



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 fourth periodic report of Benin*

1. The Committee considered the fourth periodic report of Benin (CEDAW/C/BEN/4) at its 1163rd and 1164th meetings, on 3 October 2013 (see CEDAW/C/SR.1163 and 1164). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/BEN/Q/4 and Corr.1 and the responses of the Government of Benin are contained in CEDAW/C/BEN/Q/4/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its fourth periodic report, its written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the Committee's pre-session working group and the responses to the questions posed orally by the Committee. The Committee notes, however, that the State party submitted its fourth periodic report, covering the period 2005-2009, in 2011, instead of its combined fourth and fifth periodic reports due in April 2009, as requested by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/BEN/CO/1-3).

3. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister of Family, Social Affairs and National Solidarity, Marie-Laurence Sranon Sossou, and also included the Minister of Justice, Legislation and Human Rights, Valentin Djènon-tin-Agossou, the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations at Geneva, the President of the Institute for Women and representatives of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and of the Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. The Committee appreciates the dialogue that took place between the delegation and the Committee.

* Adopted by the Committee at its fifty-sixth session (30 September-18 October 2013).



B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2005 of the State party's combined initial to third periodic reports (CEDAW/C/BEN/1-3) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of:

(a) Act No. 2006-04 of 10 April 2006 on conditions for the displacement of minors and the suppression of child trafficking;

(b) Act No. 2005-31 of 10 April 2006 on the prevention, treatment, and control of HIV/AIDS;

(c) Act No. 2006-19 of 5 September 2006 on the suppression of sexual harassment and protection of victims;

(d) Act No. 2011-26 of 9 January 2012 on the prevention and prohibition of violence against women, which covers domestic violence and marital rape, sexual harassment, forced prostitution, forced marriage, honour crimes, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices.

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, such as the adoption of the following:

(a) National Policy on Gender Equality, in 2009;

(b) Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women, in 2012.

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

(a) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, in 2012;

(b) International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, in 2012;

(c) Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in 2012;

(d) 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, in 2011;

(e) Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in 2006;

(f) Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, in 2005.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Parliamentary Assembly

7. **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 Government and invites the State party to encourage the Parliamentary Assembly, in line with its procedures and where appropriate, to take the necessary steps with regard to the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.

Definition of discrimination against women

8. The Committee welcomes the revision of the Criminal Code to bring it into line with the Convention and the decision of the Constitutional Court of 2009, in which the Court considered that criminal provisions regarding adultery were discriminatory against women. The Committee is concerned, however, about the absence in the State party's legislation of a specific definition of discrimination against women in accordance with article 1 of the Convention.

9. The Committee urges the State party to incorporate into its national legislation a definition of discrimination against women, which encompasses both direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, in accordance with article 1 of the Convention.

Access to justice

10. The Committee is concerned about women's limited access to justice resulting from long distances to courts and other practical and economic obstacles, and about the limited technical and human resources of the judicial system, insufficient training on existing legislative frameworks for judges and relevant law enforcement agents and the lack of legal aid services available to women. The Committee is also concerned about the particularly low level of legal literacy among women, the lack of dissemination of relevant laws in the local languages, the lack of dissemination of information targeting women about their rights under the Convention and, consequently, their limited capacity to claim such rights.

11. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Strengthen the judicial system, including by enhancing its financial, technical and human resources, provide adequate legal aid services to women and ensure that the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the State party's relevant national legislation are made an integral part of the legal education and training for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and law enforcement officers;**

(b) **Undertake awareness-raising campaigns targeting women about their rights under the Convention; disseminate knowledge on the available legal remedies in relation to violations of their rights under the Convention through the use of media, in particular radio programmes; implement legal literacy programmes; and widely disseminate all relevant laws in the local languages.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

12. While welcoming the establishment of gender focal points within each ministry, the Committee is concerned about unclear information provided on the mandates of and the division of responsibilities among the three components of the national machinery: the National Council for Gender Equality, its steering committee, technical committee and monitoring centre for family, women and

children; the Directorate for the Promotion of Women and Gender within the Ministry of Family and National Solidarity; and the Institute for Women. It also expresses concern about the absence of a coordination mechanism between these entities, the limited technical and financial capacity of the Ministry to ensure gender mainstreaming, the reported ineffectiveness of the decentralized entities of the National Council and the lack of information on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Policy on Gender Equality.

13. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Strengthen its national machinery for the advancement of women, clearly define the mandate and responsibilities of its components, improve coordination among them and strengthen the linkages between the national, departmental and municipal levels in relation to gender equality activities, including through the provision of training on gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming;

(b) Increase the human and financial resources of the national machinery and its technical capacity to work effectively for the protection and promotion of women's human rights at all levels;

(c) Establish impact assessment mechanisms in relation to the National Policy on Gender Equality so as to ensure that it is properly monitored and evaluated, and that measures to address any dysfunction can be taken when and where necessary, and, on that basis, develop a comprehensive action plan for effective implementation at the national and municipal levels.

Temporary special measures

14. The Committee is concerned that the State party may not have a clear understanding of the nature, purpose and necessity of temporary special measures to accelerate women's substantive equality with men, and regrets that, except in the field of education, no temporary special measures have yet been adopted by the State party.

15. The Committee recommends that the State party clearly distinguish in its policies and programmes between general social and economic policies that benefit women and temporary special measures under article 4 (1) of the Convention that are necessary to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality of women and men in various areas, as clarified by the Committee in its general recommendation 25 on temporary special measures. The Committee further urges the State party to create a legislative basis for the adoption of temporary special measures and to make use of such measures in all areas covered by the Convention where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including in public and political life, and to improve the situation of rural women.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

16. The Committee remains seriously concerned about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in all spheres of life and the State party's limited efforts to combat customs and practices that perpetuate discrimination against women and the subordination of women within the family and society. While

welcoming the inclusion of harmful practices in the newly enacted law on violence against women (Act No. 2011-26 of 9 January 2012), the Committee expresses deep concern that harmful practices, such as child and forced marriages, polygamy, female genital mutilation, widowhood practices, levirate and sororate, purification rites for adulterous women and killings of so-called “witch children”, continue to be prevalent and go unpunished, the comprehensive legislative framework notwithstanding. The Committee is particularly concerned about the absence of information on investigations, prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators, pursuant to the legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation in effect since 2003 (Act No. 2003-03) and about the fact that female genital mutilation is often practised outside the territory of the State party in neighbouring countries to avoid prosecution.

17. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) To hold consultations with civil society and women’s organizations and traditional leaders, at the departmental and municipal levels, with a view to fostering a dialogue on harmful practices and promoting wide acceptance of the new legislative framework;

(b) To develop a comprehensive strategy to eliminate stereotypes that discriminate against women, including by conducting awareness-raising efforts targeting the general public and the media, and urgently complete the review of school textbooks undertaken by the State party to eliminate gender-based stereotypes;

(c) To step up efforts to effectively implement its legislative framework addressing harmful practices, by systematically training judges and law enforcement officers; to establish mechanisms to facilitate victim identification; and to ensure effective regional and bilateral cooperation with neighbouring countries to ensure the prosecution and punishment of all acts of female genital mutilation.

Violence against women

18. The Committee notes the State party’s efforts to combat violence against women, in particular the nationwide campaign to disseminate Act No. 2011-26 of 9 January 2012 on the prevention and prohibition of violence against women and the establishment of listening and counselling centres in 49 municipalities. The Committee notes with concern, however, the alarming rates of both domestic and sexual violence against women and that the vast majority of such cases remain underreported owing to cultural taboos, the reluctance of women, especially disadvantaged groups of women, such as illiterate women, rural women, refugee women and those living in de facto polygamous marriages, to report violence and the fear of being stigmatized by their communities. The Committee also expresses concern about delays in effectively implementing the new law, including the absence of an implementing decree, the lack of an effective monitoring mechanism and the insufficient allocation of human and financial resources to the judiciary. Furthermore, the Committee regrets that there are insufficient support measures for victims of violence, such as shelters and medical and psychological support.

19. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Urgently take all measures necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the new legislative framework aimed at the prevention and prohibition of violence against women, including by enacting its implementing decree, increasing the human and financial resources of the judicial system and establishing a monitoring mechanism to assess the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan;**

(b) **Provide systematic and mandatory training to all relevant professionals, including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and health-care providers, to ensure that victims of violence are dealt with in a gender-sensitive manner;**

(c) **Step up its efforts to disseminate information on the existence of new legal provisions, such as those prohibiting marital rape; encourage women to report domestic and sexual violence; and ensure that women are duly informed about the available legal remedies, that all such reports are effectively investigated and that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished;**

(d) **Provide adequate assistance and protection to women victims of violence, in particular shelter facilities;**

(e) **Collect data on cases of all forms of gender-based violence, disaggregated by sex, age and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, including on the number of complaints, prosecutions and convictions, and on the sentences imposed on perpetrators, and inform the Committee thereof in its next periodic report.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

20. While noting the State party's legislation protecting children from trafficking, the Committee expresses deep concern about the absence of a specific legislative framework aimed at combating trafficking of adults and about the delays in enacting the draft anti-trafficking law. The Committee also regrets the lack of data on trafficking of women and girls in the State party, the insufficient information provided on the prosecution and punishment of traffickers and the absence of a comprehensive strategy addressing prevention, protection, assistance and legal support for victims of trafficking, including refugee women, asylum-seeking women and girls exploited in forced labour as "vidomegons", who are particularly vulnerable to trafficking.

21. The Committee calls upon the State party:

(a) **To expedite the adoption of the draft law on trafficking in persons, in line with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, in order to fully implement article 6 of the Convention, so as to strengthen mechanisms for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of trafficking offenders;**

(b) **To provide adequate assistance to victims, including refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls working as vidomegons, and to consider the establishment of a national mechanism to coordinate efforts to combat trafficking;**

(c) **To provide training to the judiciary, law enforcement officials, the border police and social workers on the existing anti-trafficking provisions regarding children and on how to identify and deal with victims of trafficking;**

(d) **To collect sex-disaggregated data on the trafficking of women and girls and include those data in its next periodic report.**

Participation in political and public life

22. The Committee is concerned about the low representation of women in the Parliamentary Assembly and the Government, as well as in other decision-making positions in political and public life, including at high levels, the judiciary and the civil service. While noting the State party's efforts to encourage female candidates for the forthcoming municipal elections, the Committee is concerned that there is currently only one female mayor. Furthermore, it deeply regrets the rejection by the Parliamentary Assembly of the bill on gender equality that would establish quotas to improve women's participation in political life.

23. The Committee calls upon the State party:

(a) **To expeditiously adopt the draft law establishing quotas for women in elected positions;**

(b) **To consider using temporary special measures, such as electoral quotas not only for candidates but also for seats to be apportioned, in order to accelerate the full and equal participation of women in public and political life, including at the next municipal elections;**

(c) **To provide incentives for political parties to nominate equal numbers of women and men as candidates and to strengthen targeted training and mentoring programmes on leadership and negotiating skills for current and potential women candidates.**

Nationality

24. While noting information provided by the delegation indicating that Act No. 65-17 of 23 June 1965 on nationality is being reviewed, the Committee is concerned that the existing legislation contains discriminatory provisions. First, it does not allow Beninese women to transmit their nationality automatically at the time of marriage to their foreign spouses, who, unlike women of foreign nationality marrying Beninese nationals, have to apply for naturalization. Second, it provides that the loss of Beninese nationality by the husband can be extended to the mother and children. Furthermore, while welcoming the regulatory framework regarding birth registration and its gratuity, the Committee is concerned that practical and bureaucratic obstacles continue to prevent women, especially poor and rural women who do not give birth in a health facility, from registering births and obtaining birth certificates.

25. The Committee recommends that the State party amend Act No. 65-17 of 23 June 1965 on nationality with a view to granting Beninese women equal rights with Beninese men regarding the retention or loss of their nationality, in addition to the transmission of Beninese nationality to their foreign spouses. The Committee also calls upon the State party to increase its efforts to facilitate access to birth registration services for all women, especially for poor and rural

women who do not give birth in a health facility, and to consider establishing a monitoring mechanism to ensure the enforcement of its regulatory framework in remote and rural areas.

Education

26. While welcoming the State party's efforts to provide free education at both the primary and secondary levels, the Committee is nevertheless concerned about the lack of accurate sex-disaggregated statistical data on enrolment rates at all levels of education. It is also concerned about the high illiteracy rates; the low completion rates and high dropout rates resulting from, among others, the large number of teenage pregnancies and child or forced marriages; the absence of education on sexual and reproductive health and rights as part of school curricula; the insufficient efforts to develop the educational infrastructure following the decision to provide free education for girls in primary schools; and the insufficient information on measures taken to tackle sexual violence in schools and to enforce the interministerial order of 1 October 2003 providing for penalties for perpetrators of sexual abuse in educational establishments.

27. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Provide detailed sex-disaggregated data on the enrolment, completion and dropout rates at all levels of the education system;

(b) Strengthen literacy programmes for women and girls, especially in rural areas, and increase opportunities for skills training of rural women and girls through non-formal education, including in traditionally male-dominated fields;

(c) Address the root causes of the high dropout and incompleteness rates of girls, such as gender stereotypes, poverty, sexual abuse in schools, teenage pregnancies and child and/or forced marriages, and take proactive measures to retain girls in school;

(d) Integrate age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights into school curricula, including comprehensive sex education for adolescent girls and boys covering responsible sexual behaviour and the prevention of early pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS;

(e) Increase its efforts to strengthen the educational infrastructure with sufficient teachers and adequate premises that take into account the gender-specific concerns of women and girls, including the availability of appropriate sanitary facilities;

(f) Establish reporting and accountability mechanisms to ensure that the perpetrators of sexual abuse of girls in schools are duly prosecuted and punished.

Employment

28. The Committee is concerned about the low number of women in formal employment; the concentration of women in the informal sector and the lack of measures to facilitate their integration into the formal sector; the absence of information on the gender pay gap and the progress in the implementation of the National Policy for Employment (2011-2015); the occupational segregation in all

sectors, where women are concentrated in typically female occupations encouraged by the State party's programmes and policies; the absence of information on transparency and accountability measures to avoid corruption regarding recruitment practices in the public service; and the lack of measures taken to address the vulnerable situation of girls working in exploitative conditions as vidomegons.

29. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Apply the principles of equal remuneration for work of equal value and of equal opportunities at work and address the wage gap between women and men;**

(b) **Collect sex-disaggregated data on the situation of women in the private sector and the informal sector and take effective measures to monitor and improve the working conditions of women in those sectors by removing the obstacles that women face in entering the labour force, implementing measures to promote reconciliation of family and work responsibilities of women and men and providing a regulatory framework for the informal sector;**

(c) **Take action to address occupational segregation and intensify technical and vocational training for women in traditionally male-dominated fields;**

(d) **Establish an effective monitoring and regulatory mechanism on employment and recruitment practices in the public sector;**

(e) **Regulate and monitor the working conditions of girls employed as vidomegons in order to protect them from exploitative child labour, through increased inspections and fines for employers; integrate them into the educational system; and consider ratifying the International Labour Organization Domestic Workers Convention (Convention No. 189) of 2011.**

Economic empowerment

30. While noting the creation in 2006 of a ministerial department on microfinance, young people and women's employment, which has implemented various measures to increase women's access to microcredit and to fund women's small and medium-sized enterprises, the Committee regrets that the State party has conducted no evaluation of those measures and has not provided sufficient information on the Microcredit Programme for the Very Poor, launched by the President in 2007, which largely benefited women.

31. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Study the impact and effectiveness of the measures taken since 2006 to enable women to engage in income-generating activities and conduct an evaluation of the Microcredit Programme for the Very Poor, in order to assess the extent to which women have benefited from the Programme, identify the shortcomings and take remedial action, where appropriate;**

(b) **Strengthen its initiatives aimed at encouraging the sustainable economic empowerment of women, in particular in rural areas, including through training on microenterprise development and management, and periodically monitor the impact of these initiatives.**

Health

32. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The feminization of HIV and gaps in the effective implementation of Act No. 2005-31 of 10 April 2006 on the prevention, treatment and control of HIV/AIDS, notably the absence of an implementing decree, as provided for in article 8, and the insufficient measures to reduce the incidence of HIV among women and to provide adequate assistance to women living with HIV;

(b) The high maternal mortality and morbidity rates, the prevalence of malaria, the insufficient number of health-care personnel in the State party, in particular midwives in rural areas, the persistent misconceptions about the use of contraception and the lack of adequate information on sexual and reproductive health and on the right of women to autonomous decision-making about their health;

(c) The inadequate implementation of the free caesarean section programme in the State party, owing notably to insufficient dissemination of information to women, corruption among health-care personnel and insufficient stocks of medical equipment;

(d) The discrepancy between article 17 of Act No. 2003-04 of 24 January 2003 on sexual and reproductive health, which provides exceptions to the general prohibition of abortion in cases of rape, incest, threat to the life or health of the mother and foetal impairment, and article 3 of Act No. 2011-26 of 9 January 2012 on the prevention and prohibition of violence against women, which lists abortion as one of the forms of violence, notwithstanding the explanation given by the delegation that this provision pertained only to "forced abortion".

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

(a) **To take all measures necessary to effectively implement Act No. 2005-31 of 10 April 2006 on the prevention, treatment and control of HIV/AIDS, by urgently adopting its implementing decree, increasing the provision of free antiretroviral treatment to all women and men living with HIV/AIDS, raising the awareness of mothers and fathers living with HIV/AIDS regarding the importance of preventing mother-to-child transmission and conducting educational programmes on sexual and reproductive health and rights directed at both women and men, including the essential responsibility of men in preventing the spread of the disease;**

(b) **To strengthen the maternal and infant mortality reduction programme, eliminate the causes of such mortality and increase the number of skilled health-care personnel, in particular midwives in rural areas;**

(c) **To provide effective access for women and girls to comprehensive information regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the use of contraception, in order to reduce the rate of unwanted pregnancies, teenage pregnancies and unsafe abortions, and to ensure the availability, affordability and accessibility of modern contraceptive methods for women;**

(d) **To ensure the effective and consistent implementation of the free caesarean section programme throughout the State party, by adequately disseminating information to women, especially in rural areas, enhancing coordination between health facilities and the State agency administering the**

programme and establishing a monitoring and accountability system to address the misconduct of health personnel;

(e) **To address the existing inconsistencies regarding the legislation on abortion to ensure that abortion cannot be interpreted as a form of violence against women, to develop simplified procedures to guarantee access to legal abortion in the cases provided for in article 17 of Act No. 2003-04 of 24 January 2003 on sexual and reproductive health and to disseminate such information to women.**

Rural women

34. While welcoming the adoption of Act No. 2007-03 of 16 October 2007 on rural land tenure, which guarantees to women the right to inherit rural land from their elders or spouses, the Committee is concerned that the customary practice of excluding women from inheriting agricultural land remains dominant in rural areas and that women continue to face practical difficulties in gaining access to both land and credit. The Committee also notes that, although women are overrepresented in the agricultural workforce and women's agricultural organizations make up 70 per cent of all small farmers' organizations, they are not sufficiently included in the decision-making process and management of resources, such as land, water and forestry. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned about the lack of information provided on the implementation of the Policy for the Advancement of Rural Women and Women in Agriculture, adopted in 2001.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Conduct, in collaboration with civil society and women's organizations, awareness-raising activities targeting the general public in rural areas, including traditional leaders, to effectively implement the Land Code of 2007 and to ensure that women have access to land and credit facilities on an equal basis with men;**

(b) **Enhance the economic and political empowerment of women in rural areas, through the use of temporary special measures, in order to ensure that women participate in the decision-making process and management of resources, in particular land, water and forestry;**

(c) **Assess the status and progress in the implementation of the Policy for the Advancement of Rural Women and Women in Agriculture and, on that basis, develop gender-responsive land policies and programmes and ensure that women fully participate in their formulation, implementation and evaluation.**

Women in detention

36. The Committee expresses serious concern about the conditions of detention of women detainees, including pregnant women and women detained with their children, in particular the length of pretrial detention and the lack of measures aimed at facilitating women's access to justice and the fact that women detainees are not systematically separated from men detainees.

37. In line with the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (see CAT/OP/BEN/1) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women

Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), the Committee urges the State party to ensure the protection of women in places of detention and strict respect for their right to a fair trial and to adopt clear procedures for complaints, in addition to effective monitoring mechanisms. The Committee further calls upon the State party to improve the conditions of detention for women detainees by guaranteeing separate accommodation for men and women inmates, providing adequate health facilities and services, in particular for pregnant women, and educational programmes.

Marriage and family relations

38. While commending the State party for its efforts to ensure the principle of equality of spouses during marriage and upon its dissolution in its new and progressive Persons and Family Code (Act No. 2002-7 of 24 August 2004), the Committee is concerned about remaining discriminatory provisions providing: (a) that, when spouses cannot agree on the matrimonial domicile, the husband may decide alone and the wife needs to initiate legal proceedings in order to be allowed a separate domicile if the husband's decision amounts to a real danger to her and the children (arts. 15 and 156); and (b) that a married woman automatically carries the name of her husband upon marriage, but can retain it only upon the dissolution of the marriage with the consent of the husband or with a judge's authorization (art. 12 and art. 261 (3)). Furthermore, the Committee is concerned about the persistence of customary laws and practices, including the prevalence of de facto polygamous marriages, although such laws are no longer valid in the State party following the adoption of the Persons and Family Code.

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

(a) **To withdraw the discriminatory provisions of the Persons and Family Code in order to bring its legislative framework into full compliance with articles 15 and 16 of the Convention;**

(b) **To strengthen its efforts to conduct comprehensive educational measures and awareness-raising campaigns about the Persons and Family Code, targeting rural areas in particular, and, in collaboration with civil society, to systematically raise the awareness of traditional leaders regarding the renunciation of the application of customary laws and practices, as provided for in the Code.**

National human rights institution

40. The Committee is concerned that the new national human rights commission, although established by law in December 2012, is still not operational owing to delays in enacting the implementing decree.

41. **The Committee recommends that the State party expedite the adoption of the implementing decree of Act No. 2012-36 of 15 February 2013 creating the new Beninese Commission on Human Rights, with a view to establishing a national human rights commission in compliance with the Paris Principles; provide it with sufficient resources; and ensure that its composition and activities are gender-sensitive and fully address women's rights, including by raising awareness and disseminating information about the new complaints procedure.**

Data collection

42. The Committee notes with concern the general lack of available updated data, disaggregated by sex. It recalls that data disaggregated by sex, age, race, ethnicity and geographical location are necessary for an accurate assessment of the situation of all women, for the development of informed and targeted policymaking and for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress achieved towards the realization of women's substantive equality with regard to all areas covered by the Convention.

43. The Committee calls upon the State party to enhance the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive data disaggregated by sex, age, race, ethnicity and geographic location, and the use of measurable indicators to assess trends in the situation of women and progress towards the realization of the substantive equality of women in all areas covered by the Convention.

Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

44. The Committee encourages the State party to accept, without delay, 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 and implementation

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, the Parliamentary Assembly 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 and research institutions and the media. It further recommends that its concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local community level so as 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, as well as the Committee's general recommendations, to all stakeholders.

Ratification of other treaties

48. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, to which it is not yet a party.**

Follow-up to the concluding observations

49. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 29 (e) and 33 (a) above.**

Preparation of the next report

50. **The Committee invites the State party to submit its fifth periodic report in October 2017.**

51. **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/MC/2006/3](#) and Corr.1).**

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.