

**Jordanian NGOs Oral Statement  
Presented to the CEDAW Committee  
39<sup>th</sup> Session – 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2007- NYC**

As of 25 July this year, Jordan's government published CEDAW in the National Gazette, more than 15 years since the ratification. Although this is considered to be a step forward binding the State of Jordan to the CEDAW provisions still the government has to take further measures to put CEDAW provisions into practice as national law.

On behalf of the four NGOs who issued the shadow report and the 7 NGOs who endorsed it, we address the Committee to urge our Government to consider the following issues:

**First**, lifting the reservations:

A. Jordan has reserved the right to restrict women from passing their nationalities to their children and husbands and at the same time granting men the ability to pass their nationality to their children and wives which is a clear discrimination between citizens. We recommend that the government should ensure equality between men and women in the nationality law.

B. Ensure the full right of women to choose her place of residence. Jordan government has maintained a restriction on this right by ruling that a woman is attached to her husband. The Jordanian government should ensure equality in freedom of movement and residence for men and women, and lift its reservation on this article.

**Second**, in terms of adopting a National Strategy to end violence, the government has to:

1-Enact new laws in the Penal Code to criminalize VAW and punish perpetrators.

2- Issue new policies and measures to ensure non-discrimination against women at all levels

3-women whose lives have been threatened by family members should not be held in jail as a form of protection. Instead, they should be secured a place at the national shelter. The Government also has to support and open more than one shelter for abused women to ensure access for women outside of the capital. Further, open the national shelter to receive clients from NGOs working with abused women, so they may benefit from its services.

4- A major effort by NGOs failed to repeal and only succeeded in amending Paragraph 1 of Article 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code, which reduces the sentence of a man who kills or injures his wife or one of his female kin whom he has just caught committing adultery. Article 98 of the Penal Code allows for a reduction in the sentences when a person kills in a "fit of fury". Under the existing law perpetrators found guilty of committing such killings can receive light sentences in prison. Moreover, courts may further reduce the sentence if the victim's family waives its right to file a complaint about the crime. The law should not support any such excuse, justification, or impunity for violence against women.

**Third**, new legislation should be enacted to prohibit gender-based discrimination in all levels of employment and benefits, and to establish enforcement mechanisms to file complaints concerning discrimination and sexual assault against women in the workplace. Many women work in sectors not regulated by labour law and therefore cannot enjoy the protection or benefits afforded by the law. Article 3 of the Labour Law states that it doesn't apply to; domestic workers; gardeners; cooks and those in the same capacity; and family members of the owner of a business who work with

him without receiving pay. This leaves women workers vulnerable to multiple forms of exploitation without legal protection or recourse.

**Fourth**, Article 6 paragraph 1 of the Constitution indicates that all Jordanians are equal before the law and there is no discrimination between them. We recommend that the Constitution should indicate equality according to “sex” alongside with “language”, “religion” and “race”.

**Fifth**, Government should amend the Jordanian Personal Status Law to remove articles that do not ensure women’s equal rights with men within marriage. For example, (1) the legal minimum age for marriage was amended from 15 to 18 for both boys and girls; however, a judge can conduct a marriage for a girl under 18 if it is in “her interest”. This exception should be eliminated.

(2) Guardianship over women under 40 restricts women from enjoying their full rights in terms of marriage and travel,

(3) Divorce laws and procedures place a big burden on women to prove their case and derive any benefit from the law, while men can divorce women directly and without any restrictions. The Khulu law which was issued in 2001 gives women the ability to get divorced by returning their dowry. This law is still temporary because the parliament refused to pass it. We need a permanent law.

**Sixth**, the Government has yet to ensure equality in political participation. A few women are represented in the decision-making level. A quota of six women out of 110 was endorsed in the previous election of the parliament. However, the government has to undertake new policies and measures to ensure better participation of women in political and public life. A quota of at least 30 % should be adopted at all decision making levels.

**Seventh**, there is no education and training taking place by the government to affect social values taught to children. There should not be any permission for text books to promote discrimination or stereotypical roles for women and girls: whether by confining women's roles to family settings and traditional occupations, or by reinforcing discriminatory social practices. Rather, the government should change the text books accordingly to promote equal rights and equal status among women and men, boys and girls, in the text books and in the schools.