



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
Discrimination against Women**

List of issues and questions in relation to the combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Trinidad and Tobago

Constitutional, legislative and policy framework

1. It is indicated in the report (CEDAW/C/TTO/4-7) that the State party subscribes to the dualist system of international law, which requires the incorporation of the Convention into the national legal system to render it fully applicable (para. 29).¹ Please indicate the specific measures that the State party is taking to fully incorporate the provisions of the Convention into the national legal system. Please provide an update on measures being taken to amend or repeal legislation that discriminates against women, including the Widows' and Orphans' Pension Act (1934), the National Insurance Act (1971) and the Industrial Relations Act (1972). Please also provide an update on measures being taken to adopt the draft national policy on gender and development. Please indicate whether a previous national policy existed and, if it did, whether it was assessed and the results taken into account in the development of the current draft.

2. Please indicate the measures envisaged by the State party to integrate into the Constitution or other legislation a definition of discrimination against women in line with article 1 of the Convention. Please also provide examples of cases, if any, in which the provisions of the Convention have been invoked by the national courts.

National machinery for the advancement of women

3. According to information before the Committee, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is now the government body responsible for leading the advancement of gender equality in the State party. Please state whether the change

Note: The present document is being issued in English, French and Spanish only.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of the State party.



of name to include mandates on social development and family services affects the advancement of women. It is indicated in the report that its predecessor, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development, had its budgetary allocation for gender-related activities increased by 40.43 per cent (paras. 22 and 32). Please indicate whether the change of name has affected the budget allocation and, if it has, the potential impact on the existing initiatives. Please also provide detailed information on the challenges and achievements of the gender-responsive budgeting activities coordinated by the Gender Affairs Division. Specifically, please provide information on the implementation of the protocol on gender budgeting and its impact, in particular in the areas of social protection, reproductive health and adult literacy.

Temporary special measures

4. The State party report is silent on the legislative and other measures aimed at increasing the number of women in decision-making bodies at all levels and in all areas. Please provide information on temporary special measures already instituted and/or envisaged, 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 de facto equality of women with men.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

5. Please provide information on measures taken to develop a comprehensive policy to change social and cultural patterns that lead to stereotyping and reinforcement of the traditional roles of women and men within the family and society, targeting, in particular, gender socialization practices in the family and at school and negative media messaging and portrayals of women. Please provide information on the challenges and achievements of the Gender Affairs Division in implementing the Defining Masculinity Excellence Programme, which is aimed at addressing gender stereotypes (paras. 41 and 113). Please describe the impact that the television series *Gender on Your Agenda: You've Got Male* has had on eliminating men's stereotypical perceptions and attitudes regarding the roles of women in society.

6. It is acknowledged in the report that the State party's four marriage acts — the Marriage Act (1923), the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (1961), the Hindu Marriage Act (1945) and the Orisa Marriage Act (1999) — allow for girls to be married at the ages of 12, 14 and 16 years, hence legitimizing child marriage (paras. 69 and 70). Please provide information on specific measures taken to repeal or amend those laws, with a view to combating child marriage. Please specify how the State party reconciles the age of marriage with the age of sexual consent, which is set at 16 years. Please provide an update on progress made since November 2011, when the then Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development held a national stakeholder consultation on the standardization of the legal age of marriage in the State party. Please specify the extent to which the Children Act (2012) addresses child marriage and incest.

Violence against women

7. It is noted in the report that the State party is concerned about the high rate of gender-based violence, including violence against women, and that most cases remain unreported because victims fear revictimization (para. 37). Please provide information on measures being taken to ensure the effective protection of women who are victims of violence, including eliminating difficulties experienced by women in obtaining protection orders. Please provide information on the number of protection

orders that were issued during the reporting period and those that have been violated, as well as the sanctions that have been imposed for such violations under the Domestic Violence Act (1999). Please also provide data, disaggregated by age and type of offence, on cases of violence against women reported to the police, the number of cases brought to court and the number of prosecutions and convictions resulting therefrom. Please provide data on the crime of femicide in the State party.

8. According to the report, there is a need to improve data collection on violence against women, and a central registry on domestic violence and child abuse was successfully piloted by the Gender Affairs Division (para. 38). Please provide an update on the establishment of the database and how nationwide data will be collected, collated, analysed and shared for purposes of effectively combating violence against women and girls. Please also provide information on measures being taken to review the Sexual Offences Act (1986) in order to introduce a national registry of sex offenders. It is indicated that a Family Court initiative providing victims of domestic violence with access to mediation and redress was piloted in 2003. Please state the measures envisaged to ensure that cases of violence against women, including domestic violence, are not referred, under any circumstances, to alternative dispute resolution procedures, as set out in the Committee's general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice.

9. Please provide information on specific steps being taken to guarantee efficient coordination mechanisms in order to ensure effective multisectoral responses to sexual and gender-based violence. Please provide further information on the accessibility of shelters to women and girls who are victims of violence in the State party and on the nature of their funding.

Trafficking

10. Please provide data, disaggregated by age, sex and origin of victim, on trafficking in persons in the State party. Please indicate whether the State party has carried out a study to investigate the extent and root causes of trafficking in persons and exploitation of prostitution, in particular of women and girls. It is stated that a counter-trafficking unit was established to, among other things, investigate cases; screen, identify, protect and assist victims; and raise public awareness about such crime (para. 120). Please provide information on the number of cases investigated and prosecuted and the nature of sanctions imposed on perpetrators of trafficking in persons and in women and girls in particular. Please provide an update on efforts to adopt and implement a gender-responsive national action plan on child labour in order to address the problem of internal trafficking of children, in particular girls, for engagement in agricultural and other forms of work.

Participation in political and public life

11. It is indicated in the report that, although there has been some improvement in the representation of women in decision-making bodies, they remain underrepresented (para. 44). Please provide information on the steps envisaged to increase the number of women in elected and appointed decision-making bodies and to achieve equal representation of women in political and public life, including through the adoption of temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25. Please provide, in particular, information on measures taken or envisaged, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on article 7 of the

Convention (political and public life), to introduce a system of quotas aimed at reaching, at a minimum, 30 per cent representation of women in Parliament, and to support women candidates for elected positions in the State party.

Education

12. It is acknowledged in the report that the incidence of teenage pregnancy is high and needs to be addressed (para. 74). Please provide detailed information on the impact that the adoption of the Children Act (2012) and the implementation of the early motherhood programme have had in reducing teenage pregnancies and whether there is a clear policy allowing for the re-entry of teenage mothers into formal education and, if there is, the measures in place to enforce such provisions. Please provide an update on progress made in developing an age-appropriate education programme on sexual and reproductive health and rights for all levels of education in the State party. Please provide data on the dropout rates of girls owing to pregnancy and on indirect costs of education that might impede access by women and girls to education, in particular in female-headed households. Please specify the measures in place to improve the enrolment of women on engineering courses (para. 132).

Employment

13. It is indicated in the report that, although women and girls have higher participation and attainment rates at all levels of education, they are still not adequately reflected in employment or income parity (para. 50). It is also noted that, on average, women earn less than half the wage of men (para. 51). Please provide information on the specific measures taken to improve the rate of employment of women, including through the use of temporary special measures, and enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, in accordance with the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), of the International Labour Organization, in order to close the wage gap between women and men. Please provide information on specific measures being taken to adopt legislation that provides for remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace, given that current legislation does not provide for such redress (para. 53). Following the establishment of a steering committee for action against discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace (*ibid.*), please provide an update on progress made to conduct a national study on the matter.

14. It is stated in the report that the State party is aware that domestic workers are currently not covered under the definition of “worker” in the Industrial Relations Act (1972) but that the issue has been included in the State party’s legislative agenda (para. 55). Please provide information on the specific steps being taken to address that problem.

Health

15. Please provide information on measures being taken to address the high rate of HIV infection among women between 15 and 24 years of age. It is stated in the report that 50 per cent of new HIV cases occur in women and girls (para. 144). Please provide information on specific measures taken to identify the root causes of that incidence and on the measures being taken to address them. Please also provide information on the percentage of the national budget allocated to women’s health; the maternal mortality rate; access by women to basic health-care services, including

essential obstetric care and sexual and reproductive health-care services; and the prevalence of cervical and breast cancer and the measures taken to prevent it.

16. Please provide information on the incidence of unsafe abortion and its impact on women's health, including maternal mortality. Please provide information on measures being taken to review the Offences against the Person Act (1925) in order to legalize abortion on other grounds, including severe foetal impairment and when pregnancy is a result of rape or incest (para. 37).

Rural women

17. Please provide information on measures being taken to improve access by women, in particular rural women, to land, credit facilities and markets. It is indicated in the report that a study will be conducted to gather national agricultural data, disaggregated by sex, to identify the gender differential with regard to ownership, earnings, crop selection, marketing and other aspects of agriculture (para. 83). Please provide information on whether that has been done and, if it has, what the results were. Please also provide information on the participation of rural women in the development of policies that affect them. Please describe the programmes that are in place to ensure their access to information, health care, employment, social protection and adult education in the State party.

Disadvantaged groups of women

18. Please provide information on the situation of women with disabilities. In its previous concluding observations (A/57/38), the Committee expressed concern that female-headed households had been negatively affected by structural adjustment programmes and the changing global situation. It is stated in the report that there has been an increase in the number of female-headed households, from 20 per cent in 2009 to 33 per cent in 2011. Please provide information on the extent to which such households are disproportionately affected by poverty and lack of access to health-care services, education and employment. Please describe the social protection measures, in addition to the various skills development programmes currently in place, that have been developed with a view to alleviating the gendered impacts of poverty in society (paras. 60 and 65). Please provide specific examples of existing social protection programmes aimed at reducing the economic burden on female-headed households, domestic workers and older women.

Natural disasters

19. According to information before the Committee, the State party is in the hurricane belt and hence susceptible to tropical storms. Please provide information on whether a gender perspective has been incorporated into national disaster management, relief and recovery strategies and indicate whether women participate in all stages of the process.

Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

20. Please indicate progress made with respect to the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and acceptance of the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention.