



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### Concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of Cabo Verde\*

1. The Committee considered the ninth periodic report of Cabo Verde (CEDAW/C/CPV/9) at its 1704th and 1705th meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.1704 and CEDAW/C/SR.1705), held on 11 July 2019. The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/9, and the responses of the State party are contained in CEDAW/C/CPV/Q/9/Add.1.

#### A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its ninth periodic report. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group, as well as the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister of Education and Minister of Family and Social Inclusion, Maritza Rosabal Peña, and included representatives of the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity and of the Permanent Mission of Cabo Verde to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

#### B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2013 of the State party's combined seventh and eighth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/CPV/7-8) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the regulatory framework of the Gender Based Violence Law, in 2015.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the following:

(a) Establishment of the Interministerial Commission for Gender-Mainstreaming, in 2018;

\* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-third session (1–19 July 2019).



- (b) Establishment of the Ministry of Family and Social Inclusion, in 2016;
  - (c) Adoption of the national plan to combat sexual violence against children and adolescents for the period 2017–2019, in 2016;
  - (d) Establishment of gender focal points at the municipal level.
6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party ratified the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in 2014.

### **C. Sustainable Development Goals**

7. **The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It urges the State party to recognize women as the driving force of the sustainable development of Cabo Verde and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.**

### **D. Parliament**

8. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see [A/65/38](#), part two, annex VI). It invites the parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.**

### **E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations**

#### **Visibility of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto**

9. The Committee commends the State party for its efforts to disseminate the Convention. It is concerned, however, about the lack of awareness of the rights guaranteed under the Convention among the public in the State party, in particular among women, in both rural and urban areas, and among members of the judiciary and law enforcement and health-care personnel.

10. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Intensify its efforts to raise awareness among the general public of the rights guaranteed under the Convention and the procedures under the Optional Protocol thereto, in particular among women, in both rural and urban areas, and including migrant women, as well as among the members of the judiciary and law enforcement and health-care personnel;**

(b) **Strengthen capacity-building for legal practitioners, members of the judiciary and law enforcement officials on the direct application of the Convention, or the interpretation of national legislation in the light thereof, in court proceedings;**

(c) **Incorporate into its legal framework the provisions of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in**

**Africa and disseminate it among the general public, in particular legal professionals and civil society.**

#### **Access to justice**

11. The Committee notes with concern that legal training on women's rights under the Convention is insufficient and that judgments in cases of gender-based discrimination are not easily accessible to the public and also notes the lack of a complaint mechanism for reporting gender bias within the judiciary. The Committee is also concerned that data on court cases collected by the Superior Council of Magistrates are not disaggregated by victim or perpetrator characteristics, such as sex or other variables, which does not enable an analysis of cases of gender-based discrimination or violence.

**12. The Committee, in line with its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Provide legal training, in a sustained and structured manner, on the Convention, substantive gender equality, combating gender-based violence and the elimination of gender stereotypes to the members of the judiciary, legal professionals and law enforcement personnel;**

(b) **Ensure that court decisions in cases of gender-based discrimination are easily accessible, such as by being posted on the websites of the Supreme Court and the Ministry of Justice, with a view to promoting the transparency of the justice system;**

(c) **Put into place a mechanism to report cases of gender bias within the judiciary and ensure that such complaints are rapidly investigated and addressed;**

(d) **Ensure that the Superior Council of Magistrates collects sex-disaggregated data, to enable an analysis of cases of gender-based discrimination and violence;**

(e) **Raise awareness among the public, including among women and girls, of legislation prohibiting discrimination against women and of the remedies available to victims of such discrimination.**

#### **National machinery for the advancement of women**

13. The Committee notes that, since 2016, the Ministry of Family and Social Inclusion has had the overall responsibility for ensuring gender equality in the State party, that 18 of the 22 municipalities have designated a gender focal point and that, in one municipality, gender equality is under the responsibility of the mayor's office. The Committee welcomes the development of the national gender equality plan for the period 2015–2018, the national plan to combat gender-based violence and the national gender equality plan for the period 2019–2021, under the responsibility of the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity within the Ministry of Family and Social Inclusion. It also welcomes the recent establishment of an Interministerial Commission for Gender-Mainstreaming to monitor gender-mainstreaming in public policies. The Committee notes that the Minister of Family and Social Inclusion is also the Minister for Education and is concerned that efforts to eliminate discrimination against women may not receive the attention and resources necessary, given the Minister's broad portfolio, which also covers matters pertaining to education, childhood, older persons, persons with disabilities and the fight against poverty. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of coordination and monitoring of activities and the limited resources of the various entities of the national machinery.

**14. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that the advancement of gender equality is given priority among government efforts and, in that regard, consider the creation of a fully authorized and adequately resourced separate entity to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Convention;**

(b) **Ensure that all entities of the national machinery for the advancement of women, including the Institute for Gender Equality and Equity, the Interministerial Commission for Gender-Mainstreaming and the gender focal points at the municipal level, work in a coordinated and effective manner;**

(c) **Ensure that gender focal points are designated in the remaining municipalities.**

**National human rights institution**

15. The Committee appreciates that 16 of the 30 commissioners of the National Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship are women and that the Commission has a clear mandate to promote women's rights and gender equality. The Committee remains concerned, however, that the Commission is under the Ministry of Justice and that its lack of independence is not in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

**16. The Committee recommends that the State party promptly finalize and adopt the draft law on the National Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship, ensuring full compliance with the Paris Principles, and ensure that the Commission is provided with the necessary human, technical and financial resources to effectively protect and promote women's rights and gender equality.**

**Temporary special measures**

17. The Committee notes that the State party is considering the implementation of temporary special measures to promote the participation of women, including rural women and women with disabilities, in political and economic life. However, the Committee is concerned about the delays in implementing such measures in practice and about the lack of temporary special measures to accelerate the realization of substantive equality between women and men in all areas in which women are disadvantaged or underrepresented.

**18. The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Raise awareness among government officials and policymakers and increase their understanding of the nature of temporary special measures within the meaning of article 4 (1) of the Convention and of their importance for the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in all areas in which women are disadvantaged or underrepresented;**

(b) **Put into place temporary special measures, such as outreach or support programmes, the allocation and/or reallocation of resources, preferential treatment, targeted recruitment, hiring, training and promotion and statutory quotas, to redress gaps in participation in political and public life;**

(c) **Adopt temporary special measures for rural and disadvantaged groups of women, including widows, women heads of household, women living in poverty and in disaster prone areas and women with disabilities;**

(d) **Ensure that national plans and programmes, such as the advocacy action plan for gender parity, poverty reduction measures, entrepreneurship and professional initiatives, have specific measurable targets.**

#### **Stereotypes and harmful practices**

19. The Committee notes the legal, policy and institutional measures taken by the State party to address discriminatory stereotypes. It notes with concern, however, the persistence of deeply entrenched traditional patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes that continue to be a root cause of the denial of full equality to women in the State party. The Committee also notes with concern the limited coverage by the media, especially television media, of gender-based violence. It is very concerned about the harmful practice of early de facto unions, which amount to child marriage, affecting girls as young as 12 years of age.

20. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Expand public education programmes to increase understanding of the negative impact of discriminatory stereotypes and harmful practices on the enjoyment by women of their rights under the Convention and accelerate awareness-raising among men and boys about gender equality;**

(b) **Promptly finalize the revision of curricula at the primary and secondary levels of education to incorporate mandatory education on gender equality and continue reviewing textbooks to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society;**

(c) **Strengthen its work with the media to promote coverage of issues, such as gender-based discrimination and violence, in a gender-sensitive manner;**

(d) **Implement awareness-raising measures to prevent the harmful practice of girls entering into de facto unions, which amounts to child marriage;**

(e) **Undertake the study on cultural practices and gender relations in immigrant communities that was envisaged in the second action plan on immigration and the social inclusion of immigrants for the period 2018–2020.**

#### **Gender-based violence against women and girls**

21. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the regulatory framework for the gender-based violence law in 2015, the second national plan to combat gender-based violence, for the period 2016–2018, and the integration of gender-based violence into the national plan for gender equality for the period 2019–2021. The Committee appreciates the training conducted for the police, members of the judiciary and legal and health professionals on gender-based violence and the publication in 2014 of a manual on good practices in journalism to combat gender-based violence. However, the Committee notes the following with serious concern:

(a) The high number of complaints about gender-based violence filed with public prosecutors' offices across the country, which stands at an average of about 2,500 complaints per year, and that there were eight femicides in 2018, all of which involved situations in which women were leaving their partners;

(b) The high prevalence of child sexual abuse in the State party, with girls accounting for 95 per cent of the victims of sexual abuse;

(c) The absence of gender-based violence police officers in the islands of Brava, Fogo, Maio and Boa Vista and the delays in the judicial response in Praia and

São Vicente, despite the fact that specific gender-based violence prosecutors were designated;

(d) The absence of shelters and other immediate measures to protect victims and survivors of gender-based violence, with only one shelter in the island of Fogo and one in Praia having been established recently;

(e) The discontinuation of the free emergency helpline for victims of gender-based violence (8001818), whose functions have been absorbed into the free police emergency helpline (132), which limits calls to two minutes.

**22. The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, urges the State party:**

(a) **To allocate the resources necessary for the implementation of the gender-based violence law of 2011 and its regulatory framework of 2015, with dedicated budget allocations to justice, police, health, education and the victim support fund;**

(b) **To strengthen its efforts to raise awareness among women and men, girls and boys, including through educational and media campaigns, of the criminal nature of gender-based violence against women and girls, in order to challenge its social acceptance;**

(c) **To ensure that the national plan to combat sexual violence against children and adolescents for the period 2017–2019 is fully implemented and extended beyond 2019;**

(d) **To adequately train medical personnel to ensure specialized attention and care for women and girls who are victims of sexual violence, including the provision of essential services for emergency contraception and abortion;**

(e) **To create gender-based violence police officer posts in the islands of Brava, Fogo, Maio and Boavista, ensure that all reports of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, are duly investigated and that victims have access to protection services and strengthen the mandate of gender-based violence prosecutors to ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished and that victims have access to appropriate redress, including compensation;**

(f) **To provide members of the judiciary, prosecutors, the police and other law enforcement officials with adequate training on women's rights and on the gender-sensitive investigation and interrogation methods to be used in cases of gender-based violence against women;**

(g) **To allocate sufficient resources to ensure that shelters for women who are victims of gender-based violence are fully operational throughout the State party and ensure that women who are victims of gender-based violence have effective access to medical treatment, psychological counselling, legal assistance and protection orders;**

(h) **To ensure that the inter-institutional support network to victims of gender-based violence (SOL network) and the victim support centres are available in all 22 municipalities and provide psychological, legal and social support in one place;**

(i) **To ensure the availability of a dedicated free telephone helpline with trained professionals to provide the necessary advice and support to victims of gender-based violence.**

### **Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

23. The Committee welcomes the provision of subsistence and urgent medical treatment to victims of trafficking in persons, the adoption of the national plan to combat trafficking in persons for the period 2018–2021, the creation in 2016 of a centre to support women in prostitution or who are at risk of entering prostitution and the criminalization under the Penal Code of trafficking in persons (art. 271 A) and forced prostitution (arts. 268A and 268B). The Committee, however, notes the following with concern:

(a) The lack of standard protocols for law enforcement and social workers to identify victims of trafficking and that, although the border police has written procedures for the identification of such victims, no training has been conducted for the border police on the application of the procedures;

(b) Cases of parents encouraging their daughters to be exploited in prostitution by residents of the United States of America, in order to obtain immigration visas to the United States or to support the family financially, and cases of girls as young as 12 years of age who have been sexually exploited in exchange for drugs;

(c) Cases of forced prostitution, including of migrant women from West African countries such as Nigeria and Senegal, in the islands of Sal and Boa Vista;

(d) The low rate of investigations, prosecutions and convictions for cases of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution, as well as the limited support and redress provided to victims.

**24. In the light of target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Develop standard protocols for early identification, referral and provision of support to victims of trafficking and ensure that all relevant professional categories receive adequate training on such protocols;**

**(b) Strengthen its efforts to protect girls in prostitution from exploitation and abuse and develop services and exit programmes to assist them in leaving prostitution;**

**(c) Investigate, prosecute and adequately punish traffickers and ensure that women and girls who are victims of trafficking, including migrant women, are exempted from any criminal liability and have access to adequate health care, shelters, counselling services and redress, including reparations and compensation;**

**(d) Enhance regional cooperation with countries of origin and destination, in order to prevent trafficking in women and girls, by exchanging information and harmonizing procedures to facilitate the prosecution of traffickers.**

### **Participation in political and public life**

25. The Committee notes the increased number of women in parliament and municipal assemblies and that the proportion of women holding positions of legislative and executive representatives, directors and executive managers is 43.3 per cent. The Committee, however, notes the following with concern:

(a) The representation of women in parliament remains low (23 per cent in 2016) and has decreased at the ministerial level (from 53 per cent in 2010 to 21 per cent in 2019);

(b) The limited representation of women in diplomatic posts, international organizations and the judiciary;

(c) The delay in the finalization of the draft parity law, which provides for parity of women and men in elected bodies and in leadership positions in the public administration;

(d) The fact that voting procedures fail to guarantee equal voting rights and the principle of secret ballot for women with disabilities;

(e) The limited participation of women in sports.

**26. The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns for politicians, community leaders, the media and the public on the importance of the participation of women in political life and their representation in decision-making positions;**

**(b) Increase, in a sustained manner, the representation of women in government, diplomatic posts, international organizations and the judiciary, in particular at decision-making levels;**

**(c) Promptly adopt the draft parity law establishing parity in the representation of women and men in elected bodies and in public administration and ensure that it takes precedence over the law on political parties and the electoral code, pending their amendment;**

**(d) Amend the electoral law to ensure equal voting rights and the principle of secret ballot for women with disabilities;**

**(e) Strengthen measures to ensure gender parity in sports bodies, including at decision-making levels, and to promote physical activity among women for their physical and psychological health and well-being.**

#### **Nationality**

**27. The Committee welcomes the measures taken to address the 220 cases of statelessness identified in the 2010 census and recommends that the State party ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961.**

#### **Education**

28. The Committee welcomes the improvement in literacy rates among women, in particular among women and girls between 15 and 24 years of age, and the measures taken to promote education among girls and women, including pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers, and to end violence in schools. The Committee, however, notes the following with concern:

(a) The persistent gap in literacy rates among women and men;

(b) The lack of information about drop-out rates among girls, in particular pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers;

(c) The underrepresentation of girls in traditionally male-dominated fields of study, in particular in higher education, in which study choices remain stereotyped;

(d) That a significant proportion of students consider schools unsafe and indicate having been victims of violence at school and that more than 50 per cent of those victims were girls.

**29. Recalling its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education and taking note of target 4.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to eliminate gender disparities in education, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its literacy campaigns for women 24 years of age and older and women in rural or remote areas;**

(b) **Collect data on enrolment, absenteeism and dropout rates among women and girls, for all levels of education, disaggregated by location, age and pregnancy status;**

(c) **Monitor the implementation of the decree law on social support for mothers in school, encourage pregnant adolescents to continue their education and facilitate the reintegration into education of adolescent mothers, including through financial support, by combating cultural stigma through awareness-raising campaigns and by providing affordable access to childcare facilities;**

(d) **Promptly include in school curricula at all levels mandatory, age-appropriate, evidence-based and scientifically accurate education for girls and boys on sexual and reproductive health and rights that covers responsible sexual behaviour and is free from discriminatory gender stereotypes;**

(e) **Adopt temporary special measures, including financial incentives and scholarships, to promote enrolment among women and girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and address stereotypes and structural barriers that may deter girls and young women from enrolling in traditionally male-dominated fields of study;**

(f) **Ensure that the national plan to combat sexual violence against children and adolescents for the period 2017–2019 is implemented in practice and develop measures to combat all forms of gender-based violence in schools, as well as corporal punishment.**

### **Employment**

30. The Committee commends the measures taken by the State party to promote women's right to work, including the action plan for gender-mainstreaming in the tourism sector for the period 2016–2018, the national transition strategy from informal to formal economy for the period 2017–2020, the national employment plan for the period 2018–2023 and the entrepreneurship training conducted by the Agency for Business Development and Innovation. However, the Committee notes the following with concern:

(a) The persistent gender segregation in the labour market, in which women are concentrated in employment in domestic work, the health sector, commerce, education and the hotel and restaurant sector;

(b) The persistent gender stereotypes which are a root cause of the assignment of a disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic work, child-raising and care of family members to women and the insufficient maternity leave afforded to women, thereby limiting their access to the labour market;

(c) The majority of women work in the tourism sector under precarious contracts and the fact that women comprise the majority of workers in the informal sector;

(d) The high unemployment rate among women with higher education, despite the fact that the representation of women in higher education is almost 10 per cent higher than that of men;

(e) That the principle of equal pay for work of equal value was not included in the most recent revision of the Labour Code;

(f) The lack of information on sexual harassment in the workplace and the complaint mechanisms available to women.

**31. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Take measures, including temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention, such as awareness-raising activities, quotas and incentives, to promote the choice of non-traditional career paths among women and to reduce gender segregation in the labour market;**

**(b) Increase the period of maternity leave from two to four months, establish paternity leave to be taken within the first two weeks of the child's birth and promote the equal sharing of family and domestic responsibilities between mothers and fathers;**

**(c) Enforce the application of labour regulations in the tourism industry to end the practice of precarious contracts and accelerate the transition among women from working in the informal to working in the formal economy;**

**(d) Promote access to the labour market for women with higher education;**

**(e) Promptly amend the Labour Code to ensure the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;**

**(f) Take measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, encourage women to raise complaints in cases of sexual harassment and ensure that they are promptly investigated and the perpetrators adequately punished;**

**(g) Ratify the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) of the International Labour Organization (ILO).**

**Women domestic workers**

32. The Committee welcomes the creation of a Domestic Workers' Association in 2018. It notes that women constitute the majority of domestic workers and expresses its concern that the regulatory framework for domestic work has not yet been approved. It notes with concern that, despite the extension of social protection to domestic workers under decree law No. 49/2009 of 23 November 2009, in 2018 only 17.5 per cent of domestic workers were enrolled in the national system of compulsory social protection.

**33. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Promptly adopt a regulatory framework for domestic work;**

**(b) Ensure that labour inspections extend to households with domestic workers to monitor compliance with relevant standards and regulations, including the minimum wage, working hours, holidays and maternity leave, and that they can apply adequate sanctions in cases of non-compliance;**

**(c) Ensure domestic workers' enrolment in the national system of compulsory social protection and promote the payment of unemployment subsidies for unemployed domestic workers;**

**(d) Ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of ILO.****Health**

34. The Committee appreciates that the free basic package of essential health services includes reproductive health services for women and that adolescent girls have access to special reproductive health facilities in some health centres. The Committee, however, notes the following with concern:

(a) The persistently high rate of early pregnancy, with 12 per cent of adolescent girls and young women between 15 and 19 years of age having already given birth to at least one child as at 2018, although that rate was 15 per cent in 2015, that adolescent girls and young women under 19 years of age represent almost one fifth of all pregnant women and that no special reproductive health facilities are available for adolescent girls in most health centres in the State party;

(b) That abortion and post-abortion care services are not available free of charge;

(c) The lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services for rural women, the decrease in the use of contraceptives and the increase in the number of new cases of HIV and AIDS in the State party;

(d) The underrepresentation of women at decision-making levels in existing mechanisms for the prevention and management of vector-borne disease epidemics.

**35. Recalling its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Ensure that adolescent girls have access to accurate information about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on responsible sexual behaviour and the prevention of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, step up efforts to prevent adolescent pregnancy and ensure the availability of special reproductive health-care facilities for adolescent girls and young women in all health centres;**

**(b) Make abortion and post-abortion health services free of charge and ensure that no girl or woman faces obstacles in acquiring access to safe legal abortion services;**

**(c) Invest in the availability of sexual and reproductive health services, in particular in rural areas, and ensure that all women and girls, including those with disabilities, have access to affordable, modern contraceptives throughout the territory of the State party;**

**(d) Strengthen its efforts to prevent cases of HIV and AIDS;**

**(e) Ensure the representation and meaningful participation of women at decision-making levels in the prevention and management of health emergencies and epidemics.**

**Climate change**

36. The Committee notes that, as a small island developing State, the State party is particularly vulnerable to climate change and appreciates its efforts to invest in renewable energies and the adoption of guidelines for the systematic use of sex-disaggregated data and the implementation of gender-mainstreaming strategies in the environment sector. It also notes that, in the national strategy for disaster risk reduction for the period 2017–2030, gender equality and environment sustainability were defined as cross-cutting issues. However, the Committee is concerned about the

lack of meaningful participation of women in the development and implementation of those initiatives.

**37. The Committee, taking into consideration its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, recommends that the State party ensure that women are meaningfully involved in the development of legislation, national policies and programmes on climate change, disaster response and disaster risk reduction. It also recommends that the State party take measures to address hunger and ensure food security for rural women in the light of the effects of climate change.**

#### **Women and economic empowerment**

38. The Committee notes with concern that poverty rates remain disproportionately high among women in the State party. It is also concerned that over 60 per cent of poor and very poor households are headed by women in the State party, particularly in deprived urban areas.

**39. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its measures to alleviate poverty, including through the implementation of the social inclusion income policy, paying particular attention to women and women heads of household in deprived urban areas. It also recommends that the State party take measures to ensure food security among women, such as by supporting agricultural activity, creating food stocks and building water reserves to avoid famine. The Committee notes the importance of tourism, but asks that equal attention be paid to other sectors with high rates of employment of women, such as agricultural marketing, fisheries and agribusiness.**

#### **Rural women**

40. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party to reduce poverty among the rural population and the inclusion of rural women in the national poverty reduction strategy. It also welcomes the improved access to safe drinking water and sanitation for rural households. The Committee, however, notes the following with concern:

(a) That 25 per cent of the rural population still uses non-treated water sources and 35 per cent lacks access to toilets at home and wastewater removal systems;

(b) The high illiteracy rates among rural women;

(c) That rural women continue to carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work compared with rural men;

(d) That only 8.5 per cent of women in agriculture have access to land ownership and use for agricultural purposes and that, in cases in which joint marital property is registered only in the name of one spouse or partner, it is usually the man's name that is registered in the property title, despite the fact that, in 2015, 49.7 per cent of those working in agriculture were women;

(e) The limited access for rural women to information, capacity-building activities and decision-making forums related to agriculture, business development and new technologies;

(f) The limited inclusion of rural women in the design and implementation of measures to promote renewable energies and sustainable use of the ocean, known as the "blue economy".

41. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Reinforce its investment in the provision of water, including desalinated water, and sanitation in rural areas and ensure that women effectively participate in municipal environmental, water and sanitation committees and sanitation divisions;**

(b) **Strengthen adult literacy programmes and facilitate access to vocational education and training for women in rural areas;**

(c) **Take steps to recognize, reduce and redistribute the unpaid care and domestic work of rural women through investment in infrastructure and social services such as childcare, elder care, affordable housing and transportation;**

(d) **Promote access for women to land ownership and agricultural use and put into place mechanisms to ensure that jointly owned land property, including in de facto unions, is registered under the names of both partners and that rural women have access to legal assistance when claiming their property rights, which are now provided by the municipal services following the closure of the *casas do direito* (victim support and legal information centres);**

(e) **Put into place mechanisms to incorporate gender analysis into, and ensure the involvement of women in, the agricultural sector and the “blue economy”, in particular under the strategic plan for sustainable development, ensure access for rural women to technical support and training for agricultural innovation and new technologies and agribusiness development, in addition to small and micro-sized projects, and facilitate access for rural women to banking services, including mobile banking services;**

(f) **Ensure that rural women have access to electricity generated by renewable energy, as envisaged under the national renewable energy plan and the national energy efficiency plan, for cooking and other needs, and are effectively involved in the design and implementation of measures to develop the sustainable use of the ocean, known as the “blue economy”.**

**Women with disabilities**

42. The Committee is concerned about the high illiteracy rates among girls and women with disabilities and that women with disabilities are exposed to high levels of gender-based violence, including physical, psychological and sexual violence, and that most women with disabilities refrain from reporting such incidents. It is also concerned about prejudices against women with disabilities in relation to their sexual and reproductive health and rights, family and societal pressure on them to end pregnancies and their limited use of contraceptives.

43. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure access to inclusive education for girls and women with disabilities and access to remedies to raise complaints in cases of violations of their rights;**

(b) **Take further measures to make the health-care system more inclusive and accessible to women with disabilities;**

(c) **Ensure that all cases of gender-based violence against and of the forced sterilizations of women and girls with disabilities are duly investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished and that any medical procedure is carried out only with the free, prior and informed consent of those concerned, in accordance with international standards.**

**Migrant women**

44. The Committee welcomes the measures targeting women taken by the General Directorate for Immigration. However, it notes with concern the difficulties that women immigrants face in regularizing their status and in gaining access to education and health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, owing to costs, language barriers, excessive working hours and the patriarchal attitudes of their partners. The Committee notes there are no reported cases of female genital mutilation but remains concerned about its potential practice within migrant communities.

**45. The Committee recommends that the State party continue supporting migrant women, consider regularizing their migration status and ensure access for migrant women to education and health services. It also recommends that the State party combat patriarchal attitudes, which impede migrant women from enjoying their rights and that it continue monitoring for potential cases of female genital mutilation.**

**Marriage and family relations**

46. The Committee notes the information that the number of cases of de facto polygamy has decreased in the State party. However, it is concerned that efforts to change social attitudes and practices remain insufficient and that girls under 18 years of age sometimes live in de facto unions, which is similar to child marriage. The Committee notes with concern that the Civil Code recognizes de facto unions of persons older than 19 years of age who have lived together for at least three years, which in practice legitimizes de facto unions for children as young as 16 years of age. The Committee is concerned about the difficulties that women face upon separation and divorce, which often result in precarious socioeconomic situations. It notes with concern the eight cases of femicide that took place in 2018, all of which involved situations in which women were leaving their partners.

**47. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Strengthen its efforts to prevent and end de facto polygamy;**
- (b) Amend the Civil Code to prohibit the de facto union of girls who are under 18 years of age, which is similar to child marriage, and recognize only those de facto unions which commenced when both partners were at least 18 years of age;**
- (c) Ensure that the jointly owned property of women and men in de facto unions is registered in the name of both partners from the outset;**
- (d) Ensure that women in situations of separation and divorce have access to financial support, protection orders against violent partners and legal assistance, when necessary.**

**Data collection and analysis**

**48. The Committee recommends that the State party collect and publish data, disaggregated by sex, gender, ethnicity, disability and age, in order to inform policies and programmes on women and girls, as well as to assist in the tracking of progress in the achievement of the gender-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

**Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention**

**49. The Committee encourages the State party to accept the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.**

### **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

50. **The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to further evaluate the realization of the rights enshrined in the Convention in the context of the 25-year review of the implementation of the Declaration and Platform in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.**

### **Dissemination**

51. **The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.**

### **Technical assistance**

52. **The Committee recommends that the State party link the implementation of the Convention to its development efforts and that it avail itself of regional or international technical assistance in this respect.**

### **Ratification of other treaties**

53. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments<sup>1</sup> would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to ratify the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a party.**

### **Follow-up to concluding observations**

54. **The Committee regrets the State party's failure to submit information on the measures taken to implement the specific recommendations identified for immediate action in its previous concluding observations and requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 22 (a), 26 (a), 29 (c) and 33 (a) above.**

### **Preparation of the next report**

55. **The Committee requests the State party to submit its tenth periodic report, which is due in July 2023. The report should be submitted on time and cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.**

56. **The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents ([HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).**

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<sup>1</sup> The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.