

unnecessary may have contributed to the decline in political participation by women; the lack of programmes to sensitize the public and particularly the police, the judiciary and health professionals, to the conditions and needs of victims of domestic violence; and, the absence of such measures as anti-discrimination laws, as well as laws on violence against women, preventing effective action to combat indirect discrimination, accurate reporting of incidents, and rigorous prosecution of all forms of violence against women.

The Committee expressed concern about the lack of sex-disaggregated data relating to part-time work and underlined the importance of close monitoring in this area in order to determine the number of women occupied in part-time employment. The Committee noted that, when the number of women in part-time employment was disproportionate, it became a factor that contributed to indirect discrimination. Concern was expressed about: the inequality in the sharing of "caring responsibilities", the fact that caring responsibilities fall predominantly on women, particularly in southern Italy, and the absence of efforts or programmes to encourage men to undertake their fair share of domestic responsibilities and to care for the children and the elderly.

The Committee expressed concern with respect to: the lack of statistics and/or studies into the causes of a number of health related issues concerning women; studies which suggested an increase in the incidence of lung cancer among women; the very high incidence of caesarian section deliveries and the failure of women to take advantage of early detection technologies, including mammography and pap smears; the lack of data on occupational health and disease; and, the limited availability of abortion services for women in southern Italy, as a result of the high incidence of conscientious objection among doctors and hospital personnel.

Referring to current welfare reforms and the shift in emphasis from the concept of man as breadwinner and the fact the reforms was intended to give women autonomy and reduce humiliating financial dependence, the Committee expressed concern that the reforms posed real risks for women who had been, *inter alia*, homemakers (not part of the paid workforce), or whose careers had been interrupted by childcare and other responsibilities and for older women who had little earning capacity.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- ▶ continue to implement and strengthen the current measures it is taking to empower women and mainstream gender issues;
- ▶ establish specific affirmative actions targeted to numerical goals and quotas, in particular in areas such as political and decision-making positions of public life;
- ▶ undertake large-scale measures to combat the widespread acceptance of stereotypical roles of women and men, particularly in the south, by alerting the public to the importance of an equitable distribution between women and men of family roles and "caring responsibilities";
- ▶ review and revise text books and teaching materials to reflect the non-stereotypical roles of women and men;
- ▶ amend existing legislation, where needed, in order effectively to deal with the phenomenon of indirect discrimination;

- ▶ implement measures to sensitize judges and lawyers and law enforcement personnel to indirect discrimination and to Italy's international obligations, in particular those outlined in the Convention;
- ▶ in its next report, provide full information evaluating the impact of legislation and policy concerning equality for women and discrimination;
- ▶ undertake public sensitization campaigns in relation to domestic violence in its various manifestations (sexual, physical, etc.) to ensure the protection of the human rights of women and girls in the family;
- ▶ introduce measures to encourage complaints related to domestic violence and provide mechanisms for effective and timely response to such claims;
- ▶ provide training to health professionals and the police in the care and management of domestic violence cases;
- ▶ introduce measures to increase the numbers of shelters in Italy for women victims of domestic violence and other abuses and difficulties;
- ▶ take steps to secure the enjoyment of women, and in particular, southern Italian women, of their reproductive rights by, *inter alia*, guaranteeing them access to safe abortion services in public hospitals;
- ▶ take the necessary steps to incorporate participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparation of the country's next report to the Committee;
- ▶ as a member of the European Union, take concrete initiatives to encourage the acceptance by the European Union of the Convention as a fundamental bill of rights for women;
- ▶ ensure that all women have an adequate income and that husbands and fathers are obliged to provide financial support; and,
- ▶ introduce measures to enforce payment of alimony and of a fair share of the matrimonial assets, including those measures which will enable the courts to set aside provisions which are intended to or have the effect of concealing assets and income and thereby deprive women of their entitlements.

Torture

Signed: 4 February 1985; ratified: 12 January 1989.

Italy's third periodic report was due 10 February 1998.

Reservations and Declarations: Declarations under articles 21 and 22.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 26 January 1990; ratified: 5 September 1991.

Italy's second periodic report is due 4 October 1998.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Racial Discrimination, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1997/68/Add.1, para. 77, 83, 84, 93, 95, 103, 111)

The report of the UN seminar to assess implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and particularly articles 4 and 6 (September