

QUICK GUIDE TO ADDRESS WOMEN'S ISSUES

DURING THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW ON RUSSIAN FEDERATION[1]

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.
- In those cases in which the Sexual Rights Initiative has submitted reports, we have included an Annex with our recommendations.
- In all cases we have included 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, while **recommendations** are in bold and underlined. 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 ratified, Palermo Protocol ratified, Rome Statute not ratified. _

Gaps: The only reference to women's issues is in the section on Non-Discrimination (Para. 27-30); a gender perspective has not been applied to any other issue in the report.

Issue	National Report	Compilation	Summary
Domestication/Harmonization with international law		International treaties can be invoked in national Courts (2)	Need to eliminate discrepancies (1)
Economic rights/ Right to development		Feminization of poverty. Older women (50)	
Equality and Non discrimination	Guarantees (27), low number of offences registered	Lack of constitutional provisions. Concerns around gender inequality	

	(29), measures taken (30)	(10)	
Public and political participation		National Action Plan (5)	
Reproductive health/rights	Protection of the State (82)	High rates of infant and maternal mortality. Unsafe abortion as a main cause of maternal mortality; problems: adolescent reproductive health, spread of HIV, maternal health (52) UNFPA Projects (85)	
Right to education		Need to guarantee free primary education; Adolescent girls' illiteracy (57)	
Right to work		High rates of women's unemployment (46) Most women in lower level and low-paying jobs. Need for an equal employment opportunity law (48)	
Sexual violence		Women exposed to rape and sexual harassment (26)	
Stereotypes		Persistence (10)	
Trafficking/sexual exploitation		Large numbers of trafficked persons (32);	Need for continued efforts and adoption

/violence of/against children		women exposed to trafficking (26)	of a law to combat trafficking (25)
Violence against Women		Domestic violence: high rates; lack of legislative protection; police refusal or unwillingness to deal with it (27). Multiple forms; Recommendations from Special Rapporteur on VAW (81)	Domestic violence widespread; lack of statistics. Need for shelters, sensitization of police and judiciary (24)
Women deprived of their liberty	Better conditions of detention (118)	Women exposed to violence in prison (26)	
Women in conflict and post-conflict situations		Counter-terrorism strategy making women vulnerable in the North Caucasus (72, 26, 81)	

Domestication/Harmonization with international treaties

In 2006, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) welcomed the fact that **international treaties can be directly invoked in domestic courts** (Para 2, Compilation). A joint submission by Russian NGOs (Russian NGOs) recommended **that the Russian Federation eliminate discrepancies between national and international human rights legislation**. (Para 1, Summary)

Economic rights/Right to development

In 2002, CEDAW was concerned at the **feminization of poverty**, as also noted by a 2006 UNDP report, and at the poverty of **older women** (Para 50, Compilation)

Equality and Non Discrimination

*The State will guarantee rights and freedoms of people and citizens, regardless of **gender**; race, nationality, language, origin, economic and professional status, residence place, religion attitude, beliefs, joining public organizations or in any other circumstances* (Para 27, NR). *In Russia Federation **discrimination** is considered a **punishable crime**. The number of crimes against rights and freedoms in the Russian Federation is insignificant. Between 2006 and 2007 only three crimes related to discrimination were registered* (Para 29, NR). *The Estate has **introduced measures to oversee gender equality*** (Para 30, NR).

In 2002 CEDAW was also concerned that the **Constitution does not expressly prohibit discrimination on the ground of sex**. In 2003, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) remained concerned about **gender inequality** (Para 10, Compilation)

Public and political participation

In 2002, CEDAW welcomed the **National Action Plan** to increase women's representation in **decision-making** positions (Para 5, Compilation)

Reproductive health/rights

In agreement with Constitutional law, motherhood as well as childhood and the family enjoy of protection of the state. (Para 82, NR).

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) was concerned about the high levels of **infant and maternal mortality**, and that **unsafe abortion remains a main cause of maternal mortality**. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) noted that in the area of reproductive health main problems are connected with **adolescent** and **reproductive health, spread of HIV** and maternal health (Para 52, Compilation). UNFPA mentioned that the projects it supports are focused on –among others- **reproductive health** including **HIV/STI prevention**, and advocacy and **gender equity** (Para 85, Compilation).

Right to education

In 2005, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was concerned about the number of **adolescent illiterates** and the **increase in the proportion of girls among them** (Para 57, Compilation)

Right to work

In 2003, CESCR remained concerned about the relatively **high rates of unemployment** in women (among others) (Para 46, Compilation). CEDAW was deeply concerned that women are the overwhelming majority of workers in **lower level and low-paying jobs** in the various parts of the **public sector**. It **urged the enactment of an equal employment opportunity law** (Para 48, Compilation)

Sexual violence

In 2006, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that women are reportedly exposed to multiple forms of violence in society at large, including **rape and sexual harassment**. (Para 26, Compilation).

Stereotypes and Discriminatory Attitudes

In 2002, CEDAW expressed concern at the persistence of stereotypes and **discriminatory attitudes** with respect to the role of women and men in the family and society (Para 10, Compilation)

Trafficking of women/Forced prostitution

The Human Rights (HR) Committee was concerned about the **large number of persons** who are being trafficked for sexual (and labour) exploitation, mainly to destinations outside the borders

(Para 32, Compilation). In 2006, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that women are reportedly **exposed** to multiple forms of violence in society at large, including trafficking (Para 26, Compilation).

The CoE/Commissioner **recommended continued efforts to combat trafficking in human beings; and the adoption of a law governing the fight against such trafficking to make it more effective** (Para 25, Summary).

Violence against Women/Gender Violence

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that CEDAW and CESCR have both expressed concern about the **high rates of domestic violence** and the **lack of legislative protection**. The lack of specific legislation contributes to impunity for crimes committed in the private sphere. It deters women from seeking recourse and reinforces **police unwillingness**, or even **refusal, to deal seriously with the problem**, as they do not consider it a crime. UNFPA mentioned the long standing and painful problem of domestic violence. (Para 27, Compilation). In 2006, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that while violence against women occurs mainly **in the home**, women are reportedly exposed to **multiple forms of violence in society** at large (Para 26, Compilation). The Special Rapporteur on violence against women issued recommendations related to domestic violence (Para 81, Compilation). Amnesty International (AI) stated that violence against women in the family remains widespread, yet there are **no official statistics** on the issue, which demonstrates a lack of prioritization of the issue. The CoE/Commissioner **recommended that the Russian Federation combat violence against women, in particular domestic violence; provide shelters for battered women, which could encourage the victims to report domestic violence to the prosecuting authorities; and provide greater training for the police and the representatives of the judiciary in this area** (Para 24, Summary).

Women deprived of their liberty

*In prison, pregnant women, lactating mothers with their babies, minors, detainees with illnesses, or Class I-II disabilities, enjoy **better conditions of detention**. Penitentiary system centres are equipped with 12 maternal care homes, in which 776 children live.* (Para 118, NR).

In 2006, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that women are reportedly **exposed to multiple forms of violence** in society at large, including in prison (Para 26, Compilation).

Women in conflict and post-conflict situations

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that, in the **North Caucasus**, women have become even more vulnerable to human rights violations due to the **counter-terrorist strategy** adopted in response to suicide bombings allegedly committed by Chechen women (Para 72, Compilation). In 2006, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that women are reportedly exposed to multiple forms of violence in society at large, including within the context of the **military operations** in the North Caucasus (Para 26, Compilation) and formulated recommendations related to violence against women in the North Caucasus (Para 81, Compilation).

- Ask the Russian Federation to elaborate on the measures taken to oversee gender equality (Para. 30, National Report)

- Ask which measures are being taken to tackle feminization of poverty and the particularly vulnerable situation of older women /Recommend that the Russian Federation takes all necessary steps to improve women's economic situation, reverting the process of feminization of poverty and paying particular attention to the situation faced by older women.

- Recommend that the RF takes urgent measures to lower maternal mortality rates including: implementing action plans to ensure women's equal access to education and employment; improving the quality and accessibility of reproductive health services throughout the country; reviewing abortion laws and implementing a program focused on adolescents including school-retention, confidential and accurate information and counselling on reproductive and sexual health matters.

- Recommend that the RF implements the recommendations from different UN mechanisms on preventing, sanctioning and eradicating domestic violence against women, particularly by promulgating a law on the issue, providing assistance to victims and sensitivity-training for law enforcement and judiciary personnel.

- Ask the RF about the situation of women deprived of their liberty particularly how are they protected from violence perpetrated by penitentiary staff and also about the conditions in which children in the maternal centres operating in prison live. Recommend that the RF considers alternative penalties for pregnant women and mothers of young children including home imprisonment.

[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