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# 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 ninth periodic report of the Russian Federation\*

1. The Committee considered the ninth periodic report of the Russian Federation (CEDAW/C/RUS/9) at its 1834th and 1836th meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.1834 and CEDAW/C/SR.1836), held on 2 and 3 November 2021. The list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group is contained in CEDAW/C/RUS/Q/9, and the responses of the Russian Federation are contained in CEDAW/C/RUS/RQ/9.

#### A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its ninth periodic report. It also appreciates the State party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8/Add.1 and CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8/Add.1/Corr.1) and its written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group. It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by State Secretary and Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Andrei Pudov, and included representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, the General Prosecutor's Office, the Investigative Committee, the Federal State Statistics Service, the Federal Agency for Ethnic Affairs, the Federal Penitentiary Service and the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

#### B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2015 of the State party's previous report in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) Presidential Decree No. 274 of 18 April 2020 and Presidential Decree No. 364 of 15 June 2021, which introduce safeguards for refugees and asylum seekers during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic;

\* Adopted by the Committee at its eightieth session (18 October to 12 November 2021).



(b) Amendments to the Federal Act on citizenship and the Federal Act on the legal status of foreign nationals, the legislative framework concerning refugees and asylum seekers, which provide for the issuance of temporary residence permits.

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 National Strategy for Women 2017–2022, which aims at empowering and advancing women, and the establishment of a coordinating council to ensure its implementation;

(b) The National Health-care Project (2019), which seeks to reduce mortality rates and strengthen women's access to health-care services.

### **C. Sustainable Development Goals**

6. **The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It urges the State party to recognize women as the driving force of the sustainable development of the State party and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.**

### **D. Parliament**

7. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see [A/65/38](#), part two, annex VI). It invites the parliament (State Duma and Federation Council), in line with its mandate, to take necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.**

### **E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations**

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

8. The Committee notes the efforts by the State party to disseminate the Convention. Nevertheless, it is concerned that disparities remain in the implementation of the Convention across the different regions. It also notes with concern the limited awareness among the branches of the Government, including the judiciary, prosecutors and law enforcement officers, on women's rights and substantive equality between women and men under the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations, and the lack of awareness among women themselves, in particular rural women, which presents an obstacle for them to claim their rights under the Convention or avail themselves of the communication or inquiry procedures under the Optional Protocol.

9. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation ([CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8](#), para. 8) that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure the dissemination of the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations across its regions;**

(b) **Raise awareness among women, in particular rural women and those in remote areas, women belonging to disadvantaged groups and human rights defenders about their rights under the Convention and the procedures available under the Optional Protocol to claim violations of their rights;**

(c) **Incorporate the Convention into the federal and regional legislative frameworks and develop and conduct systematic capacity-building programmes on women's rights and substantive equality between women and men under the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations for the judiciary, prosecutors, the police and other law enforcement officers at the federal and regional levels.**

#### **Definition of discrimination against women and discriminatory laws**

10. The Committee notes that article 5.62 of the Code of Administrative Offences and article 136 of the Criminal Code prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. Nevertheless, it is concerned about the lack of measures taken to adopt a comprehensive definition of discrimination, covering direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres and intersecting forms of discrimination.

11. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8, para. 10) that the State party adopt, with a clear time frame, comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits discrimination against women and covers direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in line with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.**

#### **Women's access to justice**

12. The Committee notes the information on the legal safeguards in the national legal framework. Nevertheless, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The lack of information on the number of court cases on discrimination against women and the low number of complaints from women received by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation (around 400 in 2018);

(b) The barriers faced by women in gaining access to justice such as judicial bias and discriminatory stereotypes among judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and lawyers towards women reporting violations of their rights, particularly women belonging to disadvantaged groups, especially in rural areas.

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

(a) **Develop a comprehensive legal aid scheme for women at the federal and regional levels, with sustainable and sufficient resources, including procedural accommodation, particularly targeting rural women and women belonging to disadvantaged groups such as indigenous and tribal women, women belonging to minority groups, women in detention, journalists and women with disabilities;**

(b) **Address stigmatization of women and girls who submit complaints about violations of their rights by raising awareness among the general public and disseminating information on the remedies available to women for claiming violations of their rights, particularly in rural and remote areas;**

(c) **Provide systematic and mandatory capacity-building on women's rights and gender equality for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and other law**

**enforcement officials, and ensure an enabling environment in which women feel safe reporting violations of their rights without fear of revictimization in their interactions with the judicial and law enforcement authorities.**

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

14. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the National Strategy for Women 2017–2022 and the related action plan, and the establishment of a coordinating council on women’s rights within the Government to implement the National Strategy, composed of the Deputy Prime Minister, members of the Federation Council and the State Duma, senior regional officials and representatives of civil society. The Committee, however, notes with concern:

(a) The lack of information on the implementation of the National Strategy at the regional and local levels and the absence of monitoring and impact assessment mechanisms in relation to such implementation;

(b) The lack of gender-responsive budgeting in the National Strategy and its action plan;

(c) The delays in the adoption of the draft act on gender equality and the lack of a separate government mechanism in the State party that is responsible exclusively for gender equality policies and the implementation of the Convention.

#### **15. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Incorporate a results-oriented approach, including specific indicators and targets, into the National Strategy for Women 2017–2022 and introduce a monitoring mechanism and regular impact assessments of the National Strategy to evaluate its effectiveness at the federal and regional levels, with the effective participation of civil society organizations;**

(b) **Introduce gender-based budgeting and make special budgetary allocations for the implementation of policies, strategies and programmes for the advancement of women throughout the State party;**

(c) **Accelerate the adoption of the draft act on gender equality, and establish a central body on women’s rights and provide it with a clear mandate, adequate and sustainable financial resources and staff with the necessary technical capacity to fully enable it to implement programmes and projects to promote gender equality and the advancement of women.**

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

16. The Committee notes with appreciation the establishment of a separate unit in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation for the protection of the rights of women, families and children, as well as the regional legal aid clinics and the outreach to women in remote and rural areas by the regional commissioners for human rights. The Committee notes the consideration of a draft federal act to strengthen the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation. The Committee is nevertheless concerned about the selection and appointment process, the limited mandate of the High Commissioner and the weak engagement with civil society organizations, including women’s organizations, and women human rights defenders.

**17. The Committee recommends that the State party accelerate the adoption of the draft federal act on the mandate and activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, ensure its independence in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and expand its mandate to**

cover addressing human rights violations, especially against women, that result from the acts and omissions of private entities, monitoring the extent to which its recommendations have been implemented, making publicly available its reports, studies and press releases, enhancing its relationship and cooperation with civil society organizations, including women's organizations, and women human rights defenders, and monitoring the implementation of the Convention in line with the recommendations of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. The Committee also recommends that the State party expand the activities and travel to remote and rural areas conducted by the regional commissioners for human rights.

#### **Non-governmental organizations and women human rights defenders**

18. The Committee notes with concern the restrictions on the activities of non-governmental organizations and the suspension or closure of several such organizations that work on women's rights and gender equality under Federal Act No. 121-FZ on non-commercial organizations on the basis that they are "foreign agents" because they receive foreign funding and engage in "political activities". The Committee also notes with concern that, as a consequence, many organizations labelled "foreign agents" have been forced to reduce or discontinue the support provided to victims of gender-based violence. It is further concerned about reports of harassment, threats and attacks by law enforcement officials against women human rights defenders and women environmental and indigenous activists.

19. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8, para. 16) that the State party to review the legislation requiring non-commercial organizations that receive foreign funding to register as "foreign agents" and to ensure an environment in which women's associations and non-governmental organizations working on women's rights and gender equality may freely operate and raise funds. It also recommends that the State party ensure full respect for the rights of women human rights defenders to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, refrain from any reprisals against them, and ensure that they have effective access to justice and receive protection from harassment, intimidation, retaliation and violence.

#### **Temporary special measures**

20. The Committee notes with concern the limited understanding within the State party of the non-discriminatory nature and importance of temporary special measures for accelerating the achievement of substantive equality between women and men, including statutory quotas, in the public or private sectors, in particular for rural women and women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination such as women with disabilities, women belonging to minority groups and indigenous and tribal women.

21. The Committee recommends that, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and its general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, the State party:

(a) Adopt and implement temporary special measures and establish time-bound targets to accelerate the realization of substantive equality between women and men in all areas in which women continue to be disadvantaged or underrepresented, including in political and public life and employment;

(b) Undertake capacity-building programmes targeting legislators, policymakers, other public officials and employers in the public and private sectors, at both the federal and regional levels, on the non-discriminatory nature and importance of temporary special measures for the achievement of

**substantive equality between women and men in all areas covered by the Convention in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged.**

#### **Discriminatory stereotypes**

22. The Committee notes the implementation of projects in the State party to highlight success stories in the media about the achievements of women in various spheres of life. The Committee nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) The persistence of patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, considering women primarily as mothers and caregivers and focusing solely on traditional family values, which continue to impede progress in advancing gender equality;

(b) The absence of a comprehensive strategy to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes, particularly among the judiciary;

(c) The lack of a regulatory mechanism to address stereotypical and discriminatory portrayals of women in the media, especially as regards lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons.

**23. The Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8, para. 20) and recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive strategy with proactive and sustained measures and a monitoring mechanism for its implementation to eliminate patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, targeting women and men at all levels of society, including religious leaders;**

(b) **Strengthen its efforts to raise media awareness of the need to eliminate gender stereotypes and of the importance of positive portrayals of women as active agents of change and undertake capacity-building programmes for judges and law enforcement agencies;**

(c) **Address the use of misogynistic language, hate speech against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, and sexist portrayals of women in public discourse, the media and on the Internet.**

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

24. The Committee notes the information provided by the delegation during the dialogue concerning measures taken to amend the Criminal Code to introduce public prosecution of acts of gender-based violence and the ongoing efforts to amend article 116 of the Code to recriminalize battery. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The narrow definition of rape and sexual crimes in the Criminal Code, which requires coercion and the use or threat of violence or abuse of the “victim’s state of helplessness”, and that marital rape is not criminalized;

(b) The exemption of perpetrators of statutory rape from criminal liability in case of marriage to the victim (article 134 of the Criminal Code);

(c) That the system of private-public or private prosecution continues to apply to gender-based violence under article 20 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, requiring victims to initiate private prosecution proceedings in which they must call and question witnesses, present evidence, ensure their constant presence and constantly confront the perpetrator directly at the trial or else risk having the proceedings closed;

(d) The absence of a victim protection system;

(e) The introduction, through the amendment to the Criminal Code in December 2020, of more severe sanctions for defamation, applicable to cases in which victims bring charges of crimes against their sexual integrity and sexual freedom, which prevents victims of sexual violence from gaining access to justice owing to fear of prosecution;

(f) The absence of comprehensive legislation to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence against women and the lack of a definition of domestic violence;

(g) The amendment to article 116 of the Criminal Code in February 2017, decriminalizing non-aggravated battery against family or household members and reclassifying it as an administrative offence;

(h) The high prevalence of femicide, domestic violence, abduction, female genital mutilation and other forms of gender-based violence against women and the lack of shelters and victims support services, particularly in rural and remote areas.

**25. Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, and its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8, para. 22), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Amend articles 131 to 134 of the Criminal Code to repeal the exemption of perpetrators of statutory rape from criminal liability in case of marriage to the victim, ensure that the definitions of rape and sexual crimes are explicitly based on the lack of free consent and take into account coercive circumstances, and explicitly criminalize marital rape;

(b) Amend article 20 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to abolish the system of private prosecution in cases of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, which places the burden of proof entirely on victims, and introduce public prosecution to ensure equality of arms in criminal proceedings;

(c) Adopt comprehensive legislation to prevent and address domestic violence, develop a national action plan on domestic violence and amend the Criminal Code to criminalize on all forms of domestic violence, including physical, sexual, economic and psychological;

(d) Ensure that all cases of gender-based violence against women are promptly and thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted and adequately punished;

(e) Ensure that victims of gender-based violence have access to legal assistance, free of charge when necessary, and to adequate shelter, protection orders and victim support services, and ensure adequate funding for civil society organizations providing such services;

(f) Ratify the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention);

(g) Accelerate the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee in its Views in *X and Y v. Russian Federation* (CEDAW/C/73/D/100/2016), *O.G. v. Russian Federation* (CEDAW/C/68/D/91/2015) and *S.T. v. Russian Federation* (CEDAW/C/72/D/65/2014).

#### **Harmful practices against women in the North Caucasus region**

26. The Committee is deeply concerned about the prevalence of harmful practices against women and girls in the North Caucasus region, including femicide, killings in the name of so-called honour, child marriage, forced marriage, abduction of women and girls for forced marriage and female genital mutilation. It notes with concern the

lack of effective implementation of federal legislation on the investigation, prosecution and punishment of such crimes against women in the region.

**27. The Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8, para. 24) and recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Conduct educational and awareness-raising campaigns targeting communities, policymakers and religious leaders and provide mandatory, systematic and effective capacity-building, education and training to judges, prosecutors, the police and other law enforcement officers on the strict application of criminal law provisions against harmful practices against women and girls, such as femicide, killings in the name of so-called honour, child marriage, forced marriage, abduction of women and girls for forced marriage and female genital mutilation;**

(b) **Adopt legislation explicitly criminalizing female genital mutilation;**

(c) **Develop and adopt standardized procedures and protocols on gender-sensitive investigations and investigation methods and ensure the effective investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of harmful practices;**

(d) **Ensure that victims of harmful practices have access to justice, including free legal aid where necessary, reparations and rehabilitation, including social, medical and psychological support.**

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

28. The Committee notes the seminars organized by the State party to exchange experiences of combating trafficking in women and girls and victim protection, and the cooperation at the regional and international levels. However, it notes with concern:

(a) The absence of a national action plan on trafficking and a coordination entity at the federal level;

(b) The absence of a system for early identification and referral of women and girls victims of trafficking to appropriate services;

(c) The lack of adequately funded shelters and medical, social and legal services, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for victims of trafficking;

(d) Reports of gender-based violence and discrimination against women in prostitution, including harassment, threats, intimidation, beatings and rape, and the absence of exit and reintegration programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution.

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

(a) **Develop and adopt, with a clear time frame, a national action plan to combat trafficking in persons and establish a coordination body to ensure its effective implementation at the federal and regional levels;**

(b) **Develop national guidelines for the early identification and referral of women and girls victims of trafficking to appropriate services, integrating a victim-centred and gender-responsive approach, and provide systematic training on such procedures for the police, immigration officials and other law enforcement officers;**

(c) **Revise article 6.11 of the Code of Administrative Offences to decriminalize women in prostitution and adopt measures to ensure the protection of women in prostitution against gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation, including by the police;**

(d) **Establish shelters and safe houses for victims of trafficking;**

(e) **Provide exit programmes and alternative income-generating opportunities for women who wish to leave prostitution;**

(f) **Adopt measures to reduce the demand for prostitution, including by carrying out educational and awareness-raising measures targeting the general public, in particular men and boys, with a focus on combating all forms of subordination and objectification of women.**

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

30. The Committee remains concerned about the low representation of women in decision-making positions in political and public life. In that regard, it notes that only two out of 10 Deputy Prime Ministers, one out of 21 federal ministers, 38 out of 170 Federation Council deputies and 74 out of 450 deputies of the State Duma are women, and that there are only three women ambassadors in the State party's foreign service. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of targeted measures, including temporary special measures in line with its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, to increase women's representation in public life.

31. **The Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8, para. 28) and recommends that the State party accelerate achievement of the full and equal participation of women, including at the regional and local levels, in political and public life, in line with its general recommendation No. 23, by:**

(a) **Adopting temporary special measures, including statutory quotas and a gender parity system in the public and foreign services, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, to increase women's representation in the State Duma, the Federation Council, ministerial positions, the judiciary and the foreign service, and introducing preferential recruitment of women to the civil service and the foreign service, paying particular attention to women belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups;**

(b) **Strengthening capacity-building for women politicians and candidates on leadership skills and political campaigning, and requiring political parties to include an equal number of women and men candidates on their electoral lists, with the women's and men's names appearing on alternating rows (the zipper system);**

(c) **Reinforcing awareness-raising among politicians, the media, religious and community leaders and the general public on the importance of the full, independent and democratic participation of women on an equal basis with men in political and public life to guarantee the implementation of the Convention.**

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

32. The Committee notes with concern the lack of information on activities by the State party related to women's participation in the process of peaceful negotiations and supporting security and the situation of women and girls, including internally displaced and refugee women and girls, in:

(a) The Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation (General Assembly resolutions [75/192](#) and [75/29](#));

(b) The conflict areas in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia (General Assembly resolution [74/300](#));

(c) The self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic".

33. In line with its general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, in particular with regard to the extraterritorial obligations of States parties, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) In line with the General Assembly resolution 75/29 of 7 December 2020, end its military operations and use peaceful means to resolve the conflicts, ensure full respect for international humanitarian law, effectively investigate allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by its armed forces and militia groups and ensure that women and girls affected by the conflict have effective access to justice, redress and assistance, including psychological assistance; and

(b) Adopt a comprehensive national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security and, in line with those resolutions, promote the meaningful inclusion and participation of women in formal and informal peace negotiations and in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

#### Nationality

34. The Committee notes with appreciation the information on the facilitation of birth registration procedures and legislative amendments to grant refugees and asylum seekers temporary residence permits, and on the procedure in place to grant citizenship of the Russian Federation to Russian-speaking nationals of the former republics of the Soviet Union. However, the Committee is concerned about the slow process of implementation and about reports that women still face barriers in obtaining citizenship and birth registration for their children, particularly refugee and asylum-seeking women, migrant women, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, Roma women and rural women.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Effectively implement the Federal Act on citizenship and the Federal Act on the legal status of foreign nationals throughout its territory so that women can acquire citizenship of the Russian Federation and register children's births, particularly refugee and asylum-seeking women, migrant women, Roma women and rural women, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women;

(b) Ratify the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

#### Education

36. The Committee notes with appreciation the high number of women in higher education and research institutions, and the initiatives to promote women's and girls' participation in non-traditional fields of study and career paths, in particular in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology. The Committee nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) Reports about segregation and discrimination in access to education against Roma, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls;

(b) The lack of comprehensive age-appropriate sexuality education at school;

(c) The persistence of discriminatory gender stereotypes in school curricula and textbooks and the lack of education on gender equality;

(d) The lack of effective measures to ensure the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence, harassment and bullying in schools and universities and the lack of effective complaint and redress mechanisms.

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

(a) **Ensure that girls and women belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, such as girls and women with disabilities and Roma, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking girls and women, have access to inclusive education;**

(b) **Introduce mandatory age-appropriate sexuality education in school curricula at all levels of education, including education on family planning, modern forms of contraception and responsible sexual behaviour;**

(c) **Integrate education on gender equality in accessible and inclusive formats into school curricula;**

(d) **Ensure the protection of women and girls in schools and universities from harassment and gender-based violence, including establishing effective reporting and accountability mechanisms, and endorse the Safe Schools Declaration;**

(e) **Develop a national anti-bullying policy to provide safe and inclusive educational environments free from discrimination, harassment and violence.**

### **Employment**

38. The Committee notes that the State Programme for Employment Promotion seeks to promote flexible and remote working arrangements and increase the number of childcare facilities in the State party. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) Vertical and horizontal occupational segregation and the persistent gender pay gap, with regional disparities, despite the recognition in national legislation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and that women continue to carry a disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work;

(b) The long list of restricted occupations and sectors that pose a risk to women's safety or health, despite the adoption of Ministry of Labour Order No. 512n of July 2019, seeking to reduce the number of restricted occupations from 456 to 100;

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

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

(a) **Strengthen measures to eliminate vertical and horizontal occupational segregation and enhance women's access to employment in higher decision-making positions in the private and public sectors, to effectively enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in order to narrow and ultimately close the gender pay gap, reduce regional disparities and equally share the burden of unpaid and domestic work between women and men;**

(b) **Review the list of restricted occupations and sectors that are deemed to pose a risk to women's safety or health, with a view to dismantling discriminatory gender stereotypes;**

(c) **Adopt legislation to explicitly prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace, ensure that victims have access to effective remedies and ensure that complaints about sexual harassment are effectively investigated, perpetrators prosecuted and adequately punished and victims protected from retaliation;**

**(d) Ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), of the International Labour Organization.**

### **Health**

40. The Committee notes the information on the launch in 2019 of the National Health-care Project, which aims at reducing maternal and infant mortality, addressing staff shortages in health-care facilities and improving women's access to health-care services. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) Restrictions on women's access to abortion, such as pre-abortion counselling requirements to provide women with alternative options to abortion;

(b) That only approximately 22 per cent of women of fertile age are using modern forms of contraception, owing to the lack of available information on such methods and the limited access of women and adolescent girls to adequate sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning services;

(c) That rural women, migrant women, refugee and asylum-seeking women and women in detention face barriers to access to basic health care, and on reports that women with disabilities, particularly women with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, are subjected to forced sterilization;

(d) Stigmatization of and discrimination against women living with HIV/AIDS and women using drugs.

**41. Recalling its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health and target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen measures to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of modern contraceptives to all women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups and in rural areas, and to prevent the forced sterilization of women and girls with disabilities and require their free and informed consent prior to any medical intervention;**

(b) **Adopt measures to combat and eliminate gender-based violence and discrimination against and stigmatization of women living with HIV/AIDS, women using drugs, women in detention and women with disabilities in health care and ensure that they have access to adequate health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, antiretroviral treatment and drug treatment;**

(c) **Guarantee the requirement for free, prior and informed consent for any medical intervention or treatment;**

(d) **Criminalize forced sterilization in the legislation of the State Party.**

### **Rural women**

42. The Committee notes the establishment of rural women's councils and initiatives to improve infrastructure and basic services in rural areas. However, it notes with concern that women account only for one third of farmers and holders of local government positions. It is also concerned about rural women's limited access to justice, education, formal employment, health care, credit and economic empowerment schemes and protection from gender-based violence.

**43. The Committee recommends that, in line with its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to ensure rural women's access to justice, education, formal employment, health care, credit and income-generating schemes, land ownership and shelters, protection orders and support services for victims of gender-based violence;**

(b) **Promote rural women's representation in decision-making processes and involve them in the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agricultural and other relevant policies.**

#### **Disadvantaged groups of women**

44. The Committee notes the adoption of Federal Act No. 11-FZ (2020), establishing a unified list of indigenous peoples in the State party and a procedure for registration. It notes with concern the lack of detailed information on the registration procedure and on the number of indigenous women belonging to indigenous peoples who have registered on the unified list to be able to have access their traditional lands and livelihoods and participate in decision-making processes at the local, regional and federal levels.

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

(a) **Adopt measures to facilitate the registration of indigenous women and girls on the unified list of indigenous peoples and ensure their access to education, social benefits and health care;**

(b) **Ensure and protect indigenous women's collective rights to traditional land and resources and to effective participation in decision-making bodies and processes at the local, regional and federal levels.**

46. The Committee notes with concern discriminatory provisions in the Federal Act No. 135-FZ (2013) banning the "promotion of non-traditional sexual relations to minors", which reinforce discriminatory stereotypes, stigmatization and hate speech in relation to lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, particularly in the North Caucasus region. The Committee is particularly concerned about the reported increase in gender-based violence such as femicide, attacks, intimidation and harassment against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, including on the Internet, and restrictions on their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. It further notes with concern reports of the prosecution and arrest of women based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression and their limited access to justice due to fear of reprisals and lack of protection.

47. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/RUS/CO/8, para. 42) and recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Repeal, within a clear time frame, all provisions in Federal Act No. 135-FZ (2013) that discriminate against women based on their sexual orientation or gender identity;**

(b) **Conduct public awareness-raising campaigns in all regions, particularly in the North Caucasus region, to address hate speech and stigmatization of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons in society and in the media and provide systematic capacity-building for law enforcement officials, including the police, on their duty to protect the rights of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons;**

(c) **Investigate, prosecute and adequately punish all acts of gender-based violence and hate crimes against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons and provide reparation to victims.**

48. The Committee is concerned about the prevalence of violence against women in centres for persons with disabilities and psychiatric hospitals.

49. **The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that all institutions such as centres for persons with disabilities and psychiatric hospitals are effectively monitored by independent authorities.**

50. The Committee is concerned about the prevalence of violence against women in detention.

51. **The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that institutions for women in detention are effectively monitored by independent authorities and that women in detention have access to justice and free legal aid and counselling.**

52. The Committee is concerned at the absence of a suitable legal framework that ensures equality before the law and justice for women and girls with disabilities. The Committee is also concerned at the prevalence of the welfare model and the lack of consideration of women and girls with disabilities in public policies.

53. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Amend its legal framework, and in particular the Civil Code and the Code of Civil Procedure, to ensure the legal capacity of women with disabilities;**

(b) **Step up its efforts to ensure that women with disabilities who are victims of human rights violations can access justice effectively;**

(c) **Adopt human rights-based positive action measures aimed at women with disabilities, in consultation with organizations of women with disabilities;**

(d) **Promote the development of independent living for women with disabilities while ensuring community-based personal assistance services.**

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

54. The Committee notes with concern the lack of a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of policies and action plans on climate change and disaster risk reduction, particularly for rural and indigenous women, even though they are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

55. **The Committee recommends that, in line with its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the State party review its climate change and energy policies and take into account the negative effects of climate change on the livelihoods of women, especially rural and indigenous women.**

#### **Marriage and family relations**

56. The Committee notes the introduction of mandatory notary agreements on the division of marital property and new safeguards to enforce child support alimony payments. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The exceptions to the minimum age of marriage, set at 18 years for women and men, under the Federal Act No. 140-FZ (1997) amending the Family Code, which allow for child marriage from the age of 16 years;

(b) Reports of polygamy and the lack of legal and economic protection of women in polygamous unions, and the application of discriminatory religious and customary laws on divorce and inheritance and the denial of child custody to women, particularly in the North Caucasus region;

(c) Reports of bride kidnapping, leading to child marriage or forced marriage.

57. In line with its general recommendations No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations and No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Revise article 13 of the Family Code to remove all exceptions to the minimum age of marriage of 18 years for women and men and explicitly criminalize violations;

(b) Enforce the prohibition of polygamy, ensure that discriminatory religious and customary laws on divorce, inheritance and child custody have no legal effect and are not applied in practice, and raise public awareness of the risks of polygamous and unregistered unions;

(c) Ensure that all cases of child marriage and forced marriage are prosecuted and that perpetrators are adequately punished, and provide support to women and girls in such forced unions.

#### **Data collection and analysis**

58. The Committee is concerned about the general lack of statistical data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, disability, geographical location and socioeconomic background, which are necessary to accurately assess the situation of women, determine the magnitude and nature of discrimination, develop informed and targeted policies and systematically monitor and evaluate progress achieved towards the realization of substantive equality between women and men in all areas covered by the Convention.

#### **Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention**

59. 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**

60. The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to further evaluate the implementation of the Convention in the context of the 25-year review of the implementation of the Declaration and Platform in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.

#### **Dissemination**

61. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.

**Ratification of other treaties**

62. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments<sup>1</sup> would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to ratify the International Convention 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**

63. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 13 (c), 29 (f) and 41 (b) above.

**Preparation of the next report**

64. The Committee requests the State party to submit its tenth periodic report, which is due in November 2025. The report should be submitted on time and cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

65. 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).

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<sup>1</sup> 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.