



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

Distr.: General  
14 February 2024

Original: English

---

## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Eighty-seventh session

### Summary record of the 2034th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 31 January 2024, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Peláez Narváez

## Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention  
(continued)

*Seventh periodic report of Tajikistan (continued)*

---

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention** (*continued*)

*Seventh periodic report of Tajikistan (continued)* ([CEDAW/C/TJK/7](#); [CEDAW/C/TJK/Q/7](#); [CEDAW/C/TJK/RQ/7](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Tajikistan joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation of Tajikistan to continue replying to the Committee members' questions.

*Articles 1–6*

3. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that, in the new Criminal Code, the article establishing criminal liability for rape had been expanded to cover damage to the health of the victim and the threat of killing with rape. Liability could be incurred by parents, relatives or persons such as teachers. In line with the Committee's recommendations, the Code now also addressed racial discrimination and made provision for aggravating circumstances for crimes committed on grounds of social or ethnic hatred or racial or other forms of discrimination. Specific penalties applied to killing and to premeditated infliction of bodily harm of medium or severe gravity, including by means of hot or burning substances.

*Articles 7–9*

4. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that, on the subject of women's participation in public life, in addition to the information contained in the State party's written replies to the list of issues ([CEDAW/C/TJK/RQ/7](#), para. 100), she wished to inform the Committee that the 2023 budget of the State programme for the education, selection and placement of capable women and girls in leadership positions for the period 2017–2022 was around 400,000 somoni; the average age of the young women who had benefited from funding under that programme was 26 and the median age 24. As to Tajik women's participation in international organizations, in Vienna there were around 15 women officers and in Geneva 10.

5. In line with the recommendations of the International Organization for Migration, the 215 Afghan nationals who had been granted refugee status were eligible for free services. That group included 166 women, all of whom were attending training or were in employment. In the 2020 census, 2,784 persons had been identified as stateless, some 1,300 of them women.

6. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that nearly 1,500 persons, including around 1,000 women, had received residence permits under the Amnesty Act aimed at regularizing the legal status of stateless persons and foreign nationals residing in Tajikistan. Refugee status had been granted to around 4,500 persons. As of December 2023, residence applications had been received from around 3,600 foreign nationals and stateless persons and were pending.

7. Although Tajikistan had not ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, it was already implementing certain provisions of those instruments, for example in respect of residence permits for stateless persons and the right to obtain a travel document to leave the country. The possibility of ratification had been raised in the national plan of action to implement the recommendations put forward during the most recent universal periodic review.

8. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the social service network for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking included 3 provincial centres and 22 help centres for social rehabilitation for victims of violence, while about 20 voluntary organizations provided services to victims of human trafficking, in the form of psychological support, advocacy, help, medical assistance, financial support, education and food.

9. Voluntary organizations also provided assistance to victims of domestic violence, notably in Dushanbe, and worked with government institutions on prevention of domestic

violence and rehabilitation. Victims received social services free of charge on an equal footing with victims of other types of abuse. Major centres existed in more than 40 cities and districts, where women and girls could consult psychologists, legal experts and social workers, for example. Awareness raising and training in entrepreneurship, health and well-being were also provided through those organizations.

10. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the unlawful preparation and distribution of pornographic material was an offence under the Criminal Code. In 2023, 197 criminal cases had been brought and the perpetrators had been punished by the courts. Online websites and networks were constantly monitored in order to try and detect the illegal spread of pornographic photos, videos and other material.

11. In 2022 and 2023, the militia had identified 37 cases of demeaning or insulting language used against women in public statements. In 21 cases, administrative reports had been drawn up and the offenders fined; 16 administrative offences had been confirmed and in some cases up to 15 days' administrative detention had been ordered.

12. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that, in August 2019, the Government Commission on International Human Rights Obligations had adopted a national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015), with a view to coordinating action by State agencies. His delegation would provide detailed information on the outcome of the national action plan in writing.

13. As to the deportation of women refugees, under the Code of Administrative Offences, as amended in 2020, the penalty of expulsion of asylum-seekers for violations of rules on residence had been eliminated and replaced by a fine, which was the result of efforts to bring domestic legislation into line with the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

14. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that, in order to register a child's birth, documents must be produced to confirm the birth and attest to the parents' identity. A valid identity document for a foreigner might be a foreign passport, a temporary asylum certificate or a temporary residence permit. For a stateless person, a residence permit could serve as identification. Under the State Civil Registration Act, which provided for the timely registration of births, stateless persons and children born to them were dealt with by the relevant authorities and the children could obtain regularized legal status according to the established procedure. Documents must be translated into one of the official languages. If one or both parents lacked identification, they could provide a marriage certificate or equivalent. The civil registry offices would not refuse to register a birth and could help parents obtain the necessary documents. In certain special cases, a court could rule on whether or not a child had in fact been born to a given woman.

15. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that Tajikistan had now submitted three voluntary reports on the country's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, notably in the field of gender equality.

16. The goal for women's representation in the parliament was 37 per cent, to be achieved by 2030; the current figure was around 27 per cent. The goal for women in senior government positions was 50 per cent and for women employers, 30 per cent. Women's wages currently stood at about 65 per cent of parity and were expected to reach 75 per cent in the near future.

#### *Articles 10–14*

17. **Ms. Ameline** said that the Committee commended the State party on its long-term education strategy, and particularly its emphasis on science and mathematics. There remained nevertheless persistent inequalities that must be addressed. Policy notwithstanding, the dropout rate for girls remained high, little progress had been made in bringing girls into higher education, the vital technical and digital sectors of the economy, or other sectors such as management, engineering and banking. She would welcome the delegation's comments in that regard, particularly on ways of building on past efforts and taking them further.

18. She would appreciate an explanation of the criteria used for selecting girls for participation in the education scheme under the presidential quota for girls from rural and remote areas, and a description of the subjects towards which they were guided. Could that

experiment be expanded? Could alternative forms of education be developed as an additional means of bridging the geographical divides?

19. Notwithstanding the State party's significant efforts to cater for young children with disabilities, there was still a great need for investment in infrastructure for appropriate and inclusive education. She wondered how the State party intended to meet that need.

20. She would appreciate more information on efforts to raise awareness of the Convention among teachers in the course of their training. She would be interested to hear how school curricula and teaching materials reflected the increasing role of women in education.

21. As a means of combating religious extremism, the State party's decision to make religious education compulsory in schools was understandable. However, she would like to know how a balance was maintained between the obligation to attend such classes and the constitutional principle of freedom of belief and conscience.

22. **Ms. Akizuki** said that, in the light of women's widespread involvement in unpaid work and of the persistent gender pay gap, the Committee would be interested to hear what mechanisms existed to protect women working in the informal sector by ensuring fair wages, safe conditions and access to social security benefits. She would like to know what steps had been taken to promote women's employment in professions traditionally dominated by men and whether there had been any reviews of wages in predominantly female sectors. What measures had been taken to close the gender pay gap?

23. Noting that, under the Labour Code, an employer could not refuse to hire a woman or cut her pay, on the grounds of pregnancy or having children, she asked what measures were in place to improve women's social protection, such as maternity benefits, childcare, health care and pensions. Were there any plans to legislate for paid paternity leave to fathers?

24. She would like to know about any measures to increase investment in childcare, care for older persons and domestic services, as a means of stimulating women's economic participation, to promote gender equality in care tasks and to balance work and family life.

25. Commending the State party on its new Act on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, which included a provision on harassment, she said that she would like to know whether workplace sexual harassment incurred criminal or civil penalties and whether there were plans to ban sexual harassment at work under labour law.

26. The Committee noted that a draft programme for the development of women's entrepreneurship was currently under consideration, and would like to know more about its content, the targets set and mechanisms for monitoring implementation. What support measures and incentives were envisaged to stimulate the women entrepreneurs' transition from the informal to the formal sector?

27. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that, according to the State party's statistics, women's and girls' participation at all levels of education had increased in the 2022/23 academic year compared to 2019/20. Nearly half of all students were girls. The gender parity index had stood at 0.9 in 2021. The number of children in preschools had increased significantly in recent years and 45 per cent of preschool children were girls. The percentage of girls studying in both vocational and higher educational institutions had increased.

28. Gender discrimination in education was prohibited by law and the first nine grades of school were compulsory for both boys and girls. Thanks to the national development strategy to 2030, however, many girls continued beyond ninth grade. Other measures were in place to reach out to women and girls, such as distance learning for adolescents and adults, a special programme for girls who had dropped out, special courses to bring in girls from disadvantaged communities and a specialized centre set up by the Committee on Women and the Family. The budget for those measures had increased by 21 per cent since 2019. Both the public and private sectors ran institutions that worked to attract more girls; 57 were run by the State and 27 were private.

29. Since the start of the presidential quota there had been an increase in the number of female students in secondary and tertiary vocational education and upper secondary education. The Ministry of Education and Science had established a body to provide general

education to adults who had not attended school. Persons with disabilities were given free educational assistance, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds had 50 per cent of their education fees covered. More than 2,000 women and girls living in rural areas had received a secondary education by distance learning over the previous five years.

30. A presidential decree on the transition to a digital economy had focused on increased training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology. In the 2020/21 academic year, female students accounted for nearly 45 per cent of students specializing in the natural sciences, 25 per cent in computer science and 36 per cent in telecommunications in institutes of higher education.

31. Women made up approximately 40 per cent of the total employed population in Tajikistan. Considering the high birth rate, many women found themselves obliged to stay at home to care for their children and were self-employed. It was estimated that 150,000 women would gain employment between 2023 and 2025 under the State Employment Promotion Programme, which had seen a nearly 10 per cent increase in the take-up of training courses, provided professional guidance to unemployed women, increased the provision of social support to women and offered various tax breaks.

32. A State programme to develop women's entrepreneurship, running until 2027, had already seen some successes. One objective was to enhance gross domestic product through women's participation by 2025. The number of female entrepreneurs was also due to increase to 90,000 by that year. It was hoped that foreign and internal investment for women's entrepreneurship, exported products made by female entrepreneurs and funding for public-private partnerships would increase. The value of loans granted to those entrepreneurs was due to rise to more than 5 million somoni, with business mortgages offered to ensure women's access to those funds. More bank accounts among that group were expected to be opened.

33. **Mr. Ashuriyon** said that the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment had proposed the inclusion of provisions on harassment in the workplace in the Labour Code that were in keeping with the definitions set out in the Act on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. Under the Act, sexual harassment was defined as verbal, non-verbal and other behaviours of a sexual nature that undermined a person's dignity, created enmity towards them or insulted them. It defined workplace harassment as any form of non-physical harassment with repeated actions that undermined an employee's dignity or worsened the employee's working conditions or professional status.

34. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she would appreciate a response to her question about the provision of paternity leave.

35. **Ms. Xia** said that she would like to know whether any measures had been taken in the previous three years to implement the National Communication Programme on the First 1,000 Days of a Child's Life to reduce malnutrition and undernutrition. She would like to know whether the programme covered the prevention and reduction of birth defects. She wondered whether there were any plans to raise awareness of the importance of medical check-ups, especially prenatal fetal examinations, for pregnant women and women planning for pregnancy.

36. She wished to know whether the State party provided any free breast cancer and cervical cancer screening services, including in rural areas and how women living in remote areas had access to safe and affordable family planning services. She wondered whether there were any new measures as part of the initiative aiming to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV and how women and girls were able to receive treatment, testing and relevant information for HIV/AIDS. She would be interested in hearing about the results of sex education in schools, including its effect on teenage pregnancy rates.

37. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she would like to know whether the State party had any plans to tackle the persistent underresourcing of gender-related programmes. She wondered whether there were any plans to bridge the financing gaps for women's enterprises and equip them for the digital age and the green economy. She would appreciate data on female entrepreneurs who had been beneficiaries of a grant from the International Development Association. She wished to know how that grant had stimulated financial

inclusion and increased access for women's micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to loans, credit and customized insurance policies. It would be interesting to hear about the findings of the 2022 study on women's economic rights and opportunities, in regard to development planning and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

38. She wondered whether there were any plans to review the migration policy to better protect abandoned women and children and to reduce their suicide rates. She wished to know whether there was a timeline for establishing the proposed safety net and fund to protect abandoned wives and families of migrant workers. It would be useful to know whether there were any plans to promote and invest in sporting and recreational activities for women.

39. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that several programmes were in place for neonatal care, and care for women during and after pregnancy. A multisectoral plan was aimed at improving nutrition by 2025, and another programme covered reproductive health. Despite the geographical and electronic challenges posed by the country's mountainous nature, antenatal and neonatal care coverage stood at over 90 per cent. In 2023, approximately 140,000 women had benefited from free pregnancy screening, which had identified several thousand congenital defects.

40. The provision of contraception and the timely detection of HIV/AIDS were on the increase. In 2023 alone, approximately 300,000 pregnant women had been screened for HIV/AIDS, with access for that screening opening up to more women. A child could be identified as HIV-positive from the first day of birth and subsequently receive medical and social assistance. Measures taken as part of the National Communication Programme on the First 1,000 Days of a Child's Life included an application in Tajik for parents to monitor the development of their child in coordination with medical services. School meals were being improved to ameliorate health indicators.

41. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the guarantees and benefits provided to mothers raising children were also provided to fathers if they were raising children in the absence of the mother, for example in the event of her death or deprivation of parental rights.

42. Between 2021 and 2023, there had been a 20 per cent wage increase in the education and health-care fields, where women were highly represented. An additional wage increase of 40 per cent had been planned, to take effect in July 2024, for the governmental, education, culture, sports, public health and social protection fields.

43. The national development strategy to 2030, the medium-term development programme for 2021–2025 and the national strategy for financial inclusion for 2022–2026 included measures to support female entrepreneurs. The national development strategy would help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. A total of 19 billion somoni in loans had been provided in 2023, more than 25 per cent of which had been received by women, which represented an over 20 per cent increase in that amount for that group. More women had received credit cards in 2023 than in previous years.

44. In 2021, the Committee on Women and the Family, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund, had developed guidelines for equal rights and opportunities for men and women. The Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment was working towards implementing economic integration programmes to train at least 20,000 new women entrepreneurs from vulnerable groups, including those in informal employment. A total of 10,000 women had received crafts training between 2019 and 2023 to leave informal employment, and approximately 1,600 women had been granted loans or credits for that purpose.

45. Under the programme for the development of women's entrepreneurship, business loans were granted to small and medium-sized enterprises, thus supporting businesses led by women. A gender policy had been adopted to improve the quality of life of rural women and promote their activity in the public sphere. The market economy stimulated private initiative and the economic independence of women. The Government, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund, had rolled out a pilot project to promote remote employment opportunities in three provinces, which had included training for more than 2,300 participants, mostly young women and girls.

46. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that religious education was imparted to upper secondary school students. A dangerous trend had emerged for terrorist organizations and extremist groups to recruit children and teenagers, often invoking religion for their purposes. The Government had introduced the subject in schools so that children and young people could learn about all religions. They were taught that no religion advocated terrorism.

47. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she would be interested to know how the Civil Code adopted in 2022, which simplified land registration procedures, affected women who did not have access to State-owned land. She wondered what land rights were enjoyed by women who lived in rural areas, especially older women and widows, and what training was provided to women who worked in agriculture.

48. As serious concerns had been raised about violence against women in detention, she wished to know how the State party held law enforcement officers accountable for abuses and how it applied the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules). As many employers requested job applicants to provide a criminal record certificate, although it was not required by law, she wished to know how the Act on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, adopted in July 2022, ensured the access to employment and economic opportunities of women in detention and former inmates.

49. The Committee would be interested to know to what extent Tajikistan complied with the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, which prohibited HIV testing without informed consent and mandated strict confidentiality. In particular, it would be useful to know whether the Government intended to revise article 125 of the Criminal Code, which established criminal responsibility for the transmission of HIV, in violation of the International Guidelines.

50. Regarding women with disabilities, she would be interested to know whether the Act on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination provided for accessible workplaces and shelters for women victims of violence. She also wished to know what progress had been made towards the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

51. As a largely mountainous country, Tajikistan was severely affected by climate change. She therefore welcomed the ambitious environmental plans and strategies that the Government had presented, including the initiative to declare 2025 International Year of Glaciers' Preservation. However, she would like to know how women could play a leadership role, as scientists, technologists and decision makers, in response to the climate crisis.

#### *Articles 15 and 16*

52. **Ms. Tisheva** said that women in Tajikistan struggled to achieve equality and faced persistent direct and indirect discrimination. She therefore wished to know how the authorities applied the Criminal Code provisions concerning the violation of equality of citizens on grounds of sex. In particular, she wished to know how many prosecutions had been brought and how many convictions handed down for such discrimination. She wondered how the State party ensured the provision of legal aid for women, including women from rural or remote areas, who instituted civil or criminal proceedings in discrimination cases.

53. Despite it being a criminal offence to give under-age girls in marriage, it seemed that there had been few prosecutions. Moreover, the courts could lower the minimum legal age for marriage to 17 years, and it had been reported that Tajikistan had comparatively high rates of early marriage and adolescent fertility. She therefore wished to know what measures had been taken to set the minimum age for marriage at 18 years without exceptions. Information on planned legislative amendments, including the timeline for adoption by the parliament, would be welcome. She also wished to know what had been done to identify, prosecute and adequately punish all responsible persons involved in child and forced marriages, including unregistered religious marriages.

54. Despite the prohibition of polygamy by law, it appeared that polygamous marriages persisted for economic and religious reasons, including the exodus of many young men

seeking employment abroad. She would therefore be grateful for information on any plans or programmes to prevent and protect women and girls from early and forced marriages, polygamous unions and other harmful practices, and on the human and financial resources allocated by the State and the targets and timelines that had been set for elimination of such practices. She wondered how many people had been prosecuted for polygamy. She also wished to know whether the Government planned to take steps, such as revising the Family Code and the Criminal Code, to prohibit so-called virginity tests for future brides.

55. The Committee would be interested to know how the State party was meeting its obligation to tackle gender stereotyping in the field of family relations. For instance, she wondered whether any research had been conducted on how notions of gender, sexuality and virginity conditioned control of women's bodies, choices and reproduction and thus undermined their rights. Information might be provided on specific measures to enforce court orders for the payment of child support, and on any plans to broaden the definition of domestic violence, which currently applied to a limited range of family relations based on marriage or cohabitation but did not cover intimate or romantic relations or relations with former spouses.

56. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she would be interested to know to what extent rural women participated in sports, such as the popular traditional sport of *buzkashi*. As the Wall of Great Tajik Writers in Dushanbe featured 11 statues of male writers but, regrettably, no women, she asked what role women played in culture, the arts and science and how Tajikistan celebrated their achievements.

57. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that the Government had developed a programme and a related plan of action for law enforcement officers who dealt with detainees. The programme covered both convicted women who were serving their sentence and those who had been released. As part of the reform of the criminal justice system, the Government planned to enhance medical services and to provide vocational training and labour activities related to the employment of convicts serving non-custodial sentences.

58. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that in 2022 and 2023, some 6,800 Tajik women and girls had taken part in international sporting events, with the active support of the Government. They excelled in sports such as taekwondo, kickboxing and badminton.

59. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that compulsory HIV screening did not undermine the rights of persons entering marriage. Everyone who was tested for HIV gave written consent; persons who knew their HIV status could refuse to be tested. Screening had been introduced not only for persons entering marriage, but for a range of people belonging to different risk groups. In 2023, the authorities had examined 1.4 million people – a significant proportion of the population – with a view to reducing the country's HIV burden. The authorities had succeeded in reducing the mother-to-child transmission rate, which had fallen below 2 per cent in 2022.

60. Virginity tests in medical facilities were prohibited by law and the Government had no plans to make them available as a medical procedure. However, certain authorities, such as the National Centre of Forensic Medicine, were authorized to carry out the checks in the context of criminal investigations.

61. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that, as the Committee was aware, the minimum legal age for marriage was set at 18 years. In exceptional cases, judges might lower that age by one year; statistics showed that such cases accounted for less than 1 per cent of all registered marriages.

62. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that the Government had taken steps to remove barriers to women's economic advancement. The Committee on Women and the Family and its development partners had implemented several projects to support rural women, including projects to promote entrepreneurship and to develop business skills. An analysis had been conducted and proposals made for mainstreaming gender in the strategy for the development of a green economy in Tajikistan. The United States Agency for International Development had helped female entrepreneurs by investing in start-ups and emerging agribusinesses. The Government had also identified over 100 folk crafts in which women were particularly active and had exempted them from taxation.



63. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that bigamy and polygamy were prohibited under the Constitution and article 170 of the Criminal Code. Men who kept households with two different women incurred criminal liability regardless of whether the second marriage was officially registered. The Government maintained statistics on the prosecution of bigamy and polygamy.

64. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that Tajikistan had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in March 2018. The Government had set up a working group which had developed a road map to prepare Tajikistan for ratification and implementation of the Convention – a document that had subsequently been adopted by government decision. In order to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, a State programme on accessibility had been adopted for the period 2021–2025.

65. **A representative of Tajikistan** said that article 4 of the Labour Code provided for employers to request job applicants to provide criminal record certificates. Persons who had committed a serious offence and whose criminal record had not been expunged could not be hired for certain positions, including in the civil service.

66. **Mr. Ashuriyon** (Tajikistan) said that his delegation was grateful for the constructive dialogue and for the Committee's assessment of his country's achievements and remaining challenges. The dialogue, however, had not covered all of the efforts of Tajikistan in the human rights sphere. For example, the Government had recently declared 2024 the Year of Legal Education and was planning a number of measures, including the broadcast of television and radio programmes and the organization of seminars and other events, to increase citizens' legal awareness and knowledge. In that regard, it intended to disseminate information on the provisions of the Convention and measures for implementation of the Committee's recommendations. The Government would closely examine those recommendations and would discuss them with civil society. It would continue to maintain a dialogue with the Committee and other United Nations human rights bodies with a view to further empowering women and protecting their rights.

*The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.*