

De Commissie ter Uitbanning van Elke Vorm van Discriminatie van Vrouwen (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - CEDAW) heeft op 28 februari 2018 het gecombineerde vierde t/m zesde periodieke rapport van de Staat Suriname in behandeling genomen tijdens haar 69^{ste} zitting in het Palais des Nations in Genève, Zwitserland. Deze zitting is ook bijgewoond door een ngo-vertegenwoordiging afgevaardigd door Women's Rights Centre (WRC) en Ultimate Purpose (UP) met ondersteuning van IWRAW-AP. Zoals gebruikelijk heeft de commissie kort daarna de Staat haar Slotopmerkingen (Concluding observations) doen toekomen.

ONDERSTAAND DEEL 2 VAN DE CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Suriname*

National human rights institution

16. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the National Human Rights Institute in 2016 but regrets that it is not yet operational.

17. **The Committee calls upon the State party to operationalize the National Human Rights Institute, in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles) (General Assembly resolution 48/134, annex) with a broad mandate including the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality. It also recommends that the State party allocate sufficient human, technical and financial resources to the Institute and that it provide capacity-building for its staff on gender issues and women's rights under the Convention.**

Corruption

18. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Anti-Corruption Act in 2017, but considers that pervasive corruption in the public sector continues to undermine the advancement of women's human rights in the State party.

19. **The Committee recommends that the State party formulate a government policy on the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Act, strengthen institutional capacities to effectively detect**

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Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-ninth session (19 February-9 March 2018).

and investigate allegations of corruption in the public sector, prosecute the perpetrators, and ensure transparency of the public financial management system in order to avoid diverting resources from the implementation of the Convention.

Extraterritorial obligations

20. The Committee notes with appreciation the efforts made by the State party to address the consequences of mining activities, including pollution from mercury, and its gender action plan to mainstream gender issues throughout the implementation and monitoring of this area. It is concerned, however, about the negative impact of the activities of foreign-owned gold mining, petroleum extraction and agribusiness companies operating within the State party, as well as Suriname-registered companies carrying out operations abroad, on the rights of rural, Maroon and indigenous women. In this regard, it is concerned that the existing legal framework is inadequate in holding foreign-owned companies accountable for violations of women's rights, particularly as regards their land rights and health as well as environmental and labour standards.

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

- (a) **Strengthen its legislation governing the conduct of companies registered in the State party, including the Suriname Mining Act, to establish minimum standards for environmental protection, water quality, labour and health, with a view to protecting the rights of rural, Maroon and indigenous women affected or likely to be affected by their operations;**
- (b) **Establish a mechanism or body to regulate the activities of foreign-owned private mining companies and monitor their compliance with legislation and the advancement of the human rights of women.**

Temporary special measures

22. The Committee is concerned about the limited understanding of the concept of temporary special measures in the State party, including among political leaders and policymakers. It notes with concern that the State party has not adopted any temporary special measures to achieve substantive equality of women and men in all areas of the Convention where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including political and public life, education, employment and health.

23. **The Committee reiterates its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/3, para. 26, and A/57/38, para. 56) and recommends that the State party, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures:**

- (a) **Raise awareness among relevant State officials on the non-discriminatory nature of temporary special measures to achieve the substantive equality of women and men and the need to eliminate intersecting forms of discrimination faced by disadvantaged groups of women, especially rural, Maroon and indigenous women, as well as women with disabilities;**
- (b) **Set time-bound targets and allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of temporary special measures, such as quotas and other proactive measures, to accelerate women's equal**

representation in the judiciary, public service, rural councils, agricultural cooperatives, trade unions, public and private company boards and professional associations.

Stereotypes

24. The Committee welcomes the training activities conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes. Nonetheless, the Committee reiterates its previous concerns (CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/3, para. 17) about the persistence of discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society. In particular, it is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of structural, long-term national programmes and strategies to address the lack of public awareness on women's rights and the resulting stereotypes;
- (b) The limited measures taken to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes in the education system, including in school curricula and textbooks, as well as the fact that the Basic Life Skills Programme, which was introduced in 1997 to adapt the outdated education system to modern standards and contains sections to sensitize students on gender equality, has not been integrated into school curricula and is still referred to as a "pilot project" to be tested in seven schools in 2018-2019;
- (c) The absence of regulations governing media content, which often reinforces traditional roles of women and fails to provide a balanced picture of women's diverse roles and contributions to society.

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

- (a) **Identify and address barriers to the development of structural long-term national programmes to change social and cultural patterns that promote and reinforce discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society;**
- (b) **Incorporate, within a specific timeframe, the Basic Life Skills Programme into the education system, and ensure that the textbooks developed under the programme are used in all primary and secondary schools;**
- (c) **Raise awareness of the media on the need to eliminate gender stereotypes and establish a mechanism, within the Bureau for Gender Affairs, that systematically assesses and encourages the removal of stereotypical content from the media and promotes positive images of women and girls;**
- (d) **Develop and implement targeted measures to raise public awareness of women's rights through the media and promote positive images of women as active participants in social, economic and political life and of men as active participants in household and child-rearing responsibilities.**

Gender-based violence against women

26. The Committee reiterates its concern about the high prevalence of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, against women in the State party and the delay in adopting the draft National Policy Plan 2014-2017 on Domestic Violence. It further regrets:

- (a) The limited information on the application of the Law on Domestic Violence since its adoption in 2009;

- (b) The lack of information on inter-institutional coordination mechanisms for combating gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual harassment, and the fact that there is only one shelter for victims of domestic violence with about 30 women and their children;
- (c) The continuing practice of corporal punishment affecting girls and the absence of legislation explicitly prohibiting it in all settings;
- (d) The lack of information on the prevalence, causes and consequences of gender-based violence against women, despite the Committee's previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/3, para. 20).

27. Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Approve, without delay, the national policy plan on domestic violence and continue its efforts to enforce the law on domestic violence;**
- (b) Establish additional shelters for victims of gender-based violence that are accessible for all women and girls, especially those living in rural areas, and that they provide legal assistance, rehabilitation and psycho-social support to victims;**
- (c) Adopt legislation to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings;**
- (d) Systematically collect data on gender-based violence against women and girls, disaggregated by age, ethnicity, geography and relationship between victim and perpetrator, and ensure that research in this area serves as a basis for comprehensive and targeted interventions.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

28. The Committee welcomes the revision of the Penal Code to prohibit trafficking, as well as the establishment of the Trafficking in Persons Desk in the Public Prosecutor's Department, the Trafficking in Persons Unit in the police force to investigate cases of trafficking in persons, and the Working Group to Counter Trafficking in Persons within the Ministry of Justice and Police mandated to develop the National Strategy and National Plan of Action. However, it is concerned at:

- (a) The limited capacity and responsiveness of the institutions created to monitor compliance with anti-trafficking laws, particularly in the interior;
- (b) The lack of reliable data on trafficking in women and girls, including on its prevalence and the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions and the sentences imposed on perpetrators;
- (c) The lack of information on the shelters available to women and girls who are victims of trafficking and the types of programmes and health services provided by these shelters.

29. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to the New Government Infrastructure to Combat Trafficking in Persons (*Schakelketting 2.0*) to implement the national strategy and national plan of action to combat trafficking in persons and establish a sufficient number of adequately equipped shelters for victims of trafficking in different parts of the State party;**

- (b) Investigate, prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators, and ensure that victims of trafficking and prostitution are exempted from criminal liability and provided with adequate protection, remedies and reparations, including temporary residence permits, medical care, psycho-social counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration support and compensation;**
- (c) Adopt a policy to ensure that victims of trafficking in need of protection have access to asylum procedures in the State party and that gender-sensitive identification and referral mechanisms are in place at points of entry and in detention facilities;**
- (d) Continue to carry out capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, border police, immigration authorities and other law enforcement officers on early identification and gender-sensitive protocols for dealing with victims of trafficking.**

Participation in political and public life

30. The Committee notes with appreciation the efforts of the State party to promote women's political participation, as well as the slight increase in the participation of women in political life at district and local levels and in the diplomatic service. Nonetheless, the Committee reiterates its previous concern (CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/3, para. 25) about the significant underrepresentation of women in political and public life, in particular in decision-making positions including the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers.

31. **Recalling that the full, equal, free and democratic participation of women on an equal basis with men in political and public life is a requirement for the full implementation of the human rights of women, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Adopt a comprehensive strategy to promote the participation of women in political and public life at all levels, including through the adoption of statutory quotas for political appointments, accelerated recruitment of women to decision-making positions and financial incentives for political parties to include an equal number of women and men in their electoral lists;**
- (b) Promote definitive support for women's candidacies and political campaigns for elections through awareness-raising among political leaders and the general public, capacity-building and campaign financing;**
- (c) Introduce temporary special measures to increase the representation of rural, Maroon and indigenous women in the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers, legislative bodies, district and local councils, leadership positions in political parties, and government advisory councils (High Organs of State).**