

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 3 VAN DE CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

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

Nationality

32. The Committee welcomes the amendment of the Law of 1975 on Regulation of the Surinamese Nationality and Residency in 2014 to ensure gender equality in the transfer of nationality and introduce safeguards to prevent statelessness. Nonetheless, the Committee is concerned that women living in the interior face difficulties registering the birth of their children.

33. **Recalling Article 9 of the Convention and its general recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Take legislative and other measures, such as deploying mobile units of the civil registrar and reducing costs and administrative barriers, to facilitate birth registration for children born in the interior;**
- (b) **Remove any administrative barriers and discriminatory practices that prevent the registration of children born to foreign parents.**

Education

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

34. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party to promote access of women and girls to education, including through the removal of entrance fees and improvements in accessibility for girls with disabilities. It also notes the high net enrolment rate of girls in primary education and the high representation of girls in higher education. However, the Committee remains concerned about:

- (a) Women's and girls' low completion rates at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education, as reported by the State party in para. 110 of its report (CEDAW/C/SUR/4-6);
- (b) Limited access for girls from disadvantaged groups, including girls with disabilities, and significant disparities in enrolment rates in rural and urban areas, the poor quality of elementary schools and the lack of secondary schools in rural areas;
- (c) The lack of bilingual education for Maroon and indigenous girls and boys;
- (d) High drop-out rates, or even expulsion, due to early pregnancy, and the tendency among young mothers to pursue vocational training instead of returning to school;
- (e) The lack of mandatory, comprehensive and age-appropriate education in schools on sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- (f) The limitation of compulsory education up to 12 years only.

35. **In line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education and recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/CO/SUR/CO/3, para. 18), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Increase the rates of women and girls at all levels of education, giving due consideration to the relationship between women's and girls' educational choices and labour market demands;**
- (b) Improve the quality and accessibility of schools in rural areas and provide instruction in indigenous and tribal languages in schools, with a view to improving access to education for Maroon and indigenous girls and girls with disabilities;**
- (c) Implement oversight mechanisms, as well as sanctions, to enforce government policies prohibiting the expulsion of pregnant girls from school and facilitate the reintegration of young mothers into the school system;**
- (d) Institutionalize mandatory, age-appropriate and comprehensive sexuality education, including education on responsible sexual behaviour and prevention of early pregnancy;**
- (e) Raise the age of compulsory education to 16 years for girls and boys.**

Employment

36. The Committee notes that the guarantee in article 28 of the Constitution of equal pay for equal work for women and men is not in line with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. It further notes with concern:

- (a) The delay in the adoption of various legislative instruments that are necessary for accelerating women's equal participation in the labour market, including: (i) the draft Law on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, which was developed in 2008-2011; (ii) the draft Maternity Protection Act; and (iii) the

amendment to the Act on the Regulation of the Legal Status of Civil Servants (*Personeelswet*) to repeal discriminatory provisions that reduce a woman's entitlement to annual leave due to pregnancy and childbirth and provide for the termination of employment of a female civil servant when she gets married;

(b) The absence of legislation on the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the State party despite its ratification in 2016 of the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) of the International Labour Organization;

(c) Women's unequal access to economic opportunities, despite higher participation and attainment rates at all levels of education, and the disproportionately high unemployment rate among women, in particular rural, Maroon and indigenous women;

(d) Continued occupational segregation in the labour market, the concentration of women in low-paid jobs in the informal sector and the underrepresentation of women in managerial positions and in non-traditional professions;

(e) The absence of a regulation on the maximum number of working hours for girls aged 14 to 17, increasing their vulnerability to exploitative working conditions and harassment or abuse by employers;

(f) The absence of reliable statistical data on the gender pay gap in both the private and public sectors.

37. Recalling its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/3, para. 28), the Committee calls upon the State party to:

(a) **Adopt, without delay, the revised Civil Code, the Maternity Protection Act, the amendment to the Civil Servants' Act, and expand the coverage of the Minimum Hour Wage Act to the public sector and the informal economy;**

(b) **Identify and address the challenges delaying the adoption of the Law on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, and ensure that it is enforced in both the public and private sectors;**

(c) **Amend article 28 of the Constitution to ensure that it incorporates the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and adopt measures to effectively enforce this principle;**

(d) **Conduct a study on occupational segregation in the labour market and the gender wage gap, based on the collection and analysis of statistical data disaggregated by sex, with a view to addressing discriminatory gender stereotypes precluding women from exercising certain professions and promoting non-discriminatory employment and recruitment practices in all sectors;**

(e) **Implement targeted measures to address occupational segregation, promote women's access to formal employment, including in managerial or decision-making positions and in non-traditional professions such as construction, mining and logging, by guaranteeing paid maternity leave and providing sufficient and adequate childcare facilities;**

(f) **Promote equal sharing of family and domestic responsibilities between women and men, including by introducing compulsory paternity leave.**

Health

38. The Committee welcomes the improved health insurance coverage for women in the State party, including for women with disabilities and women from disadvantaged groups. However, it remains concerned at:

- (a) The inadequate funding of the health sector, resulting in women's very limited access to basic health care services, in particular for rural, Maroon and indigenous women who must often travel to Paramaribo to seek specialist medical treatment;
- (b) The lack of cardiovascular services and cancer screening for women outside Paramaribo, despite the high incidence of cardiovascular diseases and reproductive cancers including breast, uterine and cervical cancer;
- (c) The high incidence of unsafe abortion and the absence of measures to implement the Committee's previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/3, para. 30) to revise legislation criminalizing abortion;
- (d) The lack of comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health and rights and family planning services, as well as persistently low rates of modern contraceptive use, in particular among rural, Maroon and indigenous women.

39. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health, the Committee draws attention to Sustainable Development Goals 3.1 and 3.7 and recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Increase its health expenditure to improve the coverage of and access to quality health services for women living in the interior areas of the State party, and ensure that they have access to cardiovascular health services and cancer screening;**
- (b) Conduct a study on the impact of unsafe abortions on maternal mortality and other obstetric complications;**
- (c) Amend articles 355-357 of the Penal Code, which prohibit abortion, with a view to legalizing it in cases of rape, incest, threats to the life and/or health of the mother, or severe foetal impairment, decriminalizing it in all other cases and removing punitive measures for women who undergo abortion;**
- (d) Provide women with access to quality post-abortion care, especially in cases of complications resulting from unsafe abortions;**
- (e) Provide access to safe and affordable contraceptives, family planning services and adequate information on sexual and reproductive health.**

Economic and social life

40. The Committee commends the State party on its legislative reform to establish a national social security system and provide social benefits, including family allowances and conditional cash transfers, for women. However, the Committee is concerned that the austerity measures taken by the State party, including budget cuts and the introduction of a fixed-rate value added tax in 2014, had a disproportionate impact on women living in poverty.

41. **The Committee recommends that the State party undertake an assessment on the impact of austerity measures on women, particularly disadvantaged groups of women, and ensure the internal redistribution of its domestic resources to overcome the consequences of budget cuts and ensure women's access to social benefits and microfinance and microcredit schemes at low interest rates.**

Disaster risk reduction and climate change

42. The Committee commends the State party for its commitment to addressing climate change through risk reduction strategies. However, it is concerned that the State party has not explicitly incorporated a gender perspective into these strategies. The Committee also regrets that the second National Communication on Climate Change published in 2016 failed to take into account the specific vulnerability of women to natural disasters and their ability as change agents.

43. **Drawing attention to its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure the effective participation of women, in particular rural, Maroon and indigenous women, not only as those disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change and disasters but also as agents of change, in the formulation and implementation of policies and action plans on disaster risk reduction and climate change. It also recommends that such policies and plans, including the third National Communication on Climate Change, explicitly include a gender perspective and take into account the specific needs of women.**