

15 April 2005  
English  
Original: French

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

**Responses to the list of issues and questions for  
consideration of the combined fourth and fifth  
periodic report**

**Burkina Faso**

**Constitution, legislation and status of the Convention**

**Question 1**

Since the consideration of the combined second and third periodic reports, the Government of Burkina Faso, with the support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women's associations and development partners, has worked to consolidate the progress made and promote new measures, including legislative amendments, action plans, policies and strategies for the achievement of gender equality.

**1.1 Legislative amendments**

Since the consideration of the most recent reports, the Constitution and other legislation have continued to respect the principle of gender non-discrimination.

Only one code — the Labour Code — has been amended through Act No. 033-2004/AN of 14 September 2004. In it all forms of sexual harassment are prohibited for the first time.

**1.2 Action plans, policies and strategies**

In order to take gender equality into account, a study assessing Burkina Faso's gender challenges strategy was conducted in April 2003. The study evaluates the policies, strategies and action plans discussed below in various sectors of activity in order to demonstrate the progress achieved in addressing the gender problem.

### **The policy letter on sustainable human development**

The policy letter, the purpose of which is to help focus the nation's development on the idea of human security, explicitly addresses the issue of women in the context of optimal human resource development as one element of a sustainable human development strategy. It envisages a more active role for women in development, which requires publicizing and disseminating all the legislation and codes adopted in order to advance the rights and status of women and taking specific measures to support both women's organizations and the development of economic activities benefiting women. This is a real cultural adjustment which will involve maximizing opportunities to give women easier access to land, credit and training facilities and modern techniques to lighten the burden of their household tasks.

### **The strategic framework for poverty reduction (SFPR) 2003-2006**

One of the principles underlying the review of the SFPR is the existing inequality between men and women that is perceived as a major cause of poverty, both among women and in general.

Thus, the need to take gender equality into account is one of the guiding principles of the SFPR. The Government is committed to expanding opportunities in the areas of employment and income-generating activities for poor people and, in particular, to improving the living conditions of rural women.

With respect to income-generating activities, a mechanism for providing support to underprivileged groups and those in urgent need — the national solidarity fund — has been established. In addition, a variety of projects for women (including homes, mills, shea butter presses, grain hulling machines and motorized pumps) have been implemented, especially in the 20 poorest provinces, and have improved women's economic and social situation.

Education is the sector in which women's issues have been best integrated. One of the anticipated results is an increase in the enrolment rate to 50 per cent (of which girls will account for 43 per cent) and an increase in the literacy rate (of which women accounted for 60 per cent during the period 2004-2006). The SFPR and 10-year basic education development plan (PDDEB) indicators in the areas of women's education and enrolment are used; these are the gross admission rates and gross enrolment rates for girls.

### **The regional strategic frameworks for poverty reduction**

One of the basic principles used in developing the regional strategic frameworks for poverty reduction is the need to reduce gender inequalities as a key factor in the success of the entire poverty reduction strategy. Thus, this principle is expressed repeatedly in the guiding principles of the SFPR for all 13 regions.

The issue of the advancement of women is also addressed in most of the focus areas of the regional strategies and of the monitoring indicators.

### **The National Good Governance Plan**

Good governance — defined as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority within the framework of the management of public

affairs — pursues several goals, including greater participation of civil society in the management of public affairs. The good governance policy stresses the need to increase the public's decision-making powers, especially those of women, in the area of development activities.

#### **The decentralized rural development policy letter**

This letter envisages the legal, social and economic protection of women. It covers the following topics:

- Decentralization of the system for granting women credit for the development of income-generating activities;
- Review of the modalities for awarding irrigated plots of land in order to include criteria favourable to women;
- Measures to make agricultural services more accessible to women;
- Promotion of health savings and loan programmes and education loans;
- Implementation of the agrarian and land reform (RAF) legislation;
- Translation of the Individual and Family Code (CPF) into the national languages and dissemination thereof;
- Establishment of legal information centres (aid and advisory centres) in all the provinces; and
- Expansion of the trade in shea butter.

#### **The strategic framework for combating HIV/AIDS**

On the basis of the statistics provided by the National Council to Combat AIDS, which estimated the rate of HIV/AIDS seropositivity at 7.17 per cent in 2000, and of the social and economic impact of this pandemic, the Government has developed a strategic framework for combating AIDS, including four strategic approaches and five general objectives. These objectives are:

- To reduce the transmission of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs);
- To control the progress of STIs and HIV/AIDS and increase understanding of the epidemic;
- To reduce the impact of STIs and HIV/AIDS on individuals, families and communities;
- To strengthen the national, regional and international partnership for combating STIs and HIV/AIDS; and
- To strengthen the organizational capacity and coordination of community-based organizations.

Achievement of these goals should help reduce the impact of HIV and STIs on infected or affected women through strategies adapted to the new situation (such as promoting the use of female condoms).

The strategic framework for combating HIV/AIDS targets a specific group of women: HIV-positive pregnant women. Prevention of mother-child transmission of HIV/AIDS is a priority for action in combating HIV/AIDS.

### **The policy and the action and leadership plan for the promotion of human rights**

The issue of the advancement of women is addressed explicitly in chapter V of this document, which deals with the protection, promotion and strengthening of economic, social and cultural rights. Improving and expanding access to education requires that priority be given to activities such as the development of a programme to increase young girls' enrolment. This issue is also addressed through the promotion and protection of specific categories of rights; one strategy for action is to strengthen and consolidate the specific rights of women, including by promoting their citizenship and participation in public affairs. The key components of this strategy are:

- To ensure that national legislation is amended to harmonize it with the relevant international legal instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- To propose measures benefiting women, including those designed to increase their participation in political, economic, social and cultural life;
- To ensure that the gender perspective is incorporated into the educational system and media programmes;
- To publicize the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- To monitor the process of ratification of the Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa;
- To help disseminate and publicize the Individual and Family Code;
- To organize information and training sessions informing women of their rights;
- To encourage the establishment of support centres for women victims of violence;
- To help promote the right to reproductive health;
- To develop and implement a plan for combating practices and customs demeaning to women;
- To support movements and associations for the promotion and protection of women's rights;
- To promote free primary and secondary education for girls;
- To propose measures to facilitate women's access to resources such as loans, services, education, health care and information;
- To introduce appropriate draft legislation and regulations to combat violence against women; and
- To help combat violence against women (including forced marriage, excision and social exclusion).

### **The National Population Policy**

The issue of the advancement of women is addressed in this Policy at the highest level: that of basic principles. The promotion of women's political,

economic and social rights is mentioned on several occasions, including in the general objectives and strategic approaches.

A major portion of this national policy framework document is devoted to the advancement of women; two of its five general objectives deal specifically with the issue of gender.

### **The national communication policy document for Burkina Faso**

One of the specific objectives of this policy is to help advance the status of women and promote gender equity.

#### *In the area of employment and work*

This sector has a strategic framework for the promotion of employment and work-related training and a plan of action. The strategic framework sets forth strategies for the promotion of employment and the development of vocational training.

The strategy for the promotion of employment calls for the direct creation of jobs aimed at reducing poverty; one of these programmes targets women.

#### *In the area of health and nutrition*

The national health policy is based on four documents:

- The national health policy document;
- The 2001-2010 national health development plan;
- The 2001-2003 triennial implementation plans for the national health development plan; and
- The national nutrition action plan.

The overall objective of the national health policy is to improve the public's state of health. One of the seven objectives underlying this general objective is promotion of the health of vulnerable groups.

This specific objective seeks to ensure better health for women; the target groups include women, mothers and children, adolescents and young people of both sexes. It promotes reproductive health for young people and low-risk pregnancy for women of reproductive age.

#### *In the area of agriculture*

The Agricultural Development Policy Letter mentions the issue of the advancement of women in its Specific Objective No. 10 on promotion of the role of women and young people in the agricultural sector.

The elements of this specific objective are:

- To support income-generating activities (production, harvesting, processing and sale of agricultural, livestock and fisheries products);
- To provide the target groups with training in literacy and simple management techniques;

- To invest in projects aimed at lightening their work;
- To facilitate their access to land and production methods;
- To promote their participation in decision-making; and
- To implement the project aimed at encouraging young people to remain on their land.

Thus, the issue of the advancement of women has been addressed at a high level.

The Strategic Guidance Document on Agriculture does not include the advancement of women among its four major objectives. However, the agricultural sector projection for 2010, which has had a great influence on the Strategic Guidance Document, does aim to improve the status of rural women.

Thus, significantly improving the economic status of rural women is one of the seven major strategic guidance areas.

#### *In the area of education*

##### **The ten-year basic education development plan (PDDEB)**

The PDDEB is the cornerstone of the national education policy. Its four general objectives mention the need to reduce gender disparities (the first general objective). The need to take the advancement of women into account is a specific objective; in fact, the first objective is to increase the enrolment rate to 70 per cent by 2009, focusing especially on women and on the poorest rural areas.

With respect to the plan's implementation strategy, the enrolment targets are 44.08 per cent for girls in the first phase, 58.53 per cent overall (52.05 per cent for girls) in the second phase, and a 40 per cent literacy rate and 65 per cent enrolment rate for girls in the third phase.

Burkina Faso is also preparing an Education for All national action plan, which is harmonized with the PDDEB. The primary objectives of the national action plan, which incorporate the issue of the advancement of women, are:

- To ensure that by 2015, all children, including girls, children in difficulty and children belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to high-quality, compulsory, free primary education and an opportunity to complete that education; and
- To eliminate gender inequalities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and to achieve equality in that area by 2015, including by giving girls equitable, unrestricted access to high-quality basic education with the same chance of success as boys.

#### *In the area of the environment*

The national biodiversity policy addresses the issue of the advancement of women through its objectives and strategic options and, more precisely, through its specific objectives. In the area of forestry, it is recommended that special attention should be paid to women's participation as primary users of biological resources and, above all, in the context of their habitual willingness to involve themselves in

local development activities and of their key role in the transfer of knowledge to young people.

### **The plan of action of the Department of Better Living Conditions**

The role and status of women are not dealt with explicitly in this plan of action, but women are essential to the well-being of families and society in all Burkina Faso's ethnic groups and regions. In the family, the gender-based allocation of household tasks places women in charge of housekeeping, hygiene and cleanliness. In society, outside the family unit, women's associations (including environmental groups) are very active in ensuring a clean environment.

The issue of the advancement of women is explicitly addressed from the point of view of human resources in the section of the document devoted to women's participation, which describes the essential role played by women in environmental matters. They play a very active role in restoration of the plant cover and diversification of the potential for food self-sufficiency. However, the plan states that strengthened functional literacy programmes and support systems in the form of loans and occasional assistance in meeting the needs expressed by women's groups is necessary to support their performance.

### **Question 2**

*Clarification of the statement that "(i)n general terms, in Burkina Faso there are no explicit legislative or administrative provisions that prohibit discrimination against women".*

We agree with the Committee that this statement contradicts everything said in the report, and we apologize.

In reality, the words "specifically penalize", rather than "prohibit" should have been used.

The prohibition of discrimination is a fundamental principle in our legislation, but there are no criminal or civil penalties for those who discriminate against women, particularly within the family.

For example, a father who decides to send his sons, but not his daughters, to school cannot be punished for this discriminatory choice because the law does not envisage penalties for this act, despite the fact that it is contrary to the principles enshrined in the Constitution and the legislation concerning education for all.

The Labour Code adopted in September 2004, unlike other legislation, successfully strengthens the definition of discrimination.

Article 3 of the Code prohibits discrimination in the area of employment and occupation and provides the following definition of discrimination:

"Discrimination means:

- (a) Any distinction, exclusion or preference on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national origin or social background which has the effect of destroying or otherwise affecting equality of opportunity or treatment in the area of employment or occupation;

(b) Any other distinction, exclusion or preference having the effect of destroying or otherwise affecting equality of opportunity or treatment in the area of employment or occupation.”

It should be noted that the 2004 Labour Code includes colour and national origin as examples of prohibited discrimination; these were not included in the provisions of article 1, paragraph 3, of the 1994 Code.

### **Question 3**

Since the previous reports, the Department for the Advancement of Women, together with associations and NGOs working in the field of women’s rights, have been carrying out nationwide training and awareness-raising activities for the general public, and especially for women, concerning the legislation that protects women.

Another purpose of these sessions is to survey the public’s wishes concerning the necessary repeal and amendment of legislation which violates the principle of gender non-discrimination. In October 2000, the National Forum for the Advancement of Women and Girls, attended by delegates from all the provinces, was held; it involved a framework of exchange with a government delegation headed by the Head of State, H.E. Mr. Blaise Compaoré.

On this occasion, the delegates addressed the authorities on the subject of these various legal provisions. Since then, action has continued; we believe that Burkina Faso’s signature of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and of the Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa are steps towards the compulsory harmonization of our national legislation with the primary regional and international instruments.

We note with great satisfaction that our Government is on the point of ratifying these two Protocols.

### **Question 4**

Training and awareness-raising activities are conducted for judges, lawyers and administrators. Information on Burkina Faso’s international obligations under the Convention is often included in such training in order to change traditional perceptions and stereotypes that hinder effective enjoyment of the equal rights of men and women recognized in our legislation.

### **Question 5**

The reply to this question, as to those provided above, is affirmative; there are many such initiatives throughout the country.

The role of the media (radio, television and newspapers) is very important and they have always been involved in order to ensure that messages reach even the most remote areas.

### **Question 6**

At the time the latest reports were submitted there were 11 jurisdictions in Burkina Faso, which has a total area of 272,000 km<sup>2</sup>.



Six additional jurisdictions have been created by the Government in order to bring justice closer to the people.

In 2002, Parliament adopted a legal aid act so that legal costs would not hinder women's access to the judiciary.

Under this act, the very poor are exempt from payment of the compulsory fees for bringing a case before the courts; these fees are covered under the national budget.

Associations and NGOs working to promote women's rights also provide legal aid for court cases, including case monitoring, advisory services and even covering the costs of retaining a lawyer and treating the victim.

While domestic law, which simply guarantees equal rights, is invoked before the courts, there have been no legal decisions based solely on a provision of the Convention.

### **Violence against women**

#### **Question 7**

As is the case throughout the world, violence against women takes the following forms:

- Physical violence: blows, beatings, female genital mutilation and scarification;
- Psychological and emotional violence: insults, forced/early marriage, marriage with a brother's widow or a wife's sister (levirate or sororate marriage), all forms of discrimination, repudiation and desertion of the family; and
- Sexual violence: rape, incest and sexual abuse.

While physical and sexual violence are often brought to the authorities' attention through the gendarmerie and the police, this is not the case with psychological and emotional violence.

These are handled through the traditional forms of conflict resolution: family councils or intervention by the witnesses to the marriage or the religious or customary authorities.

There is no national mechanism to gather statistical data on violence against women.

We can report that increasing numbers of women have recourse to the competent authorities and that sentences have been handed down.

This is particularly true of sexual violence since it is rarely tolerated by any social group.

#### **Question 8**

Burkina Faso has no specific legislation on domestic violence.

However, there has always been specific legislation covering all forms of sexual violence.

The Penal Code calls for sentences of 5 to 20 years' imprisonment without parole.

Information and awareness-raising campaigns are conducted in order to prevent such violence.

The victims receive medical treatment, medical and legal expertise and, in the case of minors, psychological treatment.

Since the advent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, serological tests have been conducted systematically in all cases involving sexual penetration so that appropriate health protection measures can be taken.

Pregnancy tests are also administered since the law permits abortion in cases of rape or incest.

### **Exploitation of prostitution, and trafficking**

#### **Question 9**

The Penal Code makes prostitution a crime; article 423 defines prostitution as an act in which a person of either sex habitually engages in sexual acts for remuneration.

Anyone engaging in prostitution is subject to a 15-day to two-month prison sentence and/or a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 francs.

Article 427 establishes more severe penalties for anyone who receives clients for sexual services in a hotel, boarding house, bar, club, league premises or dance hall or who engages in prostitution. It is clear that despite the Government's desire for prostitution not to exist in Burkina Faso, the problem does exist, particularly in urban areas as a consequence of the poverty and population density.

Efforts have been made to initiate dialogue with the women and girls who engage in this practice with a view to their social rehabilitation, but no specific programme of this kind has yet been developed.

However, with respect to their health, there are monitoring programmes aimed at combating sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, all the development projects and programmes discussed under question 1 incorporate gender equality in order to allow girls and women to escape from poverty and give them access to education and training so that they will not be forced to seek an escape through prostitution or any other means contrary to public order and morality.

#### **Question 10**

In order to prevent and punish trafficking in children, Act No. 038-2003/AN of 27 May 2003, which defines and penalizes for trafficking in children, was adopted. This Act was promulgated by decree and published on page 1114 of Official Gazette No. 31 on 31 July 2003.

It should also be noted that article 148 of the 2004 Labour Code prohibits the worst forms of child labour: "The worst forms of child labour are categorically prohibited." This is a public policy provision.

Under this Act, the term “the worst forms of child labour” means:

- (1) All forms of slavery or similar practices such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt servitude and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts;
- (2) The use, recruitment or offer of a child for purposes of prostitution, production of pornographic material or pornographic entertainment;
- (3) The use, recruitment or offer of a child for purposes of illegal activity, including the production and sale of narcotics, as defined under the international conventions ratified by Burkina Faso; and
- (4) Work which, by its nature or the conditions under which it is performed, may be detrimental to the child’s health, safety or morals.

### **Discriminatory practices and stereotypes**

#### **Question 11**

When Burkina Faso submitted its combined second and third reports (in 2000), the legislation on traditional practices and customs detrimental to women had been adopted only four years previously: in 1996, the Penal Code was amended to include sanctions for female genital mutilation, forced and/or early marriage, dowry and desertion of the family.

In the French-influenced legal system, the principle is that “no one is presumed ignorant of the law”. But for our largely illiterate people, stages of awareness-raising were needed to make women aware of the provisions designed to protect them. This was primarily the role of associations and NGOs.

The Government, for its part, has strengthened the existing legislation through the following measures:

- Preservation and strengthening of the National Committee to Combat the Practice of Excision, which has been given a larger budget. A hot line has been created to facilitate communication with victims and with anyone wishing to report cases of planned or actual excision;
- Preservation and strengthening of the National Commission to Combat Discrimination Against Women and the Office of Legal Affairs in the Department for the Advancement of Women, which offer advice and legal aid for victims; and
- Severe sentences in the courts for those convicted of the aforementioned acts of violence.

In recent years, suspended sentences have been replaced by sentences with no possibility of parole in order to make them as dissuasive as possible.

#### **Question 12**

The primary measures in place or anticipated with a view to involving the media more effectively in combating gender-based discriminatory stereotypes may be summarized as follows:

- Providing media presenters with training in the primary rights which protect women and children from general discrimination and violence;
- Devoting more media space to women’s concerns; there are now far more articles in the press and radio and television programmes on such topics;
- Creation of a civil society group advocating a better image of women in the media;
- Supporting the communications activities of women’s associations;
- Placing more women in positions of responsibility in news organizations;
- Involving the media in disseminating training and awareness-raising information at the local level and in conveying judicial decisions against perpetrators of violent acts.

The information is broadcast in the official language, the national languages, on radio and in the print and visual media.

### **Question 13**

Awareness-raising campaigns concerning the Individual and Family Code are continuing because of their very positive impact on family life and personal status. Citizens are becoming increasingly aware of equal rights for all children, in marriage and within society in general. More and more people are getting married in registry offices and, in rural areas, more and more births are being recorded at the registry office. Inheritance rights are better protected and, now that they know their established rights under the Code, women do not hesitate to go to court to ensure that they are respected.

### **Participation in political and public life**

#### **Question 14**

Efforts have been made to increase the level of representation of women in elective bodies.

Statistics show that in 1995, 152 women were elected in communal elections as compared with 1,546 men. In 2000, 232 women were elected as compared with 860 men. In 1992, there were four women in the National Assembly; in 2002 (the current term), there were 13 women as compared with 98 men. No temporary special measures or obligatory quotas have been used to achieve equal representation of women and men in political and public life. Nevertheless, it was recommended that political parties should allocate at least 30 per cent of seats in governing bodies to women, to close the gap. At the level of the Constitution and the Electoral Code, women’s right to be elected remains guaranteed, as does their right to found and to lead political parties. Civil society is firmly committed to supporting women who aspire to hold elected office. For the 2002 legislative elections, associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supported women from different political parties who were registered on the electoral lists.

## Education

### Question 15

The ten-year basic education development plan (PDDEB) for the period from 2001 to 2010, adopted in July 1999 by Decree No. 99-254/PRES/PM/MEBA was developed as the official framework for all basic education activities. It contains a section on “girls’ education”. The plan provides for research and information and awareness-raising activities to advance the enrolment of girls in school. Henceforth, activities of the Directorate for the Promotion of Girls’ Education will be part of this new framework.

A number of measures have been put in place to promote girls’ education:

- The development of a girls’ education action plan for the period from 2001 to 2004, which covers the first phase of PDDEB;
- The adoption in May 2002 of the Government’s education policy letter;
- The “25 by 2005” initiative, which is designed to maximize efforts, intensify actions and substantially increase support to 25 countries in which enrolment rates for girls are low and likely to sink lower;
- The holding of national meetings on education and the Conference of Parent and Teachers’ Associations on Girls’ Education in 2002 shows the will of both the State and civil society to promote girls’ education;
- The adoption in 2003 of the strategic framework for poverty reduction (SFPR). This framework will from now on be promoted for any development initiative in which education is a priority sector;
- The existence at the national level of a technical consultation forum of Technical and Financial Partners in Education;
- The establishment of a thematic group of experts on girls’ education.

In Burkina Faso, activities to promote girls’ education have been divided into the following categories: improved access, reduction in the drop-out rate, and scholastic achievement.

#### 1. Improved access

- Establishment of education infrastructures. The Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy (MEBA) has defined a minimum infrastructure package: three classrooms, three teachers’ housing units, separate toilet facilities for girls and boys; one drinking-water point (standpipe) plus three drinking water stations to provide water in the classrooms; classroom equipment: 25 combination bench-tables, one table, one chair, one cupboard, one school canteen (infrastructure and food available);
- Attempts are being made to achieve enrolment parity of 50 percent between girls and boys respectively. Although parity has not yet been reached, results in bilingual schools are encouraging;
- In addition, legislation calls for compulsory enrolment of all school-age children, although the law has not been respected or applied in practice;

- Awareness-raising and community mobilization have been developed through various awareness-raising activities at the local level, such as the UNICEF integrated communication plan, and forum theatre, especially in pockets of resistance to school enrolment;
- A broad awareness-raising campaign to involve all levels of society in promoting girls' education;
- School books and supplies are provided free to schoolchildren, and some school fees have been abolished (for girls);
- A "satchel for girls" as a "minimum package" containing school books donated free of charge was distributed to girls in 100 schools in 11 provinces having low rates of school enrolment.

## **2. Reduction in the drop-out rate**

- The MEBA school canteen project developed in collaboration with the Catholic Relief Services, the World Food Programme and communities (locally run canteens) keeps children in school, especially girls;
- In addition to these canteens, girls are given a supplementary ration of 10 kg of food or flour to take home in the 20 provinces of Burkina Faso considered to be of priority concern, as in kind food compensation for families that agree to enrol their girl children in school;
- Building the capacity of basic community structures, inter alia the *Associations des Mères Éducatrices*, to follow up on the enrolment of girls in school, on management and the development of microprojects should involve mothers in their children's enrolment, particularly their girl children;
- The State also conducted an analysis of school text books according to type, with a view to revising them. The review is still in progress.

## **3. Improved scholastic achievement**

MEBA has introduced national languages into the school curriculum and started training teachers and senior education personnel in gender issues and law. In addition, gender and law modules have been developed for basic instruction at national elementary school teacher training colleges and subsequent training. MEBA, in collaboration with partners, holds a competitive exam every year which rewards high-achieving children (girls and boys).

The following measures have been taken in the fields of technical and vocational teaching:

- (1) Girls are encouraged and motivated to obtain qualifications for various trades. To this end there are public colleges and technical education centres;
- (2) The number of girls is being increased, to dispel myths and promote access to skilled work through State diplomas; at this level, two essential measures have been proposed:
  - Recruiting 55 per cent girls as compared with 45 per cent boys through all entrance tests for secondary-level technical schools (AP-

CAP (*Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*), first level, A BEP (*brevet d'études professionnelles*) 2nd level TI and AB3);

- Lowering the average score for girls for entry in the CAP preparatory year, to attain the quota of 55 per cent (special temporary measure);
- (3) An information and awareness-raising campaign is under way to steer girls towards the industrial stream (mechanical, electrical, electronics, computers, civil engineering, construction, etc.); elimination of “job taboos” for girls.
  - (4) For children in general education classes, the Centre for Scholastic and Professional Information and Guidance (*Centre d'Information et d'Orientation Scolaire et Professionnelle*) (CIOSP) has created a database to assist in the selection of training programmes following the BEPC (*brevet d'études*, first level). Girls are particularly sought after and are invited to register in the scientific and technical streams.

For the last two years, the General Directorate of Technical and Secondary Education (*Direction Générale de l'Enseignement Secondaire et Technique*) has given highest priority to girls holding CAP or BEP diplomas in industrial studies in its (pre-employment) internships.

In the context of implementing the recommendations of the African Development Bank, which contributed to the construction of a production centre at the Training Centre for Women's and Craft Industries (*Centre de Formation Féminine et Artisanale*), girls will be given a start-up kit upon leaving the Centre.

All such praiseworthy initiatives are insufficient when compared with what is really required to shelter skilled young women from poverty by finding them decent jobs or creating viable self-employment conditions. The combined actions of the departments responsible for women's issues in general and of NGOs able to contribute multifaceted support to training young women, will provide fertile ground for women's fulfilment and independence.

### **Question 16**

In the field of literacy and informal education, the rate of female enrolment increased as follows between 2000 and 2003:

From 61,198 women for the period from 2000 to 2001; to 71,710 for the period from 2001 to 2002; and to 111,738 women for the period from 2002 to 2003.

The rate of female enrolment during that period surpassed that of male enrolment, and the drop-out rate was lower. The success rate was higher for men, but from 2002 to 2003 the trend was reversed, and the success rate among women was higher. Progress was achieved owing to the following combination of activities:

- Awareness-raising campaigns;
- Reduction of women's workload through technology (mills, standpipes, shea-presses, threshers, etc.);
- More action by partners, consisting mainly in literacy programmes.

## Employment

### Question 17

The following strategies or measures have been developed to promote women's participation in the labour market:

- The opening of training centres specifically for women (e.g. the *Centre féminin d'initiation et d'apprentissage aux métiers* (CFIAM) in Koudougou and the *Cheminement particulier de formation de type temporaire* (CPFT) in Bobo-Dioulasso);
- The establishment of boarding schools to allow girls to pursue their studies in better conditions;
- Subsidized training, in particular for schoolchildren of low-income parents (CFIAM, Don Bosco), or training free-of-charge (CPFT);
- Support in finding internships;
- Creation of a girls' guidance cell at CIOSP to help this specific group to make sensible training choices.

### Question 18

The study conducted in 2003 by the *Institut National de la Statistique et de la Démographie* (INSD) on household living standards shows women's participation in the labour market to be very significant. Thus, the employment rate for women between the ages of 15 and 60 is 77.7 per cent, while the national rate for this age bracket is 67.7 per cent. Women are active in various sectors, as follows:

- In the agricultural sector, 86.8 per cent of women are heads of household;
- In the rural, informal, non-agricultural sector, 45.8 per cent of women are heads of household, and 30.8 per cent of those women are self-employed in non-agricultural work. In rural areas women head microenterprises and/or have an agricultural occupation, and 5.9 per cent of women are involved in the rural, informal, non-agricultural sector;
- In the urban, informal, non-agricultural sector, most self-employed non-agricultural work is performed by men (82.5 per cent by men as compared with 17.5 per cent by women). However, 44.5 per cent of women heads of household are involved in this type of work as compared with 29.7 per cent of men. It is worth noting that 1.6 per cent of women heads of household are wage earners in the informal sector. Generally speaking, women participate in the labour market as self-employed workers in the informal sectors, both non-agricultural and agricultural. This trend is explained by the decline over the last 10 years in employment in the formal sector, caused by economic reforms. In any event, although they may face social and cultural obstacles, women can be found working in a number of different areas and doing jobs traditionally reserved for men:
  - o Maintenance and repair of office machines;
  - o Automobile mechanics;
  - o Two-wheeler mechanics;



- o Driving cars;
- o Electrical work in buildings;
- o Welding, etc.

## Health

### Questions 19 and 21

Access to primary care by the population as a whole, and women in particular, is of constant concern to the Government of Burkina Faso. With regard specifically to family planning, efforts are under way to make contraception services available and accessible throughout the territory, particularly modern contraceptive methods. The monitoring indicator for these services is the contraceptive prevalence rate, which is measured annually using routine data and demographic and health studies conducted by INSD.

#### Measures taken:

- **Improving service providers' skills**

To assure quality services, providers practising in primary health-care facilities are trained and regularly rotated. These activities form part of health district action plans, and necessary funds are mobilized through health district support projects which receive financial aid from partners. During the last four years, it is estimated that 2000 service providers have been trained in family planning, or rotated;

- **Procurement of contraceptives**

Special measures, monitored by technical services of the Ministry of Health and by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), apply to the acquisition of contraceptives. Accordingly, the following amounts (in CFA francs) have been used over the past four years for the procurement of contraceptives:

Table I

#### Amounts devoted to the procurement of contraceptives from 2001 to 2004 in Burkina Faso (not including the private sector)

<i>Period</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>
Partners	340 316 370	343 165 400	139 944 000	782 694 045
Burkina Faso State	20 000 000	-	-	206 170 281
<b>Total</b>	<b>360 316 370</b>	<b>343 165 400</b>	<b>139 944 000</b>	<b>988 864 326</b>

In order to guarantee these allocations, the Ministry of Health, with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UNFPA, has developed a plan for safeguarding reproductive health-care products, including those for family planning.

- **Provision of family planning services**

There are 1,351 health-care facilities in Burkina Faso. In each facility there is at least one qualified provider to offer family planning services. In addition, at least

two modern contraceptive methods are available. During 2003 the Ministry of Health, in association with its partners, began to introduce the female condom at the health-care service level and for various specific groups (sex workers). During 2004 and 2005, the following quantities of female condoms were acquired:

- 2004: 110,000 condoms;
- 2005: 80,000 condoms.

During 2003, the introduction of a new method called the “fixed day method” or “the ring” has expanded the range of contraceptive measures. Contraceptives are heavily subsidized so that price is not an obstacle.

Table II

**Comparison of actual retail prices with the prices charged for contraceptives supplied to women via the public sector**

<i>Contraceptive products</i>	<i>Actual retail prices</i>	<i>Cost of supply to women</i>
Pill	180.7	100
Injectable	700	500
Norplant	21 962	1 000
Male condom	59.73	10
Female condom	257	100
<i>Néo shampoïn</i>	1 411	150
IUD	260	800

• **Main difficulties encountered**

One difficulty encountered relates to the stocking of contraceptive products. It will be overcome by the development of the USAID/UNFPA plan, which will allow for the mobilization of all actors and better planning with regard to purchases.

Another difficulty concerns the limited use of family planning services, which is linked to several factors, including:

- **Inaccessibility of services:** The solution lies in extending the sweep of the country’s health-care services. This process was initiated with the implementation of the health-care development plan, which provides for the construction of new health-care facilities. Accordingly, the average journey to reach such a facility was reduced from 9.07 km in 2002 to 8.68 km in 2003; the number of facilities was increased from 1,253 in 2002 to 1,351 in 2003. Efforts to recruit and train health-care personnel have contributed to improving the availability of services. Each year, 400 new health-care workers on average are dispatched to work in health-care facilities. It should be noted that, in 2001, the Government decided to provide preventive care to women and children free-of-charge. Every year — beginning in 2002 — it purchases medicines and consumable items worth 200 million CFA francs;
- **Lack of knowledge among the population:** The low level of women’s education and the weight of traditions that are still upheld inhibit the use of family planning services. The ongoing major effort to promote school

enrolment for girls aims, inter alia, to reduce these handicaps, but results are achieved slowly and over the long term. The information and awareness-raising campaigns conducted by health-care services and NGOs also fall within the framework of the search for a solution;

- **Poverty:** In Burkina Faso 45.3 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. Women are more affected by poverty (47.1 per cent), and there are many ongoing poverty-reduction initiatives. The strategic framework for poverty reduction focuses on implementation of economic projects aimed at women through microcredit mechanisms to finance schemes initiated by them, an improved legal framework favourable to women, intensified literacy training for women and girls' education.

Despite these difficulties there have been slow but encouraging results in family planning, as shown in tables I and II. To enhance these results, several measures have been taken with respect to men and women, including:

- Awareness-raising campaigns about the use of both male and female condoms conducted by public and private media organizations and NGOs and associations;
- Support for the training activities provided by family planning associations to their members and the population as a whole;
- Support for women's groups and associations through various development projects that have a family planning component;
- Information provided by registry office officials at the marriage ceremony;
- Instruction given by religious officials when preparing persons for marriage, etc.

#### **Question 20**

With regard to the results obtained from political and legal measures.

#### **Question 22**

The practice of female genital mutilation is an offence in Burkina Faso and is punishable by law. To deal with this practice, which affects the physical well-being of women, the Government has established a national committee to combat genital mutilation. This committee has contacts in the provinces and the departments. It has conducted studies to assess the scope of the problem and to understand the determining factors. These efforts have allowed for information and awareness-raising campaigns to be conducted over several years. The Government has used the judicial system to crack down on the practice. Thus, on several occasions persons who had practised female genital mutilation have been tried and sentenced to prison terms. The most recent cases concerned a group of women from one part of the city of Ouagadougou who were sentenced to prison terms of up to three years.

There is a monitoring system involving security forces, women and NGOs that covers the entire territory and that helps to track down offenders. The number to call when reporting attempts or actual incidents has been widely disseminated so that offenders can be dealt with.

Media organizations and NGOs conduct information and awareness-raising campaigns. It must nevertheless be acknowledged that, since the practice has existed for decades and is rooted in the culture of some communities, it is unlikely that it

will be eradicated overnight. The Government, in collaboration with the NGO Population Council has just launched a study project to assess the situation and identify any factors to encourage resistance among the population.

### **Rural women**

#### **Question 23**

It should be noted that all the information contained in the answer to question 1, on laws, policies and programmes for the achievement of women's equality, took into account the rural sphere, which constitutes the greater part of the population. We showed that in all areas under discussion specific attention was paid to women, 80 per cent of whom live in rural areas. With regard to health, the question also dealt with the situation of rural women. All national projects and programmes contain decentralized operational plans. The decision to opt for decentralization as a means of enhancing government efficiency and increasing participation by grass-roots communities was followed by the decision to divide the country into 13 regions and the appointment of the first governors of those regions in 2004.

#### **Question 24**

The steps taken by the Government effectively to implement the Agrarian and Land Reform Code are more apparent with respect to urban land, where more and more women nowadays have the same opportunities as men to build a home or to conduct industrial commercial or professional activities. In rural areas difficulties persist given families' attachment, from generation to generation, to land as their sole asset. Women, even when organized, do not succeed in achieving full ownership of such land, only the right to work it for one or more years.

### **Marriage and family relations**

#### **Question 25**

Since 2000, awareness-raising campaigns and training programmes dealing with texts pertaining to women's advancement have increased in number throughout the national territory. They are designed to inform the people of the advantages of monogamy and the risks of choosing polygamy. This allows future spouses to make informed choices, and allows women already living in polygamous situations to take advantage of protection afforded under the law. From a legislative standpoint, the Government has not yet begun to review the Individual and Family Code on the question of polygamy, even though women are very keen for such a review to take place.

#### **Question 26**

Once the matter has been referred to the State, the provisions of the Individual and Family Code are applied to all aspects of personal status (birth, marriage, dissolution of marriage, death, inheritance). Women are resorting to legal action more and more frequently to claim restitution of their rights.

**Question 27**

In practice, there are institutions at the local level, such as district and departmental courts, which can issue the necessary documents when someone dies so that the courts or lawyers handling the settlement of an estate can proceed. Training and awareness-raising campaigns are conducted for women, as well as Government agencies involved in this area, to avoid any type of discrimination. If documents are drawn up in violation of inheritance rights, the law provides for civil, administrative and criminal penalties against the perpetrators.

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