

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 4 VAN DE CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

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

Rural, Maroon and indigenous women living in the interior

44. The Committee notes with appreciation the policy of the Ministry of Regional Development to empower and engage women in the planning of agricultural activities in the interior, and the two directorates established in 2016 to provide assistance to the Maroon and indigenous communities. However, it notes with concern the extremely high poverty rate among rural, Maroon and indigenous women in the State party and their very limited access to basic services including health, education, safe water, adequate sanitation, energy and communications technologies. It is also concerned about violations of the land rights of indigenous and tribal women, despite three judgments passed by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 2015, 2007 and 2005, respectively, holding that the State party violated the rights of indigenous people to land and access to justice. The Committee further regrets that rural, Maroon and indigenous women are excluded from decision-making processes, in particular with regard to the use of land.

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

(a) **Develop and implement a policy to support the economic and social development of rural, Maroon and indigenous women, and to overcome persistent gender inequalities limiting their access to land, social services, economic opportunities, sanitation facilities and communications technologies;**

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

(b) **Implement measures to ensure the full and equal participation of rural, Maroon and indigenous women in decision-making processes affecting them, including on mining and logging concessions, and rural and national development plans, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women;**

(c) **Ratify the Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization.**

Women with disabilities

46. The Committee is concerned about the lack of information on the situation of women and girls with disabilities in the State party and on the services available to them. It further regrets that there are no measures in place to improve the accessibility of education, employment and health care services for rural, Maroon and indigenous women and girls with disabilities.

47. **The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to collect and analyse information on the situation of women and girls with disabilities, paying particular attention to their access to education, employment and health care, and on the quality of the services available. It also calls upon the State party to implement measures to increase the accessibility of such services particularly for rural, Maroon and indigenous women and girls with disabilities.**

Refugee and asylum-seeking women

48. The Committee notes that the State party experienced a sharp increase in the number of registered asylum-seekers in 2016 and 2017, and is concerned about the lack of a national policy governing refugee protection or asylum procedures in the State party, as well as a lack of long-term protection measures for refugee and asylum-seeking women who are victims of trafficking or gender-based violence. It is further concerned that refugee and asylum-seeking women in the State party face difficulties in accessing education, health, employment, income-generating opportunities and financial services.

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

(a) **Formulate and adopt a policy governing refugee protection and asylum procedures that ensures a gender-sensitive approach and protects the economic and social rights of refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls;**

(b) **Put in place gender-appropriate, culturally sensitive and age-sensitive individual screening and assessment procedures to ensure the systematic and early identification of refugees and asylum seekers, in particular women and girls who have been victims of or who are at risk of gender-based violence.**

Lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women

50. The Committee notes that the Penal Code has been revised, inter alia, to include protection of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women prohibiting discrimination and hate speech against them. However, it is concerned that lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women continue to face discrimination and harassment, particularly with regard to their rights to education, employment and health.

51. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure equal rights and opportunities for lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, and raise awareness to eliminate discrimination and social stigma against them. It further recommends that the State party apply a policy of zero-tolerance of discrimination and violence against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, including by prosecuting and adequately punishing perpetrators.**

Marriage and family relations

52. The Committee welcomes that article 35 of the Constitution recognizes equality of husband and wife before the law, provides for the protection of children without discrimination and recognizes the extraordinary value of motherhood. Nonetheless, the Committee is concerned that in practice, women do not have equal rights within marriage. In particular, it is concerned at:

- (a) The delay, since 2011, in revising the Civil Code to remove provisions regarding the father as the only parent having guardianship over children, requiring children to take the name of their father, and the legal incapacity of married women;
- (b) The minimum age of marriage, which is 15 years for girls, the disproportionately high number of rural, Maroon and indigenous women aged 15 to 17 years who are married, and the absence of a national strategy to combat and prevent child marriage;
- (c) The absence of a legal framework for tribal marriages;
- (d) The fact that women in de facto unions cannot inherit property from a deceased partner or claim pension benefits.

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

- (a) **Adopt the revised Civil Code to remove discriminatory provisions (including Articles 18, 24, 56a, 217, 221, 234 and 353), raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 and guarantee the legal capacity and equal rights of married women, as well as equality of women and men with regard to parental authority and custody of children;**
- (b) **Take measures to prevent early and child marriages, including by developing a national strategy for the prevention and elimination of child marriage and establishing a complaint mechanism for victims of child and/or forced marriage;**
- (c) **Provide legal protection of the rights of women in tribal marriages, and conduct targeted awareness-raising activities about their rights under the Convention and corresponding remedies;**
- (d) **Consider extending social and economic protection to women in de facto unions.**

Data collection and analysis

54. The Committee welcomes the efforts made by the State party to strengthen data collection systems, including through the piloting of the CARICOM Gender Equality Indicators Model to collect data on the participation of women in public life, produce a national report on the status of women and men in the State party, and create a database for monitoring. Nonetheless, the Committee reiterates its previous concerns (CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/3, para. 13) regarding the overall absence of publicly and regularly available data, disaggregated by sex, age and location (rural, interior and urban), which are

necessary to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies in all areas of the Convention, in particular regarding health insurance coverage, social benefits, access to land, economic empowerment, vocational training, sports and recreation.

55. The Committee calls upon the State party to strengthen the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive data disaggregated by sex, age and location, and prioritize the creation of a national database that uses measurable indicators to assess trends in the situation of women and progress made towards the realization of women's substantive equality in all areas covered by the Convention. In that regard, the Committee draws the State party's attention to its general recommendation No. 9 (1989) on statistical data concerning the situation of women and encourages the State party to continue its collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies in the systematic collection of accurate data.

Optional Protocol to the Convention and amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

56. The Committee encourages the State party to ratify, as soon as possible, the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to accept the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

57. The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

58. The Committee calls for the realization of substantive gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Dissemination

59. 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, local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the National Assembly and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.

Technical Assistance

60. The Committee recommends that the State party link the implementation of the Convention to its development efforts and that it avail itself of regional or international technical assistance in this respect.

Ratification of other treaties

61. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a party.

Follow-up to concluding observations

62. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 11 (c), 11 (d), 15 (a) and 15 (b) above.

Preparation of the next report

63. The Committee requests the State party to submit its seventh periodic report, which is due in March 2022. The report should be submitted on time and cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

64. 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 (see [HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).

¹ The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.