

Mandate of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice

REFERENCE: AL
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14 November 2014

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 23/7.

The Working Group is following up on the information on Sierra Leone, published by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in its 2014 annual note regarding **gender equality in legal provisions in nationality laws**. According to this information, legislation in Sierra Leone discriminates against women in that those children born abroad acquire Sierra Leonean citizenship by descent if their father is a Sierra Leonean citizen but not if their mother is.

In this regard, the Working Group wishes to recall CEDAW's Concluding Observations on Sierra Leone (CEDAW/C/MYS/CO/2), in which the CEDAW Committee expressed concern that women who give birth outside the country cannot transmit their Sierra Leonean nationality to their children, in violation of article 9 (2) of the Convention. The Committee urged the State party to ensure the equal rights of women and men to transmit their nationality to the children.

The Working Group would also like to recall the recommendations made in the context of the Universal Periodic Review of Sierra Leone, which are under consideration or are supported by Sierra Leone, which called for Sierra Leone to strengthen actions to promote and protect rights of women and child, continue its measures to further improve the human rights of women and introduce reforms of domestic laws and regulations aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women (see recommendations 80.16, 80.17 & 82.6 in A/HRC/18/10).

In order to clarify the measures being taken by Your Excellency's Government to repeal the discriminatory legislative provisions on nationality, the Working Group would be grateful if you could address the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information on the current status of the relevant legislation with regard to the right of women to pass their nationality to the children on an equal footing with men;

2. Please provide information on any measures that your Excellency's Government has taken or intend to take in order to implement the recommendations by UN human rights mechanisms, referred to above, and to bring its legislation into compliance with international human rights law.

The Working Group would appreciate a response within 60 days and remains available for any type of technical advice on legislative reform that your Excellency's Government may require.

This communication and your Excellency's Government's response will be made available in a report to be presented to the Human Rights Council for its consideration.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Frances Raday
Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against
women in law and in practice