



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Fifty-second session

9 – 27 July 2012

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

Bahamas

1. The Committee considered the combined initial to fourth periodic report (CEDAW/C/BHS/1-4) and the fifth periodic report of the Bahamas (CEDAW/C/BHS/5) at its 1057th and 1058th meetings on 20 July 2012 (CEDAW/C/SR. 1057 and 1058). The Committee's lists of issues and questions are contained in CEDAW/C/BHS/Q/4 and CEDAW/C/BHS/Q/5, and the responses of the Government of the Bahamas are contained in CEDAW/C/BHS/Q/4/Add.1 and CEDAW/C/BHS/Q/5/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates that the State party submitted its combined initial to fourth periodic report and its fifth periodic report, which were well structured and, in general, followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of reports, although they lacked references to the Committee's general recommendations and to some specific sex 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 the 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 H.E. Ms. Melanie Griffin, Minister for Social Services, and included representatives from the Office of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Bahamas National Women's Advisory Council, the Bureau for Women's Affairs and representatives of the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York. The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue that took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee appreciates the efforts made by the State party for the empowerment of women and the fight against sex-based discrimination.

5. The Committee welcomes the adoption of:
 - (a) The Education Act (1962) and its Amendment of 1996 that provide for universal and equal access to education
 - (b) The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 1991
 - (c) The Employment Act of 2001;
 - (d) The Inheritance Law of 2002 which permits men and women to inherit equally;
 - (e) The Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act of 2007; and
 - (f) The Trafficking in Persons (Prevention and Suppression) Act of 2008.
6. The Committee notes with appreciation the existence of the Bureau for Women's Affairs and the launching of various initiatives to combat violence against women including the launching, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development in 2012, of the campaign "Domestic Violence is Everyone's Business".
7. The Committee also notes with satisfaction that the State party has ratified:
 - a) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
 - b) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
 - c) The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and
 - d) The Convention on the Rights of the Child.
8. The Committee also welcomes the withdrawal of the reservation to article 16 (h) on 18 February 2011.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

9. **The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement, without delay, 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. Consequently, the Committee urges the State party to focus on those areas in its implementation activities and to report on actions 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, the Parliament and the judiciary, so as to ensure their full implementation and recommends that the State party disseminate the Convention, in particular among civil society.**

Parliament

10. **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 the State apparatus and invites the State party to encourage the 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 State party's next reporting process under the Convention.**

Visibility of the Convention and access to justice

11. While noting the existence of legal sanctions for acts of discrimination against women, the Committee is concerned about the limited cases brought before court for redress in instances of discrimination against women. The Committee also remains concerned that women, in particular in the Family Islands, are not aware of their rights under the Convention and thus lack the capacity to claim them.

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

a) **Take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations are sufficiently known and applied by all branches of Government and the judiciary as a framework for all laws, court decisions and policies on gender equality and the advancement of women and that they are made an integral part of the training for judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police and other law enforcement officers; and**

b) **Enhance women's awareness of their rights and the means to enforce them and ensure that information on the Convention is provided to all women and men, in particular in the Family Islands, through the use of all appropriate means, including the media.**

Constitutional and legislative protection of women from discrimination

13. While noting that the Constitution (Chapter 3 Article 15) protects the rights of all citizens regardless of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, the Committee remains concerned that the State party's Constitution and national legislation do not contain an explicit definition of discrimination in accordance with article 1 of the Convention, nor provisions on equal rights of women in line with article 2 (a) of the Convention. The Committee is also concerned that article 26 (1) of the Constitution does not protect against discrimination with respect to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death or other matters of personal law. The Committee is further concerned that the State party has not withdrawn its reservation to article 2 (a) on the ground that the referendum held in 2002, on the incorporation of a definition of discrimination against women in the Constitution and domestic legislation, was unsuccessful.

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

(a) **In partnership with the Constitutional Review Commission, take steps to repeal article 26 (1) of the Constitution and ensure that an explicit definition of discrimination in line with article 1 of the Convention, as well as provisions on the equal rights of women in line with article 2 (a) of the Convention, be included in the Constitution or in other appropriate legislation; and**

(b) **Take all the necessary measures to withdraw its reservation to article 2 (a) of the Convention related to the integration of the principle of equality of women and men in the Constitution or other appropriate legislation.**

Legislative framework

15. While welcoming the enactment of legislation that include certain provisions of the Convention, the Committee remains concerned that the State party has not undertaken a comprehensive revision of domestic law or enacted new legislation to domesticate the entire Convention as part of the national law. It notes that, short of such full domestication, the relevance of the Convention and its direct application have not yet been established in the State party.

16. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

a) **Carry out, within a clear time frame and without delay, a comprehensive revision of domestic law and enactment of new legislation in order to bring domestic provisions into line with the Convention; and**

b) **Ensure that all discriminatory provisions are reviewed and repealed in order to achieve de jure equality and to enable de facto equality for women in compliance with the State party's obligations under the Convention.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

17. The Committee welcomes the existence of a Bureau for Women's Affairs and the plan to expand the Bureau into a Department, the State party's plan to strengthen its authority and the increase in the Bureau's budget since 2004. While the Committee is aware that the Bureau for Women's Affairs is part of the Ministry of Social Services and has at its disposal social workers throughout the archipelago, it is concerned about: i) the limited financial and human resources allocated directly to the Bureau, which consists of four staff members and less than 1% of the national budget; ii) the need to enhance its technical capacity; iii) the delay in finalizing and adopting the National Gender Policy; and iv) the lack of sex-disaggregated data necessary to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at mainstreaming gender equality and enhancing women's enjoyment of their human rights.

18. **In accordance with its general recommendation No. 6 (1988) and the guidance provided in the Beijing Platform for Action on the necessary conditions for the effective functioning of national mechanisms, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

a) **Strengthen, within a clear timeframe, the financial and human resources allocated to the Bureau for Women's Affairs at national and local levels; provide it with technical capacity-building activities; and strengthen its authority to formulate, provide advice on, coordinate and monitor the implementation of legislation and policy measures in the field of gender equality;**

b) **Finalize and accelerate the adoption of the National Gender Policy and incorporate a result-oriented approach, including specific indicators and targets; and**

c) **Develop a comprehensive gender indicator system to improve the collection of sex-disaggregated data necessary to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at mainstreaming gender equality and enhancing women's enjoyment of their human rights.**

Temporary Special Measures

19. The Committee is concerned that the State party's understanding of the purpose of and need for temporary special measures is not in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and its general recommendation No. 25. It is also concerned that no temporary special measures were or are planned to be applied as a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in areas where women, in particular women in situation of poverty, migrant women and women with disabilities, are underrepresented or disadvantaged.

20. **The Committee encourages the State party to use temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, as interpreted in the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, in all areas covered by the Convention, where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including for women in**

situation of poverty, migrant women and women with disabilities. To that end, it recommends that the State party:

(a) Set time-bound targets and allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of temporary special measures in various forms, such as outreach and support programmes, quotas and other pro-active and result-oriented measures aimed at achieving substantive equality of women and men in all areas, and encourage their use both in public and private sectors;

(b) Raise awareness among members of Parliament, government officials, employers and the general public about the necessity of temporary special measures and provide comprehensive information on the use of such measures and their impact in its next periodic report.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

21. The Committee notes with appreciation the existence of the National Parenting Programme which challenges parents to move away from the traditional roles of women and men and the current review of the Health and Family Curriculum of the Ministry of Education to address gender stereotypes. However, the Committee expresses its deep concern at the persistence of adverse cultural norms, practices and traditions as well as patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in the family (in which men are considered as breadwinners and women family caretakers), in the workplace, in politics and in society. The Committee notes that stereotypes contribute to sex-based inequalities in all areas of life and the persistence of violence against women.

22. **The Committee recommends that the State party put in place, without delay, a comprehensive strategy with result-oriented approach to eliminate stereotypes that discriminate against women in the family, the workplace, in politics and in society, in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention. Such measures should include concerted efforts, in a clear timeframe and in collaboration with civil society, to educate and raise awareness about this subject, targeting women and men at all levels of society, and should involve the school system and the media.**

Violence against women

23. The Committee welcomes the campaign undertaken against rape, the launching of various initiatives to combat violence against women and the enactment of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 1991 and the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act of 2007. However, the Committee is concerned about:

a) The high prevalence of violence, including rape, in the State party and the persistence of domestic violence;

b) The lack of a comprehensive law addressing violence against women;

c) The postponement of the adoption of the amendment to the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 1991, criminalizing marital rape;

d) The lack of a comprehensive plan that addresses all forms of violence against women and girls;

e) The slowness of the justice system and its negative impact on women victims of violence.

f) The limited number of State-run shelters for victims of domestic violence, particularly in the Family Islands, and the lack of access to shelters for women with sons over the age of 10 years; and

g) The absence of data on cases of gender-based violence reported and on prosecution and conviction rates in relation to violence against women and the delay in establishing a protocol for systematic and regular gathering and analysis of data and information on all forms of violence against women.

24. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Consider adopting a comprehensive law addressing violence against women;**

(b) **Promptly raise awareness among the population on the criminal nature of marital rape and amend the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 1991 to criminalize marital rape;**

(c) **Adopt a comprehensive plan that addresses all forms of violence against women and girls and a strategy for its implementation;**

(d) **Take necessary measures to ensure speedy access to justice for women victims of all forms of gender-based violence;**

(e) **Provide adequate assistance and protection to women victims of violence, in particular psychosocial rehabilitation and an adequate number of shelter facilities, including in the Family Islands, specialized on the protection of victims of domestic violence and accepting women with their children; and**

(f) **Collect comprehensive statistical data on violence against women, disaggregated by sex, age and relationship between the victim and perpetrators, including data on the number of complaints, prosecutions and convictions, and on the sentences imposed on perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence and include such data in its next report.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

25. While noting the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention and Suppression) Act in 2008, the Committee remains concerned about:

a) The absence of effective implementation of this Act and the absence of cases brought before the court since the Act came into force;

b) The absence of policies and programmes addressing prevention, protection, assistance and legal support for victims of trafficking, including those who are exploited in forced prostitution;

c) The number of children involved in prostitution and child pornography and the lack of awareness raising activities of the actors directly related to the tourist industry about children, and presumably girls, engaged in certain activities related to tourism who are at risk of being involved in commercial sexual exploitation; and

d) The criminalization of prostitution (five years imprisonment) by the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 1991 (para. 8 (a)).

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

a) **Ensure the effective enforcement of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention and Suppression) Act of 2008; strengthen the Trafficking in Persons Committee and the Trafficking in Persons Task Force to this effect; and, further to the 2008 Act, finalize without delay, the draft national Plan of Action with a result-oriented approach, including specific indicators and targets;**

b) **Strengthen mechanisms for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of trafficking offenders;**

c) **Develop policies and programmes addressing prevention, protection, assistance and legal support for victims of trafficking, including those who are exploited in forced prostitution, and establish special shelters for women victims of trafficking;**

d) **Take the necessary measures to eliminate child pornography and raise awareness among the actors directly related to the tourism industry about children, and presumably girls, engaged in certain activities related to tourism who are at risk of being involved in commercial sexual exploitation;**

e) **Review its prostitution policy and relevant legislation, in particular the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 1991, with a view to decriminalizing women's involvement in prostitution, ensuring that women involved in the sex trade are not punished and discouraging male demand for prostitution; and**

f) **Increase efforts aimed at international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination, in order to prevent trafficking through information exchange and to harmonize legal procedures aiming at the prosecution and punishment of traffickers.**

Participation in political and public life

27. While welcoming the presence of women at key positions in the judicial service and the Government and, in particular, the high proportion of women in the Foreign Service, the Committee is concerned about the remaining low participation of women in other areas of the political and public life.

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

(a) **Ensure access of women to all areas of political and public life, including at high levels of decision-making;**

(b) **Adopt temporary special measures, such as quotas, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, to increase the number of women in political and public life and in decision-making positions;**

(c) **Implement awareness-raising activities for the society as a whole about the importance of women's participation in decision-making and develop targeted training and mentoring programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for present and potential women candidates and women holding public office.**

Nationality

29. The Committee is concerned that the State party does not see itself bound by the provisions of Article 9 paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Convention on the ground that Bahamian citizens voted, via a Constitutional Referendum, against the withdrawal of the constitutional provision preventing women from passing their nationality to their children or to their spouses of foreign nationality. Moreover, the Committee is also concerned about the penalization of asylum-seekers for illegal entry and stay in the country and about their conditions of detention that are particularly inadequate for women and children.

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

a) **Raise awareness among the population on the equal rights of women and men with regard to transmission of nationality;**

b) **Amend its Constitution and relevant domestic laws to grant Bahamian women equal rights with men in regard to transmission of their nationality to their children or to their spouses of foreign nationality;**

c) **Withdraw its reservation to article 9 (2) of the Convention; and**

d) **Ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers, in particular women and girls, are not penalized for illegal entry and stay in the country, that detention of asylum-seekers is only used as a last resort where necessary and for as short period as possible, and that safeguards against refoulement are fully implemented; improve the conditions of detention facilities for women asylum seekers, in accordance with international standards; and ensure the provision of adequate health facilities and services, in particular for pregnant women.**

Education

31. The Committee commends the high literacy rate of women in the State party, the enactment of the education Act (1962) and its Amendment of 1996 that provide for universal and equal access to education, and the steps taken to encourage girls to enter non-traditional areas. However, the Committee remains concerned about:

(a) The existence of some challenges/barriers that women face to attend Adult Education and Literacy classes, including cultural patterns, opposition from husbands, health issues, hiding of literacy deficiencies, lack of access for persons with disabilities and lack of programmes in remote areas;

(b) The lack of data on the representation of women and girls in traditionally male-dominated fields of studies, such as engineering and information technology; and

(c) The persistence of stereotypes in school curricula despite the 1997 curriculum reform that eliminated stereotypes throughout the natural sciences, English language and the technical and vocational subjects.

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

(a) **Take the necessary measures to eliminate the barriers that prevent women from attending Adult Education and Literacy classes;**

(b) **Collect data on the representation of women in traditionally male-dominated fields of studies and encourage women and men to choose non-traditional fields of education and careers; and**

(c) **Evaluate the content of curriculum to ensure that it is gender sensitive and gender responsive and explicitly addresses principle of equality between women and men; and undertake a new revision of educational textbooks and of the family life and health education (FLHE) curriculum to eliminate remaining gender stereotypes.**

Employment

33. While welcoming the existence of legal provisions providing for equal pay for work of equal value and provisions allowing paid maternity leave, the Committee is concerned that:

(a) Section 6 (b) of the Employment Act of 2001 limits the application of work of equal value, in contradiction with ILO Convention No. 100;

(b) Occupational segregation of men and women persists, including in the higher occupational category of senior officials and managers, and women are concentrated in so-called typically female occupations;

(c) Some legal provisions are not in line with ILO Convention No. 103 with regard to entitlement to maternity leave, compulsory leave after confinement of six weeks, interruptions of work for nursing and protection against dismissal during maternity leave;

- (d) Unemployment is higher among women;
- (e) Unpaid work, most of this done by women, does not count towards women's eligibility for retirement and other work related benefits; and
- (f) The State party failed to provide information on implementation measures of the legal provisions (Chapter 99 of the Statute Laws and The Sexual Offenses Act) protecting against sexual harassment and violence against women in the workplace.

34. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Enact appropriate legislation that guarantees the principle of "equal pay for work of equal value" in all areas of work, in line with article 11 (d) of CEDAW Convention and ILO Convention No. 100;**
- (b) Adopt effective measures, including temporary special measures, to eliminate occupational segregation based on stereotypes related to gender;**
- (c) Bring in line with ILO Convention No. 103 the legal provisions related to entitlement to maternity leave, compulsory leave after confinement of six weeks, interruptions of work for nursing and protection against dismissal during maternity leave;**
- (d) Implement employment policies aimed at reducing the unequal rates/higher level of unemployment of women;**
- (e) Ensure that women carrying out unpaid work are eligible for retirement and other work related benefits, particularly in old age;**
- (f) Consider ratifying the ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning decent work for domestic workers; and**
- (g) Ensure the effective enforcement of the legal provisions (Chapter 99 of the Statute Laws and The Sexual Offenses Act) protecting against sexual harassment and violence against women in the workplace.**

Health

35. The Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The inadequate access to mental health services in the Family Islands;
- (b) The high rate of teenage pregnancies among adolescents; the low rate of contraceptive use;
- (c) The inadequate provision of education on sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- (d) The increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS among adolescents; the higher HIV/AIDS prevalence among women than among men;
- (e) The prevalence of breast cancer as one of the five leading causes of mortality for women; and
- (f) The absence of legal provisions allowing abortion in case of rape or incest, which lead women to seek unsafe and illegal abortions;

36. In line with its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health, the Committee calls on the State party to:

- (a) Continue its efforts to ensure access of women, including women from Family Islands, to adequate health facilities and services, and increase women's access to mental health services in the Family Islands;**

(b) Widely promote education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including by:

(i) Undertaking large-scale awareness-raising campaigns for the population in general with special attention to early pregnancy and the importance of using contraceptives for family planning and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS;

(ii) Integrating effective and age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights into the Health and Family Life Education curricula for all school levels;

(c) Ensure that all women and girls have free and adequate access to contraceptives and sexual and reproductive health services, including in Family Islands;

(d) Take holistic measures to combat HIV/AIDS and ensure that women and girls infected with HIV/AIDS are given appropriate assistance;

(e) Strengthen measures to prevent breast cancer by ensuring that women have awareness of and affordable access to screening procedures; and

(f) Broaden the conditions under which abortion can be legally available including in instances of rape and incest.

Marriage and family relations

37. The Committee welcomes the enactment of the New Inheritance Law of 2002 which permits men and women to inherit equally. However, the Committee is concerned at the divided structure of the family court system which severely hampers women's access to justice in family matters, notwithstanding the report of the family court system committee of 31 August 2008, which recommends the creation of a unified family court system. The Committee is also concerned that, although the courts recognize the rights of *de facto* unions with respect to property during the relationship and on its breakdown, there are no legal provisions governing *de facto* unions, which may deny women protection and redress in case of separation or violence against women.

38. **The Committee encourages the State party to:**

(a) Accelerate establishment, within a clear timeframe, of a unified family court system, in accordance with the recommendations of the report of the family court committee of 31 August 2008, to improve women's access to justice in family matters; and

(b) Review its current legal system governing marriage and family relations with a view to extending existing legal provisions to couples living in *de facto* unions.

National human rights institution

39. The Committee is concerned about the absence of an independent and effective national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles.

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

(a) Establish a National Human Rights Commission in compliance with the Paris Principles and provide it with sufficient resources, independent commissioners, a broad human rights mandate and a specific mandate on gender equality; and

(b) Ensure that the composition and activities of the National Human Rights Commission are gender-sensitive.

Optional Protocol

41. **The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

42. **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

43. **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 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

44. **The Committee requests the wide dissemination in the Bahamas 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 de jure and de facto equality of women and the further steps that are required in that regard. The Committee recommends that dissemination should include dissemination at the local community level. The State party is encouraged to organize a series of meetings to discuss the progress achieved in the implementation of the present observations. The Committee requests the State party 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

45. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the Bahamas 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 Bahamas to consider ratifying the treaties to which it is not yet a party, i.e., the Convention against Torture; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the**

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.

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

46. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 20 and 24 above.

Technical assistance

47. The Committee recommends that the State party consider seeking cooperation and 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 Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Statistics Division, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Preparation of the next report

48. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the participation of all ministries and public bodies in the preparation of its next periodic report and, at the same time, to consult a variety of women's and human rights organizations.

49. 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 and invites the State party to submit its next periodic report in July 2016.

50. 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 that were approved at the fifth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies, in June 2006 (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I). The treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee at its fortieth session in January 2008 (A/63/38, part I, annex I) 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.