



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ghana*

1. The Committee considered the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ghana ([CEDAW/C/GHA/6-7](#)) at its 1253rd and 1254th meetings, on 24 October 2014 (see [CEDAW/C/SR.1253](#) and 1254). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in [CEDAW/C/GHA/Q/6-7](#) and the responses of Ghana are contained in [CEDAW/C/GHA/Q/6-7/Add.1](#).

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates that the State party submitted its combined sixth and seventh periodic reports, which generally followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of reports but lacked references to the Committee's general recommendations and to some specific sex-disaggregated data. The Committee also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group. It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party for its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, Nana Oye Lithur. The delegation also included three parliamentarians, a deputy commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, officials from government agencies responsible for health, food, agriculture, education, foreign affairs and local government, in addition to representatives of civil society and the media.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2006 of the State party's combined third, fourth and fifth periodic reports

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



(CEDAW/C/GHA/3-5) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the deletion of section 42 (g) of the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29), which permitted non-consensual sex within marriage, and the adoption of the following:

- (a) Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (Act 694);
- (b) Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715);
- (c) Criminal Offences (Amendments) Act, 2007 (Act 741), which widens the scope of persons responsible for the practice of female genital mutilation and increases sanctions for that offence;
- (d) Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732);
- (e) Mental Health Act, 2012 (Act 846).

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, including the following:

- (a) Re-engineering of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs;
- (b) Development of the National Policy and Plan of Action (2009-2019) on the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified the following international and regional instruments:

- (a) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, in 2012;
- (b) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in 2011;
- (c) Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, in 2007.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Parliament

7. The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). It invites Parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.

Visibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations

8. The Committee welcomes the use of the Convention by the State party in the design and implementation of policies and guidelines. It is concerned, however, about the general lack of awareness of the Convention and the Optional Protocol at all levels of the Government. It also concerned that women themselves are not aware of their rights under the Convention and the complaints procedure under the Optional Protocol.

9. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To take the steps necessary to ensure the adequate dissemination and understanding of the provisions of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations among all government ministries, parliamentarians, the judiciary, law enforcement officers and community leaders, and use them as the basis for measures aiming at the elimination of discrimination against women;**

(b) **To take all appropriate measures to enhance women's awareness of their rights and the means to enforce them, including by providing women with information on the Convention and the Optional Protocol.**

Legislative framework and harmonization of laws

10. The Committee notes the current process aimed at reviewing the Constitution and the harmonization of the laws of the State party. It is concerned, however, about the delay in completing those legislative reforms and in adopting the regulations necessary for the full implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007, the Human Trafficking Act, 2005 and the Persons with Disability Act, 2006.

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

(a) **Finalize, within a clear time frame, the ongoing review of the Constitution with a view to bringing its legislation into conformity with the Convention and ensuring that all discriminatory provisions are repealed;**

(b) **Honour its commitment to swiftly enacting the regulations required for the full implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007, the Human Trafficking Act, 2005 and the Persons with Disability Act, 2006.**

Definition of discrimination against women

12. The Committee notes that article 17 (3) of the Constitution was not amended to bring the definition of discrimination into conformity with the definition in article 1 of the Convention, despite the recommendations to that effect by the Constitutional Review Commission. The Committee welcomes, however, the information provided by the State party that the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill contains a definition of discrimination in conformity with the definition in article 1 of the Convention.

13. **The Committee requests the State party to expeditiously adopt its Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill and to ensure that it includes a definition of discrimination in line with article 1 of the Convention, encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination in both the public and private spheres.**

Access to justice

14. The Committee notes the measures taken with a view to increasing women's access to justice, including the establishment of two gender-based and sexual offences courts and family and juvenile courts in the district courts. It also notes the information provided that the legal aid scheme has been given constitutional rank, resulting in increased resources. The Committee nonetheless remains concerned about:

(a) The fact admitted by the State party that judicial processes remain cumbersome and that most women living in poverty have limited or no access to the formal channels for obtaining access to justice;

(b) The continued lack of legal literacy, especially among rural women, unaffordable legal costs and the stigmatization of women who bring cases to court;

(c) The increased use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to settle cases in the family courts, which also have jurisdiction to deal with criminal cases and civil protection orders under the Domestic Violence Act, 2007.

15. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Conduct awareness-raising programmes to increase women's legal literacy, with specific attention to rural and poor women, and eliminate the stigmatization of women who claim their rights;**

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

(c) **Undertake targeted awareness-raising to ensure that customary court officials are familiar with the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations;**

(d) **Ensure that women have access to affordable legal assistance throughout the State party;**

(e) **Raise awareness among women about criminal law provisions on sexual violence, encourage them to opt for criminal complaints rather than mediation, whenever justified, and monitor the use of mediation to ensure that it is implemented in a way that respects women's rights and does not lead to impunity for perpetrators;**

(f) **Provide adequate assistance and protection to women who are victims of violence by strengthening the capacity of shelters and crisis centres, especially in rural and remote areas, working towards the decentralization of domestic violence and victim support units, and strengthening cooperation with non-governmental organizations providing shelter and rehabilitation to victims.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

16. The Committee takes note that, in order to facilitate sustainable national development, the mandate of the newly restructured Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has been expanded to include equality of women and men, the promotion of the welfare and protection of children and the empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women, including older women and women with disabilities. The Committee is concerned, however, that the expansion of the mandate may dilute the focus on women's rights and that it has not been matched with a corresponding increase in budget allocations, which remain at less than 1 per cent of the national budget.

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

(a) **Ensure that a sharp focus on women's rights is maintained in the mandate of the newly restructured entity;**

(b) **Significantly increase the financial resources of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and allocate a higher percentage of the national budget to gender equality issues;**

(c) **Provide the national machinery for the advancement of women with the human and technical resources necessary for its effective functioning.**

18. The Committee notes that the State party is currently transitioning to a lower middle-income country, although it still relies on foreign aid for numerous policies and programmes, including those aimed at the elimination of discrimination against women and the advancement of women's rights. The Committee is concerned that this dependency may endanger the sustainability of these policies and programmes since a number of them appear to rely on external aid that will gradually be withdrawn.

19. **The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to ensure the sustainability of policies, programmes and activities aimed at the elimination of discrimination against women and the advancement of women's rights despite the gradual decrease in external funding through increased mobilization of domestic resources. It also recommends that the State party ensure that equality of women and men remains one of the central pillars of its development and strategic plans.**

Temporary special measures

20. The Committee notes the measures taken by the State party in the area of education and the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill establishing a quota of 40 per cent for the representation of women in Parliament and public administration. It is concerned, however, that no other temporary special measures have been introduced or are being planned as part of a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged.

21. **The Committee encourages the State party to use temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention, as interpreted in the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on temporary special measures, in all areas covered by the Convention where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged. To that end, it recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Expedite the enactment of the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill;**

(b) **Implement temporary special measures in various forms, such as outreach and support programmes, quotas and other proactive and results-oriented measures aimed at achieving substantive equality of women with men in all areas and encourage their use both in the public and private spheres.**

Stereotypes and harmful practices

22. The Committee notes the measures taken by the State party to eliminate stereotypes and harmful practices, for example the criminalization of female genital mutilation and efforts to secure the release of women and girls in servitude in *trokosi* (ritual servitude) shrines. The Committee is deeply concerned, however, about the persistence of adverse cultural norms, practices and traditions, in addition to patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, which contribute to the persistence of violence against women and harmful practices. It is equally concerned about the harmful, albeit decreasing, practice of enslaving young girls in *trokosi* shrines.

23. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) **To put in place, without delay and within a clear time frame, a comprehensive strategy, in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention, to eliminate stereotypes and harmful practices that discriminate against women, such as polygamy, forced and early marriage, the stigmatization of widows and widowhood rites, female genital mutilation, the denial of inheritance rights to women, the enslavement of young girls in *trokosi* shrines and violence against girls and older women believed to be witches;**

(b) **To strengthen measures aimed at securing the release of and preventing the further enslavement of young girls in *trokosi* shrines;**

(c) **To ensure the full implementation of the laws criminalizing female genital mutilation and other harmful practices, including by bringing perpetrators to justice.**

24. The Committee is concerned about the persisting phenomenon of women being accused of witchcraft, especially in the northern, upper-eastern and upper-western regions of the country. In fact, it notes the high number of cases of violence against girls and older women alleged to be witches, which has caused several of them to seek refuge in so-called witch camps, often under difficult living conditions, including lack of access to adequate housing, sufficient food and water and sanitation.

25. The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure the swift closure of all remaining “witch camps” and that alleged witches are provided with adequate rehabilitation and safe reinsertion into their communities or with alternative housing and livelihood options. Specific steps should also be taken to protect the rights of all girls who have grown up in such camps, including by ensuring that they are provided with rehabilitation, safely reintegrated into their families and communities and given access to high-quality education and vocational training.

Violence against women

26. The Committee notes the State party’s efforts to combat violence against women, in particular the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732) and the National Policy and Plan of Action on Domestic Violence (2009-2019). It also notes the repeal of section 42 (g) of the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29), which failed to criminalize non-consensual sex within marriage. The Committee nevertheless remains concerned about:

(a) The delays in adopting the legislative instrument required to fully implement the Domestic Violence Act, 2007, in addition to the insufficient resources allocated to implement the National Policy;

(b) The persistence of violence against women, including rape, sexual harassment in school, the workplace and the public sphere, early and forced marriages, domestic violence and female genital mutilation;

(c) The remaining obstacles faced by women in bringing cases of sexual violence to court owing to cultural taboos, the low number of investigations and convictions and the increased use of mediation in cases of domestic violence;

(d) The absence of operational State-run shelters and the heavy reliance on shelters run by non-governmental organizations.

27. The Committee calls upon the State party:

(a) **To ensure the effective implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, 2007, including by expeditiously adopting enabling legislation, and to increase the human and financial resources for the implementation of the National Policy;**

(b) **To intensify efforts to prevent and systematically punish all forms of violence against women and girls by ensuring that complaints are fully and effectively investigated and that perpetrators are brought to justice;**

(c) **To provide systematic and mandatory capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and health-care providers, to ensure that victims of violence are dealt with in a gender-sensitive manner;**

(d) **To ensure that women who are victims of domestic violence have full access to protection orders and legal remedies rather than mediation;**

(e) **To strengthen victim assistance and rehabilitation by establishing a comprehensive care system for women who are victims of violence, including free legal aid, medical and psychological support, counselling and rehabilitation services, throughout the territory of the State party;**

(f) **To ensure that a sufficient number of adequately equipped shelters are available to women who are victims of violence in each district, staffed by trained personnel.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

28. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to prevent trafficking in women and girls and protect and rehabilitate victims, including the creation of a trafficking database and collaboration with local authorities. It notes with concern, however, that the State party remains a source, transit and destination country for women and children trafficked mainly for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour. The Committee is also concerned about the reported high incidence of internal trafficking of women and girls from rural areas. It is particularly concerned about the limited number of convictions under the Human Trafficking Act, 2005, partly owing to the low level of reporting and inadequate identification of victims of trafficking. While noting the State party's efforts to ensure the protection of women in prostitution, the Committee is concerned that women in prostitution are disproportionately affected by the criminalization of prostitution compared with their

clients. The Committee is also concerned about the absence of information on the impact of existing rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women wishing to leave prostitution.

29. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure the effective implementation of the Human Trafficking Act, 2005, including through the swift adoption of enabling legislation;

(b) Carry out a study to investigate the scope, extent and causes of forced prostitution and trafficking in human beings, in particular in women and girls;

(c) Address the root causes of trafficking by increasing prevention efforts through poverty reduction strategies;

(d) Take effective measures to provide assistance and support to women and girls who are victims of trafficking by, for example, increasing the number of available shelters, including with support from civil society;

(e) Ensure the investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of human trafficking;

(f) Increase international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination to prevent trafficking through the exchange of information and the harmonization of legal procedures for prosecuting and punishing traffickers;

(g) Address the root causes of prostitution, provide women wishing to leave prostitution with alternative income opportunities and intensify efforts to provide access to assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women and girls in prostitution.

Participation in political and public life

30. The Committee notes that the Affirmative Action Policy Guideline formulated in 1998 set a target of 40 per cent representation of women at all levels of the Government. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to ensure the participation of Queen mothers in traditional councils and houses of chiefs and the increasing participation of women within the two major political parties. The Committee is nevertheless concerned about the delay in adopting the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill and that women are still underrepresented in decision-making positions. It also notes the lack of targeted measures to address the underlying causes, including prevailing social and cultural attitudes and limited access by women to campaign funding. In that regard, the Committee also regrets that the Women in Local Governance Fund established in 2006 has not become operational.

31. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Promote equal representation of women in political and public life at the national, regional and district levels, including in the Government and in decision-making positions, Parliament, the judiciary and the civil service;

(b) Adopt temporary special measures, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and with the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, such as

a law establishing statutory quotas to promote the equal participation of women in political and public life;

(c) Exeditiously adopt the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill establishing a quota of 40 per cent for the representation of women in elected and appointed political positions and at all levels of the judiciary;

(d) Pending the adoption of the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill, ensure that the 40 per cent quota in the Affirmative Action Policy Guideline is applied;

(e) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns for the general public and in particular for rural women about the importance of women's effective political participation, and develop targeted training and mentoring programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for present and potential women candidates and women holding public office;

(f) Adequately finance the Women in Local Governance Fund to financially support women standing for election, including in the upcoming district-level elections.

Education

32. The Committee notes the measures taken by the State party to promote girls' education at all levels and that the budget for education represents a significant percentage (30 per cent) of the national budget. It also notes with appreciation the launch of a sexual harassment policy by the University of Ghana in March 2011 and the new policy to integrate girls and boys with disabilities into the regular school system. The Committee remains concerned, however, about:

(a) The continued low enrolment and completion rates of girls, at all levels of education, and the regional disparities in access to quality education owing to economic and cultural barriers;

(b) The high dropout rate among girls owing, inter alia, to child marriage and the high number of teenage pregnancies;

(c) The urban/rural disparities with regard to the number of girls who are able to transition from junior high to senior high school owing to the lower quality of education in rural and deprived areas;

(d) The persistence of sexual abuse and harassment of girls in schools and the negative impact of harmful practices, such as early and forced marriage, on girls' education, especially in rural areas;

(e) The lack of education facilities and qualified teaching professionals, especially in rural areas, the trend towards privatization of education and the priority given to schooling of boys over girls, especially in rural areas.

33. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that girls and young women have de facto equal access to all levels of education, including by eliminating the direct and indirect costs of schooling, providing incentives for parents to send their daughters to school and building appropriate sanitary facilities in schools;

(b) **Set up adequate monitoring mechanisms to ensure that girls in rural areas and in public schools have equal access to high-quality education and intensify efforts to reduce disparities in access to education and in the quality of education between urban and rural areas and between public and private schools;**

(c) **Improve the educational infrastructure, especially in rural areas, in addition to the number of teachers and the quality of teacher training, in particular in rural schools;**

(d) **Ensure that sexual abuse and harassment in school are adequately addressed and punished;**

(e) **Integrate age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights into primary and secondary school curriculums, including comprehensive sex education for adolescent girls and boys covering responsible sexual behaviour and the prevention of early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.**

Employment

34. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to improve the employment of women in such sectors as the oil industry and the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. It also notes that, according to the State party, the definition of sexual harassment included in the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) must be expanded to address hostile environment situations. The Committee remains concerned, however, about:

(a) The absence of information on the extent of the gender wage gap and on how the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is being implemented; the low number of women employed in the public sector; and the lack of information on the employment of women in the private sector;

(b) The concentration of women in the informal sector, especially in rural areas, with limited basic safety services, social protection coverage or other benefits;

(c) The absence of legislation specifically protecting domestic workers.

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

(a) **Provide sex-disaggregated data on the position of women in the labour market and reduce and close the gender wage gap, including by addressing occupational sex segregation and enforcing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;**

(b) **Provide a regulatory framework for the informal sector, with a view to providing women with access to social security and other benefits and to basic safety services in different markets, as foreseen by the State party;**

(c) **Ensure that the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) is amended with a view to extending the definition of sexual harassment to explicitly cover hostile environment sexual harassment;**

(d) **Consider ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization.**

Health

36. The Committee notes the measures taken by the State party as a result of the Health Sector Gender Policy of 2009, in addition to the revised National Policy on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections published in February 2013. It also notes with appreciation the adoption of the Mental Health Act, 2012 (Act 846), as well as projects aimed at promoting the National Health Insurance Scheme. The Committee nonetheless remains concerned about:

(a) The maternal mortality ratios, which have remained high owing in part to teenage pregnancies and lack of access to health-care services, including essential obstetric care, in particular in rural areas;

(b) The lack of comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on responsible sexual behaviour, and of family planning services, and the disproportionate level of unmet contraception needs among poor women and women living in rural areas;

(c) The regional and socioeconomic disparities in access by women and girls to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including skilled birth attendance and adequate antenatal and postnatal care;

(d) The stigma attached to abortion and general lack of awareness about the conditions under which abortion is legally available, resulting in numerous women resorting to unsafe abortion;

(e) The lack of information on the mental health status of women in the State party and on the implementation of the Mental Health Act, 2012.

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

(a) To increase access for women and girls, in particular rural women, to basic health-care services by increasing the number of health-care facilities and trained health-care providers;

(b) To intensify education on sexual and reproductive health and rights through widespread dissemination of information about available contraceptive methods and family planning, in order to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and teenage pregnancies;

(c) To adopt strategies to eliminate abortion-related stigma, raise awareness among women and girls about the conditions under which abortion is legally available and ensure that safe abortion is affordable for all women under such conditions;

(d) To collect disaggregated data on the situation of women's mental health and include in its next periodic report information on the progress made in implementing the Mental Health Act, 2012;

(e) To ensure that the National Health Insurance Scheme is fully operationalized and effectively implemented in order to care for the health needs of poor women and that care in the case of obstetric emergencies is included in the list of services offered.

Rural women

38. The Committee remains concerned about the widespread poverty and illiteracy among rural women and the lack of sufficient targeted strategies and measures in place to address discrimination against rural women in access to justice, education, health care, housing, economic opportunities and social benefits, and adequate water and sanitation, and about their exclusion from decision-making processes. The Committee is also concerned about the prevalence of harmful practices such as early marriages in rural areas and about the persistence of traditional customs limiting women's access to inheritance and land.

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

(a) **Ensure that rural women have access to basic services and infrastructure, including health-care services and education, and to economic opportunities, on an equal basis with men and with their urban counterparts, including through the adoption of temporary special measures;**

(b) **Ensure that obstacles to land ownership by women are removed and that national courts, including customary courts, enforce the land and property rights of women, in line with the provisions of the Convention;**

(c) **Eliminate harmful practices and discrimination against rural women and address customs and traditions that perpetuate them;**

(d) **Ensure that all discriminatory customary laws are repealed or amended and brought into full compliance with the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations.**

Marriage and family relations

40. The Committee notes the current process of harmonization of marriage laws and that the Intestate Succession Bill, 2009 will be adopted by the end of 2014. It is concerned, however, about the delays in adopting the Property Rights of Spouses Bill, 2009 owing to disagreement as to whether de facto unions (or cohabitantes) should be covered by it. The Committee is also concerned about the increase in polygamous marriages, the lack of registration of customary marriages and the diverging levels of protection against discrimination afforded to women as a result of the many regulations applying to marriage and family relations depending on one's personal status. The Committee is further concerned that the National House of Chiefs has yet to take action to codify customary laws and eliminate customs and usages that are "outmoded and socially harmful" as mandated by article 272 (b) and (c) of the Constitution. Lastly, the Committee is concerned about the lack of progress in curbing the high prevalence of forced, early and child marriage.

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

(a) **Accelerate and expand its efforts towards the harmonization of marriage and family laws, in line with articles 2 and 16 of the Convention;**

(b) **Expediently adopt the Property of Spouses Bill, 2009 in its current version, so that equal distribution of property rights covers women in the three types of marriage in addition to women in de facto unions;**

(c) **Expediently adopt the Intestate Succession Bill, 2009 and ensure its effective implementation throughout the State party;**

(d) Ensure the wide dissemination of the Supreme Court decision in *Mensah vs. Mensah*, in particular in the district courts, and ensure that women married under religious or customary law who apply to a court for divorce receive the improved protection arising from the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1971 (Act 367) in respect of all aspects of the consequences of divorce;

(e) Sensitize traditional leaders on the importance of ensuring that women seeking divorce outside the court system may benefit from rights in respect of the sharing of property and other rights;

(f) Take systematic, proactive measures to discourage polygamy with a view to prohibiting the practice, in accordance with the joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices;

(g) Ensure that all Muslim and customary marriages are systematically registered;

(h) Provide assistance to the National House of Chiefs and ensure that it complies with its constitutional mandate to undertake the progressive study, interpretation and codification of customary law with a view to evolving, in appropriate cases, a unified system of rules of customary law and an evaluation of traditional customs and usages with a view to eliminating those customs and usages that are outmoded and socially harmful (article 272 (b) and (c) of the Constitution);

(i) Ensure maximum visibility of the national dialogue involving traditional leaders, the National House of Chiefs, the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs and the United Nations Children's Fund in order to sensitize the population on the high risks for girls resulting from early and forced marriage (for their life, health, education and future economic chances) in addition to the fact that such marriages represent a violation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Data collection and analysis

42. The Committee notes with concern the general lack of updated sex-disaggregated data. It recalls that data disaggregated by sex, age, geographical location and socioeconomic background are necessary for an accurate assessment of the situation of all women, to determine whether they suffer from discrimination, for the development of informed and targeted policymaking and for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress achieved towards the realization of the substantive equality of women in all areas covered by the Convention.

43. The Committee calls upon the State party to develop a gender indicator system to improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex and other relevant factors, which is necessary to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at mainstreaming gender equality and enhancing the enjoyment by women of their human rights. In that regard, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to the Committee's general recommendation No. 9 on statistical data concerning the situation of women

and encourages the State party to enhance its collaboration with women's associations that could assist in securing the collection of accurate data.

Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

44. The Committee encourages the State party to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

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

Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development framework

46. The Committee calls for the integration of a gender perspective, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, into all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and into the post-2015 development framework.

Dissemination

47. The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement the provisions of the Convention. It urges the State party to give priority attention to the implementation of the present concluding observations and recommendations between now and the submission of the next periodic report. The Committee therefore requests that the present concluding observations be disseminated in a timely manner, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, Parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation. It encourages the State party to collaborate with all stakeholders concerned, such as employers' associations, trade unions, human rights and women's organizations, universities, research institutions and the media. It recommends that the present concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local community level to enable their implementation. In addition, the Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and relevant jurisprudence, in addition to the Committee's general recommendations, to all stakeholders.

Technical assistance

48. The Committee recommends that the State party link the implementation of the Convention to its development efforts and that it avail itself of regional or international technical assistance in this respect.

Ratification of other treaties

49. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which it has signed but not ratified.**

Follow-up to the concluding observations

50. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 25 and 27 (a), (b) and (c) above.**

Preparation of the next report

51. **The Committee invites the State party to submit its eighth periodic report in November 2018.**

52. **The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents ([HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).**

¹ The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.