- In the field of employment

organizations involved in combating violence against women (see second periodic report, part one, chapter 3.I.3).

Articles 7 and 8

Question 12

- On the subject of women and political participation, noticeable progress has been recorded in recent years, as precisely illustrated in figures in the second periodic report, to which reference should be made in this connection (see second periodic report, part 2, chapter 4).

Article 9

Question 13

- On the subject of nationality and bearing in mind Lebanon's reservation to the provision that women are to be granted equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children, Lebanese legislation contains nothing new in this regard. It is worth pointing out, however, that a child's nationality does not preclude the mother's receipt of social benefits for her children (see second periodic report, part one, chapter 4.I, final paragraph, and part two, chapter 1.II.C, second paragraph). In addition, it is explicitly stated in the Regulation of the Employment of Aliens Act that work permits are granted to aliens born of a Lebanese mother.

Article 10

Question 14

- Lebanon has a national literacy committee, the aims of which are, inter alia, to combat illiteracy and halve illiteracy rates by 2015. The committee's successes include the training of literacy tutors (210 tutors in development service centres, 389 tutors in non-governmental organizations, 143 tutors in the military establishment and 15 tutors in the Directorate of Prisons). The University Students for Literacy (UNILIT) programme, which aims to involve university students in literacy activities by granting them free academic credit for every 40 hours of tutoring they provide within the programme, has also been implemented and the eradication of illiteracy is now included as part of the academic curriculum at universities.
- Literacy classes benefiting 3,220 learners, one third of them women, were organized by 15 main offices and 22 branch offices of the development service centres. Classes benefiting a further 2,524 learners, over half of them women, were also run by 25 non-governmental organizations. A teaching programme benefiting

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incorporating the concept of gender with the aim of altering thought and behaviour patterns.

- The literacy programmes are facing a number of difficulties, including: the lack of studies to assess such programmes (although they are estimated to benefit 56 per cent of women participants); the high cost of the programmes; the failure to develop training programmes geared to the productive needs of male and female participants; and the inability to offer material incentives, such as payment of travel expenses for illiterate women, particularly those from deprived areas.
- Those running the above programmes observe that women show a greater commitment to and desire for literacy than is the case with men. The reason for this is that, in the case of some men, illiteracy does not stand in the way of employment, particularly in physically demanding sectors, whereas employment opportunities are few and far between for illiterate women (who are usually not well off). Within the family, the need to keep track of their children's schoolwork is a further incentive for women to acquire a knowledge of reading (see second periodic report, part two, chapter 5.III).

Question 15

- In 1998, a law providing for compulsory education to the age of 12 as a first phase and to the age of 15 as a second phase was approved. This law, however, was not linked to free education. Furthermore, no control mechanisms or procedures were put in place and no budget for implementation of the law was established. The Education for All plan comprises a number of steps to be completed by 2015. These relate to early childhood, basic education, children and young people who are non-school goers and adult education. No special or specific measures for females are mentioned in the plan (see second periodic report, part two, chapter 5.III).

Question 16

- The proportion of women in the workforce increased by 3.3 per cent during 2001, compared with 1997.
- This increase, however, was not achieved as the result of a deliberate policy or direct effort on the part of the Lebanese Government; it was an automatic outcome of economic growth and the trends in its development.
- The majority of women workers are unmarried. It can therefore be assumed that the underlying reasons for the disproportion between men and women in terms of joining the workforce are twofold: the failure of establishments to support the reproductive role of women (with free crèches, subsidized cafeterias, etc.) and the widespread belief that only women - and not men - bear responsibility for the tasks involved in that role (see second periodic report, part two, chapter 6.I.2, and tables 5 and 6).

Article 11**Question 17**

- The tables contained in the second periodic report (part two, chapter 4.II.3) show the proportion of women in various State departments and in the civil, legal, judicial and military machinery, in accordance with their administrative grade. The indication is that there has been a quantitative and sometimes qualitative improvement in the positions of women and the extent of their involvement in such departments. The Lebanese Government has not launched any open initiatives for positive discrimination in this area. However, the selection system used to fill government administrative posts, which is applied by Lebanon's Civil Service Council, does not discriminate against women.

Question 18

- The rate of women's participation in the job market has increased to 25 per cent of inhabitants of working age.
- Some of the measures taken by the Government to improve employment opportunities for women involve the inclusion of training for various income-generating occupations as part of the programmes offered by the National Employment Office - which is under the mandate of the Ministry of Labour - in conjunction with non-governmental organizations, particularly in outlying areas (see second periodic report, part two, chapter 1.II (The workforce)).

Question 19

- Under article 29 of the Employment Act, it is forbidden for employers to dismiss from service or issue a warning of dismissal to

Question 21

- The statement that women's pay is low in comparison with men's pay certainly does not apply to all sectors; in the public sector, as in the formal private sector, workers in the same occupational category receive equal pay, without discrimination between men and women. In Lebanon's informal sector, however, the workers are not subject to the Employment Act and its supplementary provisions. The question of pay in this sector is therefore subject to different influences, not least the general economic situation which Lebanon has been experiencing for a considerable period of time, the accompanying shortage of job opportunities and the increasing unemployment rate.

Question 22

- In 2002, the provisions of the Social Security Act were expressly amended so that there is no longer any disparity between male and female insured persons as far as the right to receive child benefits is concerned (see second periodic report, part two, chapter 1.II.1.B, third paragraph).
- In 1999, the equality of female employees with their male counterparts (in the public sector) was established in regard to the receipt of benefits from the Civil Servants' Cooperative for themselves and their children. This equality between male and female employees, however, does not include the right to family allowances for children, governed by article 3 of Decree No. 3950, which is mentioned in the second periodic report under the heading of "Areas of discrimination against women" (see second periodic report, part two, chapter 1.III.2).

Question 23

- Low-income women heads of household receive assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs under its support programmes for families in need. Such assistance consists of grants in kind and of service awarded to families on the basis of the priorities established by the families themselves, with the help of the Ministry's departments. Low-income women heads of household may also attend, free of charge, the vocational retraining programmes for women organized by the Ministry.

Article 12

Question 24

1. Health problems affecting women in particular

- Women are vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), especially AIDS, as well as to the physical and mental risks of secret abortion (see second periodic report, part two, chapter 7.III), pathological complications linked with childbirth, genetic

sometimes taint the electoral process in outlying rural areas). In the 2004 parliamentary elections, the number of women who won seats in rural areas rose compared with the number in major towns (see second periodic report, part two, chapter 4.II).

Articles 15 and 16

Question 28

- Lebanon has no one personal status law; instead, it has laws which vary on the basis of the religious community to which each Lebanese belongs. It is for this reason that Lebanon was obliged to make a reservation to article 16, paragraphs (c), (d), (f) and (g), of the Convention, as the rights articulated therein do not apply as one to all Lebanese. For further details on this subject, please refer to paragraph 13 of the report.

National Commission for Lebanese Women

Ref.: Commission/2182/2005
Hazimiyah, 14 February 2005

Subject: Letter from the Director of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women concerning article 522 of the Lebanese Penal Code

Reference: Cable from the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to your Directorate in connection with a “complaint concerning the situation of women” dated 13 October 2004 - facsimile No. 1971/8 - file No. 8/16/4.

Sir,

We should like to inform you that the provisions of the Lebanese Penal Code are currently under comprehensive review. The Parliamentary Subcommittee on Administration and Justice took up the request of the National Commission on Lebanese Women and Lebanese non-governmental associations and abolished article 522 - the subject of the complaint forwarded by the Director of the