

UPR 18th Working Group Session—Yemen



Yemen Organization for Defending Rights & Democratic Freedoms is a non-governmental organization based in Yemen, founded in 1993. Our Mission is to enhance, support, promote and defend basic principles of Human Rights for all people no matter their race, gender, or ethnicity. Yemen Organization plays a national role in supporting and protecting freedoms and rights, commitment to the constitution, and binding under laws.



Karama is a regional NGO based in Egypt that works to reform discriminatory laws and practices, and to promote women's advancement, security, and protection in all aspects of public and private life. Operating throughout the Arab region, Karama works in coalition with national NGO partners in 13 countries—Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

ISSUE FOCUS: Ensuring Women's Political Representation and Rights

After incorporating a 30% quota for women in its seats and committee leadership, the National Dialogue Conference in Yemen has approved a 30% parliamentary quota for women. To ensure critical representation for women at all levels of governance in Yemen's transition period, a 30% quota should be adopted for women in the judicial and executive branches of government, particularly in all constitutional drafting and electoral committees or commissions.

Yemen is a State Party to CEDAW, of which Article 4 calls for temporary special measures such as those recommended above. Also relevant in this regard is CEDAW Article 7(b): "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right...[t]o participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government."

If taken, these actions will help reverse the historical omission of women from government in Yemen—only 1 woman was elected among the 300 members of the last parliament; only 27 women were elected among the 5620 local council seats in 2006; only 3 women were appointed ministers among the 34 in the reconciliation government; only 18 women have been appointed as under-secretaries in the Ministries while 550 men currently hold the same post.

Suggested Questions to ask in the Interactive Dialogue:

1. Will the State continue the NDC's 30% quota for women in all committees for constitution-drafting and electoral commissions?

2. Will the State seek the adoption of the 30% quota in the judicial and executive branches, to match the parliamentary quota for women?

Suggested Recommendations to propose to the Government of Yemen:

1. Include in the new constitution articles guaranteeing gender equality, women's rights, and non-discrimination on the basis of gender
2. Adopt the 30% quota for all branches of government—judicial and executive as well as parliamentary

These recommendations were cited and reiterated in OHCHR's *Summary of information provided by other stakeholders*:

- A/HRC/WG.6/18/YEM/3, page 3, para. 18 (women's rights in the constitution)
- A/HRC/WG.6/18/YEM/3, page 8, para. 47 (quota for women in public offices)

A link to the full report by the Yemen Organization for Defending Rights and Democratic Freedoms and Karama can be found here, under 'JS5 - Joint Submission 5': <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRYESTakeholdersInfoS18.aspx>