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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

Forty-sixth session
12 – 30 July 2010

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Albania

1. The Committee considered the third periodic report (CEDAW/C/ALB/3) at its 942nd and 943rd meetings, on 26 July 2010 (see CEDAW/C/SR/942 and 943). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/ALB/Q/3 and the responses of Albania are contained in CEDAW/C/ALB/Q/3/Add.1.

Introduction

2. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its third periodic report, which was well structured and in general followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of reports, with references to the previous concluding observations, although it lacked references to the Committee's general recommendations, was overdue, and provided limited sex-disaggregated statistics and qualitative data on the situation of women in the areas covered by the Convention, in particular in respect of women from disadvantaged groups. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its oral presentation, the extensive written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the Committee's pre-session working group and the further clarifications to the questions posed orally by the Committee.

3. The Committee commends the State party for its delegation, which was headed by the Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and included an expert from the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue that took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee but regrets that no answers were provided to some of the questions and that questions posed were not always answered in a clear and precise manner.

4. The Committee welcomes the State party's recognition of the positive contribution made by non-governmental women's and human rights organizations in the implementation of the Convention and in preparation of the report.

Positive aspects

5. The Committee notes with satisfaction the accession, on 23 June 2003, to the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

6. The Committee also notes with satisfaction that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified or acceded to the following international instruments:

- a. Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- b. Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;
- c. Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- d. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict;
- e. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
- f. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- g. International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and
- h. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

7. The Committee also welcomes the State party's ratification, on 26 November 2004, of the European Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes, and, on 6 February 2007, of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

8. The Committee further welcomes the laws enacted since the consideration of the last report advancing the situation of women and eliminating discrimination based on sex and gender, as well as aimed at intersecting (multiple) forms of discrimination against women, such as the new Family Code, Law No. 9062 of 8 May 2003; Law No. 9669 on Measures against Violence in Family Relations of 18 January 2006; the new Law No. 9970 on Gender Equality in Society of 24 July 2008, which contains a definition of discrimination against women in line with article 1 of the Convention; amendments to the Electoral Code of 29 December 2008 aimed at increasing the number of women running as candidates for national and local elections; Law No. 10221 on Protection from Discrimination of 4 February 2010, which makes Albania one of the few States parties that expressly prohibits discrimination, inter alia, on the grounds of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation; and amendments to the Penal Code with regard to trafficking in women and girls.

9. The Committee commends the State party for programmes adopted with the aim of accelerating elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, including the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence 2007-2010; the National Strategy for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings 2005-2007; the new National Strategy and Action Plan for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings for 2008-2010; and the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Fight against Trafficking in Children and Protection of Child Victims of Trafficking 2008-2010.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

10. The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement all the provisions of the Convention and views the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding observations as requiring the priority attention of the State party between now and the submission of the next periodic report. Consequently, the Committee urges the State party to focus on those areas in its implementation activities and to report on action taken and results achieved in its next periodic report. The Committee calls upon the State party to submit the present concluding observations to all relevant ministries, to the Parliament (Assembly – *Kuvendi*), and to the judiciary, so as to ensure their full implementation.

Parliament

11. While reaffirming that the Government has the primary responsibility and is particularly accountable for the full implementation of the obligations of the State party under the Convention, the Committee stresses that the Convention is binding on all branches of government, and it invites the State party to encourage its Parliament (Assembly – *Kuvendi*), in line with its procedures, where appropriate, to take the necessary steps with regard to the implementation of the present concluding observations and the Government's next reporting process under the Convention.

Legal status of the Convention, legal complaint mechanisms

12. The Committee reiterates the concerns expressed in its previous concluding observations (A/58/38(Supp), para. 58) about the lack of clarity regarding the direct applicability of the Convention in the domestic law of Albania. While the Convention, upon ratification by Parliament and publication in the official gazette, forms part of the domestic legal system, by virtue of articles 5, 22 and 122 of the Albanian Constitution, and prevails over the State party's laws that are not compatible with its provisions, the Committee notes that the Constitution only provides for the direct application of those provisions that are self-applicable and do not require the issuance of a law.

13. The Committee, reiterating its previous recommendation (A/58/38(Supp), para. 59), urges the State party to further clarify which provisions of the Convention are directly applicable within the national legal order of Albania and whether it is the executive, Parliament, or the courts that decide on the direct applicability. It specifically requests the State party to provide the Committee in its next periodic report information about court cases in which the Convention, or provisions thereof, were qualified as self-applicable, and, thus, directly applied.

14. The Committee takes note of the five cases involving discrimination against women reported to the People's Advocate (Ombudsperson) during the period 2003-2009. It further notes with satisfaction the establishment, in 2010, of the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination, an independent body for the promotion of equality, monitoring the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation, organizing awareness-raising campaigns and investigating cases of alleged discrimination. However, the Committee is concerned about the legal and practical obstacles faced by women seeking redress for acts of discrimination based on sex and gender under the new legislative anti-discrimination framework, as well as the lack of counseling and legal aid services available to women, especially women belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities, women in rural areas and women belonging to other disadvantaged groups. It is particularly concerned about complainant women bearing the burden of proof in cases of alleged discrimination on the grounds of sex, including in cases of sexual harassment at the workplace.

15. The Committee recommends that the State party accelerate its efforts to remove impediments faced by women in accessing justice, provide legal aid, and raise awareness about how to utilize legal remedies against discrimination based on sex and gender, so as to increase women's capacity to avail themselves of existing complaint mechanisms and seek redress for discrimination in the Albanian legal system, as well as monitor the results of such efforts. The Committee urges the State party to consider reversing the burden of proof in cases of alleged discrimination on the grounds of sex and gender, especially in cases of sexual harassment, in its anti-discrimination legislation and the Labour Code. It requests the State party to provide information in its next periodic report about cases brought before the courts, the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination, and the People's Advocate (Ombudsperson), and about their outcomes.

Visibility of the Convention and Optional Protocol

16. The Committee takes note of various efforts to raise awareness about the Convention and its Optional Protocol including trainings for judges and prosecutors. The Committee remains concerned, however, that the provisions of the Convention have not been invoked in court proceedings, which indicates that there is inadequate knowledge in society in general and among women themselves, among all branches of government, including the judiciary, about the rights of women under the Convention and its Optional Protocol, the concept of substantive (de facto) equality of women and men and the Committee's general recommendations.

17. The Committee recommends that the State party systematically enhance knowledge and understanding of the Convention and its Optional Protocol and promote gender equality through education and training programmes, especially for parliamentarians, the judiciary, law enforcement and senior government officials. It further requests the State party to ensure that the Convention, its Optional Protocol, as well as the Committee's general recommendations and the views adopted on individual communications and inquiries, are made integral part of educational curricula, including legal education.

Harmonization of national legislation

18. The Committee notes the efforts to reconcile the newly enacted gender equality and anti-discrimination laws, legislation previously in force, as well as the Convention, especially addressing intersecting (multiple) forms of discrimination experienced by ethnic minority women, women with disabilities, rural women, or other disadvantaged groups of women, and the legal basis for imposing sanctions for acts of discrimination.

19. The Committee recommends that the State party monitor the impact of the gender equality and anti-discrimination legislation, identify inconsistencies, and address them, as appropriate, with a view to ensure that its implementation is conducive towards effective elimination of discrimination against women, especially women belonging to disadvantaged groups, such as ethnic and linguistic minority women, women with disabilities, older women, women living in rural or remote areas, migrant women, women living with HIV/AIDS, and women discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

National machinery for the advancement of women

20. The Committee observes frequent changes in the national institutional gender equality structure during the period since the consideration of the previous report and takes note of the State party's efforts to strengthen the national institutional capacity for gender equality. These efforts resulted in the diversification and progressive establishment of

institutional structures in various policy areas and at different levels of power. It is, however, concerned that rather than appointing new gender equality officials in ministries and municipality government structures, as required by the Law on Gender Equality in Society, line ministries and municipalities have often extended the portfolio of existing staff instead. While the Committee notes that the network on gender equality employees was established at central and local government level, it is, however, concerned about the absence of an adequate national to local coordinating mechanism to ensure coherence of local policies with the objectives of the gender equality policy of the central government. The Committee is further concerned about human and financial resources of the Directorate of Equal Opportunities within the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities which may not be commensurate to its broad range of functions and responsibilities for promoting gender equality and preventing domestic violence. While the Committee notes that the State party is preparing the new National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence, it regrets the lack of information on results achieved through the implementation of measures and actions for achieving the objectives of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence 2007-2010 and problems encountered.

21. The Committee recalls the State party's responsibility to fully ensure government accountability for formal and substantive (de facto) equality of women and men and women's enjoyment of all human rights in the implementation of the Convention. In this respect, the Committee refers to its general recommendation No. 6 and the guidance provided in the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular regarding the necessary conditions for the effective functioning of national mechanisms. The Committee calls on the State party to provide the gender equality institutions at central and local levels with the necessary human, financial and technical resources for their effective functioning. The Committee further calls on the State party to take due consideration of the present Committee's recommendations in the formulation of its new National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence and to ensure its effective implementation, including through monitoring and regular evaluation of strategies and measures used in its implementation, and to establish effective coordination between central and local government on policies designed to achieve the objectives of the action plan.

Temporary special measures

22. In view of the fact that the legal basis for the introduction of temporary special measures in the former Law on Gender Equality of 2004 was never invoked, the Committee commends the State party for having introduced temporary special measures as foreseen in the Law on Gender Equality in Society of 2008 and in the Electoral Code in the form of quotas, as well as, albeit to a limited extent, in the field of vocational training for unemployed women belonging to the most disadvantaged groups of society. The Committee, however, is concerned about the different approach to gender quotas in provisions for the general election and the local elections and the differing sanctions for non-compliance with the provisions, and identifies the need for the State party for the introduction of further temporary special measures in order to achieve substantive (de facto) gender equality in all areas covered by the Convention.

23. The Committee calls on the State party to strengthen the use of temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, in areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including through allocating additional resources where needed, in order to accelerate the achievement of substantive (de facto) gender equality in areas covered by the Convention, such as participation in political and public decision-making, including in the civil and diplomatic service, in the judiciary

and the executive, and in the education and employment sectors. The Committee further recommends that temporary special measures be applied in order to ensure equality of women and men in accessing property, capital and credits, health care services, housing, and more generally all the components of an adequate standard of living, particularly in regard to women belonging to disadvantaged groups, including women and girls belonging to linguistic and ethnic minorities, older women, women with disabilities, and women living in rural and remote areas, as authorized by the comprehensive article 8 of the Law on Gender Equality in Society of 2008. The Committee requests the State party to include comprehensive information on the use of such temporary special measures in relation to various provisions of the Convention and their impact in its next periodic report.

Stereotypes, cultural practices harmful to women

24. While noting the efforts of the State party to work towards their elimination, the Committee remains concerned about the persistence of entrenched gender stereotypes in the family, the media, and the society at large. The Committee commends the State party for having a new Family Code that fully integrates gender equality standards regarding family relations, but nevertheless remains concerned about the limited measures it has taken to challenge the harmful marriage traditions that violate the rights of women and girls under the Convention, including child marriages, the practice of the family choosing the husband, and the payment of a bride price or dowry which remains prevalent in rural and remote areas of the country and among minority communities. The Committee remains seriously concerned about the re-emergence of traditional concepts of justice (kanun) and codes of conduct in some Northern areas of the country which condone so-called honour killings.

25. **The Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts to address gender stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination against women. It calls on the State party to strengthen targeted educational programmes, including initial and in-service training programmes for teachers at all levels of the educational system, and develop a more comprehensive and wide ranging strategy across all sectors to eliminate stereotypes, working with a broad range of stakeholders, including women's and other civil society organizations, media and the private sector, and specifically targeting rural areas and the minority communities in respect of family relations. The Committee also recommends that the State party, while respecting the independence of the media and of the right to freedom of expression, encourage the media to project positive non-stereotyped images of women and of their equal status and role in the private and public spheres. It requests the State party to monitor the impact of measures taken and to provide information on the results achieved in its next periodic report. The Committee urges the State party to take concrete steps to eliminate customary laws and traditions that discriminate against women. It further urges the State party to take appropriate legislative measures and to condemn and vigorously prosecute killings of women committed in the name of honour in the same way as other homicides or murders.**

Violence against women

26. The Committee recognizes the progress made by the Government in combating violence against women, including domestic violence and violence outside domestic relationships, such as rape and other forms of sexual violence, stalking and sexual harassment, inter alia, through the enactment of the Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations, the adoption of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence 2007-2010, the opening of the first government-run shelter for victims of domestic violence, and the establishment of a referral system of cases of domestic violence. The Committee, however, remains concerned about the continued high

prevalence of violence against women in Albania. It is particularly concerned that domestic violence is not appropriately sanctioned and criminalized, and that marital rape is not defined as a specific offence under the new Penal Code, about the high rate of suicides of female victims of domestic violence, about gaps in the Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations and its implementation, and the lack of statistical data.

27. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 19 and its recommendations contained in its previous concluding observations (A/58/38(Supp), para. 73), the Committee urges the State party to continue to put emphasis on comprehensive measures to address violence against women in the family and in society. The Committee calls upon the State party to amend, without delay, the Penal Code so as to establish marital rape as a specific criminal offence, to appropriately sanction and criminalize acts of domestic violence, and to ensure that all cases of violence against women are swiftly prosecuted and punished. The Committee further recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to ensure that female victims of violence have immediate protection, including the possibility of expelling the perpetrator from home, effective recourse to a shelter, and access to free legal aid and psycho-social counseling. The Committee urges the State party to adopt measures to prevent incidences of suicide by victims of domestic violence. It recommends ensuring that public officials, especially law enforcement officials, members of the judiciary, health-care providers and social workers, are fully sensitized to all forms of violence against women. The Committee calls on the State party to systematize data collection on violence against women, including domestic violence. It recommends that structures be established to help female victims of violence to rebuild their lives, including through the creation of job opportunities. The Committee invites the State party to further pursue, in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders, including women's and other civil society organizations, awareness-raising campaigns through the media and public education programmes to make such violence socially unacceptable, and to continue seeking international assistance toward this end.

Trafficking, exploitation of prostitution

28. The Committee recognizes the efforts by the State party, and the positive results achieved, in combating trafficking in women and girls, including for the purpose of sexual and economic exploitation, through legislative, strategic and institutional measures. These include, inter alia, the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings, the conclusion of bilateral agreements on cooperation in respect of trafficking in human beings, the adoption of domestic laws and various national strategies and action plans (cf. paras. 0 and 0 above), the establishment of several institutions engaged in the fight against trafficking in human beings, and of centres for victims of trafficking, the organization of various professional training projects aimed at strengthening the rendering assistance to victims, and the establishment of a centre for the processing of data on victims of trafficking by the Ministry of the Interior. The Committee, however, remains concerned about gaps in the implementation of legislation and strategies, the low number of criminal convictions for trafficking in women, the failure to effectively protect victims of trafficking as witnesses, and the lack of compensation for victims. It is also concerned about re-trafficking of victims and internal trafficking in women, as well as about the lack of effective preventive measures. The Committee reiterates its specific concern, contained in its previous concluding observations (A/58/38(Supp), para. 70) that victims of trafficking and prostitutes remain subject to criminal punishment under the Penal Code.

29. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that offenders of both cross-border and internal trafficking be prosecuted and punished. It recommends that free legal aid be guaranteed for victims of trafficking and witness protection laws be

effectively applied. The Committee also recommends that the Penal Code be amended to the effect that victims will not be subjected to criminal prosecution and punishment and that internal trafficking is also covered under the criminal offence of trafficking in human beings. Such measures are also conducive to promote cooperation of victims of trafficking with law enforcement agencies and their use of existing, but rarely utilized, compensation schemes. The Committee further calls upon the State party to strengthen preventive measures, including education opportunities for disadvantaged groups of women, including teenage girls and girls belonging to linguistic or ethnic minorities. The Committee requests the State party to introduce, where lacking, exit programmes, including social support, rehabilitation and reintegration measures for trafficked women and girls, so as to diminish the chances of women and girls becoming victims of re-trafficking. Victims of trafficking suffering from serious health problems, including post-traumatic health syndrome, must have access to adequate health care. The Committee encourages the State party to improve its monitoring system as well as the evaluation of the phenomenon of cross-border and internal trafficking in women with a view towards more effective implementation of anti-trafficking legislation, policies and measures. The Committee urges the State party to amend its Penal Code so that prostitutes are not criminally prosecuted and punished and to provide adequate support programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution. The Committee further requests the State party to provide in its next periodic report comprehensive information and data on trafficking in women, including on the progress made.

Education

30. The Committee commends the State party for the comprehensive reforms undertaken and the achievements made in the field of education, which reflect gender issues, for example in the training of teachers, and the review of school curricula and textbooks. The Committee, however, expresses a number of concerns in relation to the education of girls in rural or remote areas and girls belonging to linguistic or ethnic minorities. Such concerns relate to the high drop-out rate from schooling, especially on the secondary level, due to early marriages, traditional sex role stereotypes, lack of means of transportation, secondary costs of education, and involvement in economic activities, indicating poverty as a strong predictor. The Committee also expresses concerns about the lack of comprehensive data on the rate of enrolment of Roma women and girls as well as women and girls with disabilities on all levels of education, which is an impediment for the State party to assess their situation with a view to improving it. The Committee is also concerned about the low level of representation of women in senior management positions in education institutions on the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

31. The Committee recommends that the State party continue raising awareness of the importance of education for the empowerment of women and take concrete comprehensive measures to overcome traditional attitudes and other obstacles to the education of girls and women. The Committee especially recommends intensifying efforts to promote access of girls and women living in rural or remote areas, including minority girls and women, to education and their retention in all levels of education. The Committee calls on the State party to enhance temporary special measures currently in place in the form of quotas, to ensure women's representation in high level positions in universities and other educational institutions. It requests inclusion, in the next periodic report, of comprehensive data and information on the educational situation and opportunities of disabled women and girls as well as those belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities, particularly Roma women and girls.

Employment

32. While commending the State party for its achievements in the employment sector, particularly with respect to enacting legislation concerning equal employment opportunities for women, the Committee is concerned about the persistence of a significantly higher unemployment rate among women compared to men, although the State party recognizes that women have good academic results, and that it is especially persistent amongst women belonging to the most disadvantaged groups or working in the informal sector. The Committee is also concerned about the social insurance situation of a high number of women who were laid off following the economic reforms and privatizations undertaken during the transitional period in the 1990s. The Committee is concerned about the wide gender wage gap, the underdeveloped support schemes for women having to reconcile family obligations and work, and the limited oversight exercised by the Labour Inspectorate, particularly in relation to hazardous workplaces for women, women working at home and in the informal sector, and sexual harassment at the workplace.

33. **The Committee urges the State party to ensure de facto equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market through, inter alia, the use of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, also in respect of women who have been without work since the transitional period and are without adequate social insurance so as to avoid them having to rely on social assistance when reaching the pension age. The Committee also recommends monitoring closely the situation of women working in the informal sector and at home and introducing employment-related measures to make sure that women have access to full-time and permanent jobs with adequate social benefits if they so wish. The Committee requests that the State party strengthen special training programmes for different groups of unemployed women. It also recommends that effective measures allowing for the reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities be strengthened, especially in rural areas, and that the sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men be promoted, inter alia, through further awareness-raising and education initiatives for both women and men on adequate sharing of care of children, other dependent family members, and domestic tasks. The Committee calls on the State party to review the issue of wage differentials between women and men, and avail itself of existing research and practice with regard to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in order to overcome the pay gap. It also requests the State party to strengthen labour inspection measures to ensure better implementation of the Labour Code, particularly with a view to hazardous workplaces occupied by women, women working at home and in the informal sector, and sexual harassment at the workplace.**

Health

34. The Committee is concerned about the unequal access to health care for women and men in urban and rural areas, in particular in relation to family planning services and reproductive health with the overall rate of use of modern contraceptives remaining very low. The Committee is further concerned about the rise of the number of women infected with HIV/AIDS, mother-to-child transmission, the limited availability of anti-retroviral drugs in rural areas and the lack of information and data on whether they are available free of charge for intravenous drug users and sex workers.

35. **The Committee calls upon the State party to take all necessary measures to improve women's access to health care and health-related services, within the framework of the Committee's general recommendation No. 24, especially addressing the unequal access between women and men in rural and urban areas of the country, and to step up efforts in relation to women and girls belonging to linguistic and ethnic**

minorities. The Committee requests the strengthening and expansion of efforts to raise awareness about access to affordable contraceptive methods throughout the country and to ensure that women in rural areas and women belonging to linguistic and ethnic minorities do not face barriers in accessing family-planning information and services. It also recommends that sex education be widely promoted and targeted at adolescent girls and boys, with special attention to the prevention of early pregnancy, especially in rural areas and for women belonging to linguistic and ethnic minorities, and the control of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, especially with a view to mother-to-child transmission of the virus. The Committee calls upon the State party to increase efforts with the objective of countering discrimination, stigmatization, and social exclusion of women living with HIV/AIDS.

Social and economic benefits

36. The Committee expresses concern that the political and economic reforms in Albania of the 1990s increased poverty and social exclusion, especially in the rural areas where only 6% of farms are owned or managed by women, although about 70% of women work in agriculture. Demographic changes have affected the family and many women have become heads of household. Only 8% of women own property, although title registration under the husband only is unlawful.

37. The Committee recommends to the State party that gender impact analysis of all social and economic policies and of measures aimed at reducing poverty be conducted regularly. It recommends that the State party take targeted corrective measures, including enhancing opportunities to access property, loan and credits, and providing for sufficient day care institutions for children, so that women, especially members of ethnic minorities or living in rural or remote areas as well as women heading households, are able to fully and equally benefit from growth and poverty reduction. It encourages the State party to adopt, without delay, the bill drafted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection, on agricultural cooperative associations, as well as to implement its Agriculture Strategy 2007-2013 in a gender sensitive manner. The Committee invites the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, detailed information about the enforcement of the Family Code in relation to property ownership in marriage and following its dissolution.

Older women

38. The Committee is concerned about the lack of sex-disaggregated data for the older population which may lead the State party towards developing responses intended to address the needs and interests of the older population without taking due account of discrimination faced by older women.

39. The Committee requests the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, a comprehensive picture of the de facto situation of older women, including sex-disaggregated data for all areas under the Convention, and to report on sex and gender specific measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women based on their age.

Disadvantaged groups of women

40. The Committee regrets that the State party is lacking information about the situation of migrant women workers.

41. The Committee calls on the State party to provide information about the situation of female migrant workers and remittance received by the State party. The Committee also urges the State party to develop a safe service labour migration policy

to protect the human rights of migrant women in accordance with the guidelines provided in the Committee's general recommendation No. 26.

42. While welcoming the adoption of the Law on Protection from Discrimination, which expressly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation, the Committee expresses concern about discrimination and acts of violence against women on such grounds.

43. The Committee calls on the State party to implement fully the Law on Protection from Discrimination in relation to discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation by providing effective protection against discrimination and violence against women on such grounds.

Amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

44. The Committee encourages the State party to accelerate the acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, concerning the meeting time of the Committee, as to which the State party indicated that the structures of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs are currently following the necessary procedures.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

45. The Committee urges the State party, in the implementation of its obligations under the Convention, to fully utilize the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which reinforce the provisions of the Convention, and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

Millennium Development Goals

46. The Committee emphasizes that full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It calls for the integration of a gender perspective and an explicit reflection of the provisions of the Convention in all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

Dissemination

47. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Albania of the present concluding observations in order to make the people, including government officials, politicians, parliamentarians and women's and human rights organizations, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure the de jure and de facto equality of women, as well as the further steps that are required in that regard. The Committee recommends that the dissemination should include the local community level. The State party is encouraged to organize a series of meetings to discuss progress achieved in the implementation of the present observations. The Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Committee's general recommendations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on the theme "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

Ratification of other treaties

48. 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 treaty to which it is not yet a party, that is, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Follow-up to concluding observations

49. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 0 and 0 above.

Technical assistance

50. The Committee recommends that the State party avail itself of technical assistance in the development and implementation of a comprehensive programme aimed at the implementation of the above recommendations and the Convention as a whole. The Committee also calls upon the State party to strengthen further its cooperation with specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Statistics Division and the Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

Preparation of next report

51. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the wide participation of all ministries and public bodies in the preparation of its next report, as well as to consult a variety of women's and human rights organizations during that phase.

52. The Committee requests the State party to respond to the concerns expressed in the present concluding observations in its next periodic report under article 18 of the Convention. The Committee invites the State party to submit its next periodic report in July 2014.

53. The Committee invites 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, approved at the fifth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies, in June 2006 (HRI/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1). The treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee at its fortieth session, in January 2008, must be applied in conjunction with the harmonized reporting guidelines on a common core document. Together, they constitute the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of All

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.

Forms of Discrimination against Women. The treaty-specific document should be limited to 40 pages, while the updated common core document should not exceed 80 pages.
