



*Mission Permanente  
de la République Islamique d'Iran  
auprès des Nations Unies  
et des autres Organisations Internationales à Genève*

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

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The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to the latter's communication dated 17 July 2019, has the honor to transmit, herewith, the comments of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the Questionnaire from the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



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## Main questions

**What are the main trends influencing women's human rights in the world of work in your national context and in their impact on the types of and quantity work available to women, and the quality and conditions of work (including access to social protection and equal pay)?**

### **A. Legal Framework:**

#### **A.1. Constitution**

- Article 20 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, declared the equality of all citizens, both men and women before law and their equal enjoyment of all human, political, economic, social, and cultural rights;
- Article 21 declared that the government must ensure the woman's rights in all aspects and provide a favorable environment for her growth and resuscitation of her material and spiritual rights;
- Article 28 declared the rights of everyone to choose whatever job he/she wishes as long as it is not against Islam, public interest, and the rights of others.

These articles encompass all women's rights including their right to work and at work.

#### **A.2. Sixth National Development Plan**

- Paragraph D of Article 80 emphasizes on the protection of women heading households through the elaboration and implementation of the "Comprehensive Plan for Empowering Women Heading Households" by the Office of the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs with the cooperation of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare and other relevant bodies.

#### **A.3. Code of Labour**

- Article 38 preserves the equal payment for equal work for women and men and prohibit any discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity and political or religious beliefs in remuneration.
- Articles 75 to 78 provide some privileges for women workers including the prohibition of assigning hazardous, arduous and harmful work to them, the protections related to pregnancy and post-delivery period, the guaranty of return to work after the maternal leave.

#### **A.4. Code of Social Security**

- Article 67 provides an allowance related to pregnancy for women employed during the year before childbirth;
- According to the Executive Regulations for the Nurseries and Kindergartens drawn up by the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare, childcare centres shall be set up as close to the mother's workplace as possible and should preferably be located within the building of their work place.
- Paragraph 2 of Article 4 of the Act of Women and Children Without Guardian (enacted in 1992) emphasizes provision of cultural and social support including such services as education (schooling), training, job seeking, technical and vocational

training, counseling and social work in solving life problems and in marriage and starting a family.

#### **A.4. Amendment of the Law on Population Planning**

This amendment has extended the maternity leave from 6 to 9 months as per the rules for all women employed.

#### **A.5. the Charter on Citizenship Rights**

- Article 83 on the rights of women to appropriate job opportunities and the right to equal payment for equal work with men.
- Article 90 on the rights of women to enjoy healthy nutrition during pregnancy; healthy childbirth; postpartum health care; maternity leave; and medical treatment for women diseases.

#### **A.6. Law on Arrangement and Protection of Home-based Jobs**

The provisions of this law protect all workers; however it could be considered as a law which protect and promote women's human rights in the world of work because of the tendency of women to this form of work in comparison with men.

### **B. Facts in the field**

- In recent decades, women's tendency for employment, especially in young women has been steadily increasing. Their access to higher education has strengthened their capacities and emboldened their role in economic activities. Regarding these trends, the promotion and protection of economic participation of women has turned into an important factor in our national policies and planning.
- The equal access to IT/ICT for men and women in rural and urban areas has provided an infrastructure for expanding and diversifying the types of and quantity of work available to women, and the quality and conditions of work for them.
- Actually 2500 women are members of Chambers of Commerce and major national, regional, and international markets. By 2015, there were 98,001 women entrepreneurs including 40,534 women as member of board of directors. 21,627 women is also in the post of Inspector
- Today, women's cooperatives include more than 30 percent of the members of active cooperatives within the country.

### **What are the main trends influencing women's human rights in the world of work in your national context and their impact for women's safety (including violence and sexual harassment) at work?**

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always paid a special attention to women safety and security in public and private spheres including in the place of work. In this regard, there is some law and regulations which criminalize the different forms of violence and harassment against women including those related to or committed in the work place. Furthermore some of the special measures are mentioned as follows:

- The adoption of a comprehensive bill on the “Securing Women against Violence” is underway.
- All national regulation on health and safety in work and their related inspections, address the women and men in an equal manner.

**What are the main trends influencing women’s human rights in the world of work in your national context and their impact on women’s rights to organize and claim rights?**

- The Labour and Social Security Code (1990), State Services Management Law (2007), National Development Plans (including the Sixth National Development Plan since 1993), Employment and Decent Job National Plan (2019), Family Protection Policy (2012), and Women Employment Policies (1992) are among the most important regulations which could referred in organizing and claiming women rights in world of work.
- Article 26 of the Constitution and Article 131 of the Labour Code recognize the right of workers to create the association and syndicate; in order to protect their legal rights.
- Article 43 of the Charter on Citizenship Rights stipulates that citizens are entitled to establish, join, and work in parties, communities, social, cultural, scientific, political, associations, and NGOs in accordance with the law. Furthermore, Article 44 describes that citizens are entitled to engage in effective participation in policy making, decision making, and law enforcement. Articles 45 and 46 authorize participation in civil activities in areas of citizenship rights, establishment of communities, and participation in demonstrations with no gender discrimination.
- With regard to home-based jobs, establishment of network activities can be effective. Considering the fact that the law governing home-based jobs is new, establishment of organizations and guild platforms is under investigation.

**What are the promising practices emerging from your country to ensure the realization of women’s rights to work and women’s rights at work, in the context of technological and demographic change, as well as continuing globalization and the shift towards sustainability? (laws; economic, labour market and social policies; programmes).**

In the past, women mostly worked in agriculture, industry and other simple occupations. Today, in contrast, they mostly work in the services sector. Among service jobs, the most occupied by women are those related to sell, followed by technical, administrative, and managerial field. Women's employment in simple and non-scientific occupations has been decreasing and their employment in scientific and non-physical jobs has been increasing. This means that educated women have better chances to be entered in the job market.

Regarding the realization of resilient economy and achieving the sustainability some measures has been taken as follows:

- Establishing at least 2 permanent centres for supplying and selling of products manufactured by women or in the cooperative managed by theme in home-based jobs, handicrafts, agricultural processing, industries and micro-industries in province capitals and cities with the aim of proportional geographical distribution

- Prioritizing support for and follow up the implementation of previously approved plans of the Resilient Economy Taskforce related to women and family affairs,
- Facilitating the process of issuing the permission for NGOs active in the field of entrepreneurship and employment, particularly relevant women NGOs
- Providing special support to entrepreneurial and employment projects pursuing a cultural, and tourism approach for women
- Establishing the "Women Businesses Incubator and Accelerator Centre" which provide specialized and general entrepreneurship training for women, identifying and eliminating the existing barriers to women's economic activities, developing business ideas, contributing to the commercialization of goods and services, marketing, and transferring technical knowledge and experience in order to establish and improve business for various groups of women including university graduates, women heading households, and housewives.
- Allocating specialized facilities and funds to economic and entrepreneurial activities in the provinces and to women engaging in economic activities as well as cooperatives, technological units and women's knowledge-based companies; In line with the improvement of women employment, the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare has executed the internship plan for university graduates as an active policy in the labour market in 2017. This plan is for the practical training of 135,000 university graduates. Across Iran, 18,210 university graduates have signed an internship contract and 11,985 applicants has gained work permit from the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO).
- A novel model for developing home-based businesses is running with the purpose to guarantee the sustainability for these jobs.
- Five national examinations have been organized aiming at issuing the technical protection/safety certificate with equal conditions for male and female applicants. In this regard, more than 200 competence certificates have been issued for female applicants in the field of occupational safety and health.
- The Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare has begun developing a web-based comprehensive platform for professional relationships since 2017, which can indirectly ensure women's employment rights. In this regard, the main strategy of this platform is to identify the informal (underground) jobs and to orient them to the formal situation. This process will automatically end up in pushing the informal businesses to the formal sector.

**How is technological change impacting on women's experiences of work in your national context? (e.g. increasing access to ICTs, robotics, machine learning, automation)**

The mobile phone, computer and internet penetration for women is respectively 72, 40.2 and 44.4 per cent, equal with men.

The expansions of broadband internet bandwidth, access to ICTs and mobile phones, digital platforms and similar IT-related facilities, have created considerable job opportunities for women, specially unemployed women.

Actually a considerable population of women are using the internet and digital platform; social networks and messaging apps are forums for presenting goods and services offered by women in both formal and informal sectors. As these platforms assist women to make a balance between their familial and professional responsibilities, they became more and more popular between them. For now, 10% of marketed start-up ideas belong to women.

**What are some of the good practices for supporting women to benefit equally from technological advances? (Laws, economic and social policies, institutional measures, regulation, actions by employers)**

- The e-business regulations stress on female employment and the providing jobs and business especially for women headed households. According to this regulation, new digital enterprises are exempt from some business incorporation regulations. In fact, they follow simple regulations aimed at facilitating the transition and profitability of such businesses.
- A Home-Based Businesses Portal has been launched across the country to register interested applicants including women and disseminate information on ICT-related business opportunities.
- The labour market governance is under reform by the government, societal partners and research centers in order to find appropriate solutions to challenges of the future world of work.

**How is the rise of more flexible forms of labour, including the ‘gig’ and ‘on demand’ economy impacting one women’s experiences of work in your national context?**

Given the concept of gig economy, there are many women who can work from inside their homes. Therefore, compared with the past, more job opportunities are available for women. This is indeed a good opportunity for making a proper balance between works, living and familial responsibilities. However, the relationship between the two parties of work is short and thus falls beyond the supervision of the labour regulations. Therefore, there are problems for women in this regard. Usually, there is no social protection in the jobs and this is the main problem for women.

**What are the implications for job security for increased flexibility and women’s caring responsibilities, and for harassment and violence?**

The Cyber Police of the Islamic Republic of Iran exclusively address cybercrimes and in case of receiving complaints, it will investigate the cases.

**Which groups of women are most likely to be impacted by this type of work?**

All women who are interested in home-based businesses, inter alia women heading households; female entrepreneurs, young girls, unemployed women and low-income workers.

**What are some of the good practices for ensuring access to social protection for women in informal and ‘on demand’ work? (Laws, economic and social policies, institutional measures, regulation, actions by employers)**

The proper working conditions for workers including social supports are predicted in the social security and labour laws. Therefore, it is expected that in the gig economy, social supports are provided in accordance with the relevant working hours or volume. However, implementing the social security in gig economy is a big challenge in the current global labour market. The establishment of the Comprehensive Portal on Job Relationships is significant in this regard. Some other support measures include:

- Providing financial facilities for home-based businesses, consistent with relevant criteria;
- Providing the possibility for insurance coverage for home-based businesses.

**What are the good practices for women’s collective organizing in the context of more flexible forms of labour?**

In home-based businesses, it is attempted to provide flexible and proper conditions for organizing female workers through the activities of home-based businesses networks and their connection to the leading enterprises.

**How is demographic change in your national context impacting on women’s experience of work?**

According to the statistics, the annual average of women in labour force increased 4.7% from 2011 to 2017. During these years, the active population of women was 16.2 per cent (2014) to 19.7 per cent (2017). Therefore, the augmentation of active population leads to increase the number of applications for entering in the labour market.

**What are the implications of an aging population and of the ‘youth bulge’?**

While life expectancy at birth reached 74 years old in 2016, the number and proportion of older persons is expected to continue increasing from 7.4 million to nearly 30 million in 2050. The window of opportunity which opened in 2006 with its potential population bonus provides a golden opportunity for the Iran’s economy. Based on an intermediate scenario of the UN population projections (2009), Iran’s window of opportunity will remain open for almost four decades from 2005. These demographic changes need to be managed efficiently in order to be transformed into a better and sustainable economic growth. Thus, the Government explores to develop effective strategies to properly place these issues in national policies and plans in order to achieve “demographic dividend”. A Regional Conference on Aging, was organized in Tehran last year in order to consider and share strategies, challenges, achievements and best practices among more than 40 countries in Asian- Pacific on health, insurance, reinstatement, welfare and other issues related to the second demographic dividend.

Moreover, a commission on “youth, Entrepreneurship, New and Knowledge-based Businesses” was created in the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade mandated to orient and to aid the youth population in the changing world of work.

**What economic and social policies are needed to ensure that the growth in the care sector creates decent work opportunities for women?**

In the changing world of work, employment in the care sector is rapidly growing. The efforts aiming at improving the arrangement of the institutions related to care sectors could lead to create decent work opportunities for women. In this regard there is some rules and regulations:

Regulation on Establishment the Centres for Care services in home (2016)

- Iran’s Nursing Organization Law (2001);
- Improving Productivity of Health System Clinical Staff Executive (2010)
- Promoting decent work for women in the care sectors requires comprehensive execution of the aforementioned regulations and studying their transformation.

Women’s contribution in managerial posts of the affiliated institutions in public and private sectors has been augmented in recent decades. The Cooperatives could also play a significant role as providers of services and generators of employment in this sector.

**What measures are necessary to ensure that women benefit equally from the transition to sustainability in your national context? What are some of the promising practices to ensure that green jobs do not replicate existing gender inequalities in other sectors (e.g. occupational segregation, gender pay gap)?**

According to the article 101 of the Sixth National Development Plan, all executive organizations are obliged to apply the approach of promotion of the status of women in their activities aiming at ensuring the participation of women in the transition to sustainable development. In this regard the Vice- Presidency for Women and Family Affairs is mandated to coordinate the policies, programs and plans and to monitor and evaluate the related indexes.