

National Situation Analysis Report:

Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality

Algeria

*Enhancing Equality between Men and Women
in the Euromed region (2008-2011)
Programme financed by the European Union*



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*"This report has been drafted by independent experts.
It does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union."*

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List of abbreviations

AAPF	Algerian Family Planning Association
ADPDF	Association for the Defence and Promotion of Women’s Rights
AFCARE	Algerian Association of Women Managers
AFEPEC	Women’s Association for Personal Development and the Exercise of Citizenship
AITDF	Independent Association for the Triumph of Women’s Rights
AME	Algerian Women Managers and Entrepreneurs
CENEAP	National Research Centre for Population and Development Studies
CIDDEF	Information and Documentation Centre on Children’s and Women’s Rights
CRASC	National Social and Cultural Anthropology Research Centre
CREAD	Centre for Research in Applied Economics for Development
FVV	Women Victims of Violence
INSP	National Institute of Public Health
MDCFCF	Ministry for the Family and Women’s Affairs
MESRS	Ministry for Higher Education and Scientific Research
MSPRH	Ministry for Health, the Population and Hospital Reform
Rachda	Assembly against “Hogra” and for the Rights of Algerian Women
UGTA	General Union of Algerian Workers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VAW	Violence against Women

1. Executive Summary

The programme “Enhancing Equality between Men and Women in the Euromed Region” (EGEP) is of three years’ duration (15 May 2008 – 15 May 2011); it is funded through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and is implemented in the nine countries of the southern part of the EU neighbouring area: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Syria and Tunisia.

The aim of the regional programme is to promote the following three purposes:

- Purpose 1: Support and reinforce current dynamics that favour both de jure and de facto gender equality and that provide support to the promotion of women’s rights in the region;
- Purpose 2: Improve understanding and knowledge of the various forms of violence against women;
- Purpose 3: Ensure that the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions on “Strengthening the role of women in society” are being followed up.

This report has been drafted within the framework of Purpose 1 of the EGEP programme. With a view to supporting current dynamics and strengthening the capacity of those acting in support of equality between men and women, Situation Analyses have been conducted in eight partner countries (Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia). The process has been twofold: the drafting of a Situation Analysis report by a national expert and the presentation, discussion and validation of the findings of that Situation Analysis report during a national, multi-stakeholder validation workshop.

The **overall objective** of this national report is to conduct a situation analysis of women’s human rights and gender equality, with an emphasis on legal reforms, women’s participation in decision-making in public and private life and gender-based violence. The **specific objective** of this report is to provide an inventory of national efforts towards the realization of women’s equal rights. The analysis is conducted through the prism of CEDAW and the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions, where the cross-cutting principles of both are analyzed within the national context.

The **methodology** adopted in this situation analysis is based on an examination of both primary and secondary sources, as well as on assessment interviews with stakeholders.

Main findings: efforts undertaken and actions deployed

Undeniable progress can be seen in the status of women in Algeria, thanks to the effort of women and the existence of a political will to improve their condition and position within society. This has been translated into achievements in the consolidation of women's rights and the continuation of public efforts in the education, training, health and employment of women.

Amendments have been made to the Constitution, among other texts, in order to enhance women's political rights and their access to decision-making positions through Article 31 bis, which stipulates "The State is working to promote the political rights of women by increasing their opportunities to access representation in elected bodies". That said, women remain under-represented in decision-making areas at the executive and legislative levels, both nationally and locally. As for their participation in the judiciary, it is one of the highest in the world, as over 38% of magistrates are women.

From the legal point of view, several reforms have been introduced: to the Family Code, the Nationality Code and the Penal Code. Sexual harassment at work is now a crime and women have been granted the right to legal maternity leave. Although these reforms represent an advance towards the eradication of discrimination against women, there is still a legal void to fill regarding domestic violence, which is trivialised by legislation and tolerated by society.

The removal of the obstacles preventing the socio-economic integration of women has been implemented as part of a national strategy. The combat to eradicate violence against women and to reduce this phenomenon has been implemented through measures which aim to create a policy of prevention and support the victims. These measures have led to the creation of a national strategy and an operating plan.

As regards the combat to eradicate violence against women (VAW), the actions carried out by the administration and the associations are focused on: temporary accommodation, socio-psychological, medical and legal support, benefits to facilitate integration, publications, the organisation of workshops and study days, the setting up of support centres and centres for the promotion of human rights, national campaigns denouncing harassment, radio and television programmes, advertising banners and the installation of a computerised information system.

Main findings: restrictions and limitations

Although women have achieved a higher level of education and are more visible in the public sphere, the process has not resulted in changes in political representation and a change in mentalities. The following phenomena remain:

- the small number of women present in political and public life;
- the negative perception of the role and participation of women in decision-making positions;
- the lack of interest by political training bodies in including women in their structures and programmes;
- the perpetuation of a system of discriminatory values linked to the lack of equality within the private, domestic sphere and connected to women's legal status.

In this respect, a series of constraints has been identified:

- the small number of women in employment;
- the lack of a legal culture and access to justice;
- illiteracy;
- maternal and reproductive health;
- stereotypes and prescribed social roles, which make women responsible for domestic work, and the lack of the necessary childcare infrastructure;
- the low rate of access by women to new information and communication technologies (ICT);
- stereotypes of women in the media and the insufficient use of the media to highlight the positive contribution of women to society;
- the lack of institutional mechanisms for monitoring and assessing action programmes, particularly at the level of data and statistics broken down by gender.

On the one hand, although the most remarkable advances in equality are in the area of education, progress still needs to be made to make women's work outside the home part of social and professional reality.

On the other hand, following the implementation of the reforms to the Family Code and the Nationality Code and the introduction of Article 31bis into the Constitution, there is an urgent need to inform women of their rights and to implement measures to support these laws.

The **opportunities** which could help to achieve gender equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women can be found at five different levels:

- political will
- the legal and legislative context
- national strategies and policies
- institutional measures and mechanisms
- mobilisation of society and the community: NGOs, networks, parliamentary groups

The **restrictions and limitations** identified concern:

- the national and international legal instruments
- the lack of visibility of the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions
- the social limitations to the constitutive principle of equality
- the responsibilities of women in the domestic sphere

The male/female stereotypes projected by socio-cultural pressures hinder the successful popularisation of egalitarian values and the resulting rights.

National priorities and perspectives for future action

Based on the situation analysis, the consultations and the discussions with the stakeholders, the priorities selected by the institution responsible for the women dossier in partnership with civil society concern six areas of application:

- women and the law
- women and education
- women and the economy
- women and violence
- women, power and decision-making
- the strengthening of mandates and institutional capacities

There are two distinct categories among the priorities and strategic interventions which must be tackled and reinforced by future interventions:

In terms of **gender equality**, the perspectives for action could focus on:

- lifting the reservations in the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the ratification of the Optional Protocol. However, let us stress that Algeria has lifted the reservation to Article 9/2 of CEDAW, following the revision of the Nationality and Family Codes.

In terms of **gender-based violence**, the perspectives for action could be centred on:

- the drafting of surveys or sociological analyses to determine the role of the different high-profile institutions, including mosques, schools, the media and the family;
- endorse these with support measures, follow-up and periodical assessments;
- ensure exchanges between the countries in the region to encourage decision-making and share experiences (good practice);
- carry out participatory studies to be in a position to define benchmarks in the legislative and regulatory domains;
- increase the actions of civil society and the authorities in popularising the legal rights acquired at all levels.

2. Introduction and Purposes

2.1. Programme context

The regional programme “Enhancing Equality between Men and Women in the Euromed Region” (EGEP) was developed in the context of the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions on “Strengthening the Role of Women in Society” and has a duration of three years (May 2008 – May 2011). It is funded through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) of the European Union (EU). The programme is implemented in the nine countries of the southern part of the EU neighbouring area: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia.

The overall objective of the programme is to enhance equality between men and women by building the capacities of the key players, particularly the States, and by supporting the current, positive trends and the dynamics relating to the role of women in decision-making in both the public and private domains and to follow up the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions.

The programme is structured according to the following purposes:

- Purpose 1: Support and reinforce current dynamics that favour both de jure and de facto gender equality and that provide support to the promotion of women’s rights in the region;
- Purpose 2: Improve understanding and knowledge of the various forms of violence against women;
- Purpose 3: Ensure that the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions on “Strengthening the role of women in society” are being followed up.

Situation Analyses have been conducted in eight partner countries (Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia) with the aim of supporting current dynamics and building the capacities of the players qualified to enhance gender equality. The process was twofold: on the one hand, the drafting of a situation analysis by a national expert and on the other hand the presentation, discussion and validation of the results of the situation analysis during a national, multi-stakeholder validation workshop.

2.2. Objectives of the situation analysis and expected findings

The **overall objective** of the national report is to conduct an analysis of women’s human rights and gender equality, highlighting legal reforms, women’s involvement in decision-making in both the public and private spheres, and gender-based violence.

The **specific objective** of the report is to provide an inventory of the national efforts to achieve women’s human rights. The report identifies the manner in which women have progressed in the economic, political and social spheres through the implementation of national programmes, legislation and other intervention strategies. The analysis was carried out through CEDAW and the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions and underlines the principles common to both instruments in the analysis of the national context.

This document also identifies the main problems, obstacles and opportunities, as well as the challenges and priorities relating to:

- women’s role and involvement in decision-making in both private and public life;
- gender-based violence; violence against women.

3. Methodology

The **general methodology** adopted for the situation analysis was based on a documentary study of the secondary sources, as well as rapid assessment interviews with stakeholders as primary sources. The analysis of the findings of the documentary study and the rapid assessment is included in the provisions of CEDAW and the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions.

The aim of the situation analysis was not to prepare new assessments, but rather to create an inventory and bring together the existing information to allow the States, civil society organisations and the other regional and international partners to ensure consistency and increase the synergies of efforts and interventions. Interviews were held with a representative sample of stakeholders in order to assess the efforts and challenges involved in enhancing women's human rights at national level.

At the final stage of the situation analysis process, a national validation workshop was organised to allow the participants to debate and validate the results of the situation analysis and to come to an agreement on a set of national priorities. The workshop was planned and organised under the direction of and/or in close collaboration with the Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs, in order to ensure a process of appropriation and commitment at the national level. The workshops brought together representatives of the National Women's Machinery, multi-sectoral Ministries, parliamentarians, researchers, women's and civil society organisations, journalists and representatives of donor organisations. The findings of the report were debated and validated with all the participants so that a consensus could be reached on the findings, priorities and perspectives for future action.

The national results of the situation analyses and the national priorities, as validated by the national workshops, were presented and debated during a regional roundtable organised in Brussels on 15, 16 and 17 March 2010. The roundtable brought together representatives of the Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries in order to share, discuss and finalise the national situation analyses and the regional compilation report produced from the national reports.

The **specific process** for drafting the report was essentially analytical. All the legal, political, institutional and scientific texts directly and indirectly related to the subject of the study were inventoried and analysed in relation to the country's multi-lateral commitments. The report identifies the developments and the relationship of these commitments with women's daily life, with the aim of making the analysis more relevant. The political speeches of the President of the Republic which provide guidance on changes to be made in this area were also analysed to highlight the legal context.

The approach developed to achieve the expected results was qualitative (interview with people), documentary (texts and data) and participative (validation of the conclusions by a workshop). The findings of the analysis were completed and validated during interviews conducted with specialists well aware of the problems; some twenty interviews were carried out with representatives of the Ministries, civil society and international bodies.

4. National context

The reality of living conditions for women in Algeria goes beyond what statistical indicators can show. A better understanding of the changes underway and the obstacles encountered has been made possible thanks to surveys carried out by public institutions, NGOs and research bodies.

History and political structure

Algeria, a Democratic Republic, has been an independent country since 1962. Its people were colonised for almost a century and a half and there was a war of independence from 1954 to 1962.

The political structure of the country resembles a presidential and parliamentary system. Following various changes and events, a new Constitution was adopted on 28 November 1989, installing constitutional control¹. The principle of the separation of powers was implemented and a multi-party system was recognised with pluralist elections. The 1996 and 2008 constitutional reforms introduced changes to the balance of power.

The country then embarked on objectives which were meant to ensure the material conditions required for economic development and investment in education as bases for the independence and well-being of the population. The option of heavy industry as a lever for the construction of long-term development was marked by the drastic fall in oil prices in 1986.

The economic crisis was accompanied by a crisis in identity values linked to systematic ideological brainwashing in public places (mosques, schools, universities and others). Presented as the absolute truth, the interpretation given of Islam, Salafist and traditionalist, has prohibited an entire generation from considering the rationalist path or that of *ijtihad* as another possible interpretation. The process of indoctrination, backed by the educational principle of memorising, ended up overwhelming a school weakened by the socio-economic conditions which prevailed at the time of the structural adjustment plans.

The electoral victory of the Islamists at the communal (1990) and legislative (1991) levels² established a discriminatory approach towards women, reaffirming their status as mothers

¹ Yelles-Chaouche Bachir: *The Constitutional Council in Algeria, from control of constitutionality to prescriptive leadership*, OPU 1999 (preface (A. Mahiou pVI). A single-party system was in place from 1962 to 1988.

² The Islamic Salvation Front did not put forward any female candidates; Saliha Boudefa “women and parliament” in CEDDEF, n° 06, 2005.

and their social role as restricted to the home and giving them the role of wives and not full citizens. The stopping of the process in January 1992, supported by a number of women's associations, re-established the legitimacy of the Republic but the ideological referents, supported by discrimination and the exclusion of women from public life, endured in society. Furthermore, the following decade plunged all Algerians into a climate of terror in which the right to life was no longer guaranteed. Resistance by society and the Republican institutions succeeded in achieving a return to calm and the failure of terrorism.

Growth and human development

Between 1998 and 2008, the national report on human development (2008)³ indicated a 12.91% growth in the human development index. That said, the food bill doubled in 2008, linked to the strong increase in the price of raw materials on international markets, and the State intervened with an envelope of 184.4 billion Dinars to support the prices of basic products (milk, cereals). In the same year, inflation went up: 4.4% in 2008 compared with 3.5% in 2007.

The structure of the population according to the major age groups is as follows:

Population: numbers in thousands

0-4	5-9	10-14	0-14	15-24	15-59	60 and +
3402	2878	3245	9526	7392	21.885	2509
10.0%	8.49%	9.57%	28.08%	21.79%	64.4%	7.6%

Source: RGPH, 2008

Life expectancy at birth is currently 75 for men and 76 for women.

In 2008, the average age at marriage was 29.3 for women and 33.0 for men. According to the national report on human development, it would seem that the recent development is characterised by the fact that the age of men and women at marriage is no longer rising. However, a high marriage rate was noted, particularly in 2008.

³ RADP/CNES: National report on human development 2007-2008

A net increase in schooling, particularly for girls, was noted at all levels of education and more for those at university level.

The population in employment increased from 8.869 million in 2006 to 9.146 million in 2008. The structure of unemployment is weighted towards young people, for whom the unemployment rate is above 23%, with young graduates representing 20% of the unemployed. 75% of the unemployed are aged under 30, with women representing 25.8%. Also notable is a decrease in the overall unemployment rate, which went from 15.3% in 2005 to 11.3% in 2008. However, in 2007, an OECD study noted that for an overall unemployment rate of 13.8%, the rate was 14.4% for women and 11.8% for men.

5. Legal framework and national context: women's human rights and equality

5.1. The national legal framework

5.1.1. The Constitution

The Algerian Constitution recognises equality between male and female citizens in all areas and before the law; all rights and freedoms find their roots in this Constitution.

The principle of the hierarchy of standards is established in the Algerian Constitution and recalled in a Constitutional Council decree of 1989. Article 132 of the Algerian Constitution states that treaties ratified by the President of the Republic are superior to the Law⁴. The Constitutional Council decree of 20 August 1989 specifies "After ratification and on publication, any agreement becomes part of national law".

The principle provisions regarding equality are:

- Art.29: citizens are equal before the law. No discrimination shall prevail because of birth, race, sex, opinion or any other personal or social condition or circumstance.
- Art.31: the aim of the institutions is to ensure equality of rights and duties of all citizens, men and women, by removing the obstacles which hinder the progress of human beings and impede the effective participation of all in political, economic, social and cultural life.
- Art.51: Equal access to functions and positions in the State is guaranteed to all citizens without any other conditions except those defined by the law.
- Art.53: The right to education is guaranteed. Education is free within the conditions defined by the law. Fundamental education is compulsory. The State organises the educational system. The State ensures equal access to education and professional training.

On 12 November 2008, modifications were made to the 1996 Constitution, including the promotion of the political rights of women and their access to decision-making positions by means of Article 31 bis, which stipulates: "The State works to promote women's political rights by increasing their opportunities to access representation in the elected bodies".

⁴ Aït Zaï N., "Constraints and opportunities for the economic participation of Algerian women" in *Revue CIDDEF*, n° 12 - January-March 2007.

5.1.2. The Family Code

This Code, adopted in 1984 by the National People’s Assembly, renounced full equality between the sexes, particularly as regards marriage, divorce and the guardianship of children. The 1984 Family Code contradicted Article 29 of the Constitution, which recognises equality between men and women. This led to disputes and the mobilisation of several players in civil society, particularly feminist associations and Moudjahidate women, who were scandalised by the fact that their contribution during the national Revolution was not fully recognised.

The reform undertaken by the National Commission for Justice Reform include the reform of the Family Code. The 1984 Family Code was amended by the Order of 5 February 2005 and the amendments concerned the following aspects:

- strengthening the role of the Public Prosecutor’s Office as a party to personal status proceedings (Article 3 bis);
- setting the age for marriage at 19 for both men and women (Article 7);
- requiring future spouses to produce a medical certificate stating that they do not have any illnesses contraindicating marriage (Article 7bis);
- making polygamy subject to the prior consent of the wife/wives and the future wife and the authorisation of the President of the Court, who will have to check consent as well as the reasons and the ability of the spouse to ensure fairness and the conditions necessary for married life (Article 8);
- the consent of both spouses as a condition for the marriage contract (Article 9);
- the abolition of marriage by proxy;
- the possibility for both spouses to place in the marriage contract or in any valid, later contract any clause they consider useful, unless its conditions contravene the provisions of this law (Article 19);
- the re-establishment of the balance of rights and duties between both spouses (Article 36), in particular the abolition of the wife’s duty of obedience;
- the possibility for the judge to use scientific methods to prove parentage (Article 40);
- the extension of judges’ prerogatives, as they are now authorised to give their ruling in summary judgments or through prescription, particularly in cases relating to custody rights, access rights, accommodation and maintenance (Article 57 bis);
- the reconsideration of the order of priorities in custody cases in favour of the father, who is now placed immediately after the mother of the child (Article 64),
- in the event of a divorce, the obligation to ensure decent accommodation for minors whose custody is entrusted to the mother (Article 72);
- a fair, legal division of guardianship rights; the parent who has custody is the child’s guardian (Article 87);

- when the mother obtains custody, she becomes her child's sole guardian and therefore no longer needs, as she did previously, the father's authorisation to leave the country with her children, for example; in this event she must present a copy of the divorce certificate to the border police. Thus, parental authority is granted to the divorced women but not to the married woman.

5.1.3. The Nationality Code

In the same way as the Family Code, the law on nationality was revised by Order 05-01 of 27 February 2005. The amendments concern the granting of Algerian nationality:

- to children born in Algeria of an Algerian mother, even if the father was not born in Algeria;
- to children born abroad of an Algerian mother and a foreign father, before or after they come of age;
- to any foreigner married to an Algerian;
- the extension of the ability of Algerian fathers to pass their nationality on to their under-age children;

The new text simplifies the conditions for administering proof of original nationality by parentage. The blood right which previously determined whether an individual belonged to a nation will now be combined with the land law. These amendments will be considered as major advances insofar as the proof of parentage adopted by Algerian legislation until now was based on the male lineage.

The amendments therefore establish equality between men and women, the preservation of the family unit and of course the compliance of national legislation with international standards, particularly CEDAW, to which Algeria had issued reservations relating to nationality (Article 9 of CEDAW). The reservations on nationality have been lifted and were published in the *Journal Officiel* at the end of 2008.

5.1.4. The Penal Code

Amendments were made to the Penal Code during 2005/2006. They concerned:

- the criminalisation of sexual harassment and giving the victim the legal means to take the person responsible to court. (Article 341 bis);
- the increasing of the penalties against a husband who voluntarily abandons his wife for more than two (02) months without good cause, knowing that she is pregnant (Article 330, paragraph 2);

- the voluntary refusal for more than two months to provide all the allowances established by the judge (Article 331);
- the non-payment of the full amount of maintenance owed to the spouse, ascendants and descendants, in spite of a court decision (Article 331).

It should be noted that civil society, in particular the National Commission of Women Workers (CNFT) and the Algerian League for Human Rights, greatly advocated the criminalisation of harassment. However, victims of sexual harassment were confronted with obstacles resulting from the nature of the general rules of law, in particular regarding the establishment of proof and the lack of legal witness-protection.

There is no doubt that these reforms represent an advance towards the eradication of discrimination against women, but there still remains a legal void to be filled regarding domestic violence, which is trivialised by legislation and tolerated by society.

5.1.5. The Law on the protection and promotion of health

The Law of 16 February 1985 on the protection and promotion of health includes a whole chapter on the protection of motherhood and childhood (Articles 67 to 75). It stipulates the protection of the health of the family and the medical measures necessary to protect the health of the mother and ensure the equilibrium of the family through a national birth spacing programme (Article 70).

Abortion is permitted for medical reasons, provided that it is carried out by a doctor within a specialised facility (Article 72).

5.1.6. The law on labour and the social security system

Labour legislation translates the provisions of the Constitution aiming to end the segregation of women in the workplace. Article 55 of the Constitution stipulates that “All citizens have the right to work. The law guarantees the right to protection, security and hygiene at work”.

The Law on civil service prohibits any distinction between the sexes relating to work (Article 5).

The Law on working relations guarantees the right to work regardless of sex and age (Article 84).

Signatories of a collective agreement or a collective labour contract which includes provisions discriminating against women employees are liable to a fine of 2,000 to 5,000 Dinars. In the

event of a second offence, the penalty is 2,000 to 10,000 Dinars and 3 days' imprisonment, or only one of these penalties (Art. 142 of Law n° 90-11 of 21 April, *Journal Officiel* n° 17-1990).

Female employees are entitled to maternity leave during the pre- and post-natal periods (Art. 55 par. 1 of Law 90-11 of 21 April 1990, *Journal Officiel* n° 17-1990). The duration of the maternity leave paid by the social security system is 14 weeks (Art. 29 of Law N° 83-11 of 02-07-1983 amended by Article 12 of Order n° 96-17 of 06-07-1996). Article 3 of Agreement n° 103 (1952) on the protection of motherhood, ratified by Algeria, states that employed women are entitled to maternity leave on production of a medical certificate.

The social security system grants women health insurance and insurance against accidents in the workplace, as well as protection measures relating to maternity and retirement (Law 8311 of 02 July 1983, Articles 06, 06 bis, 23, 28).

5.2. The involvement of women in decision-making: private and public life

5.2.1. Political involvement

The Electoral Law

The Constitution has given Algerian women the right to vote and to be elected since the recovery of national sovereignty in 1962. Article 50 stipulates "Any citizen fulfilling the legal conditions can vote and be elected". Order no 9707 of 6 March 1997 concerning the fundamental law relating to the electoral system sets out the conditions for voting and makes no distinction between men and women.

The draft fundamental law on political involvement

In March 2009, the Ministry of Justice decided to set up a commission to draft a fundamental law aimed at increasing the number of women in elected assemblies. This initial draft of the fundamental law is in accordance with Article 31 bis introduced into the Constitution on 12 November 2008, promoting the political involvement of women.

Some in civil society consider this draft fundamental law, which has not yet been published, to be incomplete if it does not define a precise percentage for this involvement and the means of its application. This is an important issue, as it is the only means of pushing the political parties to comply with this law.

The poor representation of women in decision-making bodies

The involvement and commitment of women during the fight against colonialism, in the Resistance and/or the War of Independence, as political militants, members of support networks or armed combatants “has never been considered, from the point of view of the nationalist leaders, as a measure which could give them access to the decision-making process and the political leadership of the freedom movements”⁵.

The extremely poor representation of women in decision-making areas since the country’s independence can be considered to be structural. The status of women in the family, their limited presence in socio-economic life and the difficulties encountered in combining work and private life contribute to increasing the exclusion of women from the decision-making sphere.

Notwithstanding the assertion of the principles of equality and non-discrimination, women are very poorly represented in both elected and appointed bodies, although improvements can be noted over the last ten years. In parliament, elected women represent 7.75% for the 2007-2011 mandate but represented 6.9% for the previous 2002-2007 mandate and 4.2% for the 1997-2002 mandate. This marginal presence of elected women in parliament can be correlated with their poor presence in the electoral lists of the political parties. In the 1997 elections, 322 women were presented, out of a total of 7,427 candidates, representing 4.15% of the total. In 2002, there were twice as many, with 9,358 candidates, representing 6.9% of all candidates⁶.

In the Council of the Nation (Senate), 4 seats out of 144, or 2.7%, are occupied by women during the 2007-2010 mandate. The figure was the same in 2001-2004. This representation of women is the result of Presidential will.

There are even fewer women in senior State positions, filled by Presidential decree; in 1995, 131 of the 3,954 senior officials were women, or 0.33%. In 2002, 367 of the 40,856 senior positions were occupied by women, or 0.08%.

In 2002, four women entered government; in 2009 there were just three. No women were part of the first nine governments following independence in 1962. It was in 1984 that the first women became Minister (Zohor Ounissi) and deputy Minister (Leila Ettayeb). In June 2002, five women became part of the government (one Minister and four deputy Ministers). The position of Deputy Minister significantly reduces their room for manoeuvre. It should be

⁵ CIDDEF: Comparative study on the representation of women in political institutions in the Maghreb. Amine Khaled Hartani, with the support of UNIFEM, April 2006.

⁶ Saï Fatima-Zohra, *The political status and the family status of women in Algeria*, State PhD thesis, University of Oran 2007,

noted that the President of the Council of State is a woman and two women are Presidents of political parties, one of whom was twice a candidate in the presidential elections.

The percentage of female magistrates is higher, at 38%.

The same trend is repeated in local assemblies. The lists drawn up by the political parties place women at the bottom of the list⁷. It was not until the 2007 elections that there were two female candidates for the position of Mayor (Bousfer in the West of the country, in the *wilaya* of Oran and Kouba in the centre, in the *wilaya* of Alger) out of a total of 1541 communes.

Representation of women in local assemblies:

	Candidates	Elected
2007	6,373	264
2002	3,679	147
1997	1,281	75

Women are not barred from any positions. Article 51 of the Constitution stipulates that “equal access to functions and positions in the State is guaranteed to all citizens, without any other conditions than those defined by the law”.

According to the report *Women in national parliaments: situation on 31 July 2006*, Algeria is in 115th place, with 7.75% of elected women in parliament. As women occupy fewer positions of responsibility than men and are more present in less well-paid jobs, their situation in times of crisis or economic difficulty is more precarious and the rate of female unemployment is a significant element.

The report by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) notes that “the principle of affirmative action in favour of women, which is widely used in other developing countries and even in developed countries, is rejected outright by the Algerian political class”. The preference seems to be “to leave women to fight on a level playing field with men. However, it is clear that at the moment they are not on a level playing field... even though it is obvious that women will get there on account of their competitiveness at school”. But “why wait so long? How can resistance linked to customary practices and traditions be defeated in order to accelerate this process? There are so many concerns that the supporters of natural progression are not mentioned”⁸. The statements of the political class in general do not seem particularly concerned by gender-based discrimination.

⁷ Saï Fatima-Zohra, *The political status and the family status of women in Algeria*, State PhD thesis, University of Oran 2007,

⁸ RADP-MAEP: Assessment report of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, July 2007

Decision-making in the domestic domain

According to a survey on decision-making methods in the domestic arena, initiated by the Ministry for Women and the Family (MDCFCF) and carried out by the Social Anthropology and Cultural Research Centre (CRASC) in 2005⁹ with 13,755 women, more than 55% of them stated that decisions were taken jointly, for 38% it was either the husband or the family and 7% of women questioned stated that they decided alone. It was working women who took more joint decisions or were consulted when decisions were made (64% and 11% deciding themselves). The study also showed that women regain responsibility for family decisions as they age (16-25: 2.27%, 66 and +: 21.4%).

5.2.2. The obstacles to the equal involvement of women in decision-making

According to the analysis made by MDCFCF as part of a preliminary study on women and socio-economic integration for the preparation of the national strategy for the promotion and integration of women (published in July 2008), a certain number of obstacles have to be removed¹⁰.

The lack of legal culture and access to justice

Despite laws favourable to women, they do not fully exercise their rights, in particular due to the lack of legal culture and their inability to exercise their right to access justice and their right to notification, for material and educational reasons *inter alia*.

Illiteracy and access to education

As regards education, certain constraints remain despite the efforts made in this area in the training, literacy and education of adults and the reduction of the illiteracy rate. Among the reasons identified, let us mention the breaking off of schooling for girls, particularly in rural areas, due mainly to the lack of transport, recollections of traditional customs and the absence of balance between training and the job market.

Maternal and reproductive health

Despite the positive results achieved in improving the health of citizens, in particular maternal and infant health and reproductive health, many inadequacies remain, such as the still imperfect application of programmes intended for mothers and children, insufficient care of women

⁹ National survey *Women and socio-economic integration*, carried out by CRASC on behalf of MDCFCF, under the leadership of Nouria Benghabrit-Remaoun, 2005.

¹⁰ National strategy for the promotion and integration of women, MDCFCF, July 2008

as regards specialised gynaecological services in all *wilayas* (regional disparities, quality of services), insufficient spaces for women within health facilities and poor training at this level.

The low rate of female employment

Society and its leaders do not consider women's work in the public arena to be a "natural" activity following on from the authorities' investment in education, as Article 19 of the amended Family Code (27-02-05) states that "both spouses may stipulate in the marriage contract or in another valid, later contract any clause they consider useful, particularly as regards polygamy and the work of the wife"¹¹. In brief, paid employment has not become a reality for women.

Based on national statistics, the employment rate for women in Algeria, although very low, has doubled in almost thirty years, from 7.5% in 1977 to 14.6% in 2005. It was 16.9% in 2006. An increase in the rate of female employment in the service sector should be noted. The authorities and the service industries have been the main providers of employment to women since the seventies and this is constantly increasing. Agriculture has a marginal place in relation to the type of employment done by women. The current rate is 5.24% of all permanent employees whereas the presence of women in this sector is much higher for countries such as Egypt (27% in 1994) or Tunisia (27.8%).

That said, the low rate of working women in relation to the population as a whole continues despite the advances made. The proportion of women in the unemployed population was 15.32% in 2003, 20.4% in 2006 and 22% in 2007. The lack of information on the employment mechanisms and administrative and banking red tape lead to a lack of fluidity and access to job opportunities offered to women. The problem of reconciling working life and family life hinders women's contribution to the formal work life. This is in addition to the absence or insufficiency of reliable data on women working in the informal sector and on the situation of rural women and the problems accessing professional training establishments due to distance or the lack of material resources.

The percentage of women involved in creating new businesses in the private sector in Algeria is 12.11%. Women are mainly involved in services and the craft industry. The results of the 2006 household survey give a rate of 6% of female employers (entrepreneurs). The data from the National Youth Employment Support Agency (ANSEJ) give a percentage of 14% of women involved in creating micro-businesses¹².

¹¹ 2005 Family Code.

¹² RNDH, 2007

Other constraints

- **stereotypes** and social roles which make women responsible for domestic work, and the lack of the necessary childcare infrastructure;
- women's low rate of access to new information and communication technologies (NICT);
- the inferior place of women in **the media** and the insufficient use of the media to highlight women's positive contribution to society;
- the lack of institutional mechanisms for following up and assessing action programmes, particularly at the level of data and statistics broken down by gender.

Thus, although women have achieved a higher level of education and are more visible in the public domain, the process has not been followed by changes in political representation and a change in mentalities. The following phenomena remain:

- the small number of women present in political and public life;
- the negative perception of women's role and involvement in decision-making posts;
- the lack of interest of political training bodies in including women in their structures and programmes;
- the perpetuation of a system of discriminatory values linked to the lack of equality within the private domestic sphere, tied up with the legal status of women.

6. Gender-based violence: available data and studies

The United Nations Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) refers to three categories of violence:

- violence carried out within the family;
- violence coming from the community (rape, harassment); and
- violence imposed by the State (legislation).

A national survey¹³ on violence against women was carried out in Algeria in 2005. The question asked was: “are you a victim of physical, verbal or psychological violence?”¹⁴. Over half of the women surveyed stated that they had suffered a form of violence, whether verbal, psychological or physical, i.e. 7,423 out of a total of 13,755, or 53.96% of the total.

The types of violence cited by the women were split as follows:

- 824 women said they had been victims of physical violence, or 11.1% of those surveyed;
- 3,484 women said they had been victims of verbal abuse, or 46.93%; and
- 3,115 women said they had been victims of psychological violence, or 41.6%.

In more detail, the results demonstrate that:

- according to the responses, verbal and psychological forms of violence are the most frequent; physical violence, which is the most visible, comes in third position with a relatively high rate of 11.1%.
- violence in all its forms runs through all age groups.
- according to marital status, divorced women are more affected by physical violence: of the 428 divorcees who answered this question, 22% stated that they had been victims of it. 26.7% of 7,523 single women stated that they had suffered from verbal abuse the most.
- according to the current situation of women, at work, in training, unemployed or at home, it is housewives who are the most affected by physical violence, i.e. 7.2% of the total of 6,706 housewives who answered this question; this is followed by those in search of employment, 5.9% out of a total of 1,496 and in third position working women with a

¹³ National survey *Women and socio-economic integration* carried out by CRASC on behalf of MDCFCF, under the leadership of Nouria Benghabrit-Remaoun, 2005.

¹⁴ The national sample consisted of 4,950 households in 66 communes, which are part of 16 wilayas (North, East, West, South). 13,744 women aged 16 and over were questioned.

percentage of 5.9% of a total of 2,570. Working women are the most affected by verbal abuse (29.1%).

This preliminary data makes it possible to see the extent of the phenomenon of violence against women. A second, specific survey on the prevalence of violence against women¹⁵, carried out in November 2006, makes it possible to see the forms and consequences of this violence in detail. This survey is in conjunction with the establishment of indicators of violence¹⁶.

This survey showed that:

- despite an upbringing characterised by the principle of submission to the husband, women now consider the forced sexual act as a form of violence.
- women in a couple feared forced sexual relations, physical violence and humiliation above all.
- the 45 to 49 age bracket seemed to be the most vulnerable age bracket and the main target for all forms of violence.
- the overall rate of conjugal violence was 15.2%.
- the overall rate of violence in a public place was 7.3%. The authors of attacks in public places are mainly unknown men. The age bracket most subject to violence in public places is that of women aged 19 to 30.

Presentation of the overall rate of violence against women according to location:

Violence by location	Overall rate
Family	8.9
Couple	15.2
Work	3.0
Public places	7.3
Schools and universities	1.8

CRASC-MDCFCF, 2006

¹⁵ *Violence against women*, Survey carried out by CRASC, on behalf of the Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs and financed by UNIFEM, 2006, B. Mimouni, N. Benghabrit-Remaoun, F.Z. Sebaa, R. Abdellilah, Y. Bazizi.

¹⁶ Four indicators have been defined: Indicator of verbal abuse (IVV); Indicator of physical violence (IVPH); Indicator of attack, harassment or sexual interference (IAS); Indicator of sexual violence (IVS)

Rate of violence against women in private places:

Type of VAW	Couple	Family
Verbal abuse	19.1	16.1
Psychological violence (couple)	2.5	8.0
Controlling behaviour (family)		
Physical	9.4	5.2
Sexual interference	-	1.9
Forced sexual relations	10.9	0.6

CRASC-MDCFCF, 2006

According to a Ministry of Health survey (MICS3¹⁷), it would seem that more than two out of three women accept that a husband can beat his wife for at least one of the following reasons: if she goes out without telling him, if she neglects the children, if she argues with him, if she refuses to have sexual relations with her husband, if she burns the food¹⁸. Acceptance is greatest in rural areas and among older women and the higher the level of education, the less acceptance there is. That said, other data tends to show the non-acceptance by women of de facto situations and refusal of inevitability¹⁹.

During her mission to Algeria in January 2007, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Mrs Yakin Ertürk, noted “considerable progress in gender equality. Visible progress in both national legislation and in areas such as education”. However, she invited Algeria “to implement a policy of zero tolerance in the context of its commitments regarding violence against women”²⁰.

¹⁷ National, multi-indicator survey on the follow-up of the situation of women and children, carried out by the National Statistics Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Population and Hospital Reform, with the technical and financial support of UNICEF and the coordination of the United Nations, UNFPA and UNAIDS

¹⁸ RADP – Ministry of Health, Population and Hospital Reform– ONS: national, multi-indicator survey, December 2008, p. 162.

¹⁹ CRASC-MDCFCF, National survey on women and socio-economic integration, op. cit.

²⁰ In http://www.aidh.org/onu_GE/conseilddh0817-rapp-vio-fem.htm

7. International framework of reference

7.1. The international legal framework

The commitments made by Algeria at an international level, whether contractual or non-contractual, have an important impact on national legislation. The international instruments ratified by Algeria prevail over national laws (Article 132 of the Constitution) and the mission of the Constitutional Council is to ensure that the Constitution and the laws are respected and that the international and regional instruments ratified by Algeria comply with the provisions of the Constitution. This means that magistrates are meant to apply the provisions of these international instruments in their judgments and decrees.

7.1.1. International treaties and agreements

The principle instruments ratified by Algeria in this area are:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Algeria signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) in 1963. The first article of this Declaration suggests that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth without distinction based on race, colour or sex.

Algeria ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) in 1989, with interpretative declarations on Articles 1, 8, 13 and 23.

Algeria ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) in 1989, with interpretative declarations in Articles 1, 13 and 23.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)

CEDAW is considered as “the universal declaration of women’s human rights” and is the most complete and most global international agreement on the subject. Algeria ratified it in 1996, with a series of reservations which, for the most part, no longer have any reason to exist in view of the reforms made to the Family Code, the Penal Code and the Nationality Code since 2005.

Algeria has not ratified the Optional Protocol to CEDAW (1999).

The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (1981)

Algeria ratified this Charter in 1987. Article 18, paragraph 3 of the Charter orders the State party “to ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of the woman and the child, as stipulated in international declarations and conventions”. However women’s rights are not covered in great detail. It is in this context that the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women (2003) was adopted. Algeria is not a signatory to this Protocol.

The Solemn Declaration of African Heads of State on Gender Equality

The Declaration, adopted during the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in Ethiopia in July 2004, tackles the principle of parity in decision-making. Algeria amended its Constitution in 2009, with the introduction of Article 31 bis, a draft fundamental law on the political involvement of women.

Algeria is also a party to the following conventions which deal directly or indirectly with women’s rights:

- The Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957).
- The Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriages. Adopted on 7 November 1962.
- The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), ratified by Algeria in 1963 with a reservation to Article 22.
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965).
- The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), ratified by Algeria in 1968.
- ILO Convention n° 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, (1958) ratified on 15 October 1969.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), ratified by Algeria in 1992.
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (2003).
- The UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), adopted by Algeria in 2004.
- The Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its three protocols –particularly that relating to the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons, particularly women and children.
- ILO Conventions 100 E and 111 F on the Elimination of Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation.

7.1.2. CEDAW

The Reservations

Algeria ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 22.01.1996. Reservations were made to the Articles (2) on the commitments of the States Parties to pursue by all appropriate means policies to eliminate all forms of discrimination, (9.2) on nationality, (15.4) on the right to movement and the choice of domicile, (16) on marriage and the resulting family relations and (29) on the arbitration of the International Court of Justice between two or more States Parties.

Algeria has not signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which authorises the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women to consider complaints sent in the form of communications by victims of a violation of one of the rights set out in the Convention and to carry out inquiries into such a violation.

After the entry into force of the Convention in 19 June 1996, Algeria presented its initial report in January-February 1999 and the second report in January 2005²¹. The latter notes that the abrogation of the proxy form in votes in which women were the main victims has made it possible to re-establish the act of women's citizenship through a high level of participation by women in the voting. Furthermore, certain discriminatory provisions of the Nationality Code and the Family Code have been modified. The reservations to Article 9.2 on equal rights as regards the nationality of children were lifted and published in the *Journal Officiel* in 2008, in accordance with the promulgation of the Law on Nationality of 27.02.2005.

The Declaration of the President of the Republic of Algeria on 8 March 2009: "I am tempted to compare the denial of women's rights to that of the rights of colonised peoples"²² and underlining the importance of respecting both national and international commitments regarding the rights of women, should be able to constitute a political frame of reference with a view to taking the measures necessary to lift the reservations and the sign the Optional Protocol.

The preparation of CEDAW reports

The CEDAW report is prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the MDCFCF. The principal associations represented in Algiers as well as those active within the country (Temouchent, Batna, Khenchela, Adrar, Tizi Ouzou, Oran, Constantine) are also involved in it. It should however be noted that the assessment report on CEDAW implementation has not been published.

²¹ CEDAW/C/DZA/2 Committee, 32nd session 10. 28 January 2005, presentation of the report by the State Party.

²² Speech by the President of the Republic on the occasion of International Women's Day, Algiers, 8 March 2009.

Certain NGOs also contribute to the preparation and drafting of the shadow report produced by civil society.

7.2. The national frame of reference

The frame of reference for the legal situation of women in Algeria consists of the international and regional instruments which Algeria has joined and the national texts, which are the Constitution and the laws and regulations which have a direct or indirect impact on the status of women.

The asserted references²³ for the national strategies drafted by the MDCFCF in partnership with civil society according to a validated process, concerning in particular the Strategy for the Integration of Women (SNAFAM), the National Plan for the Integration of Women (PAN-PIF), the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women, the Strategy for Childhood and that for the National Family Strategy which is currently being drafted, were inspired by the values and principles of religion, the Constitution and the political directions of the President of the Republic:

7.2.1. Islam

The precepts of the sacred religion glorify the human being, advocate justice, equality and equity between men and women and encourage co-existence, compassion and mutual aid. The work of *ijtihad* must, however, be continued so that Islam is no longer used by supporters of the patriarchal ideology in particular in marriage, divorce and inheritance by women.

7.2.2. The Constitution

The equality of the sexes and the protection of women from all forms of discrimination are sacred principles in virtue of Article 29. Article 31 stipulates that “the aim of the institutions is to ensure the equality of rights and duties of all citizens, men and women, by removing the obstacles which hinder the progress of human beings and impede the effective participation of all in political, economic, social and cultural life”. Article 51 also stipulates that “equal access to functions and positions in the State is guaranteed to all citizens without any other

²³ National strategy for the promotion and integration of women, Ministry for the Family and Women’s Affairs, July 2008.

conditions except those defined by the law". Finally, Article 58 stipulates that "the family gains protection from the State and society".

7.2.3. The directions of the President of the Republic

These directions reiterate the place of Algerian women as citizens and confirm their role as full members of society. A few examples:

- "Algerian women were emancipated during the national War of Independence, in the efforts to develop the country and most recently in the fight against terrorism, where they have paid a heavy price. They do not have a merely symbolic presence in high office; they play an increasing role in decisions committing the State and the people. But there is still a long way to go towards the total rehabilitation of the status of women in our societies, as the path is above all cultural and social (...) "²⁴
- "... Now, individually but together, we must all tackle a new stage in this process, whose challenges fall mainly outside the areas of education, justice and public health. Algerian women must also become part of the modern economy, which is that of the high-performing company and effective knowledge "²⁵
- "The Millennium Summit which took place at the United Nations in September 2000 outlined the goals known as the Millennium Development Goals. We subscribe to this vision and add to this that these noble goals can only be achieved by involving women and by increasing their role within our society "²⁶
- The government Programme stipulates that "The State attaches great importance to increasing the harmony of the family, the protection of children and the promotion of women through the investment of human resources".

²⁴ Opening of the 27th Conference of the African Parliamentary Union (APU), Algiers, 29 November 2004

²⁵ Speech of 8 March 2007

²⁶ Speech of 8 March 2005

8. National initiatives: public policies and strategies for women's human rights and equality

8.1. The Delegated Ministry and the associations

Through its programmes, the Ministry for Families and Women's Affairs aims to achieve the various goals which concern areas connected to the family and women, in particular Women's Affairs, the development of women's capacities, increasing their involvement in various areas and defending their cause, as well as strengthening family cohesion and enhancing children's rights. The identification by the Ministry for Families and Women's Affairs (MDCFCF) of the actions to be undertaken is the result of a two-fold process: that of the data produced by the studies and surveys conducted on specific subjects and the recommendations constructed and issued by partners, including civil society.

The studies on the issues concerning women have multiplied over the last decade and the analyses of the social, economic and cultural environment are progressively incorporating the gender approach: the National Report on Human Development, National Economic and Social Council (2006); the National Enquiry on the social and economic integration of women, Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs (2005); Algerian Women "Reality and Data", Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs (2006); the National Survey on the Prevalence of Violence against Women in Algeria, Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs as part of a UNFPA-UNIFEM-UNICEF project aimed at combating violence against women (December 2006); Inventory of data produced on violence against women in Algeria (October 2006); the National Strategy Combating Violence against Women under the slogan "Security of Women – Stability of the Family", carried out by the MDCFCF in partnership and coordination with all the partners involved (2006-2007); the Survey on the place of women in politics, the law, the economy, the media, education and health, conducted by the MDCFCF on the initiative of the Arab Women's Organisation, the National Reports on the implementation of the recommendations of the Arab forums organised by the Arab Women's Organisation and the MDCFCF in 2006; the National Study on Health Indicators, Ministry of Health, Population and Hospital Reform (MSPRH) (2007); Algerian Women in national legislation, drafted by the MDCFCF in 2006, updated in 2007 and launched by the Arab League in the context of the production of the Encyclopaedia on Arab Women in the legislation of Arab countries; the Recommendations of the International Forum on "female entrepreneurs in Algeria: opportunities, constraints and perspectives", organised by the MDCFCF on 31 March and 1 April 2008.

The associations are considered essential partners in the defence of women's human rights and in the promotion of greater gender equality. The publication of Law N° 90-31 on social associations allowed civil society to expand in Algeria. Thus, from 1962 to 1989, the number of associations did not exceed 167 (all national). This number increased progressively and in 2005 there were over 70,000, nearly 900 of which were national associations.

The associations invest in a relatively wide and varied range of areas, principally in the social, cultural, scientific, IT, health and technological areas. The resulting activities are based around: the involvement of associations in creating programmes and activities which aim to increase public awareness of a specific area concerning the situation or condition of women; aid for women experiencing a difficult situation and reinsertion through the availability of training leading to a qualification; involvement in carrying out projects financed by the State, in particular microcredit, the fight against illiteracy and the strengthening of capacities; the compilation of data through surveys, interviews and themed dossiers and their publication in communication media. The recommendations which result from the various meetings which bring together the MDCFCF and the representatives of civil society, act as a reference for the creation of the strategic plans of the MDCFCF.

The National Council for Women and the Family was created on 22 November 2006 by an order in council by the Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs. It consists of some fifty people representing the institutions, research and civil society. It is an advisory body, responsible for contributing to the creation of operational programmes in accordance with the public authorities' policy on the family and women, for contributing to and/or undertaking research and studies on the family and women and making recommendations on all legal, economic, social and cultural measures aimed at promoting the family and women. It is also responsible for issuing opinions on draft legislative and regulatory texts relating to the family, for collecting, processing and using information and data on the family and women with a view to increasing the database on this subject, for organising seminars, conferences and study days on themes relating to the family and women and editing publications on its area of activity; for exchanging ideas and experiences with international and regional organisations and institutions with similar objectives, for studying, at the request of the Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs, any issues relating to its area of activity; and for drafting periodic reports on the situation of the family and women and sending them to the Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs²⁷.

²⁷ Extract of Executive decree n° 06-421 of 22 November 2006 creating the National Council for Families and Women

8.2. Public policies and measures enhancing women's human rights and equality

8.2.1. The national strategy and the action plan for the integration of women

An assessment of the situation of women through the studies initiated and undertaken by the MDCFCF and the different study centres and associations shows the need to implement actions which can promote the improvement of human development indicators, the protection of deprived sections of society, the creation of a national centre for research, information and documentation on women, families and children and the integration of the gender approach into all national programmes.

The achievement of these objectives is detailed in the action plan for the implementation of the national strategy for the promotion and integration of women (PANPIF)²⁸, an action plan created in January 2009 by the Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs for the period 2009-2012. The national action plan forecasts a budget of 102,900,000.00 Dinars for the implementation of nine strands: law, education, health, the economy, women in difficult situations, power and decision-making, information and communication technology, the media and the environment. Three essential points have been identified for each strand: data, lobbying and communication and capacity-building, as well as follow-up and assessment. For each strand, a multi-sectoral, gender workgroup will be setup, whose aim is to create an assessment plan every two years.

As regards the **law**, the provisional budget is 8,100,000 DA; the ways in which women and men use legal services in Algeria will be identified. Gender-specific studies will be carried out. It will also be necessary to lobby the institutions and organisations involved in legal matters on the need to include the gender issue in their policies and programmes. As regards training, the aim will be to build the capacities of those who deal with women. The institutional partners for these actions are the Ministries of Justice and the Interior, Parliament, associations and experts.

As regards **education**, a provisional budget of 12,100,000 DA will be dedicated to studies into why girls are more likely to leave education than boys, attendance at training centres and the courses offered to girls and boys and their professional aspirations. It will be necessary to lobby the institutions and bodies involved in education and professional training on the need

²⁸ National strategy for the promotion and integration of women, July 2008 MDCFCF

to include the gender approach in their programmes and policies. Building the capacities of the participants as regards literacy and professional training should make them more aware of the gender approach. The partners are the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Professional Training, the National Literacy Office and the associations.

As regards the issue of **health**, a provisional budget of 10,100,000 DA will be dedicated to studies on the ways in which basic and specialised health services for men and women are accessed, on women's perception of health services and on the expression of their needs.

As regards **economic activities**, the provisional budget is 15,100,00 DA; it will be spent on studies into the main causes of female unemployment, women's use of job creation plans, paid and unpaid work in rural environments, the informal work of women, the training of women and job offers, as well as women entrepreneurs. The partners are the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Ministry of National Solidarity, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the public bodies and the associations.

As regards **women in difficult situations**, the provisional budget is 11,100,000 DA. It will be necessary to carry out studies and gather data on the mechanisms for handling complaints by women who have been sexually assaulted and on young people and violence against girls and women. The partners are the Ministries of Justice, the Interior and Youth, the media and the associations.

As regards **power and decision-making**, the provisional budget will be 12,100,000 DA. Data will be gathered on the roles and remits of women within the political parties and the identification of the main constraints on their involvement; data will also be gathered on female representation on the electoral lists, on the choice mechanisms for responsible positions within the public sector and the obstacles to the nomination of women.

For the issue of women and **information and communication technologies**, the provisional budget is 11,100,000 DA. Data will be gathered on women's access to ICT and the identification of obstacles in urban and rural areas. The partners are the Ministry of Posts and Information and Communication Technologies, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the banks with OUSRATIC²⁹.

For the issue of women and the **media**, the provisional budget is 11,100,000 DA. Studies will be carried out into the image of Algerian women spread by the press as well as on the decision-making power of women in the media. The media will be lobbied to abandon the negative stereotypes of women and efforts will be made to highlight their skills, the importance of their role in society and their involvement in economic, political and decision-making

²⁹ Ousratic: As part of the "one computer per family" programme, the government set up credits for the population to give them the possibility of obtaining a computer.

areas. The partners are the Ministry of Communication, television, radio, the press and the associations.

For the issue of women and **the environment**, the provisional budget is 12,100,000 DA. The role of women in consuming natural resources will be highlighted and their possible involvement in the rational use of these same resources and awareness campaigns will be held into the way in which women can help to protect the environment.

Among the other reforms and programmes implemented by Algeria, the following should be mentioned: the reform of the education system, the reform of justice, the Five-year Programme (2004-2009) to support growth and the two complementary programmes of the South and the High Plateaux, as well as more specifically the gender strategy created by the Ministry of Health, Population and Hospital Reform (2001-2003) and the previous action programme of the Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs (government programme for the period 2004-2008).

8.2.2. Other interventions

The "Joint Programme for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Algeria, 2009-2011" project, financed by the Spain Fund and the UNDP, fits within the context of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This project has three main strands:

- Strand 1: support in creating an environment which promotes fair decision-making, through the implementation of policies and programmes which take account of the considerations of gender equality and the empowerment of women, the integration of the gender approach into the creation of policies, programmes and legislation and more specifically into the sector of employment and improving the availability of data and gender-specific studies;
- Strand 2: improvement in women's access to employment through targeted support for the existing job creation mechanisms and the development of pilot projects to clarify the strategic reflections or interventions selected as part of Strand 1;
- Strand 3: support in providing information and training for the population on gender issues and the socio-economic rights of women through the development of partnerships with civil society organisations and the media and through support for the mechanisms which allow them to have a more effective role in their dialogue on policies as part of participatory processes.

8.3. Strategies and actions for combating gender-based violence

Civil society in Algeria and more particularly the women’s associations have been the first to challenge the authorities and society on gender-based violence. Even after the 2005 reform, the 1984 Family Code was and remains at the centre of their demands. The women’s association movement was heavily involved during the “black decade” and helped to challenge gender-based inequalities. Among these networks, several professional associations of doctors, psychologists, teachers, midwives and lawyers were formed to denounce and overcome the different forms of violence against women.

In October 2007, the Algerian State officially launched the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women. Currently being implemented, this Strategy is the result of a process of collaboration carried out from 2003 to 2006 with the United Nations System (UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF), the institutional partners involved in violence issues (Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Health, National Solidarity, Family and Women’s Affairs), the State bodies, the elected bodies and civil society. Three key areas for action have been defined:

- A1: meetings and appropriate, varied services (guarantee security and protection, ensure appropriate care by health personnel, guarantee legal protection and assistance);
- A2: mobilisation of the community and social and national solidarity;
- A3: actions by the coalitions (implementation of measures, procedures and reforms at the legal, institutional and political levels, creating coalitions/alliances and lobbying for change).

During the period 2000-2003, the implementation of the “Regional Gender Initiative” project by civil society, in collaboration with the government (Foreign Affairs, Health and solidarity), helped to build the capacities for implementing the gender approach and combating violence against women. One of the concrete achievements, a national Directory of those involved with women victims of violence, was created in 2008. It contains information on the institutional bodies responsible for gender-based violence and/or tackling the problems of violence against women, of which there are twelve, and the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), of which there are thirty-four, mainly created between 1989 and 2004.

The main interventions and actions identified during 2007, 2008 and 2009 were:

- the development and implementation of sector-based plans for combating VAW;
- the consolidation of the information system to standardise/harmonise the locally-generated information and create a national data bank on VAW;

- improving technical and institutional capacities for combating violence against women;
- the self-empowerment and socio-economic reinsertion of women who have survived violence (develop their internal resources and provide them with socio-legal support, identify their professional training needs and access to micro-credits);
- the creation and implementation of a communication/social awareness strategy for the prevention and combating of VAW from a socio-cultural, public health and human rights perspective;
- the organisation of awareness campaigns;
- the opening of a free telephone line (2009);
- the creation of an information guide on women's rights;
- the extension of the network of local cells;
- the revision of the legal and regulatory texts.

The revision of the Penal Code and the criminalisation of sexual harassment could open the way to debate on the criminalisation of conjugal violence, as demanded by the associations³⁰.

Gender-based violence manifests itself in different forms and requires a multi-sector approach. Fifteen Ministers are directly involved in implementing the strategy for combating gender-based violence, as well as the State bodies (police and gendarmerie). The Department of National Security (DGSN) is involved in caring for women and children who are victims of violence through listening and referral. Since 2001, it has kept quarterly statistics on physical and sexual violence against women on a national scale and per *wilaya*.

Through its own actions and those carried out in partnership with Ministerial departments, the association movement is helping to inform, raise awareness, train and carry out projects to protect and defend women's rights.

Several projects have been started in partnership with UN agencies. The "Support for the Operational Plan of the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women"³¹ project (UNFPA and UNDP) aims to: set up an appropriate information system to obtain more information on gender-based violence; obtain better specialised and varied care for women survivors; create a plan for lobbying decision-makers and planners; strengthen the partnership with the NGOs in the area of promoting and empowering women and combating inequalities.

³⁰ See *Le Quotidien d'Oran* of Thursday 17/01/08: *personal status: violence still permitted*.

³¹ The implementation of this project, signed in 2007, was interrupted in 2008 following the terrorist attack of 11 December 2007 against the United Nations House.

Initiatives taken by the State to enhance awareness of the incidence of gender-based violence

The Ministry for the Family and Women’s Affairs has formulated a National information, education and communication Strategy for the general public through the media. Furthermore, national campaigns for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women are regularly organised by the association movement and the MDCFCF.

8.4. The monitoring and implementation of the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions

The 2008-2009 report prepared by the MDCFCF on the actions undertaken and the findings obtained or to be obtained within the context of the implementation of the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions and its follow-up is subdivided into four strands. The first strand concerns cross-functional actions requiring implementation in a multi-disciplinary context, the second strand concerns women’s civil and political rights, the third concerns women’s social and economic rights and sustainable development and the fourth concerns women’s rights in culture and the media.

Support for promoting women to decision-making positions, particularly in economic and political areas, was strengthened by the amendment to the Constitution with the aim of promoting women’s political rights (Art. 31 bis) and by the creation of a national strategy for the promotion and integration of women (2008-2012) and an action plan implemented from October 2008.

In the context of the Five-year plan for implementing the national strategy for combating violence against women (2007-2011), interventions have been implemented, aimed at building the technical capacities of the different institutional partners and the association movement, in particular women’s organisations.

Awareness and training campaigns on the full enjoyment of women’s basic rights have been held. Inter alia, two national conferences on training and support for women were organised in Algiers (March 2008 and March 2009) by the Ministry for Training and Professional Education, as well as technical training courses in rural areas and information and awareness conferences, coupled with exhibitions in the 48 *Wilayas*.

As regards health, four national programmes have been implemented: the perinatal health programme (pregnancy, birth and post-natal); the family planning programme; the repro-

ductive health programme (medically assisted reproduction); and the programme for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS (to come). As regards maternal and infant health, there is an Extended Vaccination Programme (PEV).

As regards education, measures have been taken to promote literacy and schooling among girls, particularly in rural areas. The percentage of girls registered in all educational cycles and in university programmes has increased from year to year. This percentage tripled between 1970-1971 and 2008-2009, increasing from 21% to 65% respectively. An information and communication technologies teaching programme for all social categories, including housewives and women in rural areas, is planned for the period 2009-2013.

As regards research, the national research programme implemented by the higher education and scientific research sector, particularly that into *population and society*, includes several research projects centred on different themes involving women and childhood.

In the media, the percentage of women in the written press, whether public or private, is over 55%. On national radio and according to 2006 statistics, the number of female journalists is 194 out of 440 (132 on the central station and 62 on regional stations), i.e. 44.09%. That said, there are not many women in senior posts. On television, the number of female journalists is 148 out of 219, i.e. a rate of 67.57%. This high level of involvement helps to promote a balanced, non-stereotypical image of men and women.

At this stage, women's slow but sure progress in all areas of activity is more the consequence of improved schooling and the educational success of women than the result of a policy of implementing principles of non-discrimination.

9. Analysis of the findings and priorities for future action

9.1. Principal findings of the situation analysis

9.1.1. The advances: promotion of women’s human rights and equality

Undeniable progress can be seen in the status of women in Algeria, and this is thanks to the fight of women and to the existence of a political will to improve their condition and their situation within society. This has been translated into achievements in the consolidation of women’s rights and the continuation of public efforts in the education, training, health and employment of women.

The recently amended Constitution set out a new challenge, that of enhancing the place of women in the political world by establishing the concept of equal opportunities and targeting the full and complete involvement of women in the decision-making process. Article 51 of the Constitution establishes equal access to positions within the State and Article 31 stipulates that “the aim of the public institutions is to remove all the obstacles preventing the effective participation of all in political, economic, social and cultural life”, including through a certain number of affirmative action measures (31bis).

The government is committed to achieving de jure and de facto equality between men and women at regional and international levels by ratifying a series of Treaties, Agreements and Protocols, but with some reservations in certain cases. Reforms of the Family Code, the Nationality Code and other national legal texts are underway in order to align legislation with international agreements.

From the point of view of public policies, a national gender strategy is being implemented (2008-2012)³². It aims to use gender tools in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and assessment of the strategies, programmes and targeted actions to promote equality. The action plan known as the National Action Plan for the Enhancement and Integration of Women (PANPIF) aims to provide the State and its different partners with an instrument for executing, coordinating and monitoring the National Strategy for the Enhancement and Integration of Women.

³² Adopted by the Government on 29/07/2008.

A National Strategy Combating Violence against Women was approved and validated in consultation with representatives of the sector-based Ministries, the Parliament, the State bodies, civil society and the relevant United Nations agencies. Its aim is to create the means for the physical, psychological, social and legal follow-up of gender-based violence, at all stages of women's lives; raising the awareness of society and its institutions, including the family and the media; and the social and economic insertion and reinsertion of women who have survived violence.

9.1.2. The available opportunities

The opportunities which could help to achieve male-female equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women are at five levels:

Political will

At the highest level of State, a burst of impetus has just been given with Article 31 bis of the Constitution and the proposals currently being submitted for approval to the National People's Assembly. This fundamental law foresees alternative, indicative measures to increase women's involvement in nominative and elective mandates, whether at national or local level.

The legal and judicial framework

Equality is recognised in the texts of law and many reforms have taken place or are underway. Algeria's signing of agreements, pacts and declarations which aim to enhance equality provides essential support to civil society organisations fighting for their application in national regulations.

Article 116 of the Constitution grants international treaties and agreements a greater power than that given to laws. The principle of the primacy of international agreements over national laws is an asset for the enhancement of women from the legal point of view.

National policies and strategies

The national strategy to combat violence against women and the national strategy for the enhancement and integration of women are helping to improve women's social, economic, legal and political status.

Institutional measures and mechanisms

The existence of a Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs has allowed the specialised management of women's issues, very often considered as secondary by the other Ministries.

Social and community mobilisation: NGOs, networks, parliamentary groups

The fifth opportunity is the civil society network, which is heavily involved in equality issues and is supported by external funding, in particular the CIDDEF, the Maghreb 95 Collective, AFCARE, AFEPEC, the Commission of Working Women of the National Union, UGTA, etc.

9.1.3. The restrictions and limitations

National and international legal instruments

In the national legal framework, there is a discrepancy between the principles, the stated political will, the favourable legal context and practices and realities. In practice, male/female stereotypes based on a patriarchal culture heavily restrict equal rights. This paradox is due to the fact that society, including women, and political decision-makers did not take ownership of the issue of equality. This means that the mechanisms set up to enhance equality do not function.

The legal achievements have mostly been the result of Presidential orders, which poses the question of appropriation, commitment and implementation by the elected bodies, for example the Parliament, where conservative forces and currents are strongly represented.

There is almost chronic ignorance of the national and international legal context promoting equality, due to the lack of training and information for the main players and participants, particularly legal personnel and local community officials.

The ratification of the international texts is often accompanied by reservations affecting the very spirit of the text, which totally changes the objectives of these instruments and strips the meaning from the content of the texts and the stated rights. CEDAW is thus the agreement which resulted in the greatest number of reservations. The lack of knowledge of international texts also puts a brake on their application.

The lack of visibility of the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions

The Istanbul Conference is almost absent as a reference point for the actions undertaken towards equality. Through interviews carried out with a certain number of key figures (institutional, NGO), only three interviewees out of twelve said that they knew and followed the Istanbul Conclusions. It was the institutional players (Ministry for the Family and Ministry of Health) who were the best informed. Civil society, though heavily involved in the programmes to implement the actions to enhance equality, had no information on the Istanbul Conference. CEDAW on the other hand was the reference point for all the interviews.

The risk of institutional fragility of the “Women’s” Mechanism

Changing responsibility for the Ministry for the Family and Women’s Affairs from the Prime Minister to the Ministry for Health and Population brings with it a certain precariousness, instability and institutional fragility.

A clear will and a great deal of effort remain necessary for the gender approach to become an integral part of public policies.

The social limitations of the founding principle of equality

The male/female stereotypes spread by education, the media and the legal and institutional domains make it difficult to establish egalitarian values and the rights which result from them. Advances in women’s involvement in the public arena have been slow. Thus, progress in education has not gone hand in hand with the mainstreaming of gender equality.

The problems breaking down paternalistic subordination such as trusteeship can be seen in the preservation of the “*wali*” in the 2005 reformed Family Code.

The responsibilities of women in the domestic sphere

Women’s contribution is invisible or neglected due to the fact that their responsibilities are enclosed within the domestic sphere. Although women’s education represents a major opportunity, their limited presence in the economic sphere and in decision-making is slowing the process of achieving equality.

Equal opportunities for men and women in accessing and developing professional life highlight the issue of the work-life balance. This raises the question of relationships of force within the family and the inferior position of women in the labour market as well as their legitimacy in this market³³. The inadequacy of childcare facilities for young children and the lack of qualified professionals are putting a serious strain on women’s continued investment in economic and also social and political activity. Studies have in fact shown a strong correlation between having a professional job and involvement in the political domain³⁴.

³³ Dorra Mahfoudh-Draoui: Work-life balance, a private affair or a public affair? in CEDDEF, n° 10 September 2006.

³⁴ CRASC-MDCFCF, Women and socio-economic integration, op cit.

9.2. Priorities for future action

On the basis of the situation analysis and the consultations and discussions with those involved, the priority interventions selected by the institution responsible for the women's dossier in partnership with civil society concern six areas of application.

9.2.1. Women and the law

The reform and harmonisation of the legislative system must be continued, taking account of the country's national requirements and international commitments; the legislation and its application must be balanced and all possible steps must be taken to remove the reservations issued when CEDAW was ratified³⁵. Awareness campaigns must also be organised, with the aim of making legal knowledge more widespread.

9.2.2. Women and education

A system of monitoring the education system must be put in place so that the continued revision of programmes can be followed-up, to ensure that they are suitable for the development of society and the requirements of knowledge and technology. The integration of the values and principles of gender equality into education programmes must be monitored. Greater knowledge is needed of the sources at the origin of girls' illiteracy and ceasing schooling, in particular in rural areas; the different players in this area must be supported, in particular those in civil society and efforts to improve literacy must be monitored and constantly assessed.

9.2.3. Women and the economy

It is necessary to adopt a voluntarist approach to the enhancement of gender equality and to create a short- and medium-term action programme to include the gender approach into all the country's socio-economic development programmes. It is necessary to take specific measures to promote equal employment and promotion opportunities in both the public and the private sector and to create a suitable environment which allows women to achieve a work-life balance, such as increasing the creation of crèches in workplaces.

³⁵ Also asked by the panel of the African Peer Review Mechanism, RADP-APRM: Assessment report of the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria, July 2007

9.2.4. Women and violence

Procedures and reforms must be implemented at the institutional, political and legal levels in order to criminalise domestic violence, protect witnesses and create care, security and protection services. This will require the creation of standards and special programmes to take responsibility for this category and the appropriate training of service providers in the areas of listening, psychological care, legal assistance and others. This is in addition to improving the available support services and creating a monitoring and assessment system. Coalitions must also be created in the social and professional areas and with social partners in order to make people aware of the seriousness of violence and its negative effects on the individual, the family and society.

9.2.5. Women, power and decision-making

The conditions required for a cultural and social environment favourable to the development and consolidation of the values of equality and partnership between the sexes must be provided and joint efforts must be increased between the government, civil society and the media to launch an awareness campaign aimed at society as a whole in rural and urban areas in order to end the discriminatory practices which prevent the full equality of men and women. Efforts must be intensified to implement awareness campaigns aimed at changing the stereotypical image of the role of men and women in society and their responsibilities within the family in particular and society in general.

9.2.6. Strengthening mandates and institutional capacities

The change of the MDCCFF from vice-Ministry to full Ministry could create a suitable positioning totally compatible with the political will and the egalitarian legal context, using the appropriate means (human and financial resources, institutional and legal measures) to transform the objective of ending all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence into a reality experienced by women at all stages of their lives.

The main aim of the National Council for Women and the Family could be the monitoring and implementation of the principal measures taken to combat discrimination and gender-based violence. It could take responsibility for observing and monitoring the country vis-à-vis the international or national institutions. It could provide regular national reports on the application of the laws. In brief, it would act as an equality observatory.

10. Perspectives for future action

Although the most remarkable advances in equality are in education, the fact still remains that further progress is required so that women’s work outside the home becomes part of social and professional reality for both men and women. Women’s authority at the economic level will only be established if it is visible and formally recognised by society. Domestic work would therefore benefit from being seen as “work” by the authorities, as a contribution to the development effort, on the social and economic level of the preservation of health and education and the reproduction of the workforce.

The presence of women in the public domain is sanctioned by the basic texts and the law. Algerian women are consequently present in the public arena without any legal restrictions, even if there are still only a relatively small number of them on company boards and in political parties, associations, unions, elected bodies, the national and local authorities, the army and its different bodies. Although women are recognised in the public domain, this is still strongly linked to the extension of their reproductive role. Furthermore, characteristics common to both domains can be noted: discrimination, inequality and violence against women.

The implementation of the reforms to the Family Code, apart from the two dimensions to be reviewed (that of the *Wali* and that of inheritance), and the Nationality Code and the reform of the Constitution with the introduction of Article 31 bis should positively change practices and representations of policies and of the policy towards women. That said, women themselves have not yet taken ownership of the concept of equality. They need to be informed and trained in equality, with support measures to implement laws enhancing equality. In this respect, the creation of the national strategy for the enhancement and integration of women, formulated from the situation analysis on access and control by men and for women of the various existing resources and the study of the differences observed, is supported by the national action plan for the promotion and integration of women (PANPIF 2009-2012). A total budget of 102,900,000 DA is devoted to this.

Among the priorities and strategic interventions which should be tackled and strengthened by future interventions, two categories can be distinguished:

In terms of **gender equality**, the perspectives for action could focus on:

- the lifting of the reservations to the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the ratification of the Optional Protocol.

In terms of **gender-based violence**, the perspectives for action could focus on:

- creating surveys or sociological analyses to determine the role of the different influencing institutions including mosques, schools, the media and the family;
- backing them up with support measures, monitoring and periodic assessments;
- ensuring exchanges between the countries of the region to encourage decision-making and share experiences (good practice);
- carrying out participatory studies to be in a position to define points of reference (benchmarks) in the legislative and regulatory domains;
- increasing the action of civil society and the authorities on making legal achievements known at all levels.

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