

**COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN****93rd Session (5-30 October 2026)****Information from Civil Society for the List of Issues Prior to Reporting - Jordan****Rural Women in Jordan: Economic Participation, Local Decision-Making and Geographic Inequality**

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1. Introduction and scope

The Intermediaries of Change Center for Sustainable Development (ICC) is a Jordanian civil society organization working with women, youth and local communities, with particular experience in rural and governorate-level communities. Its work includes women's economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, political participation, local governance, social protection, community dialogue and support for institutional mechanisms that strengthen women's participation in local development.

This submission is provided to assist the Committee in preparing the List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR) for Jordan at its 93rd session. The OHCHR Treaty Body Database lists Jordan among the States for which a LOIPR will be prepared at that session, and the submission deadline is 4 September 2026.¹ The submission focuses on Articles 5, 7, 10, 11 and 14 of the Convention, with Article 14 as its central lens.

The evidence is drawn from ICC programme reports, consultations and policy-dialogue documentation from work in Ajloun, Jerash, Irbid, Zarqa, Karak and East Amman between 2021 and 2026. ICC does not present programme participants as a statistically representative national sample. The evidence should instead be read as field-based qualitative and programme evidence that can help identify implementation questions requiring clarification from the State party. No photographs are included, and no alleged victim, witness or perpetrator is identified in this submission.

¹ OHCHR Treaty Body Database, CEDAW 93rd session, Jordan LOIPR; submission deadline 4 September 2026.

ICC welcomes institutional and legislative steps taken since the Committee's previous review. In 2025, Jordan enacted Law No. 11 of 2025 concerning the Jordanian National Commission for Women, strengthening the Commission's formal role in promoting women's rights and empowerment.² The central concern of this submission is therefore not whether reform has occurred, but whether reforms and programmes are producing **substantive and geographically equitable outcomes** for women living outside major urban centres.

2. Article 14: Rural women and geographic inequality

In its 2017 concluding observations, the Committee recognized development projects targeting rural women but remained concerned about the disadvantaged position of women in rural and remote areas, including poverty, difficulty accessing health care, education and income-generating activities, and limited participation in community-level decision-making. It recommended targeted measures to accelerate substantive equality and create income-generating opportunities for rural women in their localities.³

ICC's experience indicates that this remains a useful framework for assessing implementation. In Jerash, the project Rural Women are More Resilient in Poverty Pocket Areas, implemented by ICC in partnership with Sakib Women Charitable Society with financial support from Expertise France, reached 1,942 direct and indirect beneficiaries, including 1,269 women. The intervention combined skills and livelihood support with participatory identification of gender priorities, engagement with municipalities and governorate institutions, and development of a voluntary social-protection and economic-development plan.⁴

The project trained 60 women and girls in entrepreneurship, including six persons with disabilities; 20 women and girls in water-saving, income-generating agricultural techniques; and 20 women and young women in mobile-phone and computer maintenance and electronic marketing. These activities illustrate the importance of making economic opportunities available within or close to women's communities and of opening access to non-traditional skills.⁵

ICC's 2026 rural policy-dialogue documentation identifies a broader implementation concern: programmes may exist nationally while access remains uneven. Rural communities continue to report barriers linked to the concentration of services and opportunities in cities and main centres, limited access to quality training and local economic opportunities, and difficulties accessing information, finance, markets and technology. The same documentation highlights weak coordination and limited mechanisms for tracking whether programmes actually reach groups facing the greatest barriers.⁶

For purposes of Article 14, national availability should therefore not be treated as equivalent to effective access. Distance, transport costs, care responsibilities, digital connectivity, eligibility conditions, information gaps and the geographic distribution of service providers can determine whether a woman can realistically benefit from a programme. National averages can also conceal substantial differences between governorates and between urban and rural communities.

² Jordanian National Commission for Women, Women's Harvest 2025 (2026), noting Law No. 11 of 2025.

³ CEDAW Committee, Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Jordan, CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6, 3 March 2017, paras. 49-50.

⁴ ICC, Rural Women are More Resilient in Poverty Pocket Areas - Jerash, Final Report, 2021-2022; implemented with Sakib Women Charitable Society, with financial support from Expertise France.

⁵ ICC, Rural Women are More Resilient in Poverty Pocket Areas - Jerash, Final Report, pp. 2-4.

⁶ ICC, From Dialogue to Impact: Towards Fair Policies for Education, Work and Economic Empowerment of Youth and Women in Rural Communities, 2026 concept note; qualitative programme documentation.

Suggested question for the Committee

Please provide detailed information on measures taken since 2017 to implement Article 14 and paragraph 50 of CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6, including measurable results on rural women's access to decent employment, vocational and technical training, entrepreneurship support, finance, markets, social protection and participation in local decision-making. Please provide data disaggregated by governorate and rural/urban location and, where available, by age, disability and nationality, and explain how the State identifies and addresses geographic gaps in programme coverage and public expenditure.

3. Articles 11 and 5: Economic participation, decent work and structural barriers

The Committee's 2017 observations identified women's high unemployment, marginalization from formal labour markets, occupational segregation, family-responsibility barriers and insufficient information on labour inspection, and recommended flexible working arrangements, professional training, incentives for women's employment and adequately resourced labour inspectorates.⁷

Recent official statistics show both movement and continuing structural inequality. In the first quarter of 2026, the revised female economic participation rate for the total resident population reached **19.0 per cent**, compared with 59.5 per cent for males. Among Jordanian women, unemployment reached **32.7 per cent**, compared with 17.9 per cent among Jordanian men.⁸ In addition, women accounted for only 7,170 of the 48,403 net jobs created during the first half of 2025, or **14.8 per cent**.⁹

These figures make implementation questions especially important. A March 2024 consultation convened by ICC in cooperation with the EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI) brought together approximately 60 participants, including 41 women, private-sector employers, women employees, members of parliament and national institutions. Participants identified barriers including gender stereotypes that prioritize caregiving over careers, transportation, childcare, workplace conditions and gaps between legislation and consistent implementation.¹⁰

The consultation also raised concerns about part-time and temporary work, social-security coverage and the need for more effective oversight of employment practices. Its recommendations emphasized enforcement of laws and regulations, monitoring of private-sector practices, flexible work, childcare, transportation, gender-sensitive workplace procedures and legislative-impact assessment.¹¹ These are qualitative stakeholder findings rather than national prevalence estimates, but they illustrate how multiple barriers can operate simultaneously and reduce the practical value of formal rights.

ICC encourages the Committee to distinguish between adoption of legislation and demonstrable enforcement. This is particularly relevant to women employed in small and medium enterprises, informal or home-based activities, temporary or part-time work and areas where inspection and support services may be less accessible. The State party should also be asked to explain how employment policy responds to the persistent gap between women's educational attainment and their labour-market participation.

⁷ CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6, paras. 43-44.

⁸ Jordan Department of Statistics, Unemployment Rate Decreased to 16.1% in Q1 2026, 17 June 2026.

⁹ Jordan Department of Statistics, Net New Jobs Created During 1st Half of 2025 Reached 48,000, February 2026.

¹⁰ ICC and EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI), Towards Stronger Economic Participation of Women in Jordan - Consultation Session Report, 31 March 2024.

¹¹ Ibid., key findings and recommendations on enforcement, part-time and temporary work, flexible work, childcare, transportation and gender-sensitive workplace procedures.

Suggested question for the Committee

Please provide data on the implementation and enforcement of labour protections affecting women, particularly in small and medium enterprises, informal and home-based work, temporary and part-time work and rural areas. Please include data on labour inspections, complaints, remedies and sanctions; social-security coverage; access to flexible work; childcare provision; and measures addressing safe and affordable transportation. Please also explain which measures are being taken to reduce the gap between women's educational attainment and their participation in the labour market.

4. Articles 7 and 14: Women's political participation and local decision-making

The Committee recommended in 2017 that Jordan use measures including temporary special measures, quotas and time-bound benchmarks to achieve women's equal and full participation in political and public life and decision-making at national and local levels.¹² Recent developments in local administration create an important opportunity to examine the difference between numerical representation and substantive influence.

On 19 August 2026, the House of Representatives approved the 2026 Local Administration Bill in its entirety. The text approved by the House requires women to constitute at least 30 per cent of governorate council membership. The Government's published description of the bill also provides for raising women's representation to 30 per cent and guaranteeing a seat for women in municipal executive offices. On 24 August 2026, the Senate approved the bill as received from the House, completing parliamentary consideration of the bill by both chambers of the National Assembly. The bill remains subject to the remaining constitutional steps before entry into force, including royal ratification and publication in the Official Gazette.¹³

ICC welcomes these provisions. The next question is whether representation will translate into influence over local priorities, development plans, committees, budgets, investments and accountability mechanisms. This question is especially relevant for rural women, whose participation in local planning is directly connected to Article 14.

ICC's Jerash programme provides one local example of institutionalizing women's participation. Four municipalities - Burma Al-Jadida, Al-Mi'rad, Al-Naseem and Bab Amman - established women's empowerment units within their organizational structures. The project engaged 103 participants in identifying economic and social gender priorities and 31 participants in analysing them, while 25 local decision-makers committed to incorporating provisions of the voluntary social-protection and economic-development plan into institutional plans, programmes or strategies.¹⁴

Such mechanisms should not be assumed to have the same mandate, resources or influence across all municipalities. The State party should therefore be invited to provide a national picture of local gender-mainstreaming mechanisms and to explain how women, including rural women and women with disabilities, can influence needs assessments, participatory budgeting and development planning.

A complementary strand of ICC's work addresses the pathway into political participation for young women in rural communities. The Safe Rural Youth Political Space was launched in 2024 as a one-

¹² CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6, paras. 37-38.

¹³ Jordan News Agency (Petra), House Approves 2026 Local Administration Bill, 19 August 2026; Senate Approves Bill as Received from House, 24 August 2026.

¹⁴ ICC, Rural Women are More Resilient in Poverty Pocket Areas - Jerash, Final Report, pp. 4 and 14.

year initiative and, following the first cycle, was extended for two additional annual cycles through 2026. Implemented by ICC in partnership with Ajloun Community Radio, with support from the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung - Palestine and Jordan Office, the Space has developed cumulatively across the three annual cycles, generating different dialogue priorities, policy contributions and engagement opportunities each year. Its activities have created structured opportunities for rural young women and men to engage with political parties, parliamentarians, local-government representatives, national institutions and decision-makers, while strengthening political-dialogue and leadership skills. Current programme documentation sets a minimum target of 50 per cent women's participation across activities.¹⁵

For CEDAW purposes, the significance of this experience is not the existence of a youth dialogue project itself, but the continuing gap between formal political access and practical pathways to leadership. ICC programme documentation identifies social, cultural and structural barriers that can limit rural young women's access to political dialogue and party structures. Sustained, geographically accessible platforms can help women move from civic participation toward party membership, internal party leadership, candidacy and decision-making roles in municipalities, governorate councils and national institutions. The State party should therefore be asked to demonstrate whether such pathways exist systematically beyond project-based interventions and whether their outcomes are measured for young and rural women.

Suggested question for the Committee

Please explain how the 30 per cent representation of women under the 2026 Local Administration Bill, once in force, will be implemented and monitored to ensure substantive participation, including women's participation in executive offices, strategic and permanent committees, budget processes, needs assessments and municipal and governorate development plans. Please also provide information on women's empowerment or gender-mainstreaming units across municipalities, including their number, mandate, staffing, budget and measurable influence on local policies and resource allocation. In addition, please provide data disaggregated by age, governorate and rural/urban location on women's participation in political parties, internal party leadership, candidacy and elected local bodies, and describe measures that support young and rural women to progress from civic and political participation into leadership and decision-making positions.

5. Articles 10, 11 and 14: From training to sustainable economic opportunity

The Committee previously recommended eliminating stereotypes and structural barriers that deter girls and women from traditionally male-dominated fields and expanding vocational training that corresponds with market demand.¹⁶ ICC's experience suggests that the quality of economic-empowerment policy should increasingly be assessed through **post-training outcomes**, rather than participation counts alone.

Between 2023 and 2024, ICC's Towards Stronger Economic Participation of Women in Jordan project, implemented with financial support from the EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI) and in cooperation with Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights, established six women-focused business incubators in Karak, Zarqa, East Amman, Ajloun, Jerash and Irbid. Project reporting records 984 women served through the incubators. The project delivered 45 training sessions and 115 mentoring,

¹⁵ ICC, Safe Rural Youth Political Space programme documentation and public programme pages, 2024-2026; implemented with Ajloun Community Radio, with support from Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung - Palestine and Jordan Office.

¹⁶ CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6, paras. 41-42, especially para. 42(e)-(f).

guidance and technical-consultation sessions, covering business development, market research, financial management, licensing and regulatory requirements, marketing, procurement, social security and access to financial and investment support.¹⁷

This experience points to a policy distinction between **training access** and **economic transition**. A programme may successfully complete training while beneficiaries still face barriers to finance, licensing, procurement, market access, childcare, transport or digital tools. Sustainable empowerment therefore requires follow-up indicators such as employment, income, business survival, formal registration, financing, market access and social-security coverage at defined intervals after programme completion.

The Jerash programme further demonstrates the importance of opening non-traditional opportunities. Women were trained in entrepreneurship, water-saving agricultural techniques, electronic marketing, and mobile-phone and computer maintenance, with the entrepreneurship component including women and girls with disabilities. These types of interventions can challenge occupational segregation when they are linked to real market demand, finance and continuing mentorship rather than delivered as stand-alone training.

Suggested question for the Committee

Please explain how the State measures the long-term outcomes of vocational training, entrepreneurship and economic-empowerment programmes for women. Please provide data on the proportion of beneficiaries who subsequently obtain decent employment, establish and sustain businesses, increase income, access finance and markets, formalize their activities and obtain social-security coverage. Please provide geographically disaggregated results and information on women's participation in digital, technical, green and other non-traditional economic sectors.

6. Article 5: Stereotypes, unpaid care and the infrastructure of participation

The Committee has previously identified stereotypes concerning women's roles in family and society as barriers to education, employment and public participation. ICC's consultations indicate that stereotypes interact with practical constraints. Expectations concerning caregiving, combined with limited childcare and transportation, can make participation in work, training or public life substantially more difficult even where formal access exists.

For rural women, this interaction can be particularly acute because the location of employment, training centres, finance providers and public institutions can require longer and more costly travel. Policies aimed at increasing women's economic and political participation should therefore treat childcare, mobility, digital access and the distribution of services as part of the enabling infrastructure for equality, rather than as separate welfare issues.

Suggested question for the Committee

Please describe measures taken to address discriminatory gender stereotypes and the unequal distribution of unpaid care responsibilities, and explain how employment, training, entrepreneurship and local-participation policies address childcare, transportation, digital access and other structural barriers affecting women, particularly women in rural and remote communities.

¹⁷ ICC, Towards Stronger Economic Participation of Women in Jordan Project, Final Report, 2023-2024; with financial support from EFI and in cooperation with Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights.

7. Priority recommendations

ICC respectfully recommends that the Committee consider requesting the State party to:

- Establish measurable mechanisms for implementing Article 14, with public indicators and data disaggregated by governorate and rural/urban location on women's access to employment, training, finance, entrepreneurship support, social protection and local decision-making.
- Ensure that any increase in women's representation under the 2026 Local Administration legislation is accompanied by enforceable mechanisms for women's participation in executive bodies, committees, local planning, needs assessments and budgeting, and by regular public reporting on outcomes.
- Institutionalize adequately mandated and resourced gender-responsive mechanisms in local government, with meaningful participation of rural women and women with disabilities in identifying development priorities and monitoring implementation.
- Establish sustained and geographically accessible pathways for young and rural women to progress from civic and political dialogue into political-party membership, internal leadership, candidacy and elected or appointed decision-making positions, with measurable targets and data disaggregated by age, governorate and rural/urban location.
- Strengthen labour-law enforcement affecting women, particularly in SMEs, informal and home-based work and temporary or part-time employment, and publish sex- and geography-disaggregated data on inspections, complaints, violations, sanctions and remedies.
- Address structural barriers to women's labour-market participation through accessible childcare, safe and affordable transportation, flexible work arrangements, social protection and policies that promote a more equal distribution of unpaid care responsibilities.
- Evaluate publicly funded economic-empowerment programmes by outcome indicators - including employment, income, business survival, finance, formalization, market access and social-security coverage - at defined intervals after programme completion.
- Expand rural women's access to digital, technical, green and other non-traditional sectors, linking skills development to market demand, finance, mentorship and sustainable employment, with targeted inclusion of women with disabilities and other groups facing compounded barriers.

8. Conclusion

Jordan has taken important steps to strengthen women's institutional representation and has continued to invest in women's employment and economic empowerment. The current local-administration reform process also offers a significant opportunity to expand women's representation in local governance. These developments should be recognized and built upon.

At the same time, ICC's field experience suggests that the next phase of implementation should focus more explicitly on the difference between **formal access and substantive equality**. For rural women, equality requires more than the existence of national programmes, training opportunities or numerical representation. It requires realistic geographic access to resources and services, decent and sustainable economic opportunities, effective participation in decisions affecting local communities, and the ability to influence plans, budgets and development priorities.

ICC therefore encourages the Committee to place geographic inequality, measurable implementation and the substantive participation of rural women at the centre of its questions to Jordan.

Submission prepared for the CEDAW List of Issues Prior to Reporting process. All ICC programme figures are drawn from the organization's internal final reports or consultation documentation identified in the footnotes.