



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### List of issues and questions prior to the submission of the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Solomon Islands\*

#### General

1. Please provide information and statistics, disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, disability, ethnicity, geographical location and socioeconomic background, on the current situation of women in the State party to enable monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. In accordance with the State party's obligations under articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, and in line with target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, please indicate how the State party intends to improve the collection and analysis of data pertaining to the areas covered by the Convention, in order to support policymaking and programme development and measure progress towards the implementation of the Convention and the promotion of substantive equality between women and men, including with regard to the specific areas covered in the present document.

#### Women's rights and gender equality in relation to the pandemic, recovery efforts and global crises

2. Please describe efforts made and mechanisms put in place to address the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its long-term impact, and ways to apply these in the State party's response to current and future crises, such as armed conflict, food insecurity and the energy crisis. Please provide information on strategies taken to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are a fundamental requirement in addressing such crises and in elaborating adequate responses, such as policies, scope of essential services, assistance programmes, recovery efforts and the application of the rule of law. Please also provide information on measures taken to ensure the equal and meaningful participation of women in these processes, and that such crises will not lead to a reversal of progress made in the protection and promotion of women's rights.

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\* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 1 June 2023.



**Visibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations**

3. Please provide information on how courts are adopting the Convention and the concluding observations as part of judicial decision-making and constitutional interpretation. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 8)<sup>1</sup> and in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, please provide information on steps taken or envisaged to:

(a) Disseminate the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto among women and in society, in particular women living in remote areas;

(b) Integrate the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations, in addition to the views adopted on individual communications, into the training for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, the police, civil servants and members of Parliament;

(c) Implement the Committee's concluding observations through the revision of the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development.

**Constitutional framework and discriminatory laws**

4. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 11), please provide information on steps taken to:

(a) Adopt anti-discrimination legislation integrating a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, including the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination, and addressing substantive equality in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention;

(b) Adopt the new federal constitution, ensuring that it contains a clause to repeal all legislation, including customary law provisions, that is incompatible with the principle of equality and non-discrimination, as enshrined in the Convention, including provisions of customary law, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention;

(c) Adopt a clear time frame in relation to the law reform process, the amendments to the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code, the Islanders' Divorce Act, the Affiliation, Separation and Maintenance Act, the Labour Act and the Citizenship Act;

(d) Allocate adequate human and financial resources and equipment to the Law Reform Commission.

**Access to justice**

5. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 17), please provide information on the steps taken to:

(a) Provide effective remedies for women who were victims of violence during the ethnic tensions, in line with international principles and standards of transitional justice and reparations;

(b) Provide adequate resources to the Supreme Court to address cases of violence against women during the tensions;

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the Committee's previous concluding observations on the combined initial to third periodic reports of the State party (CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3).

(c) Formally adopt and publish the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and adopt a framework for the implementation of its recommendations;

(d) Provide free and quality legal aid to women to access justice and train law enforcement on gender-sensitive responses to violence against women;

(e) Establish victim protection programmes, such as temporary restraining orders and online complaint mechanisms;

(f) Make the criminal justice system, including prosecutors, gender-sensitive, to avoid double victimization of women and girls.

#### **National human rights institution**

6. Please indicate the steps that have been or are being taken to establish a national human rights institution with a broad mandate to promote and protect women's rights and that is in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

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

7. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 19), please provide information on efforts to:

(a) Allocate a sufficient and sustainable budget and staff to the Women's Development Division at the national, provincial and local levels and ensure that it has a clear mandate to coordinate the implementation of public policies;

(b) Design strategies for the participation of women's civil society organizations in the design and implementation of public policies everywhere, including women living in remote areas;

(c) Strengthen coordination among the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, the gender focal points and gender mechanisms in the public administration and at the national, provincial and local levels and ensure that those mechanisms can address the challenges faced by women arising from the geographic situation of the State party;

(d) Adopt a monitoring and evaluation framework for all public policies and strategies for the advancement of women with measurable indicators and release the results of the gender assessment that has been completed on the five key areas in the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development.

#### **Women, peace and security**

8. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 15) and taking into account Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security, including Council resolutions that deal with women and climate justice, please provide information on measures taken to:

(a) Renew the national action plan for women and peace and security and give due consideration to the contributions of women in the maintenance of peace, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, ensuring that it is linked to the national security strategy and emphasizes the prevention and participation pillars along with the protection pillar of the women and peace and security agenda;

(b) Implement measures within the scope of the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and engage in regional processes in the Pacific region;

(c) Ensure that women are fully included in high-level track 1 and 2 dialogues on conflict resolution and in climate change and foreign policy negotiations in a changing development cooperation with regional partners and in a manner that supports women's civil society spaces and agency.

#### **Temporary special measures**

9. In follow-up to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 21), please provide information on steps taken, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, to:

(a) Strengthen the role of the task force to implement temporary special measures to accelerate substantive equality of women and men in all areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, such as political and public life, including in rural and remote areas, women with disabilities, older women, single mothers and adolescent mothers;

(b) Adopt specific and result-oriented measures, to promote substantive equality of women and men;

(c) Disseminate information to all branches of the Government and in the private sector, with special focus on transnational corporations, on the nature and scope of temporary special measures, to familiarize them with the concept of those measures, demonstrate their value and encourage their application.

#### **Stereotypes**

10. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 23), please provide information on efforts to:

(a) Implement a strategy to combat gender stereotypes through education and multimedia, including social media awareness-raising campaigns, with specific targets, aimed at women, men, girls and boys, focusing particular attention on the recognition of the contributions of women and of the global potential and value of their participation in decision-making processes in the community and society at large;

(b) Engage the media, civil society organizations and all stakeholders to combat harmful practices and discriminatory social attitudes towards women in public and private life, in particular in rural areas;

(c) Integrate non-discrimination and equality of women and men into educational policies, the national core curriculum and related documents, as well as into basic and continuing education for teachers and health-care professionals and other service providers;

(d) Establish justice sector mechanisms for women and girl victims of harmful practices.

#### **Harmful practices**

11. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 23), please provide information on efforts to:

(a) Raise the minimum legal age for marriage from 15 to 18 years, repeal customary laws that provide for child marriages and the payment of bride prices and carry out campaigns involving community leaders on those practices as harmful practices contrary to the Convention, in line with joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/

general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices;

(b) Adequately integrate non-discrimination and equality of women and men and women's leadership into educational policies, the national core curriculum and related documents, as well as into basic and continuing education for teachers and health-care professionals and other service providers.

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

12. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 25), please provide information on steps taken to:

(a) Address sexual abuse and domestic violence, including when such violence occurs in the areas of logging concessions as well as in the mining, forestry and fisheries industries, prosecute and adequately sanction perpetrators and collect disaggregated data on such cases;

(b) Establish corporate social responsibility, environment, social and governance and due diligence policies to hold companies, in particular those in the logging, mining and fisheries industries, accountable for the human rights impact of their activities;

(c) Disseminate clear and easily understood information, including for women with disabilities, on the criminalization of different forms of violence under the Family Protection Act 2014;

(d) Ensure and monitor the police response to complaints regarding violence against women, enable women to access the formal justice system and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished;

(e) Eliminate the use of mandatory mediation in cases of domestic violence, monitor compensation and settlements under customary mechanisms and ensure that they do not violate the Convention;

(f) Provide adequate support, including psychosocial support, for women and girls who are victims of violence both offline and online, including by strengthening the Safenet referral system and establishing shelters that are accessible to all women, including women with disabilities and their families, in all provinces;

(g) Allocate financial resources and strengthen the technical capacity of civil society organizations, to provide services and redress for women who are victims of violence.

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

13. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 27), and taking into account the Committee's general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, please provide information on measures taken to:

(a) Ratify the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, in particular the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and seek the cooperation of States in source countries, in the region and internationally to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls and their exploitation in prostitution;

(b) Strengthen the mandate and work of the Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee set up under the Ministry of Commerce, Industries, Labour and Immigration by establishing a programme of action and a clear mandate in designing strategies and programmes to combat trafficking in persons;

(c) Amend the Penal Code to criminalize sex tourism and other forms of sexual exploitation of women and girls, including the use of girls in pornography;

(d) Provide assistance to victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation by strengthening the capacity of referral centres;

(e) Prevent the exploitation of prostitution of women and girls, giving particular attention to logging, mining and forestry areas and areas where large-scale projects are being developed, as well as in the tourism industry;

(f) Strengthen the criminal justice system to prosecute and sentence perpetrators of trafficking offences.

### **Participation in political and public life**

14. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 29), please provide information, including with regard to temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations No. 25 on temporary special measures and No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, on:

(a) Steps taken to increase the number of women in the judiciary, the executive branch and the public and foreign service, as well as in the private sector;

(b) Steps taken to enact legislation to reserve at least 30 per cent of seats for women in Parliament and encourage the creation of a special parliamentary committee on the equality of women and men, as well as to establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of such legislation effectively and consider sanctions against political parties that do not comply with the quota;

(c) Training for women, including on leadership, political campaigning and constituency-building, to prepare them for positions in the different areas of public administration;

(d) Campaign financing and mentoring to women as an incentive to run for office;

(e) Awareness-raising activities for the general public on the value of the equal participation of women in leadership and decision-making;

(f) Male allyship programmes for the participation of women in leadership positions in the public and private sectors;

(g) Full and equal participation of women in decision-making processes related to the logging and mining industries.

### **Nationality**

15. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 31), please provide information on steps taken to repeal all the discriminatory provisions of the Citizenship Act (1978) concerning the acquisition, transmission, retention and loss of nationality and in particular to ensure that both mothers and fathers are able to transmit their nationality to their children, in compliance with article 9 of the Convention.

### **Education**

16. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 33), please describe measures put in place to:

(a) Increase the percentage of the budget allocated to education and computer literacy, improve sanitation facilities at schools by providing safe latrines for girls,

increase the number of dormitories for girls and provide affordable school transport, especially in rural areas;

(b) Ensure security for girls on school premises, including dormitories, investigate allegations of sexual abuse and rape of schoolgirls and prosecute offenders;

(c) Make primary education compulsory for all children and reduce the indirect costs of schooling, such as the costs of school transport, textbooks, menstrual products and school-imposed charges, with a view to eliminating them;

(d) Compile and use good practices from other States parties in the Pacific region aimed at encouraging girls to choose non-traditional career paths that encourage innovation in the employment sector;

(e) Adopt teacher training tools that ensure that the curricula respond to the demands of the labour market, by using adaptive information technologies;

(f) Close the gender digital divide in rural areas;

(g) Strengthen efforts to retain girls in school, both at the primary and secondary levels, including pregnant girls, facilitate the return to school of young mothers after giving birth by adopting the policy on second-chance education currently under consideration and by providing adequate child-care facilities, and ensure that girls are not expelled from school because they are pregnant and by imposing appropriate sanctions on those responsible for such dismissals;

(h) Continue to develop and promote age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health;

(i) Eliminate gender stereotypes in textbooks, curricula and pedagogy and provide symbols of women in leadership in textbooks, murals and portraiture;

(j) Develop context-specific women's and girls' leadership programmes and curricula from kindergarten to university;

(k) Incentivize educational programmes on new technology, mobile money and financial inclusion for women and girls and encourage the participation of women in new technologies, including agritech, blue technology and automation, as well as the arts and sports.

### **Employment**

17. Please provide information on the measures in place to address forced labour and the high burden of care work carried out by women compared with men. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 35), please provide information on steps taken to:

(a) Strengthen collaboration with the International Labour Organization to improve women's access to employment opportunities, on a basis of equality with men, in particular in the formal economy and in managerial positions;

(b) Eliminate discriminatory provisions in employment by amending the Labour Act and ensuring that the right to maternity, paternity, parental and family leave and other benefits such as flex time and remote work are in accordance with the Convention;

(c) Develop programmes aimed at increasing women's participation in the labour market, and financial inclusion, including in the areas of financial technology (fintech) and mobile money.

**Health**

18. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 37), and in line with general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health, please provide information on steps taken to:

(a) Ensure that obstetric health services for women, including prenatal and postnatal services, are provided nationwide, including in remote areas, through partnerships to develop adequate health-care infrastructure with appropriate sanitation and hygiene facilities, acquire equipment and train health-care professionals on medical ethics and new scientific developments;

(b) Ensure free access, through in-person and technology-facilitated information, to modern contraceptive methods for women as part of the policy on free health care and provide age-appropriate information and education on sexual and reproductive health to address misconceptions, stereotypes and the stigma attached to those methods;

(c) Take measures to improve access to safe water and proper sanitation;

(d) Carry out information campaigns and free confidential counselling at the community level, in particular in rural areas, for women and girls on their sexual and reproductive health and rights, including prevention of early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases;

(e) Amend legislation to decriminalize abortion in cases of rape, incest, risk to the health of the mother or severe foetal impairment, in line with the Committee's jurisprudence, and provide women with high-quality post-abortion care;

(f) Design a monitoring mechanism to report on the mental health of women and girls and use its results to develop mental health programmes and services;

(g) Provide opportunities for women to lead health care, obstetric care, innovations in health and medical care and health-care policies.

19. Please provide data, disaggregated by age and region, on the incidence of unsafe abortion and the impact on women's health, including maternal mortality.

**Rural women**

20. In line with the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 39), please provide information, taking into account the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, on measures taken to:

(a) Adopt indicators for monitoring the progress achieved in enhancing access to education, information technology, health care, safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, employment, social security, formal credit and loans and the formal justice system for rural women, women with disabilities, older women and widowed women;

(b) Strengthen programmes to provide income-generating opportunities for rural women, including through credit and loans with long-term and low-interest reimbursement schemes and by developing rural women's entrepreneurial skills;

(c) Adopt legislation and long-term policies focused on rural development with specific lines of action and indicators reflecting their impact on women and ensure that women engaged in informal trade have access to social security;

(d) Raise awareness to promote the participation of rural women in decision-making processes relating to rural policies, including climate, poverty alleviation and health-care policies, at the national, provincial and community levels;



(e) Facilitate rural women's access to land ownership and strengthen community-based associations representing rural women's economic interests;

(f) Establish a legal framework to ensure that large-scale development projects do not undermine rural women's rights to land ownership, biodiversity and agricultural activities;

(g) Ensure gender equality in the distribution of income and profit generated from land appropriated or leased for the purpose of large-scale commercial projects.

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

21. Please describe measures taken, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, to include an explicit gender perspective in national policies and the State party's action plan on climate change, disaster response and risk reduction and ensure the effective and meaningful engagement of women and girls in both the development and implementation phases.

### **Women with disabilities**

22. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 43), please provide detailed information on efforts to:

(a) Adopt comprehensive policies and programmes, including for access to information and communications technology, to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities, ensuring their right to inclusive education and their equal access to employment, health care, housing, safe drinking water, sanitation and other services, and to promote their access to community services;

(b) Develop partnerships with community-based organizations and international stakeholders to identify women and girls with disabilities in the State party who are facing discrimination based on their disability, as well as isolation, confinement and different forms of physical and psychological violence;

(c) Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which the State party signed in 2008.

### **Marriage and family relations**

23. Recalling its general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, and in the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 45), please describe steps taken to:

(a) Raise the minimum age of marriage from 15 to 18 years for girls and boys, and apply it to customary marriages, in accordance with joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child;

(b) Ensure the mandatory registration of all marriages and the enforcement of the prohibition of bigamy;

(c) Establish legal safeguards to ensure that women enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(d) Prohibit the practice of payment of bride prices and adequately punish parents and legal guardians engaging in that practice;

(e) Ensure that legislation recognizes women's right to inheritance and access to property on an equal basis with men;

(f) Adopt legislation guaranteeing equal rights to women and men in family relations and during and upon dissolution of a marriage, in line with article 16 of the Convention;

(g) Amend discriminatory provisions of the Islanders' Marriage Act, the Affiliation, Separation and Maintenance Act and the Islanders' Divorce Act and prohibit any customary practices that discriminate against women in family relations.

**Additional information**

24. Please provide any additional information deemed relevant with regard to legislative, policy, administrative and other measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations since the consideration of the previous combined periodic reports in 2014. Such measures may include recent laws, developments, plans, programmes and ratifications of human rights instruments, as well as any other information that the State party considers relevant. Please note that, further to the issues raised in the present document, the State party will be expected, during the dialogue, to respond to additional questions relating to areas covered by the Convention.

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