

girls and boys to free education and training; the recommendation of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Council of Education to increase the compulsory and uninterrupted primary education to eight years; its decision to develop curricula and revise textbooks and teaching methods so that they are free of sex-based stereotypes and that gender-based prejudices are eliminated from educational programmes; the fact that women are entitled to the same employment opportunities as men; the participation of women in the labour force in different economic activities; the microcredit scheme and its impact in promoting women entrepreneurs; and, the commitments made by the government at the Fourth World Conference on Women that by the year 2000 it would: (a) reduce infant and maternal mortality rates by 50 per cent, (b) raise compulsory education to eight years, (c) eradicate female illiteracy; and, (d) withdraw the reservations to the Convention.

The Committee acknowledged factors and difficulties hindering full implementation of the Convention, including the reservations to articles 15 and 16, and difficulties arising from globalization, modernization and deeply rooted traditionalism which interplay strongly in the context of the status of women in Turkey. The Committee noted that Turkey is a secular country with a predominantly Muslim population under pressure from various political groups, and recognized the serious impact these pressures have on the condition of women, and the extent to which they serve to perpetuate the existing inequality between women and men and hamper the *de jure* and *de facto* implementation of the Convention.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee were: the reservations to articles 15 and 16 of the Convention; the prolonged discussions and the resistance to the reform of the Civil Code; the fact that the General Directorate on the Status and Problems of women has no corresponding bodies at regional and local levels; the lack of an integrated and systematic approach by the national machinery and the relevant ministries to all areas covered by the Convention, in particular with regard to women in rural areas, vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, young women and women in prisons; and, the fact that various articles of the Penal Code, including those related to the abduction of single and married women and to adultery contradict paragraph (f), article 2 (laws constituting discrimination against women).

The Committee also expressed concern over: the fact that greater penalties are imposed for the rape of a woman who is a virgin; the practice of forced gynaecological examinations of women in the investigation of allegations of sexual assault, including of women prisoners while in custody; the provisions of the Penal Code that allow less rigorous sanctions or penalties for "honour killings"; the lack of special temporary measures to redress the situation of Kurdish women, who suffer double discrimination; the pervasive violence, in all its forms, perpetrated against women and girls and the inadequacy of legal and educational measures to combat this violence; the failure to take into consideration the Committee's general recommendation No.19 on violence against women and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women; the law which categorizes violence as a "crime against public decency and public order", noting that it contradicts the spirit of the Convention and contravenes the dignity of the person; the ineffectiveness of juridical and

educational measures to address violence within the family; the failure to take sufficient appropriate measures to prevent and combat the acceptance of male dominance and violence against women in rural as well as in urban areas, to beat women and to require silent obedience from them; and, the lack of concrete measures to prevent the high number of suicides among women victims of violence.

Concern was also expressed over: the fact that spousal consent is required for abortion; the existence of brothels regulated by law and the lack of information and statistical data about the phenomenon; the fact that Turkish political parties, trade unions and other public institutions are not sufficiently sensitive to the importance of the implementation of article 7 (participation in public life); the need for representation in decision-making bodies, including Parliament and the government, where the number of women is still very low; and, provisions in the Turkish Citizenship Law, stipulating that a Turkish woman who decides to assume the nationality of her foreign husband will lose her Turkish nationality.

Additional areas of concern included: the high level of illiteracy among women and girls, especially in the rural areas, the drop-out rates of girls in schools owing to family practices, early marriages and the prioritization of boys in school enrolment and other gender discriminatory practices in education; the clustering of women in higher education in areas regarded as "suitable for women"; the very low minimum age for employment, which contravenes relevant ILO Conventions; the high level of unemployment of migrant urban female workers, the lack of measures to integrate them in the labour markets and the persistent occupational segregation in lower paid jobs, impeding their upward mobility and further reinforcing discrimination against women in the labour market; the lack of legal literacy programmes to raise the awareness of rural women regarding their rights; and the high number of women in rural areas who work in family enterprises, meaning that their work is not recognized in the formal economy, they do not receive social security benefits and their access to health services is limited.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- ▶ review the Civil Code, particularly with regard to family law, with a view to removing the reservations to the Convention;
- ▶ review related provisions of the Penal Code in order to ensure women the full protection of the law on equal terms with men;
- ▶ educate women and men so that they share the obligations and responsibilities of family work and the rearing of children;
- ▶ establish programmes of information and training directed at both sexes to stop the perpetuation of traditional attitudinal and behavioural patterns and create awareness of women's rights as expressed in the Convention;
- ▶ exert serious efforts to address violence against women, especially domestic violence, through legislation and through comprehensive gender-sensitive awareness-raising and education for the public in general, and law enforcement agencies, such as judges, lawyers and police, in particular;