



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
10 July 2025

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Solomon Islands*

1. The Committee considered the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Solomon Islands ([CEDAW/C/SLB/4-5](#)) at its Pacific technical cooperation session, held from 7 to 11 April 2025 in Suva, and adopted the present concluding observations at its ninety-first session.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State Party of its combined fourth and fifth reports, which were prepared in response to the list of issues prior to reporting ([CEDAW/C/SLB/QPR/4-5](#)), as well as its follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee ([CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3/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 country exchange.

3. The Committee commends the State Party on its delegation, which was headed by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, Cedric Collen Alependava, and included representatives of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2014 of the State Party's combined initial to third periodic reports ([CEDAW/C/SLB/1-3](#)) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) Education Act, which improves the representation of women and communities on school boards and in education decision-making bodies, in 2023;

(b) Constitution (Amendment) (Dual Citizenship) Act, which enables Solomon Islanders, including women, to hold dual citizenship and participate fully in political life, including as parliamentary candidates, in 2018;

* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-first session (16 June–4 July 2025).



(c) Family Protection Act, which criminalizes domestic violence and cites the Convention as an essential normative basis for the Act, in 2014.

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 or establishment of the following:

(a) National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy for the period 2021–2027;

(b) National Action Plan against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling for the period 2020–2025;

(c) National Women's Financial Inclusion Policy for the period 2022–2026;

(d) National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy for the period 2016–2020.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State Party has acceded to the following instruments:

(a) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2023;

(b) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, in 2023;

(c) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in 2022.

C. Sustainable Development Goals

7. **The Committee calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of mainstreaming the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals and urges the State Party to recognize women as the driving force of sustainable development in the State Party and to adopt gender-responsive 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) and invites the National Parliament of Solomon Islands to implement, in line with its mandate, the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.**

E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

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

9. The Committee commends the State Party on its efforts to disseminate information about the Convention to its provinces and rural areas. It is concerned, however, that these efforts are not systematic and that many women, in particular rural women, older women, single women, women living in poverty, women with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, are unaware of

their human rights under the Convention and the remedies available to claim those rights.

10. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Continue to raise awareness among women of their human rights under the Convention and the legal remedies available to them to claim violations of those rights, and ensure that information on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations is available to all women in accessible formats, such as Braille and sign language;
- (b) Consider establishing a comprehensive mechanism for the implementation of the concluding observations of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, including the present recommendations, and involve non-governmental organizations that promote women's human rights and gender equality in the work of the mechanism;
- (c) Ensure that the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto, the Committee's jurisprudence and its general recommendations are made an integral part of systematic capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and lawyers.

Constitutional and legislative framework, definition of discrimination against women and discriminatory laws

11. The Committee acknowledges the State Party's efforts to align its legal framework with the Convention, particularly through the amendment of the Constitution to incorporate a more comprehensive definition of discrimination, including the explicit recognition of sex-based discrimination in section 15 (4). The Committee notes with concern, however:

- (a) That the Constitution does not contain an explicit reference to intersecting forms of discrimination affecting women and girls, in particular rural women, women with disabilities and women belonging to ethnic and religious minorities;
- (b) That the constitutional reform process has been delayed, that there is no clear timeline for the adoption and implementation of the Draft Federal Constitution, and that it contains provisions that give precedence to customary norms over ordinary laws protecting women's human rights, thereby potentially perpetuating discrimination against women in such areas as land tenure, inheritance, marriage and participation in public life;
- (c) That the Law Reform Commission faces severe constraints, including limited human resources, inadequate funding and outdated technical equipment, curtailing its ability to advance legislative reforms effectively;
- (d) That same-sex relationships are criminalized under sections 160, 161 and 162 of the Penal Code.

12. Recalling the links between articles 1 and 2 of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Incorporate into its Constitution a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, that encompasses both direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination;

- (b) Expedite its constitutional reform process, instituting a clearly defined timeline for the adoption and implementation of the Draft Federal Constitution, and ensure that it is revised to give precedence to ordinary laws, in particular those protecting women's human rights, over customary norms and to incorporate specific guarantees that protect the equal rights of women in connection with land tenure, inheritance, participation in public life, marriage and family relations;
- (c) Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Law Reform Commission by allocating adequate human, technical and financial resources to it, recruiting qualified legal experts with gender expertise, providing modern technical equipment and digital infrastructure, establishing a dedicated unit for gender-responsive law reform with clear reporting mechanisms, and developing a multi-year strategic plan with specific timelines for reviewing national legislation and harmonizing it with the Convention, in cooperation with civil society organizations, academia and international partners;
- (d) Repeal sections 160, 161 and 162 of the Penal Code, which criminalize consensual same-sex relationships.

Women and peace and security and transitional justice

13. The Committee acknowledges the State Party's efforts to restore peace and security following the ethnic tensions between 1998 and 2003, including through the adoption in 2020 of the National Policy on Conflict Prevention and Victims' Rights. It notes with concern, however, that the rights of women to truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence remain largely unfulfilled and that:

- (a) The Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan, launched in 2017, remains under review and has therefore yet to be fully operationalized and implemented;
- (b) Only 9 per cent of the claimants who have received redress under the State Party's compensation system were women and that the passage of the Reparations Bill establishing a legal framework for victim compensation has faced persistent delays, denying survivors the right to a timely remedy;
- (c) The recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report of 2012, which documented serious human rights violations against women, remain largely unimplemented;
- (d) The proposed Conflict Prevention and Victims' Rights Commission has not yet been established and that the draft legislation for its establishment is still at a preliminary stage.

14. In line with its general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations and recalling its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 15), the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Finalize, adopt and implement without further delay the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, in cooperation with representatives of women's civil society organizations and women human rights defenders, and ensure that the plan takes into consideration the full spectrum of the Council's agenda on women and peace and security, as reflected in its resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, and incorporates a model of substantive equality that addresses gender-based violence and discrimination, including intersecting forms of discrimination, against women;

- (b) Expedite the adoption of the Reparations Bill, establishing a transparent, gender-responsive framework for compensating survivors, allocate sufficient resources for existing claims, simplify application processes, provide access to legal assistance and ensure that reparations include financial compensation, rehabilitation services and formal recognition of survivor status;
- (c) Implement without further delay the recommendations contained in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2012 and ensure a comprehensive truth and reconciliation process based on the experiences and needs of women survivors, including adequate psychosocial support, confidentiality and protection, and allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of the recommendations;
- (d) Accelerate the establishment of the Conflict Prevention and Victims' Rights Commission, ensuring that it is gender-responsive, adequately resourced and victim-centred.

Women's access to justice

15. The Committee notes with appreciation that the Public Solicitor's Office in Honiara and in four of the nine provinces provides free legal aid, including for women who are survivors of gender-based violence, despite resource constraints. The Committee notes with concern, however:

- (a) The persistent barriers to access to justice faced by women, in particular rural women, Indigenous women, older women, single women, women living in poverty, women with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;
- (b) The fact that the Public Solicitor's Office operates in only four of the nine provinces of the State Party and lacks sufficient resources to provide comprehensive free legal aid for women in need, particularly disadvantaged groups of women;
- (c) The lack of continuous capacity-building programmes for the judiciary and law enforcement officials on women's human rights and gender-sensitive investigation and interrogation methods.

16. **The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) Remove barriers to access to justice for women, in particular rural women, Indigenous women, older women, single women, women living in poverty, women with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, including by providing free legal aid and interpretation services, as well as reasonable accommodations;
- (b) Expand the coverage of the legal aid clinics of the Public Solicitor's Office to all nine provinces and substantially increase its human, technical and financial resources to strengthen and institutionalize accessible, responsive and affordable legal aid services for women, particularly disadvantaged groups, through mobile clinics, outreach programmes and partnerships with law firms, civil society organizations and academic institutions;
- (c) Strengthen systematic capacity-building programmes for the judiciary and law enforcement officials on women's human rights and gender-sensitive interrogation and investigation methods and raise awareness to address judicial gender bias.

National machinery for the advancement of women

17. The Committee acknowledges the establishment of the Women’s Development Division of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs as the national machinery for the advancement of women in the State Party. The Committee is concerned, however:

- (a) That the Women’s Development Division lacks sufficient human, technical and financial resources to effectively coordinate the implementation of the Convention;
- (b) That there are significant gaps in the data collection system, particularly the absence of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data across sectors, including education, health, employment, political participation and gender-based violence, which hinders evidence-based policy development, effective monitoring of women’s status and proper evaluation of the impact of gender equality initiatives.

18. **Recalling the guidance provided in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in particular regarding the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national machineries, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) **Increase the human, technical and financial resources allocated to the national machinery for the advancement of women, namely the Women’s Development Division of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, and ensure that it is equipped with the authority necessary to effectively coordinate and implement an integrated gender-responsive budgeting process across all government departments;**
- (b) **Strengthen the existing data collection system so that it can be used to generate comprehensive disaggregated data on the enjoyment by women of their rights and their access to services, with a view to informing and evaluating the impact of public policies, strategies and programmes aimed at achieving gender equality.**

National human rights institution

19. The Committee acknowledges the State Party’s efforts to strengthen its human rights infrastructure, notably through the inclusion in the Draft Federal Constitution of a provision establishing a national human rights institution. It notes with concern, however, that despite this provision, no clear timeline has been established for the formal establishment of the national human rights institution or for the adoption of enabling legislation.

20. **The Committee recommends that the State Party expedite the establishment of a national human rights institution, in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), and seek the advice and technical support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in that regard, in line with the commitments made by the State Party during the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review (A/HRC/48/13/Add.1, paras. 10 and 11).**

Temporary special measures

21. The Committee acknowledges the progress made through the Affirmative Action Strategy: Accelerating Women’s Prospects and Pathway to Leadership, Decision-making and Governance 2022–2027. The Committee is concerned that the State Party has not adopted comprehensive temporary special measures to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in areas in which

women remain underrepresented or disadvantaged and that the Temporary Special Measures Taskforce established in 2017 has faced chronic underfunding, limiting its impact and effectiveness.

22. In line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, the Committee recommends that the State Party adopt temporary special measures, such as quotas, preferential recruitment and promotion of women and gender-responsive public procurement, with time-bound targets, to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality in areas in which women are underrepresented, particularly in regard to political and public life, education, employment, economic empowerment, health services and access to land and productive resources, and strengthen the mandate of the Temporary Special Measures Taskforce.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

23. The Committee acknowledges the State Party's efforts to address gender stereotypes through various awareness-raising initiatives and programmes. The Committee notes with concern, however:

- (a) The persistence of deeply entrenched gender stereotypes and harmful cultural norms that continue to subordinate women and girls to men and boys;
- (b) The stigmatization of adolescent pregnancy, incest, abortion and broader issues of sexuality, which deters girls and women from seeking access to sexual and reproductive health services and perpetuates a culture of silence in relation to sexual violence;
- (c) The persistence of harmful practices, such as child and forced marriage and the practice of bride price, reinforced by stereotypes that women and girls are property that can be transferred between families.

24. Drawing attention to joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, as revised, and in line with target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on eliminating all harmful practices, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Adopt a comprehensive strategy with proactive and sustained measures targeted at women, men, girls and boys at all levels of society, including community and religious leaders, aimed at eliminating patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, allocate sufficient resources to the implementation of that strategy and ensure that it is regularly monitored and evaluated;
- (b) Implement specific measures to destigmatize sexual and reproductive health services, ensuring that women and girls can access them without fear of discrimination or social ostracism;
- (c) Adopt comprehensive legislation prohibiting harmful practices, particularly child and forced marriage and bride price, including adequate penalties, victim protection mechanisms, accessible reporting systems and awareness-raising and educational programmes to address the root causes of such practices and challenge the commodification of women as men's property.

Gender-based violence against women and girls

25. The Committee notes with appreciation the establishment in 2017 of Safenet, the national referral service designed to provide coordinated support to survivors of domestic violence. It notes with concern, however:

- (a) The criminalization of women and girls over the age of 15 years who are victims of incest;
- (b) The limited implementation of the Family Protection Act, owing to factors including the inaccessibility of courts in remote areas, lack of capacity to enforce protection orders and inadequate training of law enforcement officers in handling cases of gender-based violence;
- (c) Reports that authorized justices, who are predominantly men, consistently fail to issue safety notices and have not received training on gender-sensitive approaches to handling cases of gender-based violence against women and girls, resulting in the perpetuation of judicial gender bias and undermining the confidence of victims in the justice system;
- (d) The prioritization of mediation in cases of domestic violence under the Family Protection Act;
- (e) The limited public awareness of Safenet services and protection mechanisms under the Family Protection Act, which poses a significant barrier to women's access to justice and support services;
- (f) The limited accessibility of shelters and Safenet services for women and girls with disabilities who are victims of gender-based violence, lack of staff training on disability inclusion and the absence of communication accommodations;
- (g) The expansion of extractive industries in rural areas, particularly logging and mining operations, which has contributed to increased gender-based violence;
- (h) The absence of legislation to regulate, prohibit and criminalize digital violence, such as online harassment, image-based abuse and cyberstalking, leaving victims/survivors unprotected and without access to legal remedies;
- (i) The absence of legislation to protect lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women from gender-based violence, hate crimes, conversion practices and institutionalized prejudice, leaving them without access to effective legal remedies, social support systems or inclusive public services.

26. **Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 25) and its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, as well as target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) **Repeal the criminalization of victims of incest and take all measures necessary to eradicate intrafamily sexual abuse against women and girls;**
- (b) **Strengthen the implementation of the Family Protection Act through comprehensive training of law enforcement officers, judicial personnel and social service providers on gender-sensitive approaches to handling cases of gender-based violence against women and girls;**
- (c) **Increase the number of women authorized justices and ensure that all authorized justices receive training on gender-based violence against women and the issuance and application of protection orders and safety notices;**

- (d) Develop standardized protocols for the timely issuance, monitoring and enforcement of protection orders in cases of domestic violence, with penalties for non-compliance;
- (e) Abolish mandatory mediation in cases of domestic violence, prioritize the prosecution of perpetrators and ensure that any voluntary mediation processes take place only with the free and informed consent of the victim;
- (f) Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to raise awareness, particularly among marginalized groups of women, of Safenet services and protection mechanisms under the Family Protection Act;
- (g) Adequately fund victim support services, expand the network of specialized, inclusive and accessible shelters and the provision of psychosocial counselling for women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence, and provide those who cannot safely return home with financial support, education, professional training, income-generating opportunities and affordable housing;
- (h) Develop and implement a regulatory framework to assess and mitigate the impact of extractive industries giving rise to gender-based violence, including mandatory gender impact assessments for all mining and logging operations;
- (i) Adopt legislation specifically criminalizing digital violence against women, strengthen measures to prevent and adequately punish online sexual violence and ensure that providers of online platforms and distributors of online content are held accountable for failing to report criminal content and to delete or block it from their platforms;
- (j) Adopt legislation protecting lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women from gender-based violence and discrimination; and implement a comprehensive national strategy that includes data collection, mandatory capacity-building for officials, public awareness campaigns and specialized support services, such as shelters and counselling tailored to the specific needs of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

27. The Committee welcomes the State Party's efforts to develop a Trafficking in Persons Bill aimed at addressing legal gaps in the Immigration Act 2012 and the Penal Code. It notes with concern, however:

- (a) The fragmented legal framework addressing trafficking in persons and the inconsistent penalties in the Penal Code (Amendment) (Sexual Offences) Act 2016 and the Immigration Act 2012;
- (b) The inadequate financial, technical and human resources allocated for the implementation of the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling;
- (c) The extremely low prosecution and conviction rates in trafficking cases in the State Party;
- (d) That no Statewide campaigns targeting communities near logging or mining operations have been conducted to raise awareness about trafficking in persons;
- (e) That the State Party has not prohibited worker-paid recruitment fees, which often lead to debt bondage and result in forced labour or coerced commercial sex;
- (f) That sex tourism and trafficking of women and girls for sexual services and domestic servitude in mining and logging camps are commonplace and often

involve the victims' families, yet the State Party does not conduct regular inspections in high-risk sectors and has not established a specialized police unit to investigate cases of trafficking in persons;

(g) The lack of adequate State-run support services for victims of trafficking, including shelters, psychosocial support and legal assistance, which are often delegated to non-governmental organizations with limited State subsidies;

(h) The criminalization of women in prostitution, preventing them from reporting gender-based violence and exposing them to further exploitation and trafficking.

28. Recalling its general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration and its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 27), the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Adopt a comprehensive law on trafficking in persons aged 18 years and over and implement standard operating procedures to support effective victim identification and referral, investigation, prosecution and sentencing in cases of trafficking in women and girls;

(b) Expedite the adoption of the new national action plan against trafficking in persons and ensure that it takes into account intersecting and gender-specific dimensions of trafficking and allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources for its effective implementation;

(c) Ensure the implementation of the instructions for the police on early identification of trafficking victims and provide capacity-building for prosecutors, border police and other law enforcement officials, healthcare providers and other first responders on early identification and referral to appropriate services of victims of trafficking and on gender-sensitive investigation and interviewing methods in trafficking cases;

(d) Expand its awareness-raising campaigns on trafficking in persons to cover the entire country, ensuring comprehensive outreach to all communities, particularly those in remote and underserved areas;

(e) Prohibit worker-paid recruitment fees and establish effective mechanisms to prevent debt bondage, which often leads to forced labour and coerced commercial sex;

(f) Conduct regular inspections in mining and logging camps, establish a specialized police unit to investigate cases of trafficking in persons and develop programmes to raise awareness about trafficking offences;

(g) Establish support for victims of trafficking that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without the need for judicial authorization, increase funding for shelters, and provide free legal aid, medical assistance and residence permits to victims;

(h) Decriminalize women in prostitution and ensure adequate resource allocation for implementing measures to reduce the demand for prostitution and strengthen exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution.

Equal participation in political and public life

29. The Committee acknowledges the State Party's adoption of the National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy for the period 2016–2020, its renewal for the period 2021–2027, and the Affirmative Action Strategy for the period 2022–2027,

which outline specific areas for intervention. The Committee notes with concern, however:

- (a) That, under the Political Parties Integrity Act 2014, only 10 per cent of political party candidates selected to contest an election are required to be women, which is five times below the gender parity standard, and that, under section 48 (2) of the Act, even that provision is non-compulsory;
- (b) The persistent underrepresentation of women in political leadership, with only three women currently in the 50-member National Parliament, the failure of most political parties to meet even the minimal 10 per cent quota of endorsed women candidates, and the entrenched structural and cultural barriers to the political participation of women, including patriarchal attitudes, gender-based discrimination and lack of campaign financing for women candidates;
- (c) The marginalization of women in provincial governance structures, as demonstrated by the fact that they accounted for less than 5 per cent of provincial assembly members following the April 2024 elections, and the absence of a clear timeline for the adoption of the Provincial Government Amendment Bill, which envisages temporary special measures to increase the representation of women;
- (d) The lack of data collection and reporting on the representation of women in the executive branch, the public service and the private sector.

30. Recalling its general recommendations No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems and No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, as well as target 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on ensuring 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 section 48 (2) of the Political Parties Integrity Act 2014 to increase the quota for women candidates and make it mandatory, with a view to reaching parity, and introduce effective sanctions for non-compliance;**
- (b) **Address the structural and cultural barriers to the political participation of women through capacity-building on political leadership skills and campaign financing for women candidates and awareness-raising to challenge patriarchal attitudes;**
- (c) **Expedite the adoption of the Provincial Government Amendment Bill and ensure that it includes mandatory quotas for the representation of women in provincial assemblies;**
- (d) **Establish a comprehensive system for collecting sex-disaggregated data from government and private sector sources in order to track the representation of women in decision-making positions.**

Nationality

31. The Committee notes with appreciation the progress made by the State Party, since the consideration of its previous report, in its legislation to eliminate discriminatory provisions against women in matters of nationality, through the Citizenship Act 2018 and the Constitution (Amendment) (Dual Citizenship) Act 2018. The Committee notes with concern, however:

- (a) Reports that women face additional procedural barriers when applying for passports independently of their husbands, such as requirements for spousal consent or proof of marital status, which are not applicable to male applicants;

(b) The existence of delays in birth registration, due to the centralization of this service in the capital, and the penalties imposed for late registration;

(c) The lack of specific measures to address the risk of statelessness among women and girls in marginalized situations, such as internally displaced and migrant women and women living in remote areas.

32. In line with article 9 of the Convention and the Committee's 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) **Abolish any administrative practices that impose heavier requirements on women than on men when applying for passports or other identity documents and strictly apply the gender equality provisions of the Passports Act 2012;**

(b) **Strengthen birth registration through the decentralization of services at the provincial level, using mobile units to cover remote communities, as well as by providing online registration procedures, eliminate penalties for late birth registration and launch awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of birth registration;**

(c) **Conduct a comprehensive national legal review to assess gaps in the protection of stateless persons, paying particular attention to the situation of women and girls, and ensure affordable access to identity documents in rural and remote areas, with a special focus on disadvantaged groups of women, such as single mothers, widows and women with disabilities;**

(d) **Accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.**

Education

33. The Committee welcomes the State Party's commitment to increasing budget allocations aimed at enhancing access to education and safety in schools. It notes with concern, however:

(a) Systemic barriers that continue to impede the transition of women from education to paid employment in traditionally male-dominated fields of study, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT), including artificial intelligence, despite targeted initiatives;

(b) The absence from curricula at all levels of education of gender-specific content aimed at empowering girls and women and strengthening female leadership;

(c) The limited use of universal design principles to ensure that learning materials and physical and digital environments are inclusive and accessible for girls and women with disabilities;

(d) The prevalence of bullying and harassment of girls, including girls with disabilities, in schools;

(e) The failure to adequately cover through sexual and reproductive health education such topics as contraception methods, the concept of consent, the prevention of gender-based violence and the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, thereby limiting girls' and women's access to comprehensive, age-appropriate and scientifically accurate information necessary for making informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health;

(f) The limited access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene in schools and the absence in most schools, particularly in rural and underserved areas, of private spaces for menstrual hygiene management, contributing to high rates of absenteeism and dropout among girls.

34. In line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education and the Committee's general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) **Strengthen measures to address barriers that deter women from pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and ICT, including artificial intelligence;**
- (b) **Review curricula to incorporate gender equality at all levels of education in order to foster self-confidence, participation in decision-making and leadership skills among girls and young women;**
- (c) **Strengthen access to inclusive education for women and girls with disabilities, including by ensuring that educational facilities are physically accessible and equipped with the necessary learning materials and assistive devices, and provide reasonable accommodations for all types of disabilities;**
- (d) **Provide safe and inclusive educational environments, free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and gender-based violence, to girls and women;**
- (e) **Integrate comprehensive age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on responsible sexual behaviour, modern forms of contraception and sexually transmitted diseases, into curricula at all levels of education;**
- (f) **Ensure that girls have access to adequate water and sanitation, sex-segregated restrooms and menstrual hygiene products and facilities in schools.**

Employment

35. The Committee notes with appreciation the State Party's adoption of the National Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy for the period 2023–2027 and the National Employment Policy for the period 2023–2027. It notes with concern, however:

- (a) The absence of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the Employment Act and the Labour Act;
- (b) That section 42 of the Labour Act provides only six weeks of maternity leave at 25 per cent of regular pay to women employed in the private sector, while women in the public sector receive full pay during 12 weeks of maternity leave under the General Orders (internal administrative rules applying to public service workers);
- (c) The absence of comprehensive legislation to prohibit gender-based discrimination in employment practices across all sectors, particularly with regard to recruitment, hiring, promotion, pay, working conditions, training, benefits, termination and retirement;
- (d) That women are concentrated in the informal economy in the State Party, and that the Labour Act and social security legislation exclude them from legal and social protection, including protections related to disabilities and workplace injuries and their consequences;
- (e) The absence of legislation protecting women in the private sector from sexual harassment in the workplace despite the introduction of such protection for public servants through the 2018 amendment to the Public Service Act 1988;

(f) The absence in the Affirmative Action Strategy for the period 2022–2027 of specific, time-bound and measurable targets for increasing the representation of women in senior leadership positions in both the public and private sectors;

(g) That the Statistics Act does not provide for the systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data on key employment indicators, including the gender pay gap, occupational segregation and the representation of women in various economic sectors.

36. In line with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Amend the Employment Act and the Labour Act to explicitly guarantee the principle of equal pay for work of equal;**

(b) **Amend section 42 of the Labour Act to extend maternity leave to at least 12 weeks with full remuneration for women in the private sector and gradually increase the leave period to 14 weeks in both the public and private sectors, in line with international standards; and introduce paternity and parental leave to promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities between women and men;**

(c) **Adopt comprehensive legislation prohibiting gender-based employment discrimination across all sectors and establish enforcement mechanisms with sanctions and employer guidelines to foster compliance;**

(d) **Facilitate the transition of women from informal to formal employment and extend labour and social protection to women in the informal economy and to women performing domestic and other unpaid work;**

(e) **Adopt legislation prohibiting sexual harassment of women working in the private sector, with protection equivalent to that provided under the 2018 amendment to the Public Service Act, conduct regular workplace inspections and ensure that victims have access to effective remedies and protection from retaliation and that investigations are carried out;**

(f) **Amend the Affirmative Action Strategy for the period 2022–2027 to include specific, time-bound and measurable targets for increasing the representation of women in senior leadership positions and establish a regular monitoring system to track progress in that regard;**

(g) **Amend the Statistics Act to mandate the systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data on key employment indicators, and establish a dedicated unit within the National Statistics Office for gender-related labour market analysis;**

(h) **Ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), of the International Labour Organization.**

Health

37. The Committee notes the State Party's adoption of the National Development Strategy for the period 2016–2035 and the National Health Strategic Plan for the period 2021–2031, which establish a policy framework for improving health outcomes, including maternal health outcomes. It notes with concern, however:

(a) Geographical disparities in the provision of health services, which disproportionately affect rural women and girls, who face shortages of trained medical staff, inadequate facilities, lack of public transportation and high costs that limit their access to essential health services;

- (b) The lack of availability of modern forms of contraception, in particular in remote clinics, where stock-outs and a lack of trained providers are common;
- (c) The criminalization of abortion under sections 158 and 159 of the Penal Code, except when the life of the pregnant woman is at risk, the limited progress in reviewing abortion laws to provide for additional exceptions in cases of rape, incest and severe fetal malformation, and inadequate data collection on abortion-related morbidity and mortality;
- (d) That, despite the roll-out of the human papillomavirus vaccine programme for girls aged 9 to 14 years, vaccination coverage remains inadequate, with significant geographical disparities showing particularly low uptake rates in rural and remote provinces, and that screening and treatment services for cervical and breast cancer remain inadequate outside the capital, with limited availability of Pap smears, human papillomavirus testing and oncological care at provincial health centres.

38. In line with its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) **Develop a comprehensive rural health strategy addressing geographical disparities through trained professionals, equipped facilities, mobile units, transportation reimbursement and telemedicine;**
- (b) **Ensure affordable and autonomous access to modern contraceptives, including hormonal and oral contraceptives, for all women and girls;**
- (c) **Amend sections 158 and 159 of the Penal Code to legalize abortion, at least in cases of rape, incest, severe fetal impairment and risk to the health or life of the pregnant woman, and decriminalize abortion in all other cases;**
- (d) **Strengthen the human papillomavirus vaccine roll-out for girls aged 9 to 14 years, increase access to cancer screening and ensure the availability of skilled obstetric personnel, particularly in rural areas.**

Economic empowerment of women

39. The Committee notes with appreciation the adoption of community savings initiatives aimed at enhancing financial inclusion, economic empowerment and the resilience of women, particularly in rural and underserved areas, including through the Solomon Islands National Provident Fund. The Committee notes with concern:

- (a) That the lack of effective gender-sensitive regulation of the private sector in general and of microfinance institutions in particular under the Financial Institutions Act has led to abusive lending practices, including excessively high interest rates that often exceed 20 per cent annually, hidden fees, aggressive collection practices and inadequate borrower protections, which disproportionately affect women small-business owners and market vendors, who have limited access to other forms of financial credit;
- (b) That poverty-targeted and accessible loan schemes are not available to women in the informal economy, that the Credit Unions Act and other financial regulations fail to mandate gender-responsive financial products, resulting in restrictive collateral requirements that disadvantage women who lack formal property titles, and that financial education programmes are limited and there is minimal outreach to rural areas where most women operate businesses;
- (c) That significant gender disparities persist in digital access and literacy, despite the adoption of the ICT Master Plan 2019–2023, that national statistics indicate that women are 30 per cent less likely than men to own mobile devices, use

Internet services or possess advanced digital skills, and that the Telecommunications Act lacks provisions to address gender-based digital exclusion;

(d) That women and girls, especially rural women and girls, continue to face structural barriers to digital participation, including infrastructure gaps, with only 11 per cent broadband coverage in rural areas, prohibitive costs of data and devices that consume a disproportionate share of women's incomes, which are typically lower than men's, the limited technical training opportunities tailored to women's needs and schedules, and rising online gender-based harassment that discourages women's digital participation.

40. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Strengthen the gender-sensitive regulatory framework for microfinance institutions by amending the Financial Institutions Act to include interest rate caps, transparent fees, ethical collection practices and specialized monitoring unit;**

(b) **Develop and implement comprehensive poverty-targeted and accessible loan schemes for women in the informal economy by amending the Credit Unions Act to mandate gender-responsive financial products, establishing alternative collateral mechanisms that recognize women's assets beyond formal property titles, creating a dedicated Women's Enterprise Fund with favourable terms and simplified application procedures and expanding financial literacy programmes tailored to different levels of education and business experience;**

(c) **Address gender disparities in digital access by revising the ICT Master Plan 2019–2023 to include specific, time-bound targets for the digital inclusion of women, amending the Telecommunications Act to incorporate gender equality provisions, implementing subsidized technology access programmes specifically targeting women and girls in underserved communities and collecting sex-disaggregated data on digital participation to monitor progress in that regard;**

(d) **Eliminate digital barriers through expanded broadband coverage in rural areas, community centres with women-only hours, adapted training programmes and legislation addressing online gender-based harassment.**

Rural women

41. The Committee notes that approximately 80 per cent of the State Party's population resides in rural areas. It notes with concern:

(a) That rural women face compounded challenges arising from geographical isolation, underdeveloped infrastructure, limited access to essential services, including legal aid, education and health services, and economic opportunities, weak communication networks and public transportation and limited access to schools, markets, health clinics, police stations and courts;

(b) That the level of participation of rural women in land and natural resource decision-making is minimal despite their being primary users, that they are excluded from extractive industry negotiations and that they are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and increased rates of gender-based violence associated with mining and logging camps;

(c) That the National Minerals Policy (2017–2021) is lacking a gender perspective, in that it does not include mandatory consultation mechanisms to ensure the involvement of women, safeguards addressing the specific risks to women or provisions on gender-disaggregated data collection and on equitable benefit-sharing.

42. **In line with its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women and target 5.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, on undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) **Develop a comprehensive rural infrastructure plan that prioritizes reliable public transportation, multipurpose service centres, mobile delivery, improved roads, and transportation scheduling that takes women's mobility needs into account;**
- (b) **Ensure that rural women have equal access to and control over land, and that they are able to participate equally at all levels in decision-making on land governance and natural resource management, by establishing formal mechanisms to guarantee the representation of women in all community consultations, negotiations and decision-making processes related to extractive industries;**
- (c) **Revise the National Minerals Policy (2017–2021) to include mandatory gender impact assessments, consultation mechanisms ensuring the meaningful participation of women, equitable benefit-sharing and safeguards addressing specific risks faced by women in relation to gender-based violence, environmental harm, economic displacement and health impacts.**

Women and girls with disabilities

43. The Committee is concerned that the Constitution of the State Party does not include disability as a prohibited ground of discrimination and that women and girls with disabilities experience heightened stigma, exclusion and vulnerability due to both their gender and their disability status. It notes with concern that this situation is exacerbated by the inadequate allocation of budgetary resources for disability-inclusive programmes specifically addressing the educational, health, employment, economical and protection needs of women and girls with disabilities.

44. **The Committee recommends that the State Party amend its Constitution to explicitly include disability as a prohibited ground of discrimination, collect comprehensive disaggregated data on women and girls with disabilities to inform policy development, allocate adequate budgetary resources for disability-inclusive programmes and ensure that women and girls with disabilities have adequate access to justice, inclusive education, employment and health services, including sexual and reproductive and mental health services, with provision of reasonable accommodations, adequate assistive technologies and accessible services and facilities in all provinces of the State Party.**

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

45. The Committee notes with concern the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls in the State Party, as evidenced by Tropical Cyclone Harold in 2020, which caused catastrophic flooding, multiple fatalities and severe damage to critical infrastructure, including roads, schools, health facilities and the water supply. It also notes with concern:

- (a) **The lack of a gender dimension in the State Party's legislation and policies on climate change, environmental degradation and disaster risk reduction;**
- (b) **The lack of awareness and education on climate change and its effects, particularly among women, the insufficient recognition of women's contributions to**

environmental sustainability and their limited participation in decision-making processes regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

46. In line with 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 review its climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and ensure that women and men are equally represented in the development, adoption and implementation of legislation, policies and programmes on climate change, disaster response and disaster risk reduction, in particular by:

- (a) Developing gender-responsive early warning systems and disaster management mechanisms that address the specific needs of women, allocating adequate resources for climate resilience initiatives that target women in vulnerable situations and establishing comprehensive data collection systems to assess the impact of climate change on women;**
- (b) Strengthening awareness and education programmes on climate change and its effects, with particular focus on women in rural and remote areas, and implementing targeted programmes to support women small-scale farmers through climate-adaptive agricultural training, sustainable technology transfer, access to climate finance and provision of agricultural resources.**

Marriage and family relations

47. The Committee notes with concern:

- (a) That girls aged 15 to 18 years can marry with parental consent, contributing to the persistence of child marriage across civil, customary and religious unions;**
- (b) The continued practice of bride price, which commodifies women through customary marriage rituals whereby a woman's worth may be assessed on the basis of her virginity, marital history or motherhood status;**
- (c) The inadequate legal framework governing family relations, outdated and fragmented provisions in the Affiliation, Separation and Maintenance Act and the Islanders' Marriage Act, which are still under review, and the absence of a comprehensive Family Law Act, leaving significant gaps in relation to the equitable distribution of matrimonial property, child maintenance obligations, parental responsibilities and the economic protection of women in de facto unions;**
- (d) The fact that approximately 83 per cent of land is held under customary tenure systems in the State Party, which under the Constitution prevail over equality guarantees and typically pass landownership and inheritance through male lineage, depriving women of equal rights to inherit land and retain land property upon separation or widowhood and excluding them from decision-making on land use;**
- (e) The criminalization of same-sex relationships, which prevents legal recognition of diverse family formations.**

48. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Increase the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both women and men, without exceptions;**
- (b) Take legislative and policy measures to eliminate the payment of a bride price and engage with traditional leaders and communities to reform bride price practices, promoting non-monetary, symbolic ceremonies that retain cultural significance while rejecting harmful practices;**

- (c) Expedite comprehensive family law reform by adopting a unified Family Law Act to guarantee that women have equal rights in marriage and property distribution and establish specialized family courts;
- (d) Adopt legislation recognizing equal rights for women to own, inherit and transfer land regardless of their marital status, establish mechanisms to register women's customary land rights, engage traditional leaders in the reform of customary land tenure systems and amend the Constitution to ensure that equality guarantees prevail over customary practices;
- (e) Protect the rights of women in diverse family formations, including through the legal recognition of same-sex partnerships.

Data collection and analysis

49. The Committee notes with concern the lack of data collection in many areas relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

50. The Committee recommends that the State Party promote and build capacity for the use of relevant technology in the collection of statistical data, disaggregated by age, ethnicity, race and disability status, for the design and implementation of tailored and gender-responsive legislation, policies, programmes and budgets.

Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

51. The Committee encourages the State Party to accept the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

Dissemination

52. The Committee requests the State Party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official languages of the State Party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation, as well as to civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in particular women's organizations, to raise full awareness within the State Party.

Follow-up to the concluding observations

53. The Committee requests the State Party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 26 (c), 34 (f), 30 (c) and 48 (a) above.

Preparation of the next report

54. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the sixth periodic report of the State Party in line with a future clear and regularized schedule for reporting by States Parties (General Assembly resolution [79/165](#), para. 6) and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State Party. The report should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

55. 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).