



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

**Pre-session working group**

**Thirty-fifth session**

15 May-2 June 2006

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

**St. Lucia**

**Introduction**

The pre-session working group examined the combined initial, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth periodic report of Saint Lucia (CEDAW/C/LCA/1-6).

**Articles 1 and 2**

1. Please describe the process of preparation of the report, especially whether non-governmental organizations were consulted during its preparation, and indicate if the report was adopted by the Government and presented to the Parliament.
2. Kindly indicate whether provisions of international treaties ratified by Saint Lucia take precedence over domestic laws.

**Article 3**

3. Please provide information about the human and financial resources of the national machinery for the advancement of women, as well as its level of authority.
4. The report (para. 2.6) indicates that “a general review of the Criminal Code is ongoing and this process is expected to impact women significantly”. Kindly provide information on the status of the review process and on the parties involved in the review and clarify further how it will affect women.
5. The report (para. 2.21) indicates that under section 8 of the Equality of Opportunity and Treatment in Employment and Occupation Act 2000, “Any act of sexual harassment against an employee committed by an employer, managerial

employee or co-employee shall constitute unlawful discrimination based on sex ... and constitutes an offence". What are the penalties for offenders in cases of sexual harassment? How many persons have been prosecuted for sexual harassment under the Equality of Opportunity and Treatment in Employment and Occupation Act 2000 since its entry into force?

#### **Article 4**

6. According to the report (para. 4.1) "Section 7 of the Equality of Opportunity and Treatment in Employment and Occupation Act (2000) makes some provisions for affirmative action ..." Are temporary special measures provided for by this Act in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25 regularly applied? Please provide detailed information.

#### **Article 5**

7. As highlighted in the report (para. 5.1), "... gender stereotyping and prejudices against women and girls continue to pervade the cultural value system and this is evident in various spheres of Saint Lucian society, including socialization within the home, the education system, the workplace, the arts, politics and the media". Please provide specific information on the measures that have been taken and/or planned to combat gender stereotyping in all spheres of society.

#### **Violence against women**

8. Please provide data disaggregated by sex on the persons who have been prosecuted and the penalties imposed under the 1994 Domestic Violence Act since its entry into force and indicate the measures that have been put in place for the rehabilitation of victims of domestic violence.

9. In light of the successful one-year project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Gender Equity Fund in 1999 aimed at enhancing public sensitization and vigilance on gender-based violence, is the Government planning to carry out other similar projects in the future?

#### **Article 6**

10. The report (para. 6.1) states that "Prostitution remains illegal although it is known to be on the increase as a response to the growing economic difficulties experienced by some families". What measures have been taken to address the economic difficulties faced by women in order to provide them with economic alternatives to prostitution?

11. According to the report (para. 6.8), "Similar to the phenomenon of prostitution, it is difficult to determine the actual extent of the problem [of trafficking in women and girls] ... As a result, there is inadequate research and documentation of the problem of child exploitation". Has the Government taken any steps to adopt a comprehensive anti-trafficking strategy, including specific anti-trafficking legislation and the conduct of research, in order to better prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls?

## Articles 7 and 8

12. Does the Government intend to apply temporary special measures, in line with the Committee's general recommendation 25 on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and general recommendation 23 on women and public life, in order to increase the participation of women in the various levels and branches of Government, including the judiciary, legislature and administration?

13. The report (para. 7.27) indicates that the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women submitted a number of recommendations to the National Task Force on Local Government Reform in order to ensure de facto gender equality in local government. Please provide information on the status of the ongoing local government reform initiative and on whether the recommendations made by the National Machinery will be implemented.

## Article 9

14. According to the report (para. 9.2), the Citizens of Saint Lucia Act is discriminatory towards a Saint Lucian woman who chooses to marry a foreigner, since, "unlike the case of the woman, the man's application may not be accepted for reasons which include poor character, convictions for criminal and drug offence and non-residency". Please indicate if this provision has been or will be amended.

## Article 10

15. According to the report (para. 10.25), "at the secondary school level, and among the technical/vocational subjects, there are different subjects offered at the all-male and all-female schools". What measures are being taken to eliminate gender-bias in school curricula?

16. Please describe the steps being taken, and their impact, to encourage girls to choose non-traditional subjects at school.

17. In light of the high incidence of pregnancies among adolescent girls, as described in the report (para. 12.38), does the Government intend to take specific measures to ensure that school aged mothers continue their education? Please provide details.

## Article 11

18. The report (para. 11.29) states that "A comparison of employment figures of men and women demonstrates that women are more affected by unemployment than men, more men are part of the labour force than women, women generally receive less pay than men, and there is also the persistence of gender-based division of labour or occupational segregation". How does the Government intend to achieve gender equality in the field of employment?

19. According to the report (para. 11.28), "The effectiveness of the existing labour legislation is limited by employees' ignorance of their rights as well as by the fear of losing their jobs in what is known to be a competitive labour market". What

measures has the Government put in place to educate employers and employees of labour rights and to ensure that violations are effectively addressed?

20. According to the report (para. 11.17), “No provision has been made in the laws of Saint Lucia for paternity leave”. Has the Government taken any steps to encourage men to share family responsibilities with women?

## **Article 12**

21. The report (para. 12.47) indicates that abortion is illegal in Saint Lucia and that, “... it is known that backstreet/illegal abortions do take place; a situation which puts women concerned at risk, and with little legal recourse”. What measures has the Government taken or is planning to take to improve women’s access to family planning services in order to avoid the significant risks posed by clandestine abortions?

22. The report (para. 12.50) indicates that “The unwillingness among the youth and their negative attitude towards accepting and using family planning services result in a high population growth rate that places a strain on the limited social infrastructural services available. In addition, the problem is further compounded due to a lack of communication between parents and their sexually active daughters with respect to contraceptive use”. Has the Government undertaken any awareness-raising campaign to educate both adolescent boys and girls on reproductive health and family planning issues? Please provide details.

## **Article 13**

23. How many women, as compared to men, took advantage of the Saint Lucia Mortgage and Finance Company Limited loan schemes described in the report (para. 13.9) in order to build a house?

24. The report (para. 13.8) indicates that “From inception to 2002, the [James Belgrave Micro-Enterprise Development Fund Inc.] BELfund has issued loans to 180 micro-entrepreneurs, 58 per cent of whom are women”. Is the BELfund still active? If so, please provide the most recent data, disaggregated by sex, on loans given to Saint Lucians under this fund.

## **Article 14**

25. According to the report (para. 14.22), “Maternity services in health centres in the rural areas have been scaled down at times because health centres are not fully equipped to handle complications at birth”. What measures does the Government intend to take in order to ensure effective access to maternity services for women in the rural areas?

26. The report (para. 14.31) indicates that “there is a need to improve the quantity and quality of rural day-care services and other programmes to make education more accessible [to rural women]”. What measures are being taken in this regard?

**Articles 15 and 16**

27. According to the report (para. 15.6), “Although women have acquired equality before the law in all aspects, the mechanisms available to make the law operative and to enable women to assert their rights are very limited. The stipulated laws declare general principles but deficiencies with regard to their full implementation still remain.” What steps have been taken to ensure the full implementation of the laws?

28. As indicated in the report (para. 16.1), under the Civil Code men and women are allowed to marry at the age of 16 years. Please provide statistical data, disaggregated by sex and age, of persons who marry before 18 years of age and indicate whether the Government intends to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both men and women in order to bring it in line with article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and article 16, paragraph 2, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

**General**

29. What actions have been taken towards ratification of the Optional Protocol?

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