

From Chair's Summary 2013



- As evidenced in most goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and particularly in SDG 5, realizing gender equality is pivotal for achieving fairer and prosperous societies. Yet progress is far too slow, and much remains to be done.
 - Poverty – perpetuate exclusion and inequality cycles
 - Intersectionality leading to heightened vulnerability

From the (newly released) Report on ICPD Programme of Action implementation in the UNECE Region



- Employment
 - persistent gaps in workforce participation
 - persistent gender pay-gaps
- Public life and leadership roles
 - Minor increase in parliamentary membership
 - Unchanged representation in managerial roles
- Family-work balance
 - No progress in achieving more balance for men and women alike
 - Women continue to bear the higher burden
- Gender based violence against women

Emerging new challenges identified by CEDAW



- The advantage of a continuous and constant systemic assessment of ALL countries in regular intervals that facilitates the formation of unique insights, identifying developments that may at first glance seem sporadic and isolated, but our unique perspective allows for discerning a common thread
- Besides those traditional areas summarized in those Reports, it is crucial to draw attention to a number of emerging processes, that seem to go un-noticed, yet present serious threats to the advances that were achieved for women in the last few decades, and may severely compromise danger equality
- **CEDAW's Concluding Observations** reflect these challenges (but for obvious reasons their language is typically nuanced)



And the challenges are:

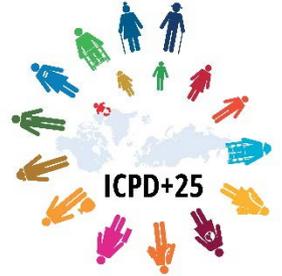
- Gender neutrality from the Left (“gender being mainstreamed away”)
- Gender neutrality from the right (censoring gender in “the war on gender”)
- Growing religious fundamentalism and extremism leading to, *inter alia*:
 - Curtailing women’s SRHR (conscientious objections)
 - Promoting women’s exclusion
- Women’s heightened vulnerability (including from multiple factors) at any crisis, leading to, e.g.
 - Disparate impact of privatization
 - Legal aid cuts as a cross-cutting issue impeding on women’s access to justice

New forms of backlash?



- In retrospect, and in light of current developments resulting from major predicaments such as the economic crisis and the immigration challenges, and when analyzing the inter-relations and connections between those emerging, unseen challenges, it seems that most of the gains and improvements in the situation of women are merely a side-effect of the overall, slow and steady advancements in human development in general
- Caveat: religion *per se* is not the problem!
- **Without real understanding of women's rights and gender equality, and without true commitment to advance them, we will be facing more painful regression**

CEDAW/C/DNK/CO/8 (CEDAW, 2015)



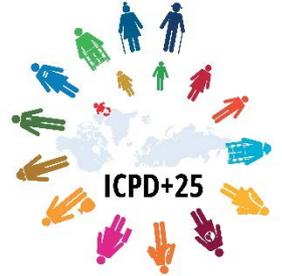
- **Equality before the law**
- 39. The Committee is concerned that the increasing use of **gender-neutral language and policies** in the State party could unintentionally result in an **increase of substantive inequality** between women and men. In particular, the Committee is concerned that the **gender-neutral application of the Criminal Code** may lead to a lack of gender-disaggregated data on domestic violence, thereby **obscuring the fact that women are overwhelmingly the victims of such violence, and to a decrease in funding for women-only programmes and services.**

CEDAW/C/NOR/CO/9 (2017)



- **Legislative framework and definition of discrimination against women**
- 12. The Committee notes that, as a general rule, legislation adopted in Norway is gender-neutral. **The Committee repeats its concern that gender-neutral legislation, policies and programmes might lead to the inadequate protection of women against direct and indirect discrimination and hinder the achievement of substantive equality between women and men**, as explained in paragraph 5 of the Committee’s general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention. The Committee is concerned that this is already reflected in the amendments of 2016 to the assessment procedure instructions for official studies and reports, which made gender-related aspects less visible in the assessment of the equality-related consequences of legislative and policy measures. The Committee also notes that the new Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, which merges the previous gender equality, sexual discrimination, ethnic discrimination and discrimination and accessibility laws, is “particularly aimed at strengthening the position of women and minorities” and allows for cases to be brought on the basis of a combination of prohibited grounds of discrimination. **The Committee is, however, concerned that the implementation of the Act may weaken the promotion of gender equality in the State party, which used to be governed by a separate gender equality law, and that the duty of private and public employers to report on their gender-related activities was repealed.**

CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/6 (CEDAW, 2008)



- **Violence against women**
- c) the policy on violence against women is couched in **gender-neutral language**, which undermines the notion that such violence is a clear manifestation of discrimination against women

CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/5-6 (CEDAW, 2015)



- **Stereotypes**

- 18. The Committee notes with concern:

- (a) That discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in society and in the family are deeply rooted in the State party and that women continue to bear a disproportionate share of family and household responsibilities;
- (b) That there have been vigorous campaigns by non-State actors, **including religious and civic organizations**, the media and politicians, advocating traditional family values, overemphasizing the roles of women as mothers and caretakers and **criticizing gender equality as “gender ideology”**.

CEDAW/C/ITA/CO/7 (CEDAW, 2017)



- **Health**

- 41. The Committee is concerned about:
 - (d) The limited availability and accessibility of abortion services owing to the significant number of health personnel **conscientiously objecting to carrying out such operations** and the lack of health centres providing these services, leading pregnant women to undergo unsafe abortions;

CEDAW/C/HUN/CO/7-8 (CEDAW, 2013)



- **Health**

- 30. The Committee notes the State party's statement that the new article in the Fundamental Law protecting life from the moment of conception will not be used to restrict the present legislation and the access of women to abortion. The Committee is concerned about **campaigns, including a recent poster campaign, supported by the State party that stigmatize abortion and seek to negatively influence the public view on abortion and contraception**; the limited access to emergency contraceptives; the subjection of women who want surgical abortion to biased mandatory counselling and a three-day medically unnecessary waiting period; and at the increasing resort to **conscientious objection** by health professionals in the absence of an adequate regulatory framework. The Committee is also concerned at the limited access to modern, efficient methods of contraception, and the lack of choice for women on whether to give birth at home or in the hospital, due to various obstacles, including the non-recognition of midwives as independent professionals.

CEDAW/C/ISR/CO/6 (CEDAW, 2017)



- **Limitation of freedom of movement, segregation and exclusion of women in public spaces, commercial and educational settings**
- 12. The Committee notes with concern that, in spite of the response by the delegation and measures taken by the State party, limitations on freedom of movement continue to impact women in public spaces, including transportation, and, at times, have led to their **exclusion from educational, commercial and religious environments, by certain ultra-orthodox movements, imposing their observance of religion in a way that contravenes the fundamental rights of women and girls.** It is concerned about the recent decision by the Council for Higher Education (MALAG) to expand the segregated campus and introduce fully segregated classrooms within universities.

CEDAW/C/ITA/CO/7 (CEDAW, 2017)



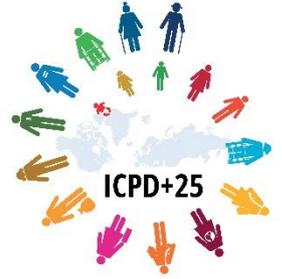
- **General context**
- 9. The Committee notes with concern that the **financial and economic crisis and the austerity measures** adopted by the State party in an effort to stabilize public finances have had a detrimental and **disproportionate impact on women in all spheres of life** owing to cuts in public services mostly used by women for themselves or for persons under their care, such as children and older persons. The Committee reminds the State party that, even in a time of fiscal constraint and economic crisis, special efforts must be made to respect women's rights, sustain and expand social investment and social protection and employ a **gender-sensitive** approach, according priority to women in vulnerable situations and avoiding retrogressive measures.

CEDAW/C/PRT/CO/8-9 (CEDAW, 2015)



- **General context**
- 8. The Committee notes with concern that **austerity measures**, many of which have been taken by the State party under the bailout agreements with the European Union institutions and the International Monetary Fund, **have had a detrimental and disproportionate impact on women in many spheres of life**. The Committee also notes that **few studies and evaluations have been conducted to monitor the gender-specific effects of such measures**. The Committee wishes to emphasize that the concerns expressed below take into account the exceptional circumstances that the State party has faced in recent years and is still facing. However, the Committee reminds the State party that, even in times of fiscal constraints and economic crisis, special efforts must be made to respect women's human rights, sustain and expand social investment and social protection and **employ a gender-sensitive approach**, giving priority to women in vulnerable situations.

CEDAW/C/GBR/CO/7 (CEDAW, 2013)



- 20. The Committee is concerned that the austerity measures introduced by the State party have resulted in **serious cuts in funding for organizations that provide social services to women, including those that provide services for women only.** The Committee is concerned that the cuts have had a negative impact on women with disabilities and older women. It is also concerned that the State party does not provide direct funding for these services but resorts to commissioning them, which allegedly risks undermining the provision of the services. The Committee is further concerned that budgetary cuts in the public sector **disproportionately affect women, owing to their concentration in this sector.**