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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
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**Responses to the list of issues and questions for  
consideration of the initial report**

**Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

**WRITTEN REPLIES BY THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S  
REPUBLIC OF KOREA CONCERNING THE LIST OF ISSUES  
AND QUESTIONS (CEDAW/PSWG/2005/II/CRP.1/Add.3)  
ISSUED BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION  
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

**MARCH 2005**

This reply has been prepared in accordance with the list of issues and questions (CEDAW/PSWG/2005/II/CRP.1/Add.3) with regard to the consideration of the initial report of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (CEDAW/C/PRK/1).

**Articles 1 and 2**

**1. The report notes that the “provisions of the instruments are applied either directly or by being turned into domestic laws and regulations” (para 57). Please provide information as to how the Convention has been incorporated into the national legal system and if it is directly applicable before the national courts.**

The Law on Equality of Sexes was promulgated on July 30, 1946 as one of the first steps for democratic reform after the national liberation from the Japanese colonial military rule on August 15, 1945 and the first democratic constitution was adopted in September 1948 upon the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Since then, equality of sexes has been invariably maintained as a basic constitutional principle and embodied in national legislation.

The current Constitution stipulates: “Citizens enjoy equal rights in all spheres of State and public activities.” in article 65; “All citizens who have reached the age of 17 have the right to elect and be elected, irrespective of sex, race, occupation, length of residence, property status, education, party affiliation, political views or religion.” in article 66, paragraph 1; and “Women are accorded an equal social status and rights with men” in article 77, paragraph 1.

Article 18 of the Family Law provides: “The husband and the wife shall have equal rights within the family.” and article 19, paragraph 2 of the Civil Law reads: “All citizens are equal with regard to civil rights.” Besides the provisions mentioned above, the Convention including article 2(a) have been incorporated into the national legal system either literally or in substance.

The Convention is directly applicable before the courts at all levels as the legal basis of judgment or decision. If any idea of the Convention is not provided in the national legislation, the principle is to make a judgment according to the Convention. If there is any discrepancy between the Convention and a national law, the Convention is applied in view of the interests of the female party.

**2. The report notes that the Government has entered a reservation under article 2 (f) of the Convention in light of the legislated difference in the minimum marriage age of girls (17 years) and boys (18 years) (para 86) and under article 9 (2) with regard to the nationality of a child born to a foreign citizen and a citizen of the DPRK (para. 129). Please explain further the legislative situation that, in the view of the Government, required the entry of these reservations as well as any consideration that has been given to amend the laws so as to allow for withdrawal of the reservations.**

Article 9 of the Family Law provides that the minimum marriage age is 17 for girls and 18 for boys. Nobody considers this age difference as a discrimination against women in the DPRK. That is why there has been no public demand for the amendment of this provision.

The reservation was entered to article 2(f) of the Convention provisionally until due legislative amendment to avoid any possible misunderstanding of the age difference as discrimination. The reservation to article 9(2) was from the concern that a child born to a foreign citizen and a DPRK citizen may have double nationality if the parents differ in their opinion and was not from the non-recognition of the equality of father and mother with regard to the decision of the nationality of a child as required by the Convention.

The National Coordination Committee widely discussed this issue while preparing the initial report and decided to recommend the amendment of the related laws to the legislation body.

**3. There is a Law on Equality of Sexes of 1946. What is the status of this law and does the Government intend to amend it to include the Convention's definition of discrimination against women as contained in article 1 of the Convention that includes direct and indirect discrimination?**

The Law on Equality of Sexes of 1946 has not officially become invalid yet. Many provisions of the law were completely turned into reality by the democratic reform after liberation and the basic principles have been elaborated either directly or indirectly in the Constitution and the related laws.

According to the legal consciousness of our people, "equality of sexes" coincides with the "elimination of all forms of discrimination against women".

As the Convention states in article 1 that the term “discrimination against women” means any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the rights and freedom of women, so the DPRK legislation implies that “equality of sexes” means the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The definition in article 1 of the Convention has thus been embodied in the DPRK legislation. If necessary, the provision may literally be introduced in the future.

**4. The report states that in addition to traditional customs, discrimination against women remains as a result of recent economic difficulties which “obstruct the sufficient supply of material and cultural living conditions [of]...women provided by law” (paras. 61 and 102). Please provide detailed information on the nature and extent of women’s poverty in the DPRK, the measures that have been taken to counter them and any progress achieved in combating women’ poverty. In particular, provide information on specific efforts taken to ensure that women solely responsible for their families benefit from the public distribution system for delivery of food and essential goods.**

The DPRK does not have any actual condition to make women’s economic status worse than men.

Due to the recent economic difficulties of the country, both women and men are hampered from enjoying their legal rights to the full. It is true that women assume more of the family burden by the traditional custom of women’s responsibility of household chores.

From 1970s, the DPRK directed the attention of the State and a lot of financial resources to the emancipation of women from their heavy household chores defining it as one of the tasks of the three-major technical revolution. Women widely use electric kitchen equipments even in rural areas by the construction of medium or small sized power stations suitable to their local characteristics.

On the other hand, the National Coordination Committee and the public organizations including the women’s union and the youth league actively conducted agitation activities to educate men to discard the outdated idea of taking no care of household chores leaving them only to women. The people’s committees at all levels supplied food and essential goods, offered suitable jobs and ensured other benefits preferentially to women headed families.

### **Article 3**

**5. As the State institution primarily responsible for the implementation of the Convention and the advancement of women’s rights in the DPRK, does the National**

**Coordination Committee for the Implementation of the Convention intend to introduce a national plan of action or policy for women to facilitate implementation of the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action? In addition to the drafting of the report and dissemination of the Convention, please provide detailed information on the activities of the National Coordination Committee to date and the training this body has received on the Convention.**

The DPRK has set up the plans and policy targets for women's rights in different sectors including the plan for the protection of women's health.

The National Coordination intends to introduce a national plan of action for women by combining the sectoral plans. The DPRK, after its accession to the Convention in 2001, organized and enhanced the role of the National Coordination Committee for the Implementation of the Convention. The Committee, as its first work, comprehensively examined how the requirement of the Convention is embodied in the national legislation and recommended the competent legislative bodies to amend the Family Law, the Nationality Law and other laws in conformity with the Convention. The Committee has established the system for the surveillance and information of the implementation of the Convention by coordinating the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Labor and other Government organs closely related with the rights of women. As a result, officials of the State institutions especially in the sectors of law, education and public health came to improve their view point towards women and enhance their responsibility.

The Committee has received no international training on the Convention except a study tour to the Philippines in February 2002. The Committee feels it necessary for the officials to have more opportunities of international training on the Convention.

**6. As required under article 2 (c) of the Convention, please indicate if women can file complaints of violations of their rights under the complaint and petition procedures referred to in the report (paras. 80-84). This information should indicate how frequently these procedures have been used by women and any notable trends in the content of such complaints as well as decisions delivered.**

Citizens are free to file complaints against violations of their rights and have every condition to do so. There is no restriction against women.

The major contents of complaint are the unjustifiable viewpoint towards people among the officials of public service institutions, bureaucratic treatment of people by the officials of state organs, etc. Very few complaints have been related with the encroachment on the rights of women. Some women who sought a divorce raised to the court the abuse by their husbands. In such cases, the husbands were legally punished at the socialist law-abiding life guidance committee concerned.

#### Article 4

**7. The report refers to temporary special measures that have been instituted to ensure a proportion of women in management positions in some sectors (see, for example, para 97). Please indicate if similar measures, including the use of quotas or incentives, are planned or in place to achieve women's full and equal participation in the Government, civil service and other public bodies, taking into account the Committee's general recommendation 25 on article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and general recommendation 23 on women in public life.**

Among the administrative management officials, women account for over 70 percent in the sectors of public health, commerce, child nursing and upbringing, 34 percent in education, communication and culture and 15 percent in industry, agriculture and construction. The proportion of female officials is high at medium or lower positions, but is comparatively low at the level above department directorship of Government ministry. Women make up about 10 percent of the officials in Government ministries and central organs.

In order to increase female proportion among public officials, the State has put in place the quota of over 30 percent on women in all sectors and set up nurseries, kindergartens, medical and commercial service facilities in the work places of women for their convenience.

#### Article 5

**8. The report notes that discrimination based on the perceived inferiority of women and superiority of men remains within the family and in the field of employment due in part to "outmoded customs" (paras. 61, 100) and "prejudice" (para. 102). Please provide information on measures undertaken to combat such stereotypes and describe progress achieved in that regard.**

There existed feudal society for more than 2,000 years in the history of Korea. Like other countries, Korea was deeply rooted by inferiority of women and superiority of men during the feudal period.

Through the democratic reform after liberation, the social, economic and legal basis of this outmoded conception was eradicated but some people still betrayed the remnants of the old conception in various ways. The Government while actively unfolding education activities against the idea took the steps of preferential treatment of women by law and policy. Now it has been turned into a social trend and moral standard to respect women in all spheres of life.

## Violence against women

**9. The initial report contains no information on the prevalence of violence against women, including in particular, domestic violence. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women has reported allegations that women in prison or during interrogations have been subjected to several methods of torture. In accordance with the Committee's general recommendation 19 regarding violence against women, please provide detailed information regarding the measures taken to prevent and combat violence against women, develop legislation on all forms of violence against women, the support services that are available to women who are victims of violence, and training of police, lawyers and judges and the general public to raise awareness about violence against women.**

Any violence against person is seriously dealt with as a crime under the Criminal Law. The period under review recorded some violence by husband against his wife in the family. The husbands were educated by the power organs concerned and grave cases were brought to the strict handling and punishment by the socialist law-abiding life guidance committee set up in the power organs. It is groundless to allege that "women in prison or during interrogations have been subjected to ... torture."

The DPRK does not have prison but labor reform institutions. Under the Criminal Procedures Act, an interrogation of a woman should be attended by an observer in view of her psychological characteristics. Women are on an equal footing with men before the law.

**10. Please provide information about the number and situation of women currently in detention and in prison and the resources allocated for them.**

The Criminal Procedures Act prohibits the illegal treatment of the persons in detention. Under articles 69 and 79 of the Act, a public prosecutor keeps a constant watch on investigation and preliminary examination to rectify any unlawful activity, and articles 162 and 177 provide for the procedures of submitting complaints by the examinee or defence counsel against illegal treatment and of their settlement by the public prosecutor.

The women in detention maintain their personal rights until they are convicted except they are restricted in their freedom. Their life is supported by the detention institution at the level that used to be provided by their work unit before detention. Female detainees are guaranteed the life conditions specific to their physiological characteristics.

There is no prison but labor reform institution in the DPRK. Female convicts who have been sentenced to reform through labor do the labor proper to their technical ability at the labor reform institution. Labor reform institutions have workshops producing clothes, shoes, bag, bicycle, sewing machine, metal fittings, etc. and mine, coal mine or quarry,

attached to them. Female convicts work at the workshops that produce such things as clothes, shoes or bags. They are paid according to the work done.

The living expenses for food, clothing and daily necessities are deducted from their earning. If they conduct themselves well in the institution, they are given a prize and reduced in their term of reform. As of March 2005, seven women were in pre-trial detention and forty in the reform institution after conviction.

## Article 6

**11. Although the report states that there have been no reports of trafficking “for many years” (para 105), the Special Rapporteur on violence against women notes that there have been reports of trafficking in women and girls from the DPRK as brides or prostitutes to China. Please indicate what legal and programmatic measures are in place to identify, prevent and combat trafficking of women in DPRK, for example any regional and bilateral initiatives with neighboring countries, the provision of information about risks and protective measures, training of border officials, the prosecution of traffickers and the establishment of rehabilitation and safe repatriation measures for victims.**

Although it is unlikely that women and girls are sold to China as prostitutes or brides, some went over to China in the northern areas for the needs of life or trade. They came back with the things they had procured. The State did not punish them as their deeds were related with the current economic difficulties.

In the DPRK, there has not been any report of trafficking in women or prostitution. That is why the Criminal Law does not have a provision for the punishment of trafficking in women and prostitution. There were some proposals to include these provisions in the Criminal Law for preventive effect, which were considered seriously by the legislative body. Recently, there have been reports of disorderly crossing over the borderline under the pretext of economic difficulty. The immigration office strengthened its legal requirement and concluded bilateral agreements with the neighboring countries to control illegal immigration.

**12. Please indicate if any cases have been brought before the courts under articles 153 or 154 of the Criminal Law, and if so, please provide information on these cases.**

Sometimes, rape cases are instituted under article 153 of the Criminal Law. But there have not been any case where a man has had sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of 15 or obliged a woman who is his subordinate officially or by duty to have sexual intercourse with him.

Statistics of rape cases

crime \ year	2003	2004
Rape	2	1
Rape & Murder	2	2
Rape & Burglary	4	3

**Articles 7 and 8**

**13. Please provide updated information on the number of women at all levels and in all branches of Government, including in the Supreme People's Assembly, the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, the local people's assemblies and the local people's committees (para. 111) as well as trends in women's political representation over time (for instance, during the past 5-10 years).**

Women make up 20.1 percent of the deputies to the 11<sup>th</sup> Supreme People's Assembly and 21.9 percent of the deputies to the local people's assemblies. The proportion of women in the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly and its subordinate departments is over 30 percent. The female proportion in the power organs has systematically increased in the past 10 years.

Year	Percent
1995	29.5
1998	31.1
2002	32.7
2004	32.9

**14. The report states that various measures have been taken to enable women to "hold the posts of State officials and actively join the political and public activities" (para. 113). Aside from the 11-year compulsory free education, what is the nature and availability of these measures? Please also note any progress achieved as a result of these measures.**

-- Measure for education of women

The female proportion has increased to 35~40 percent in universities and colleges.

-- Measure for reorientation of women at work

Refresher courses are widely organized for 1~6 months in all sectors including science, education and public health. And part-time education system is in operation in factories, agricultural farms and fishing villages as the following:

Factory college	114
Farm college	16
Fishing ground college	1
Number of female students;	20,000 odd

-- Measure to supply conditions of social activity to women with children

Each village, factory or workshop has a nursery and a kindergarten for the convenience of working women.

## Article 10

**15. Although the report states that customary discrimination against women in the field of education “has long forgotten” (para. 152), several references are made throughout the report to the prevalence of customary discrimination against women. Please indicate what measures to combat gender stereotyping through the education system through the provision of career and vocational guidance, the promotion of female role models in non-traditional careers and the encouragement of women to continue their education in post-secondary programmes.**

In the DPRK, there is no *de facto* discrimination against women in education. Whereas some families and social sectors may have the outdated conception of disregarding women, there is no room for it in education. It is because the Government has attached utmost importance to education in building a civilized society and has let education play the leading role in the overall social development. All legal regulations on gender equality have been applied to education before any other sector and the new generation is free from ignorance of female by the coeducation system from kindergarten to university.

Educational institutions do not discriminate against female in the school curriculum except educating female pupils separately in female physiology and reproductive health at the last period of secondary school. The uneven female proportion in different specialized and vocational educations is not attributable to any discrimination by the State but to the personal demand of females in view of their wish, talent, taste and characteristics.

In the past, some parents did not want their daughters to go to university or college saying that “University is not appropriate for a female.” But now parents are convinced that women need higher education not only for their social activities but also for the management of family and education of children. Therefore application for university or college has increased among females in recent years. The state does not apply quota of

female since admission is strictly based on personal ability, but when the ability is similar priority is given to a female.

**16. Please provide updated statistics on women's and girls' enrollment rates and completion of various levels of education. In particular, provide information on the availability of and access to schools, as well as enrollment rates of girls in rural and remote communities.**

The 11-year compulsory education system has long been instituted and all education is free of charge in the DPRK. Under the compulsory preschool education system, 100 percent of 5~6 year old girls are enrolled in kindergartens which last for 2 years, after which they proceed to primary and secondary schools.

As of April 2005, the total number of kindergarten was 14,120; that of girl kindergarteners 35,500; the minimum age of enrollment in a primary school 6 and the enrollment rate 99.6 percent. The number of primary schools was 4,856 and that of primary schoolgirls 834,000. The enrollment rate in secondary schools among primary school graduates was 100 percent and the number of girl pupils at secondary schools 1,093,000. The completion rate of 11-year compulsory education was 100 percent. Those few girls who had stayed away from school and failed to graduate on time for sickness or some other reason continued their schooling after 1 year or so to complete it. The enrollment rate in vocational schools among secondary school graduates was 100 percent except those who proceeded to higher education or joined the army. The proportion of those who proceeded to higher education was about 35 percent among secondary school graduates. The proportion of girls was about 50 percent at primary and secondary schools and about 25~30 percent in average at universities. The latter was due to the fact that many girls wanted to go to colleges to learn commerce, service or statistics rather than to the universities of many years course.

Among the 4,800 females who participated from different parts of the country in the nutritional survey conducted in cooperation with the UNICEF and the WFP in October 2004, secondary school graduates accounted for 75.9 percent and university or college graduates 24.1 percent.

Schools are found at every place where there are children so that the 11-year compulsory education may substantially be provided. There is a kindergarten and a school even in an isolated lighthouse island or a remote mountainous area where 2~3 children are available. There are also primary and secondary schools for orphans. Thus, there is no condition whereby any girl is kept from going to school in the DPRK.

## **Article 11**

**17. The DPRK Law on Sex Equality provides that women shall have equal rights with men to labor (art. 3) and in all spheres of economic life (art. 1). Please indicate the existence and operation of an informal sector and the level of women's**

**participation in this sector. Please also describe any measures that are planned or in place to ensure women’s equal access to professions and to encourage women to seek employment in non-traditional sectors.**

There is neither legislation nor policy to restrict women’s employment in any sector. However, in reality, comparatively more women work in such fields as commercial service, education, public health and light industry and fewer women in mines or coal mines. It is because women seek jobs appropriate to their constitution and ability.

Measures have been taken to encourage more women to work in the sectors with fewer women. One of them is automation and modernization of hard labor. With the introduction of computerization and modernization, more women work even in metallurgical industry. There is no informal sector in the DPRK.

Proportion of female in different sectors

Sector	Percent
Industry	53
Agriculture	49
Construction	24
Transport	29
Geological survey	24
Telecommunication	29
Land and environment management	39
City administration	39
Education	60
Culture	60
Public health	60
Commerce	68
Food administration	68

**18. The process by which “the State allocates female graduates of various schools to the jobs of their choice”**

Since labor reserves are fostered to meet the manpower needs in a planned way in accordance with article 29 of the Labor Law, it is not a problem to allocate female graduates of colleges and universities to appropriate jobs. The problem is how to provide jobs to the girl graduates who advance to society after the 11-year compulsory education in compliance with their wish.

The labor administration institutions interview secondary school graduates on their wish, characteristics, taste and technical skill to introduce them to appropriate jobs. When the institution, enterprise or occupation of their choice has no more to employ, they temporarily work in other places until vacancy is available. Employment is decided by

the labor administration organ, institution, enterprise or organization concerned in view of the personal wish. It is up to one's own mind whether to accept the decision.

Citizens, male or female, may lodge a complaint or petition with the people's power organs at all levels and the institution or enterprise concerned, if a decision on employment is illegal or unacceptable. Once a complaint or petition is lodged, the institution that has received it registers it and goes out to the site to talk with the complainer and the person complained against, inquire into the reality and take appropriate measures.

**19. The report states that salaries are determined by a variety of factors including technical skills, labor intensity and work conditions (para. 162). Given that women in DPRK are traditionally employed in health care, education, commercial and light industrial sectors, please provide detailed information disaggregated by sex regarding the salaries of employees working in various sectors of the labor market and indicate if there is a *de facto* wage gap between women's and men's salaries.**

In the DPRK, it is an invariable principle to offer equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex, age or nationality.

Article 70 of the Constitution provides that citizens work according to their abilities and are paid in accordance with the quantity and quality of their work. The Labor Law also provides for the principles and system of equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex, age and nationality; of paying salary according to the scale and standards; of determining rational work norms, etc.

The salary scale system is that salaries have gap depending on occupational classification, rating, technical skill, function, work conditions, etc., where gender has no meaning at all. The principle in paying salary is to recover the physical and mental energy consumed in the work and ensure the life of a person, and this principle is not altered if the worker is a woman. The women in the branch of hard labor where more energy is required get more salary than those in light industry or service sectors. The women doing technical or intellectual work get more salary than those doing simple labor. Besides the basic salary determined by scale system, women get such supplementary remuneration as different additional pay, prize, bounty, etc. with no discrimination.

The current provisional minimum salary is 2,200 won, the average salary 5,000 won and the high salary level 8,000 won. The minimum salary of 2,200 won is enough to procure staple and subsidiary food and daily necessities, and save 800~900 won. Recently some cost-accounting enterprises pay their employees much higher salaries in proportion to their income.

**20. Please provide statistical information disaggregated by sex on labor force participation, occupation and levels of jobs, including in part time, temporary and other non-permanent contract jobs.**

(Unit: 1,000)

Year	Sex	Industry	Agriculture	Construction & geological survey	Transport & telecommunication	Commerce & procurement	Education, culture, health	Land management & city administration
2003	M	1,965	1,644	340	274	152	347	153
	F	2,146	1,672	105	111	363	514	107
2004	M	1,979	1,701	352	296	159	355	161
	F	2,206	1,687	107	117	371	527	112

**Article 12**

**21. Please provide information on rates of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity including trends over time and urban and rural differences.**

In 2002, the maternal mortality was 103 per 100,000 live births and the infant mortality 23.5 per 1,000 live births. The mortality was 9.3 per 1,000 in average, 9.7 in towns, 8.9 in countryside, 9.4 among male and 9.2 among female. The morbidity of TB was 220 and that of malaria 243 per 100,000.

**22. Despite efforts to counter the quantitative and qualitative gap in medical care between remote communities and those in urban centers and the plain areas, the report states that there continue to be difficulties in increasing mobile service teams and ensuring the availability of mobile, routine health care services such as the detection, diagnosis and treatment of diseases (para 189). Please describe additional measures that are planned or in place to ensure the availability of basic health care services to all citizens, including gynecological and obstetric care for women and any incentive programmes that have been developed to encourage qualified medical personnel to travel to or establish medical practices in remote communities.**

- In order to improve primary health care, the Government took such measures as:

■ Introducing household doctor system.

Under this system, a doctor takes charge of a certain number of households for the preventive and curative work. The current average number of households under a doctor's responsibility is 134. The number will be gradually decreased in conformity with the increasing number of doctors.

- Developing district health system based on primary health care.

Under this system, all the medical institutions within a district or county are included in the primary health care service with a district in urban areas and a county in rural areas as the basic unit and provide health care to all of the population within the district by increasing regional independence and initiative under the unified central guidance. The system involves district or county hospital, *dong* clinic, *ri* people's hospital or clinic, the hygienic and anti-epidemic station and medicament supply center of the district or county. The number of population under the district health system is about 50,000~100,000 in average.

- Widely involving inhabitants in the planning, organization, management and control of primary health care.

The deputies to the county (or district) people's assembly, the officials of public organizations and the health institutions of county (or district) and *ri* (or *dong*) regularly meet to discuss the issues of planning, organization, management and control of primary health care. Inhabitants conduct the campaign to create a disease-free village and take an active part in the work to develop primary health care. The campaign is a mass activity to prevent diseases conducted with a *ri* (or *dong*) as a unit.

- The State takes care of maternal health responsibly by:

- Enhancing the role of obstetrical and gynaecological departments.

Measures have been taken to improve the facilities and management of the central Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, provincial or municipal maternity hospitals and the obstetrical and gynaecological department of hospitals. Special attention is directed to furnishing obstetrical and gynaecological section and delivery room of rural hospitals and clinics so that in-hospital childbirth assistance may be provided to all rural women as well. Nearly all women get in-hospital childbirth assistance by qualified medical personnel now. In the year 2000, the proportion of women who were assisted in child delivery by qualified medical personnel was 98.3 percent in towns and 94.7 percent in countryside.

- Ensuring that pregnant women and women in childbed are registered and taken care of without fail.

Every pregnant woman is registered within 3 months, interviewed and examined compulsorily 18~22 times during the whole period before and after childbirth and is provided medical service whenever necessary.

- Providing women with maternity leave for 150 days.

**23. In light of the widespread famine and natural disasters that affected the DPRK from the mid-1990s, please outline the availability of adequate food and nutrition to counter the malnutrition that women and children have consequently suffered.**

Food situation is not yet good and so the rate of malnutrition is still high. The State does not have sufficient food resource but ensures equitable supply of rations to all households. That is why no inhabitant is in the state of starvation.

According to the data of household food stock collected during the nutritional survey in November, 2002 by the Central Statistics Bureau in cooperation with the WFP and the UNICEF, among the households examined 99.5 percent had starch, 69.5 percent had bean, 49.6 percent had meat, egg or fish, 97.8 percent had vegetable, 25.5 percent had fruit and 5.5 percent had the food supplied by the WFP. The basic stocked food was maize (43.2 percent), rice (35.1 percent), wheat (10.4 percent) and potato (9 percent). The national survey of nutritional situation showed that the malnutrition rate of children under 7 was 15.6 percent in 1997, 10.4 percent in 2000 and 7.5 percent in 2004, and that of general population was 16.8 percent in 1998, 8.1 percent in 2000 and 6.2 percent in 2004.

**24. Please provide more detailed information regarding the existence of reproductive and sexual health education programmes, including their substantive content and their availability to high risk groups such as adolescents and unmarried women who may not receive reproductive and sexual health education.**

The reproductive health policy of the DPRK aims to:

- Strengthen health education of women
- Promote the well-being of women
- Decrease the maternal morbidity and mortality
- Ensure sound sexual life and reasonable number of children according to the wish of the couple

The DPRK does not introduce family planning to control birth rate. There are cases where pregnancy interruption is required for the sake of maternal health.

The knowledge of reproductive health is disseminated through regular education, family education and social education. Secondary schools teach in the subject of “hygienics” human body anatomy physiology and general knowledge to prevent diseases and give to schoolgirls about 20 lectures a year from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade on female physiology and common sense.

The Public Health Publishing House under the Ministry of Public Health, the provincial propaganda houses, city or county hospitals and the hygienic and anti-epidemic stations disseminate female hygienics among women through full-time hygienic propaganda workers. Household doctors, obstetricians and gynaecologists regularly interview women

in their districts on female physiology and health care including safe sexual life, pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery care.

The women's union runs mother's school to disseminate the knowledge of family life and female hygienics. The publishing and broadcasting institutions publish and distribute such books on female health care as the Reader of Family Medical Knowledge or the Female Common Sense and disseminate general knowledge for women through TV and radio. These measures contribute to the reproductive health by preventing illegal abortion and premature pregnancy.

**25. The report notes that “until now, there has been no HIV/AIDS cases reported” (para 196). Please indicate whether there have been any reported HIV/AIDS cases since the report was submitted and also provide updated information on preventive measures that have been undertaken.**

The DPRK has eliminated the social basis of outbreak and transmission of AIDS by strengthening ethical and moral education on safe sexual relationship. There has not been AIDS case until now and venereal disease is not a matter of concern as there is neither immoral sexual relationship nor prostitution. But in view of the widespread reality of AIDS and venereal disease in the world, the Government strengthens its quarantine for travelers abroad and immigrants and health institutions popularize the knowledge to prevent the disease. The regular education institutions teach young people the transmission channels, fatal aftermath and preventive measures of AIDS and venereal diseases so that they may have high vigilance and take a good care of their health.

Article 3 of the Law on Epidemic Prevention provides that the State shall pay great attention to the detection and isolation of epidemic source and prevent in time the outbreak and transmission of epidemic disease. Under this provision, the epidemic prevention institutions and the institutions concerned have established the system of epidemiological survey, medical examination and detection of infected persons to grasp epidemic patients, their cohabitants and the infected persons. The institutions, enterprises, organizations and citizens inform the relevant organ about the detected epidemic source and the suspected persons, and the organ that has been informed registers and takes curative measures for them.

The Cabinet organizes the emergency anti-epidemic committee according to epidemic situation and takes necessary measures. The epidemic prevention institutions and the relevant institutions isolate the detected patients in epidemic hospital or ward in time. There has not been emergency anti-epidemic measure taken against HIV/AIDS in the DPRK as it has not broken out yet.

### Article 13

**26. The report notes that “nobody is excepted from the State and public care or benefits” (para 201). However, no information is provided on the availability of pension or retirement benefits. To what extent are these benefits available to women?**

In the DPRK, women are entitled to pension or retirement benefits without any discrimination.

Old age pension amounts to 100 ~ 40 percent of the salary just before retirement. The retirement age is 60 for men and 55 for women. Old age pension has no other requirement but that a woman should have been in employment for 25 years and a man for 30 years at least.

In case a person has temporarily lost the ability to work or is absent from work for an unavoidable reason, temporary subsidy is supplied. This subsidy differs in its amount depending on each person’s salary. Temporary subsidy is between 50 ~ 30 percent of the salary in view of the service term, merits, achievements, the causes and extent of temporary disability. Temporary subsidy is supplied for less than 6 months and is henceforth followed by disability pension under the state social security system. Disability pension is given irrespective of the term of service if the cause of disability is related with employment. But it is given according to the fixed term of service if the cause of disability has nothing to do with employment. The more serious the disability is, the higher the ration of pension is.

Generally, 3 months’ salary is given to a person who retires. There is no sexual difference in the supply of pension or retirement benefits.

### Article 14

**27. The report notes that the gap between urban and rural women is “the product of the current technical and cultural backwardness of the countryside....and [its] geographical conditions” (para 208). Accordingly, the report indicates that the Government is working to improve the living conditions of rural women “up to the level of towns” including through the introduction of modern dwellings, electricity, sanitation and water service and bus services (para 221). Please provide details on the levels of poverty of rural women, and on progress of these efforts.**

The countryside used to be prevailed by deep-rooted illiteracy, ignorance, centuries-old backwardness and poverty before liberation.

But thanks to the democratic reform and the socialist construction of different stages, the countryside changed its appearance radically after liberation. Above all, the rural people have become civilized. By the introduction of the compulsory free education system in

the countryside just like in towns, rural people including women have been educated in modern science and knowledge. And the material and technical foundation for agricultural production has been strengthened by the Government policy of rural technical revolution. Modern farming machines are widely used in the agricultural and livestock farms, and women as well as men have become engineers, technicians and skilled workers. Under the farmer's exalted demand for cultural life, TV sets, video players, tape recorders, computers and other modern cultural living accessories have been introduced to serve to enhance the life of rural women.

But the rural women have not yet reached the level of urban women in their life and are still under the heavy burden of physical labor. The proportion of women is nearly equal to that of men in the labor force of agriculture, livestock farming and silk raising (49 percent of rural population).

Recently agricultural industry was severely damaged by flood, tidal wave and draught. With the difficulties that occurred in the later half of the 1990s being alleviated and the economy normalized, the life of rural women is getting better.

**28. The Regulation on State Social Insurance and Social Security provides that benefits are available to rural women who are employed in any State institutions. What social security benefits exist for rural women who are not employed in a public institution or enterprise?**

Rural women who are not employed are entitled to social insurance and social security benefits. The benefits are supplied by the co-operative farm of the residential district concerned. The financial resource needed is created by the farm itself. It is based on the premium paid by farmers out of their share of yearly accounts and income distribution and the deficiency is supplemented by the public accumulation of the farm. The account of benefit is estimated and applied differently in each farm. The benefit of social insurance is assessed in the form of average work-points and is paid in kind at the end of the year.

**Articles 15 and 16**

**29. The report notes restrictions on travel to security-related areas of the DPRK. It also states that travel to and from the country are subject to immigration law and passport and visa regulations (para 232). Please indicate if a woman can obtain a passport or a Regulation on Travel Order and travel freely within and outside the DPRK without the prior authorization of her husband or another male relative and if any legal obstacles exist which would inhibit the ability of a woman to travel.**

Article 75 of the Constitution stipulates: "Citizens have freedom of residence and travel". This provision is applied to women to the letter as well. Women are free to travel within

and outside the country only subject to due formalities. Women are on an equal footing with men and are neither discriminated against nor restricted in obtaining passports or travel permission. There is no legal requirement of prior authorization of husband or a male relative for women's travel, nor legal restriction on it.

**30. According to article 8 of the Law on Sex Equality “women shall have equal rights with men to...have a share of property or land at the time of a divorce” (para 74, art. 8). The report also notes that where parties are unable to reach an agreement on the division of property on the dissolution of marriage, the matter will be settled by the courts. Please indicate if a comprehensive analysis of court decisions has been conducted to determine the extent to which women have been granted an equal share of property in divorce cases settled by courts.**

A comprehensive analysis of court judgments in divorce cases has been conducted by the people's power organ that supervises law enforcement. Nearly all of the judgments contained the sharing of property.

The principle is that the property individually owned by each spouse before marriage goes back to the owner and the property acquired during a marriage be disposed of by agreement. But if a party asks for the division of property by law the court intervenes by decision or judgment. No woman is shared less than man simply because she is a female. A woman with little children is given more property in view of her support of children.

**31. Please explain the meaning and purpose of child and women preferences in child support court cases and the circumstances under which these preferences are applied (para 231).**

There are cases where women participate in the criminal or civil proceedings in the capacity of a litigant or a witness. In such cases, the trial takes place at the court in or near to the residential place of the woman to lessen the burden of the woman and her children.

In the court cases of child support, a special benefit is granted to the woman complainant by not demanding court costs. In both criminal and civil proceedings, there is no sexual discrimination except the special benefits. The purpose of such system is to guarantee women's rights better and more realistically.

**32. The report indicates that “[o]n rare occasions, grandparents demand childbirth until they have a grandson” (para. 245). What measures have been taken or are envisaged to change this attitude of son preference?**

The attitude of son preference is based on the outdated and reasonless notion of family inheritance or clan prosperity. Some old people still have this attitude. But the civilized

new generations who have been educated after liberation do not follow the attitude. On the contrary, many young couples prefer to have daughters. The State does not feel it necessary to adopt a special measure to alter the attitude of son preference, which is spontaneously being resolved.

## **General**

### **33. What measures and actions have been taken towards ratification of the Optional Protocol?**

The DPRK acceded to the Convention on February 27, 2001 and is considering the issue of ratifying the Optional Protocol. The National Coordination Committee is negotiating with the relevant State organs including the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly.

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