



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Thirty-third session
5-22 July 2005

**Concluding comments: Democratic People's Republic
of Korea**

1. The Committee considered the initial report of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (CEDAW/C/PRK/1) at its 699th and 700th meetings on 18 July 2005.

Introduction by the State party

2. In introducing the report, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea informed the Committee that his Government had acceded to the Convention on 27 February 2001 based on the ideal of thoroughly eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and further promoting the rights of women. Soon after, in September 2001, the National Coordination Committee for the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was established. This mechanism would regularly monitor the implementation of the Convention, harmonize the country's human rights system with international standards and discharge the reporting obligations.

3. The representative indicated that while preparing the initial report, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had found that the Convention's basic requirements had already been realized in various sectors.

5. The representative indicated that women had firmly occupied their social position and had been a force in the promotion of the social and economic development of the country, owing to satisfactory legislation and policies on gender equality and to preferential treatment. They enjoyed equal rights in the political, economic, labour, cultural and all other sectors.

6. Despite successive natural disasters since the mid-1990s, which had radically decreased agricultural production and had caused economic difficulty, social benefits, such as compulsory free education and universal free medical care, had been maintained at a normal level. Women's educational achievement had surpassed the secondary level and they enjoyed access to reproductive and maternity health care as well as to other health services.

7. In conclusion, the representative noted the absolute trust of women in the social system and the benevolent politics initiated by the late President Kim Il Sung and carried forward by the country's leader, Kim Jong Il. The achievement in implementation of the Convention had been possible as a3 05oI/t3 0 0 10.02 218.2635 569.s t Tm(e count)T

23. The Committee is concerned about existing discriminatory legal provisions, particularly that which establishes a minimum marriage age for females at 17 and for males at 18; and about article 7 of the citizenship law on the determination of the citizenship of a child under the age of 14. It is also concerned about existing protective legislation, which in some cases is based on the socially perceived characteristics of women and men and which may perpetuate inequality and discrimination against women.

24. The Committee urges the State party to initiate without delay a comprehensive review of all legislation, with the aim of identifying provisions that discriminate against women, and a process of law reform to bring its laws into conformity with the provisions of the Convention.

25. While the Committee notes that the people's committees address and regulate almost every aspect of people's lives, including women's lives at every level, it is concerned that the committees and their procedures may not address women's rights and needs on anTj10.2633 0 0 10.02 362a ual73 2i3 0 0 10.02 362a ua.28 Tm(e)Tj0.1048 Twj10 m452

committees in efforts to promote gender equality and ensure the integration of gender perspectives in all areas of legislative and policy development. While noting

36. The Committee urges the State party to increase its efforts to address stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men, including the hidden patterns that perpetuate direct and indirect discrimination against women and girls in the areas of education and employment and in all other areas of their lives, in accordance with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention. ~~Those efforts should include educational~~ measures at all levels, beginning at an early age; the revision of school tex

42. **The Committee urges the State party to introduce specific poverty alleviation measures aimed at improving the situation of women to eliminate their vulnerability. The Committee recommends that the State party seek international assistance in guaranteeing that women, particularly women from rural areas, have equal access to food supplies. It urges the State party to assist women economic returnees who went abroad without valid travel permits to reintegrate into their families and society and to protect them from all forms of violations of their rights. It calls on the State party to train law enforcement officials, migration officials and border police on the causes, consequences and incidence of trafficking and other forms of exploitation so as to enable them to render support to women who might be at risk of becoming victims of trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation. It also recommends that the State party conduct nationwide awareness-raising campaigns on the risks and consequences of trafficking targeted at women and girls. The Committee further urges the State party to evaluate those phenomena and systematically compile information on them with a view to formulating a comprehensive strategy that includes measures of prevention, prosecution and punishment of offenders, as well as measures to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims. The Committee also urges the State party to intensify its efforts to deal with these phenomena through increased international, regional and bilateral cooperation. Information on the results of the research and progress made should be included in the next periodic report.**

43. While noting that women make up approximately 20 per cent of the deputies to the eleventh Supreme People's Assembly, and 30 per cent of the local people's assemblies, the Committee expresses concern that the number of women in decision-making positions remains low in politics, the judiciary and the civil service. The Committee is also concerned at the low participation of women in decision-making positions in the foreign service.

44. **The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to increase the number of women in decision-making positions in all spheres. It also recommends that women's representation in the foreign service be increased including in missions abroad. It also recommends that the State party introduce temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25, to strengthen and accelerate its efforts to promote and elect women to positions of power, supported by special training programmes and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at underlining the importance of women's participation in decision-making at all levels.**

45. While recognizing that the State party has the potential for providing comprehensive coverage of health services in the country, the Committee is concerned that insufficient information has been provided on the priority focus for the provision of such services in the light of the economic crisis and that women may be affected more negatively than men. The Committee expresses concern about the insufficient information on the impact of the reproductive health policy in urban and rural areas and about the fact that the policy exclusively targets women.

46. **The Committee requests the State party to include in its next periodic report detailed information about the availability of and access to general and reproductive health services for women in all parts of the country. It also**

requests the State party to provide information on the impact of the measures taken to improve the access of women, including those from rural areas, to reproductive and sexual health programmes, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation 24 on women and health. It also recommends that the State party target men and boys in it(r)Tj10.2633 0 0 10.02 er965 647.2801 Tm(e

achievement of the MDGs, and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

56. The Committee notes that States' adherence to the seven major international human rights instruments¹ enhances the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. Therefore, the Co