

Poverty and its associated effects were acknowledged as main factors hindering implementation of the Convention. The Committee noted that one-half of the population lives in poverty, poverty affects 44 per cent of Peruvian women, with 18 per cent of women live in extreme poverty, there has been a feminization of poverty, and the situation is worsening in rural areas, indigenous settlements and areas declared emergency zones.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee included, *inter alia*: the situation of women who have been removed from their places of origin with their families as a result of terrorist activity, noting government programmes to return such women to their places of origin or to settle them where they currently reside; continuing inequality between women and men despite the introduction of significant legal changes aimed at implementation of the Convention; the prevalence, throughout society, of socio-cultural patterns of behaviour that perpetuate prejudices and discrimination against women; and lack of clarity in the definition of "discrimination" contained in Act No. 26772 and possible inconsistencies with article 1 of the Convention relating to direct and indirect discrimination.

The Committee expressed concern about: the lack of information on the migration of Peruvian women abroad and on the protection afforded to them by the government; the effects of regulating prostitution, viz. was the effect to protect the rights of prostitutes or to protect the health of the clients and make it easier for them to obtain sexual services; the lack of references to any specific measures taken to deal with cases of violence, including incest; instances of sexual violence against rural and indigenous women and the high rate of sexual abuse of teenagers and girls in the emergency zones; the high drop-out rates among girls, particularly in poor urban, rural and indigenous areas; the very high illiteracy rates among women; the situation of women with regard to employment, the need for programmes and projects designed to increase the access of the working female population to the labour force and the number of women in all occupational categories; and the fact that many women are underpaid and are paid less than men for work of equal value.

Concern was also raised over: the high percentage of women heads of household and the need for systematic programmes to meet the needs of such women; the high rates of maternal and infant mortality; teenage pregnancy; the fact that malnutrition and preventable diseases are common; the lack of resources for women to avail themselves of medical care when needed and with the necessary speed; the close link between the number of abortions performed and the high maternal mortality rate, noting that criminalizing abortion did not discourage abortions but rather had the effect of making the procedure unsafe and dangerous for women; and lack of access to adequate contraception among poor women in urban and rural areas, indigenous women and teenage girls.

The Committee recommended that the government, *inter alia*:

- ♦ give the greatest possible care to women displaced by terrorist activity, who are the heads of households and should benefit from programmes promoting their participation in the labour force and providing access to education, health care, housing, drinking water and other essential services;
- ♦ formulate a working strategy involving training, publicity and legal literacy regarding the new legal provisions to achieve *de facto* compliance with legislation promoting the rights of women; systematically disseminate the Convention at all levels, to women and men, and in particular to all government authorities and persons responsible for its implementation; impose penalties against those infringing current legislation;
- ♦ provide information in the next report on the status of the Convention vis-à-vis existing legislation and whether cases of discrimination have been resolved by the courts with reference to the Convention;
- ♦ as a matter of priority, include in gender equality programmes a component to promote the gradual elimination of harmful stereotypes and undertake a general awareness-raising campaign to eradicate them;
- ♦ with regard to Act No. 26772, which defines discrimination, ensure that the stipulation "any objective and reasonable justification" is used only on the basis of implementation of temporary special measures which accelerate *de facto* equality between women and men; include, in the next report, information on the manner in which the criterion of "objective and reasonable justification" has been implemented and whether a definition of discrimination reflecting article 1 of the Convention is an enforceable part of the law;
- ♦ take steps to help increase the access of women to management and, in particular, decision-making posts; include in the report the results of the steps taken to increase the access of women to Parliament through the requirement of a 25 per cent quota for women in the lists of candidates;
- ♦ include in the next report information on: any increase or decrease in the number of women prostitutes; the existence of under-age prostitutes; the situation of women who engaged in prostitution without meeting the established requirements, and of their clients; the number of women and men who had been accused, arrested, tried and convicted for offences relating to prostitution and trafficking in persons; sociological characteristics of women engaged in prostitution; and the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases and other diseases among prostitutes;