



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

Legal framework and definition of discrimination

1. Please indicate the expected timeline for the adoption into law, with a view to harmonizing national law with the Convention, of the bills before Parliament governing persons and family and regarding matrimonial regimes, family gifts and succession. In accordance with the State party's obligations under articles 1 and 2 of the Convention and in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5.1, to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, please explain the status of the Convention in the national legal order, following the amendments to the Constitution in 2015. Please provide further information on the steps taken to incorporate a prohibition of discrimination against women, encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination, in line with articles 1 and 2 (b) of the Convention, into the Constitution or into legislation.

National machinery for the advancement of women

2. Please provide information on: (a) the progress achieved and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the national gender policy and its strategic plan; (b) updated information on the human, technical and financial resources allocated to implement this policy and the strategic plan; and (c) whether the State party envisages adopting a new gender cluster strategic plan following its expiry in 2012 ([CEDAW/C/RWA/7-9](#), para. 9).¹ Please indicate whether there are institutions in charge of gender equality at the regional, municipal and community levels, and if

Note: The present document is being circulated in English, French and Spanish only.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of the State party.



so, how coordination is ensured between them and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, including which entities are responsible for coordinating national policies and programmes regarding the advancement of women (paras. 7 and 9).

Temporary special measures

3. The report details temporary special measures to increase the number of women in decision-making and governance positions in political and public life (paras. 11-12). Please inform the Committee about the use of other temporary special measures taken or envisaged to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in all areas of the Convention, including with regard to: (a) education and employment; (b) the representation of women in the private sector and at the district executive level; and (c) overcoming the disadvantages experienced by specific groups of women subject to multiple forms of discrimination, including rural women, female heads of households, women with disabilities, widows and conflict-affected women and girls.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

4. Reference is made to several programmes initiated by the State party to change the widely accepted attitudes and practices of the subordination of women and gender stereotypes (paras. 14-15). Please inform the Committee about whether these initiatives are linked to a comprehensive strategy, with measurable goals and timelines, implemented to tackle the link between the subordination of women, gender stereotyping and the perpetration of violence against women, in particular domestic violence especially as a result of the consequences of past conflict, as well as the limited educational and employment opportunities for women. Please indicate whether the impact of these programmes has been evaluated.

5. It is stated in the report that the mass media has played a significant role in challenging stereotypes (para. 15). Please describe how the media has been used to discuss and promote non-stereotypical and positive images of women, and to promote the value of gender equality to society as a whole. Please also provide the outcome of any evaluation of effectiveness in this regard. Please indicate the existence of comprehensive educational programmes and awareness-raising campaigns, targeting rural areas in particular, to prevent and address harmful practices such as early marriage, and, furthermore, specify the initiatives involving collaboration with religious and community leaders, teachers, officials and women's organizations to this effect.

Gender-based violence against women in the post-genocide period

6. Reference is made to the national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, covering the period 2009-2012 (para. 16; [CEDAW/C/R/RWA/CO/6/Add.1](#), para. 5). Please inform the Committee about the outcome of any evaluation conducted regarding: (a) the impact of the plan on achieving the equal participation and full involvement of women in the reconstruction and socioeconomic development of the country; (b) whether a new national action plan will be adopted and implemented, following its expiry in 2012; and (c) whether the role of women in prevention efforts will be accorded priority.

7. With respect to cases of sexual violence that occurred during the genocide, please provide details on: (a) the number of prosecutions that have taken place, the convictions secured, the sentences handed down and the nature of remedies provided to the victims; (b) the measures taken to address the discrimination experienced by children born to victims of rape during the genocide; and (c) data on the type of assistance provided by the government fund for genocide survivors, including the beneficiaries (para. 59). Reference is made to the psychological, legal, economic and medical support provided to women survivors of rape during the genocide (para. 16). Please describe in detail what services are offered in each of these areas, and in which regions they are offered, and provide statistics on the individuals who have availed themselves of these services.

Gender-based violence against women

8. Please indicate whether the State party envisages reviewing the provisions of Law No. 59/2008 on the prevention and punishment of gender-based violence: (a) criminalizing adultery and concubinage; (b) imposing life imprisonment on a person found guilty of transmitting a terminal disease; (c) criminalizing a victim's refusal to testify; and (d) applying more lenient penalties to marital rape than other forms of rape.

9. It is stated in the follow-up report that the Ministry of Health is working on a national scale-up strategy to address the operational challenges faced by the Isange one-stop centres ([CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/6/Add.1](#), para. 23). Please provide an update on the allocation of human, technical and financial resources to the centres and their prevalence throughout the State party. Please further provide the outcome of any evaluations conducted on the impact of the implementation of the national policy against gender-based violence (2011), as executed through its strategic plan (2011-2016). Please provide information on the development of a national management information system designed to capture all data from various entry points in the reporting and referral process of cases of gender-based violence and how the systematization, collation and coordination of these data are ensured (*ibid.*, para. 28).

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

10. At the time of its previous review, the State party informed the Committee about a bill on suppressing, prosecuting and punishing trafficking in persons. Please provide information on the status of this bill and the expected timeline for its enactment into law. Please indicate the existence of any national strategy to address the root causes of trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution of women and girls, and describe the programmes in place to ensure the rehabilitation and social integration of victims of such activity, including the availability of shelters, and the allocation of resources to ensure their implementation.

11. Please provide sex-disaggregated data on the extent and forms of trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution and provide details on any cases of prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of trafficking in women and girls, as well as the protection measures and reparations provided to the victims. The Committee notes the articles of the Penal Code criminalizing the enticement of prostitution and its organization (para. 25). Please clarify whether the penal sanctions subject both the

sex worker and the client to prosecution. Please also indicate the existence of social services, and any assistance made available to women wishing to leave prostitution.

Participation in public and political life and decision-making

12. The Committee notes the reported increase in the number of women in decision-making positions at the local level and the elaboration of gender mainstreaming strategies for local government and the private sector to increase the participation of women in the two sectors (para. 16; [A/HRC/WG.6/23/RWA/1](#), para. 87). Please provide further details on these strategies, including ways and means to sustain them, including information on time-bound goals and the mechanisms responsible for monitoring their implementation.

Education

13. Please inform the Committee about: (a) the effectiveness of the affirmative action “cut-off points” in ensuring that girls remain in and complete school and higher education (para. 13); (b) the strategy in place to increase the number of female teachers, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels and in leadership positions; and (c) the programmes in place to combat the significant illiteracy rates of women (para. 64).

14. Please indicate whether the State party envisages reversing its policy of suspending pregnant pupils approaching the time of confinement and permitting them to return to school only following the birth and one year of childcare (para. 29). Please describe the support services offered to adolescent mothers to facilitate their return to education. It is stated in the report that the men responsible for the pregnancy of pupils are punished, in particular teachers (*ibid.*). Please provide data on the number of pregnant pupils, the number of teachers sanctioned and the type of sanctions imposed, as well as the protection measures in place to combat violence against girls in schools.

Employment

15. The State party indicates that workers in the informal sector are protected by Law No. 13/2009 regulating labour in Rwanda (para. 31). Recalling the State party’s obligations under articles 2 and 11 of the Convention and its commitment to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5.1, please provide sex-disaggregated data on: (a) the number of inspections carried out under this law in the informal sector; (b) the nature of the violations recorded and the penalties imposed; and (c) the number of workers earning the minimum wage. Please further provide information on steps taken by the State party to provide women street vendors with market facilities where they can work safely.

16. The State party indicates that victims of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace may seek redress by filing a complaint with the Ombudsman Office (para. 55). Please provide sex-disaggregated data on the number of cases brought, the nature of violations, the investigations opened, where sanctions were applied and the remedies provided to the victims. Please provide information on the State party’s efforts to combat the exploitation of girl domestic workers, including efforts to revise Law No. 13/2009 in order to allow labour inspectors to enter workplaces outside of normal business hours — in accordance with the recommendations of the International Labour Organization — and make

information publicly available on inspections, violations, citations and penalties relating to child labour.

Health

17. Please inform the Committee about: (a) the efforts made to raise awareness of article 165 of the new Penal Code regarding the expanded exceptions for permissible abortion; (b) the progress made in repealing provisions of the Code hindering access to safe abortion in eligible cases; and (c) the development of clear guidelines for health-care providers to improve the accessibility and availability of safe abortion services.

18. Please clarify whether the national mental health policy includes specific objective measures to address women's mental health issues, including psychosocial counselling for women and girls suffering from trauma, severe stress and other behavioural and mental health problems. Please provide sex-disaggregated data on the reported cases dealt with by the country's mental health service (para. 34). Please further provide information on specialized care provided to women and girls with disabilities, in particular those living in rural areas.

Social and economic benefits

19. Please indicate whether gender equality is an explicit component of the second economic development and poverty reduction strategy, covering the period 2013-2017 ([HRI/CORE/RWA/2015](#), para. 10). Given that the Rwandan labour market is dominated by agriculture, with a higher percentage of females than males employed in this sector (*ibid.*, para. 8), please indicate how the critical contribution of women to food security in the State party is valued, promoted and protected ([A/HRC/WG.6/23/RWA/3](#), paras. 46-47).

Rural women

20. Notwithstanding the new law governing land in Rwanda (Law No. 43/2013) ([HRI/CORE/RWA/2015](#), para. 55), which reverses discriminatory practices relating to women's access, ownership, utilization and inheritance of land, it has been reported that women, especially in rural areas, continue to face discrimination in their right to land ownership. Please inform the Committee about the measures in place: (a) to raise awareness of the new legal framework regulating land registration and titling; (b) to implement the law, including the numbers of booklets published on the law and their geographical dissemination; and (c) the number of women who registered land as a result of this intervention.

21. Please further provide information on measures taken to ensure that women in rural areas have improved access to social security benefits, health services, education, electricity and income-generating projects, including access to markets. Please also provide information on how the second economic development and poverty reduction strategy supports entrepreneurship among rural women, and indicate whether a strategy is in place to simplify business registration processes, thereby ensuring women's access to information on new registration procedures.

Refugee women and women returnees

22. The State party refers to the creation of special services for women refugees, women returnees and displaced women as a follow-up to the reintegration of former women combatants and the creation of special infrastructure for women living with disabilities (para. 38). Please provide the Committee with details and data: (a) on each of these services and their beneficiaries; (b) on the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive plans and programmes for social reintegration, capacity-building and training of refugee women and women returnees; and (c) on the measures currently in place for the protection of refugee women and women returnees from violence and their access to immediate means of redress.

Equality in marriage and family relations

23. Please provide a time frame for the repeal of the discriminatory provisions of the Family Code (para. 39). Please further describe the strategy to raise awareness of the legal framework ensuring equality in matters of matrimonial regimes, succession, liberalities, mortgages and the operation of commercial activities (para. 62). Please further provide information on the measures taken to ensure that children born outside of a civil marriage are guaranteed equal rights to inherit property, including land.
