



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

1. The Committee considered the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Democratic Republic of the Congo ([CEDAW/C/COD/6-7](#)) at its 1134th and 1135th meetings, on 11 July 2013 (see [CEDAW/C/SR.1134](#) and 1135). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in [CEDAW/C/COD/Q/6-7](#) and the responses of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are contained in [CEDAW/C/COD/Q/6-7/Add.1](#).

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates that the State party submitted its combined sixth and seventh periodic reports and expresses its appreciation to the State party for the written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-session working group, its oral presentation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee.

3. The Committee commends the State party for its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Wivine Mumba Matipa, and included representatives of the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Committee welcomes the constructive dialogue that it held with the delegation.

4. The Committee regrets that the State party failed to submit the exceptional report, requested by the Committee on 16 November 2010, on alleged rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against women in the context of the conflict, in line with article 18 (b) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

* Adopted by the Committee at its fifty-fifth session (8-26 July 2013).



B. Positive aspects

5. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the following:

(a) Act No. 08/005 of 10 June 2008, in which political parties are requested to consider gender equality in establishing electoral lists;

(b) Act No. 08/011 of 14 July 2008 on the protection of the rights of persons living with HIV/AIDS and affected persons;

(c) The law of 21 March 2013 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the National Commission on Human Rights.

6. The Committee also welcomes the adoption of the following:

(a) The national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the establishment of a national steering committee under the national action plan and the formulation of an action plan covering Security Council resolution 1820 (2008);

(b) The National Policy on Gender Issues, in 2009, and its action plan;

(c) The National Strategy for women's political participation in democratic governance, in 2010;

(d) The National Strategy against gender-based violence (2009-2010), and the establishment of the National Agency for Eliminating Violence against Women and Adolescent and Very Young Girls, technical coordination committees to fight sexual violence and the National Fund for the Promotion of Women and the Protection of Children;

(e) The National Strategy on maternal and child mortality;

(f) The action plan on reproductive health, gender and population (2008-2012);

(g) The integrated rural development policy and the national strategy on microfinance (2008-2012).

7. The Committee notes with satisfaction that in 2010 the State party ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Parliament

8. **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 State apparatus and invites the State party to encourage the parliament, in line with its procedures, where appropriate, to take the necessary steps with regard to the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the State party's next report under the Convention.**

Violence against women in conflict-affected areas

9. The Committee is extremely concerned about:

(a) Mass rapes, sexual violence and sexual slavery used as a weapon of war by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo-FARDC) and armed groups in the eastern part of the country;

(b) The shocking levels and the nature of the violence and sexual atrocities committed against women, the failure of the authorities to prioritize the protection of civilians and the denial by key State officials of the extent of the violence committed against women in conflict-affected areas;

(c) Pervasive impunity and the lack of adequate funding of the operational military courts, the limited number of prosecutions of members of the armed forces by military courts, the lack of systematic follow-up by the military prosecutors of investigations made by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), as well as other United Nations bodies and agencies, with regard to acts of sexual violence committed by the Congolese armed forces, the delay in the establishment of specialized courts to try individuals responsible for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity and the low number of women judges dealing with cases of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas and of judges and prosecutors specialized in sexual violence;

(d) The fear of reprisals against women who complain about the conduct of the security forces, including sexual assaults, against women human rights defenders, in particular women defenders in rural communities working on cases of sexual violence;

(e) The limited enforcement of court decisions and non-payment of compensation for acts of sexual violence by State agents in conflict-affected areas;

(f) The absence of a proper screening process to remove persons suspected of perpetrating serious human rights violations from official positions in the security forces;

(g) The lack of centres providing medical, judicial, psychological and socioeconomic support to women and girls who are victims of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas;

(h) The large number of women living with HIV/AIDS and the effects on women of large-scale displacements, marginalization, trauma and poverty resulting from the conflict;

(i) The limited regulation of the arms trade and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their impact on the security of women;

(j) The very low representation of women in the peace negotiations.

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

(a) **To prevent gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence, by State and non-State actors in conflict-affected areas, ensure the protection of civilians, including women, in cooperation with MONUSCO, conduct gender-sensitive training and adopt codes of conduct for the police and the military and provide training for psychologists and health-care professionals;**

(b) To prioritize the fight against impunity for sexual violence in conflict-affected areas, promptly complete effective and independent investigations into violations of women's rights committed by the Congolese armed forces and armed groups and prosecute the perpetrators of such acts, including those who have command responsibility;

(c) To ensure access to justice for all women affected by sexual violence during the conflict, provide proper funding to military jurisdictions, ensure that the justice system is responsive to gender-based violence and increase the number of women judges dealing with cases of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas and the number of judges and prosecutors specialized in sexual violence and pursue efforts, with the support of the international community, towards the adoption of a law on a specialized court or specialized chambers under the national judiciary system to try individuals responsible for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity;

(d) To ensure the protection of victims and witnesses from reprisals whenever they seek access to justice;

(e) To establish a human rights-based vetting system to ensure that no perpetrator of human rights violations, including violations of the human rights of women, is maintained in the army and the police or is integrated into the army, especially during peace negotiations with armed groups;

(f) To ensure that victims have access to comprehensive medical treatment, mental health care and psychosocial support provided by health professionals who are trained to detect sexual violence and treat its consequences and ensure that women victims are provided with medico-legal forms free of cost;

(g) To ensure the effective implementation of the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and establish a comprehensive national policy to provide adequate reparations to victims of sexual crimes;

(h) To ensure the effective regulation of the arms trade, control the circulation of illicit small arms and consider ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty;

(i) To significantly enhance the inclusion and representation of women in peace negotiations and ensure that women are represented in provincial security committees;

(j) To ensure the effective implementation of Security Council resolution [2098 \(2013\)](#).

Access to justice

11. The Committee is deeply concerned about:

(a) The delays in the judicial reform, the insufficient number of courts and the serious lack of financial and human resources of the criminal justice system;

(b) The fact that women do not have effective access to justice owing to multiple factors, such as the high costs of legal proceedings and the prevalence of corruption, legal illiteracy, the insufficient number of courts and tribunals, the

tendency to opt for mediation in cases of sexual violence and the limited training of judges, prosecutors and lawyers on women's rights.

12. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Strengthen the judicial system, including by enhancing its financial, technical and human resources, and finalize, without delay, the reform of the judicial system and establish, also without delay, all the jurisdictions that are pending;**

(b) **Ensure that women, including women victims of violence suffered during the conflict, have effective access to courts and tribunals and, in particular:**

(i) **Provide free legal aid to women without sufficient means;**

(ii) **Strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms in order to enhance women's confidence in the judiciary;**

(iii) **Raise awareness among women about the legal provisions on sexual violence and encourage them to file complaints rather than to opt for mediation;**

(iv) **Conduct awareness-raising campaigns to eliminate stigmatization of women victims of sexual violence;**

(v) **Provide systematic training to judges, prosecutors and lawyers on the application of legislation prohibiting discrimination and sexual violence;**

(vi) **Support non-governmental organizations facilitating women's access to justice.**

Legislative framework

13. While welcoming the ongoing revision of the 1987 Family Code and the efforts made towards the adoption of the draft gender equality law, the Committee is concerned about the long delay in finalizing these two processes.

14. The Committee recommends that the State party accelerate the process of legislative reform, within a clear and precise time frame, with a view to bringing its legislation into conformity with the Convention and ensuring that all discriminatory provisions are repealed. In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party review, without delay, the 1987 Family Code and adopt the draft law on gender equality.

National machinery for the advancement of women

15. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the National Policy on Gender Issues, in 2009, and its action plan. However, the Committee is concerned about the fact that the allocation of State funds to the realization of women's rights, including to the elimination of violence against women and impunity in conflict-affected areas, has not been prioritized. The Committee is also concerned about the delay in the implementation of the National Policy on Gender Issues.

16. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 6 (1988), on effective national machinery and publicity, and the guidance provided in the Beijing

Platform for Action on the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national mechanisms, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Prioritize the allocation of State funds to the realization of women's rights, including to the elimination of violence against women and impunity in conflict-affected areas;**

(b) **Significantly increase the financial, technical and human resources of the national machinery for the advancement of women at the national and local levels;**

(c) **Accelerate the implementation of the National Policy on Gender Issues.**

Temporary special measures

17. The Committee is concerned that no temporary special measures have been introduced or are being planned as part of a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of the substantive equality of women and men in areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged.

18. **The Committee encourages the State party to use temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention, and in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004), on temporary special measures, in all areas covered by the Convention where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged. To that end, it recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Implement temporary special measures aimed at achieving the substantive equality of women and men in all areas, ensure their implementation in various forms, such as outreach and support programmes, quotas and other proactive and results-oriented measures, and encourage their use in both the public and private sectors, including in the civil service and the police;**

(b) **Raise awareness among members of parliament, government officials, employers and the general public about the need to adopt temporary special measures in order to achieve women's substantive equality with men.**

Stereotypes and harmful practices

19. The Committee expresses deep concern at the persistence of adverse cultural norms, practices and traditions, as well as patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society. It notes that stereotypes contribute to the persistence of violence against women and of harmful practices. The Committee expresses deep concern that the State party has not taken sufficient, sustained and systematic action to eliminate stereotypes, negative cultural values and harmful practices.

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

(a) **To put in place, without delay, a comprehensive strategy, in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention, to eliminate stereotypes and harmful practices that discriminate against women, including by making a concerted effort, within a clear time frame, in collaboration with parliament, civil society, the school system, health professionals, the media and**

traditional leaders, to educate and raise awareness about negative gender stereotypes in a manner that targets women and girls, as well as men and boys at all levels of society;

(b) Adopt legal provisions prohibiting polygamy, early marriages, female genital mutilation and levirate, include adequate sanctions for violations of these provisions and ensure their implementation.

Violence against women

21. The Committee is deeply concerned about:

(a) The prevalence, including in areas not affected by conflict, of rape and other forms of sexual violence, incest, sexual harassment and domestic violence, of acts of torture and other ill-treatment of women and girls accused of being witches and of acts of sexual violence against women detainees, including by members of the Congolese National Police;

(b) The ineffective implementation of the 2006 law on sexual violence, the 2009 National Strategy against gender-based violence and the zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence;

(c) The lack of legal provisions prohibiting domestic violence, including marital rape, and the absence of shelters, counselling and rehabilitation services for victims of such violence;

(d) The lack of awareness among men of the harmful nature of sexual violence and the insufficient awareness of the police and other law enforcement officials, health-care and social workers, the judiciary and the public at large, about violence against women.

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

(a) To ensure the effective implementation, including through the provision of sufficient resources, of the 2006 law on sexual violence, the 2009 National Strategy against gender-based violence and the zero-tolerance policy;

(b) To prosecute all acts of violence against women upon complaint by the victim or ex officio, adequately punish perpetrators, including when perpetrators are members of the Congolese national police and ensure that judicial decisions are executed, including when such decisions mean that those convicted must serve mandated sentences and that compensation must be paid;

(c) To provide compensation, as well as assistance and rehabilitation, to victims of violence through the setting up of a comprehensive care system for victims of gender-based violence that includes measures to provide such victims with free legal aid, medical and psychological support and access to shelters, counselling and rehabilitation services throughout the territory of the State party;

(d) To prevent violence against women and children accused of being witches and women in detention and prosecute and punish perpetrators of such violence, including when they are members of the Congolese national police;

(e) To ensure that domestic violence, including marital rape, is explicitly prohibited and provide for adequate sanctions;

(f) **To undertake awareness-raising and educational activities, targeted at both men and women, as well as the police and other law enforcement officials, health-care and social workers and the judiciary, with the support of civil society organizations, in order to combat violence against women.**

Trafficking in and exploitation of human beings for prostitution

23. The Committee is concerned about the delay in conducting a study on the extent and causes of trafficking in human beings and forced prostitution in the State party and about the absence of a comprehensive law and strategy aimed at combating trafficking in human beings. It is also concerned about the prevalence of prostitution in the State party, including forced and adolescent prostitution.

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

(a) **Carry out, without delay, a study to investigate the extent and causes of trafficking in human beings and forced prostitution, in particular involving women and girls, including through the collection and analysis of data on the trafficking in and exploitation of women for prostitution;**

(b) **Adopt a law and strategy aimed at combating trafficking in human beings and establish mechanisms for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of traffickers;**

(c) **Increase international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination to prevent trafficking through information exchange and harmonize legal procedures aimed at the prosecution and punishment of traffickers;**

(d) **Address the root causes of the prostitution of women and girls, including poverty, in order to eliminate their vulnerability to sexual exploitation and trafficking and ensure the rehabilitation and social reintegration of victims.**

Participation in political and public life

25. While welcoming the adoption of Act No. [08/005](#) of 10 June 2008, in which political parties are requested to consider gender equality in establishing electoral lists, and the National Strategy on women's political participation in democratic governance (2009), the Committee remains concerned about the extremely low participation of women in political and public life at the national, provincial and local levels, including in the Government and at high levels of decision-making, the legislature, the judiciary, the decentralized regional bodies and the civil service. The Committee notes that, although article 14 of the Constitution guarantees parity between women and men, the law enabling its implementation in practice has yet to be adopted.

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

(a) **Ensure that women and men have equal representation in all areas of political and public life at the national, provincial and local levels, including in the Government and at high levels of decision-making, in parliament, the judiciary, the decentralized regional bodies and the civil service, including through the adoption of temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and general recommendation No. 25 (2004);**

- (b) **Expedite the adoption of the draft gender equality law;**
- (c) **Ensure the effective implementation of the National Strategy on women's political participation in democratic governance (2009);**
- (d) **Implement awareness-raising activities for the general public about the importance of women's participation in decision-making and develop targeted training and mentoring programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for women in the public sector.**

Education

27. While welcoming the existence of the free and compulsory primary education policy and taking note of the challenges faced by the State party in providing education in rural and conflict-affected areas, the Committee remains concerned about:

- (a) The insufficient infrastructure and funding for education;
- (b) The insufficient implementation of the free and compulsory primary education policy;
- (c) The low enrolment rate of women and girls at all levels of education owing to the lack of local schools and the existence of school fees and economic and cultural barriers for women and girls and the resulting high female illiteracy rate;
- (d) The high drop-out rate among girls owing, inter alia, to early marriage and pregnancy;
- (e) The existence of stereotypical attitudes to the roles and responsibilities of women and men in textbooks, curricula and teacher training;
- (f) The prevalence of violence against and sexual harassment of girls at and on the way to school and at university.

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

- (a) **Allocate adequate funding for education to increase the number of schools and teachers and to improve the quality of teaching and school infrastructure;**
- (b) **Ensure that girls and young women have de facto equal access to all levels of education and retain girls at school, including by eliminating the indirect costs of schooling and the practice of early marriage, enabling young women to stay at school during pregnancy and to return to school after giving birth, providing incentives for parents to send their daughters to school and building appropriate sanitary facilities in existing and new schools;**
- (c) **Raise awareness among communities, families, students, teachers and officials, especially men, about the importance of women's and girls' education;**
- (d) **Undertake a revision of educational textbooks to eliminate gender stereotypes;**
- (e) **Strengthen adult literacy programmes, especially for women in rural areas;**

(f) **Enforce a zero-tolerance policy with respect to sexual abuse and harassment at school and ensure that perpetrators are punished appropriately.**

Employment

29. The Committee is concerned about persistent discrimination against women in the labour market, in particular with regard to the following:

- (a) Exploitative labour of women and girls in the mining sector;
- (b) The large number of women in the informal sector with no legal protection, social security or other benefits;
- (c) The restrictive definition of sexual harassment;
- (d) The gender wage gap;
- (e) The protective measures for women based on stereotypical perceptions of their abilities and their role in society;
- (f) The difficulties faced by women in gaining access to credit for starting small businesses and the limited results of the national strategy on microfinance (2008-2012).

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

- (a) **Protect women and girls working in the mining sector from exploitative labour practices;**
- (b) **Pay particular attention to the conditions of women working in the informal sector with a view to ensuring that they have access to social services;**
- (c) **Broaden the definition of sexual harassment to include conduct that creates a hostile working environment and adopt legislation providing additional avenues for redress to victims of sexual harassment;**
- (d) **Reduce the gender wage gap, including by addressing the occupational segregation of women;**
- (e) **Ensure that protective measures for women are strictly limited to maternity protection and not based on stereotypical perceptions of their abilities and their role in society;**
- (f) **Expand women's access to microfinance and microcredit at low interest rates so as to enable them to engage in income-generating activities and start their own businesses.**

Health

31. While welcoming the adoption of the action plan on reproductive health, gender and population (2008-2012) and Act No. [08/011](#) of 14 July 2008 on the protection of the rights of persons living with HIV/AIDS and affected persons, the Committee remains concerned about:

- (a) The high rate of maternal mortality and the ineffective implementation of the National Strategy on maternal and child mortality;
- (b) The high number of cases of vesico-vaginal fistula;

(c) Women's limited access to basic health-care services, including essential obstetric care, in particular for women in rural areas;

(d) The high rate of teenage pregnancy, the limited availability and access to comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health and rights and family planning services and the low use of contraceptives;

(e) The criminalization of abortion, accompanied by the application of severe penalties for abortion, despite the large number of unwanted pregnancies resulting from rape;

(f) The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women and as a result of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and the limited availability of and access to HIV/AIDS-related services, including antiretroviral treatment, especially in rural areas.

32. In line with its general recommendation No. 24 (1999), on women and health, the Committee calls on the State party:

(a) **To ensure the effective implementation of the National Strategy on maternal and child mortality;**

(b) **To prevent vesico-vaginal fistula and provide medical support to women affected by it;**

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

(d) **To address teenage pregnancies by integrating age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in curricula, widely promote education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, in particular by undertaking large-scale awareness-raising campaigns about available contraceptive methods, increase access to safe and affordable contraceptive services throughout the State party and ensure that women and girls do not face barriers in gaining access to information on family planning;**

(e) **To remove punitive legislative provisions imposed on women who undergo abortion, in line with general recommendation No. 24 (1999), in particular when pregnancy is harmful to the mother's life and health and in instances of incest and rape, and more particularly in cases of rape perpetrated in the context of the conflict;**

(f) **To reduce the high rate of HIV/AIDS among women, address mother-to-child transmission and improve the availability of and access to HIV/AIDS services, including antiretroviral treatment, especially in remote areas.**

Rural women

33. The Committee is concerned about the precarious situation of women in rural areas, as these women constitute the majority of women in the State party and are disproportionately affected by their lack of participation in decision-making processes and the lack of adequate health services, education, economic opportunities and social benefits.

34. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Integrate a gender perspective into the integrated rural development policy, evaluate the implementation of the policy and take corrective measures;**

(b) **Pay special attention to the needs of women in rural areas and ensure that they participate in decision-making processes, including community decision-making processes and development planning, and have equal access to basic services and infrastructure, including health services, education and economic opportunities, on an equal and equitable basis with men and also with their urban counterparts, and that the State party do so, including through the adoption of temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and general recommendation No. 25 (2004).**

Disadvantaged groups of women

35. The Committee is concerned about the lack of adequate protection and assistance for disadvantaged groups of women such as:

(a) Women belonging to the Pygmy community, many of whom experience discrimination, marginalization and displacement and loss of self-sufficiency as they become unable to make a livelihood for themselves in the forest;

(b) Internally displaced women, whose number is extremely high (there are more than 2 million internally displaced persons in the State party) and most of whom suffer from insecurity, homelessness and extreme poverty;

(c) Women refugees, women albinos, girls living in the street, elderly women and women with disabilities.

36. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Ensure that Pygmy women have access, without discrimination, to basic services, including health care and education, and to land, ensure that they have access to self-sufficient livelihoods in the forest and provide compensation when they have been displaced from the forest;**

(b) **Provide protection and assistance to other women who face multiple forms of discrimination, including internally displaced women, refugee women, women albinos, girls living in the street, elderly women and women with disabilities and ensure that these women have access, without discrimination, to health care, education, clean water, sanitation and income-generating activities;**

(c) **Consider ratifying the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.**

Marriage and family relations

37. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The existence of discriminatory provisions in the 1987 Family Code, including on the need for women to gain authorization from their husband for any legal act (arts. 448-450); the husband being the head of the household (art. 353); the choice of the place of residence resting with the husband (art. 454); the application

of a broader definition of adultery to women than to men (art. 467); the woman's duty to obey her husband (art. 444); the ownership of the family registry booklet by the husband (arts. 148 (1) and 150); and the different minimum age of marriage for girls and boys (art. 352);

(b) The Committee is also concerned about the persistence of the practices of early marriage, polygamy and levirate and about discriminatory customary practices with regard to the inheritance of land.

38. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Withdraw the discriminatory provisions of the 1987 Family Code, including on the need for women to gain authorization by their husband for any legal act (arts. 448-450); the husband being the head of household (art. 353); the choice of the place of residence resting with the husband (art. 454); the application of a broader definition of adultery to women than to men (art. 467); the woman's duty to obey her husband (art. 444); the ownership of the family registry booklet by the husband (arts. 148 (1) and 150); and the different minimum age of marriage for girls and boys (art. 352);**

(b) **Raise the legal age of marriage to 18 years for girls;**

(c) **Raise the awareness of traditional leaders on the importance of eliminating discriminatory practices such as polygamy, early marriage and levirate and the customary practice that discriminates against women with regard to land inheritance.**

Data collection

39. The Committee is concerned about the general lack of updated statistical data. It notes the lack of data on violence against women in conflict-affected areas and that updated data disaggregated by sex, age, race, ethnicity, geographical location and socioeconomic background are necessary for an accurate assessment of the situation of women, to determine whether they suffer from discrimination, for informed and targeted policymaking and for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress achieved towards the realization of women's substantive equality in all areas covered by the Convention.

40. The Committee calls upon the State party to develop a system to improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex and other relevant factors necessary to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at mainstreaming gender equality and enhancing women's enjoyment of their human rights. In this regard, the Committee draws the State party's attention to its general recommendation No. 9 (1989), on statistical data concerning the situation of women, and, in this regard, encourages the State party to seek technical assistance from relevant United Nations agencies and enhance its collaboration with women's associations that could assist in collecting accurate data.

Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

41. The Committee encourages the State party to ratify, without delay, the Optional Protocol to the Convention, noting that the State party had committed itself to ratifying it during the universal periodic review of 2010. The

Committee also 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

42. 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

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

Dissemination and implementation

44. 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 attention, as a matter of priority, 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 concluding observations be disseminated in a timely manner, in the official languages of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (regional, national and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable the full implementation of the observations. 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 media entities. It recommends that its concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local community level, to enable their implementation. In addition, the Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate the Convention, its Optional Protocol and relevant jurisprudence and the Committee's general recommendations to all stakeholders.

Ratification of other treaties

45. The Committee notes that adherence by 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 Democratic Republic of the Congo to consider ratifying the treaties to which it is not yet a party, i.e. the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and

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, 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.

Members of Their Families, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Follow-up to the concluding observations

46. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10 and 38 (a) above.

Technical assistance

47. The Committee recommends that the State party avail itself of international assistance, including technical assistance, to develop a comprehensive programme aimed at the implementation of the above recommendations and the Convention as a whole. The Committee calls upon the State party to continue its cooperation with specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system.

Preparation of the next report

48. The Committee invites the State party to submit its eighth periodic report in July 2017.

49. 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).
