



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
16 September 2010

Original: English

**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

Fiji

1. The Committee considered the combined second, third and fourth periodic reports of Fiji (CEDAW/C/FJI/2-4) at its 928th and 929th meetings, on 14 July 2010 (see CEDAW/C/SR.928 and 929). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/FJI/Q/4, and the responses of Fiji are contained in CEDAW/C/FJI/Q/2-4/Add.1.

Introduction

2. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its combined second, third and fourth periodic reports, which were well structured and in general followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of reports with references to the previous concluding observations, although they lacked references to the Committee's general recommendations, as well as some specific disaggregated data. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its oral presentation, the written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by its 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 high-level delegation, headed by the Minister for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation, which included an equitable distribution of women and men and a representative from a national-level body with responsibility for the implementation of measures in the areas covered by the Convention. The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue that took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee.

4. The Committee notes with appreciation that the report was prepared in a participatory process involving Government institutions, non-governmental organizations and extensive community consultations, including in the outer islands.

Positive aspects

5. The Committee welcomes the new laws, decrees and promulgations introduced by the State party, including the Family Law Act (2003), the Employment Relations Promulgation (2007), the Domestic Violence Decree (2009), the Crimes Decree (2009), the Criminal Procedure Decree (2009), the Sentencing and Penalties Decree (2009) and the Child Welfare Decree (2010), which are aimed at bringing national legislation into line with the provisions of the Convention.

6. The Committee also welcomes the new Women's Plan of Action (2010-2019), which identifies five priority areas for the promotion of women's rights: formal sector employment and livelihood, equal participation in decision-making, the elimination of violence against women and children, access to basic services, and women and the law. In addition, the Committee notes with appreciation the Sustainable Economic Empowerment Development Strategies, which address the State party's commitment to the advancement of women.

7. The Committee commends the State party for its construction of women's centres in the 14 provinces and semi-urban settlements to promote the empowerment of women in rural areas through the enhancement of leadership skills and programme management skills, and to provide venues for meetings, training, women's health clinics and other capacity-building initiatives.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

8. The Committee recalls the State party's obligation to systematically and continuously implement all provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and views the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding observations as requiring the State party's priority attention 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. It calls upon the State party to submit the present concluding observations to all relevant ministries, the Parliament and the judiciary, so as to ensure their full implementation.

Parliament

9. While reaffirming that the Government has the primary responsibility and is particularly accountable for the full implementation of the State party's obligations under the Convention, the Committee stresses that the Convention is binding on all branches of Government. It invites the State party to encourage its Parliament, 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.

Constitutional framework

10. The Committee expresses grave concern that the Government's abrogation of the 1997 Constitution and dismissal of the judiciary have had a negative impact on the protection of human rights and the rule of law, and have limited the implementation of the rights guaranteed in section 38 (2) of the Constitution (the Bill of Rights and anti-discrimination clause) and under the Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Committee notes the stated intention of the State party to adopt a new constitution by 2012 and hold elections in 2014, but remains concerned about the delay in those processes and the resulting continued inadequacy of the protection of human rights.

11. The Committee strongly urges the State party to take immediate, clear and credible steps to adopt a new constitution through a collaborative process involving the full participation of women, and to fully restore the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary through, inter alia, the re-establishment of the Judicial Service Commission. The Committee also urges the State party to hold free and fair elections as early as possible. In keeping with its previous recommendation, the Committee encourages the State party to ensure that the constitutional review process addresses the need to incorporate the principle of equality of women and men, in line with article 2, as well as the definition of discrimination against women and to include a clear procedure for the enforcement of fundamental rights in line with article 1 of the Convention.

12. The Committee is especially concerned about the harassment of human rights defenders, including those women human rights defenders who have been detained and sometimes abused in custody, in violation of their rights under the law and the Convention. In this context, the Committee is also concerned that the Public Emergency Regulation, promulgated at the time of the abrogation of the Constitution in 2009, which grants immunity to police and military officers, thus giving them the right to act with impunity, and the Media Decree have had a negative effect on women's outreach and their right to freedom of expression.

13. The Committee urges the State party to ensure the protection of human rights, including the rights of human rights defenders. The Committee also strongly urges the State party to take steps to ensure that the Public Emergency Regulation and the Media Decree do not infringe upon the rights of women, including women human rights defenders, and their right to freedom of expression.

Legal complaints mechanisms

14. While noting the important role of the Fiji Human Rights Commission in promoting and protecting human rights, the Committee is concerned about its apparent lack of independence, which has resulted in its recent suspension from the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights as well as from the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. The Committee is concerned that this lack of confidence in the credibility of the Commission has resulted in the small number of cases currently before it. The Committee also notes with concern that, while the Commission has addressed non-discrimination and equality in a variety of ways in the past, little has been done since it was set up in 1997 to prioritize gender and women's rights within its work and to ensure adequate technical expertise and resources for the development of sound policy in this area.

15. The Committee urges the State party to ensure the independence of the Fiji Human Rights Commission and strengthen its monitoring functions, including in the area of gender and women's rights, with a view to regaining credibility, public confidence and legitimacy, in compliance with the Paris Principles. In this context, the Committee recommends the State party to

encourage the Commission to reapply for accreditation to the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and to the Asia-Pacific Forum, and to take appropriate measures to ensure compliance with the Paris Principles.

National machinery for the advancement of women

16. The Committee is concerned about the changes encountered by the national machinery, which has repeatedly moved administratively and was recently downgraded to a department within the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation, as well as the insufficient amount of resources allocated and the capacity constraints, which limit the effective functioning of the Ministry and hamper the implementation of the Women's Plan of Action (2009-2018). While welcoming the recent establishment of the Fiji Women's Federation within the Department of Women, to coordinate the programmes and activities of women's non-governmental organizations to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Committee is concerned about the requirement of the Federation that non-governmental organizations must register in order to engage with their processes and initiatives to promote equality and protect women's rights.

17. The Committee calls upon the State party to give urgent priority attention to the national machinery for the advancement of women and to provide it with adequate authority, decision-making power, and human and financial resources to work effectively for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights. The Committee encourages the State party to ensure that the registration requirements of the Fiji Women's Federation for non-governmental organizations, and the further requirement of the State party that permits be issued for all meetings, do not infringe upon the right to freedom of association and assembly or restrict the opportunity for non-governmental organizations to engage in consultative processes towards gender equality and the promotion and protection of women's rights. The Committee recommends that the national machinery enhance its cooperation with women's non-governmental organizations for the effective implementation of programmes for the advancement of women.

Temporary special measures

18. The Committee notes the State party's insufficient understanding of the purpose of and need for temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention.

19. The Committee, in its general recommendation No. 25, enjoins States parties to view the application of temporary special measures as their obligation to remedy the effects of past discrimination against women. The Committee recommends that the State party utilize temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, as part of a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality for women. It requests that the State party include information about the use of such temporary special measures in relation to the various provisions of the Convention, and the impact of such measures, in its next report.

Stereotypes and cultural practices

20. The Committee once again expresses its concern at the persistence of practices and traditions, as well as strong patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes, regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in all spheres of life. The Committee is concerned that such customs and practices perpetuate discrimination against women and girls and that they are reflected in the disadvantageous and unequal status of those groups in many areas, including public life, decision-making, marriage and family relations, as well as in the persistence of violence against women. The Committee is also concerned about the cultural practice of reconciliation and forgiveness ceremonies such as *bulubulu*, forced on victims of violence so that they remain in abusive and violent relationships. In addition, the Committee is concerned that, thus far, the State party has not taken effective and systematic action to modify or eliminate stereotypes and cultural practices harmful and/or demeaning to women.

21. The Committee urges the State party to put in place without delay a comprehensive strategy, including the review and formulation of legislation and the establishment of goals and timetables, to modify or eliminate stereotypes, patriarchal attitudes and cultural practices that discriminate against women, in conformity with articles 2(f) and 5(a) of the Convention. Such measures should include efforts to raise awareness about the subject, targeting women and men at all levels of society, in collaboration with civil society. The Committee calls upon the State party to take innovative and effective measures to strengthen understanding about the equality of women and men and to work with the media to promote a positive, non-stereotypical and non-discriminatory portrayal of women, and in particular to develop outreach programmes to connect with women in rural areas and the outer islands. It further calls on the State party to periodically review the measures taken in order to assess their impact, to take appropriate action and to report thereon to the Committee in its next report.

Violence against women

22. The Committee is seriously concerned that the level of violence against women in all its forms is persistently high in both the private and public spheres. While welcoming the Domestic Violence Decree (2009), the Committee remains concerned at the absence of a holistic approach to the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women, including the introduction and enforcement of comprehensive integrated legislation prohibiting all forms of gender-based violence as well as other effective measures to prevent, investigate and prosecute gender-based violence, including against women sex workers. The Committee regrets the lack of data and information regarding the incidence of various forms of violence against women and girls, as well as studies and/or surveys on the extent of violence and its root causes. The Committee is also concerned that social support services suffer from inadequacy, insufficiency and a lack of coordination.

23. The Committee urges the State party to give priority attention to combating violence against women and girls and to adopting comprehensive measures to address such violence, in accordance with its general recommendation No. 19. Such measures should include the expeditious adoption of a comprehensive law criminalizing all forms of violence against

women, including domestic violence with regard to de facto relationships, marital rape, sexual violence, sexual harassment and institutional violence, as well as the development of a coherent and multisectoral action plan to combat violence against women. The State party should investigate and prosecute all cases of violence against women, including those involving women sex workers. The Committee also urges the State party to publish and widely disseminate the Domestic Violence Decree and all relevant laws and policies established and/or envisaged to address violence against women in all its forms. The Committee calls upon the State party to increase the number of shelters and to ensure adequate geographical distribution, with particular focus on remote and outer islands. The Committee requests the State party to provide data on trends concerning the prevalence of various forms of violence against women, disaggregated by age and area (urban and rural).

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

24. The Committee notes the States party's adoption of the Crimes Decree (2009), which punishes persons who sexually exploit women. The Committee also notes that prostitution as a criminal offence continues to be the focus, but that recent initiatives have broadened this criminal offence, which now addresses demand and supply to include clients as well as the owners of premises on which prostitution is carried out. The Committee is concerned that sex work continues to be criminalized and that, as a result, sex workers are often victims of violence and are particularly vulnerable to torture and ill-treatment by the police. The Committee is also concerned about the exploitation of underage girls in commercial sex work. While the Committee notes that, as a complementary measure to the Crimes Decree, the State party has set up the Transnational Crimes Unit of the Fiji Police Force to investigate the trafficking in persons, it regrets the lack of disaggregated data and information about the prevalence and root causes of trafficking, as well as about training for law enforcement personnel in this regard.

25. **The Committee strongly urges the State party to take concrete steps aimed at effectively implementing the Crimes Decree as well as decriminalizing sex work and strengthening programmes, in cooperation with relevant partners, to provide support, exit programmes and alternative livelihoods for women who wish to leave prostitution. The State party should take effective steps to ensure that sex workers who are victims of violence, torture or ill-treatment are provided an opportunity for a fair trial and, as appropriate, receive medical and psychosocial services as well as compensation, including reparations and guarantees of non-repetition. The Committee urges the State party to fully implement article 6 of the Convention, including by speedily enacting specific and comprehensive national legislation and programmes on the emerging phenomenon of trafficking, ensuring that offenders are punished and victims adequately protected and assisted. The Committee calls upon the State party to increase its efforts to engage in international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination to prevent trafficking through information exchange and to facilitate the recovery and social integration of trafficked persons. It also recommends anti-trafficking training for the judiciary, law enforcement officials, border guards and social workers in all parts of the country. In addition, the Committee recommends that the State party conduct comparative studies on trafficking and prostitution**

and address their root causes in order to eliminate the vulnerability of girls and women to those phenomena.

Participation in political and public life

26. The Committee notes that the participation of women in political and public life continues to be a major challenge and that the efforts of successive governments to achieve 30 per cent representation have failed. The Committee remains concerned about the continuing underrepresentation of women in public, political and professional life and in decision-making positions, especially in rural areas and outer islands, where stereotypes about the role of women are most firmly entrenched.

27. **The Committee urges the State party to take the measures necessary to ensure the participation of women in the ongoing constitutional reform and upcoming electoral processes. The Committee recommends that the State party pursue sustained policies, including the setting of quotas, aimed at the promotion of women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of public, political and professional life. In line with the State party's intention to adopt a new constitution in 2012, the Committee recommends the inclusion of temporary special measures in the new constitution. The Committee also recommends that the State party fully utilize its general recommendation No. 23 concerning women in public life and calls upon the State party to adopt, wherever necessary, temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, in order to accelerate women's full and equal participation in public and political life. The Committee recommends the implementation of activities to raise awareness about the importance of women's participation in decision-making for society as a whole, as well as the development of targeted training and mentoring programmes for women candidates and women elected to public office, and programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for current and future women leaders. The Committee also recommends that the State party carefully monitor the effectiveness of measures taken and results achieved and to inform the Committee thereof in its next report.**

Education

28. The Committee welcomes the high rate of enrolment of girls and appreciates the State party's efforts to ensure access and equal opportunities for boys and girls at all levels of education, to establish re-entry policies enabling young women to return to school after pregnancy, and to set up the "Matua" programme (2004), which encourages interested school leavers and adults to continue their education. However, the Committee is concerned that traditional attitudes, perceived gender roles and poverty — particularly the lack of ability to pay the costs associated with uniforms, shoes, books and transportation — continue to limit girls' education and contribute to the increase in the dropout rate among girls, particularly in rural areas and the outer islands. The Committee is also concerned about the inadequacy of the reproductive and sexual health education included in the school curriculum. In addition, the Committee is concerned at the gender segregation reflected in students' choice of the field of education and regrets the insufficient training programmes and educational opportunities for women and girls with disabilities.

29. **The Committee urges the State party to take steps to overcome traditional attitudes that, in some rural areas and outer islands, may constitute obstacles to girls' and women's education and to the retention of girls in school. The Committee also calls on the State party to actively encourage the diversification of educational and professional choices for women and men and to provide incentives for young women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields of study. The Committee urges the State party to ensure the budgetary allocation necessary for the continued implementation of programmes to facilitate the education of children, especially girls, from poor families, and to strengthen reproductive and sexual health programmes, including sex education targeting adolescent girls and boys, with special attention accorded to the prevention of early pregnancy and the prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. The Committee requests the State party to include in its next report information about the measures taken and their gender impact, as well as information about access to education for women and girls with disabilities.**

Employment

30. The Committee notes that the Employment Relations Promulgation (2007) is aimed at creating labour standards that are fair to both workers and employers and ensuring equal rates of remuneration for work of equal value for all workers. However, it is concerned that in practice, women earn significantly less than men, especially in occupations and industries not requiring high qualifications, such as the garment industry, agriculture, the fisheries industry and craftwork. The Committee remains concerned about the high number of women in the informal sector with no social security or other benefits, who are particularly vulnerable. While noting the National Policy on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, the Committee is concerned about the absence of specific legal provisions and concrete measures to address sexual harassment in the workplace, which has become an increasing source of concern. The Committee notes with concern the Government's efforts to downsize the civil service by reducing the retirement age from 60 to 55, forcing a number of persons into early retirement. The Committee also notes with concern that a number of women with disabilities are unemployed owing to lack of education and training opportunities and to cultural attitudes that limit their employment. The Committee is concerned that the Public Emergency Regulation is restricting the freedoms of association and expression in the State party, thereby hampering the advancement of human rights in trade unions and women's organizations.

31. **The Committee requests the State party to ensure equal opportunities for women in the labour market, in accordance with article 11 of the Convention. To this end, the Committee urges the State party to adopt effective measures in the formal labour market to eliminate both horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, narrow and close the wage gap between women and men, and apply the principle of equal remuneration and equal opportunities at work. It encourages the State party to regulate the informal sector to ensure that women in the sector are not exploited and are provided social security and other benefits. The State party is also encouraged to enact specific legal provisions to prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace, to introduce special protection measures for women with disabilities in the workplace, and to ensure**

proper and fair compensation for civil servants who have been forced into early retirement. The Committee urges the State party to fully implement the principle of freedom of association in accordance with International Labour Organization Conventions Nos. 87 and 98, which Fiji has ratified.

Health

32. The Committee is concerned about the insufficient allocation of resources to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health and to ensure access to health-care services; the shortage of trained medical personnel; and insufficient medicine and medical equipment. The Committee is particularly concerned about the lack of access to adequate health-care services for women and girls with disabilities, including mental and psychosocial disabilities. In this regard, the Committee notes the need to reform the Mental Health Treatment Act to ensure, inter alia, rehabilitation and reintegration following hospital treatment, as well as the need to raise awareness about the full and equal human rights of people with mental and psychosocial disabilities. The Committee also notes with concern that in rural areas, poverty and the inability to afford transportation have had a negative impact on women's access to health. In addition, the Committee is concerned about the limited access to reproductive and sexual health services, especially in some rural areas and outer islands, and about the fact that violence against women has increased the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS infection.

33. The Committee calls upon the State party to take all necessary measures, including the allocation of adequate resources to improve women's access to health care and health-related services, within the framework of the Committee's general recommendation No. 24. The Committee strongly urges the State party to reform the Mental Health Treatment Act to protect the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities and to take effective steps to raise awareness about the full and equal human rights of people with mental and psychosocial disabilities. It also recommends that the State party take appropriate measures to increase access to health, including reproductive and sexual health services, especially in rural areas and the outer islands, and to enhance its efforts to address violence against women and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Rural women

34. The Committee notes that the Social Justice Act provides for affirmative action in support of certain groups of women, including widows and single mothers, and that non-governmental organizations provide most of the very limited social services available in the State party. This is of particular concern to the Committee, given the increase in poverty; the demand for affordable housing, especially among female heads of households; the growth in urbanization; and the de facto preference for males in terms of land ownership, inheritance and access to credit loans. Noting that rural women constitute the majority of women in the State party and of the workforce in the agricultural and fisheries sector, the Committee is concerned at the very limited information and statistical data provided regarding the situation of women in rural and remote areas, including older women, particularly with respect to the issues of labour and employment, access to justice and participation in socio-political life.

35. **The Committee urges the State party to pay special attention to the needs of rural women and women heads of households to ensure that they participate in decision-making processes and have full access to justice, health, education and credit. The Committee also encourages the State party to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, including older women, with respect to the ownership and inheritance of land. The Committee requests that the State party include in its next periodic report comprehensive data on the situation of rural women, including those in the outer islands, in all areas covered by the Convention.**

Disadvantaged groups of women

36. The Committee is concerned at the very limited amount of information and statistics provided about disadvantaged groups of women, including elderly women, women with disabilities and women living with HIV/AIDS. The Committee is also concerned that such women often suffer from multiple forms of discrimination, especially with regard to access to justice, education, employment, housing and health care.

37. **The Committee requests the State party to provide in its next report a comprehensive picture of the de facto situation of disadvantaged groups of women in all areas covered by the Convention, as well as information about specific programmes and achievements.**

Marriage and family relations

38. While commending the State party for its recent adoption of the Family Law Act (2003), the Family Law (Amendment) Act (2005) and the Domestic Violence Decree (2009), as well as the opening of the new Family Divisions within the court system, the Committee is concerned about the unequal status of women in marriage and family relations owing to traditional practices and attitudes. The Committee notes with concern that insufficient measures have been taken to promote the provisions of those laws; to provide training in this regard, including gender-sensitivity training; and to raise awareness about the underlying philosophy of gender equality in marriage and family relations, including de facto relationships.

39. **The Committee calls upon the State party to monitor and assess the implementation of the Family Law Act and amendments, as well as the Domestic Violence Decree; to raise awareness about the provisions of those laws; and to ensure adequate training, including gender-sensitive training, for relevant personnel, including the police and officers of the Family Divisions of the Courts. The Committee also calls upon the State party to take additional measures to promote equality in marriage and family relations, taking into account the Committee's general recommendation No. 21.**

Data collection and analysis

40. The Committee is concerned that the report did not provide sufficient statistical data regarding the situation of women in all areas covered by the Convention, particularly in the areas of prostitution and trafficking, violence against women, and the situation of vulnerable groups of women. The Committee is also concerned at the lack of information about the impact of measures taken, including

the implementation of laws, programmes and policies, as well as obstacles encountered and results achieved in various areas covered by the Convention.

41. The Committee calls upon the State party to strengthen its system of data collection, including through the use of measurable indicators; to assess trends regarding the situation of women, particularly in the areas of prostitution and human trafficking, female victims of violence and vulnerable groups of women; to assess progress made towards women's de facto equality; and to allocate sufficient budgetary resources for data collection. The Committee also requests the State party to include in its next report statistical data and analysis, disaggregated by sex and area (rural and urban), indicating the impact of policy and programmatic measures, the obstacles encountered and the results achieved.

Optional Protocol

42. The Committee notes with concern the State party's reluctance to accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention and its stated preference for focusing instead on the strengthening of national laws and institutions to address complaints and claims of discrimination within its borders.

43. The Committee encourages the State party to reconsider its position and accede to the Optional Protocol. The strengthening of national laws and institutions should be seen as a complement, especially since the Optional Protocol requires that domestic remedies be exhausted before a case can be submitted under the Optional Protocol.

Article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

44. 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

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

Dissemination

47. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Fiji 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 required in that regard. The Committee recommends that such dissemination should include the local community level and the outer islands. 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, entitled "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 Government of Fiji to consider ratifying the treaties to which it is not yet a party, namely, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Follow-up to concluding observations

49. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within one year, written information about the steps undertaken to implement the recommendation contained in paragraph 11 above and to provide, within two years, written information about the steps undertaken to implement the recommendation contained in paragraph 13 above.

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 on 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.

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 recommendations set out above and of 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,² 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 Women² 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. The Committee calls upon the State party to include, in its delegation for the consideration of that report, representatives who possess expertise in the broad range of areas covered by the Convention, so as to ensure a constructive and fruitful dialogue.

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 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.

² As of 1 January 2011, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women will become part of the newly formed United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); see General Assembly resolution 64/289.