

9 February 2005

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**Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women**
Pre-session working group for the thirty-third session
5-22 July 2005

**List of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of
periodic reports***

Guyana

The pre-session working group examined the combined third, fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports of Guyana (CEDAW/C/GUY/3-6). It is noted that the report does not refer to the Committee's concluding comments on the previous report or to follow-up actions undertaken.

Constitution, legislation and national machinery for the advancement of women

1. Please provide information on the process of preparing the current report, indicating, in particular, whether consultations were held with non-governmental organizations and women's groups and whether the report was presented to Parliament or any designated high-level authority.

2. The Committee, in the concluding comments on the examination of the second periodic report in 2001,¹ had expressed concern at the absence of reference to indirect discrimination in the Constitution and of legislation seeking to eliminate discrimination (para. 162). It recommended that priority be given to constitutional and legislative reform with respect to addressing these gaps and strengthening law enforcement so as to ensure that women's de jure and de facto equality would be realized (para. 163). Please indicate what follow-up action was taken pursuant to this recommendation, specify whether the bill to amend the Constitution contains a definition of discrimination, in accordance with

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11. Please state whether the problem of trafficking in women and adolescents exists in Guyana. If so, please indicate what measures have been taken in that regard.

Political and public life

12. The report shows the persistent underrepresentation of women in some areas of political and public life, namely, on management boards (appendix 1), in top government positions (appendix 3), on most of the service commissions (appendix 4), at regional, local and governmental levels and in particular as mayors (appendix 7) and at the level of international participation (p. 30). Please identify the main challenges that prevent women from having equal access to decision-making positions and state clearly what measures the Government intends to utilize to overcome those challenges, including temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25.

Education and stereotypes

13. Please provide information on the reasons why girls and boys drop out of school and the planned measures and/or actions to overcome this situation.

14. According to the report (p. 25), "(i)n spite of efforts by the Education Ministry to modify sex role stereotyping through gender-sensitive content in teaching material, women and girls continue to adopt traditional gender-based education and career choices". Please identify the challenges that are impeding the equal participation by women in non-traditional occupations and careers and the actions planned by the Government to eliminate such impediments, including the implementation of measures under article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25.

Employment and poverty

15. Kindly indicate whether women working in the private and public sectors have equal access to pensions and retirement benefits, and if any benefits are available for women working in the informal sector.

16. Please indicate the level of women's wages as compared with men's in the various sectors of the labour market, and what the impact has been of the provision on "equal pay for equal work" of the Equal Rights Act of 1990.

17. The report mentions (p. 20) that the Women's Affairs Bureau "was the implementing agency of the component of the Poverty Alleviation Programme in 1995 addressing women's poverty". Please indicate the impact of this component and whether the findings/evaluations in respect of its implementation were taken into account in the National Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2000.

18. The report mentions (p. 36) that despite the recognition "that women account for most of the poor in Guyana" in policy papers (namely, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the National Development Strategy Paper), "(t)hese policy documents are ... not at the level of implementation". Please clarify the practical measures taken by the Government to tackle and address women's poverty.

Health

19. Please provide further information on diseases that most affect women and girls, including the leading causes of death of women, also by ethnic group, and Government efforts to combat these diseases.

20. Please clarify whether the three-year National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (p. 41) is now in its implementation phase and also discuss the components that target specifically women and female adolescents, as well as whether the Plan incorporates a gender perspective throughout, and whether any impact assessment has yet been undertaken of the effectiveness of the Government's action.

Vulnerable groups of women

21. The report mentions (p. 18) that new legislation regarding the Amerindian Act 29:01 was expected to be presented in Parliament in August 2003. Please indicate the content of this Act, in particular the provisions aimed at eliminating racial discrimination against Amerindian women, and the status of its enactment.

22. Please indicate whether a comprehensive strategy is in place to achieve equality of Amerindian women and girls. In particular, describe the situation of, and the measures directed towards, this group of women in areas such as education, health, family relations, employment, economic and social benefits, and representation in public life, with respect to eliminating discrimination and achieving equality for Amerindian women and girls.

23. The report mentions (p. 13) that "racial tensions, evidenced by strikes and demonstrations ... now appear to be an integral part of Guyana's social and economic landscape". Please provide information about how such racial tensions affect the rights to equality of Guyanese women of African and of Indian origin.

24. Please provide information about the status, especially the economic situation, of older women and about any programmes directed at this group of women.