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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of
Belarus***

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

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission of the eighth periodic report of the State party, which was prepared in response to its list of issues prior to reporting (CEDAW/C/BLR/QPR/8). The Committee welcomes the oral presentation of the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the distinguished delegation of the State party which was headed by Ms. Marianna Shchotkina, Member of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus and Chairperson of the National Council on Gender Policy under the Council of Ministers. The delegation also included representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the National Statistical Committee, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

B. Positive Aspects

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

- (a) Amendments to article 181 and 171 of the Criminal Code (2015);
- (b) The Crime Prevention Act (2014);
- (c) The Human Trafficking Act (2012);

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

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

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

(b) Crisis rooms which provide temporary shelter inter alia to victims of domestic violence and of trafficking, the number of which has increased from 31 to 109 between 2011 and 2016;

(c) The “Home without Violence” campaign (2012-2015);

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

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Parliament

7. The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). It invites the National Assembly, in line with its mandate, to take necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.

Equality and non-discrimination

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

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

Access to Justice

10. The Committee notes with concern that many women in the State party are unaware of complaints procedures to claim their rights and that these mechanisms may not be effective. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that many women and the public at large, including relevant professionals, are unaware of their rights under the Convention and its Optional Protocol thereto, the Committee’s General Recommendations and its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/BLR/CO/7). The Committee also notes with concern the absence of any court decisions referring to provisions of the Convention.

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

(a) Provide continuous capacity building for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, law enforcement officials, civil servants, teachers, health-care professionals and all other relevant professionals and service providers, and train students in those fields on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto, the Committee’s General

Recommendations, the present concluding observations and all other domestic provisions on women's rights; and

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

National machinery for the advancement of women

12. The Committee notes with concern that the National Council on Gender Policy of the Council of Ministers only meets twice a year and that the Department of Population and Gender and Family Policy within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, focuses particularly on family and demographical issues, violence against women and trafficking. The Committee is concerned that consequently these bodies are not able to operate as effective national machinery for the advancement of women. Furthermore, the Committee notes with concern that the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2020 has not yet been adopted and that insufficient resources will be allocated to its implementation.

13. The Committee recommends that the State party establish a centralized national machinery for the advancement of women with a clearly defined mandate and responsibilities and provide it with adequate human, financial and technical resources enabling it to coordinate and effectively promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming. In so doing it also encourages the State party to ensure that the Department of Population and Gender and Family Policy within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection place an increased focus on gender equality and women's rights issues. Furthermore, it calls upon the State party to speedily adopt the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016 – 2020 and allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to its implementation.

National Human Rights Institutions

14. The Committee notes with concern that despite the commitment undertaken during its Universal Periodic Review, the State party has not yet established an independent national human rights institution.

15. The Committee encourages the State party to establish, within a clear timeframe, an independent national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles (General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993), with a broad mandate to protect women's human rights and promote gender equality. It invites the State party to seek the support and advice of OHCHR in the process.

Civil society including women human rights defenders

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

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

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

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

Temporary special measures

18. The Committee notes that the measures referred to in the State party report do not constitute temporary special measures in line with article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention. The Committee is further concerned about the persistence of inequalities between men and women in several fields.

19. The Committee recommends that the State party introduce specific legislation providing for the adoption and implementation of temporary special measures, in line with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004). The Committee also encourages the State party to raise public awareness about the importance of temporary special measures for accelerating the achievement of substantive gender equality in all fields, and apply it to areas such as employment and education

Stereotypes

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

21. The Committee recommends that the State party raise public awareness in collaboration with civil society and the media, targeting women, men, girls and boys, to overcome discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, and highlight the importance of women's equal participation in decision-making in the public and private sectors. It also recommends that the State party vigorously implement the prohibition of unethical advertisement contained in Article 26 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus of May 10, 2007 No. 225-Z "On Advertising" and sensitize the media and the advertising sector, with a view to promoting positive images of women as active participants in political, economic and social life. Furthermore, in view of the strong connection between stereotypes against women and violence against women, the Committee reminds the State party that it is paramount to link efforts to combat violence against women with efforts to combat prevailing gender-based stereotypes that discriminate against women.

Gender-based violence against women

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

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

(b) Reported frequent exposure of politically active women to physical violence by members of the police force;

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

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

(e) The risk for women who are subjected to domestic violence to be deprived of their parental rights, as their family might be perceived as a "family at social risk" with their children being institutionalized; and

(f) The lack of adequately equipped crisis rooms offering long-term shelter and the lack of specific functional shelters for victims of domestic violence.

23. While noting the elaboration of a law on the prevention of violence in the family, which takes into account the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), the Committee refers to Sustainable Development Goal 5.2 on the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, and recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to accelerate the finalization and adoption of the draft law and ensure that it criminalizes all forms of gender-based violence against women and provides victims with immediate protection and long-term rehabilitation. The Committee furthermore recommends that the State party:

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

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

(c) Increase the number of crisis rooms and ensure the availability of a sufficient number of shelters across the State party allowing for long-term stay of victims of domestic violence and their children;

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

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

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

(g) Provide mandatory training and adopt codes of conduct for police officers to ensure gender-sensitive behaviour and ensure that women victims of police violence have the possibility to report and that their allegations are effectively investigated and that perpetrators are adequately punished; and

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

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

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

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

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

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

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

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

27. The Committee recommends that the State party:

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

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

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

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

Participation in political and public life

28. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to increase the participation of women in political and public life, including the increase of female members in parliament. It is concerned, however, that women remain significantly underrepresented at the decision-

making levels in parliament and that they are concentrated in the public administration at middle and lower levels only.

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

Education

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

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

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

(c) Women are frequently enrolled in traditionally female dominated fields of study at vocational and university level; and

(d) Several state institutions of higher learning have a gendered admission policy, such as the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, which inter alia restrict the number of admitted female students and/or require higher passing scores for women.

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

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

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

(c) The same curriculum applies to boys and girls so that it offers the same "life skills lessons" to boys and girls, including through the usage of temporary special measures;

(d) Gender equality and gender sensitivity training is made an integral and mandatory component of teacher training at all levels; and

(e) As recommended in its previous concluding observations, intensify its efforts aimed at diversifying academic and vocational choices for women and men and

take further measures to encourage women and men to choose non-traditional fields of education and careers, e.g. by encouraging more men to participate in the formal education of children. (CEDAW/C/BLR/CO/7, para. 30) and furthermore provide them with career counselling on non-traditional career paths. It also recommends that the State party take immediate measures to ensure equal opportunities for women and men and girls and boys to attend all institutions of higher learning and that it furthermore strengthen women's leadership roles in academic institutions

Employment

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

(a) The Labour Code containing an overprotective list with a significant number of professions prohibited to women, allegedly to protect their health, especially their reproductive health;

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

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

(d) The introduction, in 2015, of a national tax via presidential decree No. 3 "On the Prevention of Social Parasitism", which is payable by persons who are unemployed in order to refund government expenditures, and imposed on parents outside the labour market taking care of children above the age of seven, which disproportionately affects women, as they are disproportionately involved in childrearing and household responsibilities.

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

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

(b) Increase the participation of women in senior level professions, inter alia on management boards, including through the use of temporary special measures, in line with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures;

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

(d) Promptly adopt legal amendments to ensure that the tax obligation introduced by presidential decree No. 3 "On the Prevention of Social Parasitism" does not apply to parents who are outside the labour market to take care of children.

Sexual harassment in the workplace

34. The Committee reiterates its previous concerns that article 170 of the Criminal Code may not provide adequate protection from sexual harassment in the workplace, as the burden of proof is very high in criminal cases and certain discriminatory practices in the form of sexual harassment might not amount to behaviour punishable under this provision (CEDAW/C/BLR/CO/7, para. 31). It furthermore notes with concern that sexual

harassment in the workplace is under-reported due to women's fear of stigmatization and dismissal. It is further concerned about reports indicating that a relatively high number of victims of sexual harassment in the workplace have been dismissed or pushed to resign following such harassment.

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

Health

36. The Committee notes with appreciation the continuously improving health status among women. It is, however, concerned about the increasing anti-abortion movement as well as the limited use of contraceptives, including for "moral reasons" and due to the high costs of hormonal contraceptives. The Committee furthermore notes with concern that rates of breast and cervical cancer are relatively high.

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

Economic and social benefits

38. The Committee is concerned that time spent for the care of children or relatives is not computed towards pension benefits, which has a particularly negative effect on women as they are disproportionately involved in this type of work. The Committee furthermore notes with concern that the retirement age for women is five years earlier than for men, which reduces women's pension and contributes to old age poverty risk.

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

Rural women

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

41. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women and recommends that it promote the empowerment of rural women and ensure their economic and social independence. In doing so, the State party should further reduce the gender wage gap in the agricultural sector and introduce measures, including temporary special

measures, in line with article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, to provide for women's equal participation in decision-making in state-owned farms. It also recommends that the State party:

(a) Increase the number of child care facilities in rural areas in order to facilitate the reconciliation of job and family duties; and

(b) Collect data on the situation of rural women, relevant areas under the Convention, and include the results in its next periodic report.

Disadvantaged groups of women

Women with disabilities

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

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

(a) Have full access to reproductive health information and services and that abortions and sterilizations performed on women with disabilities are strictly subject to their free, prior and informed consent; and

(b) May under no circumstances be subjected to any form of pressure or threat to give up custody of their children.

Women in detention

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

45. The Committee recommends that the State party improve women's conditions of detention in line with the United Nations rules for the treatment of women prisoners and non-custodial measures for women offenders (the Bangkok rules). It recommends that the State party ensure that:

(a) Women detainees subjected to labour are entitled to the minimum wage;

(b) Detained women's living and working conditions are decent and in line with international standards and that monitoring and oversight mechanism are in place and clear procedures for complaints are available;

(c) Male staff in detention facilities receive mandatory training on women's rights and gender-sensitive behaviour, that the number of female staff is increased and that detainees have the possibility to correspond on a confidential basis with

outside judicial and complaints' bodies, and that closed complaints boxes be installed in the prisons; and

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

Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women

46. The Committee is concerned about significant societal discrimination, stigmatization and violence, including by the police, experienced by lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) women. It also notes with concern that discrimination and hate crimes against LBT women are frequently not prosecuted. It is furthermore concerned that the recently adopted Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 362-Z providing for amendments to normative acts for the protection of children from harmful information, which is inter alia defined as information discrediting the traditional family and marriage institute, might be used to discriminate against LBT women.

47. The Committee recommends that the State party adequately combat discrimination, harassment and violence against LBT women and/or LBT human rights defenders, and ensure that every crime against them is promptly investigated, prosecuted and adequately punished. It also recommends that the State party ensure an interpretation of Law 362-Z, that will not restrict the dissemination of information on LBT women.

Marriage and family relations

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

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

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

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

Amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

50. The Committee encourages the State party 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.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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

Dissemination

53. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official 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 Parliament and to the judiciary, to enable their full implementation

Ratification of other treaties

54. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; 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 concluding observations

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

Preparation of the next report

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

57. The Committee requests the State party to follow the “Harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents” (HRI/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1).
