



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 seventh periodic report of Slovenia*

1. The Committee considered the seventh periodic report of Slovenia ([CEDAW/C/SVN/7](#)), submitted under the simplified reporting procedure, at its 1955th and 1956th meetings ([CEDAW/C/SR.1955](#) and [CEDAW/C/SR.1956](#)), held on 16 February 2023.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its seventh periodic report, which was prepared in response to the list of issues and questions prior to reporting ([CEDAW/C/SVN/QPR/7](#)). It also appreciates the State party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee ([CEDAW/C/SVN/CO/5-6/Add.1](#)). It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its multisectoral delegation, which was headed by the Minister for Solidarity-Based Future, Mr. Simon Maljevac, and included representatives of the Ministry of Health, the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Support and Integration of Migrants, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, as well as the Ambassador and Permanent Representative and other members of the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Ms. Anita Pipan.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2015 of the State party's previous report in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) The amendments to the Companies Act (2021), requiring large and medium-sized companies, which must produce an audit in their annual reports, to

* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-fourth session (6–24 February 2023).



disclose the proportion of men and women in their management and supervisory bodies;

(b) The amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act (2019), introducing the obligation to provide victims of crimes, including victims of gender-based violence, with information about available support services and on the status of proceedings and final judgments in order to ensure their personal safety;

(c) The amendments to the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (2019), requiring the Government to consider the balanced gender representation principle, under which either women or men must account for at least 40 per cent of the composition of government advisory and coordinating bodies, working bodies and delegations, and representatives in management and supervisory bodies of entities governed by public law;

(d) The Non-Governmental Organizations Act (2018), allowing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to acquire public benefit status in various fields, including NGOs working on equal opportunities for women and men, protection against discrimination or human rights;

(e) The Protection against Discrimination Act (2016), establishing the Advocate of the Principle of Equality as an independent and autonomous institution and determining the personal conditions under which protection from discrimination is provided, including gender-based and multiple forms of discrimination;

(f) The Domestic Violence Prevention Act (2016), introducing a definition of domestic violence, expanding the definition of family members, establishing procedures for dealing with domestic violence and determining non-payment of child maintenance as economic violence;

(g) The International Protection Act (2016), protecting victims of trafficking in persons as vulnerable persons with special needs;

(h) The Residence Registration Act (2016), enabling victims of trafficking in persons to reside anonymously at a secret location.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption of the following:

(a) The resolution on the national programme for the prevention and suppression of crime 2019–2023, which aims to reduce all forms and occurrences of hate speech or public incitement to hatred and intolerance, and to guarantee and strengthen educational and prevention programmes, in 2019;

(b) The resolution on the national mental health programme 2018–2028, which defines the measures for the prevention and treatment of various forms of violence, including domestic violence, in 2018;

(c) The resolution on the family policy 2018–2028, which raises awareness of responsible parenthood and payment of child maintenance, in 2018;

(d) The national programme of measures for the Roma community 2017–2021, which includes target-oriented measures and recommendations in the field of social protection with an emphasis on addressing child and/or forced marriage, in 2017;

(e) The resolution on the national programme for equal opportunities for women and men 2015–2020, which aims to improve the position of women and to ensure the sustainable development of gender equality in key areas, in 2015.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, in 2021.

C. Sustainable Development Goals

7. The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It urges the State party to recognize women as the driving force of the sustainable development of Slovenia and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.

D. Parliament

8. The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see [A/65/38](#), part two, annex VI). It invites the Parliament of Slovenia, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.

E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

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

9. The Committee welcomes the adoption of legislation to respond to the consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and to reduce its negative effects, including measures to combat gender-based violence against women, as well as domestic violence, such as awareness-raising campaigns in the media and a 24-hour domestic violence helpline. However, the Committee wishes to draw the attention of the State party to the importance of COVID-19 recovery strategies to women's enjoyment of their rights.

10. The Committee, in line with its guidance note on the obligations of States parties to the Convention in the context of COVID-19, issued on 22 April 2020, recommends that the State party:

(a) Implement institutional, legislative and policy measures to redress long-standing inequalities between women and men and to give renewed impetus to the achievement of gender equality by placing women at the centre of COVID-19 recovery strategies as a strategic priority for sustainable change, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Ensure that, in the context of post-crisis recovery plans, women and girls are not relegated to stereotypical gender roles;

(c) Ensure the equal participation of women and girls, including disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women, in the design and implementation of COVID-19 recovery programmes;

(d) **Ensure that women and girls benefit equally from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care work, aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic.**

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

11. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the delegation during the dialogue that the Convention is published on the government website, disseminated by the ombudsman and association of municipalities, and that the content thereof is covered during seminars for NGOs and lawyers. However, it notes with concern that the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations are not widely known and rarely invoked in courts in the State party.

12. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Provide systematic capacity-building and training for government officials, judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials, as well as lawyers, on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations;**

(b) **Raise awareness among the community about women's rights under the Convention and the legal remedies available to claim those rights.**

Legislative framework

13. The Committee notes the adoption of the Protection against Discrimination Act in 2016. However, it notes with concern the absence of information on the number of cases of sex- or gender-based discrimination filed under those laws, including with regard to intersecting forms of discrimination.

14. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen the implementation of the national legislative framework to protect women's rights and promote gender equality, and include information in its next periodic report on the number and outcome of court proceedings in cases of sex- or gender-based discrimination brought under those laws, on an annual basis.

Women's access to justice

15. The Committee takes note of the availability of free legal aid for women without sufficient means and of the possibility for victims of gender-based discrimination to lodge a complaint either with the Advocate of the Principle of Equality or in court proceedings. However, the Committee notes with concern that sentences for perpetrators of gender-based violence are often lenient and not commensurate with the gravity of the crimes.

16. Recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, the Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that the justice system provides women with effective protection and meaningful redress for any harm that they may suffer, in particular:

(a) **Ensure that sentences in cases of gender-based violence against women are commensurate with the gravity of the harm suffered. Redress for victims should include, as appropriate, restitution (reinstatement), compensation (whether provided in the form of money, goods or services) and rehabilitation (medical treatment, psychosocial counselling and social services);**

(b) **Conduct and facilitate qualitative studies and critical gender analyses of the justice system, in collaboration with civil society organizations and**

academic institutions, in order to highlight practices, procedures and jurisprudence that promote or limit women's full access to justice.

National machinery for the advancement of women

17. The Committee takes note of the national programme for equal opportunities for women and men 2015–2020 and of the preparation of a new programme that will run until 2030. It also takes note of the Equal Opportunities Division of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, which coordinates gender equality policies, implements programmes and provides expert support to ministries and municipalities in implementing gender mainstreaming. The Committee notes with concern, however, that the Equal Opportunities Division is established at an intermediate level within the Ministry and lacks sufficient human, technical and financial resources to effectively carry out its mandate. It also notes with concern that the national programme for equal opportunities for women and men is a strategic document of the Government and not a comprehensive strategy for gender equality involving all components of society, and the lack of initiatives aimed explicitly at gender budgeting.

18. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure that the Equal Opportunities Division within the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, which is responsible for the advancement of women and gender equality, is equipped with sufficient human, technical and financial resources to effectively carry out its mandate to promote and protect women's rights and gender equality;**
- (b) Adopt a comprehensive gender equality strategy involving all components of society and engage women's organizations in its design, implementation and evaluation;**
- (c) Support the gender focal points in line ministries to ensure effective gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting;**
- (d) Institutionalize and develop the dialogue with women's organizations and consider entering into standing collaboration agreements with them, including on the provision of State funding for their activities.**

19. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Advocate of the Principle of Equality under the Protection against Discrimination Act (2016), mandated with the promotion of equality and prevention of discrimination on several grounds, including gender. However, it notes with concern the absence of mechanisms to ensure compliance with the recommendations of the Advocate of the Principle of Equality.

20. The Committee recommends that the State party provide the Advocate of the Principle of Equality with the authority to issue binding rulings and impose sanctions for gender-based discrimination, and allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources for its effective functioning.

Temporary special measures

21. The Committee takes note of the special programme for the promotion of women's entrepreneurship 2016–2019, the funds earmarked in 2020 for women start-up entrepreneurs, aimed at including women in early entrepreneurship, and the “Day with a Woman MP” organized by the National Assembly in 2019 and 2020. However, the Committee is concerned that these initiatives fall short of temporary special measures to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality of women and men in areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged.

22. Recalling article 4 (1) of the Convention and its general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Adopt temporary special measures to accelerate women's equal participation in all areas covered by the Convention and at all levels where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, particularly in political and public life, and ensure that such measures remain in force until their objectives have been achieved and sustained for a period of time;
- (b) Include disadvantaged groups of women, such as refugee and asylum-seeking women, women with disabilities and Roma women, in the design, adoption, implementation and monitoring of temporary special measures;
- (c) Raise awareness among the legislature, policymakers and civil society, as well as the private sector, on the non-discriminatory nature of temporary special measures and their importance as a critical tool for addressing discrimination in all spheres and achieving the substantive equality of women and men.

Stereotypes

23. The Committee welcomes the various initiatives taken by the State party to combat discriminatory gender stereotypes, including awareness-raising and information campaigns encouraging the active inclusion of men in fatherhood and care for the child, and the equal distribution of parental responsibilities between women and men. The Committee is concerned, however, at the persistence of discriminatory gender stereotypes in the media and at calls for women to adhere to traditional roles in public discourse in the State party.

24. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a comprehensive strategy, with a dedicated budget and time-bound targets and objectives, aimed at eliminating discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society.

Gender-based violence against women

25. The Committee welcomes the introduction of the affirmative consent model for rape and sexual offences in the Criminal Code. It also notes with appreciation that the amended Criminal Code (2016) criminalizes psychological violence (coercion, threats, domestic violence, workplace mobbing, violence and stalking), physical violence, as well as rape and sexual violence in a marriage, extramarital partnership or registered same-sex civil partnership. It further notes the various strategies developed in the area of violence against women, the survey conducted on the prevalence and identification of cyberharassment among young people and the media campaign launched in 2019 focusing on raising awareness of various forms of cyberviolence, in particular those that frequently affect women and girls. However, the Committee notes with concern:

- (a) The absence of a comprehensive strategy on gender-based violence against women;
- (b) The absence of a permanent mechanism to coordinate, monitor and assess the effectiveness of measures taken to address violence against women;
- (c) The lack of sexual violence referral centres and the fact that support services for victims of gender-based violence are concentrated in urban areas, while rural areas are underserved;

- (d) The lack of continuous training provided to health-care professionals on the gender-responsive protocols to attend to victims of gender-based violence;
- (e) The lack of information on the effective enforcement and monitoring of compliance with protection orders, in particular restraining and separation orders, for victims of domestic violence, which leaves women who are victims of such violence at risk of revictimization;
- (f) The overall lack of disaggregated data on all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, including psychological, economic and domestic violence, as well as cyberviolence.

26. Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, and in line with target 5.2 of the Sustainable Developments Goals, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat all forms of gender-based violence against women and allocate adequate funding for its implementation, regular monitoring and evaluation;**
- (b) **Establish a permanent mechanism to coordinate, monitor and assess the effectiveness of the measures taken to address gender-based violence against women and provide it with adequate human, technical and financial resources;**
- (c) **Establish sexual violence referral centres, provide adequate shelters for victims of gender-based violence in all regions and ensure that they meet the accommodation needs of all women victims of violence, including women with disabilities;**
- (d) **Provide continuous training for health-care professionals on gender-responsive protocols to attend to victims of gender-based violence against women, including forensic documentation;**
- (e) **Ensure the effective enforcement and monitoring of protection orders, including restraining and separation orders, and impose adequate penalties for non-compliance;**
- (f) **Ensure the collection and analysis of data on all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, including psychological, economic and domestic violence, as well as cyberviolence and femicide, disaggregated by age, nationality, disability and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, and include economic and psychological forms of gender-based violence against women in administrative legislation.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

27. The Committee notes the efforts by the State party to combat trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, including the adoption of the International Protection Act (2016); the establishment of anti-trafficking services in 2018 to support the national coordinator for the fight against trafficking in human beings; the provision of annual training on trafficking for law enforcement authorities; and the adoption of the Manual on the Identification, Assistance and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in 2016. The Committee notes with concern, however:

- (a) The lack of an independent body to undertake objective evaluations of the implementation of anti-trafficking legislation, policy and activities, and identification of shortcomings;

- (b) The low number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions in cases of trafficking;
- (c) The fact that courts resort to physical violence, restrict freedom of movement, confiscate personal documents, limit the use of electronic communications for findings on trafficking and impose lenient sentences such as fines;
- (d) The gaps in the current legislation governing health care and health insurance, ensuring comprehensive treatment and medical care for victims of human trafficking.

28. Recalling its general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Establish an independent mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of anti-trafficking legislation and policies of the State party;
- (b) Strengthen the criminal justice response to human trafficking and ensure that all cases of trafficking are prosecuted and traffickers adequately punished;
- (c) Address legislative gaps to strengthen support services for victims of trafficking, including free legal assistance and medical treatment;
- (d) Ensure that the procedures in the Manual on the Identification, Assistance and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings are effectively implemented in practice, including through mandatory training for immigration and other law enforcement officers on early identification and referral of victims of trafficking to the appropriate services, and that a new national action plan to combat trafficking in persons is adopted.

29. The Committee notes that prostitution is decriminalized in the State party, but procuring and organized prostitution remain punishable under the Criminal Code. The Committee is concerned about the lack of information on measures taken by the State party to reduce the demand for prostitution and provide alternative income opportunities for women and girls wishing to leave prostitution.

30. The Committee recommends that the State party address the root causes of prostitution, such as poverty and structural gender inequalities, as well as the demand for prostitution, and adopt targeted measures to protect women at risk from being exploited in prostitution, including by providing women who wish to leave prostitution with exit programmes and alternative income opportunities.

Equal participation of women in political and public life

31. The Committee welcomes the election of women as President of the State party and as President of the National Assembly, and the appointment of women as State Attorney General and Army Chief of Staff in 2018, the first in a State member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It notes the amendments to the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (2019) aiming to introduce a minimum quota of 40 per cent for the representation of each gender in the composition of government advisory and coordinating bodies, working bodies and delegations, as well as in the appointment or proposal of government representatives in the management and supervisory bodies of entities governed by public law. It further notes the obligation for self-administration local communities and self-administration national communities to respect the principle of balanced gender representation. The Committee notes with concern, however:

- (a) The unbalanced gender representation, with women accounting for only 13.6 per cent of mayors; 35 per cent of municipal and city councillors; 20 per cent of Roma councillors; 27.7 per cent of chief executive officers; 24.6 per cent of executive directors of the largest listed companies; and 27.7 per cent of chairpersons, members of the boards and employee representatives;
- (b) The use of hate speech and harassment targeting women politicians, activists and journalists in political discourse and the media;
- (c) The lack of measures to promote the political participation of women and support women candidates campaigning for elections;
- (d) The fact that the new national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) has still not been adopted.

32. Recalling its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life and target 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Amend the Law on Elections to the National Assembly with a view to achieving gender parity on lists of political party candidates, ensuring a minimum 40 per cent quota for women;
- (b) Adopt temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention, such as increased quotas for the representation of each sex, a zipper system for electoral lists of political parties and targeted campaign financing for women candidates, to accelerate the achievement of gender parity in the representation of women and men in elected positions in national and local legislative bodies;
- (c) Adopt targeted measures such as preferential recruitment and promotion of women applicants, to achieve gender parity in appointed public positions, including in the public service and the judiciary, in particular at decision-making levels;
- (d) Amend the Companies Act to require boards of large and medium-sized listed companies and autonomous public companies to ensure equal representation of women and men on their boards;
- (e) Adopt legislation, prevent harassment and threats against women in political and public life, including by strengthening monitoring and reporting mechanisms and holding social media companies accountable for discriminatory user-generated content, and investigate, prosecute and adequately punish those responsible;
- (f) Provide capacity-building to women politicians and candidates on political campaigning, leadership and negotiation skills, and raise awareness, in collaboration with the media, among politicians, the media and the general public, of the importance of gender parity in political and public life as a requirement for the full implementation of the Convention;
- (g) Expedite the finalization and adoption of its new national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security, in cooperation with representatives of women's civil society organizations.

Women human rights defenders

33. The Committee welcomes the statement made by the delegation that the State party is fully committed to cooperating with women human rights defenders. It notes with concern, however, that no civil society organization has engaged with the Committee in preparation of the consideration of the seventh periodic report.

34. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure an enabling environment for women's organizations and women human rights defenders to advocate for women's human rights, including through cooperation in the implementation of the present recommendations, and their consultation in the preparation of the next periodic report, preparation of a national action plan on women rights, prevention of domestic violence and prevention of trafficking activities.

Education

35. The Committee welcomes the high enrolment rate of women and girls at all levels of education, in particular tertiary education, where their participation is considerably higher than that of men. It also notes that 51 per cent of state scholarships and 58.4 per cent of talented students' scholarships are awarded to girls. It further notes the launch of research, together with public universities, on sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence in higher education. However, the Committee notes with concern:

- (a) The continued underrepresentation of women and girls in non-traditional fields of study and career paths, such as in science, technology and engineering, and information and communications technologies, and that only 17 per cent of recipients of company scholarships are women and girls;
- (b) The low enrolment rates of girls with disabilities in mainstream education;
- (c) The lack of education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including responsible sexual behaviour, in school curricula at all levels of education.

36. Recalling its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Promote non-traditional educational choices and career paths of women and girls, particularly in science, technology and engineering, and information and communications technologies, including through special scholarships and revised entry requirements;**
- (b) **Strengthen access for women and girls with disabilities to inclusive education at all levels and include in its next periodic report disaggregated data on school enrolment, completion and dropout rates, and access to university education;**
- (c) **Integrate gender-responsive, age-appropriate and accessible education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including responsible sexual behaviour, modern contraceptives and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, in school curricula at all levels of education, and provide systematic training to teachers.**

Employment

37. The Committee welcomes the reduction of the gender pay gap to 3.1 points in 2020, one of the lowest in Europe; the amendments to the Parental Care and Family Benefits Act that will give each parent 60 days of non-transferable paid parental leave; and the development of guidelines for active fatherhood. It also welcomes the

increase in the employment rate of women to 72.4 per cent in 2020. The Committee notes with concern, however:

- (a) The persistence of gender segregation in the labour market;
- (b) The significant salary difference between men and women of the same level of education, in the public and private sector, and the low remuneration of women employed in the care sector and women with disabilities;
- (c) The fact that 31.7 per cent of women employees experience sexual harassment in the workplace and the lack of information on the number of investigations and the penalties imposed in cases of sexual harassment, as well as on preventive measures taken by employers;
- (d) The lack of information on the number and outcome of complaints brought by women about discrimination in employment.

38. The Committee draws attention to its general recommendation No. 13 (1989) on equal remuneration for work of equal value and to target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to achieve, by 2030, full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value, and recommends that the State party:

- (a) Take targeted measures, such as financial incentives for employers, to promote the equal participation of women in the labour market, particularly in innovative sectors such as the digital sector;
- (b) Enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in order to narrow and ultimately close the gender pay gap, including by undertaking regular gender pay reviews in all occupational sectors, including the public service, in cooperation with employers' associations and trade unions, applying gender-sensitive analytical job classification and evaluation methods;
- (c) Raise awareness among employers and employees of the relevant provisions of the Labour Code prohibiting all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, in the workplace, ensure that all reports of sexual harassment are effectively investigated and that those responsible are adequately punished, and that employers take preventive measures against harassment and sexual harassment, and adopt in the penal code special preventive sanctions and create data indicators;
- (d) Strengthen labour inspections and women's access to confidential and independent complaint mechanisms to address employment discrimination against women.

Health

39. The Committee welcomes the preventive reproductive health-care programme of the State party, which includes counselling on family planning and the use of contraception, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, spontaneous or artificial termination of pregnancy, cervical cancer detection and vaccination against human papillomavirus for girls. It notes that infertility treatment, including assisted procreation procedures, are covered by the health insurance. The Committee further notes the publication of standards and instructions to help vulnerable groups to gain access to health-care institutions and other institutions, and that mental health programmes put a special emphasis on disadvantaged groups of women, such as women in detention and women in prostitution. The Committee, nevertheless, notes with concern:

- (a) The low level of preventive care for the most frequent and fastest growing diseases, such as high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes and sexually transmitted diseases;
- (b) The limited access to health services for disadvantaged groups of women, including women with disabilities;
- (c) The poor health status of Roma women due in part to socioeconomic factors, such as unhealthy living conditions, low levels of education and poverty.

40. Recalling its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Strengthen the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of preventive health-care programmes, particularly for the most frequent and fastest growing diseases, such as high blood pressure, breast cancer, diabetes and sexually transmitted diseases, and promote the participation of women and girls in free screening programmes for these conditions as a preventive measure;**
- (b) **Ensure that women and girls belonging to disadvantaged groups, such as women and girls with disabilities, have affordable access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health services;**
- (c) **Raise awareness among Roma women and girls about healthy lifestyles and ensure their access to health services and information.**

Economic empowerment of women

41. The Committee notes with concern that women are at a disproportionate risk of poverty and social exclusion in the State party.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt targeted measures for the economic empowerment of women and:

- (a) **Address the risk of feminization of poverty and mainstream gender in its social inclusion strategies, with particular attention to disadvantaged groups of women such as single mothers and older women;**
- (b) **Develop and strengthen programmes to support women entrepreneurs, such as business start-up programmes, low interest credit schemes, entrepreneurship support funds, special tax policies and support activities provided by financial banks.**

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

43. The Committee notes with concern the absence of a gender-responsive national strategy to address environmental risks and challenges, climate change and disaster risk management, including risk reduction, preparedness, response and rehabilitation.

44. Recalling its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women are represented and participate in the development of legislation, policies and programmes on climate change, disaster response and disaster risk reduction. It also recommends that the State party integrate a gender perspective into such plans and policies and ensure that women, in particular rural women, are consulted in their development. It further recommends that the State party take measures to address the impact of climate change specifically on women's access to resources and livelihoods, in order to ensure that women are not disproportionately affected.

Disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women

Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women

45. The Committee welcomes the State party's open-door policy for Ukrainians, predominantly women and girls, and the introduction of temporary protection for them, granting them access to temporary residence, the labour market, accommodation, education, social protection and health care. However, it notes with concern the lack of gender-sensitive legal and psychosocial counselling for refugees and asylum-seekers in languages that they understand, resulting in underreporting of gender-based violence and hampering their referral to appropriate services. The Committee is further concerned that the Gender-Based Violence Multidisciplinary Working Group that provides services for refugees and asylum-seekers lacks expertise on gender issues, and that reception centres for refugees and asylum-seekers are sometimes overcrowded.

46. Recalling its general recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Strengthen the systematic referral of refugees and asylum-seekers with specific needs, in particular women and girls at risk of trafficking and survivors of gender-based violence, to appropriate services, including the provision of legal assistance and psychosocial counselling in languages they understand;**
- (b) **Provide training on gender-sensitive protocols for all actors dealing with refugees and asylum-seekers, including the Gender-Based Violence Multidisciplinary Working Group, reduce overcrowding in reception centres and demarcate segregated areas for women and men.**

Roma women

47. The Committee takes note of the national programme of measures for the Roma community 2017–2021, which provides measures aimed at addressing the needs of Roma women and girls. The Committee notes with concern, however, that Roma women face social exclusion and have limited access to housing, health care, education and employment. It is particularly concerned at the incidence of child and/or forced marriage and early pregnancy among Roma girls.

48. The Committee recommends that the State party promote access to education, employment, health care and housing for Roma women in its next national programme of measures for the Roma community. It also recommends that the State party take targeted measures, including age-appropriate sexuality education and free access to modern contraceptives and family planning services, to prevent early pregnancy among Roma girls. It recommends that the State party eliminate child and/or forced marriage among Roma communities, including by providing scholarships to retain Roma girls in the education system and raising awareness among Roma parents and community leaders about the criminal nature and harmful effects of child marriage.

Women with disabilities

49. The Committee notes with concern that women with disabilities in the State party often face exclusion from the labour market and education.

50. Recalling its general recommendation No. 18 (1991) on disabled women, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that all women and girls with disabilities are able to access the labour market, justice, inclusive education, employment and health services, including sexual and reproductive health services.

Marriage and family relations

51. The Committee notes the adoption of the new Family Code in 2019 and its recent amendments recognizing same-sex marriage. However, it notes with concern that the legislation of the State party provides for exceptions to the legal minimum age of marriage of 18 years for both women and men with parental consent.

52. The Committee recommends that the State party amend the Marriage and Family Relations Act and all other related national legislation acts to eliminate all exceptions to the legal minimum age of marriage of 18 years for both women and men.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

53. The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to further evaluate the realization of the rights enshrined in the Convention in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.

Dissemination

54. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the de facto official languages of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the Parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.

Ratification of other treaties

55. The Committee notes that the adherence of 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 State party to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, to which it is not yet a party.

Follow-up to the concluding observations

56. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12 (a), 26 (f), 34 and 52 above.

Preparation of the next report

57. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the eighth periodic report of the State party in line with a future predictable reporting calendar based on an eight-year review cycle and following the adoption of a list of issues prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The report should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

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 or 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.

58. 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/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).
