



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
6 June 2024

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of the Republic of Korea*

1. The Committee considered the ninth periodic report of the Republic of Korea (CEDAW/C/KOR/9) at its 2061st and 2062nd meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.2061 and CEDAW/C/SR.2062), held on 14 May 2024. The list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group is contained in CEDAW/C/KOR/Q/9, and the responses of the Republic of Korea are contained in CEDAW/C/KOR/RQ/9.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its ninth periodic report. It also appreciates the State party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/KOR/FCO/8) and its written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group. It welcomes 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 distinguished delegation, which was headed by the Assistant Minister for Gender Equality and Family, Kinam Kim. The delegation also included representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Employment and Labour, the Supreme Court of Korea, the Seoul Family Court, the Gender Equality and Family Committee, the Health and Welfare Committee, the National Assembly Secretariat and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea 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 2018 of the State party's eighth periodic report (CEDAW/C/KOR/8) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-eighth session (13–31 May 2024).



(a) Single-Parent Family Support Act, in 2019, which expands childcare service support for low-income single-parent families;

(b) Framework Act on Prevention of Violence against Women, in 2019, which specifically addresses gender-based violence against women and girls.

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 adoption or establishment of the following:

(a) Third National Plan for Improving Gender Representation in the Public Sector (2023–2027);

(b) Fourth Basic Plan for Low Fertility and Ageing Society (2021–2025);

(c) Fifth National Health Plan (2021–2030);

(d) Webhard Cartel Prevention Measures, in 2019;

(e) Digital Sex Crime Eradication Measures, in 2020;

(f) Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality Policies (2023–2027);

(g) First Basic Plan of Policies to Prevent Violence against Women (2020–2024);

(h) First Comprehensive Plan for the Prevention of Human Trafficking (2023–2027).

C. Sustainable Development Goals

6. **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 the State party and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.**

D. Parliament

7. **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 National Assembly, 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

Reservations

8. The Committee remains concerned that the State party maintains its reservation to article 16 (1) (g) of the Convention.

9. **The Committee recalls its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/KOR/CO/8, para. 9) and its statement on reservations, adopted at its nineteenth session, in 1998, and considers that the reservation to article 16 (1) (g) of the Convention is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention and that it should be withdrawn.**

Status and visibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations

10. The Convention is a dynamic instrument that both contributes to and evolves with the development of international law. The Committee acknowledges the efforts of the State party in enhancing the visibility and accessibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's previous concluding observations, including through their publication on the websites of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the National Human Rights Commission of Korea. The Committee also notes the distribution of the previous concluding observations to relevant domestic stakeholders, including ministries, legislative and judiciary bodies and local governments. The Committee also notes that in its decision of 2019 on abortion, the Constitutional Court made direct references to the Convention. However, the Committee notes with concern that women, especially rural women, older women and women with disabilities, are often not aware of their rights under the Convention and the remedies available to them in cases of violations of those rights.

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

(a) **Continue to raise awareness among women of their rights under the Convention and the legal remedies available to them in cases of violations of such rights and ensure that information on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations is available to all women in accessible formats;**

(b) **Consider establishing a comprehensive mechanism for the implementation of the present concluding observations and involve non-governmental organizations promoting women's rights and gender equality in the work of the mechanism, taking into account the four key capacities of a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, namely engagement, coordination, consultation and information management;**

(c) **Ensure that the Convention, the Committee's jurisprudence and its general recommendations are made an integral part of systematic capacity-building for all judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and lawyers, with a view to enabling them to continue to directly apply or invoke the provisions of the Convention in court proceedings or interpret national legislation in the light of the Convention.**

Definition of discrimination against women and discriminatory laws

12. The Committee notes that, under article 11 of the Constitution, discrimination against citizens based on sex, religion or social status is prohibited. However, the Committee reiterates its concern about the absence of anti-discrimination legislation ensuring de jure and de facto formal and substantive equality, addressing both direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention.

13. **Reiterating its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/KOR/CO/8, para. 13) and recalling the links between articles 1 and 2 of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to end all forms of discrimination**

against all women and girls everywhere, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Set a concrete timeline for the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation ensuring *de jure* and *de facto* formal and substantive equality, addressing both direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination faced by disadvantaged groups of women and girls, such as women living in poverty, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, women with disabilities, asylum-seeking and refugee women, stateless and migrant women, rural women, single women, adolescents and older women, in line with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention;

(b) Devise a comprehensive system to collect data on cases of discrimination against women, disaggregated by age, nationality, disability and socioeconomic status;

(c) Replace the word “*yeoja*” in legislation when describing rights that are afforded to women, as it is frequently used to objectify women, with “*yeosong*”, which is used to advance women’s rights.

Women and peace and security

14. The Committee notes that the main focus of the State party’s third national action plan on women and peace and security is sexual violence. The Committee acknowledges that the State party has supported the improvement of the representation and participation of women within the international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and that it has included women in its procedural delegations at every Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It also notes that, during the first session of the Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in 2023, a number of female experts were invited as panellists to a side event hosted by the State party. However, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to the fact that the Security Council agenda on women and peace and security and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations are broader than just conflict-related sexual violence and call for the leadership of women in connection with national, regional and global security. The Committee also notes with concern the growing shadow of nuclear weapons becoming a geopolitical force multiplier.

15. **Given the growing spectrum of security threats and the increasing proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in the region, the Committee calls upon the State party to continue to involve women in the development of security and counter-missile strategies. The Committee also recommends continuing to strengthen the engagement of women in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in order to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and further the goal of nuclear disarmament.**

Women’s access to justice

16. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The high rates of legal illiteracy among rural women, women with disabilities and refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women, and the reluctance of women to file complaints about gender-based violence and discrimination owing to

the prevalence of judicial gender bias and gender stereotypes among law enforcement personnel;

(b) The fact that refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women continue to face barriers to access to justice, which are often exacerbated by their lack of trust in the judiciary and law enforcement authorities and fear of retaliation.

17. The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, recommends that the State party:

(a) **Enhance women's and girls' knowledge of their rights and the remedies available to them in cases of violations of such rights, including by integrating education on women's rights and gender equality into curricula at all levels of education and conducting legal literacy campaigns;**

(b) **Expand measures to inform women with disabilities and refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women of the remedies available to them in cases of violations of their rights, including through dedicated websites and social media, in accessible languages;**

(c) **Adopt gender-sensitive policies in women's detention in keeping with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).**

National machinery for the advancement of women

18. The Committee notes with concern the proposed abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family by the State party in Amendment Bill No. 15525 relating to the Government Organization Act. The Committee is concerned that this could lead to the fragmentation and deprioritization of legal and policy frameworks dedicated to the advancement of women. It also notes with concern that the abolition of the Ministry would constitute a regression as, in its previous concluding observations, the Committee had stressed the importance of strengthening the role and resources of the Ministry. The Committee is further concerned about the failure to appoint a Minister for Gender Equality and Family, the drastic reduction in the budget of the Ministry and retrogressive policies on women. In addition, the Committee is concerned about the limited participation of women's organizations in the design and implementation of national plans and strategies for the advancement of women.

19. Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/KOR/CO/8, paras. 16–17) and the guidance provided in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in particular regarding the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national machineries, and considering that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family has been a driver of change in many directions, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Rescind the provisions on the abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family from Amendment Bill No. 15525, retain the functions of the Ministry in any reorganization and appoint a Minister without further delay;**

(b) **Substantially increase the human, technical and financial resources of the Ministry and provide capacity-building to its staff in order to enable it to effectively coordinate efforts to mainstream gender across all government departments;**

(c) **Adopt an integrated gender-responsive budgeting process and allocate sufficient budgetary resources for the advancement of women's rights;**

(d) **Ensure the equal participation of women's organizations in the design, adoption and implementation of national plans and strategies for the advancement of women.**

National human rights institution

20. The Committee welcomes the fact that the National Human Rights Commission of Korea was reaccredited in 2021 with A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Nevertheless, the Subcommittee on Accreditation has recommended that the National Human Rights Commission of Korea seek the inclusion of provisions in the National Human Rights Commission Act or other administrative guidelines that mandate the formation of a single independent selection committee to ensure a clear, transparent, merit-based and participatory process for the selection and appointment of its Commissioners.

21. The Committee recommends that the State party implement the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions to strengthen the independence of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea and ensure that it is provided with adequate human, technical and financial resources to be able to carry out its mandate effectively and independently, in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and seek the advice and technical support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in this regard.

Temporary special measures

22. The Committee notes with concern that, apart from statutory quotas aimed at increasing the representation of women in political life, the State party has not adopted any temporary special measures, such as affirmative recruitment, promotion and procurement, to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including education, employment, health care and the armed forces. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of temporary special measures across business sectors, such as capital markets and the industrial infrastructure sector.

23. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt temporary special measures, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, such as targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion, public budgeting and procurement and affirmative action, with time-bound targets, as a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in all areas under the Convention in which women, in particular older women, rural women and women with disabilities, are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including in education, employment and health care. The Committee also recommends that the State party, as a leading member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, develop regulatory policies to drive private sector funds to promote the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as well as affirmative procurement in public-private partnerships and investment forecasting in core economic sectors, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 9 on industries, innovation and infrastructure.

Stereotypes

24. The Committee remains concerned about the persistence in the State party of stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society, which overemphasize women's traditional role as mothers and wives,

thereby undermining women's social status, autonomy and educational and professional opportunities. In particular, the Committee notes with concern the significant rise of anti-feminist political rhetoric, which has sparked a populist narrative that weaponizes feminism and creates a binary opposition between family values and feminist values. The Committee notes with concern a parallel trend where a culture of anti-feminism is rapidly proliferating among some young men, who have started to identify themselves as victims of "reverse feminism", which is threatening to reverse prior gains and engendering anti-feminist hate speech online and offline.

25. Recalling 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, as revised, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt and implement a comprehensive policy on hate speech targeting women and girls, and partner with men and boys and public and private entities for its implementation;

(b) Provide relevant public officials, journalists and multimedia entities with training on the use of gender-responsive language to address discriminatory gender stereotypes, combat the objectification of women and promote the positive portrayal of women in the media as active drivers of change.

Gender-based violence against women

26. The Committee remains concerned at the prevalence of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, against women and girls in the State party. It notes with concern:

(a) That the current definition of rape in article 297 of the Penal Code requires proof of "means of violence or intimidation" and is not explicitly based on the lack of affirmative consent;

(b) That, under the Act on Special Cases concerning the Punishment of Domestic Violence, exemptions from criminal sanctions are allowed in cases of domestic violence and that the primary aim of the Act is to preserve and rehabilitate the family unit;

(c) The persistence of domestic violence in the State party; the low prosecution and conviction rates and lenient sentences in cases of domestic violence and marital rape; and underreporting owing to victims' fear of stigmatization or reprisals, their economic dependence on abusive partners, legal illiteracy or lack of trust in the law enforcement authorities;

(d) The lack of information on the effective enforcement and monitoring of protection orders, in particular restraining and separation orders, in cases of domestic violence, which exposes women who are survivors of such violence to revictimization;

(e) The lack of adequate victim support services for women seeking to escape violent relationships across the State party;

(f) The increasing use of new digital technologies for online gender-based violence, including cyberstalking, harassment, doxing and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and the proliferation of artificial intelligence-generated sexually explicit media, deepfake videos, synthetic media and online pornography that commodify and objectify women's bodies. It is further concerned that the current legislation may not fully cover all forms of existing, rapidly changing and even unanticipated digital violence and abuse, resulting in low prosecution rates and lack of protection of victims, as well as underreporting of digital sexual harassment and abuse owing to social stigma, victim-blaming and fear of reprisals.

27. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/KOR/CO/8, para. 23) and in line with its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, as well as target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, the Committee recommends that the State party create a new national narrative that is gender-equal and in line with the Convention. It further recommends that the State party:

(a) Amend the Penal Code to incorporate a definition of rape based on lack of affirmative, free and voluntary consent, covering any non-consensual sexual act, and that takes into account all coercive circumstances, including marital rape, in line with international human rights standards;

(b) Amend the Act on Special Cases concerning the Punishment of Domestic Violence to ensure the safety of victims and their families, abolish the practice of suspending charges in home protection cases on the condition that perpetrators undergo counselling and ensure that prosecution is given priority over reconciliation and mediation;

(c) Encourage reporting of domestic violence against women and girls by conducting media campaigns to raise awareness about the criminal nature of gender-based violence against women, challenge its social legitimization, destigmatize victims, protect women from reprisals for reporting incidents of gender-based violence and prohibit courts from using victims' medical records or sexual history as evidence in trials;

(d) Provide mandatory and continuous capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials to ensure that gender-based violence against women, including sexual violence, is effectively investigated and prosecuted, that perpetrators are adequately punished and that protection orders are effectively enforced and monitored, with adequate sanctions in cases of non-compliance;

(e) Adequately fund victim support services, including psychosocial counselling, by strengthening the 12 State-run shelters, subsidizing shelters run by non-governmental organizations and expanding the network of specialized, inclusive and accessible shelters for women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence, taking into account their specific needs; and provide women and girls who cannot safely return to their homes with financial support, education, professional training, income-generating opportunities, affordable housing and, if necessary to ensure their safety, a changed identity;

(f) Develop a public interest litigation campaign on technology-facilitated gender-based violence and strengthen measures to prevent and adequately punish online sexual violence, including regulation that explicitly penalizes such offences, and ensure that providers of online platforms and online distributors are held accountable for failure to report, delete, or block criminal content from their platforms.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

28. The Committee takes note of the State party's efforts to strengthen its legal and policy framework to combat trafficking in women and girls, including through the Act on Prevention of Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims, which came into force in 2023. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) That the State party remains a country of transit and destination of trafficking in women and girls for purposes of sexual and labour exploitation;

(b) The ongoing risk of trafficking of migrant women and girls on E-6-2 visas, usually granted to allow work in the entertainment industry;

(c) That victims of trafficking are offered G-1 visas only if they collaborate with the prosecution authorities;

(d) The criminalization of women in prostitution, including victims of forced prostitution;

(e) The lack of adequately funded, inclusive and accessible shelters for victims of trafficking, including women with disabilities, in the State party.

29. With reference to its general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration and recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/KOR/CO/8, para. 25) and the views of the Committee in *A.L.P., A.M.E. and F.F.B. v. Republic of Korea* (CEDAW/C/86/D/139/2018), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Provide capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials, border police, health-care providers and other first responders on the early identification of victims of trafficking and their referral to appropriate services and on gender-sensitive investigation and interrogation methods; ensure the implementation of the instructions for the police on early identification of trafficking victims and conduct a comprehensive and systematic assessment of the process of early identification of victims of trafficking, in particular women and girls, and their referral to appropriate services and protection;**

(b) **Revise the current E-6-2 visa regime and strengthen monitoring of entertainment companies, including bars near ports and United States military bases, that recruit foreign women, including through labour inspections of establishments where women are working under that regime, and promptly investigate, prosecute and adequately punish exploitative employers, in particular traffickers;**

(c) **Ensure that the G-1 visa regime is applied to all women and girls who are victims of trafficking, regardless of their willingness or ability to cooperate with the prosecution authorities;**

(d) **Ensure that perpetrators of trafficking in persons are prosecuted and adequately sentenced;**

(e) **Significantly increase the number and funding of inclusive and accessible shelters for victims of trafficking, including women with disabilities, in both urban and rural areas and ensure that they have access to free legal aid, interpretation services, medical assistance, psychosocial counselling, financial support, education, professional training and income-generating opportunities;**

(f) **Decriminalize women in prostitution and discourage the demand that fosters exploitation of prostitution and provide exit strategies, including alternative income-generating opportunities, for women who wish to leave prostitution.**

“Comfort women”

30. The Committee notes that on 23 November 2023, the Seoul High Court rendered a judgment in a lawsuit filed by former “comfort women” and others against Japan, in which it ruled that the Government of Japan, inter alia, must pay compensation to the plaintiffs, redefining the theory of customary international law. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) That many “comfort women” have not obtained reparation, including adequate compensation;

(b) That survivors face increased health challenges as they age, and their unmet need for medical and psychological support tailored to their specific needs resulting from the long-term effects of their trauma.

31. Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/KOR/CO/8, para. 27), the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Recognize the right of victims/survivors to a remedy, and accordingly provide full and effective redress and reparation, including compensation, satisfaction, official apologies and rehabilitative services;

(b) Ensure that “comfort women” who are still alive have full access to specialized medical, psychological and social support.

Equal participation in political and public life

32. The Committee notes with concern that women currently hold only 20 per cent of seats in the National Assembly and that there are only five women ministers in the State party. It is also concerned about online harassment, including deep fakes, against women politicians, activists and journalists, who may face double attacks owing to their stance against patriarchy. The Committee also notes with concern the persistence of structural barriers to women’s participation in political and public life, in particular for rural women and women with disabilities.

33. Recalling its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, as well as target 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Introduce mandatory and enforceable gender quotas aiming at parity, subject to fines in cases of non-compliance, for political parties for the nomination of candidates for election to the National Assembly and provincial and local councils, and for the appointment of women, including rural women and women with disabilities, to the Government, the civil service, the foreign service and the armed forces, in particular at decision-making levels;

(b) Adopt legislation to combat harassment, hate speech and sexist discourse faced by women politicians and activists, hold social media companies accountable for user-generated content and for prompt removal of hate speech, sexist discourse and threats and defamatory content, and ensure that the authors of such content are brought to justice;

(c) Provide capacity-building on political leadership and campaigning skills, as well as access to campaign financing, for women candidates running for election or public office, including rural women and women with disabilities.

Nationality

34. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That foreign women married to nationals of the State party are required to reside in the territory of the Republic of Korea for at least two years under a marriage migrant visa (F6) before they are eligible to apply for naturalization, and that the naturalization process is lengthy and rejection rates are high;

(b) Shortcomings and delays in birth registration procedures.

35. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that women and men have equal rights to transmit their nationality to their foreign spouses and simplify and expedite the naturalization process to reduce periods of legal uncertainty for foreign women married to nationals of the Republic of Korea;**

(b) **Facilitate affordable access to birth registration and identity documents for migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, including through online procedures;**

(c) **Accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.**

Education

36. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The persistent underrepresentation of girls and women in non-traditional fields of study and career paths, in particular science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology, including artificial intelligence;

(b) The persistence of gender stereotypes in textbooks and the lack of systematic capacity-building for teachers on women's rights and gender equality;

(c) The explosion of artificial intelligence-driven deep fakes, revenge porn, spycam videos and synthetic media pornography which lure young girls into chatrooms for cybersex have sent shockwaves in the State party.

37. **In the light of its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue and further strengthen measures to address gender stereotypes and structural barriers that may deter or discourage young women and girls from pursuing studies and careers in traditionally male-dominated fields, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology, including artificial intelligence;**

(b) **Ensure that gender stereotypes are eliminated from textbooks, curricula and pedagogy at all levels of education and in all provinces of the State party and that school curricula, academic programmes and professional training for teachers adequately address women's rights and gender equality;**

(c) **Create new educational programmes to address artificial intelligence-driven gender-based violence against women and girls and establish a regulatory framework, issuing a blueprint for an artificial intelligence bill of rights and an artificial intelligence risk management framework to regulate technology companies in the mitigation of artificial intelligence-related substantial risks.**

Employment

38. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The persistently high gender pay gap and that in the 2023 World Economic Forum global gender gap ranking, the State party was rated 105 out of 146;

(b) The low labour market participation rate for women (55.1 per cent compared with 72.7 per cent for men);

(c) That for 12 consecutive years, the State party has been ranked last among the 29 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries in terms of working environment for women;

(d) The lack of social security coverage for employees who work fewer than 15 hours a week, who are predominantly women;

(e) The underrepresentation of women in managerial positions in private companies and in the industrial infrastructure sector, despite their high levels of education.

39. In accordance with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Effectively enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in order to narrow and eventually close the gender pay gap by: (i) conducting regular labour inspections; (ii) conducting regular pay surveys; and (iii) assisting employers in submitting their gender pay gap data to the Government and making voluntary efforts to close the gap with a view to better understanding the reasons behind the gender wage and pension gap and taking appropriate remedial measures;**

(b) **Increase the access of women to formal employment, including by dismantling gender stereotypes regarding the traditional roles of women, conduct awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality targeting employers, adopt affirmative measures to improve employment in order to meet women's employment targets and provide consulting services to support businesses, among other measures;**

(c) **Undertake a thorough review of its labour laws and policies to identify barriers to the participation and advancement of women in the workplace by providing enabling and safe environments free from discrimination and intimidation; strengthen policies that support work-life balance, including flexible working hours, and childcare support; and establish a regular monitoring system to track progress on improving the working environment for women, with annual reporting to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family;**

(d) **Extend social security coverage to include workers, including women, employed under contracts for fewer than 15 hours per week;**

(e) **Strengthen initiatives to promote women's employment and career development opportunities in the private sector, including by providing financial incentives for private companies, and to recruit women to leadership positions, including in non-traditional sectors;**

(f) **Ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization.**

Health

40. The Committee welcomes the 2019 decision of the Constitutional Court of the State party, which declared the existing abortion ban to be unconstitutional. The Committee also notes that abortion has been decriminalized in the State party since 1 January 2021. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The absence of a new regulatory framework following the decriminalization of abortion and that termination of pregnancy is not yet covered by the National Health Insurance plan, which may affect women's access to safe abortion services;

(b) That assisted reproductive services, including in vitro fertilization, are not available to single women;

(c) That the 2023 Confidential Birth Bill, which allows women to give birth under assumed names at medical facilities without requiring the child to be registered under the family registration system, fails to address the underlying reasons for unregistered births, including limited access to safe abortion services and sexuality education, inadequate support services for pregnant women and girls, and societal stigma associated with single motherhood;

(d) The limited access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, including information on responsible sexual behaviour, as well as to family planning and affordable modern contraceptives, for women and girls, in particular women and girls with disabilities and refugee and migrant women and girls.

41. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health and targets 3.1 and 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on reducing global maternal mortality and on ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Expedite the development and adoption of a comprehensive regulatory framework to ensure that women and adolescent girls have adequate access to safe abortion and post-abortion services and integrate this framework into the National Health Insurance plan;

(b) Ensure access to assisted reproductive services, including in vitro fertilization, for all women, including single women;

(c) Undertake a comprehensive review of the 2023 Confidential Birth Bill to address the underlying causes of unregistered births more effectively, with a focus on expanding access to safe abortion services and comprehensive sexuality education, enhancing support services for pregnant women and girls, and implementing targeted measures to reduce the societal stigma associated with single motherhood;

(d) Ensure that women, especially women and girls with disabilities and refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women and girls, have access to adequate sexual and reproductive health services and information, including safe abortion and post-abortion services and affordable modern contraceptives;

(e) Consider the use of frontier technologies, including artificial intelligence for health and telemedicine, to support the health protection of older women.

Economic empowerment of women

42. The Committee welcomes the plans of the State party to increase the number of women's re-employment centres to 159 nationwide to facilitate the reinsertion into the labour market of women with career interruptions due to pregnancy or childcare. The Committee also notes that 60 per cent of small-scale businesses are run by women and the measures taken by the State party to promote the economic empowerment of women, such as the establishment of a Job Stabilization Fund to support personnel expenses and increase job security in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis. However, the Committee remains concerned about the significant care burden shouldered largely by women with limited access to care facilities and about the large number of women engaged in unpaid care work.

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

(a) **Commence an evaluation of the policy on women's re-employment centres to determine its effectiveness in promoting the full and productive employment of women and decent work for women experiencing employment interruptions;**

(b) **Conduct an evaluation of the impact of the Job Stabilization Fund on supporting women in small-scale businesses and its effectiveness in covering personnel expenses and enhancing job security in response to the COVID-19 crisis;**

(c) **Adopt innovative schemes and initiatives to ensure more equitable and sustainable development in the care economy, which directly and positively contribute to the social and economic empowerment of women;**

(d) **Recognize, reduce and redistribute the burden of unpaid care work on women by providing affordable childcare facilities and care services for older persons and promoting the equal sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men and ensure that women employed in family businesses are adequately remunerated and have access to social security;**

(e) **Develop and implement new public policies grounded in statistical and evidence-based analysis, aimed at establishing an integrated care economy system, with special attention to older women and women with disabilities. These policies should be complemented by campaigns promoting the equitable distribution of care responsibilities between women and men and the monetization of women's unpaid care work.**

Rural women

44. The Committee takes note that, under article 119 (2) of the Constitution, the State party may regulate and coordinate economic affairs in order to maintain the balanced growth and stability of the national economy, ensure the proper distribution of income, prevent the domination of the market and the abuse of economic power and democratize the national economy through harmony among the economic agents, therefore committing the Government to pursue redistributive justice. It further notes with appreciation that, under article 18 of the Special Act on Improving the Quality of Life of Farmers and Fishers and Promoting the Development of Rural Areas, special emphasis has been given to the needs of rural women in agriculture, and off-shore and in-land fisheries.

45. **In accordance with its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women and target 5.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, on undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Fully implement the Special Act on Improving the Quality of Life of Farmers and Fishers and Promoting the Development of Rural Areas by promoting the entrepreneurial activities of rural women, including those who are migrants, facilitating access to low-interest loans without collateral and other forms of financial credit and ensuring that rural women, including women agricultural workers, have adequate access to income-generating opportunities, social benefits and health care and that they are equally represented in decision-making processes, including in relation to rural development programmes;**

(b) **Ensure that rural women have equal access to men with regard to land ownership and use, including by conducting awareness-raising campaigns aimed at dismantling patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes.**

Women with disabilities

46. The Committee notes with concern that women with disabilities face intersecting forms of discrimination in the State party, especially with regard to access to justice, education, employment and health care.

47. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 18 (1991) on disabled women, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women and girls with disabilities have effective access to justice, inclusive education, employment and health services, especially sexual and reproductive health services, including through the development and use of reasonable accommodations and state-of-the-art assistive technologies.**

Refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women and girls

48. The Committee notes with concern that refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women and girls face intersecting forms of discrimination and disproportionate levels of gender-based violence in the State party, in particular in border areas, and that undocumented migrant women are exposed to a high risk of sexual exploitation and forced labour, including by human trafficking networks. The Committee also notes that, under article 63 of the Immigration Act, asylum-seekers, including undocumented migrants who apply for refugee status after being apprehended, those reapplying while undocumented and those who have not complied with a departure order, are often detained for the duration of their asylum proceedings, including any administrative or judicial appeals, which can extend over several years.

49. **In accordance with its general recommendations No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations and No. 26 (2008) on women migrant workers, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Address intersecting forms of discrimination against refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women, protect them from gender-based violence and prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators;**

(b) **Amend article 63 of the Immigration Act to explicitly prohibit the detention of women and girls who are refugees, asylum-seekers or holders of humanitarian status or who require international protection, including pregnant women and nursing mothers;**

(c) **Ensure the application of gender-responsive asylum procedures, including by training immigration officers on gender-sensitive interviewing techniques, and that gender-based violence against women is recognized as a protection ground.**

Disaster risk reduction and climate change

50. The Committee commends the State party on its “Our land, shared future: towards balanced, smart and innovative cities and regions for all” plan, presented during the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Dubai. The initiative prioritizes the creation of safe and liveable spaces for all generations, aims to bring peace to the national territory and seeks to enhance connectivity between the continent and the ocean. The Committee also notes with satisfaction the growing

youth movement demanding the State party's accountability for climate change, which the Committee views as a cross-cutting existential challenge under general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change and Sustainable Development Goal 13 regarding measures to combat climate change. It also notes that the nationally determined contributions, a key component of the Paris Agreement, are aimed at limiting global temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, with a maximum limit of 2°C, and that the State party's Constitutional Court held final hearings on four landmark cases on climate change policies that would impact future generations. However, the Committee is concerned that, according to the Climate Action Tracker, the State party's nationally determined contributions, which include a net zero target for 2050, are deemed "highly insufficient". It also notes with concern that women, in particular rural women, women with disabilities, women living in poverty and migrant women, are disproportionately affected by climate change, as they often live in exposed areas and lack the necessary coping mechanisms to increase their climate change resilience.

51. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the Committee recommends that the State party review its climate change and disaster response strategies, taking into account the negative effects of climate change on the livelihoods of women, and ensure that women and men are equally represented in the development, adoption and implementation of legislation, policies and programmes on climate change, disaster response and disaster risk reduction, in particular by:

(a) Being more ambitious in the enforcement decree of the Carbon Neutrality Act, which mandates the State Party to set its nationally determined contributions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 so as to respect the fundamental rights to a healthy environment for generations to come;

(b) Collecting disaggregated data on the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls;

(c) Ensuring the incorporation of a gender perspective in climate change and disaster risk reduction legislation, policies, financing and programmes in order to address the specific needs of women and girls and build their resilience and effective adaptation to climate change;

(d) Increasing climate change and disaster risk management literacy and awareness among communities, women and girls, including rural women and women with disabilities, to enable them to effectively participate in climate change-related decision-making and the development of adaptation strategies and actions that build the resilience of women and girls to the impact of climate change.

Marriage and family relations

52. The Committee remains concerned that article 781 (1) of the Civil Code maintains the patrilineal principle, as it stipulates that a child may assume the mother's surname only when the father agrees to it at the time of marriage, despite the decision of the Constitutional Court overturning the *Hoju* system. The Committee is also concerned that, upon divorce, marital property is divided in accordance with each spouse's relative contribution, unless they agree otherwise in a contract. The Committee further remains concerned that a reconciliation procedure is mandatory even for divorce in cases of domestic violence and that visitation rights and child custody are often awarded to fathers who have been abusive to their wives and

children. It is further concerned about the lack of social and economic protection afforded to women in de facto unions.

53. **The Committee calls upon the State party to amend article 781 (1) of the Civil Code to abolish the patrilineal principle in order to bring its laws into line with article 16 (1) (g) of the Convention. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/KOR/CO/8, para. 47) that the State party take legislative measures to incorporate a rule of equal distribution of marital property upon the dissolution of a marriage or de facto union, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution. The Committee also calls upon the State party to ensure expressly by law that there is no requirement for reconciliation and mediation in family cases when there is domestic violence and that members of the judiciary receive mandatory training on the requirement to take domestic violence into account in child custody cases, and to give priority to prosecution over family reconciliation, in order to adequately punish gender-based violence against women and prevent its recurrence. The Committee also recommends that the State party strengthen the economic protection of women in de facto unions.**

Data collection and analysis

54. The Committee is concerned about the absence of data collection in many areas relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

55. **The Committee recommends that the State party promote and build capacity for the use of the newest technology in collection of statistical data, including on the prevalence of gender-based violence against women, the prevalence of trafficking in women and girls, access to education and the socioeconomic status of women, disaggregated by age and socioeconomic background, for purposes of the design and implementation of tailored and gender-responsive legislation, policies, programmes and budgets.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

56. **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 order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.**

Dissemination

57. **The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official languages of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, provincial and municipal), in particular to the Government, the National Assembly and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.**

Ratification of other treaties

58. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ 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 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which it is not yet a party.

Follow-up to concluding observations

59. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 13 (a), 19 (b), 27 (a) and 31 (a) above.

Preparation of the next report

60. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the tenth periodic report of the State party in line with a future predictable reporting calendar based on an eight-year review cycle and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The report should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

61. 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).

¹ 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.