

**Jordan-NGO Delegation Oral Statement
Pre-Session Working Group of 51st Session
by Arab Women Organization (AWO) and Karama**

Introduction

On behalf of the Jordan NGO delegation, that includes representatives from Karama, the Arab Women Organization and SIGI, I'd like to welcome the opportunity offered to Arab women within the massive movements for social change and social justice. In Jordan, there is a promise from the government for the creation of a Constitutional Court, which might help in challenging all discriminatory laws. Nonetheless, current developments should make women alert to threat of the fundamentalist and Islamist groups who are severely attacking women's rights and achievements by asking to withdraw from even signing CEDAW.

The delegation will be discussing the following 6 issues:

1. Harmonization

The government of Jordan has not taken any measures **to incorporate CEDAW into the national legislation**. This impedes the judiciary and courts from being able to use CEDAW to end discrimination and injustices under the law.

2. Reservations

A positive measure was taken in 2009. The government of Jordan lifted the reservation on Art. 15para4, concerning a woman's right to choose her residence.

There are still **reservations on:**

1) Art 9 par2 which deprives Jordanian women, unlike men, from passing their nationality to husbands and children. The government should amend the existing citizenship law to end discrimination against women married to non-Jordanians. Children face hardships related to residency, enrollment in government free education, provision of health care services and deprivation work permits.

2) Art 16par1 (c, d, g), which is related to marriage, divorce and custody.

3. Equal rights in the family

- a. Guardianship and Custody:
 - i. Male relatives have the right to custody after the absence or death of the father, while the mother doesn't have.
 - ii. Women cannot marry, till the age of 35, without the approval of a male custodian.
- b. Polygamy is allowed, permitting a man up to 4 wives according to a strict interpretation of Islam.
- c. Divorce: Arbitrary divorce is allowed to men without the previous knowledge of the wife. In a recent Personal Status Code the "Qulu"

(the right of the wife to divorce provided that she returns the dowry), is divided into "Qulu" for non-married but contracted girls and "Iftida" for wives provided they return the dowry.

4. Violence Against Women

The delegation welcomes the adoption of a law on Protection against Domestic Violence in 2008. An Anti-Trafficking Law has also been ratified as of 2010. And an amendment to labor law introduced punishment to perpetrators of sexual harassment. But, we regret to say that the government has not created mechanisms for monitoring all of these new laws, yet.

We still regret the Jordanian government refusal to receive the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, which has requested twice to come to Jordan.

In case of honor crimes, it has been researched that there is a slight change in the attitudes of judges towards articles 99 and 98 concerning the reduction of sentences of perpetrators. This is a result of the awareness-raising efforts of NGOs.

5. Political participation of women

An increase in the quota for women from 20% to 25% in municipal councils was ratified on 28 July 2011 in the new Municipality Law. But, NGOs are still actively seeking to achieve 50% representation in 2015 according to the MDGs.

The quota in the new Election Law for the Lower House of Parliament has risen to 11.8% instead of 10% as in the old one. As the process for ratifying the law is still going on, NGOs are actively seeking to increase the quota.

6. Conditions of Vulnerable and marginalized women

- Expatriate domestic workers: Sponsorship must be abolished.
- Refugees: Silence about conditions for refugee women in Jordan and nothing is mentioned in the 5th state report on CEDAW.
- Disabled women: Problems need to be addressed, especially in cases of rape and abortion.