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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Gambia*

1. The Committee considered the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Gambia (CEDAW/C/GMB/4-5) at its 1311th and 1312nd meetings, on 9 July 2015 (see CEDAW/C/SR.1311 and 1312). The Committee's list of issues and questions are contained in CEDAW/C/GMB/Q/4-5 and the responses of the Gambia are contained in CEDAW/C/GMB/Q/4-5/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee notes that the State party submitted its combined fourth and fifth periodic reports. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by its pre-session working group. It welcomes the oral presentation of 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 delegation which was headed by Mrs. Isatou Alwar Graham, Acting Deputy Solicitor General and Curator of Intestate, Attorney General's Chamber and Ministry of Justice. The delegation also included representatives from the Office of the Vice-President and the National Women's Bureau. The Committee appreciates the dialogue that took place between the delegation and the Committee, while noting that various questions were not fully answered.

B. Positive Aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2005 of the State party's combined initial, second and third periodic reports (CEDAW/C/GMB/1-3) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of:

- (a) The Domestic Violence Act 2013;
- (b) The Sexual Offences Act 2013;
- (c) The Women's Act 2010;
- (d) The Legal Aid Act 2008;

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-first session, meeting from 6 to 24 July 2015.

- (e) The Trafficking in Persons Act 2007.
- 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 of the following:
 - (a) The Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project 2014–2018;
 - (b) The National Plan of Action on Gender Based Violence 2013-2017;
 - (c) The Gender and Women's Empowerment Policy 2010-2020;
 - (d) The National Education Policy 2004–2015.
- 6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified or acceded to the following international and regional instruments:
 - (a) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, in July 2015;
 - (b) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in April 2010.

C. Principle areas of concern and recommendations

National Assembly

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 necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.**

Legislative framework

8. The Committee notes that many provisions of the Convention have been incorporated into national law through the adoption of relevant legislation, in particular the Women's Act in 2010. However, it remains concerned that this legislation does not adequately address female genital mutilation, marital rape or child marriage. It further remains concerned about the Constitutional provision, under which the prohibition of discrimination does not apply in respect of adoption, marriage, divorce, burial and devolution of property on death and the fact that these issues are regulated under personal law which contains discriminatory provisions, some of which are re-enacted in the Women's Act.

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

- (a) **Harmonize legislation, including the Constitution, the Women's Act and personal laws (Sharia and customary law) with the Convention, by repealing all discriminatory provisions to ensure that women and girls enjoy equal rights as men in all areas of life;**
- (b) **Urgently repeal Article 33(5) of the 1997 Constitution which provides that the prohibition of discrimination does not apply in respect of adoption, marriage, divorce, burial and devolution of property on death.**

Access to Justice

10. The Committee is concerned about the barriers faced by women in accessing justice. It is particularly concerned that women often must resort to Cadi courts and District Tribunals which are not gender sensitive and continue applying discriminatory provisions. While noting that in 2009, the majority of high court judges were women, the Committee notes with concern the lack of information on the gender composition of other courts.

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

(a) Design a comprehensive judicial policy to eliminate barriers faced by women and girls in accessing to justice, including legal aid, and provide adequate resources and a monitoring mechanism for its implementation;

(b) Promote the appointment of women judges at all levels of the judiciary, including in Cadi courts and District Tribunals, and adopt special temporary measures in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's General Recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures;

(c) Enhance women's awareness of their rights and legal literacy in all areas of the law and the Convention, to enable women to avail themselves of procedures and remedies to claim their rights under the Convention;

(d) Strengthen efforts to provide training on women's rights and violence against women to judges, Cadis, prosecutors, police officers and the legal profession.

National machinery for the advancement of women

12. The Committee is concerned that coordination among the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the National Women's Council and its Bureau remain weak, responsibilities are not clearly defined and that their capacities, resources, and/or authority are insufficient. It is also concerned about the insufficient implementation of the Gender Policy 2010-2020 up to date.

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

(a) Expeditiously review the national machinery for the advancement of women with a view to ensuring the overall coordination among relevant institutions and that each institution has clearly defined responsibilities as well as adequate capacity, resources, autonomy and/or authority to effectively operate;

(b) Conduct a mid-term evaluation of the Gender Policy 2010-2020 and ensure that it addresses all areas covered by the Convention, includes measurable indicators, a timeframe and an effective monitoring mechanism, and that adequate resources are allocated for its implementation.

National Human Rights Institution

14. The Committee is concerned that the State party has not yet established an independent national human rights institution.

15. The Committee urges the State Party to establish, within a clear time frame, an independent national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles, with a mandate on women's issues, strong linkages with the women's machinery and authority to consider and issue opinions on complaints submitted by women alleging violations of their rights.

Temporary special measures

16. While noting that the Women's Act calls on all public and private entities to adopt temporary special measures, the Committee is concerned that the State party does not

systematically use temporary special measures to accelerate the achievement of substantive or de facto equality of women and men in all areas of the Convention.

17. **The Committee recommends that the State party effectively implement Article 15 (1) of the Women's Act and significantly increase the use of temporary special measures in education, health, employment or any other relevant areas, including quotas, with specific targets and time frames, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's General Recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, as a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality of women and men in all areas covered by the Convention where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged.**

Stereotypes and harmful practices

18. The Committee is deeply concerned about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society. It also remains concerned about the very high prevalence of harmful practices, particularly female genital mutilation, child marriages, polygamy and levirate and the fact that these practises are not prohibited by law.

19. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Adopt legal provisions explicitly prohibiting harmful practices such as polygamy, child marriages, female genital mutilation, levirate, and unequal inheritance rights for women, provide for adequate sanctions and ensure the effective implementation of these provisions;**

(b) **Expediently adopt a comprehensive strategy to eliminate stereotypes and harmful practices that discriminate against women;**

(c) **Reinforce awareness-raising programmes, targeting children, men and women, officials at all levels, teachers, parents and traditional and religious leaders, on the negative effects of harmful practices and discriminatory stereotypes on women's enjoyment of their rights;**

(d) **Cooperate with the media to enhance understanding of the concept of equality of women and men in public and private life and, convey positive images of women.**

Female genital mutilation

20. The Committee remains deeply concerned that the practice of female genital mutilation remains widespread affecting a large majority of girls and women. While noting that the State party accepted a recommendation in the context of the Universal Periodic Review in 2015 to adopt and implement effective legislation aimed at banning female genital mutilation, the Committee is concerned that the State party has not adopted any time frame to implement this Universal Periodic Review recommendation.

21. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **Expedite the adoption of legislation criminalizing female genital mutilation and prosecute and adequately punish those responsible, and compensate victims;**

(b) **Raise awareness of health practitioners regarding female genital mutilation and the remedies and assistance available to victims, including psychological counselling;**

(c) **Provide alternative means of livelihood for practitioners of female genital mutilation.**

Violence against women

22. The Committee notes the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act in 2013. However, it is concerned that violence against women remains widespread. It is particularly concerned about:

(a) The lack of criminalization of marital rape and unclear provisions in the Domestic Violence Act relating to the definition of « aggravated » domestic violence and allowing for out-of-court settlements which often do not take into account women's best interest;

(b) The insufficient implementation of the Domestic Violence Act and Sexual Offences Act due, among others, to lack of resources and the absence of regulations, guidelines, and effective reporting mechanisms;

(c) The lack of support for women victims of violence preventing them to effectively accessing justice and the insufficient support and rehabilitation services available to them;

(d) The lack of official disaggregated data related to violence against women and girls, including on the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions and sentences as well as out of court settlements.

23. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) Amend its legislation to ensure that marital rape is explicitly criminalized and adequately sanctioned; that the definition of "aggravated" domestic violence is based on objective elements, in line with international standards, and explicitly covers all forms of violence including psychological violence; that provisions allowing for out of court settlements are repealed or accompanied by adequate legal safeguards to ensure that mediation is not imposed on the victim;

(b) Effectively implement the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act throughout the territory of the State party, by adopting the necessary regulations and guidelines, reinforcing reporting mechanisms, allocating adequate resources and strengthening the Victims of Violence Advisory Committee;

(c) Ensure women's effective access to justice, including to refugee women, by ensuring confidential and gender-sensitive complaint mechanisms, reinforcing the legal aid programmes, duly prosecuting alleged perpetrators of violence by a competent criminal court, and protecting and compensating victims;

(d) Strengthen psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women victims of violence;

(e) Establish a reliable system for the collection of statistical data on violence against women, disaggregated by age, forms of violence and the relationship between victims and perpetrators, and on the number of complaints, out of court settlements, prosecutions, convictions and sentences imposed on perpetrators as well as on reparations provided to victims.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

24. The Committee notes with concern that there have been no prosecutions under the Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 and that only one investigation is currently ongoing. It is also concerned about the lack of information on the number of victims of trafficking and on the measures taken to address exploitation of prostitution of women and girls and child sex tourism, as well as about the lack of programmes to support women wishing to leave prostitution.

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

(a) **Conduct a study to investigate the extent and root causes of trafficking in women and girls and exploitation of prostitution;**

(b) **Effectively implement the Trafficking in Persons Act, including by allocating adequate resources, ensure early identification and referral of victims of trafficking, prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators, and provide free legal and psychological support and compensation to victims of trafficking;**

(c) **Adopt measures to address exploitation of women and girls in prostitution and child sex tourism, provide assistance and rehabilitation to victims, as well as economic alternatives to prostitution.**

Participation in political and public life

26. While noting the measures taken by the State party to promote the participation of women in political life, such as the appointment of a woman as Vice-President, the Committee is concerned that the participation of women in political and public life is still very low. It is particularly concerned that:

(a) Women's representation in the National Assembly remains very low and has even decreased from 13.2% in 2002 to 9.4% in 2015;

(b) Women are underrepresented in local councils;

(c) Only four out of 19 ministries are headed by women and that there are no women governors or mayors.

27. **In line with its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen efforts to promote women's representation in decision-making positions including at high levels in the Government, the National Assembly, the judiciary, the decentralized bodies and in the civil service at the national, regional and local levels;**

(b) **Expediently implement article 15.1 of the Women's Act by adopting temporary special measures for women's equal representation in political and public life, including statutory quotas, with sanctions for non-compliance, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004).**

Women human rights defenders

28. The Committee is concerned about reports that women human rights defenders, particularly those working on sexual and reproductive health and rights, face harassment, attacks, threats and intimidation.

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party create an enabling environment for participation of women human rights defenders, including those working on sexual and reproductive health and rights, in public life, in accordance with international standards, and protect them from harassment, intimidation and violence.**

Nationality

30. The Committee is concerned about reports that a high number of children are not immediately registered at birth and that cumbersome procedures are in place for the registration of children above 5 years of age. It notes with concern reported obstacles to

birth registration of children born out of wedlock, often due to the stigmatization faced by single mothers.

31. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that all children born in the State party, including children born out of wedlock or in rural areas, are immediately registered at birth to enable them to access citizenship, education and health, and de-stigmatize children born out of wedlock and their mothers.

Education

32. The Committee commends the State party for achieving gender parity in enrolment in primary education and that the President Educational Trust fund for girls' education provides scholarships for girls. However, it remains concerned about:

(a) The lower completion rates of girls at the primary level as compared to boys, their considerably lower enrolment and retention at the secondary and tertiary levels and in vocational education, and the insufficient use of temporary special measures in this regard;

(b) Disparities between rural and urban areas in access to education, quality of education and adequacy of school infrastructures, including sanitary facilities;

(c) High dropout rates among girls, particularly in rural areas, due to child marriages and early pregnancies;

(d) The insufficient number of female teachers to serve as role models, especially in rural areas;

(e) The lack of adequate gender and age appropriate sexual and reproductive health rights education at school;

(f) Reports on frequent cases of sexual harassment of girls in schools by peers and teachers;

(g) The lack of inclusive education for girls and women with disabilities, and the absence of temporary special measures in this regard.

33. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Strengthen efforts to improve the quality of education, in particular in rural areas, and the enrolment and retention of girls and women at all levels, including by: adopting a new policy and strategy on education that effectively mainstreams gender; allocating adequate resources; ensuring the adequacy of school infrastructures, in particular sanitary facilities; increasing the number of female teachers; and addressing the indirect costs of education and the high costs of tertiary education;

(b) Strengthen the use of temporary special measures to promote access to education by girls and women living in poverty, rural women and girls and women with disabilities;

(c) Promote the retention of pregnant girls in school and the reintegration of mothers after childbirth and ensure the effective implementation of section 28 of the Women's Act 2010 which prohibits taking girls out of school for marriage;

(d) Implement comprehensive programmes on sexual and reproductive health and rights as a regular part of the school curriculum, providing girls and boys with adequate, age-appropriate information on responsible sexual choices;

(e) Strengthen efforts to ensure access to inclusive education for girls and women with disabilities, including by allocating adequate resources;

(f) Adopt policies that address sexual abuse and harassment in school and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished.

Employment

34. While noting that the Women's Act prohibits discrimination against women in employment, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) Women's low participation in the formal sector, vertical and horizontal segregation in the labour market and the lack of use of temporary special measures in this regard;

(b) The gender wage gap and the fact that the Labour Act does not explicitly incorporate the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;

(c) The absence of legislation explicitly criminalizing sexual harassment in the workplace;

(d) The lack of information about the activities of the labour Inspectorate, and complaints by women about employment discrimination, as well as on any mechanism available to monitor compliance by the private sector with the Labour Act.

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

(a) Strengthen its efforts to eliminate horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market and promote women's access to the formal sector, including through the use of temporary special measures;

(b) Ensure that women in the formal and informal sectors are covered by social protection programmes;

(c) Amend the Labour Act to explicitly include the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and adopt measures to implement this principle in order to narrow and close the gender wage gap; Establish a mechanism to conduct job evaluations with methods that are free from gender bias ;

(d) Criminalize sexual harassment in the workplace, include in the legislation a broad definition of sexual harassment in the workplace which covers conduct that creates a hostile working environment, in accordance with General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, and adopt effective measures to prevent, monitor and adequately punish sexual harassment in the workplace;

(e) Collect information on the number, nature and results of labour inspections conducted and the complaints registered, and strengthen mechanisms to monitor compliance with the Labour Act and relevant provisions of the Women's Act by both public and private entities.

Health

36. The Committee notes the efforts made by the State party to improve the health status of women. However, it notes with concern:

(a) The high rates of maternal mortality and child mortality;

(b) The high number of adolescent pregnancies and the insufficient measures taken to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, including modern contraceptives;

(c) The criminalization of abortion except when the life or health of the pregnant woman is at risk, and its impact on the high maternal mortality rate;

(d) The disproportionately high HIV prevalence among women and the prevalence of mother-to-child transmission of HIV;

(e) That in accordance with Article 29.1 of the Women's Act, women's access to health care services, including those related to family planning, is governed by personal law.

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

(a) **Increase efforts to reduce maternal mortality by ensuring adequate sexual and reproductive health services, including access to antenatal, delivery and postnatal services, and prevention and treatment of anaemia.**

(b) **In that regard, consider the OHCHR technical guidance on the application of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of policies and programmes to reduce preventable maternal morbidity and mortality (A/HRC/21/22);**

(c) **Reduce adolescent pregnancies by ensuring access to age-appropriate information and education on sexual and reproductive health rights for girls and boys, and in particular for out-of-school children and adolescents;**

(d) **Provide adequate access to affordable modern methods of contraception, including emergency contraception, to all women and girls;**

(e) **Expediently amend its legislation to decriminalize abortion, removing all punitive measures particularly for women undergoing abortion, expand the grounds of legal abortion to cases of rape, incest, and severe foetal impairment, and ensure the availability of safe abortion and post-abortion services;**

(f) **Increase efforts to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS among women as well as mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and ensure the availability of anti-retroviral drugs for women living with HIV/AIDS.**

(g) **Expediently amend Article 29.1 of the Women's Act to abolish the reference to "personal law" so as to ensure women's access to health care services, including those related to family planning, independently of their personal status, and ensure that, in practice, women can access health care without inhibition;**

Economic empowerment of women

38. The Committee welcomes the initiatives taken by the State party to promote the economic empowerment of women, such as the provision of microcredits. However it is concerned that women's access to credit remains insufficient and that women's economic empowerment has not been sufficiently mainstreamed within the overall development strategies of the State party.

39. **The Committee recommends that the State party evaluate the results achieved with the initiatives taken so far to promote the economic empowerment of women, and based on the results adopt a coherent strategy on women's economic empowerment which feeds into the overall development strategies of the State party. It also recommends that the State party develop adequate indicators and a monitoring mechanism for the strategy and include as key elements access to credit, markets, land and other productive resources.**

Rural women

40. The Committee is concerned that rural women and girls have limited access to income-generating opportunities, credit, land and other productive resources, justice, health, education and participation in decision-making processes relating to issues that are of concern to them.

41. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a comprehensive strategy, which includes temporary special measures and feeds into rural development**

plans, to ensure rural women's access to education, health, justice, employment, economic opportunities, markets, productive land, agricultural training and extension services, credit, seeds, tools, and political participation, in particular as regards rural development. The State party should also ensure that rural women are aware of their rights and can effectively participate in decision making processes relating to issues that are of concern to them.

Women with disabilities

42. The Committee is concerned that women and girls with disabilities have limited access to inclusive education, health, employment and participation in political and public life.

43. **The Committee recommends that the State party expeditiously adopt legislation to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with a view to ensuring that women and girls with disabilities have effective access to inclusive education, health, justice, employment and participation in political and public life, among others. The law should provide for the use of temporary special measures.**

Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women

44. The Committee notes that homosexual acts are criminalized in the State party and that "aggravated homosexuality" carries sentences of up to life imprisonment. It also notes with concern acts of incitement to hatred against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and the arbitrary detention of women perceived to be lesbian.

45. **The Committee urges the State party to repeal the provisions of the Criminal Code on "unnatural offences" and "aggravated homosexuality"; end the arbitrary detention of lesbians; and provide them with effective protection from violence and discrimination and provide appropriate training to law enforcement officials.**

Women in detention

46. The Committee is concerned that women in detention live in deplorable conditions and are subjected to violence, including rape, by guards and/or male detainees, and that such cases are not adequately investigated and prosecuted. The Committee also is concerned that the majority of women in detention have been convicted of infanticide.

47. **The Committee urges the State party to ensure that living conditions in detention centres are compliant with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners (the Bangkok Rules); that women are under the supervision of female guards and that gender-sensitive complaint mechanisms are available to them; and that all cases of violence against women in detention are effectively investigated and prosecuted. The Committee also urges the State party to conduct a study on the phenomenon of infanticide and ensure that women charged with infanticide have access to psychological assessment and care.**

Marriage and family relations

48. While noting the statement of the delegation that the State party will consider good practices of other countries with Muslim populations which have non-discriminatory personal status laws that are in line with the Convention, the Committee remains deeply concerned that:

(a) Issues relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, marital property, adoption, burial and devolution of property on death are still regulated under personal law (Sharia and customary law) which contains discriminatory provisions against women;

(b) The Women's Act provides only for women's "equitable" access to property which is not compliant with the Committee's standard of equality. While commending the State party in the case of *Matty Faye versus Dawda Jawara*, the Committee is concerned that standards of equity were followed, rather than equality as required by the Convention;

(c) Child marriage, polygamy and levirate are regulated under personal law and are not prohibited;

(d) The registration of marriages is not systematically ensured, particularly in rural areas.

49. In line with article 16 (2) of the Convention, the Committee's General Recommendation No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations, and Joint General Recommendation/General Comment No. 31 of the Committee and No. 18 of the Committee on the Right of the Child (2014) on harmful practices, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Undertake a study on the good practices of other countries with Muslim populations which have non-discriminatory personal status laws in line with the Convention and organize an expert meeting on the issue which also includes religious and traditional leaders of the State party;

(b) Harmonize the legislation, including the Constitution, the Women's Act and personal laws (Sharia and customary law) with the Convention, repealing all discriminatory provisions, to ensure that women enjoy equal rights as men in marriage, divorce, inheritance, marital property, adoption, burial and devolution of property on death, in line with the General Recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution;

(c) Replace the term "equitable" by "equal" as regards women's access to property in the Women's Act and ensure that judges interpret it accordingly in their judgments;

(d) Ensure that the minimum age of marriage is set at 18 years of age for both girls and boys, that child marriage is criminalized and adequately sanctioned and that polygamous marriages and levirate are prohibited without exception;

(e) Strengthen efforts to register all marriages, particularly in rural areas.

Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

50. The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20, paragraph 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 utilize the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.

Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development framework

52. The Committee calls for the integration of a gender perspective, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, into all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and into the post-2015 development framework.

Dissemination

53. The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement the provisions of the Convention. It urges the State party to give priority attention to the implementation of the present concluding observations

and recommendations between now and the submission of the next periodic report. The Committee therefore requests the timely dissemination of the concluding observations, in the official language(s) of the State party, to the relevant state institutions at all levels (national, regional, local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the National Assembly and to the judiciary, to enable their full implementation. It encourages the State party to collaborate with all stakeholders concerned, such as employers' associations, trade unions, human rights and women's organisations, universities and research institutions, media, etc. It further recommends that its concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local community level, to enable their implementation. In addition, the Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate the CEDAW Convention, its Optional Protocol and jurisprudence, and the Committee's General Recommendations to all stakeholders.

Technical Assistance

54. The Committee recommends that the State party link the implementation of the Convention to its development efforts and that it avail itself of regional or international technical assistance in this respect.

Ratification of other treaties

55. 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 consider ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a party.

Follow-up to concluding observations

56. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 11 (b), 21 (a), (b) and (c) and 27 (b) above.

Preparation of the next report

57. The Committee invites the State party to submit its sixth periodic report in July 2019.

58. 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/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1).

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.