

as well as their ability to exercise their full legal rights without fear of recrimination or intimidation. The lack or inadequacy of the dissemination of information on women's rights and the available recourse to justice has hampered, in many instances, the achievement of expected results.

#### Paragraph 49

Some legislative changes are made without a thorough understanding of the relationship between existing legal systems. In practice, however, certain aspects of the law - for instance, customary provisions - may be in operation in societies with multiple and conflicting legal systems. Emerging and potential obstacles resulting from possible contradictions should be anticipated so that preventive measures can be taken. When passing new legislation, whatever its subject-matter, all possible care should be taken to ensure that it implies no direct or indirect discrimination so that women's right to equality is fully respected in law.

#### Paragraph 50

In some countries, discriminatory legislative provisions in the social, economic and political spheres still exist, including civil, penal and commercial codes and certain administrative rules and regulations. Civil codes in some instances have not yet been adequately studied to determine action for repealing those laws that still discriminate against women and for determining, on the basis of equality, the legal capacity and status of women, married women in particular, in terms of nationality, inheritance, ownership and control of property, freedom of movement and the custody and nationality of children. Above all, there is still a deeply rooted resistance on the part of conservative elements in society to the change in attitude necessary for a total ban on discriminatory practices against women at the family, local, national and international levels.

### B. Basic strategies

#### Paragraph 51

The political commitment to establish, modify, expand or enforce a comprehensive legal base for the equality of women and men and on the basis of human dignity must be strengthened. Legislative changes are most effective when made within a supportive framework promoting simultaneous changes in the economic, social, political and cultural spheres, which can help bring about a social transformation. For true equality to become a reality for women, the sharing of power on equal terms with men must be a major strategy.

#### Paragraph 52

Governments should take the relevant steps to ensure that both men and women enjoy equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities so as to guarantee the development of their individual aptitudes and capacities and enable women to participate as beneficiaries and active agents in development.

#### Paragraph 53

Changes in social and economic structures should be promoted which would make possible the full equality of women and their free access to all types of development as active agents and beneficiaries, without discrimination of any kind, and to all types of education, training and employment. Special attention should be paid to implementing this right to the maximum extent possible for young women.