



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

### Concluding observations on the initial report of Malawi\*

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Malawi<sup>1</sup> at its 45th and 46th meetings,<sup>2</sup> held on 18 and 19 September 2024, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 59th meeting, held on 27 September 2024.

#### A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the State party's initial report, despite the considerable delay, and the supplementary information provided in the replies to the list of issues.<sup>3</sup> The Committee also appreciates the constructive dialogue with the State party's delegation.

#### B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the fact that the 1994 Constitution contains a chapter devoted to human rights, including certain economic, social and cultural rights, and acknowledges the State party's efforts to integrate international human rights standards into its domestic legal framework. This includes the adoption of the Older Persons Act, 2024, the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2024, the Disaster Risk Management Act, 2023, the Customary Land (Amendment) Act, 2022, the Land (Amendment) Act, 2022, and the Labour Relations (Amendment) Act, 2021, as well as other measures mentioned in the present concluding observations.

4. The Committee welcomes the State party's ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families in 2022 and of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2017.

#### C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

##### Domestic application of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

5. The Committee welcomes the delegation's announcement that consultations on ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Covenant are ongoing. Nevertheless, it remains concerned that, despite legislation covering some aspects of economic, social and cultural rights, due to the State party's dualist legal system, requiring transposition, the Covenant has still not been given full effect in domestic law and therefore, not all Covenant rights can be invoked before the courts.

\* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-sixth session (9–27 September 2024).

<sup>1</sup> [E/C.12/MWI/1](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [E/C.12/2024/SR.45](#) and [E/C.12/2024/SR.46](#).

<sup>3</sup> [E/C.12/MWI/RQ/1](#).



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

(a) **Take all measures necessary to give the Covenant full effect in its domestic legal system, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 9 (1998) on the domestic application of the Covenant;**

(b) **Ensure that the domestic legal framework, including the Constitution, is fully aligned with the provisions of the Covenant;**

(c) **Redouble its efforts to train judges, lawyers and public officials on the provisions of the Covenant and their justiciability and enhance awareness among rights holders;**

(d) **Continue its efforts towards ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.**

**National human rights institution**

7. While welcoming the accreditation with A status of the Malawi Human Rights Commission, the Committee is concerned that the human, technical and financial resources allocated to the Commission remain insufficient for it to effectively fulfil its mandate on economic, social and cultural rights.

8. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen the Malawi Human Rights Commission by providing it with adequate human, technical and financial resources and by enhancing the capacity of its staff to address emerging issues, in particular on economic, social and cultural rights, in order to ensure that the Commission can fulfil its mandate effectively, independently and in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).**

**Business and human rights**

9. While acknowledging the development of a business and human rights action plan, the Committee is concerned about the lack of a comprehensive regulatory framework for human rights due diligence.

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

(a) **Accelerate the adoption of the national action plan for business and human rights, considering the Guidance on National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights from the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and guided by the Committee's general comment No. 24 (2017) on State obligations under the Covenant in the context of business activities;**

(b) **Establish a clear regulatory framework for businesses enterprises operating within its jurisdiction to ensure that their activities do not negatively affect the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.**

**Climate change mitigation**

11. While noting the climate change mitigation measures adopted, the Committee is concerned that the State party is not on track to meet its nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement.

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all measures necessary to meet its nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement in the energy, transportation, land-use, land-use change and forestry sectors, paying attention to the formulation of a coherent, whole-of-government policy framework, with reference to the Committee's statement on climate change and the Covenant.<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> [E/C.12/2018/1](#).

### Maximum available resources

13. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to meet its Covenant obligations, despite the challenging economic conditions it faces as a least developed country, and its initiatives to expand fiscal space, including its Domestic Revenue Mobilization Strategy 2021–2026. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned about the State party's tax system, which is characterized by a limited tax base and a regressive taxation rate, with a flat corporate tax rate and heavy reliance on value-added and consumption-based taxes, along with new tax benefits for the private sector. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned about the overall low social spending on areas related to the Covenant rights (art. 2 (1)).

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

(a) **Take all measures necessary to increase national resource mobilization to expand fiscal space for realizing the Covenant rights by, inter alia, expanding the tax base, improving tax collection, increasing the corporate income tax and reviewing private sector tax benefits to assess revenue losses, while building on the findings of the Development Finance and Local Level Finance Assessments;**

(b) **Assess the effects of its fiscal policy on the economic, social and cultural rights of the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups;**

(c) **Increase budgetary allocations for social spending on employment programmes, social security, agriculture and food programmes, water and sanitation, healthcare, education and climate change adaptation and mitigation, and ensure that these resources are ring-fenced;**

(d) **Increase its efforts to seek international assistance and cooperation where necessary and be guided by the Committee's general comment No. 3 (1990) on the nature of States parties' obligations.**

### Debt servicing

15. The Committee is concerned about the high level of public debt and the significant portion of the budget allocated to debt servicing. It is also concerned that debt control measures, including fiscal consolidation, may result in austerity policies that reduce fiscal space for realizing the Covenant rights (art. 2 (1)).

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

(a) **Assess the impact of fiscal and budgetary adjustments on the Covenant rights and take measures to prevent adverse effects on the enjoyment of those rights;**

(b) **Coordinate with international financial institutions and other creditors to ensure that public debt and servicing do not constrain fiscal space or divert resources needed to fulfil Covenant obligations;**

(c) **Uphold the obligation of both lenders and borrowers to conduct human rights impact assessments prior to engaging in lending and setting their conditions and consider the Committee's 2016 statement on public debt, austerity measures and the Covenant.<sup>5</sup>**

### Illicit financial flows

17. The Committee notes the measures adopted to combat illicit financial flows. Nevertheless, it is concerned about the persistence of corruption, tax evasion and cross-border tax avoidance in the State party, all of which substantially limit the resources available for the realization of Covenant rights (art. 2 (1)).

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

(a) **Strengthen anti-corruption measures by adequately funding and empowering anti-corruption bodies;**

<sup>5</sup> [E/C.12/2016/1](#).

- (b) **Implement advanced digital data collection and analytical tools to monitor anti-corruption enforcement;**
- (c) **Establish protection mechanisms for whistle-blowers to encourage the reporting of corruption without fear of reprisals;**
- (d) **Enhance judicial independence, facilitating impartial handling of corruption cases;**
- (e) **Combat illicit financial flows through mandatory due diligence mechanisms in the national financial system and strengthening tax administration;**
- (f) **Foster international tax cooperation to tackle tax evasion, cross-border tax avoidance and financial crimes, and consider seeking the assistance of the Tax Inspectors Without Borders initiative.**

#### **Non-discrimination**

19. The Committee is concerned that, despite existing constitutional provisions, there is no comprehensive legal framework to combat discrimination. It is also concerned about discrimination, stigma, stereotypes, harmful practices and deep-rooted beliefs affecting disadvantaged individuals and groups (art. 2 (2)).

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

- (a) **Ensure that its legal framework for combating discrimination aligns with international human rights standards, specifically with article 2 (2) of the Covenant, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 20 (2009) on non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights, which prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on any grounds in all areas covered by the Covenant, and in this regard, consider the guide to developing comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation;<sup>6</sup>**
- (b) **Ensure that victims of discrimination can seek redress, including effective administrative and judicial remedies;**
- (c) **Effectively prevent and combat stigma, stereotypes, harmful practices and deep-rooted beliefs against persons with albinism, persons with disabilities, persons affected by Hansen's disease and persons living with HIV/AIDS through awareness-raising campaigns and affirmative action measures, ensuring that all persons enjoy the Covenant rights without discrimination.**

#### **Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers**

21. The Committee is concerned about the barriers preventing migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers from fully enjoying their economic, social and cultural rights. It is also concerned about severe overcrowding, inadequate access to food, safe drinking water and sanitation, and limited livelihood opportunities at Dzaleka Refugee Camp (arts. 2 (2) and 11).

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

- (a) **Take all measures necessary to ensure that migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees fully enjoy economic, social and cultural rights, including by revisiting its reservations to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, enacting comprehensive migration and labour migration policies, and reviewing its encampment policy, and in this regard, consider the Committee's statement on the duties of States towards refugees and migrants under the Covenant;<sup>7</sup>**
- (b) **Take all measures necessary, including with international humanitarian aid, to prioritize and allocate sufficient resources to ensure food security and improve**

<sup>6</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Equal Rights Trust, *Protecting Minority Rights: A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation* (United Nations publication, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> E/C.12/2017/1.

**living conditions in refugee camps, including housing quality, electricity, sanitation and access to safe drinking water, and to seek durable solutions.**

#### **Equality between women and men**

23. The Committee takes note of the Gender Equality Act of 2014 and the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting guidelines. Nevertheless, it is concerned about the persistent substantive inequality between women and men, which hinders women's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights (art. 3).

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

(a) **Enhance women's participation in senior public and private positions, including by implementing and enforcing quotas;**

(b) **Redouble its efforts to close the gender pay gap by addressing gender-based labour segregation and addressing barriers that prevent women from continuing their careers or taking full-time employment;**

(c) **Strengthen the application of gender-responsive budgeting guidelines to ensure women's access to employment, social security, healthcare, land, income-generating activities, and financial services and literacy, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 16 (2005) on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights.**

#### **Right to work**

25. The Committee takes note of the National Employment and Labour Policy and the National Job Creation Strategy of 2021. Nevertheless, it is concerned about the high unemployment and underemployment rates among women, young people and persons with disabilities (arts. 3 and 6).

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

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive labour strategy with a precise, time-bound action plan to support women, young people and persons with disabilities in accessing decent employment, including high-quality technical and vocational training, data collection on their situation and targeted affirmative action measures, such as quotas or tax rebates for employers, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 18 (2005) on the right to work;**

(b) **Continue strengthening the national technical and vocational education and training system to align skills and qualifications with the labour market, focusing on individuals and groups most affected by unemployment and underemployment.**

#### **Informal economy**

27. The Committee is concerned about the large number of workers in the informal sector, notably women, who are not adequately covered by labour laws or social security (arts. 3, 6, 7 and 9).

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

(a) **Expand labour legislation and labour inspection services to include workers in the informal sector, such as the self-employed, street vendors, subsistence agricultural workers and domestic workers, and collect data on their situation;**

(b) **Expand social security benefits to cover workers in the informal sector, ensuring that the benefits provide a decent living for them and their families;**

(c) **Take the measures necessary to facilitate the transition of workers from the informal to the formal sector, paying special attention to women, young people and persons with disabilities, taking into consideration the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) of the International Labour Organization (ILO).**

**Right to just and favourable conditions of work**

29. The Committee is concerned that, despite the measures that have been adopted, agricultural workers face precarious working conditions that expose them to exploitation and abuse, including gender-based violence and bonded labour. It is also concerned about the limited capacity and resources of the labour inspection mechanism, which hinder effective enforcement of labour standards, particularly in remote and rural areas (art. 7).

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

(a) **Strengthen measures to protect agricultural workers from abuse and exploitation, including gender-based violence, particularly on macadamia, tea and tobacco plantations;**

(b) **Address the root causes of bonded labour in the agricultural sector, particularly under the tenancy system in the tobacco sector, by ensuring that victims have access to fertile land, housing, food, healthcare, education and vocational training;**

(c) **Establish effective complaint and reporting mechanisms, considering sector-specific circumstances, and ensure appropriate remedies for the victims;**

(d) **Strengthen the mandate and capacity of the labour inspection mechanism to conduct effective inspections in all workplaces, including in the agricultural sector;**

(e) **Ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190);**

(f) **Be guided by the Committee's general comment No. 23 (2016) on the right to just and favourable conditions of work.**

**Right to social security**

31. While acknowledging the Social Cash Transfer Programme, the Committee is concerned that a significant portion of the population living in extreme poverty is not yet included in that programme and that the programme does not adequately cover disability-related expenses. In addition, the Committee is concerned at the limited reach of contributory social protection schemes, which are restricted to the formal sector and do not extend coverage to working refugees and migrants (art. 9).

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

(a) **Take all measures necessary to ensure the effective administration, supervision, financing and expansion of the Social Cash Transfer Programme to cover all persons living in extreme poverty, providing both basic income security and, when necessary, disability-related costs;**

(b) **Expand the coverage of contributory social security schemes to include all workers, particularly those in the informal sector, as well as working refugees and migrants;**

(c) **Take all measures necessary to establish a social protection floor, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 19 (2007) on the right to social security, and its statement on social protection floors as an essential element of the right to social security and of the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>8</sup>**

**Protection of the family and children**

33. The Committee notes the measures taken to combat harmful practices and the economic exploitation of children, including child marriage and the worst forms of child labour. Nevertheless, it is concerned about the ongoing prevalence of these phenomena and the limited implementation of relevant legislation (art. 10).

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

(a) **Strengthen measures to eliminate child marriage by adopting a comprehensive approach that addresses its root causes, including providing social**

<sup>8</sup> E/C.12/2015/1.

benefits for continued education and food assistance, raising awareness of relevant legislation and conducting widespread educational campaigns at the community level, especially targeting traditional and religious leaders, about the harmful effects of early marriage;

(b) Strengthen legislative and administrative measures to address the worst forms of child labour, notably in agricultural and domestic work, by enforcing child labour and protection policies, collecting data on the situation, allocating sufficient resources to the labour inspection mechanism and ensuring adequate penalties for the perpetrators and remedies for the victims.

### **Poverty**

35. The Committee is concerned about the high rates of poverty and extreme poverty among disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups (art. 11).

36. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a multidimensional action plan to eradicate poverty, paying special attention to children and female-headed households living in poverty, that includes clear and measurable targets and is aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty, the additional effects of inter-annual inflation and the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and ensure the allocation of sufficient resources for its monitoring and implementation.

### **Right to food**

37. While acknowledging the efforts made to strengthen food security, the Committee remains concerned about the high rates of malnutrition and child stunting in the State party. It is also concerned that persistent challenges such as poverty, the limited availability of nutritious food and the impacts of climate change and disasters on agricultural production result in disparities in access to and the affordability of nutritious food, particularly in rural and remote areas (art. 11).

38. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Redouble its efforts to enhance food security in the regions most affected by hunger and malnutrition by investing in local agricultural production, providing support such as seeds, greenhouses and livestock, and improving the resilience of subsistence farming and female-headed households through income diversification and disaster preparedness, as well as other risks not covered by the Social Cash Transfer Programme;

(b) Continue and strengthen its cooperation and coordination with the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and be guided by the Committee's general comment No. 12 (1999) on the right to adequate food.

### **Land rights**

39. The Committee is concerned that the State party's land reform efforts have not effectively ensured equal access to land, addressed tenure security or resolved overlapping claims under formal and customary systems. It is also concerned that, despite legal provisions guaranteeing equal rights, discriminatory customs and practices continue to deprive women of their inheritance and land ownership rights (arts. 3 and 11).

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Strengthen coordination between formal legal systems and customary authorities to harmonize land governance, especially in areas prone to land disputes, ensuring that women's rights are fully respected in both systems, and be guided by the Committee's general comment No. 26 (2022) on land and economic, social and cultural rights;

(b) Accelerate the implementation of comprehensive land titling and registration systems to secure titles for individual and communal landowners, promptly

resolve overlapping claims through transparent mechanisms, and pay special attention to Phanga village community members in Dedza district;

(c) **Review and amend laws to eliminate gaps that perpetuate discriminatory inheritance practices and ensure equal land ownership rights for women;**

(d) **Allocate adequate resources to enforce land tenure rights, provide legal assistance and implement awareness-raising campaigns to address customs that undermine women's land ownership rights.**

#### **Right to water and sanitation**

41. While acknowledging the National Water Policy, the National Sanitation Policy and the efforts made to enhance access to improved water sources, the Committee is concerned that access to improved sanitation services remains limited and that a large number of schools and health centres lack drinking water and sanitation facilities. It is also concerned that a significant percentage of the population has to walk over an hour to reach safe drinking water (art. 11).

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

(a) **Continue to invest in improving access to safe drinking water and to provide access to improved sanitation for all, including in informal settlements, rural areas, schools and health centres, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 15 (2002) on the right to water;**

(b) **Take effective measures in rural areas to ensure nearby access to safe drinking water.**

#### **Climate change adaptation**

43. The Committee is aware of the State party's vulnerability to climate change and disasters, such as droughts and floods, and notes the adoption of the National Adaptation Plan and the National Disaster Risk Management Policy. Nevertheless, it remains concerned that the level of disaster risk preparedness is insufficient in the context of the significant impact of climate change and disasters on the enjoyment of Covenant rights (art. 11).

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

(a) **Strengthen its preparedness for and response to disasters and enhance disaster risk reduction measures by adopting a human rights-based approach and allocating adequate financial, human and technical resources;**

(b) **Strengthen the resilience of its economy and society to environmental shocks and long-term climate change impacts by significantly increasing the resources allocated to this end and by formulating and implementing all adaptation measures necessary to protect the environment and to address environmental degradation;**

(c) **Seek international support and assistance in order to mobilize financial and technological support in mitigating and responding to the effects of climate change.**

#### **Right to physical and mental health**

45. The Committee acknowledges the measures adopted in the health sector and the steady increase in the health budget. Nevertheless, it remains concerned about the infrastructure challenges and the quality and availability of health services and medicines, especially for disadvantaged groups and in rural areas (art. 12).

46. **The Committee recommends that the State party continue to allocate sufficient resources to the health sector and enhance the accessibility, availability and quality of health services, particularly in rural and remote areas and for disadvantaged groups. In addition, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that hospitals are adequately staffed and supplied with the necessary medicines through continued investment in community and primary healthcare infrastructure.**



### **Sexual and reproductive health**

47. The Committee, while aware of the efforts the State party has made, remains concerned about:

- (a) The high rate of teenage pregnancy, notably in rural areas, due to limited access to sexual and reproductive health services and information;
- (b) The high rates of maternal and under-5 mortality;
- (c) The restrictive legislation relating to abortion (arts. 3 and 12).

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

(a) **Ensure the accessibility and availability of quality sexual and reproductive health services and information, notably contraception, including emergency contraception, safe abortion and antenatal and postnatal care for all women and adolescent girls, particularly in rural areas;**

(b) **Adopt all measures necessary to prevent maternal mortality and morbidity, taking into consideration the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights technical guidance on the application of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of policies and programmes to reduce preventable maternal morbidity and mortality;<sup>9</sup>**

(c) **Revise its legislation on abortion to make it compatible with women's rights to integrity, autonomy and health, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health and the World Health Organization abortion care guideline (2022).**

### **Drug policy**

49. The Committee is concerned about the punitive approach to drug use and the limited availability and accessibility of harm reduction and rehabilitation programmes (art. 12).

50. **The Committee recommends that the State party review its legal framework to adopt a human rights-based approach to drug use, ensuring the availability and accessibility of harm reduction programmes, healthcare, psychological support and rehabilitation services.**

### **Right to education**

51. The Committee notes the State party's efforts, including the Education Act and the increased education budget allocation. Nevertheless, it remains concerned about:

- (a) The poor quality of education due to insufficient teaching staff, inadequate infrastructure and lack of materials;
- (b) The high dropout rates in primary and secondary school, particularly in rural areas and among girls, due to child marriage or early pregnancy;
- (c) The persistent difficulties in implementing the school readmission policy;
- (d) Reports of the sexual abuse of girls within the school environment;
- (e) The absence of a comprehensive inclusive education policy in the context of prevailing stereotypes and low enrolment rates for students with disabilities (arts. 3, 13 and 14).

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

(a) **Strengthen efforts to enhance the quality of education by increasing resources, improving teacher training and salaries, enhancing educational materials and infrastructure, and incorporating human rights education, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 13 (1999) on the right to education;**

<sup>9</sup> [A/HRC/21/22](#).

(b) **Redouble its efforts to increase enrolment and improve completion rates in primary and secondary education, and expand the availability of preschool education, guaranteeing universal and free access to basic education for all, especially in rural areas;**

(c) **Introduce comprehensive, age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education for all genders in primary and secondary school curricula;**

(d) **Ensure the effective implementation of the school readmission policy, safeguarding the right to education for pregnant and parenting students;**

(e) **Adopt measures to address sexual abuse within the school environment, including a national policy to combat sexual abuse, implementing a binding code of conduct for principals and teachers, establishing confidential complaint and reporting mechanisms, and investigating reported incidents thoroughly;**

(f) **Develop and implement a comprehensive policy to ensure inclusive education, increase enrolment of persons with disabilities and address high dropout rates among students with disabilities.**

#### **Cultural rights**

53. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to protect the country's cultural heritage. Nevertheless, it is concerned about the lack of information on measures taken to safeguard the cultural rights of the different religious, ethnic and linguistic groups that make up its population (art. 15).

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

(a) **Promote and protect the culture of the various religious, ethnic and linguistic groups that make up its population, ensuring the preservation, expression and dissemination of their identity, history, culture, languages, traditions and customs, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 21 (2009) on the right of everyone to take part in cultural life;**

(b) **Promote the preservation of the traditional ways of life of the various religious, ethnic and linguistic groups and combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination against them.**

#### **Right to participate in and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress**

55. The Committee notes with concern the low level of Internet access in the State party, particularly in remote areas, which limits the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights (art. 15).

56. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all measures necessary to improve affordable Internet access, particularly in remote areas, by developing the necessary infrastructure and ensuring that Internet services are affordable for all.**

### **D. Other recommendations**

57. **The Committee recommends that the State party consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.**

58. **The Committee also recommends that the State party take fully into account its obligations under the Covenant and ensure the full enjoyment of the rights enshrined therein in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level, including in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, with**

international assistance and cooperation when needed. Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would be significantly facilitated by the State party establishing independent mechanisms to monitor progress and treating beneficiaries of public programmes as rights holders who can claim entitlements. Moreover, the Committee recommends that the State party support the global commitment of the decade of action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Implementing the Goals on the basis of the principles of participation, accountability and non-discrimination would ensure that no one is left behind. In this regard, the Committee draws the State party's attention to its statement on the pledge to leave no one behind.<sup>10</sup>

59. The Committee requests that the State party disseminate the present concluding observations widely at all levels of society, including at the national, regional and district levels, in particular among parliamentarians, public officials and judicial authorities, and that it informs the Committee in its next periodic report about the steps taken to implement them. The Committee emphasizes the crucial role that Parliament plays in implementing the present concluding observations and encourages the State party to ensure its involvement in future reporting and follow-up procedures. The Committee encourages the State party to continue engaging with non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society in the follow-up to the present concluding observations and in the process of consultation at the national level prior to the submission of its next periodic report.

60. In accordance with the procedure on follow-up to concluding observations adopted by the Committee, the State party is requested to provide, within 24 months of the adoption of the present concluding observations (31 October 2026), information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 26 (a) (right to work), 32 (a) (right to social security) and 52 (d) (right to education) above.

61. The Committee requests the State party to submit its second periodic report in accordance with article 16 of the Covenant by 31 October 2029, unless otherwise notified as a result of a change in the review cycle. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/268, the word limit for the report is 21,200 words. In addition, it invites the State party to update its common core document, as necessary, in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> E/C.12/2019/1.

<sup>11</sup> HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I.