



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
26 February 2024

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions prior to the submission of the combined seventh to eleventh periodic reports of Saint Lucia*

General

1. Please provide information and statistics, disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, disability status, 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 (End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere), 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, programme development and service delivery, 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 in the present document.

Visibility of the Convention

2. Please provide information on the efforts made to give visibility to the Convention, including any awareness-raising campaigns among the general public, including women and girls, about the prohibition of discrimination against women. Please also specify measures taken to provide systematic capacity-building or regular training to judicial and law enforcement personnel and legal practitioners on the application of the Convention and the interpretation of national legislation in the light of the Convention in court proceedings. Furthermore, please provide updated information on the number of court decisions referring to provisions of the Convention.

Legislative framework and definition of discrimination

3. Please report on the steps taken:

(a) To adopt a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women that covers direct and indirect discrimination, including intersecting forms of discrimination, in both the public and the private spheres;

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 22 February 2024.



(b) To establish a judicial complaint mechanism, specifically for cases of discrimination against women, with adequate human, technical and financial resources;

(c) To make legal remedies and compensation available to women who are subjected to any form of gender-based discrimination, in particular women belonging to ethnic and national minority groups, women with disabilities, older women and women and girls living in rural areas.

Women's access to justice

4. Please provide information on:

(a) Measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in the administration of justice by removing barriers to equal access to justice and reparation and building the capacities of judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officers and lawyers on women's rights and gender equality;

(b) The availability of affordable, and if necessary free, quality legal aid for women seeking justice in the State party and the number of women beneficiaries of such aid over the past five years;

(c) Steps taken to enhance women's awareness of their rights and legal literacy in all areas of the law;

(d) Measures taken to ensure that women who are victims of gender-based violence and discrimination have access to effective redress and to facilitate their access to free legal aid;

(e) Steps taken to ensure that judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers handle cases of gender-based violence and discrimination against women in a gender-sensitive manner and to expand mandatory capacity-building to judges, prosecutors, lawyers, law enforcement officials and mediators on women's rights, including their right to access to justice.

National machinery for the advancement of women

5. Please indicate whether the State party has adopted a national action plan for women. Please also indicate the measures taken to strengthen the Office for Gender Affairs, including by improving its authority and position in the hierarchy of the Ministry of Public Service, Home Affairs, Labour and Gender Affairs and ensuring that it has adequate human, technical and financial resources. Please provide information on the progress made in establishing an efficient monitoring and evaluating mechanism to improve the coordination of gender equality policies at all levels. Please also provide information on measures taken to ensure collaboration with women's organizations in the national machinery for the advancement of women.

Temporary special measures

6. Please provide updated information on any temporary special measures taken by the State party, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, to accelerate the realization of the substantive equality of women and men in all areas covered by the Convention in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, such as participation in political and public life and employment. Please also provide information on awareness-raising campaigns targeting governmental officials, policymakers, employers and the media on the non-discriminatory nature, value and importance of temporary special measures for national development.

Gender stereotypes and harmful practices

7. Please provide detailed information on measures taken to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, including awareness-raising and educational programmes and media campaigns to convey positive images of women as active participants in economic, social and political life, and the impact of those measures. Please also provide information on:

- (a) Measures taken to address discriminatory gender stereotypes and negative portrayals of women, including all forms of objectification of women in the media and advertisements, and the results of those measures;
- (b) Efforts made to monitor negative portrayals of women in the media and on social media, as well as in statements by public officials;
- (c) Steps taken to mainstream gender equality into education curricula, including measures addressed to teachers, and impact assessments of capacity-building activities on women's rights and gender equality;
- (d) Efforts made to analyse and address gender-based stereotypes as a root cause of gender-based violence against women and measures taken to monitor their impact;
- (e) Measures taken to criminalize child and/or forced marriage;
- (f) The number of reported cases of prosecutions and convictions for, and the sentences imposed on the perpetrators of, harmful practices, in particular child marriage, disaggregated by relevant factors such as age, Indigenous origin, migrant status, disability status and geographical location.

Gender-based violence against women

8. Please provide information on specific measures taken to address the high incidence of gender-based violence against women in the State party, including the adoption of legislation to explicitly criminalize marital rape. In particular, please provide information on measures taken:

- (a) To enact comprehensive civil and penal legislation addressing the different forms of gender-based violence against women and girls;
- (b) To specifically criminalize femicide;
- (c) To prevent all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls;
- (d) To establish specialized mechanisms, including gender-based violence desks in the police, to respond to cases of gender-based violence against women;
- (e) To ensure the prosecution, conviction and punishment of perpetrators of gender-based violence against women, including sexual violence and domestic violence;
- (f) To provide victims with effective protection, including protection orders, rehabilitation and remedies, including compensation;
- (g) To ensure and monitor the police response to complaints about gender-based violence against women and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished;
- (h) To strengthen victim support services, including shelters, for women and girls who are survivors of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence;

(i) To provide targeted, mandatory capacity-building activities on the prevention and detection of, and the response to, all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, for law enforcement and judicial officials, health and social workers and other professionals who work with victims of gender-based violence;

(j) To enhance the State party's efforts to collect data on the prevalence of different forms of gender-based violence, disaggregated by sex, age, type of violence and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

9. Please provide information on measures taken:

(a) To amend the trafficking provisions in the 2021 Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act to prescribe penalties for trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation that are commensurate with the penalties prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape;

(b) To increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, convict and punish traffickers under the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act;

(c) To train law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges on trafficking in persons;

(d) To strengthen capacity-building for law enforcement officials, social workers and health professionals on the early identification and referral to appropriate services of victims of trafficking and women and girls at risk, in particular migrant women and unaccompanied girls;

(e) To ensure the protection of women and girls who are victims of trafficking and provide them with free and immediate access to temporary residence permits, specialized shelters, medical care, psychosocial counselling, legal aid and rehabilitation and reintegration services, irrespective of their ability or willingness to cooperate with the prosecution authorities.

Participation in political and public life

10. Please provide information on measures, including temporary special measures in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, such as electoral quotas and the accelerated recruitment of women to the public service, to increase the participation of women in political and public life at the national and local levels, in particular at the decision-making levels, with a view to reaching parity, along with disaggregated data on the number of women participating in diplomatic missions, the judiciary, the police and all other sectors. Please also provide information on the measures taken to promote women's leadership and provide campaign financing and training for women candidates on election campaigning and negotiation skills.

Nationality

11. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that Saint Lucian women may transmit their nationality to their foreign spouses under the same conditions as Saint Lucian men.

Education

12. Please provide information on the following:

(a) Enrolment rates at all levels of education among girls and women, disaggregated by location in urban or rural area and by Indigenous origin, disability status and migrant or refugee status;

(b) The school dropout rate among girls for the past five years; please also indicate how the State party addresses school dropout due to early pregnancy and the stigma attached to it;

(c) Measures taken to address gender-based violence against women and girls in the school environment;

(d) Measures to ensure mandatory, age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights at all levels of education, including on responsible sexual behaviour and modern contraceptives;

(e) Women's career choices, disaggregated by age and location in urban or rural area, and measures taken to encourage women and girls to choose non-traditional fields of study, such as information and communications technologies and science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

(f) Measures to address gender stereotypes in curricula and textbooks and measures taken by the State party to remove all barriers faced by women and girls in accessing education.

Employment

13. Please indicate the measures taken:

(a) To combat pregnancy- and maternity-based discrimination in recruitment processes and sexual harassment in the workplace and strengthen accountability mechanisms;

(b) To enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value to eliminate the gender pay gap, address horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market and increase women's representation in decision-making positions, including in the private sector;

(c) To promote the equal sharing of household and childcare responsibilities between women and men, including by ensuring adequate maternity benefits, paid parental leave, paternity leave and pension benefits for women who do not work because they care for children or other dependent persons;

(d) To extend labour protection to women working in the informal economy and facilitate their transition to the formal economy.

Health

14. Please provide information on:

(a) Measures taken to raise awareness about modern forms of contraception and ensure access to safe and affordable contraceptives for women and adolescent girls, in particular in rural and remote areas;

(b) Measures taken to protect pregnant women during childbirth, address obstetric violence, strengthen capacity-building programmes for medical practitioners and ensure the regular monitoring of the treatment of patients in health-care centres and hospitals;

(c) The incidence of unsafe abortions and their impact on women's health, including maternal mortality rates;

(d) Steps taken to ensure access to abortion and post-abortion care in line with the provisions of the Convention on non-discrimination and the autonomy of women and girls;

(e) Measures taken to address the persistent discrimination against and stigmatization of women living with HIV/AIDS and to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. Please also provide data on the number of new HIV diagnoses among girls and women in the State party and indicate whether a gender perspective has been integrated into existing programmes to combat HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Economic empowerment of women

15. Please provide information on steps taken to ensure gender-responsive programming in poverty reduction strategies and the meaningful participation of women, including women belonging to disadvantaged groups, in the formulation and development of poverty reduction and eradication strategies. Please provide statistical data disaggregated by age, disability status, ethnicity, location, socioeconomic status and other gender-relevant indicators on poverty levels among women, in particular groups of women in vulnerable situations.

Rural women

16. With reference to the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, please indicate measures taken to improve access for rural women and girls to basic services, including health-care and family planning services, water, education, formal employment, social protection, justice, land and credit. Please provide information on strengthening women's literacy programmes and facilitating access to vocational education and training for women in rural areas; on measures to increase access to land for rural women and access for such women to loans and income-generating opportunities, including alternative income-generating opportunities; and on measures to increase access to education, employment and social protection in both the formal and the informal economy.

Disadvantaged groups of women

17. In view of the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by disadvantaged groups of women, please provide information on the situation of older women, women with disabilities, migrant women, rural women, women in detention and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women. Please indicate the measures taken to ensure that women belonging to disadvantaged groups have access to health-care services, social benefits, education and possibilities to participate in political and public life.

Women with disabilities

18. Please provide updated information on measures taken to include women and girls with disabilities in all policies and strategies to promote equal opportunities for women and men, in particular with regard to education, employment, access to justice, protection against violence and access to sexual and reproductive health-care services and poverty reduction programmes. Please report on how free and informed consent is ensured for women with disabilities prior to any medical treatment and on any existing exceptions to that universal right and on measures adopted to protect women with disabilities living in institutions from violence and abuse and to eliminate practices involving physical and mechanical restraints. Please provide information on restrictions on legal capacity and indicate any temporary special measures, including quotas, taken by the State party to increase the number of women

with disabilities employed in the public service and the private sector and enrolled in higher education institutions.

Climate change

19. In view of 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 involvement of women in the formulation and implementation of legislation, policies and strategies on climate change, disaster response and disaster risk reduction, and post-disaster management. Please also provide information on measures taken to mainstream a gender perspective into national disaster risk reduction management and relief and recovery strategies. Please further provide information, including statistical data, on the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls in the State party. Please provide information on measures taken by the State party to increase the utilization of renewable and clean energy by women.

Marriage and family relations

20. Please indicate if the State party has introduced the option of divorce by mutual consent and provide information on measures taken to ensure women's rights in de facto unions in relation to property. Please also indicate what legislative and other measures are in place to ensure that domestic violence is taken into consideration in judicial decisions on custody and visitation rights and to conduct training and awareness-raising activities for judges, mediators, lawyers, youth welfare officers and members of law enforcement agencies and local executive bodies to ensure that they are aware of the rights of women and children and of their own role in protecting victims of domestic violence and complying with provisions protecting women's rights.

Data collection

21. Please provide information on the steps taken to enhance data-collection systems to ensure the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age, disability status, ethnicity, geographical location and socioeconomic status to assess the realization of substantive equality of women and men in all areas covered by the Convention.

Additional information

22. Please provide any additional information deemed relevant with regard to legislative, policy, administrative or other measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention. Such measures may include recent laws, developments, plans and programmes and ratifications of human rights instruments, as well as any other information that the State party considers relevant. Please also provide information on the measures taken to integrate a gender perspective into all efforts aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Please note that, further to the issues raised in the present document, the State party will be expected, during the dialogue, to respond to additional questions relating to areas covered by the Convention.