



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### List of issues and questions prior to the submission of the ninth periodic report of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines\*

#### General

1. Please provide information and statistics, disaggregated by age, disability, ethnicity, geographical location and socioeconomic background, on the current situation of women in the State party to enable monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. In accordance with the State party's obligations under articles 1 and 2 of the Convention and in line with target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, as well as in the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/VCT/CO/4-8, paras. 21 (h), 23 (b), 31 (a) and 47),<sup>1</sup> please indicate how the State party intends to improve the collection and analysis of data pertaining to the areas covered by the Convention so as to support policymaking and programme development and to measure progress towards the implementation of the Convention and the promotion of substantive equality between women and men, including with regard to the specific areas covered herein.

#### Legislative framework

2. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (paras. 11–13) and in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, please provide information on steps taken or envisaged to: (a) adopt legislation that incorporates the principle of equality of women and men, as well as a definition of discrimination against women covering direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, including intersecting forms of discrimination; and (b) review its legislation and repeal all discriminatory provisions, particularly in the Criminal Code; the Marriage Act; the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act; and the Citizenship Act. Please inform the Committee about steps taken or envisaged to fully incorporate the provisions of the Convention into the national legal order and ensure that they are directly applicable in the national courts and that judges and prosecutors are adequately trained in relation to the Convention, the Committee's general

\* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 13 November 2020.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the Committee's previous concluding observations.



recommendations and the Committee's jurisprudence under the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

### **Optional Protocol**

3. Please provide the Committee with a timeline for the State party's accession to the Optional Protocol.

### **Impact of the pandemic on women's rights and gender equality**

4. In line with the Committee's guidance note on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and coronavirus disease (COVID-19) issued on 22 April 2020, please indicate measures implemented by the State party in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, taking into consideration the long-standing inequalities between women and men, as well as the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized women and girls. Please indicate measures in place to ensure that all COVID-19 crisis response and recovery efforts: (a) address and are aimed at effectively preventing discrimination and gender-based violence against women and girls; (b) guarantee that women and girls have equal participation in decision-making related to recovery, economic empowerment and service delivery; and (c) seek to ensure that women and girls benefit equally from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care roles, that are aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Please explain how the State party is ensuring that measures taken to contain the pandemic do not limit access by women and girls to justice, education, employment and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, as well as shelters for women at risk of gender-based violence.

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

5. Please provide information on efforts made to strengthen the functions and visibility of the Gender Affairs Division, including by providing it with adequate human, technical and financial resources to enhance its coordination role and its provision of training in gender-related studies. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 15 (b)), please provide information on steps taken to introduce gender-responsive budgeting in all government departments and develop and adopt a national policy or action plan on gender mainstreaming with clear timelines and measurable benchmarks. Please also provide information on strategies in place for monitoring gender-responsive budgeting and their impact on women's rights.

### **Temporary special measures**

6. Please provide information on action taken to adopt temporary special measures during the reporting period, as stipulated in article 4 (1) of the Convention and in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, in all areas under the Convention in which women, including rural women and women with disabilities, were underrepresented or disadvantaged. Please describe steps taken to raise awareness among political leaders, legislators, the media and the general public of the non-discriminatory nature of the use of temporary special measures as a means to achieve substantive equality between women and men.

### **Stereotypes**

7. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 19), please provide information on measures taken to eliminate patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, including through awareness-raising campaigns focusing

on community leaders and women and men at all levels of society, the popular media, television, the teacher education system and school curricula, with a view to recognizing the contributions of women, often through unpaid care work, to society and sustainable development and promoting women's leadership roles and equal participation in decision-making processes.

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

8. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 21), please provide information on steps taken to review the Criminal Code and the Domestic Violence Act to criminalize all forms of domestic violence, including sexual abuse of girls and psychological and economic violence, and to ensure that the definition of rape, including marital and acquaintance or date rape, is based on the lack of consent and takes into account all coercive circumstances. Please indicate steps taken to develop gender-sensitive protocols for the interrogation and cross-examination of victims and witnesses, and evidence collection by judges, prosecutors, police officers and health workers, in domestic and sexual violence cases. Please provide detailed information on the number of reported cases, investigations, prosecutions, convictions and the sentences imposed on perpetrators of gender-based violence against women, disaggregated by relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

9. In the light of the recommendations accepted by the State party under the universal periodic review (A/HRC/33/5, para. 80.113), please provide information on the availability of victim support services, including adequately equipped shelters, medical and legal assistance, psychosocial counselling and professional training for victims of domestic violence, in particular in rural areas. Please describe measures taken to create an enabling environment for women to report incidents of gender-based violence, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19. Please specify measures taken aimed at removing barriers to women's access to justice by raising awareness about gender bias, stereotypes and victim-blaming beliefs among the judiciary, police officers and other law enforcement officials, focusing also on intersecting forms of gender discrimination.

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

10. Please provide information on measures taken to combat trafficking in women and girls under the national action plan covering the period 2016–2020, as well as the resources allocated for that purpose. Please also provide information on the number of prosecutions, convictions and sentences imposed on traffickers and on support and rehabilitation provided to victims. In the light of the Committee's general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, please describe measures taken to ensure the early identification of victims and their referral to appropriate services and to conduct awareness-raising campaigns to raise public awareness of the root causes and criminal nature of trafficking in persons.

11. Please provide information on measures taken to address the root causes of exploitation of women in prostitution, including in the sex tourism industry, provide exit programmes and alternative income-generating opportunities to enable women to leave prostitution, and ensure their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Please provide information regarding potential sanctions against persons responsible for involving girls in any activities related to prostitution.

**Participation in political and public life**

12. Please provide information on steps taken to increase the representation of women in political and public life at all levels, including in the Government, the House of Assembly, the public service and the foreign service. Please also provide information on the adoption and implementation of targeted measures, including political leadership training and campaign financing for women candidates and preferential recruitment of women, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life. Please also indicate measures taken to amend the electoral law to introduce gender parity in the electoral process for the House of Assembly. Please provide information on campaigns to raise awareness among politicians, the media, teachers, community leaders and the general public about the importance of women's participation in decision-making at all levels.

**Nationality**

13. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 27), please provide information on steps taken to amend relevant legislation to ensure that women and men have equal rights to acquire and transmit their nationality to their children and foreign spouses.

**Education**

14. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that girls, including pregnant adolescents, remain in and do not drop out of school and to facilitate the reintegration of young mothers into education following childbirth by providing affordable childcare facilities and counselling in parenting skills. Please indicate measures taken to introduce comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education at all levels of education to help to prevent early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

15. Please provide detailed information on steps taken to eliminate traditional stereotypes and structural barriers that may deter girls and women from choosing traditionally male-dominated fields of study, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure access to inclusive education for women and girls with disabilities.

**Employment**

16. Please provide updated disaggregated data on the participation of women in the labour market and steps taken to address the lack of correlation between the high educational attainment of women and their low representation in the workforce, in particular in formal employment and in leadership positions. Please indicate measures taken to promote equal sharing of family responsibilities between women and men, including by introducing paid paternity leave, and to reduce occupational segregation. Please provide information on steps taken to amend section 3 of the Equal Pay Act to ensure full respect for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and to reduce the gender pay gap. Please describe measures taken to criminalize and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

**Health**

17. Please provide information on measures adopted to ensure that women and girls in all parts of the State party have access to adequate sexual and reproductive health services, in particular to affordable modern methods of contraception and to safe

abortion and post-abortion services (para. 37 (a)). Please indicate steps taken to conduct awareness-raising campaigns targeting health-care providers with a view to addressing patriarchal attitudes and cultural barriers that limit access by women and girls to family planning services (para. 37 (b)). Please provide information on steps taken to provide free and confidential family planning services at the community level and raise awareness about responsible sexual behaviour and the prevention of early and unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (para. 37 (c)).

18. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 39), please provide information on measures taken to legalize abortion at least in cases of rape, incest, risk to the life of the pregnant women or severe fetal impairment, and to decriminalize it in all other cases. Please indicate whether women and girls have confidential access to safe abortion and post-abortion services without requiring the consent of their husband or parents.

19. Please provide data, disaggregated by age, sex, geographical location and socioeconomic background, on the prevalence of HIV in the State party. Please also indicate whether women and girls living with HIV have free access to antiretroviral medicines and treatment and whether a gender perspective has been integrated into existing programmes to combat HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Please also indicate measures in place to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are not placed in mental health institutions against their will and that their free, full and prior consent is effectively ensured before they are given any medical treatment or any medical interventions are performed on them.

#### **Rural women**

20. Please provide information on measures taken to address gender-based violence, poverty and unemployment affecting rural women, in particular those living in isolated communities, and rural women-headed households, and to ensure that they have access to justice, education, formal employment, skills development and training opportunities, including with regard to the use of digital technology, health care, housing, income-generating opportunities and microcredit, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women.

#### **Disaster risk reduction and climate change**

21. Given the State party's vulnerabilities as an island nation, please provide information on policies and programmes on disaster preparedness and steps taken to integrate a gender perspective into the response to natural disasters and the impact of climate change. In line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, please provide information on the participation of women, including women with disabilities and rural and older women, in the design, adoption and implementation of such programmes.

#### **Disadvantaged groups of women**

22. Please provide information on measures taken by the State party to ensure that older women, women and girls with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women have effective access to justice, protection from gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health services and income-generating opportunities.

#### **Marriage and family relations**

23. Please describe efforts aimed at ensuring women's economic protection upon divorce or the dissolution of de facto unions. Please provide information on child support and other measures in place to ensure the economic independence of single

mothers following divorce or separation from their partners, including enforcement of alimony and maintenance obligations of ex-husbands and/or fathers of their children. Please indicate measures in place to ensure that there are no disparities between the support and protection afforded to mothers of children born in and those born out of wedlock and that the courts, considering the best interest of the child, take domestic violence into consideration when deciding on child custody and visitation rights.

24. Please provide information on measures taken to amend the Marriage Act and raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years without exception, in line with joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices.

**Additional information**

25. Please provide any additional information deemed relevant with regard to legislative, policy, administrative and any other measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations since the consideration of the previous periodic report. Such measures may include recent laws, developments, plans and programmes, recent ratifications of human rights instruments and any other information that the State party considers relevant. Please note that, further to the issues raised herein, the State party will be expected, during the dialogue, to respond to additional questions posed by the Committee relating to areas covered by the Convention.

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