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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 combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Guinea*

1. The Committee considered the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Guinea ([CEDAW/C/GIN/7-8](#)) at its 1261st and 1262nd meetings, on 30 October 2014 (see [CEDAW/C/SR.1261](#) and 1262). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in [CEDAW/C/GIN/Q/7-8](#) and the responses of Guinea are contained in [CEDAW/C/GIN/Q/7-8/Add.1](#).

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates that the State party submitted its combined seventh and eighth periodic reports. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by its pre-sessional working group and 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. The Committee also expresses its support to the State party in the fight against the Ebola outbreak.

3. The Committee commends the State party for its delegation, which was headed by the Minister for Social Action and the Advancement of Women and Children, Sanaba Kaba. It also commends the participation of members of the National Assembly in the delegation. The delegation also included the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Guinea to the United Nations Office at Geneva and representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Ministry for Social Action and the Advancement of Women and Children and other representatives of the Permanent Mission of Guinea to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

* Adopted by the Committee at its fifty-ninth session, meeting from 20 October to 7 November 2014.



B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2007 of the State party's combined fourth to sixth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/GIN/4-6) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption in 2010 of the following:

(a) New Constitution, recognizing in article 8 the principle of equality for men and women under the law;

(b) New Electoral Code, establishing a 30 per cent quota for women's representation on electoral lists.

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) Strategic plan for the acceleration of the eradication of female genital mutilation for 2012-2016;

(b) National gender policy, in 2011;

(c) National strategy for the fight against gender-based violence, in 2010;

(d) National strategic framework to combat HIV/AIDS for 2008-2017, including effective means of addressing the concerns of women and girls;

(e) National action plan on implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) for 2009-2013.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, both in 2008.

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

General context

8. The Committee is aware of the numerous problems that the State party faces due to the Ebola outbreak, and it recognizes and fully supports the efforts undertaken by the State party to fight the outbreak and reduce the impact of the outbreak on the lives and health of the population, particularly women as caregivers, as well as the impact on the economy, food security, finances and the ability of the State party to respect, protect and promote women's rights. The Committee

welcomes the information regarding the part of the national budget allotted to education, but is concerned that other budget allotments, notably in the fields of health, social protection, rural development and justice, are not sufficient to support gender equality programmes, measures to improve access to justice and other measures in those fields.

9. The Committee supports the efforts of the State party and encourages it:

(a) To seek the international community's support to overcome the disruption in many areas resulting from the Ebola outbreak, in particular to overcome the budgetary problems arising from the outbreak, to establish adequate health infrastructure and to take economic measures to ensure food security and income;

(b) To mobilize its domestic resources, giving priority to measures to support gender equality in all fields.

10. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party to strengthen the rule of law through the current judicial reform and the internal security system reform, including with regard to detention facilities, the paralegal and jurist initiative, as well as the efforts of commissions inquiring into grave violations of human rights. The Committee notes, however, that poor governance by previous regimes and social and economic inequalities, as well as a persistent climate of insecurity and impunity, have had a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights by the entire population, in particular women and girls, and continue to constitute serious obstacles to the full implementation of the Convention. The Committee is also concerned at the difficulties that women have encountered in accessing the relevant institutions at the local and prefectural levels.

11. The Committee encourages the State party:

(a) To continue to seek support from the international community, the United Nations system and donor organizations in order to build the human and technical capacity necessary to allow the State party to strengthen the rule of law, improve its security system, including for persons in detention, support efforts resulting from the paralegal and jurist initiative to raise women's awareness of their rights and fully implement its obligations under the Convention;

(b) To continue to strengthen its institutions, including the national machinery for the advancement of women, in particular at the local and prefectural levels;

(c) To strengthen its judiciary sector and to enhance its fight against impunity;

(d) To continue to cooperate with non-governmental and community-based organizations, including by supporting them financially, to ensure the full implementation of its obligations under the Convention.

Legislative framework

12. The Committee notes that article 151 of the Constitution establishes the prevalence of international conventions over national legislation. The Committee is concerned, however, about the continued existence of many discriminatory

provisions in the State party's legislation, as well as grave discrimination arising from the coexistence of the legal system with discriminatory traditional and religious customs and practices.

13. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the full implementation of article 151 of the Constitution and that all measures are taken to guarantee, in practice, the prevalence of the Convention over discriminatory customs and cultural and traditional practices.

14. The Committee welcomes the ongoing revision of discriminatory provisions in the Civil Code, the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code. It also notes the current drafting of a bill on gender equality. The Committee is nonetheless concerned about the delay in finalizing the reform of the Civil Code and about the introduction of a new discriminatory provision relating to polygamy; it also notes the persistence of discriminatory positions in the draft Criminal Code. It takes note that the instruments of ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) were deposited in 2012. It also notes that a national discussion has opened regarding the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, although the State party had already expressed its will to ratify the Optional Protocol during the universal periodic review in 2010.

15. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Finalize, within a clear time frame, the revision of the Civil Code, the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code, in consultation with civil society, with a view to bringing its national legislation into conformity with the Convention;**

(b) **Delete from the revised draft Civil Code all the discriminatory provisions relating to polygamy, as well as any other discriminatory provisions that affect women;**

(c) **Establish a parliamentary commission to evaluate systematically the conformity of the reviewed texts with the Convention, with the participation of civil society;**

(d) **Ratify without delay the Optional Protocol to the Convention, in accordance with the announcement made by the State party in 2010 during the universal periodic review;**

(e) **Ensure the full effect of the ratification process of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol), signed in 2003.**

Definition of discrimination against women

16. While noting that the Convention is an integral part of the State party's national law, the Committee remains concerned that the absence of a specific legal provision in its national legislation, with a definition of discrimination against women in accordance with article 1 of the Convention, which encompasses both direct and indirect discrimination, constitutes an impediment to the full implementation of the Convention in the State party ([CEDAW/C/GIN/CO/6](#), para. 10).

17. The Committee reiterates its recommendation that the State party include without delay the prohibition of discrimination against women in its national law, encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination, in line with article 1 of the Convention.

Access to justice

18. The Committee notes the appointment of investigating judges to follow up on the conclusions of the International Commission of Inquiry mandated to establish the facts and circumstances of the events of 28 September 2009, which confirmed at least 109 instances of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women, as well as the conclusions of the National Commission of Inquiry. The Committee is deeply concerned, however, at the lack of sanctions against and the persistent impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of those forms of sexual violence.

19. The Committee urges the State party to ensure the prompt investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of acts of violence against women, in accordance with the conclusions of the National Commission of Inquiry and the International Commission of Inquiry, as well as the suspension from office of any alleged perpetrators holding public office.

20. The Committee welcomes the paralegal project that provides training for many women on their rights, the ongoing reform of the judiciary and the changes introduced in draft legislation that would allow civil society organizations to lodge complaints on behalf of victims as a party to the proceedings. The Committee is concerned, however, at the persistent barriers to women's access to justice, such as the low level of legal literacy among women and the limited human, financial and technical resources of the judiciary. Similarly, while noting the establishment of a centre for providing legal support to women within the Ministry for Social Action and the Advancement of Women and Children, the Committee is concerned about the limited accessibility of that centre for women living outside the capital and about the lack of similar centres at the prefectural and local levels. The Committee is also concerned that women in detention have limited access to effective remedies, including limited access to mechanisms for lodging complaints about their conditions of detention.

21. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Develop and support awareness-raising activities conducted by the State party and non-governmental organizations in order to increase women's legal literacy;

(b) Enhance its efforts to ensure that the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations are sufficiently known and used by the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and that they are made an integral part of the capacity-building programmes for judges, lawyers and prosecutors;

(c) Finalize, within a clear time frame and as a matter of priority, the reform of the judiciary, including the enactment of legislation giving legal standing to civil society organizations to enable them to lodge complaints on behalf of victims of human rights violations;

(d) **Accompany the legal reform with implementation mechanisms, encompassing concrete and adequate measures;**

(e) **Strengthen initiatives such as the establishment of legal support centres for women throughout the country to facilitate women's access to justice;**

(f) **Improve access to effective complaint mechanisms for women in detention and improve the conditions in women's detention facilities, in accordance with international standards, including through the implementation of the internal security sector reform;**

(g) **Continue to seek technical support from the international community, including the United Nations system.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

22. The Committee welcomes the strengthening of the national machinery for the advancement of women by the establishment of gender units in several ministerial departments; the observatory for gender-based violence within the Ministry for Social Action and the Advancement of Women and Children; and the Office for the Protection of Gender, Children and Public Morals within the Ministry for Security and the Protection of the Interior. The Committee remains concerned, however, that the national machinery lacks the human, financial and technical resources necessary to effectively carry out its mandate to promote equality of women and men and advance women's rights. The Committee also notes the multitude of programmes and institutions in place and the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination.

23. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its national machinery for the advancement of women at the national, prefectural and local levels by clearly defining the mandates and responsibilities of its various components and by allocating sufficient human, financial and technical resources to ensure that they can fully and adequately perform all their functions. Those measures should, in particular, include the provision of the means necessary to ensure better and more effective cooperation and coordination between the various mechanisms, as well as between those mechanisms and civil society.**

National human rights institution

24. While noting the existence of a national human rights observatory, the Committee is concerned about the absence of an independent national human rights institution in the State party.

25. **The Committee recommends that the State party consider establishing an independent national human rights institution, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134, as provided for in title XIV of its Constitution.**

Temporary special measures

26. The Committee is concerned that the State party may not have a clear understanding of the nature, purpose and necessity of temporary special measures to accelerate women's substantive equality with men.

27. **The Committee recommends that the State party clearly distinguish in its policies and programmes between general social and economic policies that benefit women and temporary special measures under article 4 (1) of the Convention that are necessary to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality of women and men in various areas, as clarified by the Committee in its general recommendation No. 25 on temporary special measures. The Committee also urges the State party to create a legislative basis for the adoption of temporary special measures and to make use of such measures in all areas covered by the Convention where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including in public and political life, and to improve the situation of rural women.**

Stereotypes and harmful practices

28. The Committee welcomes the commitment of the State party to fighting negative stereotypes and harmful practices regarding women's rights. It is, however, concerned at the persistence of deeply rooted gender stereotypes, in addition to practices that are harmful to women, such as female genital mutilation, forced marriages, child marriages, polygamy or succession rites relating to widowhood, including levirate and sororate. It regrets the absence of a strategy to combat those stereotypes and harmful practices through education and awareness-raising campaigns, including campaigns using the media, and through legislation prohibiting such practices.

29. **The Committee calls upon the State party:**

(a) **To adopt legislation to prevent and sanction all practices harmful to women;**

(b) **To adopt strategies, including education, information and awareness-raising campaigns for the general public, in particular girls and women, parents, teachers and religious leaders, aimed at the elimination of stereotypes discriminating against and practices harmful to women, and to establish a baseline and clear indicators to measure the progress and results of such strategies;**

(c) **To set up a system of monitoring and periodic reporting on harmful practices to enable the authorities, including at the local level, to focus awareness-raising activities on specific areas or specific groups of the population throughout the State party;**

(d) **To strengthen measures to engage the media and non-governmental organizations in combating negative stereotypes and social attitudes regarding women, in particular in rural areas and among disadvantaged and marginalized groups.**

Female genital mutilation

30. While noting the entrenched cultural underpinning of female genital mutilation and its prohibition under the Reproductive Health Act of 2000 and the Child Code of 2008, the Committee is deeply concerned about the persisting very high incidence of female genital mutilation and the impunity of the perpetrators and practitioners, in particular in cases involving medical professionals. The Committee notes the serious health complications for girls and women arising from the practice of female genital mutilation, which, in some cases, may lead to death.

31. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) **To strengthen efforts, in cooperation with civil society, traditional and religious leaders, to lead its preventive strategies and raise awareness of the negative impact of female genital mutilation on the lives of girls and women and the need for both men and women to recognize it as a human rights violation, in order to eliminate the practice of female genital mutilation and its underlying cultural and traditional beliefs;**

(b) **To provide training for the police and other law enforcement officials, health and social workers and the judiciary on the strict application of legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation;**

(c) **To ensure that the perpetrators and practitioners of female genital mutilation are effectively investigated, prosecuted and punished.**

Violence against women

32. The Committee notes with satisfaction the adoption of a national strategy on violence against women, as well as partnerships with civil society to provide support to victims of such violence. The Committee remains concerned, however, at:

(a) The persisting high prevalence of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence, rape and sexual harassment, as well as the limited number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions in such cases;

(b) The absence in the State party of a comprehensive law on violence against women and its failure to criminalize marital rape;

(c) The lack of public awareness of the criminal nature of violence against women and the lack of research on its root causes and consequences;

(d) The insufficient support for women who are victims of violence.

33. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) **To ensure the effective implementation of the national strategy on violence against women;**

(b) **To provide capacity-building for the judiciary, the police and other law enforcement authorities, as well as health and social workers, on the strict application of legal provisions aimed at combating violence against women;**

(c) **To ensure that women who are victims of domestic violence have full access to legal remedies, investigate all cases of violence against women, and prosecute and adequately punish the perpetrators of such violence;**

(d) **To adopt a comprehensive law on violence against women and ensure that all its forms, including domestic violence, marital rape and sexual harassment, are criminalized in accordance with international law;**

(e) **To strengthen mechanisms for providing assistance to victims of gender-based violence, including medical and psychological support, free legal assistance and shelters;**

(f) **To raise public awareness, through the media and education programmes, of the criminal nature of violence against women.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

34. The Committee, while welcoming the creation of the National Committee for the Fight against Human Trafficking, which includes civil society representatives, notes with concern that the National Committee does not meet frequently and does not have the necessary human and financial resources. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party in the area of international cooperation against trafficking. The Committee is, however, concerned at the lack of resources for the implementation of the national action plan against human trafficking and the absence of a system to collect disaggregated data on trafficking in women and girls to, from and within the State party, as well as to identify women at risk of being trafficked. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of information and data on women in prostitution, as well as on policies and programmes for the rehabilitation of women in prostitution and the lack of measures taken to tackle the root causes of prostitution. The Committee is further concerned that the current Criminal Code does not sanction all forms of trafficking.

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

(a) **Finalize the revision of its Criminal Code with a view to preventing and sanctioning all forms of trafficking;**

(b) **Systematically collect information on trafficking in women and girls to, from and within the State party in order to take informed measures to tackle the phenomenon;**

(c) **Allocate adequate human, financial and technical resources to the National Committee for the Fight against Human Trafficking, as well as for the implementation of the national action plan against human trafficking;**

(d) **Enhance efforts to build the capacity of law enforcement and border patrol authorities so as to increase their ability to recognize potential victims of trafficking and provide assistance and to strengthen efforts to investigate and prosecute traffickers;**

(e) **Pursue its cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international levels so as to further curb this phenomenon;**

(f) **Analyse and address the root causes of trafficking and prostitution and develop reintegration programmes for women and girls in prostitution, including by providing shelters and alternative income-generating opportunities.**

Participation in political and public life

36. The Committee welcomes the adoption of articles 103, 115 and 129 of the Electoral Code, establishing a 30 per cent quota for women's representation on electoral lists for national and local elections, as well as the adoption of a national policy on gender, focusing, inter alia, on ensuring women's equal access to decision-making bodies, including within the Government. It also notes the creation of a caucus of women members of the National Assembly. It also notes with satisfaction the project to rejuvenate and feminize within the global reform of the administration. The Committee remains concerned, however, at the low participation of women in the National Assembly (22 per cent), in the Government (15 per cent of ministerial positions) and in public administration (24 per cent).

37. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Adopt temporary special measures, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on temporary special measures, such as a law establishing a zipper system providing for alternation between women and men candidates on the electoral lists of political parties or raising quotas;**

(b) **Include monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms to ensure that political parties respect temporary special measures;**

(c) **Conduct campaigns to raise the awareness of the general public, in particular rural women, about the importance of women's equal participation in political and public life;**

(d) **Provide incentives for political parties to nominate equal numbers of women and men as candidates and strengthen targeted training and mentoring programmes on leadership and negotiating skills for current and potential women candidates;**

(e) **Evaluate and analyse the results and the impact of the project to rejuvenate and feminize within the global reform of the administration;**

(f) **Remove the obstacles to women's equal representation in the legislative body and other positions;**

(g) **Closely cooperate with the caucus of women members of the National Assembly.**

Women and peace and security

38. The Committee notes the national action plan on implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), as well as the establishment of a network and steering committee for its implementation, and various activities such as building capacity in the area of women's rights among legal professionals and members of the defence or security forces.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to fully involve women at all stages of the peace process, including in decision-making, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and ensure that it takes into consideration the full spectrum of the Council's women and peace and security agenda as reflected in Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 2122 (2013).

Nationality

40. The Committee notes with concern that certain provisions of the Civil Code continue to contradict article 9 of the Convention and discriminate against Guinean women, since only men transmit their nationality automatically to their children.

41. The Committee recommends that the State party expeditiously amend the Civil Code so as to bring it into conformity with article 9 of the Convention.

Education

42. The Committee appreciates the importance given by the State party to education, as reflected in its budget and the recent construction of 2,800 classrooms throughout the State party. It notes the interministerial module on HIV/AIDS, prevention of child marriage, early pregnancy and female genital mutilation, designed to be used for sensitizing children and adolescents in schools. The Committee also welcomes the initiatives of the State party to facilitate the access of women to scientific and technical fields. The Committee is concerned, however, about:

- (a) The high rate of illiteracy among women;
- (b) The continued low enrolment rate of girls, at all levels of education, owing to stereotypes and cultural barriers regarding access by women and girls to education;
- (c) The high dropout rate among girls, owing, inter alia, to child marriage and early pregnancy, and the lack of measures to support and encourage pregnant girls to stay in school;
- (d) The insufficient encouragement for women and girls to access traditionally male-dominated fields of education and careers;
- (e) The persistence of stereotypes and harmful practices despite the creation of modules to sensitize children and adolescents about those issues, and the need to intensify those initiatives;
- (f) The lack of security for girls in schools and, in particular, the risk of sexual harassment and abuse by teachers.

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

- (a) **Strengthen, as a matter of priority, adult literacy programmes, especially for women in rural areas;**
- (b) **Ensure that girls and young women have equal access, in practice, to all levels of education, including by eliminating direct and indirect costs of schooling, preventing child marriage, providing incentives for parents to send their daughters to school and building appropriate sanitary facilities in existing and new schools;**
- (c) **Take proactive measures to retain girls in school, such as providing support to pregnant girls, thereby enabling them to remain in school or facilitating their return to school after giving birth;**
- (d) **Raise awareness among communities, families, pupils, teachers and decision makers, especially men, about the importance of education for women and girls;**
- (e) **Investigate and prosecute cases of sexual harassment and abuse in school;**
- (f) **Encourage women and girls to choose non-traditional fields of education and careers, such as technical and vocational education and training in traditionally male-dominated areas, including technology and engineering, to broaden career options and occupational choices;**

(g) **Develop indicators and benchmarks to evaluate the barriers and obstacles to education as tools for developing relevant programmes and measures;**

(h) **Continue to develop and promote age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights to address teenage pregnancies, as well as education on prevention of child marriage, early pregnancy and female genital mutilation at all levels of the educational system.**

Employment

44. The Committee recognizes the efforts undertaken by the State party to fight the Ebola outbreak. The Committee is concerned, however, by the impact of the outbreak on the situation of women in the agricultural sector regarding their income, the possibility of transporting produce to cities, the restrictions on the sale or export of some kinds of produce and the risks for future food security.

45. The Committee urges the State party to consider the specific situation of women, to adopt specific measures to promote alternative income-generating opportunities for women active in the agricultural sector and to take measures to ensure food security.

46. The Committee notes that article 20 of the Constitution, the general public service regulations and the Labour Code all recognize equality of women and men regarding labour rights. The Committee welcomes the capacity-building activities such as microcredit programmes and the construction of centres supporting the economic empowerment of women. The Committee is concerned, however, about:

(a) The continued existence of discriminatory provisions in the State party's legislation, including provisions on the payment of family benefits of civil servants to fathers only;

(b) The widespread poverty among women despite the wealth of natural resources in the country and the lack of measures to introduce a social protection network for women in the informal sector;

(c) The limited representation of women (10 per cent) in the economically active population of the formal sector; most women are employed within the informal sector, without social benefits such as maternity leave;

(d) The limited access of programmes for the empowerment of women, such as programmes for the reconciliation of family and work responsibilities for women, and the difficulties in fully implementing a microcredit network that covers all parts of the country;

(e) The continued very high level of child labour, including the worst forms of child labour, such as in the mining industry and domestic labour, as well as labour involving very young children.

47. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Take all appropriate measures to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, in accordance with article 11 of the Convention, including through the use of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1);**

(b) Take all appropriate measures to fight poverty, adopt economic policies recognizing the importance of the role of women and their economic empowerment and improve the exploitation of natural resources;

(c) Revise its labour legislation to bring it into conformity with the Convention and remove all discriminatory provisions, including the provisions on the payment of family benefits of civil servants to fathers only and on the prohibition of night work for women civil servants;

(d) Collect sex-disaggregated data and conduct studies on the situation of women in the formal sector and the informal sector and take effective measures to monitor and improve the working conditions of women in those sectors by removing the obstacles that women face in entering the labour force, by implementing measures to promote reconciliation of the family and work responsibilities of women and men and by providing a basic legal framework for the informal sector;

(e) Strengthen the economic empowerment of women as a way to boost the national economy of the State party, by ensuring the full implementation of microcredit programmes, and address occupational segregation by intensifying technical and vocational training for women in traditionally male-dominated fields, including technology and engineering;

(f) Strengthen its efforts to eradicate bonded labour, including the worst forms of child labour and domestic servitude, and ensure the effective implementation of the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), of the International Labour Organization, such as increased inspections and the imposition of fines for employers of women and men working in exploitative and hazardous conditions.

Health

48. The Committee commends the efforts of the State party to contain the Ebola outbreak. It is concerned, however, about the impact of the outbreak on women's life and health and about how women's roles as caregivers put them at greater risk of infection. It is also concerned about the impact of the outbreak on the already weak national health system.

49. **The Committee urges the State party, in programming to contain the disease, to consider the gender roles and responsibilities that affect exposure to the disease and core issues such as women's unequal access to information and unequal access to health care, as well as the need to restructure and reinforce the health system.**

50. The Committee notes the progress that the State party has made to improve the health of women, especially in the area of reproductive health, including the adoption of the national road map for the accelerating the reduction of maternal, newborn and child mortality for 2012-2015, the campaign on accelerated reduction of maternal mortality in Africa and the initiative for the provision of free obstetric care and the creation of midwife networks. The Committee is concerned, however, about:

(a) The persisting high maternal mortality rate linked to inadequate prenatal care and the limited number of assisted childbirths, as well as the high number of early pregnancies, the State party's efforts notwithstanding;

(b) Women's limited access to basic health-care services, in particular in rural areas; the existence of sociocultural factors that prevent women from accessing those services; the lack of adequate health infrastructure and the insufficient human and financial resources allocated to the health sector;

(c) The discontinuation of vocational training for midwives;

(d) The lack of resources to fully implement the policy on free obstetric care.

51. In line with its general recommendation No. 24 on women and health, the Committee calls upon the State party:

(a) **To increase the access of women and girls to basic health-care services, in particular in rural areas, and to address the barriers to women's access to health-care services, including sociocultural barriers;**

(b) **To increase the funding allocated to health care, the number of health-care facilities and the number of trained health-care providers and medical personnel;**

(c) **To increase the training of midwives to improve the access of women and girls to adequate health care;**

(d) **To strengthen the programme for the reduction of maternal, newborn and child mortality and to ensure the full implementation of the programme for free obstetric care, with wider geographical coverage, by providing adequate financial and human resources;**

(e) **To widely promote age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, in particular by undertaking large-scale campaigns to raise awareness about available contraceptive methods, and to increase access to comprehensive, safe and affordable contraceptives and access to information on family planning for people of all ages throughout the country;**

(f) **To ensure the adoption and implementation of the national action plan to reposition family planning, and the allocation of adequate human and financial resources for its implementation.**

Rural women

52. The Committee is concerned about shortcomings of programmes such as the Country Strategic Opportunities Programme for 2009-2014 and the national agricultural support programme, the extreme poverty and illiteracy among women in rural areas, and the limited access of rural women to land ownership, safe drinking water, health care and legal aid.

53. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Promote equality of women and men as an explicit component of its national development plans and policies, in particular those aimed at increasing literacy, alleviating poverty and achieving sustainable development;**

(b) **Enhance the economic and political empowerment of women in rural areas through the use of temporary special measures, in order to ensure that women participate in decision-making and the management of resources, in particular land, water and forest resources;**

(c) **Assess and evaluate, with the participation of women's organizations, the implementation of programmes such as the Country Strategic Opportunities Programme and the national agricultural support programme and develop gender-responsive land policies;**

(d) **Strengthen programmes for increasing access to safe drinking water, literacy campaigns, health care and legal aid throughout the country.**

Family relations

54. The Committee takes note with satisfaction of the State party's commitment to the revision of the Civil Code. It notes that, according to information given by the State party, the draft Civil Code is compatible with the Convention and will replace all existing discriminatory provisions, such as the provisions about the age of marriage being lower for girls than for boys and about men being the head of the family, thereby having many rights that women do not have, in particular with regard to the custody of minor children and the choice of domicile. The Committee is concerned, however, about the insertion in the draft Civil Code of a provision allowing polygamy. While noting the State party's efforts to register all marriages, including marriages conducted by religious or customary authorities, the Committee continues to be concerned that women married under customary law or religious law do not enjoy full access to the rights identified in the Convention.

55. The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure that the current draft of the Civil Code is in line with the Convention, in particular with regard to discouraging polygamy with a view to prohibiting it, and to finalize the adoption of the draft Civil Code without further delay. The Committee encourages the State party to pursue its efforts to register all marriages, facilitate access to civil tribunals for all women and take steps to ensure equal rights of both spouses married under customary or religious law, in line with the Convention.

Disadvantaged groups of women

56. The Committee is concerned about the situation of women heads of households, widows, refugees and women with disabilities, who often suffer multiple forms of discrimination, especially with regard to access to land, education, employment, adequate housing, health care and social services. It notes with regret the limited information provided by the State party in this regard.

57. The Committee requests the State party to include in its next periodic report detailed information, including disaggregated data and other information on specific programmes and achievements, on the situation of women heads of households, widows, refugees and women with disabilities.

Data collection and analysis

58. The Committee is concerned at the lack, or limited availability, of data disaggregated by sex in a number of areas covered by the Convention that are

necessary for targeted policymaking. It is also concerned about the lack of systematically inserted indicators and clear time frames in the existing plans of action and the lack of monitoring.

59. The Committee calls upon the State party to give priority to the systematic collection of comprehensive data disaggregated by sex and measurable indicators to assess trends in the situation of women and the progress achieved towards de facto equality and, in that connection, it wishes to draw the State party's attention to general recommendation No. 9 on statistical data concerning the situation of women. The Committee invites the State party, as necessary, to seek international assistance in the development of such data-collection and analysis efforts and to ensure that such efforts are informed by the needs of users of the data.

Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

60. 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 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

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

Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development framework

62. 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

63. 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 that the present concluding observations be disseminated in a timely manner, 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 ministries, the National Assembly and 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 organizations, universities, research institutions and the media. It recommends that the present concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local and community levels to enable their implementation. In addition, the Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations to all stakeholders.

Technical assistance

64. 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

65. 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 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a party.

Follow-up to the concluding observations

66. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 21 (c) and (g) and 51 (b), (c) and (d) above.

Preparation of the next report

67. The Committee invites the State party to submit its ninth periodic report in November 2018.

68. 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/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).

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.