



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the combined initial to fifth periodic reports of Sao Tome and Principe*

Visibility of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto

1. Please provide updated information on efforts to raise awareness among the general public of the rights guaranteed under the Convention and the procedures under the Optional Protocol thereto, in particular among women, in both rural and urban areas. Please inform the Committee of measures taken to ensure that the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations are sufficiently known and applied by all branches of government at the national, regional and municipal levels, as well as in the specific academic and professional training courses for lawyers, judges, prosecutors and other law enforcement officials, as a framework for all laws, court decisions and policies on gender equality and the advancement of women.

Women's rights and gender equality in relation to the pandemic and recovery efforts

2. In line with the Committee's guidance note on the obligations of States parties to the Convention in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, issued on 22 April 2020, please indicate the measures implemented by the State party to redress long-standing inequalities between women and men and to give a new impetus to the implementation of gender equality by placing women at the centre of the recovery as a strategic priority for sustainable change, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, to meet the needs and uphold the rights of women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups and women in situations of conflict or other humanitarian emergencies, and to ensure that, in the context of lockdown measures, whether partial or total, and in post-crisis recovery plans, women and girls are not relegated to stereotypical gender roles. Please indicate measures in place to ensure that all COVID-19 crisis response and recovery efforts, including the recovery and resilience plan: (a) address and are aimed at effectively preventing gender-based violence against women and girls; (b) guarantee the equal participation of women and girls in political and public life, decision-making, economic empowerment and service delivery, in particular in the design and implementation of recovery programmes; and (c) are designed so that women and girls benefit equally from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 1 March 2022.



care roles, that are aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Please explain how the State party is ensuring that measures taken to contain the pandemic, such as Presidential Decree 3/2020, through which the Government declared a state of emergency and placed restrictions on freedom of movement, do not limit access for women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, to justice, shelters, education, employment and health care, including sexual and reproductive health-care services.

Legislative framework and definition of non-discrimination

3. In its report, the State party acknowledged that the concept of discrimination against women had not yet been explicitly defined in the country's legal system (CEDAW/C/STP/1-5, para. 197). Please provide information on any plans to adopt a stand-alone law on non-discrimination in line with articles 1 and 2 (b) of the Convention, which includes a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention. Please further provide information on the financial, technical and human resources allocated to support the monitoring and assessment of, as well as reporting on, the implementation of laws to ensure gender equality and protect and promote women's rights in the State party, according to its obligations under the Convention.

Access to justice and legal complaint mechanisms

4. In line with general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice and article 20 of the Constitution (*ibid.*, para. 266), please provide information on measures taken to raise awareness among women of their rights and how to claim them and to facilitate their lodging of formal complaints, rather than opting for mediation, in particular with regard to women living in rural and remote areas. Please also indicate the availability of accessible and free legal aid to women in the State party, the number of women beneficiaries of such aid and any factors impeding their access, including the stigmatization of women who pursue criminal complaints, in particular against a spouse or relative, especially in cases of gender-based violence. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that disadvantaged groups of women, such as women with disabilities, have access to courts and free legal aid.

National machinery for the advancement of women

5. Please provide information on the following:

(a) Effective coordination among all the entities of the national machinery for the advancement of women, including the National Institute for the Promotion of Gender Equality and Equity, the Domestic Violence Advisory Centre, the Fourth Committee of the National Assembly (*ibid.*, para. 209), and the gender focal points at the municipal level, including the planned gender, women and family office to be established in the Principe autonomous region (*ibid.*, para. 227), so as to ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed in all development policies and programmes across the country;

(b) Whether gender-responsive budgeting is mandatory for all government departments and whether specific budgetary benchmarks have been defined;

(c) The baselines, targets and impact assessment of the implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality and Equity (2019–2026) (*ibid.*, para. 227), and the involvement of civil society organizations working on women's rights;

(d) Efforts to ensure the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive data, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, migration status, disability

and other relevant factors, and measurable indicators, to assess trends in the situation of women and progress towards the realization by women of substantive equality in all areas covered by the Convention and the gender-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

National human rights institution

6. Please update the Committee on the concrete steps taken to establish an independent human rights institution with adequate human, technical and financial resources, as prescribed in the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), and with the mandate to effectively protect and promote women's rights and gender equality, also in line with the supported recommendation following the State party's third universal periodic review (A/HRC/47/16, paras. 106.24–106.27).

Women human rights defenders and civil society

7. Please provide detailed information on: how the State party promotes the work of women human rights defenders (CEDAW/C/STP/1-5, para. 227), meaningfully consults with them and integrates their views into national strategies on gender equality; measures taken to provide a safe and enabling environment for public activity; and the participation of women human rights defenders and women activists working on women's rights and gender-related issues.

Temporary special measures

8. Please inform the Committee on steps taken to:

(a) Raise awareness among government officials and policymakers and increase their understanding of the nature of temporary special measures within the meaning of article 4 (1) of the Convention and of their importance for the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in all areas in which women are disadvantaged or underrepresented;

(b) Establish, in line with general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures: outreach or support programmes; the allocation and/or reallocation of resources; preferential treatment; targeted recruitment, hiring, training and promotion; and statutory quotas beyond the quota system to increase the political participation of women, in particular in the areas of employment, education, health, the judiciary and poverty reduction, including with regard to disadvantaged groups of women, women living in rural and remote areas and women with disabilities.

Discriminatory stereotypes

9. Please provide information on the implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes (*ibid.*, para. 231), including steps taken to:

(a) Expand public education programmes to increase understanding of the negative impact of discriminatory stereotypes and harmful practices on the enjoyment by women of their rights under the Convention and accelerate awareness-raising among men and boys about gender equality;

(b) Revise curricula at the primary and secondary levels of education to incorporate mandatory education on gender equality and review textbooks to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society;

- (c) Strengthen work with the media to promote coverage of issues, such as gender-based discrimination and violence, in a gender-sensitive manner;
- (d) Implement awareness-raising measures to prevent the harmful practice of girls entering into child marriage;
- (e) Develop a comprehensive strategy to challenge harmful gender norms and discriminatory stereotypes that are primary drivers of gender-based violence against women.

Gender-based violence against women

10. In its report, the State party makes reference to Act No. 11/2008, on domestic and family violence, and Act No. 12/2088, on strengthening legal protection mechanisms for victims of domestic and family violence (*ibid.*, paras. 203–205). Please provide information on steps taken to raise public awareness of these laws and available remedies for lodging complaints about domestic and other forms of gender-based violence against women, and provide information on the availability of accessible and inclusive victim support services, protection orders and shelters in the State party, including in rural areas. Please provide more detailed information on training provided to members of the judiciary, prosecutors, and police and other law enforcement officers on the strict application of the laws and the measures in place to monitor their enforcement.

11. In line with general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, please inform the Committee about:

- (a) The resources allocated for the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence and the operation of the Domestic Violence Advisory Centre (*ibid.*, para. 178);
- (b) Efforts to raise awareness among women and men, girls and boys, including through educational and media campaigns, of the criminal nature of gender-based violence against women and girls, in order to challenge its social acceptance;
- (c) The training of medical personnel to ensure specialized attention and care for women and girls who are victims of sexual violence, including the provision of essential services for emergency contraception and abortion;
- (d) The creation of gender-based violence police officer posts in remote areas, including on the outer islands, and the processes in place to: facilitate the filing of reports of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence; investigate complaints; protect victims; prosecute and punish the perpetrators; and ensure appropriate redress for victims, including compensation;
- (e) The number of reported cases, prosecutions and convictions concerning gender-based violence against women, and the sentences imposed on the perpetrators in those cases.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

12. In the light of target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other forms of exploitation, please update the Committee on steps taken to:

- (a) Develop standard protocols for the early identification and referral of and provision of support to victims of trafficking and ensure that all relevant professional categories receive adequate training on such protocols;

- (b) Investigate, prosecute and adequately punish traffickers;
- (c) Ensure that women and girls who are victims of trafficking are exempted from any criminal liability and have access to adequate health care, shelters, counselling services and redress, including reparations and compensation;
- (d) Enhance regional cooperation with countries of origin and destination, in order to prevent trafficking in women and girls, by exchanging information and harmonizing procedures to facilitate the prosecution of traffickers.

Equal participation in political and public life

13. In line with its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, please inform the Committee about steps taken to:

- (a) Achieve the objective set by resolution 74/VIII/2009, setting a quota of 30 per cent of seats in parliament for women;
- (b) Adopt the draft parity law establishing parity in the representation of women and men in elected bodies and in public administration, while also ensuring more equal representation of women in local governance bodies;
- (c) Identify and address barriers to women's effective engagement in governance as representatives and to their active civic participation;
- (d) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns for politicians, community leaders, the media and the public on the importance of the participation of women in political life and their representation in decision-making positions;
- (e) Increase, in a sustained manner, the representation of women in government, diplomatic posts, international organizations and the judiciary, in particular at decision-making levels;
- (f) Ensure that the application of article 58 of the Constitution does not result in unequal voting rights for women with disabilities (*ibid.*, para. 238).

Nationality

14. According to information before the Committee, in early 2017, the ministries responsible for justice and finance signed a decree ensuring birth registration free of charge for children up to 1 year of age, replacing the previous policy under which birth registration had been free of charge only during the first month of a child's life. Please inform the Committee of the steps taken to ensure implementation of this decree, and particularly among persons living in rural areas, including migrants, and workers in the palm oil and cocoa farming sectors, who demonstrate low birth registration rates. Please inform the Committee about how the State party intends to make effective use of the next housing and population census (scheduled for 2022) to collect data on stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness. Please indicate the steps taken to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, in line with the supported recommendation following the State party's third universal periodic review ([A/HRC/47/16](#), para. 106.19).

Education

15. In the light of general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education and article 2 of the Basic Act on the Education System ([CEDAW/C/STP/1-5](#), para. 245) please update the Committee on steps taken to:

- (a) Strengthen the State party's literacy campaign for women, especially in rural or remote areas;

(b) Collect data on enrolment, absenteeism and dropout rates among women and girls, for all levels of education, disaggregated by location, age and pregnancy status;

(c) Develop a strategy to provide social support for adolescent mothers in school, to encourage pregnant adolescents to continue their education, and to facilitate the reintegration into education of adolescent mothers, including through financial support, by combating cultural stigma through awareness-raising campaigns and by providing affordable access to childcare facilities;

(d) Renew the Comprehensive Sex Education Programme to ensure that school curricula include, at all levels, mandatory, age-appropriate, evidence-based and scientifically accurate education for girls and boys on sexual and reproductive health and rights that covers responsible sexual behaviour and is free from discriminatory gender stereotypes (*ibid.*, para. 98);

(e) Adopt temporary special measures, including financial incentives and scholarships, to promote enrolment among women and girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to address stereotypes and structural barriers that may deter girls and young women from enrolling in traditionally male-dominated fields of study;

(f) Develop a strategy to combat all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, against children and adolescents in schools.

Employment

16. Please inform the Committee about steps taken to:

(a) Use temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, such as awareness-raising activities, quotas and incentives, to promote the choice of non-traditional career paths among women and to reduce gender segregation in the labour market;

(b) Grant paternity leave to be taken within the first two weeks of the child's birth and promote the equal sharing of family and domestic responsibilities between mothers and fathers, in line with article 26 (3) of the Constitution (*ibid.*, para. 199);

(c) Enforce the application of labour regulations in the tourism industry to end the practice of precarious contracts and accelerate the transition among women from working in the informal economy to working in the formal economy (*ibid.*, para. 130);

(d) Amend the Labour Code to ensure the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;

(e) Prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, encourage women to raise complaints in such cases, and ensure they are promptly investigated and the perpetrators adequately punished.

Health

17. Please indicate the measures taken to ensure a dedicated budget line for family planning and to make modern contraceptives available, accessible and affordable, particularly for marginalized groups of women (*ibid.*, para. 97). Please also provide information on periodic and mandatory training for health workers on women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, paying particular attention to lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, women with disabilities, and women with HIV. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure full, pre-informed and free consent for any medical procedure, such as sterilization,

conducted on women and girls, specifically women with disabilities and transgender women.

18. Please indicate the measures taken by the State party to legalize abortion, at least in cases of rape, incest, threat to the life or health of the pregnant woman and severe fetal impairment, and to decriminalize it in all other cases. Please also provide information on the measures taken to make safe abortion and post-abortion services accessible and affordable for marginalized groups of women, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please provide updated information on plans to conduct a mapping of regions with a shortage of medical specialists, such as neonatologists and anaesthesiologists, with a view to ensuring the availability of specialized health-care services throughout the State party, in particular in rural areas.

Economic empowerment and social benefits

19. Please inform the Committee of measures taken to address obstacles faced by women in terms of access to means of economic empowerment and microfinance programmes and development of their entrepreneurship skills. Please provide data on the number of women who have benefited from the National Social Security Policy (*ibid.*, para. 226) and pension scheme (*ibid.*, para. 142), disaggregated by the amount received, age, disability and geographical location.

Rural women

20. With reference to the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, please indicate measures taken to improve access for rural women and girls to basic services, including health-care and family planning services, water, education, formal employment, social protection, justice, land and credit. Please provide information on strengthening adult literacy programmes and facilitating access to vocational education and training for women in rural areas. Please indicate the steps taken to recognize, reduce and redistribute the unpaid care and domestic work of rural women through investment in infrastructure and social services such as childcare, elderly care, affordable housing and transportation.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

21. In line with general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, please inform the Committee about steps taken to: (a) meaningfully involve women in the development of legislation, national policies and programmes on climate change adaptation, disaster response and disaster risk reduction; and (b) address hunger and ensure food security for rural women in the light of the effects of climate change.

Women with disabilities

22. Please provide an update on the status of Act No. 7/2012, on the rights of persons with disabilities (*ibid.*, para. 230). Please further provide the Committee with information on steps taken to:

(a) Ensure access to inclusive education for girls and women with disabilities and access to remedies to raise complaints in cases of violations of their rights;

(b) Make the health-care system more inclusive of and accessible to women with disabilities;

(c) Investigate all cases of gender-based violence against and the forced sterilization of women and girls with disabilities, prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators, and ensure that any medical procedure is carried out only with the free,

prior and informed consent of those concerned, in accordance with international standards.

Equality in family relations

23. Please inform the Committee about steps taken to prevent child marriage pursuant to article 22 (d) of the Family Code, including by conducting awareness-raising on the harmful effects of child marriage and applying sanctions against officiants. Please update the Committee on planned amendments to the Family Code to prohibit the de facto union of girls who are under 18 years of age and recognize only those de facto unions that commenced when both partners were at least 18 years of age. Please clarify whether, pursuant to Law 19/2018, article 25 (1), a woman has equal rights with a man to remarry.
