



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Belarus*

1. The Committee considered the eighth periodic report of Belarus ([CEDAW/C/BLR/8](#)) at its 1439th and 1440th meetings (see [CEDAW/C/SR.1439](#) and [CEDAW/C/SR.1440](#)), on 28 October 2016.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its eighth periodic report, which was prepared in response to the list of issues and questions prior to reporting ([CEDAW/C/BLR/QPR/8](#)). 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 Marianna Shchotkina, member of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus and Chairperson of the National Council on Gender Policy under the Council of Ministers, and included representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the National Statistical Committee, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since its consideration in 2011 of the State party's seventh periodic report ([CEDAW/C/BLR/7](#)) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following legislation:

- (a) Amendments to articles 181 and 171 of the Criminal Code (2015);

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fifth session (24 October-18 November 2016).



(b) Crime Prevention Act (2014);

(c) Human Trafficking Act (2012).

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

(a) Expert working groups addressing the implementation of gender policies in all regions in 2012 and 2013;

(b) Crisis rooms, the number of which increased from 31 to 109 between 2011 and 2016, and which provide victims of domestic violence and trafficking with temporary shelter, among other things;

(c) The "Home without violence" campaign (2012-2015).

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in 2013, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

C. Parliament

7. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). 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 next reporting period under the Convention.**

D. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Equality and non-discrimination

8. The Committee is concerned about the absence of legislation specifically prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination against women.

9. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that specifically prohibits all forms of discrimination against women, including direct and indirect discrimination, in all fields of life and addressed to State and private actors, in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, on all grounds as referred to in general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention.**

Access to justice

10. The Committee notes with concern that many women in the State party are unaware of complaints procedures to claim their rights and that the above-mentioned mechanisms may not even be effective. Furthermore, the Committee is

concerned that many women and the public at large, including relevant professionals, are unaware of their rights under the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, the Committee's general recommendations and its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/BLR/CO/7). The Committee is also concerned about the absence of any court decisions referring to provisions of the Convention.

11. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice. It recommends that the State party, in collaboration with civil society and the media, disseminate information on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto, the Committee's general recommendations and the present concluding observations, and develop targeted outreach activities for women to disseminate information on the remedies that are available to claim violations and on their eligibility for legal aid and support services. It also recommends that the State party:

(a) Provide judges, prosecutors, lawyers, law enforcement officials, civil servants, teachers, health-care professionals and all other relevant professionals and service providers with continuous capacity-building, and train students in the aforementioned professions in the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto, the Committee's general recommendations, the present concluding observations and all other national provisions on the rights of women;

(b) Remove any possible barriers to the access of women to justice, including by ensuring free legal aid and waiving court costs for women without sufficient means.

National machinery for the advancement of women

12. The Committee notes with concern that the National Council on Gender Policy of the Council of Ministers meets only twice a year and that the Department of Population and Gender and Family Policy within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection focuses in particular on family and demographical issues, violence against women and trafficking. Consequently, the Committee is concerned that the above-mentioned bodies are not able to operate as effective national machinery for the advancement of women. Furthermore, the Committee notes with concern that the national action plan for gender equality, intended to cover the period 2016-2020, has not yet been adopted and that insufficient resources may be allocated to its implementation.

13. The Committee recommends that the State party establish a centralized national machinery for the advancement of women with a clearly defined mandate and responsibilities, and provide the aforementioned machinery with adequate human, financial and technical resources that would enable it to coordinate and effectively promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming. It also encourages the State party to ensure that the Department of Population and Gender and Family Policy within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection places an increased focus on gender equality and issues that involve the rights of women. Furthermore, it calls upon the State party to speedily adopt the national action plan for gender equality for the period 2016-2020 and

to allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to its implementation.

National human rights institutions

14. The Committee notes with concern that, notwithstanding the commitment undertaken during its universal periodic review, the State party has not yet established an independent national human rights institution.

15. The Committee encourages the State party to establish, within a clear time frame, an independent national human rights institution, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), with a broad mandate to protect the human rights of women and to promote gender equality. It invites the State party to seek the support and advice of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the process.

Civil society, including women human rights defenders

16. The Committee is concerned about reports that women human rights defenders and politically active women are frequently subjected to repression, harassment, violence, threats of sexual assault, forced institutionalization or threats of institutionalization and deprivation or threats of deprivation of their parental rights. The Committee is concerned that such alleged repressive measures may discourage the participation of women in public discourse and marginalize their voices. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that the registration procedure for non-governmental organizations is cumbersome, lengthy and costly and involves requirements that may constitute a basis for discriminatory and arbitrary refusal of registration and result in only a small number of women's organizations being registered.

17. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women human rights defenders and active members of civil society are able to exercise their political rights, have effective access to justice and receive adequate protection from intimidation, retaliation and violence, and that the perpetrators of any such acts are prosecuted and adequately punished. It also recommends that the State party:

(a) **Prevent arbitrary measures against women activists, including by ensuring that decisions to deprive persons of their parental rights or to institutionalize them are automatically subject to prompt and independent judicial review;**

(b) **Review the registration requirements for non-governmental organizations in order to ensure that the aforementioned organizations that are involved in human rights, in particular women's rights, can be established and operate without undue restrictions.**

Temporary special measures

18. The Committee notes that the measures referred to in the State party's report do not constitute temporary special measures in line with article 4 (1) of the

Convention. The Committee is further concerned about the persistence of inequalities between men and women in several fields.

19. The Committee recommends that the State party introduce specific legislation providing for the adoption and implementation of 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. Moreover, the Committee encourages the State party to raise public awareness about the importance of temporary special measures to the acceleration of the achievement of substantive gender equality in all fields, and to apply those measures to areas such as employment and education.

Stereotypes

20. The Committee welcomes the efforts undertaken by the State party to counter stereotypes against women. It is concerned, however, about the prevalence of discriminatory stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in society and in the family, which is reflected in, among other things, the unequal distribution of household and child-rearing responsibilities between women and men in stereotypical portrayals of women in the media, and the frequent depiction of women as sexualized commodities, notably in advertisements. The Committee also notes with concern that the prevalence of patriarchy and the subordination of women in society are root causes of violence against women.

21. The Committee recommends that the State party raise public awareness in collaboration with civil society and the media, targeting women, men, girls and boys, to counteract discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, and highlight the importance of the equal participation of women in decision-making in the public and private sectors. It also recommends that the State party vigorously implement the prohibition of unethical advertisement, as set out in article 26, on improper advertisement, of Act No. 225-Z, on Advertising, and sensitize the media and the advertising sector, with a view to promoting positive images of women as active participants in political, economic and social life. Furthermore, in view of the strong connection between stereotypes of women and violence against women, the Committee reminds the State party that it is paramount to link efforts to combat violence against women with efforts to combat prevailing gender-based stereotypes that discriminate against women.

Gender-based violence against women

22. The Committee notes with concern the increase in the prevalence of gender-based violence against women, including sexual and psychological violence, and:

(a) The absence of legislation that criminalizes gender-based violence specifically, including domestic violence and marital rape;

(b) The reported frequent exposure of politically active women to physical violence by police officers;

(c) The requirement of the written consent of a victim of domestic violence for the issuance of a restraining order evicting an abusive partner or family member from the victim's residence, pursuant to the Crime Prevention Act of 2014;

(d) The reluctance on the part of most women who are victims of violence to seek assistance or report incidents to the police, owing to fear of retribution, stigmatization or humiliation, a lack of awareness of available services or a lack of housing alternatives;

(e) The risk that women who are subjected to domestic violence will be deprived of their parental rights because their family may be perceived as "at social risk", resulting in their children being institutionalized;

(f) The lack of adequately equipped crisis rooms that offer long-term shelter and of functional shelters used specifically by victims of domestic violence.

23. While noting the development of a law on the prevention of violence in the family, which takes into account the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the Committee draws the State party's attention to 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, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, and recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to accelerate the finalization and adoption of the bill and ensure that it criminalizes all forms of gender-based violence against women and provides victims with immediate protection and long-term rehabilitation. The Committee also recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt legislation criminalizing gender-based violence specifically, including marital rape;

(b) Take steps to accede to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;

(c) Increase the number of crisis rooms and ensure the availability of a sufficient number of shelters throughout the State party, to allow for the long-term stays of victims of domestic violence and their children;

(d) Adopt the legal amendments necessary to ensure that the oral consent of a victim is sufficient for the issuance of a restraining order;

(e) Encourage women who are victims of domestic violence to report it, and ensure that they are under no circumstances forced to live with a violent husband or partner during divorce or separation procedures and that, together with their children, they are provided with affordable alternative housing;

(f) Provide judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers, in particular police officers, with mandatory training in the Convention, the Committee's jurisprudence under the Optional Protocol, the Committee's general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women and in gender-sensitive investigations of alleged cases of gender-based violence against women;

(g) Provide police officers with mandatory training and adopt codes of conduct for the aforementioned officers to ensure gender-sensitive behaviour,

and ensure that women who are victims of police violence have the possibility to report such violence, that their allegations are investigated effectively and that perpetrators are adequately punished;

(h) **Create a specific fund to ensure that women receive adequate reparation in situations in which the individuals or entities responsible for violations of the human rights of women are unable or unwilling to provide such reparation.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

24. The Committee notes with appreciation the efforts undertaken by the State party to combat trafficking and protect victims of trafficking, including the establishment of a mechanism for victim identification and referral. It is concerned, however, that the State party remains a source, transit and destination country for victims of trafficking, in particular women and girls, that law enforcement is weak and that no traffickers were convicted between 2013 and 2015. Furthermore, the Committee notes with concern that many women are being exploited in prostitution in the State party owing to a lack of alternative economic opportunities that would allow them to sustain themselves and their families.

25. **The Committee recommends that the State party pursue a comprehensive approach to addressing trafficking and exploitation of prostitution. It recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Address the root causes of trafficking and exploitation of women by improving the economic situation of women and girls;**

(b) **Strictly enforce the anti-trafficking legislation by ensuring the investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of trafficking and exploitation of women;**

(c) **Strengthen mechanisms for the combating of trafficking and improve the coordination of all efforts in this regard.**

26. The Committee is further concerned that women in prostitution are at high risk of experiencing gender-based violence, including abuse by the police, murder attempts, gang rape, extortion, robbery, forced sex practices and forced non-usage of condoms. The Committee is also concerned that, unless they can prove that they are victims of trafficking or related offences, women in prostitution face fines or administrative arrest, and their official employer and the school attended by their children are notified of the charges against them, which may even result in the deprivation of their parental rights.

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

(a) **Eliminate violence against women in prostitution, including violence perpetrated by the police, and ensure that women in prostitution can report gender-based violence against them, including police violence, without risking retribution;**

(b) **Remove the administrative liability (fines and arrest) of women in prostitution and prohibit the disclosure by the authorities to third parties of any information about a woman being in prostitution;**

(c) **Implement vigorous educational and awareness-raising measures targeted at the general public, in particular men and boys, to reduce the demand for prostitutes;**

(d) **Adopt and implement adequately resourced programmes and other appropriate measures to create educational and employment opportunities for women at risk of entering into or who are already engaged in prostitution and wish to leave it.**

Participation in political and public life

28. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to increase the participation of women in political and public life, including an increase in the number of women in the parliament. It is concerned, however, that women remain significantly underrepresented at the decision-making levels in the parliament and that they are concentrated in the public administration at the middle and lower levels only.

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party take targeted measures, including temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and with the Committee's general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in public life, including the introduction of quotas in parliamentary elections, and establish specific goals and timetables in order to accelerate the increase in the representation of women in the parliament, at higher levels of public administration and in all spheres of public life. In addition, it encourages the State party to provide female candidates with specific funds for their election campaigns. Moreover, the Committee encourages the State party to conduct training for parliamentarians and decision makers in the importance of the full and equal participation of women in political and public life in a democratic society and to accelerate the establishment of the informal group on female parliamentarians.**

Education

30. The Committee notes with appreciation that there are no gender disparities regarding access to primary and secondary education in the State party. It notes with concern, however, that:

(a) Teachers, school textbooks and teacher training materials continue to convey discriminatory stereotypes regarding traditionally "female" and "male" roles in society, which leads to the perpetuation and reinforcement of the aforementioned stereotypes;

(b) Schools offer "life skills lessons" in which girls are taught cooking and sewing while boys learn woodworking and carpentry, which further upholds traditional gender roles in society;

(c) At the vocational and university levels, women are frequently enrolled in traditionally female-dominated fields of study;

(d) Several State institutions of higher learning, including the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, have a gendered admission policy, which, among other things, restricts the number of admitted female students and/or requires higher passing scores for women.

31. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure, as a matter of priority, that:

(a) School textbooks, curricula and teacher training materials are reviewed and revised to eliminate all discriminatory gender stereotypes;

(b) The content and methodology of curricula at all levels of education incorporate a gender perspective, grounded in the provisions of the Convention, and, at the secondary and tertiary levels, students receive instruction in the Convention and its related instruments, with a view to changing existing stereotypical attitudes towards the role of women and men in the family and society and creating an environment that is conducive to the principle of substantive equality of women and men;

(c) The same curriculum is applied to boys and girls, so that it offers the same “life skills lessons” to both groups, including through the use of temporary special measures;

(d) Gender equality and gender sensitivity training are made integral and mandatory components of teacher training at all levels;

(e) As recommended in the Committee’s previous concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/BLR/CO/7](#), para. 30), the State party intensifies its efforts aimed at diversifying academic and vocational choices for women and men and takes further measures to encourage women and men to choose non-traditional fields of education and careers, for example by encouraging more men to participate in the formal education of children. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party provide them with career counselling in non-traditional career paths. It also recommends that the State party take immediate measures to ensure equal opportunities for women and men and girls and boys to attend all institutions of higher learning and that it strengthen the leadership roles of women in academic institutions.

Employment

32. The Committee takes note of the high rate of female participation in the labour force. It is concerned, however, about persistent discrimination against women in employment, including the significant gender wage gap in many fields of employment, and about horizontal and vertical segregation in employment. Furthermore, it is concerned about:

(a) The Labour Code, which includes a list of a significant number of professions prohibited to women, allegedly to protect their health, in particular their reproductive health;

(b) The failure of employers to create sufficiently safe conditions, in line with exemptions to the above-mentioned list provided for by law;

(c) The conduct of job interviews during the course of which women are often asked about their marital status and their parenthood;

(d) The introduction, in 2015, of a national tax under Presidential Decree No. 3 on Preventing Social Dependency, which is payable by persons who are unemployed in order to refund government expenditure and imposed on parents

outside the labour market who are caring for children above 7 years of age, and disproportionately affects women, given that they are disproportionately involved in child-rearing and household responsibilities.

33. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts significantly to reduce the gender wage gap, including by addressing occupational segregation, both horizontal and vertical, in order to respect the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. Furthermore, it recommends that the State party:

(a) **Review the restricted list of professions to ensure that it covers only restrictions that are absolutely necessary for the protection of maternity in the strict sense, and promote and facilitate the entry of women into previously prohibited jobs by adopting temporary special measures;**

(b) **Increase the participation of women in senior-level professions, including on management boards, inter alia, through the use of temporary special measures, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25;**

(c) **Adopt the legal amendments necessary to prohibit questions about marital status and parenthood during job interviews;**

(d) **Promptly adopt legal amendments to ensure that the tax obligation introduced through the aforementioned Presidential Decree No. 3 of 2015 does not apply to parents who are outside the labour market because they care for children.**

Sexual harassment in the workplace

34. The Committee reiterates its previous concerns that article 170 of the Criminal Code may not provide adequate protection against sexual harassment in the workplace, given that the burden of proof is very heavy in criminal cases, and certain discriminatory practices in the form of sexual harassment may not amount to behaviour punishable under this provision (see [CEDAW/C/BLR/CO/7](#), para. 31). Moreover, it notes with concern that sexual harassment in the workplace is underreported, owing to a fear of stigmatization and dismissal on the part of women. It is further concerned about reports that indicate that a relatively high number of victims of sexual harassment in the workplace have been dismissed or pushed to resign following such harassment.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt civil legislation defining, prohibiting and preventing sexual harassment in the workplace and shifting the burden of proof in favour of the victim. It also recommends that the State party develop a confidential and safe system for filing complaints relating to gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, and ensure that victims have effective access to such a means of redress.

Health

36. The Committee notes with appreciation the continuously improving health status of women. It is concerned, however, about the growing anti-abortion

movement and the limited use of contraceptives, including for “moral reasons” and owing to the high cost of hormonal contraceptives. Furthermore, the Committee notes with concern that the rates of breast and cervical cancer in the State party are relatively high.

37. The Committee calls upon the State party to provide education and awareness-raising programmes regarding the importance of the use of contraceptives and to increase access to safe and affordable modern contraceptives throughout its territory. Moreover, it calls upon the State party to maintain access to legal abortion under safe conditions. The Committee recommends that the State party undertake systematic awareness-raising among women about the importance of regular medical examinations to facilitate the early detection of breast and cervical cancer and to ensure that women have sufficient access to screening facilities.

Economic and social benefits

38. The Committee is concerned that time spent on the care of children or relatives is not computed towards pension benefits, which has a negative effect on women in particular, given that they are disproportionately involved in the aforementioned care. Furthermore, the Committee notes with concern that the retirement age of women is five years earlier than that of men, which reduces the pension of women and contributes to their risk of old-age poverty.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party recognize unpaid care work performed by women in the family in national account statistics and compute it towards pension entitlements and social benefits. Moreover, it recommends that the State party increase the retirement age for women and expand pension schemes in order to ensure at least the minimum subsistence level for women.

Rural women

40. The Committee is concerned about the persistent gender wage gap prevailing in the agricultural sector, the slight improvements notwithstanding, and the low rate of participation by women in decision-making in collective and State-owned farms. It also notes with concern that access to preschool education is very limited in rural areas, which has a negative effect on women in particular. The Committee is further concerned about a lack of information on the access of rural women to property, including land, and means of production, credit, employment, health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and social services.

41. The Committee draws the State party’s attention to its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women and recommends that the State party promote the empowerment of rural women and ensure their economic and social independence. In doing so, the State party should further reduce the gender wage gap in the agricultural sector and introduce measures, including temporary special measures, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 25, to provide for equal participation by women in decision-making in State-owned farms. It also recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Increase the number of childcare facilities in rural areas in order to facilitate the reconciliation of job and family duties;**
- (b) **Collect data on the situation of rural women and include the results in its next periodic report.**

Disadvantaged groups of women

Women with disabilities

42. The Committee is concerned about discrimination against women with disabilities in the State party, in particular with regard to their access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights and their exercise of parental rights. This includes the possibility of forcing a woman with disabilities to have an abortion upon the written consent of her legal guardian, and the exertion of pressure and threats on a woman with disabilities to place her child in State custody.

43. The Committee recommends that the State party take all safeguards necessary to ensure that women with disabilities:

- (a) **Have full access to reproductive health information and services, and that abortions and sterilizations performed on them are strictly subject to the free, prior and informed consent of the aforementioned women;**
- (b) **May under no circumstances be subjected to any form of pressure or threat to renounce custody of their children.**

Women in detention

44. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to improve the situation of women in detention. It is concerned, however, that women in detention are subjected to labour for which they receive only extremely low remuneration, and that prison and detention conditions continue to be poor, including insufficient health and sanitary conditions and reported cases of overcrowding, some improvements notwithstanding. Moreover, it is concerned about reports that women in detention are frequently subjected to sexual abuse by male staff. Furthermore, the Committee notes with concern that women in detention have only limited access to legal assistance because the prison authorities do not allow prisoners to meet their lawyers, the confidentiality of such meetings is not ensured or women in detention do not have sufficient means to pay for legal assistance and do not qualify for the constitutionally guaranteed free legal aid scheme.

45. The Committee recommends that the State party improve the conditions of detention for women, in line with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules). It recommends that the State party ensure that:

- (a) **Women detainees subjected to labour are entitled to the minimum wage;**
- (b) **The living and working conditions of detained women are decent and in line with international standards, monitoring and mechanisms for oversight are in place and clear procedures for complaints are available;**

(c) **Male staff in detention facilities receive mandatory training in the rights of women and gender-sensitive behaviour, the number of female staff is increased, detainees have the possibility to correspond confidentially with outside judicial and complaints bodies and closed complaints boxes are installed in prisons;**

(d) **Women in detention have equal access to free legal aid, and the right to private communication with counsel is guaranteed and not restricted by the prison administration.**

Lesbian and bisexual women and transgender persons

46. The Committee is concerned about significant social discrimination, stigmatization and violence, including by the police, experienced by lesbian and bisexual women and transgender persons. It also notes with concern that discrimination and hate crimes against the above-mentioned groups are frequently not prosecuted. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that the recently adopted Act No. 362-Z of 2016 providing for amendments to normative acts for the protection of children from harmful information, which is, inter alia, defined as information discrediting the traditional family and the institution of marriage, may be used to discriminate against lesbian and bisexual women and transgender persons.

47. **The Committee recommends that the State party adequately combat discrimination, harassment and violence against lesbian and bisexual women and transgender persons and/or the defenders of those groups' human rights, and ensure that every crime against them is promptly investigated, prosecuted and adequately punished. It also recommends that the State party ensure an interpretation of Act No. 362-Z that will not restrict the dissemination of information about lesbian and bisexual women and transgender persons.**

Marriage and family relations

48. The Committee notes with concern that, even in the event of a divorce resulting from domestic violence, marital property may be sold only if both spouses agree, which may force women to continue to live with their violent partner if he refuses to agree to sell or to move out of the marital domicile. It also notes that women in de facto unions and their children do not have legal protection in economic matters upon the termination of such a union.

49. **The Committee calls upon the State party, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, to:**

(a) **Adopt the legal amendments necessary to ensure the rights of women to marital property both during marriage and following its dissolution;**

(b) **Ensure the legal protection of the economic rights of women in de facto unions, and of children born from such unions.**

Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

50. **The Committee encourages the State party to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

51. **The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.**

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

52. **The Committee calls for the realization of substantive gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

Dissemination

53. **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, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.**

Ratification of other treaties

54. **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 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, to which it is not yet a party.**

Follow-up to the concluding observations

55. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 23 (a) and 45 (b), (c) and (d) above.**

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.

Preparation of the next report

56. **The Committee invites the State party to submit its ninth periodic report in November 2020. In case of delay, the report should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.**

57. **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 (see [HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).**
