



# 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 tenth periodic report of Rwanda\*

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

1. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations are sufficiently known and applied by all relevant State institutions at all levels, in particular the Government, ministries, Parliament and the judiciary, as a framework for all court decisions and policies on gender equality and the advancement of women, including in the context of training courses for officials at the local level ([CEDAW/C/RWA/10](#), paras. 43, 64, 73, 108–110, 124–125 and 129).<sup>1</sup>

#### 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. Please indicate the 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;

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\* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 6 July 2022.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the tenth periodic report of the State party ([CEDAW/C/RWA/10](#)).



(c) Are designed so that women and girls benefit equally from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care roles, that are aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic.

### **Constitutional and legislative framework**

3. In the report, it is indicated that a number of revised or newly adopted laws (paras. 11–25) have repealed provisions that discriminated against women. Please provide updated information on further efforts to amend or repeal discriminatory laws in areas such as parental leave, lack of joint management or co-ownership rights on movable property, such as shares, and the imposition of prison sentences on pregnant women while safeguarding the best interests of the future child. Please describe efforts undertaken to adopt comprehensive legislation that prohibits discrimination on all grounds and encompasses direct and indirect discrimination in both the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination against women. Please indicate any progress made in relation to Law No. 59/2008 on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence, which was under revision (para. 23), to harmonize the lesser penalty for “conjugal rape” with that for the crime of rape under article 134 of Law No. 68/2018 on offences and penalties in general, and to bring the legislation into line with the State party’s obligations under the Convention and general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19. Please also provide information about possible assessments of cultural norms and practical barriers that hinder the effective implementation of gender-related laws and practices.

### **Access to justice**

4. It is indicated in the report that a number of measures have been taken to facilitate women’s access to justice, including the establishment of Access to Justice Bureaux in each district, which disseminate information and provide free legal aid, including for women (paras. 28–33). Please provide disaggregated information on the number of women beneficiaries of legal aid, including disadvantaged groups of women, such as women with disabilities, and report on any factors impeding their access to justice, including the stigmatization of women who pursue criminal complaints, in particular against their spouse in cases of gender-based violence against women. Please provide further information on measures taken to raise awareness among women, in particular rural women, of their rights and the available legal remedies enabling women to claim them (paras. 31–33). Please provide information on cases brought before the courts on gender-based violence and discrimination against women and the outcome of those cases.

### **National machinery for the advancement of women**

5. The Committee notes that the national machinery for the advancement of women has been strengthened (paras. 34–43) and that allocations from the national budget for gender mainstreaming increased between 2017 and 2020. Please provide more detailed information on the human, technical and financial resources allocated to the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Gender Monitoring Office, the National Women’s Council and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians (para. 34). Please also provide further information on the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms such as the revived National Gender and Family Cluster (para. 37) and the new Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Subcluster (para. 38). Please indicate whether gender-responsive budgeting is mandatory for all government departments and whether specific budgetary benchmarks have been defined. Please indicate whether the revised national policy against gender-based violence and its strategic plan have been approved by the Cabinet and provide updated information on the establishment of any regional gender equality bodies.

### **Non-governmental organizations**

6. It is indicated in the report that the number of registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has increased, with figures provided up to 2020 (para. 45). Please indicate the current number of NGOs in the State party, including NGOs that promote women's rights and gender equality, and provide information about the review of existing legislation on the registration of national and international NGOs and the results achieved (para. 46) and about the development of a registration system by the Rwanda Governance Board (para. 47). Please indicate the measures taken to create and ensure an enabling environment, in which civil society and women's rights organizations can freely operate, and the legal requirements for the registration and operation of non-governmental organizations, including those working on the human rights of women. Please also indicate measures taken to protect women human rights defenders, in particular those advocating for sexual and reproductive health and rights, from harassment, attacks, threats and intimidation, ensure their protection from gender-based violence against women and intimidation, and investigate, prosecute and punish such reprisals against them.

### **Temporary special measures**

7. The report contains information on the constitutional provisions for a quota at a minimum of 30 per cent for the representation of women in all decision-making positions, under Organic Law No. 001/2019.OL governing elections, which provides that 24 seats are reserved for women in the chamber of deputies and, and includes data on women's representation in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government (paras. 55–60). Please provide further information on the impact of the measures taken to ensure gender parity in the appointment, as well as accelerated recruitment, of women, in particular to senior positions, in all sectors of the economy (para. 54), including on monitoring mechanisms and sanctions imposed in the event of non-compliance. Please indicate whether the State party has adopted temporary special measures in the areas of education, health, including sexual and reproductive health, poverty reduction, vocational training, employment, and access to financial credit and assets, including land, in particular with regard to rural women, Batwa women and women with disabilities.

### **Discriminatory stereotypes and harmful practices**

8. The report indicates numerous initiatives undertaken to change negative cultural norms and patriarchal attitudes including through awareness-raising, training and media campaigns (paras. 62–73). Please describe the impact and outcomes of these initiatives and indicate if they are based on a comprehensive strategy to eliminate patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes that discriminate against women. Please provide detailed information on measures taken to address discriminatory stereotypes and harmful practices targeting religious and community leaders, in particular in rural and remote areas.

### **Gender-based violence against women**

9. Please provide information on the use of the web-based Gender-based Violence Management Information System aimed at the facilitation of data collection across all *Isange* One-Stop Centres and indicate how the Gender Management Information System, launched in 2019 by the Gender Monitoring Office, will be used to gather, store and disseminate gender-related data on a regular basis to inform decision-making. Please also provide information on the revision of the 2011 National Policy against Gender-based Violence and its strategic plan and on their implementation and the results achieved (para. 102). It is indicated in the report that there was an increase in

the number of *Isange* One-Stop Centres, from 9 to 44, across the country and in the number of temporary shelters for women who are survivors of gender-based violence (para. 92; see also [CEDAW/C/RWA/FCO/7-9](#), paras. 2–4). Please indicate how many women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence, including women and girls with disabilities, have accessed long-term shelter and relocation possibilities, as well as financial support and access to income-generating opportunities, including in rural areas. The Committee notes the number of cases of gender-based violence investigated and prosecuted and the conviction rates provided by the State party (paras. 94–97; see also [CEDAW/C/RWA/FCO/7-9](#), paras. 6–7). Please provide updated data, disaggregated by age and relationship between victim and perpetrator, on the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions and the sentences imposed on perpetrators in cases of gender-based violence against women during the past five years, as well as on the number of cases in which compensation was provided to the victims. Please provide further information on measures taken to ensure that women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence can file complaints without fear of reprisals and stigmatization and that they have effective and affordable access to legal remedies.

### **Gender-based violence against women in conflict situations**

10. In line with the Committee's previous recommendations ([CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9](#), para. 25 (a) and (b)), and recalling the United Nations report of the mapping exercise documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003,<sup>2</sup> please indicate if the State party is considering revisiting its position of categorically rejecting the report (para. 104). The Committee notes the information provided by the State party relating to the code of conduct for members of the armed forces and the dismissal of 67 army officers for gross misconduct in August 2018 ([CEDAW/C/RWA/FCO/7-9](#), para. 9). Please provide updated information on the number of investigations into reports of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence against women by members of the armed forces, prosecutions in that connection and the punishment of perpetrators, and indicate if victims have access to adequate and effective reparations. Please also provide updated information on capacity-building for members of the armed forces on women's rights and on zero tolerance towards any forms of gender-based violence against women.

### **Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

11. Please provide information on the results achieved and challenges faced in the implementation of Law No. 51/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others (para. 106) and the national action plan on countering human trafficking of 2020 (para. 114), in particular regarding the integration of a gender perspective. Please provide updated data on the extent of trafficking in women and girls to, from and in transit through the State party, disaggregated by age, the nationality of the victims and whether the victims were trafficked for purposes of labour or sexual exploitation. Please also provide updated data on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions and on the sentences imposed under Law No. 51/2018 in cases of trafficking in women. Please indicate the budgetary allocations for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of traffickers.

12. The Committee notes that the State party has changed its approach to exploitation of prostitution by adopting Law No. 68/2018 on offences and penalties in general and article 24 (2) of Law No. 51/2018, which criminalize any person who pays for sexual intercourse, as measures to discourage the demand for prostitution.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/africa/2010-drc-mapping-report>.

Please provide data or estimates on the number of women and girls in prostitution in the State party and information on rehabilitation and support available to them, including exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution. Please indicate the number and outcome of cases of exploitation of women and girls in prostitution that have been prosecuted under article 24 (2) of Law No. 51/2018.

### **Participation in political and public life**

13. The Committee notes the continued progress made and priority given by the State party to promoting gender parity in decision-making structures, including in Parliament, the judiciary and ministerial positions (para. 134). In this regard, please provide information on the measures taken and results achieved in implementing statutory quotas for the equal representation of women and men in decision-making bodies, including at the local and district levels. Please provide detailed information on the impact of the series of awareness-raising campaigns and training on gender equality for politicians, journalists, teachers, local authorities and civil society leaders, in particular men (paras. 124–133). Please also provide data on the number of Rwandan women employed in the foreign service and in international organizations (para. 137).

### **Education**

14. In line with the Committee's previous recommendations ([CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9](#), para. 33), please provide information on measures taken to eliminate barriers to women's and girls' access to all levels of education, in particular for disadvantaged groups of women and girls, such as negative cultural attitudes, child marriage and a disproportionate burden of domestic duties. Please indicate the measures taken to address the causes of the lower enrolment rate of girls in secondary education, such as early pregnancy, insufficient sanitation facilities for girls and patriarchal attitudes that give priority to education for boys. Please provide detailed information on the impact of the girls' education policy on the establishment of mechanisms to ensure the reintegration of pregnant girls and adolescent mothers into schools (para. 143). Please also provide information on the impact of awareness-raising campaigns to combat gender-based violence against women, including sexual violence and harassment, in educational institutions and indicate the number of reported cases of gender-based violence against women, including sexual violence and harassment, in educational settings and the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions, and the sentences imposed (paras. 147–148).

### **Employment**

15. Please provide information on the impact of the implementation of Presidential Order No. 144/01 of 2017 determining the modalities for the recruitment, appointment and nomination of public servants (para. 162). Please also provide information on the measures taken to address the disproportionately high unemployment rate among women and their overrepresentation in the informal economy, including by facilitating the transition from informal to formal employment, in particular for rural women, and if the Government has set targets for private employers to increase the number of women recruited to the private sector. Please provide information on measures taken to promote the equal sharing of family and domestic responsibilities between women and men in practice, including by increasing the paternity leave period for public servants under Law No. 017/2020 (para. 157) and introducing compulsory paternity or shared parental leave following childbirth. Please provide information on the implementation of the long-term saving scheme established under Law No. 29/2017 with a view to achieving universal social security coverage (para. 166). Noting that sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace are prohibited under articles 8 and 9 of Law No. 66/2018 regulating

labour (para. 175), please provide information on any such cases reported and their outcome. Please also explain if there are any confidential and safe procedures in place for women to file complaints about sexual harassment and discrimination against women in the workplace and indicate the measures in place to ensure that each complaint is investigated and that perpetrators are adequately sanctioned.

### **Women domestic workers**

16. Please provide data, disaggregated by age, nationality and ethnic origin, on girls removed from situations of child labour and reintegrated into their families and the education system and indicate the sentences imposed on the perpetrators who have exploited girls in child labour (para. 185). Please also provide updated information on the number and outcome of labour inspections to prevent child labour by girls and data on the number of such cases reported to the Rwanda Investigation Bureau for further investigation (para. 186). Please describe the measures in place to support families living in poverty, in particular measures to provide them with adequate social protection, to create income-generating opportunities for women heading households and to ensure that they have access to low-interest loans to enable them to run small businesses (paras. 197–198).

### **Health**

17. It is stated in the report that the maternal mortality ratio declined from 210 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2014/15 to 203 in 2019/20 (para. 219). Please provide information on measures taken to further reduce the high maternal mortality rate in the State party and to address early pregnancies and unsafe abortions. Please also indicate measures taken to remove restrictions that unnecessarily limit access for women to safe abortion and post-abortion services, including by legally permitting mid-level health-care providers to offer abortion care, in line with the 2022 abortion care guideline of the World Health Organization, in cases of rape, incest, threat to the life or health of the pregnant woman or severe fetal impairment, and to decriminalize it in all other cases. In the context of the presidential pardons granted in 2019 to 481 women and girls serving prison terms for abortion-related offences (para. 220), please specify if any of these women and girls remain imprisoned and, if so, when they will be released. Please indicate the measures taken to ensure that women and girls have access to affordable sexual and reproductive health services, including modern contraceptives. Please provide detailed information on the impact of efforts to ensure that modern contraceptives are available, accessible and affordable, and that the law enables adolescents access to contraception without third-party authorization. Please provide information on the impact of the introduction of age-appropriate sexuality education at all levels of the education system and of awareness-raising campaigns targeting women and men, girls and boys (paras. 222–223) on reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions. Please define “competent organs” in article 10 (2) of Law No. 21/2016 relating to human reproductive health, which provides that mandatory HIV/AIDS testing may be required by such “organs”, and elaborate under which circumstances they can compel HIV/AIDS testing, and indicate whether this provision has ever been applied.

### **Economic empowerment**

18. The Committee notes the efforts being made to facilitate women’s access to financial credit and that the percentage of women with bank accounts increased from 20 per cent in 2012 to 34 per cent in 2020 (para. 240). Please indicate the measures taken to address obstacles faced by women in accessing financial credit and loans, including those without collateral (paras. 232–246). Please also provide information on measures taken to increase the economic security of women by expanding social

protection to include self-employed women in the formal employment sector, and to facilitate the entry of more women into formal employment with access to paid maternity leave and unemployment and pension benefits.

### **Rural women**

19. In the light of the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, please elaborate on measures to ensure rural women's access to justice, education, employment, land ownership, financial credit and health care, as well as their equal participation in decision-making processes at all levels. Please provide information on measures to ensure that rural women engaged in unpaid agricultural, care or domestic work, or in the informal sector, have access to non-contributory social protection schemes.

### **Batwa women**

20. Please provide comprehensive data on the situation of Batwa women and girls and on the measures taken to ensure that they have equal access to basic services, unemployment benefits and literacy programmes. Please provide detailed information on awareness-raising campaigns to address stigma and discrimination against Batwa women and girls and to inform them about their rights under the Convention and the remedies available to claim them, including how to file complaints of gender-based violence against women and access victim support programmes.

### **Women with disabilities**

21. Please provide detailed information on the adoption of any temporary special measures to increase the representation of women with disabilities in political life beyond the requirement in article 75 of the Constitution that one member of parliament must be elected by the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (para. 269). Please also provide detailed information on the measures taken to ensure that education, employment, health services and information about sexual and reproductive health services and rights are accessible to women and girls with disabilities (paras. 266–270) and that they are not sterilized without their consent.

### **Refugee and migrant women and girls**

22. Please provide data, disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, ethnic origin, religion and the refugee camps where they are dwelling, on the number of reports, investigations, prosecutions, convictions and the sentences imposed on perpetrators in cases of gender-based violence against refugee women and girls, including sexual violence. Please indicate the number of refugee women who are victims of gender-based violence against women and who have received legal assistance, victim support services and reparations, including compensation. Please provide information on the measures taken by the State party to ensure that the capacity and infrastructure are in place to conduct refugee status assessments on a case-by-case basis, including for asylum-seeking women and girls who are affected by the agreement between the State party and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to process in Rwanda asylum claims of asylum-seekers who have arrived in the United Kingdom.

### **Marriage and family relations**

23. Please indicate the measures taken by the State party to require civil registration of marriages and to eliminate the practice of polygamy. Please also provide information on measures taken to ensure the economic protection of women in de facto unions, including customary marriages, as well as in same-sex unions between women. Please provide information on the measures taken to eradicate the harmful

practice of child and/or forced marriage, raise awareness of the criminal nature and harmful impact of child and/or forced marriage on girls and women, and ensure that those responsible for such unions are prosecuted and adequately punished. Please provide data on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions, and on the penalties imposed, in cases of child and/or forced marriage.

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