

## UGANDA

### CEDAW A/50/38 (1995)

278. The Committee considered the initial and second periodic reports of Uganda (CEDAW/C/UGA/1-2 and Add.1) at its 270<sup>th</sup> and 273<sup>rd</sup> meetings, on 23 and 26 January (see CEDAW/C/SR.270 and 273).

279. In introducing the report, the representative of the State party pointed out that women accounted for up to 80 per cent of food production in the agricultural sector and that they were widely employed in the informal sector in urban areas. She stressed that Uganda was one of the few sub-Saharan countries that was self-sufficient in agricultural production.

280. She also emphasized that the main objective of the Government was to ensure the positive integration of women and gender issues into the mainstream of all development processes from the planning through implementation to evaluation stages. She informed the Committee that the Government had addressed the integration strategy at national and sectoral levels.

281. Furthermore, the representative mentioned that the Government was committed to enhancing the participation of women in politics and decision-making at national and local levels through legislative and administrative measures.

282. She informed the Committee that major steps had been taken towards the full observance of the legal rights of women and on de facto discrimination against women in the areas of the family, education, employment, health care and nutrition policies and natural resources management. However, she pointed out that a lot remained to be done on both the de jure and de facto levels and that obstacles such as traditional customs and attitudes, the economic restructuring process and health and ecological crises impeded the efforts.

### General observations

283. Members of the Committee commended the frankness and objectivity of the report and commented that the report followed the general guidelines. They welcomed the fact that the Convention had been ratified without reservations. They praised the Government of Uganda for involving non-governmental organizations in the preparation and evaluation of the report in a very innovative way. They suggested that a similar cooperation should be followed regarding the constitutional and other legal reforms.

284. Members commended the Government and, in particular, the President, for having appointed women to high positions in the Government, namely, the woman Vice-President and the five women ministers in the cabinet. Members advised Uganda to take advantage of the political will, including from the President, at those levels to make further necessary reforms. They welcomed the establishment of a Ministry of Gender and Community Development.

285. Other members noted that there were still various obstacles to the implementation of the Convention, such as religious and cultural practices, which had not yet been adequately addressed. It was also mentioned that traditions and customs were very deeply rooted and very diversified.

286. Members of the Committee noted with concern the effects of structural adjustment programmes on women and children. The Committee wanted to know what measures had been taken to deal with the negative effects of those programmes. The representative explained that various studies have been carried out on the effects of structural adjustment programmes on women in Uganda. Information on the findings of those studies would be included in the next report.

#### Questions relating to specific articles

##### Article 2

287. Some members of the Committee wanted to know what measures had been taken to amend the Constitution towards granting women equal rights in accordance with the Convention. One member indicated that the Constitution was silent on the issue of gender. She therefore suggested that the Government should take the matter into consideration when revising the Constitution. Others expressed their concern that the Constitution had failed to provide an accurate definition of sex discrimination. One expert referred to paragraph 64 of the report of the State party and asked if initiatives had been taken by women's organizations to make the Government reform the laws.

288. The representative replied that, as mentioned in the addendum to the report of the State party, the issue of equality was being addressed by the draft Constitution. He referred to clause 50 (2) and (3) of the draft Constitution. He also pointed out that the Government has been committed to the elimination of institutionalized discrimination against women. He referred to clause 50 (4) of the draft Constitution.

289. Members of the Committee noted that the Constitution referred to "he" throughout, while referring to both women and men, and suggested that the matter should be corrected. The representative answered that the draft Constitution would specify both men and women, particularly regarding critical issues on equality before the law, fundamental human rights and other constitutional rights.

290. The report of the State party indicated that the Government had introduced the death penalty for men convicted of rape and defilement. However, because men dominate the police force and crime detection, it was difficult to prove rape in court. The Members therefore inquired what steps were taken to convict men who were guilty of crimes such as rape and defilement. Also, more information was requested on the steps that have been taken to improve law enforcement procedures in the context of rape. The representative stated that the Government had taken measures to address the difficulty of prosecuting rape offenders. In that context, the Ministry of Gender and Community Development had been carrying out a study on the non-prosecution of rape cases. Findings had indicated that there were social, economic, legal and cultural factors contributing to the non-prosecution of rape offenders. The findings had been forwarded to the

institutions concerned to call for their action to remedy these problems. This Ministry was also engaged in sensitization programmes, especially for the police and other law enforcement officers, concerning the problem of rape. Also, the Government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, both local and international, had been undertaking interventions during the training of police officers to specifically sensitize them on issues affecting women in criminal matters.

291. The Law Reform Commission was presently looking into the controversy surrounding the issue of the death penalty for rape offenders. Results would be included in the next report.

### Article 3

292. One member wanted to know how many women were in the Law Reform Commission. The representative replied that figures were given in the addendum to the report: the Law Reform Commission should consist of six members, including at least one woman. However, the Commission currently had three Commissioners, one of whom was a woman. The Secretary of the Commission was also a woman.

293. One member wanted to know whether women's non-governmental organizations were involved in the constitution drafting process. The representative responded that the initial and second reports stated that individuals, as well as organizations representing various interest groups, had been involved in submitting memoranda of their views to the Constitutional Commission. Women's non-governmental organizations had also been involved in that process.

294. In that context, some members wanted to know how many complaints on discrimination against women had been received by interest groups and how many had been judicially disposed of. The representative replied that many complaints on discrimination against women were received; however, owing to the lack of gender-disaggregated data in that office, it was difficult to procure information on the exact number.

295. Another member asked if the Government had a plan to introduce an equal opportunities bill. Furthermore, she wanted to know whether the Government had addressed the issue of violence against women. The representative explained that the Constituent Assembly had considered the question of establishing an equal opportunities commission. He added that the process of drafting the Constitution has been ongoing since 1988 and now had six months to reach a conclusion.

296. In 1970, the Law Development Centre was established for the purpose of extending legal aid for women. The members wanted to know why this scheme had never taken off. In the report, it was noted that the Uganda Women's Lawyers Association could not serve all women in need of legal aid in the country. Members asked whether the Government had established additional legal aid agencies. The representative of Uganda referred to the information contained in the addendum to the report and explained that, in addition to the Uganda Women's Lawyers Association, the Uganda Law Society had been operating a similar project in the four regions of the country. Furthermore, the legal department of the Ministry of Gender and Community Development offered similar services.

297. Some members emphasized that the inferior status of women in the family impeded legal equality of women; they stressed that there was a need to adopt a new family code integrating statutory legislation and customary law. The representative replied that among the strategies to address the inferior status of women in Ugandan society, the Government had embarked on a process of reforming the laws on domestic relations. A draft bill on such a law had been put in place, which sought to integrate both the various customary laws and statutory law into one code. Further consultations and research were still being carried out, especially to ensure that the law was in line with international and regional human rights instruments on the status of women. Moreover, he stated that, as reported in the addendum to the report, the issue of domestic violence would be specifically addressed in the new law on domestic relations. Apart from legal measures, the Ministry of Gender and Community Development had been conducting legal education and sensitization activities on the problem in various parts of the country, together with locally based non-governmental organizations.

#### Article 4

298. Paragraph 79 of the report referred to Uganda's efforts to increase the level of participation of women in the public sector, based on affirmative action. One member wanted to know what action had been taken concerning the problem of wife beating.

#### Article 6

299. The report indicated that prostitution was a crime but did not state whether the clients of prostitutes were also considered guilty of a crime and whether they were prosecuted; nor did the report indicate whether measures to prevent acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) were applied equally to prostitutes and clients. The representative replied that based on the definition of prostitution and prostitutes, the amended legislation S.134A of the Penal Code allowed for the prosecution of both parties involved in the act.

300. A clarification of paragraph 100 of the report, which referred to the extension of the age category of protected males and females from 14 to 18 years, was required. The representative reported that the age limit for statutory rape had been raised from 14 to 18 years.

301. Members requested more information concerning the trafficking in women in Uganda; what effective measures had been taken to decrease trafficking in women and their exploitation through prostitution? The representative replied that prostitution and trafficking in women in Uganda was highly commercially organized. In that regard, the legal position remained that trafficking in women was a crime under the laws of Uganda and all measures to address the crime would be employed in the event that anybody was arrested.

302. Paragraph 95 of the report noted the need to form policy and special programmes to prevent the spread of AIDS among women prostitutes. Some members wanted to know if such policies or programmes had been initiated. If not, what plans would be initiated in the future? In addressing the AIDS crisis, another member asked about proposals to eliminate polygamous marriages in order to stem the spread of the disease. It was asked how these marriages were viewed by the

Ugandan Government.

303. The representative welcomed the recommendations of members for programmes to decrease the prevalence of prostitution. Such programmes should be implemented, especially in view of the danger of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/AIDS. Information on future initiatives would be included in the next report.

#### Article 9

304. Unlike male citizens in Uganda, women do not enjoy the right to extend their citizenship to their children born outside the country. Similarly, women do not enjoy the right to extend their citizenship to foreign spouses. Furthermore, a married woman citizen is not entitled to have a passport issued without the consent of her husband. Members asked what measures had been taken to correct these inequalities. The representative replied that the existing legal bias preventing Ugandan women married to foreigners from extending their citizenship to spouses and children had been addressed in the draft Constitution. As indicated in the addendum to the report, clause 43 (2) (a) of the draft Constitution stated that every person married to a Ugandan citizen may apply to be registered as a citizen upon providing proof of a legal and subsisting marriage of at least three-years standing. The draft Constitution further stated that men and women should have equal rights at marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Such a provision within the Constitution would address the current problems for Ugandan married women regarding passport and travel documents.

305. One member wanted to know whether a husband or father could prevent a wife or child from leaving the country. It was indicated that a girl child born out of wedlock was discriminated against. One expert asked whether these issues were being addressed by the Government. The representative replied that regarding discrimination of the girl child born out of wedlock, the legal position was that all children whether born in or out of wedlock were entitled to inherit equally from their parents.

#### Article 10

306. Paragraph 158 of the report referred to pre-primary school as a "private business". Members wanted to know whether the Government would revise its attitude towards pre-school education. The State party replied that the competition for entry into good primary schools had mainly occurred in urban areas and that the majority of the residents could afford the cost. However, the Government of Uganda had taken note of the concern of the members about the danger of abuse in the provision of education by private institutions. More detailed information would be provided in the next report.

307. In Uganda, 49 per cent of households are headed by a single young woman. The Committee wanted to have more information about the age of these young women and asked what measures had been taken by the Government to prevent early pregnancy, which disrupts education.

308. According to the report, 81.4 per cent of girls who should be in primary school enter into matrimonial relationships. Members inquired whether there was a special curriculum made

available to these girls in order to make up for the lost primary education, and if not, how was the Government going to deal with that issue in the future. Several members expressed concern regarding the high number of pregnancies among young girls that had been caused by teachers. That could account for the high drop-out rate of girls who had suffered such violence. Members asked what measures had been taken to address the problem. Had information been provided to young girls about the dangers related to early sexual intercourse?

309. The representative responded that, as stated in the addendum to the report, the Ministry of Education was incorporating family life education, which included sex education, in the school curriculum. The Government as well as non-governmental organizations had been carrying out adult education and functional literacy programmes to target women and men who had not had an opportunity for formal education. Statistics indicated that the majority of persons attending those programmes were women. Specific statistics would be included in the next report.

310. Additional information was requested by members on primary education; was primary education compulsory and were there any age limits? The representative stated that the minimum age for entry into primary school for children in Uganda was six years old. He referred to the addendum to the report, which stated that government policy was aimed at providing compulsory universal primary education by the year 2003. As to the financial resources, the representative replied that the process of providing government aid would be a gradual one; by gradually transforming the current educational system, primary education would become government aided, and university and other forms of tertiary education would be on a cost-sharing basis.

## Article 12

311. Abortion was carried out in Uganda even though it was illegal. Members requested additional data on abortion. The representative answered that statistics on women dying from abortion had been difficult to obtain because the records from various hospitals were not compiled at one focal point. However, statistics from the main national hospitals indicated that in 1992 induced abortion accounted for one third of maternal deaths. While it had been possible to provide statistics on the ratio of HIV/AIDS infection between men and women, actual figures of people dying of AIDS had been difficult to get since the medical reports indicated the immediate causes of death, such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, etc., rather than AIDS. Furthermore, many deaths had not been reported by hospitals because they happened at home, especially in rural areas.

312. Members also wanted to know if a woman who was infected with AIDS could have a legal abortion. The representative explained that the legal position on abortion was that if two medical doctors independently agreed that it was necessary for the woman's health, then an abortion could be performed.

313. In reference to paragraphs 251 and 252 of the report, the Committee wanted to know how successful government programmes had been in combating the spread of AIDS. Also, in reference to paragraph 259, the members wanted to be provided with a statistical update on AIDS. The representative replied that updated statistics on the prevalence of AIDS in Uganda were included in the addendum. Whereas the government programmes to combat the spread of AIDS now

reached 90 per cent of the population, a corresponding change in sexual behaviour had not been achieved because that took some time. Government programmes to combat the spread of AIDS had to target all members of society, and should include information on the use of condoms. To provide for the latter, however, was a matter of financial resources.

314. Members requested specific statistics regarding the incidence of rape and incest, particularly of young girls. The representative explained that that information was difficult to obtain since there was no coherent pattern in police records.

315. As to the difference in the number of births per woman as stated in the written and oral reports, the representative stated that the recent increase of fertility rates could be explained by AIDS and high infant mortality rates.

316. The Members raised concerns about female circumcision in Uganda. They wanted to know why immediate action had not been taken to abolish that tradition, which was still practised in some parts of the country. Furthermore, what penalty was given to the person performing the female circumcision? Had there been any programmes to re-educate or inform those persons about the dangers of circumcision? The Committee also requested more information on traditions and customs in Uganda. For example, were there any food taboos?

317. The representative replied that concerning health-related customs and taboos, the situation was that there were several tribes in Uganda with different customs and practices affecting women. Government policy had been to discourage customs and practices with a negative impact and promote the positive ones. The draft Constitution provided that any custom that was contrary to the fundamental human rights provided in the Constitution should be declared null and void. It was hoped that that provision would provide an effective challenge to the practice of female circumcision. Furthermore, the Inter-Committee for Africa, a regional organization that was addressing negative customary practices in Africa, had been operating programmes in Uganda. The Government of Uganda had also been carrying out sensitization programmes on female circumcision and other negative customary practices.

318. A member commented that the Government described prostitutes as a danger to society because of HIV/AIDS. Table 22 of the report indicated that only 2 per cent of the population had been using condoms. Had anything been done to inhibit the spread of AIDS among prostitutes by distributing condoms to them? Were there any programmes to inform the population about the use of condoms? The representative replied that there had been various general programmes for AIDS in Uganda. That information had already been included in the reports.

319. Table 19 in the report stated that there was a shortage of health personnel. Members believed that traditional healers and traditional medicine were the key to making assisted child bearing a financial possibility. Had Uganda made an effort to systematize its network of traditional birth attendants and traditional healers? Were development strategies making use of traditional knowledge, as opposed to imposing foreign approaches? What kind of family-planning facilities were available to women in rural areas? In response, the representative referred to the addendum to the report.

320. Members suggested that women in high political positions should become involved in information campaigns about the use of condoms, the spread of AIDS, etc.

#### Article 14

321. As to what measures had been taken to decrease illiteracy, provide health services and social protection to rural women and provide them with access to family planning, the representative referred to the addendum to the report.

#### Article 16

322. Some traditional practices such as polygamous marriages, as well as incest and rape, had furthered the spread of AIDS. Members inquired what programmes had been offered by the Government to women and men in order to prevent the transmission of AIDS. The representative replied that the issue of polygamy was considered in the new law on domestic relations.

323. Regarding interference and harassment by fathers, brothers or other relatives against widowed women when they had acquired property from deceased husbands, members wanted to know what measures had been taken by the Government to protect such women, legally as well as physically.

324. Concerning the issue of double standards in adultery and divorce, the representative replied that the provision in the draft Constitution on the equality of men and women in marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution was addressing the issue. Currently, the Ministry of Gender and Community Development was conducting a research project on women and inheritance in order to make recommendations to amend the current law in order to empower women in inheritance and succession matters. Existing legal provisions to protect women in succession matters were contained in the Administrator Generals Act, the Succession Act and criminal law. The Government had been sensitizing women through legal education on the existence of those provisions and institutions.

#### Concluding comments of the Committee

##### Introduction

325. The Committee commended Uganda for ratifying the Convention without reservation and for submitting the report which followed the guidelines. In spite of the long years of internal conflicts Uganda had instituted measures to implement the various provisions of the Convention that would redress past imbalances.

##### Positive aspects

326. Uganda is about to put in place constitutional reforms that recognized discrimination on the grounds of sex. This was reflected, *inter alia*, by the creation of the Ministry of Women in Development, Culture and Youth renamed the Ministry for Gender Equality and Community Development.

327. Commendable progress has been made in increasing the representation of women in public life through affirmative action.

328. The close collaboration between the National Machinery and non-governmental organizations in the development of gender-specific programmes is a very positive move.

329. Measures have been taken to improve the condition of rural women with credit targeted to 70 per cent of them and through legal services.

330. The Office of the Ombudsman has been established to receive and investigate complaints on the violation of human rights.

#### Principal subjects of concern

331. The Committee expressed serious concern over the alarming death rates among women as a result of the AIDS crisis, particularly among women of child-bearing age, and its association with high fertility rate.

332. The Committee expressed concern at the prevalent religious and cultural practices still existing that perpetuated domestic violence and discriminated against women in the field of inheritance.

333. The Committee expressed serious concern about the continuing practice of genital mutilation, such as specifically female circumcision in one area of Uganda.

334. The Committee was concerned at the privatization of pre-school education, which was an impediment to early education for children, particularly for those in the rural areas.

335. The Committee was concerned at the very high percentage of households headed by girl children.

336. The Committee was deeply concerned by the sexual abuse against school children by their teachers and other adults. They noted that this had serious consequences on their lives, among others, high rate of school drop-outs.

337. The Committee was seriously concerned about the harassment practised by the police against women who reported on cases of violence.

#### Suggestions and recommendations

338. The Committee suggests that existing measures be reassessed to combat AIDS. Foremost of these should be the intensification of preventive measures, such as public education in sexual and reproductive health, as well as more effective health delivery systems in these areas.

339. The Committee recommends that better methods of data collection on the incidence of AIDS

cases amongst women and deaths due to AIDS should be developed.

340. The Committee recommends that measures be taken to raise the awareness of teachers and citizens in order to halt sexual abuse against children. The Committee recommends further that campaigns be initiated to prevent children from forming a family too early.

341. The Committee recommends that legal measures be taken against all religious and customary practices that discriminate against women. Furthermore, awareness programmes must be put in place to change mentality and attitudes. The Committee also recommends that laws be amended to empower women in matters of inheritance and succession.

342. The Committee suggests that pre-school facilities be made accessible and affordable, particularly for low means families.

343. The Committee suggests further that programmes be instituted that allow for continued education for school drop-outs and that family life education be part of the school curriculum.

344. The Committee feels that it is necessary to develop an overall programme of prevention of violence against women and of attention to be given to the victims, which includes the need to educate the police to treat and handle the violated woman in such a way that their predicament will not be worsened. This creation of awareness is necessary since Uganda's draft Constitution recognizes this kind of treatment as illegal.

### **CEDAW A/57/38 part III (2002)**

113. The Committee considered the third periodic report of Uganda (CEDAW/C/UGA/3) at its 575th and 576th meetings on 9 August 2002 (see CEDAW/C/SR.575 and 576).

#### **(a) Introduction by the State party**

114. In introducing the third report, the Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development indicated that her country had made significant progress in the 17 years since its ratification of the Convention in 1985, and that great strides had been taken towards the implementation of the provisions of the Convention despite some obstacles.

115. Since the last presentation, in February 1995, several measures had been taken to strengthen the legal and policy framework for implementation. The Government had adopted the National Gender Policy and formulated a National Action Plan on Women, which provided guidance on strategies and interventions for the empowerment of women. Measures had been taken to strengthen the legal framework, and proposed laws on domestic relations, sexual offences and employment were currently under consideration.

116. Through the affirmative action policy, the number of women in decision-making positions had risen from 17 per cent in 1994 to 39 per cent in 2002. Women now held key posts, including those of the Vice-President, Deputy Chief Justice, Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Deputy Inspector-General of Police. The representative also noted that civil society organizations had supported the Government's affirmative action policy of strengthening women's political participation through capacity-building programmes, including training in leadership skills.

117. Among the most important advances was the adoption of a new Constitution considered globally as one of the most gender-sensitive. The new Constitution, inter alia, emphasized respect for human rights and freedoms, affirmed the equality of all persons and obliged the State to institute affirmative action measures in favour of disadvantaged groups for purposes of redressing structural and social inequality.

118. As part of the Government's commitment to social and economic development, a Poverty Eradication Action Plan containing mechanisms for eradicating absolute poverty by 2017, had been developed to ensure sustainable livelihoods for all Ugandans, including women. Gender mainstreaming was a guiding principle of the plan.

119. The Government had responded to the Committee's call for the eradication of gender-based abuse and violence. Violations against women and children were now dealt with under the Penal Code Act. Family protection units had been established at police posts, and sensitization and awareness-raising measures had been introduced.

120. Through a multisectoral approach to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, prevalence rates had fallen to

an average of 6.1 per cent in 2002 from 22 per cent 10 years before. Special attention had been given to awareness-raising, voluntary testing and counselling, and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission.

121. In compliance with commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action, a national machinery now oversaw gender mainstreaming and advancement of women initiatives, thereby facilitating the promotion of the status of women within the policy and institutional framework. The representative indicated that, although the national machinery had undergone structural and institutional changes, the goal of achieving women's advancement and gender equality had been retained.

122. The Government had formulated a Universal Primary Education Programme to provide free education for all children in primary school, which had enabled 6.9 million children, 3.37 million of whom were female, to enrol in school by 2001. The strategy emphasized the provision of adequate facilities to meet the needs of the girl child and children with disabilities.

123. Despite achievements made in the past few years to promote gender equality and the advancement of women, obstacles still existed. Challenges faced by the Government included, inter alia, poverty, lack of sex-disaggregated data, gender-specific information for informed policy and programme formulation, and the persistence of traditional attitudes and practices. Despite these challenges, the Government remained committed to meeting its international obligations, including the implementation of all of the provisions of the Convention.

#### (b) Concluding comments of the Committee

##### Introduction

124. The Committee commends the State party for its third periodic report, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of periodic reports. It also commends the State party for the comprehensive written replies to the questions of the Committee's pre-session working group. The Committee commends the State party for its high-level delegation headed by the Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development of Uganda and expresses appreciation for the oral presentation, which provided additional information on the implementation of the Convention and the current situation of women in Uganda.

##### Positive aspects

125. The Committee commends the State party for the promulgation in 1995 of a new Constitution, which incorporates a gender-sensitive approach to the definition of discrimination on the grounds of sex, in harmony with the Convention.

126. The Committee commends the State party for the measures taken to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic and notes with satisfaction the decrease in HIV/AIDS prevalence rates from 22 per cent in 1992 to an average of 6.1 per cent in 2002.

127. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the 1997 National Gender Policy and the formulation of the National Action Plan on Women in 1999, which provide guidelines for the development of strategies and interventions for the empowerment of women. It also welcomes the adoption of the affirmative action policy, resulting in an increase in women's representation in decision-making positions from 16.9 per cent in 1994 to 39 per cent in 2002. The Committee welcomes the fact that women occupy a number of key high-level positions.

128. The Committee commends the State party for formulating and implementing the Universal Primary Education Programme, which facilitated the enrolment of 3.3 million girls in school by 2001. It also welcomes the application of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to increase the population of women students in tertiary education and the Functional Adult Literary Programme, which has particularly benefited women.

#### Principal areas of concern and recommendations

129. The Committee is concerned that, despite the adoption of its gender-sensitive Constitution in 1995, legislative provisions that discriminate against women continue to exist. It is also concerned that, although progress has been made towards the preparation of legislation to eliminate discrimination, much of this has not been enacted. It is particularly concerned at the slow progress in removing de jure discrimination and preventing and eliminating de facto discrimination against women.

130. The Committee recommends that the State party accelerate its law reform process to harmonize its domestic legislation with its constitutional principles relating to non-discrimination and equality between women and men. It recommends the speedy enactment of the draft Land Act, the Domestic Relations Bill and the Sexual Offences Bill. The Committee further recommends that the State party introduce public education and legal literacy campaigns relating to the Convention and the Constitution to raise awareness of the State party's international and national commitments on the elimination of discrimination against women.

131. The Committee is concerned that, although laws and customs which contravene the constitutional guarantees on equality are considered to be void, mechanisms to enforce the constitutional provisions on non-discrimination are not widely known and are inaccessible to women.

132. The Committee recommends the adoption of an accessible complaints procedure to enforce constitutional guarantees. It also calls for the introduction of legal literacy campaigns to make women aware of their rights under the Constitution and the means to enforce them. The Committee recommends the development, in cooperation with women's groups, of legal aid programmes to enable women to demand enforcement of their rights.

133. Noting the State party's efforts in this context, the Committee is concerned at the persistence of patriarchal patterns of behaviour in the State party and at the existence of stereotypes relating to the role of women in the home and society, and expectations of women's subordination to men.

134. The Committee calls upon the State party to strengthen existing efforts to address stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men that perpetuate direct and indirect discrimination against women. These should include educational measures, at all levels, beginning at an early age, the revision of school text books and curricula and awareness-raising and public education campaigns directed at women and men designed with the involvement of the media and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to address traditional stereotypes regarding the role of women. The Committee also calls upon the State party to undertake an assessment of the impact of these measures in order to identify shortcomings, and improve these measures accordingly.

135. The Committee expresses concern about the high incidence of violence against women, such as domestic violence, rape, including marital rape, incest, sexual harassment in the workplace and other forms of sexual abuse of women. The Committee is also concerned at the lack of legal and other measures to address violence against women. The Committee is also concerned that, despite successes achieved in reducing female genital mutilation in some districts in 1996, this practice continues to exist.

136. The Committee urges the State party to place high priority on comprehensive measures to address violence against women and girls in accordance with its general recommendation 19 on violence against women. The Committee calls on the State party to enact legislation on domestic violence, including marital rape, as soon as possible in order to ensure that violence against women and girls constitutes a criminal offence, that women and girls who are victims of violence have access to immediate means of redress and protection and that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished. The Committee also recommends gender-sensitive training for all public officials, in particular law enforcement personnel, the judiciary and health workers. The Committee recommends the establishment of counselling services for victims of violence; the implementation of public awareness campaigns, through the media and public education programmes, and the adoption of a zero tolerance policy on all forms of violence against women. The Committee also recommends that the State party enhance its efforts to address female genital mutilation in order to eradicate this harmful traditional practice.

137. While noting the increasing number of women in decision-making positions as a result, inter alia, of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, the Committee expresses concern that this number remains low. It is also concerned that the persistence of patriarchal attitudes that view men as natural leaders may preclude women from seeking positions of leadership.

138. The Committee urges the State party to intensify its efforts to encourage women to take up leadership positions through further temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention. The Committee recommends that the State party offer or support programmes for current and future women leaders and undertake awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of women's participation in decision-making.

139. The Committee is concerned at the low number of women in the diplomatic service,

particularly in postings outside Uganda, and the fact that few Ugandan women work in international organizations.

140. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures, including in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, to encourage women to enter the diplomatic service. It also recommends the introduction of measures to encourage women to seek employment in international organizations.

141. While welcoming the constitutional provisions and the amended Uganda Immigration and Control Act, 1999 that provide for equal citizenship and nationality rights for women and men, the Committee expresses concern that the Passport Regulations contravene these provisions and discriminate against women. It is concerned that a married woman will not be issued a passport without her husband's written consent, and that the father as legal guardian must consent to the inclusion of a women's minor children in her passport.

142. The Committee urges the State Party to take urgent steps to reconcile its Passport Regulations with the provisions of the Constitution and article 9 of the Convention in order to eliminate all provisions that discriminate against women in the area of nationality and citizenship. It requests the State party to report on the implementation of these measures in its next periodic report.

143. The Committee expresses concern at the limited information provided by the State party on employment of women and notes the lack of statistical data disaggregated by sex. It expresses concern at the high rate of unemployment among women, disparities between the wages of men and women, even in the public sector, disparities in social security and the lack of legal protection for women against sexual harassment at the workplace. It also expresses concern that the draft national employment policy, which promotes equal employment opportunities for men and women, has still not been adopted. It is also concerned that legislation required by article 40 of the Constitution to provide the right to work under satisfactory and safe and healthy conditions, equal pay for equal work, paid leave and maternity protection have still to be enacted.

144. The Committee encourages the State party to provide in its next periodic report information, including, as far as possible, data disaggregated by sex, on women's participation in the labour market and employment conditions, including wages in, inter alia, the private and informal sectors. It urges the State party to enact legislation to protect the rights of persons in employment which complies with the provisions of article 11 of the Convention. The Committee also urges the State party to adopt the draft national employment policy. It further urges the State party to introduce temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to create employment opportunities for women. The Committee recommends that the State party introduce specific legislation, with accessible procedures and compensation for victims, and penalties for perpetrators, to address sexual harassment in the workplace.

145. The Committee is concerned that exploitation of women and girls in prostitution is increasing. The Committee is also concerned that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases among prostitutes is increasing.

146. The Committee recommends the development of programmes of action relating to prostitution and the introduction of legislation to ensure the prosecution of, and stronger penalties for, exploitation of female prostitutes. The Committee invites the State party to expand its programmes for women's economic empowerment. The Committee urges the State party to pay full attention to the provisions of health services for prostitutes, so as to curb the rise in HIV/AIDS.

147. The Committee is concerned about the high rate of teenage pregnancy and its consequences for girls' enjoyment of the rights in the Convention, particularly in the spheres of education and health. It is also concerned at the high rate of maternal mortality among teenage girls, particularly in the rural areas, frequently as a result of clandestine abortion.

148. The Committee recommends that the State party design and implement national health, including reproductive health, programmes to prevent early pregnancies and induced abortions in rural and urban areas. The Committee also urges the State party to reinforce programmes of sexual and reproductive health education for both girls and boys. It also calls on the State party to provide safe and affordable contraceptives.

149. Despite the State party's development strategy, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan, for improving the livelihoods of all Ugandans, including women, the Committee is concerned that poverty is widespread among women, inter alia, as a consequence of gender-insensitive privatization and the implementation of structural adjustment policies.

150. The Committee urges the State Party to continue to intensify the implementation of gender-sensitive poverty reduction programmes in rural and urban areas. The Committee also recommends that the State party continue to develop targeted policies and support services for women aimed at alleviating and reducing poverty.

151. The Committee expresses concern at the situation of rural women, who constitute the majority of the female population in the country. The Committee also expresses concern that customs and traditional practices, prevalent in rural areas, prevent women from inheriting or acquiring ownership of land and other property.

152. The Committee urges the State party to pay increased attention to the needs of rural women so as to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes adopted in all spheres, as well as participate in decision-making, have full access to education and health services and credit facilities. The Committee also urges the State party to eliminate all forms of discrimination with respect to the ownership, co-sharing and inheritance of land. It also urges the introduction of measures to address negative customs and traditional practices, especially in rural areas, which affect full enjoyment of the right to property by women.

153. While noting that Article 33 (6) of the Constitution "prohibits laws, customs or traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women", the Committee notes with concern the continued existence of legislation, customary laws and practices on inheritance, land ownership, widow inheritance, polygamy, forced marriage, bride price, guardianship of children and the definition of adultery that discriminate against women and conflict with the Constitution and the

Convention.

154. The Committee urges the State party, in line with Article 33 (6) of the 1995 Constitution, to amend these laws and prohibit such practices. The Committee requests the State party to work with the relevant ministries and non-governmental organizations, including lawyers' associations and women's groups, to create an enabling environment for legal reform and effective law enforcement and legal literacy.

155. While noting the positive involvement of women in peace-building initiatives, the Committee notes with concern that some areas of northern and western Uganda continue to experience insecurity as a result of civil strife. The Committee is particularly concerned that many women and girls in the conflict areas have been victims of violence, including abduction and sexual slavery.

156. The Committee urges the State party to include women in national reconciliation and peace-building initiatives. The Committee recommends that the State party include women from all ethnic groups affected by armed conflict in peace negotiations. It also recommends that the State party include in peace negotiations measures of accountability, redress and rehabilitation for women and girls who have been victims of violence, including enslavement, in those conflicts.

157. While recognizing the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Convention in the State party, the Committee is concerned that, without comprehensive, systematic strategies and support mechanisms, the programme for implementation may not be sustainable in the long term.

158. The Committee recommends that the State party introduce a comprehensive programme of gender mainstreaming in all government ministries and a comprehensive awareness campaign, including for civil servants with regard to the Convention.

159. The Committee urges the State party to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to deposit as soon as possible its instrument of acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the meeting time of the Committee.

160. The Committee requests the State party to respond to the concerns expressed in the present concluding comments in its next periodic report under article 18 of the Convention.

161. Taking account of the gender dimensions of declarations, programmes and platforms for action adopted by relevant United Nations conferences, summits and special session (such as the special session of the General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (the twenty-first special session), the special session on children (the twenty-seventh special session), the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the Second World Assembly on Ageing), the Committee requests the State party to include information on the implementation of aspects of these documents relating to relevant articles of the Convention in its next periodic report.

162. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Uganda of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Uganda, and in particular government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken with regard to de jure and de facto equality for women and the future steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the State party to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention and its Optional Protocol, the general recommendations of the Committee, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the results of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2002: gender, equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".