

on nationality which continues to benefit the husband to the detriment of the wife; the blatant inequalities in women's recruitment, wages and leave entitlements, as well as in legal restrictions on women's but not men's employment; the lack of plans to enact legislation to protect women against all forms of violence; and, the absence in Morocco's report of any mention of article 6 of the Convention concerning prostitution.

The Committee also expressed concern over the high rate of female illiteracy, which affected girls and rural women in particular, the high rate of maternal mortality and the high number of unattended births, the unavailability of safe abortion and the need to develop further reproductive and sexual health services, including family planning.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- ▶ incorporate the principle of equality between women and men in all spheres, and into the Constitution so as to bring it into line with the relevant international norms of the Convention;
- ▶ consider the progressive withdrawal of the many reservations that are seriously undermining the proper implementation of the Convention;
- ▶ continue its efforts to amend legislation that is still discriminatory, in order to bring it into line with the provisions of the Convention;
- ▶ bearing in mind the stages in Morocco's political, economic, sociological and cultural evolution and the need for the population to support any reform concerning women's rights, persevere in using *ijtihad*, the evolving interpretation of religious texts, so as to give the necessary impetus to the improvement of the status of women and gradually change attitudes;
- ▶ establish specific machinery, at a high executive level, with adequate financial and human resources, to coordinate and guide action in favour of women, combat energetically the persistence of attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes that discriminate against women and introduce measures to narrow the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality;
- ▶ provide education in women's rights, covering national and international legislation in all school and university systems, to women's associations and non-governmental organizations, and in rural areas;
- ▶ revise the content and orientation of school textbooks in order to eliminate stereotypes and negative images of women to speed up a change of attitudes and remove obstacles to *de facto* equality;
- ▶ pay particular attention to vulnerable groups women heads of household, abandoned women and disabled women and take the necessary steps to protect them from any form of exclusion or marginalization;
- ▶ take all appropriate, effective measures to reduce the illiteracy rate among women, particularly in the rural areas;
- ▶ address the issue of violence against women, adopt the necessary measures to overcome this phenomenon, and
- ▶ establish support services for victims of violence, in urban and rural areas;

- ▶ take special measures to reduce maternal mortality rates and protect women's right to life by ensuring full and timely access of all women to emergency obstetric care; and,
- ▶ review existing restrictions on women's access to employment, particularly those based on stereotypical assumptions concerning women's work.

#### **Torture**

Signed: 8 January 1986; ratified: 21 June 1993.

Morocco's second periodic report is due 20 July 1998.

#### **Rights of the Child**

Signed: 26 January 1990; ratified: 21 June 1993.

Morocco's second periodic report is due 19 July 2000.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Article 14.

### **COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

At its 1997 session the Commission on Human Rights adopted by consensus a resolution (1997/5) on the question of Western Sahara. In the resolution the Commission: reaffirmed the right to self-determination; recalled the entry into force of a cease fire in Western Sahara in 1991; noted Security Council resolution 1056 of 1996 and the decision to reduce the strength of the military component of the UN mission for the Referendum on Western Sahara in the absence of progress on implementation of the settlement plan; reiterated support for the efforts of the OAU and the UN Secretary-General regarding the organization and supervision of the referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara; reaffirmed that the goal, on which all parties agreed, was to hold a free, fair and impartial referendum organized and conducted by the UN, in cooperation with the OAU, and without any military or administrative constraints; expressed serious concern about the persistent obstacles to implementation of the settlement plan; emphasized the importance of direct contacts between the government and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro; and, decided to continue consideration of the question at the 1998 session.

### **THEMATIC REPORTS**

#### ***Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights***

**Arbitrary detention, Working Group on:** (E/CN.4/1997/4, paras. 4, 7, 17; E/CN.4/1997/4/Add.1, Decision 4)

The Working Group's main report notes that 11 new cases were transmitted as well as three urgent appeals on behalf of 11 persons. The government's response to the urgent appeals stated that the individuals had been released.

The decision involved five individuals who were arrested and detained in Laayoune in May 1995 for having organized a demonstration in Western Sahara in support of the Polisario Front. They were prosecuted for jeopardizing external security and the territorial unity of Morocco, for demonstrating, and for distributing leaflets and shouting slogans in favour of an independent Sahrawi state. The information received by the Working Group (WG) indicated that one of the detainees died as a result of torture inflicted during imprisonment and fears were expressed concerning the fate of the others. The WG's assessment was that the five had been held without