

QUICK GUIDE TO ADDRESS WOMEN'S ISSUES DURING THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW ON COMOROS¹

These Guides include:

- A list of issues mentioned in the National Report, the Compilation of official UN Documents and the Summary of Other Stakeholders Submissions, with references to the particular paragraphs in which they can be found.
- The full text of those paragraphs
- A reference to "gaps", that is, issues on which the National Report should/could have applied a gender perspective but failed to do so.
- Suggested questions and recommendations

References in the two working languages of the Council (English and French) have been kept in their original language.

Issues are highlighted. References from the National Report are *in Italics*.

All women's rights issues (included sexual rights' issues related specifically to women) are referred to in this Guide. Other sexual rights issues are referred to in the Sexual Rights Guides for each state under review

CEDAW ratified. OP-CEDAW not ratified. Rome Statute ratified. Palermo Protocol not ratified.

ISSUE	N Report	Compilation	Summary
Early marriage		Legal age of 18, need for public sensitization to discourage early marriage (26)	
Equality and Non discrimination		Constitutional status (5). Secondary roles. Lower social, economic and political status. Need to review legislation and protect women and girls from discrimination (13).	
Migrant women		Illegal migration abroad in risky conditions (46)	
Public and political participation		Low participation in decision-making. 3% of parliament seats, 10% of government posts. (31)	
Reproductive health/rights		Health Sector Development Plan to address maternal and child deaths (11). Need for urgent measures in this regard (38)	
Rights of girls		Need to enforce non discrimination principle, esp. in cases affecting girls (17)	
Right to education		Low enrolment ratios. Gender disparities. High dropout rates. Lack of equipment and qualified teachers. (43). Decrease of gender gap to 4.1% (44) Adult women	

¹ These Guides were produced by the Sexual Rights Initiative, a coalition of organizations based in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and North America whose mandate is to advance women's issues broadly and sexual rights issues in the Human Rights Council. For questions, comments, suggestions please contact Alejandra Sardá-Chandiramani at alejandra@mulabi.org

		education rates still under 50% (45)	
Right to work		Question about whether measures to ensure national police on gender equality and equity include employment and occupation,(11) Legal status of equal remuneration. Question on mechanisms to solve workplace discrimination cases (33)	
Violence against Women /Gender Violence		Violence against women /girls is seriously spread (19)	

Gaps

At the time of writing this Guide (April 8, 2009) the National Report was not yet available.

Early / forced marriage

UNICEF noted that the **Family Code adopted in 2005** fixes the legal age of marriage at **18 years** old for both boys and girls (Para 26, Compilation)

Equality and non-discrimination

In 2008, the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (ILO Committee of Experts) noted that the Constitution proclaims **equality of rights and duties for all**, without distinction based on **sex** () (Para 5, Compilation).

Selon l'UNDAF 2008-2012, une étude a révélé que la plupart des rôles joués par la **femme** la **relègue** au second rang et se conclut par un **statut socio-économique inférieur**. Cette étude et plusieurs autres ont montré l'importance de **l'inégalité** entre les sexes dans les secteurs **économiques, sociaux et politiques**. (Para 13, Compilation)

Migrant women

UNICEF noted the issue of falsification of identity documents to facilitate migration **abroad seeking** education and/or job **opportunities**. It also indicated that migration by precarious boats under **highly risky circumstances** puts thousands of lives in danger every year, including those of children and **women** (Para 46, Compilation)

Public and political participation

UNICEF noted that the participation of women in **decision-making** remains inconspicuous. A UN Statistics Division source indicated that the **proportion of seats** held by women in the **national parliament** was **3 per cent in 2008**. According to a 2007 UNFPA report, only **one of every 10 government posts** is occupied by a woman (Para 31, Compilation)

Reproductive health/rights

In 2008, UNICEF indicated that the Ministry of Health is developing a **Health Sector Development Plan** in order to address **maternal and child deaths** () (Para 11, Compilation)
The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) stated that a large number of **births take place outside the hospital system**. It (Para 38, Compilation)

Rights of girls

In 2000, CRC expressed concern at patterns of discrimination on grounds of **gender**, among others, particularly regarding cases affecting girls (Para 17, Compilation)

Right to education

In 2000, CRC expressed concern that school enrolment ratios are low and equal access to education is not ensured. It was also concerned () of gender disparities in school attendance and high drop-out rates. CRC added that the education system is affected by a general lack of facilities and equipment, insufficient qualified teachers, and a drastic shortage of text books and other learning materials. (Para 43, Compilation)

UNICEF indicated that over the past five years, the Comorian education system has not grown at the same pace as the school age population, implying that the system could not have been able to physically accommodate the totality of children in school age. As a result, the net enrolment rate has stagnated at 73 per cent between 2003 and 2007, with significant disparities between islands. The gender gap has dropped considerably from 13.3 in 2003 to 4.1 percentage points in 2007 (Para 44, Compilation)

A 2006 UNDP report noted that the rate of adult education of women remained below 50 per cent (Para 45, Compilation)

Right to work

In 2008, UNICEF indicated that a national policy on gender equality and equity was adopted in 2007. In 2008, the ILO Committee of Experts requested the Government to provide information, inter alia, on the steps taken to ensure that this national policy contains measures for the promotion of gender equality in employment and occupation (Para 11, Compilation)

In 2008, the ILO Committee of Experts noted the State's commitment to bring section 97 of the Labour Code into conformity with the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), which calls for equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value. The same year, the ILO Committee requested the State to indicate, inter alia, the procedures available for bringing complaints in cases of discrimination in employment and occupation under the Constitution, and provide information on any cases of discrimination addressed through labour inspection or by the courts_ (Para 33, Compilation)

Violence against Women/Gender Violence

L'UNDAF 2008-2012 a mentionné que, selon une enquête menée en 2006, les violences basées sur le sexe sont extrêmement répandues au Comores. A 2007 UNFPA report noted that violence against women and girls is a problem in Comoros.

Suggested questions and recommendations

- Ask Comoros what measures are being taken to improve women's socio-economic status that according the UNDAF study cited in Para 13 of the Compilation is markedly inferior to that of men /Recommend that Comoros takes all necessary measures, including through requesting foreign assistance, to improve women's socio-economic status that according the UNDAF study cited in Para 13 of the Compilation is markedly inferior to that of men.
- Recommend that Comoros implements special temporary measures to increase the participation of women in decision-making posts at all levels of public office, in the Parliament and in the judiciary.
- While commending Comoros for reducing the gender gap in school enrolment in the last years, recommend that it continues to increase its efforts to provide all children, and particularly girls, with the opportunity of exercising their right to education.

- Recall the question submitted by the ILO Committee of Experts in 2008 and ask Comoros if the National Policy on Gender Equality and Equity contains measures for the promotion of gender equality in **employment and occupation** /Recommend that measures for the promotion of gender equality in employment and occupation be added to the National Policy on Gender Equality and Equity if they have not been already incorporated.
- Recall the question submitted by the ILO Committee of Experts in 2008 and ask Comoros about the procedures available for bringing complaints in cases of **discrimination in employment and occupation** under the Constitution, and to provide information on any cases of gender-based discrimination addressed through labour inspection or by the courts
- Ask Comoros what measures are being taken to address the serious situation of **violence against women and girls** in terms of legislation, prosecution of perpetrators, awareness-raising in society at large and protection for victims / Recommend that Comoros takes urgent measures to address the serious situation of violence against women and girls in terms of legislation, prosecution of perpetrators, awareness-raising in society at large and protection for victims

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

- To give particular attention to addressing **discrimination** against both girls and women, inter alia, by reviewing domestic legislation so as to ensure that discriminatory provisions are removed and that adequate protection from discrimination is provided (Para 13, Compilation)
- To increase its efforts to ensure implementation of the principle of **non-discrimination** and address those cases which continue to occur **affecting all vulnerable groups, in particular girls** (Para 17, Compilation)
- To increase the legal minimum age for marriage and ensure non-discrimination against girls in this regard; also to consider the need for effective public information and sensitization activities to discourage **early marriage** (Para 26, Compilation)
- To adopt, in cooperation with international agencies, effective plans to combat childhood and **maternal mortality** (Para 38, Compilation)
- To continue its efforts to promote and facilitate **school attendance**, particularly among girls; to take effective measures to ensure that primary education is available to all, to improve the quality of teaching and to reduce drop-out rates (Para 43, Compilation)