



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 prior to the submission of the eighth periodic report of Trinidad and Tobago*

General

1. Please provide information and statistics, disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, disability, ethnicity, geographical location and socioeconomic background, on the current situation of women in the State party to enable monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. In accordance with the State party's obligations under articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, and in line with target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, please indicate how the State party intends to improve the collection and analysis of data pertaining to the areas covered by the Convention, so as to support policymaking and programme development and to measure progress towards the implementation of the Convention and the promotion of substantive equality between women and men, including with regard to the specific areas covered in the present document.

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

2. Please describe efforts made and mechanisms put in place to face the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its long-term impact, and ways to apply these in the State party's response to current and future crises, such as armed conflict, food insecurity and the energy crisis. Please provide information on strategies taken to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are a fundamental requirement in addressing such crises and in elaborating adequate responses, such as policies, assistance programmes, recovery efforts and the consolidation of the rule of law. Please also provide information on measures taken to ensure the equal and meaningful participation of women in these processes, and that such crises will not lead to a reversal of progress made in the protection and promotion of women's rights.

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 2 March 2023.



Legal status and visibility of the Convention

3. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 9)¹ and in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, please provide information on steps taken or envisaged to:

(a) Adopt legislative measures to fully incorporate the provisions of the Convention into national law;

(b) Intensify efforts to disseminate information about the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations and conduct capacity-building programmes for judges, prosecutors and lawyers on the Convention;

(c) Adopt a national action plan on the implementation of the concluding observations on the combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of the State party.

Optional Protocol

4. Please provide the Committee with a timeline for the State party's accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

Definition of discrimination and legislative and policy framework

5. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 11), please provide information on steps taken or envisaged to:

(a) Adopt a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women in the national legislation of the State party in line with article 1 of the Convention, in order to ensure that women are protected against both direct and indirect discrimination in all spheres of life;

(b) Amend or repeal all discriminatory provisions in the Widows' and Orphans' Pensions Act, the National Insurance Act and the Industrial Relations Act;

(c) Develop an inventory of all laws that are discriminatory towards women, with a view to amending or repealing them;

(d) Adopt and operationalize the draft national policy on gender and development.

Access to justice

6. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 13), please explain what measures are in place to ensure that women have effective access to legal remedies in all parts of the State party and that the Equal Opportunity Commission, the Police Complaints Authority and the Office of the Ombudsman operate independently and impartially.

National human rights institution

7. Please indicate the steps taken by the State party to establish a national human rights institution with a broad mandate to promote and protect women's rights and that is in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the Committee's previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/TTO/CO/4-7).

National machinery for the advancement of women

8. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 15), please provide information on:

(a) The status of the interministerial committee on gender equality, its cooperation and coordination with the national commission on gender equality and women's empowerment and the departmental gender focal points with the Gender and Child Affairs Division, and their mandates;

(b) Budgetary allocations to the Gender Affairs Division, and efforts to ensure that the Division receives adequate human and financial resources to effectively undertake its activities, including gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting;

(c) Steps taken to assess the impact of moving the national machinery for the advancement of women to the Office of the Prime Minister.

Temporary special measures

9. In follow-up to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 17), please provide information on steps taken to adopt and enforce legislative provisions on temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, to increase the participation of women, particularly in public life, education and employment.

Stereotypes

10. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 19), please provide information on efforts to:

(a) Expand public education programmes on the negative impact of discriminatory stereotypes on women's enjoyment of their rights, in particular in rural areas;

(b) Cooperate with the media to raise the awareness of the general public about existing sex-based stereotypes that persist at all levels of society, with a view to eliminating them;

(c) Monitor and assess on a regular basis the impact of the measures taken to eliminate gender stereotypes and harmful practices, including the programme on "defining masculinity excellence" and the television series *Gender on Your Agenda: You've Got Male*.

Gender-based violence against women

11. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 21), please provide information on steps taken to:

(a) Ensure that all cases of gender-based violence against women and girls, in particular femicide and domestic violence, are thoroughly and effectively investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished and that the Central Registry on Domestic Violence has up-to-date statistical data on cases focusing on all forms of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, disaggregated by age, type of offence and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator;

(b) Undertake a needs assessment to establish the demand for shelters by women who are victims of violence and ensure that shelters are accessible throughout the State party and sufficiently resourced;

(c) Ensure that the 2019 amendment of the Sexual Offences Act re-establishing the sex offender registry allows the tracking of repeat offenders in order to combat gender-based violence against women;

(d) Ensure the effective enforcement of protection orders and promptly investigate and punish breaches;

(e) Provide mandatory training for law enforcement officers that focuses on gender-sensitive investigation of cases of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, and adopt programmes, including mandatory courses, aimed at eliminating traditional attitudes concerning the treatment of domestic violence as a private matter.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

12. Please inform the Committee on the current status of the national plan of action against human trafficking. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 23), and taking into account the Committee's general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, please provide information on measures taken to:

(a) Address the root causes of trafficking in women and girls and ensure the rehabilitation and social integration of victims, including by providing them with legal, medical and psychosocial assistance;

(b) Carry out effective awareness-raising programmes aimed at encouraging the reporting of trafficking offences and the early detection of women and girls who are victims of trafficking;

(c) Establish and provide adequate resources for specialized units within existing shelters to provide adequate assistance tailored to women and girls who are victims of trafficking;

(d) Enforce anti-trafficking legislation by thoroughly investigating, prosecuting and punishing perpetrators, including public officials who are complicit in such crimes and those who aid and abet the exploitation of women and girls in prostitution;

(e) Provide women and girls with alternative income opportunities and develop rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women and girls exploited in prostitution, together with exit programmes for those wishing to leave prostitution;

(f) Strengthen cooperation on trafficking prevention at the bilateral, regional and international levels through information exchange and the harmonization of legal procedures to prosecute traffickers, in particular with neighbouring States and other relevant States in the Caribbean Community.

13. Please provide data on the number of cases of trafficking identified since the previous report, as well as the number of cases investigated, the number prosecuted and the number that resulted in sanctions against the perpetrators.

Participation in political and public life

14. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 25), please provide information on steps taken to introduce measures, including temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations No. 25 (2004) and No. 23 (1997) on women

in political and public life, such as statutory quotas, and to raise awareness of the gender norms, values and roles that may hinder equal female political representation in the State party, including the judiciary, senior positions in the diplomatic service and academic institutions. Please also describe specific measures that have been applied in order to reverse the decline in the representation of women in Parliament and ensure their equal representation with men, including through the introduction of maternity leave for parliamentarians.

Nationality

15. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 27), please provide information on steps taken to ensure compulsory birth registration, in particular of girls in remote areas.

Education

16. Please provide details on efforts to address the education crisis reportedly caused by the increase in school dropouts and in learning difficulties and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please also provide information on measures in place to allow refugee and migrant girls and boys access to national education. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 29), please describe measures put in place to:

(a) Provide effective access for women and girls to comprehensive information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on the use of modern forms of contraception;

(b) Comprehensively assess the impact and effectiveness of the adolescent mothers programme;

(c) Facilitate the re-entry into school of young mothers after they have given birth, and provide relevant data;

(d) Encourage the possibility for educational paths followed by girls and young women who choose non-traditional fields of study to translate into careers in these same fields;

(e) Ensure that age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including comprehensive sex education for adolescent girls and boys covering responsible sexual behaviour, is systematically integrated into the national curriculum at all levels, including primary school.

Employment

17. Please describe efforts to support gender-responsive economic policies and practices, including with regard to the integration of women in non-traditional employment sectors and the transition of women out of temporary and informal work. Please provide data on women's participation at all levels of the labour market, disaggregated by age, employment sector, region and other relevant factors. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 31), please provide information on steps taken to:

(a) Transform and reduce the informal sector of employment through, among other things, the provision of vocational and technical training, to eliminate structural inequalities and occupational segregation and to reduce the gender wage gap by guaranteeing and enforcing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in all sectors;

(b) Amend the Industrial Relations Act to include domestic workers in the definition of a worker;

(c) Ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization;

(d) Adopt legislation providing for effective remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace, collect statistical data on the extent of the problem of sex discrimination in the workplace, including cases of sexual harassment, and conduct regular labour inspections aimed at enforcing compliance with labour laws.

Health

18. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 33), please provide information on steps taken to:

(a) Scale up the provision of free antiretroviral treatment to all women and men living with HIV and to pregnant women in order to prevent mother-to-child transmission;

(b) Address the root causes of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women and girls between 15 and 24 years of age through, among other things, the implementation of preventive strategies to combat HIV and the provision of information on sexual and reproductive services and modern contraceptives;

(c) Amend the Offences against the Person Act to legalize abortion in cases of rape, incest and severe fetal impairment and to decriminalize abortion in all other cases.

19. Please provide data, disaggregated by age and region, on the incidence of unsafe abortion and the impact on women's health, including maternal mortality.

Economic empowerment of women

20. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 35), please provide information on the status of female-headed households and how women, in particular women heads of households, benefit from the State party's poverty reduction programmes, including initiatives under the National Social Mitigation Plan 2017–2022. Please also provide information on steps taken to:

(a) Reduce poverty by facilitating women's access to financial credit and loans;

(b) Investigate the extent to which private banks engage in discriminatory practices against women, in particular unmarried women, in their lending policies.

Rural women

21. In line with the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 37), please provide information, taking into account the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, on the overall situation of rural women and the results of the study aimed at gathering national agricultural data, disaggregated by sex, to identify the gender differential with regard to ownership, earnings, marketing and other aspects of agriculture, as well as access to other services such as education, health and employment. Please also describe measures in place to ensure that the development and implementation of policies and programmes on disaster risk reduction and climate change, in addition to other emergencies, are based on a comprehensive gender analysis and that such policies and programmes take into account vulnerable but productive groups of women, such as rural women. Please explain the steps taken to ensure the participation of rural women at the decision-making level in the design and implementation of policies and programmes, including those relating to climate change and disasters.

Disaster risk reduction and climate change

22. Given the State party's vulnerabilities as an island nation, please provide information on policies and programmes on disaster preparedness and climate change and on steps taken to integrate a gender perspective into the response to natural disasters and the impact of climate change, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change. Please describe measures taken to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making processes on climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and land and environmental resource management.

Disadvantaged groups of women

23. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 39), please provide detailed information, including disaggregated data, on specific programmes and achievements with regard to the situation of female heads of households, widows, older women, women with disabilities, adolescent mothers and other disadvantaged groups of women.

Marriage and family relations

24. Recalling its general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, and in the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 41), please describe measures in place to address possible negative economic disparities between women and men created by the dissolution of marriage, including any comprehensive studies carried out on the issue. Please indicate what measures, including awareness-raising activities, have been put in place to enforce the Miscellaneous Provisions (Marriage) Act (2017), which raises the legal age for marriage to 18 years.

Additional information

25. Please provide any additional information deemed relevant with regard to legislative, policy, administrative and other measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations since the consideration of the previous periodic reports in July 2016. Such measures may include recent laws, developments, plans, programmes and ratifications of human rights instruments, as well as any other information that the State party considers relevant. Please note that, further to the issues raised in the present document, the State party will be expected, during the dialogue, to respond to additional questions relating to areas covered by the Convention.