

An Inclusive, Equitable and Prosperous Caribbean



CARICOM Strategy: Social Protection and Inclusion

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CARICOM Strategy: Good governance and political participation

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EDUCATION

The Bahamas

33. The Committee notes with appreciation the progress achieved in education for girls and the reconstitution of the National Training Agency in 2017. The Committee is concerned at the:

(a) Insufficient measures taken to ensure access to quality education for all girls, especially those in the Family Islands, and from disadvantaged communities, including girls of Haitian descent; and to improve the quality of education, particularly in public schools;

(b) Delays with the revision of the Education Act and the Curriculum Reform aiming to better address gender equality;

(c) Concentration of women and girls in traditionally female-oriented fields of study and their underrepresentation in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and the Technical Cadet Corp Programme (TCCP);

(d) The placement of pregnant girls into special schools operated by the Providing Access to Continued Education (PACE) Foundation to avoid stigmatisation and the lack of practical measures to ensure their re-entry and retention in schools after childbirth;

(e) The limited access of girls with disabilities to inclusive education.

34. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that girls in the Family Islands and from disadvantaged communities, including girls of Haitian descent, have equal access to high-quality education at both the primary and secondary levels;

(b) Accelerate the revision of the Education Act and the Curriculum Reform aiming to better address gender equality;

(c) Eliminate negative stereotypes and structural barriers to the enrolment of girls in non-traditional fields of education such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and provide career counselling for girls on non-traditional career paths;

(d) Adopt a policy to ensure that pregnant women and girls remain in schools during their pregnancy and that young mothers return to school after childbirth to complete their education;

(e) Take measures to develop an inclusive education strategy for all girls with disabilities.

Barbados

31. The Committee notes with appreciation the high literacy rate among women. It also welcomes the achievement of gender parity at the primary and secondary levels of education, as indicated in the report entitled "Barbados: Education for All 2015 National Review". Nevertheless, the Committee notes the following with concern:

(a) The high school drop-out rate among adolescent girls at the secondary level of education, which is often owing to early pregnancy, the absence of a written policy on pregnant students in schools, the compulsory expulsion of pregnant girls from schools after five months of pregnancy, which reinforces negative stereotypes, and the lack of measures taken to ensure their re-entry and retention in school following childbirth;

(b) The fact that, notwithstanding the information provided by the State party's delegation on the ongoing initiatives of the Ministry of Education to end corporal punishment in schools, as well as its cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund, since 2010, on the

positive behaviour management programme in schools, corporal punishment is culturally accepted and widely practised in schools;

(c) The concentration of women and girls in traditionally female-dominated fields of study and their underrepresentation in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

(d) The lack of information on education for women and girls with special needs.

32. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Adopt a written policy to ensure that pregnant women and girls may remain at school after the fifth month of pregnancy and that young mothers can return to school following childbirth;**

(b) **Explicitly prohibit corporal punishment at school, ensure that the prohibition of corporal punishment is adequately monitored and enforced and strengthen teacher training and practice on positive discipline;**

(c) **Eliminate negative stereotypes and structural barriers to the enrolment of girls in non-traditional fields of education such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and provide career counselling for girls and boys on non-traditional career paths;**

(d) **Ensure access to mainstream education for women and girls with special needs.**

Belize

16. The Committee urges the State party to make the promotion of gender equality an explicit component of all its national development strategies, policies and programmes, in particular those aimed at poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The Committee also invites the State party to place emphasis on the promotion and protection of women's human rights in all development cooperation programmes with international organizations and bilateral donors so as to address the socio-economic causes of discrimination against women. The Committee recommends that the State party put in place evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to assess the impact of its poverty reduction strategies on women, including those in the rural areas, and provide information in its next report. It calls on the State party to pay special attention, and provide targeted support, to women heads of household in all its poverty-eradication efforts, including in the rural areas and among Mayan women.

23. The Committee is concerned about the persistence of social barriers that impede women's education and are reflected in the early dropout rate of girls from school and the lack of measures to ensure that teenage mothers stay in or return to school. The Committee reiterates its concern about the influence of the church on girls' and young women's right to education. In that regard, the Committee repeats its concern that schools remain free to expel girls because of pregnancy, that only a few secondary schools allow girls to continue their education after pregnancy and that schools are allowed to dismiss unwed teachers who become pregnant. It is also concerned that insufficient efforts are being made to

encourage girls and young women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields of study.

24. The Committee recommends that the State party implement measures to ensure equal rights of girls and young women to all levels of education, to retain girls in school and to put in place monitoring mechanisms to track girls' access to and achievement levels in education. The Committee recommends that the State party put in place measures, including monitoring mechanisms and sanctions, to ensure that pregnant students stay in school during pregnancy and return after childbirth. The Committee calls on the State party to formulate the necessary legislative and policy measures to ensure de facto adherence to article 10 of the Convention throughout the entire educational system. It also encourages the State party to actively promote the diversification of educational and professional choices for women and men and offer incentives for young women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields of study.

25. The Committee expresses concern about the situation of women in the labour market, which is characterized by levels of female unemployment at twice the rate of men, inadequate employment opportunities for women, the concentration of women in low-paid sectors of public employment and the consistent wage gap between women and men. It is concerned about the lack of enforcement of labour laws regarding discrimination in the private sector. The Committee notes with concern the absence of a system of maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits for all women as required by article 11, paragraph 2 (b), of the Convention. The Committee is further concerned that, while legislation governing sexual harassment is in place, women do not utilize the law to address incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace.

26. The Committee urges the State party to fully implement article 11 of the Convention. It encourages the State party to implement measures to encourage and support women's entrepreneurship, including by raising awareness and providing access to credit. The Committee recommends that efforts be strengthened to eliminate occupational segregation, both horizontal and vertical, and to adopt measures to narrow and close the wage gap between women and men by applying job-evaluation schemes in the public sector connected with a wage increase in female-dominated sectors. The Committee urges the State party to take further appropriate measures to introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits for all women, in line with article 11, paragraph 2 (b), of the Convention. It encourages the State party to ensure full compliance with its labour laws, including by the private sector. It also urges the State party to implement its laws on sexual harassment, raise awareness for women and men workers and ensure that women take advantage of the laws' protective provisions. The Committee invites the State party to monitor the impact of measures taken and trends over time.

29. The Committee appreciates the fact that primary education is free and compulsory in the State party without any discrimination on grounds of gender. However, it is concerned at the persistence of structural and other barriers to quality education for girls and young women, including early pregnancy and teenage motherhood and societal attitudes, resulting in a higher drop-out rate for girls in secondary education. The Committee also notes with concern that women and girls are underrepresented in technical disciplines and traditionally male-dominated fields of study.

30. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure de facto equal access of girls and young women to all levels of education, prevent dropouts of girls from schools and strengthen its efforts to encourage young women to return to school after pregnancy;

(b) Intensify efforts aimed at diversifying academic and vocational choices for women and take further measures to encourage them to choose non-traditional fields of education and careers, including by providing public scholarships and stipends.

Guyana

28. While noting that the State party has achieved parity in primary education, the Committee is concerned at the lack of statistical data, disaggregated by sex and geographical location, on enrolment and dropout rates at all levels of education. The Committee is also concerned at the high dropout rates among girls at the secondary level in administrative region 8 of the State party and at the difficulties faced in gaining access to education facilities in hinterland areas. The Committee is further concerned at the segregation of fields of study at the post-secondary level with women and girls concentrated in traditionally feminized areas, such as cooking and sewing, at their underrepresentation in technical and vocational education and at the consequences of such trends for women's representation in the paid labour force. The Committee is also concerned that corporal punishment is accepted both in school and home settings, even though it constitutes a form of violence against children, including the girl child.

29. The Committee urges the State party to enhance its compliance with article 10 of the Convention and to raise awareness of the importance of education as a human right and as the basis for the empowerment of women. To this end, it urges the State party:

(a) To ensure equal access of girls and women to all levels and fields of education, to take steps to increase capacity for girls to pursue secondary education in all regions of the State party and to overcome traditional attitudes that in some areas may constitute obstacles to education of girls and women;

(b) To implement measures to eliminate traditional stereotypes and structural barriers in social settings (the family, schools and religious institutions) that might deter girls from enrolling in non-traditional areas of academic and vocational education at the secondary and tertiary levels;

(c) **To step up efforts to provide girls with career counselling that introduces them to options regarding non-traditional career paths in science-related professions;**

(d) **To explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, including through the adoption of relevant legislation and the development of awareness-raising campaigns aimed at families, the school system and other educational settings;**

(e) **To provide access to education facilities, including safe transportation to and from schools, in particular in hinterland, rural and remote areas.**

Haiti

29. The Committee notes the efforts of the State party to increase women's and girls' participation in education and reduce their illiteracy rate by the 2011 launch of a "free and compulsory education programme". However, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) The low enrolment and dramatic progressive decline in completion rates of girls at the secondary school level, particularly in rural areas, owing to extreme poverty and child labour by girls;

(b) The lack of adequate sanitary facilities and potable water in a large number of schools;

(c) The high rate of sexual violence and harassment of girls on the way to, from or at school and the absence of any measures to combat such violence;

(d) The lack of age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health and rights education at all levels of education;

(e) The lack of congruence between the vocational subjects pursued by girls at the National Institute for Vocational Training and labour market needs.

30. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation ([CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/7](#), para. 31) and calls on the State party:**

(a) **To provide basic education to girls at the secondary level, including through the full implementation of free and compulsory education, including in rural areas, with special attention to the provision of adequate sanitary facilities and clean water, especially in schools with adolescent girls;**

(b) **To strengthen awareness-raising programmes for parents and the wider community on the importance of education for girls beyond the primary level;**

(c) **To provide safe educational environments free from discrimination and sexual violence, including in and around school settings and to put in place a policy for reintegration of adolescent mothers;**

(d) **To establish reporting and accountability mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators of sexual abuse or harassment of girls at school are adequately punished;**

(e) **To integrate age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in school curricula at all levels of education, including education on responsible sexual behaviour, sexually transmitted diseases and on the right of girls to make their own choices with regard to sexual and reproductive health, and train teachers to address such topics in a gender-sensitive manner;**

(f) **To address the underrepresentation of women in vocational and higher education, including by providing girls with career counselling on non-traditional fields of study and career paths, in particular in technical and vocational areas that are in line with real opportunities for income generation;**

(g) **To take into account Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 4.5, to eliminate gender disparities in education.**

Jamaica

25. The Committee welcomes the achievement of the State party in the area of girls' education, including high literacy and performance rates compared with the rates for boys. The Committee appreciates the fact that the State party has achieved universal access at the primary and lower secondary levels. It also notes with appreciation that the State party ratified, in 2006, the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). However, it is concerned about the persistence of structural and other barriers to quality education for girls and young women, including early pregnancy and teenage motherhood and societal attitudes, that result in a higher dropout rate for girls in secondary education. The Committee is further concerned that despite the National Safe Schools Policy, there are reportedly high levels of violence in schools, which negatively affects school attendance and community life. The Committee notes with concern that women and girls are underrepresented in technical disciplines and traditionally male-dominated fields of study.

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

(a) **Develop a comprehensive policy and plan of action for the reintegration of pregnant girls and young mothers into schools, including access to support services such as counselling in parenting skills and appropriate sexual and reproductive health services;**

(b) **Ensure appropriate budgetary allocations for the implementation of the National Safe Schools Policy and introduce the proposed amendments to the Education Act, which are aimed at strengthening school safety and security;**

(c) **Intensify efforts aimed at diversifying academic and vocational choices for women and take further measures to encourage them to choose non-traditional fields of education and careers, including by providing public scholarships and stipends.**

Saint Lucia

27. While the Committee welcomes the State party's commitment to guarantee universal secondary education as of the academic year 2006/07, it is concerned about girls and women without such education, and the impact of this lack of education on their opportunities in other fields, including the labour market. The Committee is also concerned about the high rate of teenage pregnancy, the impact on girls' educational opportunities and economic empowerment, and the lack of proactive measures to ensure that teenage mothers stay in, or return to school. It is also concerned that insufficient efforts are made to encourage girls and young women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields of study.

28. The Committee calls on the State party to implement measures to ensure equal access of girls and women to all levels of education, in accordance with article 10 of the Convention. It calls on the State party to put in place measures, including monitoring mechanisms and sanctions, to ensure that pregnant students stay in and return to school during and after pregnancy. The Committee calls on the State party to provide incentives for young women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields of study, and encourages the State party to develop non-stereotyped educational curricula that address structural causes of discrimination against women and enhance educational opportunities and achievement for girls and boys at all levels.

29. While welcoming the adoption of the Equality of Opportunity and Treatment in Employment and Occupation Act of 2000 which according to the delegation also covers indirect discrimination, the Committee expresses its concern that the Labour Code of 2001 has still not been enacted, and thus no overall legislative framework is in place in the field of work and employment. The Committee is concerned that in the absence of a Code, many areas, such as collective bargaining and effective remedies for discrimination are not covered by law. The Committee is concerned about the potential for discrimination against women in the application of exemption clauses to the non-discrimination provisions in the Labour Code of 2001. The Committee is also concerned about the absence of a law on sexual harassment.

30. The Committee calls on the State party to ensure that the Labour Code is enacted by the end of 2006, as it has been assured by the delegation, which apparently makes specific provision for non-discrimination and equal opportunity in the workplace. The Committee encourages the State party to ensure that provisions on sexual harassment in the workplace, including enforceable sanctions, are also included in the Labour Code. It calls on the State party to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place against sexual harassment in the workplace and that women are informed of their rights not to be sexually harassed at work. The Committee further urges the State party to monitor the application of exemption clauses to the non-discrimination provisions in the Labour Code of 2001, and to provide information on their application in its next report.

St Kitts and Nevis

99. The Committee is particularly concerned that, although women have a higher level of education than men, this has not been translated into promotion of women to senior posts in the public and private sectors

and/or increased economic returns for women, who continue to be concentrated mainly in the informal sector and in the jobs that pay the least.

100. The Committee recommends the adoption of legislation that guarantees equal pay for work of equal value. It also recommends that measures should be taken to deal with the situation of unemployed women, and the large number of women who work in the informal sector, with a view to their inclusion in the formal sector, and access to social benefits.

St Vincent and the Grenadines

28. The Committee commends the State party for achieving universal access to primary and secondary education. It also welcomes the development of a health and family life education curriculum and a programme aimed at enabling pregnant adolescent girls to pursue their education through the provision of day-care services, payment of school fees and books as well as transportation (“Teen Mothers Returning to School” programme). However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The high rate of teenage pregnancy (nearly 50 per cent of women/girls give birth for the first time between 15 and 19 years of age), which results in high dropout rates, in addition to the lack of information on whether the Health and Family Life Education Curriculum is offered in an age-appropriate manner at all levels of education and includes a gender perspective and education on responsible sexual behaviour;

(b) The limited coverage and the lack of public awareness of the programme designed to facilitate the return of adolescent mothers to school and the lack of sex-disaggregated data to carry out an impact assessment;

(c) The lack of a comprehensive and integrated strategy to address ideological and structural barriers that discourage girls from participating in non-traditional academic and technical-vocational subjects.

29. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Consider means of reducing unwanted teenage pregnancies by continuing to promote education in sexual and reproductive health and rights and responsible sexual behaviour for girls and boys, ensuring that it is age appropriate and offered at all levels of education;

(b) Strengthen efforts to retain girls in school and facilitate the reintegration of pregnant girls and young mothers into school by providing support services, such as counselling in parenting skills, appropriate sexual and reproductive health services and adequate childcare facilities, as well as by extending the coverage and increasing the accessibility and availability of the “Teen Mothers Returning to School” programme;

(c) Eliminate traditional stereotypes and structural barriers that may deter girls from enrolling in traditionally male fields of study, such as science and technology, and step up efforts to provide girls with career counselling on non-traditional career paths and alternatives

outside formal education, including non-stereotypical vocational training.

Suriname

34. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party to improve women's and girls' access to education, including by removing entrance fees and improving 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 the following:

(a) The low completion rates at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education among women and girls, as reported by the State party in paragraph 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 between rural and urban areas, as well as the poor quality of elementary schools and the lack of secondary schools in rural areas;

(c) The lack of bilingual education for both Maroon and indigenous girls and boys;

(d) High drop-out rates, and even expulsion rates, 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 period of compulsory education being only up to 12 years of age.

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 enrolment rates among 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 girls, indigenous girls and girls with disabilities;**

(c) **Establish oversight mechanisms, as well as sanctions, to enforce government policies prohibiting the expulsion of pregnant girls from school and to 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.**

Trinidad and Tobago

28. The Committee commends the State party on increasing the age bracket for free and compulsory education through the adoption of the Children Act, which amended the Education Act (1966). It also commends the State party on introducing an adolescent mothers programme in 1996, aimed at, among other things, supporting teenage mothers and assisting with re-entry into school after childbirth. The Committee is concerned, however, at:

(a) The high rate of teenage pregnancy, resulting in girls dropping out of school, and the limited evaluation of the adolescent mothers programme, meaning that no representative data exist to determine its effectiveness in preventing a second pregnancy in adolescents;

(b) The lack of data disaggregated by age and region on the net enrolment rate of girls at the secondary level;

(c) The lack of specific information on measures taken to address the indirect costs of education, which partly account for the high rate at which girls, in particular girls from female-headed households, are dropping out of school;

(d) Information that, notwithstanding the achievements in eliminating sex segregation in fields of study to facilitate women's choice of non-traditional and higher-paying career paths, girls continue to lag behind boys in the field of engineering;

(e) Information that the health and family life education curriculum is often not included at the primary level owing to resistance from parents.

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

(a) **Intensify efforts to provide effective access for women and girls to comprehensive information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on the use of modern forms of contraception, in order to reduce the high rate of rate of teenage pregnancy, and undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the adolescent mothers programme in order to assess its effectiveness;**

(b) **Provide, in the next periodic report, data, disaggregated by age and region, on the net enrolment rate of girls at the secondary level and information on specific measures taken to address the indirect costs of education, in particular with regard to girls;**

(c) **Intensify efforts to reduce the dropout rate among girls by facilitating the re-entry into school of young mothers after they have given birth;**

(d) **Continue efforts to encourage girls and young women, as well as boys and young men, to choose non-traditional fields of study and career paths, in particular engineering courses, and implement programmes aimed at counselling girls on the full range of educational choices;**

(e) **Intensify the provision of the health and family life education curriculum and ensure that age-appropriate education on sexual and**

reproductive health and rights, including comprehensive sex education for adolescent girls and boys covering responsible sexual behaviour, continues to be systematically integrated into school curricula at all levels.

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The Bahamas

35. The Committee regrets that the State party has not provided sufficient information to fully assess its progress on gender equality in the area of employment. The Committee remains concerned at legislation that limits the application of the principle of “equal pay for work of equal value” and the provisions related to entitlement to maternity leave, which do not offer the rights and the protection in line with the Convention. It is particularly concerned about:

(a) The disproportionately high unemployment rate among women although they have a higher educational level, continued occupational segregation in the labour market and the concentration of women in low-wage jobs in the formal and informal sector;

(b) The high level of unpaid and unrecognized work done by women, which does not count towards women’s eligibility for retirement and other work-related benefits;

(c) The lack of information on the practical implementation measures in place with respect to legal provisions (Chapter 99 of the Statute Laws of the Bahamas and the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act) that prohibit sexual harassment and violence against women in the workplace;

(d) The limited opportunities for women with disabilities to participate in the labour market;

(e) The insufficient information on the extension of this phenomenon and on the vulnerable situation of domestic workers, many of whom do not have adequate access to social benefits and are susceptible to sexual harassment in the workplace.

36. The Committee recalls its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/BHS/CO/1-5, para 34) and recommends that the State party:

(a) Enact appropriate legislation that guarantees the principle of “equal pay for work of equal value” in all areas of work; and amend provisions related to entitlement to maternity leave to guarantee the rights and the protection in line with the Convention, particularly with regards to compulsory leave after confinement of six weeks, interruptions of work for nursing a child and protection against dismissal during maternity leave;

(b) Intensify its efforts to create an enabling environment for women to become economically independent, including by raising awareness among

employers and trade unions in the public and private sectors about the prohibition of discrimination against women in employment and promote the entry of women into the formal economy, including through the provision of vocational and technical training;

(c) Ensure that women carrying out unpaid work are eligible for retirement and other work-related benefits, particularly after retirement;

(d) Ensure effective enforcement of the legal provisions (Chapter 99 of the Statute Laws of the Bahamas and the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act) protecting against sexual harassment and violence against women in the workplace;

(e) Adopt temporary special measures to increase the participation of women with disabilities in the labour market;

(f) Adopt a strategy on the protection of the domestic workers, including the reinforcement of the work inspection and ratify the International Labour Organization Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning decent work for domestic workers.

Economic empowerment of women

39. The Committee is concerned about the disproportionate levels of poverty among women and that the Renewing, Inspiring, Sustaining and Empowering (RISE) Programme launched in 2016, which aimed at reducing the number of Bahamians living at or below the poverty level, was suspended in 2017. The Committee is also concerned about the limited information on the new measures on structural adjustments in the development strategies of the State party as well as of trade liberalization policies and their impacts on women, and on the programs to overcome the poverty of the most disadvantaged groups of women, including elderly and women with disabilities.

40. **The Committee recommends that the State party assess the implications of the discontinuation of the Renewing, Inspiring, Sustaining and Empowering (RISE) Programme on women and publish the results of the assessment. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure that those women in need will not suffer any adverse effects and replace the suspended programme with a new suitable cash transfer programme with a focus on providing assistance to disadvantaged groups of women and girls, including elderly and women with disabilities. The Committee further recommends that the State party adopt programs to overcome the poverty of the most disadvantaged groups of women; and adopt gender approach in implementing measures in the context on structural adjustments and trade liberalisation and assess their impact on women. Finally, the Committee recommends that the State party, in keeping with its extraterritorial obligations, ensure that its financial and tax policies do not negatively impact on women's right and substantive equality.**

33. The Committee notes the adoption of the Employment Rights Act in 2012. Nevertheless, it notes the following with concern:

(a) The disproportionately high unemployment rate among women and the persistently wide and increasing gender pay gap in all sectors, continued occupational segregation in the labour market and the concentration of women in low-wage jobs in the formal and informal sectors;

(b) The lack of information on the implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;

(c) The delay in the adoption of the Sexual Harassment (Prevention) bill.

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

(a) **Intensify its efforts to create an enabling environment for women to become economically independent, including by raising awareness among employers and trade unions in the public and private sectors about the prohibition of employment discrimination against women and promote the entry of women into the formal economy, including through the provision of vocational and technical training;**

(b) **Effectively enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, adopt measures to narrow and close the gender pay gap, regularly review wages in sectors in which women are concentrated and provide statistical data on wages in both the public and private sectors, disaggregated by sex;**

(c) **Expedite the adoption of the Sexual Harassment (Prevention) bill.**

Economic empowerment of women

37. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to combat poverty through the poverty alleviation and reduction programme and the identification, stabilization, enablement and empowerment programme. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned that austerity measures, including budget cuts in order to reduce debt, have had a significant impact on social programmes and that the regressive Value Added Tax and National Social Responsibility Tax have disproportionately affected women. It is particularly concerned with regard to the following:

(a) The State party's financial secrecy policies and rules on corporate reporting and taxation having a potentially negative impact on the ability of other States, in particular those already short of revenue, to mobilize the maximum available resources for the fulfilment of women's rights;

(b) The high prevalence of poverty in women-headed households and the lack of information on the concrete impact of social programmes to improve the economic situation of women in rural and urban areas;

(c) The lack of information on loan schemes, mortgages and other forms of financial credit for women and the provision of specific training on women's entrepreneurship.

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

(a) Undertake the studies and evaluations necessary to monitor the gender-specific effects of the austerity measures and ensure an internal redistribution of its domestic resources in order to overcome the consequences of budget cuts, giving priority to measures which support gender equality in all fields and devise an effective strategy to ensure the full implementation of the Convention;

(b) Undertake independent, participatory and periodic impact assessments of the extraterritorial effects of its financial secrecy and corporate tax policies on women's rights and the substantive equality of women and men, ensuring that such assessments are conducted impartially and with public disclosure of the methodology and findings;

(c) Continue to strengthen its programmes to combat the feminization of poverty, in particular among women-headed households;

(d) Address barriers to women's entrepreneurship by devising specific programmes and developing evaluation mechanisms;

(e) Design specific interventions to leverage opportunities for the economic empowerment of women and ensure that they are involved in the design of those strategies and programmes, focusing on women not only as victims or beneficiaries but also as active participants in the formulation and implementation of such policies.

Grenada

31. The Committee notes that the overall unemployment rate is high in the State party with strong gender disparities, especially in rural areas where the unemployment rate for women is double the rate for men. While welcoming the revision of the Minimum Wage Order, the Committee notes with concern the persistence of wage gaps between women and men, the horizontal and vertical segregation of women and men in the labour market and the concentration of women in low-skilled jobs with low pay. The Committee is further concerned about the lack of paid maternity leave for all female workers in the State party, and that maternity leave in the public sector may be claimed only after 18 months of continuous service with the same employer. The Committee notes that while the State party has ratified the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), it has not yet ratified ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

32. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Develop policies with time-bound targets and indicators to eliminate occupational segregation and achieve substantive equality between men and women in the labour market, including in traditionally male-dominated fields through intensified technical and vocational training; promote overall employment of women; and expand women's access to microcredit at low interest rates for self-employment and income-generating activities;

(b) Conduct an assessment of any remaining gender-based inequalities in the Minimum Wage Order and other relevant legislation and policy in order to close the gender wage gap;

(c) Revise legislation and policy to ensure that all women employees in the public and private sectors are guaranteed paid maternity leave, including by eliminating restrictions to maternity leave based on duration of employment;

(d) Ratify ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

Guyana

30. The Committee is concerned that, despite the provisions of article 22 (1) of the Constitution, according to which every citizen has a right to be rewarded according to the nature, quality and quantity of his or her work, to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and to just conditions of work, pay discrimination against women persists. The Committee is further concerned at the lack of information provided on the participation of women in the labour force in urban and rural areas, their employment rates, the continuing vertical and horizontal occupational segregation and the persistent wage gap between women and men. The Committee is also concerned about the concentration of women in the informal sector with no social security or other benefits and at the high proportion of women engaged in unpaid family work, especially in the agricultural sector.

31. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) To effectively enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value through awareness-raising, increased sanctions and more effective labour inspections, and to narrow and close the wage gap between women and men in accordance with the International Labour Organization Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (Convention No. 100);

(b) To establish a regulatory framework for the informal sector with a view to providing women in that sector with access to social security and other benefits;

(c) To intensify technical and vocational training for women, including in traditionally male-dominated fields and in the agricultural sector;

(d) To adopt temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, aimed at achieving de facto equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market.

Economic and social benefits

34. While noting the efforts of the State party to achieve gender equality in access to financial services and the provision of training in

entrepreneurship, the Committee is concerned at the general lack of information on the conditions for loan schemes, mortgages and other forms of financial credit. The Committee is further concerned that, the recent increase in pensions for women notwithstanding, women who did not contribute to the pension system while working part-time, at home or performing other types of low-paid or unpaid work do not qualify to receive pensions.

35. In accordance with article 13 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Address the barriers facing women entrepreneurs by devising specific programmes and developing evaluation mechanisms to determine whether entrepreneurship education programmes are helping such women;

(b) Review the current pension system so as to increase the percentage of women eligible for full benefits.

Haiti

31. The Committee notes the State party's undertaking to train and deploy a significant number of labour inspectors throughout its territory. The Committee, however, notes with concern that:

(a) The law on the conditions of domestic work adopted by Parliament in 2009, has not yet been promulgated;

(b) Women are concentrated in the informal sector in non-skilled and low-paid jobs, where they are not covered by social protection and often face sexual harassment;

(c) Women face high unemployment rates, persistent horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market as well as a gender wage gap, particularly in the private sector;

(d) Girls, especially, are exploited in the practice known as *restavèk* whereby children live in servitude in private households, and where they are systematically deprived of family affection and their right to education, subjected to forced labour, exploited without being paid, and exposed to physical, sexual and verbal abuse.

32. The Committee draws attention to Sustainable Development Goal 5, target 5.04, to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate, and recalls its previous recommendations ([CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/7](#), paras. 33 and 35) that the State party:

(a) Expedite the promulgation of the draft law on domestic workers' labour conditions, train labour inspectors on the strict enforcement of this law and conduct an information campaign to raise awareness on the new law;

(b) Adopt legislation to broadly define sexual harassment in the workplace, conduct awareness training on reporting such cases, ease

the burden of proof for victims, and provide victims with effective redress, including compensation;

(c) Implement the gender equality action plan included in the Strategic Development Plan for Haiti, and in the National Plan for Poverty Reduction Acceleration, particularly to combat discrimination against women in employment and ensure that women benefit from job creation and entrepreneurship schemes and social protection schemes;

(d) Take measures to close the existing wage gap between women and men and implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 13 (1989) on equal remuneration for work of equal value;

(e) Ratify ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) on Decent Work for Domestic Workers and guarantee domestic workers access to social protection and benefits, including health insurance and maternity leave;

(f) Urgently abolish the practice of restavèk and provide rehabilitation for victims of this practice.

Jamaica

27. Despite the high educational achievement of women in the country, the Committee is concerned about the reportedly low participation of women in the labour force, their high unemployment rate compared with men, their concentration in the low-paying areas of the labour market, the large gender gaps in employment opportunities affecting rural women in particular, and the horizontal and vertical gender segregation of the labour market. While recognizing the Employment (Equal Pay for Men and Women) Act, the Committee is concerned about reports that indicate that women earn less than their male counterparts for comparable work. While noting the State party's commitment to ratifying International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 189 (2011) regarding decent work for domestic workers, the Committee is concerned about the vulnerable situation of domestic workers, many of whom do not have adequate access to social benefits and are susceptible to sexual harassment in the workplace. In this context, the Committee notes with concern the lack of legislation prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace.

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

(a) Systematically collect data on the labour market, detailed by sector and disaggregated by sex, and analyse and develop effective responses to the continuing lack of correlation between the high level of education attained by women and their situation in the workplace;

(b) Develop policies with time-bound targets and indicators to eliminate occupational segregation and achieve substantive equality between men and women in the labour market, including in traditionally male-dominated fields through intensified technical and vocational training; promote overall employment of women and expand women's access to microcredit at low interest rates for self-employment and income-generating activities;

(c) **Improve the enforcement and implementation of the Employment (Equal Pay for Men and Women) Act to eliminate pay disparities between men and women in practice;**

(d) **Strengthen social protection and introduce legal measures to address sexual harassment in the workplace, especially for women domestic workers who face challenges in claiming their right to social benefits and who are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment;**

(e) **Ratify ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning decent work for domestic workers.**

St Vincent and the Grenadines

30. The Committee acknowledges the adoption of legislative and other measures by the State party to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment and ensure that women and men have equal access to the labour market, including by establishing early childhood facilities at the community level and improving public transportation. The Committee notes with concern, however, that in 2013 the labour force participation rate was 55.7 per cent for women and 78.4 per cent for men. While noting the efforts by the State party to increase female participation in non-traditional sectors of the economy, the Committee remains concerned about the clear horizontal segregation of the labour market and the concentration of women in low-income occupational categories.

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

(a) **Systematically collect sex-disaggregated data on labour market participation and analyse and develop effective responses to the continuing lack of correlation between the high level of education attained by women and their low level of engagement in the workforce;**

(b) **Adopt and implement policies, with time-bound targets and indicators, to reverse cultural patterns and transform traditional gender stereotypes and norms of sex-appropriate roles in the society transmitted through schooling and parenting in order to eliminate occupational segregation and achieve substantive equality of women and men in the labour market, including in traditionally male fields, through intensified technical and vocational training for women in those areas.**

32. The Committee notes with concern that the Equal Pay Act is not in conformity with the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value.

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party amend section 3 (1) of the Equal Pay Act to ensure equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value.**

34. The Committee is concerned about information provided by the State party that there is anecdotal evidence that some women who seek employment are requested to provide sexual favours in exchange for being hired. It is also concerned that the existing national legislation does not cover all aspects of sexual harassment and that the Domestic Violence

Act addresses harassment only in the private sphere, thereby failing to address the scope of sexual harassment in the workplace.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt legislation that specifically criminalizes sexual harassment in all settings, including in the workplace, and covers both soliciting sexual favours for advancement and working environments hostile to women.

Suriname

36. The Committee notes that the guarantee of equal pay for equal work for women and men set out in article 28 of the Constitution is not in line with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. It further notes the following 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: (a) the draft law on sexual harassment in the workplace, which was formulated in the 2008–2011 period; (b) the draft law on maternity protection; and (c) the amendment to the Civil Servants' Act to repeal discriminatory provisions that reduce a woman's entitlement to annual leave due to pregnancy and childbirth and that allow for the possibility of terminating the labour contract of a female civil servant when she marries;

(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, 1951 (No. 100) of the International Labour Organization (ILO);

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

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

(e) The absence of regulation on the maximum number of working hours for girls between 14 and 17 years of age, which increases 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:

(a) To adopt, without delay, the revised Civil Code, the draft law on maternity protection and the amendment to the Civil Servants' Act and to expand the coverage of the Minimum Hour Wage Act to the public sector and the informal economy;

(b) **To identify and address the challenges delaying the adoption of the draft law on sexual harassment in the workplace and ensure that it is enforced in both the public and private sectors;**

(c) **To 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 that principle;**

(d) **To conduct a study on occupational segregation in the labour market and the gender pay gap, including 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 to promoting non-discriminatory employment and recruitment practices in all sectors;**

(e) **To implement targeted measures to address occupational segregation and 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) **To promote equal sharing of family and domestic responsibilities between women and men, including by introducing compulsory paternity leave.**

Economic and social life

40. The Committee commends the State party on its legislative reform establishing a national social security system and providing social benefits for women, including family allowances and conditional cash transfers. 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, in particular disadvantaged groups of women, and ensure the internal redistribution of its national 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.**

Trinidad and Tobago

30. The Committee commends the State party on being one of the first countries to enact legislation on counting unremunerated work (1996) and on its efforts to improve the labour participation of women. The Committee is concerned, however, at:

(a) The limited labour participation of women, notwithstanding their high attainment rates in education;

(b) The wide gender wage gap and persistent occupational segregation in the labour market, where women are often engaged in temporary work, and the lack of an explicit provision guaranteeing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;

(c) The limited progress made in amending the Industrial Relations Act to include domestic workers in the definition of a worker;

(d) The fact that, notwithstanding the concentration of women in domestic work in private households, the State party has not ratified the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization;

(e) Information that, notwithstanding the establishment of a steering committee for action against discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, a national study on the matter has not been conducted and, therefore, very limited progress has been made in adopting legislation providing for remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace.

31. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Intensify efforts to gradually transform and reduce the informal sector of employment through, among other things, the provision of vocational and technical training, to eliminate structural inequalities and occupational segregation and to reduce the gender wage gap by guaranteeing and enforcing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in all sectors;

(b) As a matter of priority, amend the Industrial Relations Act to include domestic workers in the definition of a worker;

(c) Consider ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization;

(d) Adopt legislation providing for effective remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace, collect statistical data on the extent of the problem of sex discrimination in the workplace, including cases of sexual harassment, and conduct regular labour inspections aimed at enforcing compliance with labour laws.

Economic and social benefits

34. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to implement strategies aimed at poverty reduction, such as a targeted conditional cash transfer programme and a microenterprise loan facility. It is concerned, however, at:

(a) The lack of information on the effectiveness of the efforts in reducing poverty among women and girls, in particular in female-headed households;

(b) Information that, although under the law women and men enjoy equal access to loans, some private banks discriminate against women, in particular unmarried women, in their lending policies;

(c) Information that the provision of skills training, including the craft training programme for women, focuses on traditionally female-dominated fields and that training in non-traditional fields is not systematically offered.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Intensify its efforts to reduce poverty by facilitating women's access to financial credit and loans;

(b) Investigate the extent to which private banks engage in discriminatory practices against women, in particular unmarried women, in their lending policies;

(c) Provide, in the next periodic report, information on the status of female-headed households and how they benefit from the State party's poverty reduction programmes, including the targeted conditional cash transfer programme and the microenterprise loan facility.

RURAL WOMEN

The Bahamas

41. The Committee is concerned at the disadvantaged status of women in the Family Islands in their access to health services, to education, particularly tertiary education, as well as to justice, employment, skills development and training opportunities, agricultural land management, and income-generating opportunities.

42. **Recalling its General Recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, the Committee recommends that the State party promote the participation of women in the Family Islands in decision-making processes and their access to high-quality health care, education, justice, employment, skills development and training opportunities, agricultural land management and new income-generating opportunities.**

Barbados

39. The Committee notes the activities undertaken by the State party's Rural Development Commission. Nevertheless, it is concerned at the disadvantaged status of women in rural areas and regrets the limited data on their situation and on the measures taken by the State party to address poverty among rural women and to fully ensure their access to justice, education, formal employment, skills development and training opportunities, health, housing, income-generating opportunities and microcredit.

40. **The Committee recommends that the State party seek international assistance and cooperation, as appropriate, to improve infrastructure in rural areas, formulate policies to combat poverty among rural women, and ensure their access to justice, education, formal employment, skills development and training opportunities, health, housing, income-generating opportunities, microcredit and ownership and use of land, taking into account their specific needs, in line with general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women.**

Belize

30. The Committee urges the State party to give full attention to the needs of rural women and to ensure that all policies and programmes aimed at promoting gender equality, including those relating to health, education, clean water and access to justice and to credit reach the rural areas and are fully implemented at the district level. It recommends that clear benchmarks and timetables be set and that implementation of the measures targeting rural women be effectively monitored. The Committee requests the State party to provide in its next report information on the measures undertaken to empower and improve the situation of rural women.

Grenada

35. While welcoming the efforts of the State party to reduce rural poverty, the Committee notes with concern that rural women are disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment and gender-based violence. Rural women of all ages, including women with disabilities who are doubly disadvantaged, have limited access to health and social services, to skill-development and training opportunities, and to justice and legal aid, and have low rates of participation in decision-making. The Committee is also concerned about the high prevalence of female-headed households that also suffer from undue disadvantage. The Committee is further concerned that rural women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters, as evidenced in the cases of Hurricane Ivan and Hurricane Emily.

36. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Strengthen the programmes to address poverty and unemployment for rural women, in particular women heads of households, and ensure that rural women have improved access to health care, social services and the justice system, with targeted programmes for women who suffer multiple discrimination due to old age and disabilities, including through greater access to social safety nets;

Guyana

36. While welcoming the enactment in 2006 of the new Amerindian Act, granting legal title to 135 Amerindian communities of 14 per cent of the country's land mass, and noting the establishment of a special fund for the development of Amerindian communities and the launch of the Rural Electrification Programme, the Committee expresses its concern at the disadvantaged position of women in hinterland, rural and remote areas, who form the majority of women in the State party and who are characterized by poverty, difficulties in gaining access to health and social services and a lack of participation in decision-making processes at the community level.

37. The Committee calls upon the State party:

(a) **To pay special attention to the needs of rural women to ensure that they enjoy access to health, education, clean water and sanitation services and income-generation projects;**

(b) **To address negative customs and traditional practices, especially in rural areas, which affect the full enjoyment by rural and Amerindian women of the rights enshrined in the Convention.**

Haiti

37. The Committee is concerned that rural women are exposed to high levels of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, have little access to basic services, and participate only marginally in decision-making relating to issues that are of concern to them. The Committee is further concerned at the devastating impact of the recent drought that has affected the harvest and the income of rural women. The Committee particularly regrets that given the importance of women in the production of food they have not been consulted on or included in the development of agrarian policies.

38. The Committee reiterates its recommendation (CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/7, para. 39) that the State party adopt a comprehensive strategy, which includes temporary special measures, to adequately address the situation and needs of rural women and girls. Special attention should be given to their access to justice, political and public life, education, employment, health, economic opportunities, land ownership and use and financial credit, in particular regarding rural development. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure that rural women are represented in decision-making processes at all levels in the agricultural sector, thus enabling them also to better address the impacts of natural disasters and climate change.

Jamaica

31. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party to reduce rural poverty, including through initiatives such as the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education, which provides grants for vulnerable families in support of health and education for children, persons with disabilities and the elderly, and the Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme, which provides employment opportunities and skills training for vulnerable groups. However, the Committee notes with concern that rural women are disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment and gender-based violence. Rural women of all ages, including women with disabilities, are doubly disadvantaged and, in some areas, have limited access to health and social services, skill development and training opportunities, justice and legal aid and they also have low rates of participation in decision-making. The Committee is also concerned that rural women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and climate change.

32. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Strengthen programmes to address poverty and unemployment for rural women, in particular women heads of households, and ensure that rural women have improved access to health-care and social services and the justice system, with targeted programmes for women who suffer multiple forms of discrimination owing to old age and disabilities, including through greater access to social safety nets;**

(b) **Ensure that the development and implementation of policies and programmes on disaster preparedness, response to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change, as well as other emergencies, are based on a comprehensive gender analysis, and mainstream the concerns of women, particularly those of rural women, in all policies and programmes.**

Saint Lucia

33. The Committee is concerned about the situation of women agricultural workers, especially women banana growers, who have lost their livelihoods due to the change in the banana trade regime.

34. **The Committee calls upon the State party to strengthen its efforts to ensure that women in rural communities have access to education, literacy and vocational training, and new income-generating opportunities.**

St Vincent and the Grenadines

40. While welcoming the efforts of the State party to reduce rural poverty by carrying out development and microcredit projects and improving the delivery of basic social services to remote communities, the Committee notes with concern that rural women, including those in isolated communities, which includes indigenous women, are disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment and gender-based violence. Rural women have limited access to health care, education, skills development and training opportunities and to justice and legal aid and have low rates of participation in decision-making. The Committee is also concerned about the high prevalence of female-headed households that also suffer from undue disadvantage and lack of social protection. The Committee is further concerned that rural women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters, such as floods, hurricanes and volcanoes, as evidenced by the cases of Hurricane Ivan (2004), Hurricane Tomas (2010) and Tropical Storm Lili (2002), as well as the impact of climate change.

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

(a) **Strengthen programmes to address gender-based violence, poverty and unemployment among rural women, in particular those in isolated communities and those that head households, and ensure that they have improved access to health care, social services and the justice system, with targeted programmes for women who suffer multiple**

discrimination owing to old age and disability, including through greater access to social safety nets;

(b) Consider extending social protection schemes, including conditional cash transfers, targeting all vulnerable female-headed households;

(c) Ensure that the development and implementation of policies and programmes on disaster preparedness, response to natural disasters and impacts of climate change, as well as other emergencies, are based on a comprehensive gender analysis and mainstream the concerns of women, especially those of rural women, and include them in the design and management of such programmes.

Suriname

Rural women, Maroon women 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 welcomes the establishment of two directorates in 2016 to provide assistance to the Maroon and indigenous communities. However, it notes with concern the extremely high poverty rate among rural women, Maroon women and indigenous women in the State party and their very limited access to basic services, including health services, education, clean water, adequate sanitation, energy and communications technologies. It is also concerned about violations of the land rights of indigenous women and tribal women, despite three judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued in 2005, 2007 and 2015, holding that the State party violated the rights of indigenous people to land and access to justice. The Committee further regrets that rural women, Maroon women 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 women, Maroon women and indigenous women and to overcome persistent gender inequalities limiting their access to land, social services, economic opportunities, sanitation facilities and communications technologies;

(b) Implement measures to ensure the full and equal participation of rural women, Maroon women and indigenous women in decision-making processes affecting them, including regarding 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 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of ILO.

DISADVANTAGED GROUPS OF WOMEN

The Bahamas

Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women

43. The Committee notes with appreciation the State party's commitment to strengthening regional cooperation on the protection of refugees and stateless persons, demonstrated by hosting the Caribbean Migration Consultations in December 2017. The Committee also notes the existence of the Migration Working Group. It is, however, concerned about:

(a) The absence of specific legislation incorporating a gender dimension that governs refugee and asylum seeking processes;

(b) The detention of asylum seeking women, including those with children;

(c) The lack of programmes aimed at the social and economic integration of migrant women, women of Haitian descent, refugee and asylum-seeking women in the State party;

(d) The situation of asylum seeking, migrant women and women of Haitian descent without identity documents and national passports, who do not report the violations of their rights, including gender-based violence, to the authorities, owing to fear of deportation.

44. In line with 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) Adopt specific legislation, incorporating a gender dimension, that governs refugee and asylum seeking processes;

(b) Apply a gender-sensitive approach in receiving asylum-seeking women and in considering asylum claims to ensure that they are protected from exploitation or abuse while in custody and have access to appropriate health and other services;

(c) Apply less coercive alternative measure for asylum-seeking, refugee or irregular migrant women and their children and use detention only as a last resort;

(d) Take measures to improve the social and economic situation of refugee, asylum seeking, migrant women and women of Haitian descent in order to eliminate their vulnerability to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence, including domestic violence; and provide their access to basic services, regardless of their immigration status;

(e) Ensure that a gender-sensitive approach is applied to asylum claims by women and girls; provide refugee, asylum seeking and migrant women with free legal counselling on the procedures available for obtaining legal status in the State party and nationality documents.

Barbados

Women with disabilities

41. The Committee is concerned at the lack of public policies and measures to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities, including their rights to inclusive education, employment, health care, housing and participation in political and public life, as well as the absence of mechanisms to protect women and girls with disabilities from intersecting forms of discrimination, gender-based violence and abuse. The Committee is also concerned at the alleged practice of the forced sterilization of women recognized as legally incapable, with the sole consent of their guardian and without their free, prior and informed consent or an impartial examination by a court.

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

(a) **Adopt comprehensive policies and programmes to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities, in particular those facing intersecting forms of discrimination, ensuring their equal access to mainstream education, employment, housing, health-care and other basic services, as well as social protection, and to promote their autonomy, access to community services and participation in political and public life;**

(b) **Abolish the practice of the forced sterilization of women and girls with disabilities, ensure that any such interventions may only be performed with their full, free, prior and informed consent, prosecute and adequately punish medical personnel who have performed forced sterilizations on women or girls with disabilities and provide remedies, including adequate financial compensation and rehabilitation, for the victims of forced sterilization.**

Other disadvantaged groups of women

43. The Committee is concerned at the absence of anti-discrimination legislation prohibiting intersecting forms of discrimination. It is also concerned about discrimination against migrant women, women belonging to religious minority groups and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women.

44. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure equal rights and opportunities for women who face intersecting forms of discrimination, in particular migrant women, women belonging to religious minority groups and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women.**

Grenada

Refugee women

37. While the State party currently hosts a very small number of refugees, the Committee notes that due to escalating extraregional migratory movements and migrant trafficking in the Caribbean there is a high probability of an increase

in the number of asylum-seekers. In this respect, the Committee is concerned that the State party has not acceded to the international conventions on refugees and statelessness, and that it has no national refugee legislation or national asylum procedure.

38. The Committee recommends that the State party consider acceding to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and develop national refugee legislation and a national asylum procedure.

Jamaica

33. The Committee welcomes recent initiatives undertaken by the State party to benefit refugee women and girls, including: (a) the adoption, in 2009, of a national refugee policy that strengthens the pre-existing ad hoc framework for the determination of refugee status; (b) the introduction of a compulsory child registration initiative in 2007 and a bedside registration procedure aimed at capturing all births occurring in the country; and (c) the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act, 2007, which is aimed at protecting women and children. However, the Committee is concerned about the lack of a strategy or contingency planning for mass influxes of migrants and refugees, the inadequacy of services for refugees, particularly Haitian migrants and, with regard to the latter, the lack of protection from forced repatriation in the light of the moratorium on forced returns to Haiti following the earthquake in 2010. The Committee is also concerned that the State party has not acceded to the international conventions on refugees and statelessness.

34. The Committee urges the State party to develop a gender-sensitive national strategy or contingency planning for mass influxes of migrants and refugees, ensure adequate services and documentation for refugees in line with international obligations concerning non-discrimination and gender equality, and discontinue their forced repatriation, particularly in the case of Haitian migrants. The Committee recommends that the State party consider acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

35. While welcoming the State party's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 and its signing of the Optional Protocol thereto, the Committee is concerned about the situation of women and girls with disabilities, including their access to education, employment and health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, and their protection from violence and abuse. The Committee is also concerned about the absence of data on women and girls with disabilities, which limits the development and implementation of policies and programmes to promote equal opportunities for them in society.

36. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Systematically collect data on women and girls with disabilities and use data to develop appropriate policies and programmes to promote equal opportunities for such women and girls in education, skills training, employment and access to services, including mental, sexual and reproductive health services;**

(b) **Strengthen training for professionals working with women and girls with disabilities to prevent abuse and increase awareness-raising to address multiple forms of discrimination against women with disabilities;**

(c) **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

Haiti

Women with disabilities

41. The Committee notes the adoption by the State party of legislation protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. It is nevertheless concerned that women and girls with disabilities continue to face severe stigmatization and discrimination in the State party and that they are often subjected to violence and sexual exploitation. The Committee notes with concern the barriers to their access to justice, political participation, employment, education and sexual and reproductive health services.

42. **The Committee recalls its general recommendation No. 18 (1991) on disabled women and recommends that the State party effectively enforce the Law on the Integration of Persons with Disabilities through the use of adequate sanctions against perpetrators of violence and discrimination against women and girls with disabilities and by ensuring that the victims of such acts are adequately compensated. The Committee also recommends that the State party undertake awareness-raising activities to change negative cultural attitudes towards women and girls with disabilities and ensure that they have adequate access to justice, political participation, education, income-generating activities and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services.**

Internally displaced women

43. The Committee is concerned about the extremely difficult living conditions and health problems, in particular the severe spread of cholera, lack of adequate drinking water and sanitation, and poor housing in makeshift camps faced by stateless women, women displaced by the 2010 earthquake, and by women of Haitian descent who have been expelled from the Dominican Republic. The Committee notes with concern the high rate of sexual violence against these women and girls and the inadequacy of the measures taken to prevent such acts, investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators and provide redress to the victims. It is further concerned about the compounding effect on these women of inadequate basic health care, housing, education and loss of means of subsistence and economic opportunities.

44. **The Committee recommends that the State party develop and implement an action plan to urgently provide internally displaced**

women with access to basic services, including education, economic opportunities and health care, and ensure that they are protected from violence, both within and outside the camps, and that perpetrators of any such acts are prosecuted and adequately punished, and victims provided with assistance and adequate redress. The State party is encouraged to support Haitian nationals trying to regularize their situation in the Dominican Republic and ensure that Haitian women deported or voluntarily returning from the Dominican Republic benefit from reintegration measures in the State party.

Women in prison

45. The Committee is concerned about the high number of women detainees awaiting trial, in some cases for many years. It is further concerned about reports of severe overcrowding in female prisons, and the absence of separation between girls and adult women detainees, as well as between pre-trial detainees and convicted women.

46. **The Committee recommends that the State party implement the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders ('the Bangkok Rules') and provide alternatives to detention to reduce the high number of pre-trial women detainees.**

Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women

47. The Committee notes the concern expressed by the Human Rights Committee regarding "a significant number of displays of hostility towards LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] persons and other actions including acts of violence and attacks on the institutions that defend their rights, all of which are closely bound up with the persistence of stereotypes with respect to these groups" (CCPR/C/HTI/CO/1 (2014), para. 9).

48. **The Committee recommends the State party to effectively protect lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons from violence and discrimination and ensure their access to justice, through the appropriate handling of their complaints, punishment of perpetrators and awarding of compensation.**

Suriname

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 to mainstream gender issues during the conduct and monitoring of those activities through its gender action plan. 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 companies registered in Suriname and carrying out operations abroad, on the rights of rural women, Maroon women and indigenous women. In that regard, it is concerned that the existing legal framework does not hold foreign-

owned companies sufficiently accountable for violations of women's rights, in particular their land rights and right to health, and violations of 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 Mining Decree, to establish minimum standards for environmental protection, water quality, labour and health, with a view to protecting the rights of rural women, Maroon women 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.**

Suriname

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 access to and the accessibility of education, employment and health-care services for rural women, Maroon women 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, in particular for rural women, Maroon women 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 the lack of long-term protection measures for women refugees and asylum seekers who are victims of trafficking or gender-based violence. It is further concerned that women refugees and asylum seekers in the State party face difficulties in gaining access to 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 women and girl asylum-seekers;**

(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 and transgender women and intersex persons

50. The Committee notes that the Penal Code has been revised, inter alia, to include the protection of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons and to prohibit discrimination and hate speech against them. However, it is concerned that lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons continue to face discrimination and harassment, in particular 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 and transgender women and intersex persons, and raise awareness in order 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 and transgender women and intersex persons, including by prosecuting and adequately punishing perpetrators.**

Trinidad and Tobago

38. The Committee is concerned about the situation of female-headed households, widows, older women and women with disabilities, who often suffer intersecting forms of discrimination, especially with regard to access to employment, health care and social services. It notes with regret the limited information provided by the State party in this regard.

39. **The Committee requests the State party to include, in the next periodic report, detailed information, including disaggregated data and information on specific programmes and achievements, on the situation of female headed-households, widows, older women and women with disabilities.**

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONS

The Bahamas

45. The Committee is concerned that section 50 of the Marriage Act provides for a minimum marriage age of 15 years and allows exceptions for the marriage between the ages of 13 and 15. It remains concerned that there are no legal provisions governing de facto unions, which may deny women protection and redress in cases of separation. The Committee is also concerned that there has been little progress in the creation of the Unified Court System and the establishment of the Family Court. The Committee is also concerned that

mothers (particularly single mothers) carry a disproportionate burden of care for children due to cultural factors and because there is no enforcement mechanism for the payment of child maintenance.

46. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/BHS/CO/1-5, para. 38) and recommends that the State party:

(a) Enforce the application of the minimum age of marriage of 18 years in law and practice without exceptions;

(b) Review its legal system governing marriage and family relations with a view to extending existing legal provisions to couples living in de facto unions;

(c) Accelerate the establishment of a unified court system, with the Family Courts and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Support Services, in accordance with the recommendations of the Family Court System Committee; allocate adequate human, financial and technical resources for the establishment and effective operationalization of the Unified Court System with a clear time frame;

(d) Strengthen the provision of parental education to parents, families and general public, with the aim of promoting the shared responsibility of both parents in relation to the care and maintenance of children; and review the legislation and procedures for child maintenance and urgently address challenges to ensure that single mothers can receive child maintenance in a timely manner.

Barbados

45. The Committee is concerned with regard to the following:

(a) Although the legal minimum age of marriage is 18 years for both women and men, girls who are 16 and 17 years of age can marry with the consent of their parents;

(b) Corporal punishment is a continuing practice affecting girls in the home;

(c) The lack of awareness among women that they can retain their maiden name after marriage;

(d) Reports of girls running away from home and the lack of information on the causes and the measures taken by the State party to address the problem.

46. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Enforce the strict application of the legal minimum age of marriage of 18 years and only allow exceptions for girls and boys who have reached the age of 16 years and have obtained judicial authorization;

(b) Take strong actions, including amending relevant legislation, to ensure the prohibition of corporal punishment in the home;

(c) **Raise awareness among women about the possibility of retaining their maiden name after marriage;**

(d) **Address the problem of girls running away from home and undertake a study on it in order to tackle its root causes.**

31. The Committee is concerned that, with the consent of the parents, the legal age of marriage is 16 years. The Committee also notes with concern that a man who has sexual relations with a girl under the age of 16 can, with the consent of her parents, marry her without being prosecuted for carnal knowledge.

32. **The Committee calls upon the State party to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years, in accordance with article 16, paragraph 2, of the Convention, general recommendation 21 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

Grenada

39. The Committee notes with concern the prevalence of traditional stereotypes of women in relation to the role in the family and certain legal provisions which reinforce this, such as the requirement of only the father's name in various administrative forms and certificates. The Committee also notes, in line with the State party report, the vulnerable situation of women in common-law unions. It also notes that the Married Woman's Property Act (1896) and the Marriage Act (1903) are out of date and in need of revisions to better suit the present context. The Committee further notes with concern that many fathers do not take on their parental responsibilities, and single mothers often face challenges in receiving child maintenance, which as such is also a very small amount.

40. **The Committee, recalling article 16 of the Convention, as well as its general recommendation No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations, recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to eliminate stereotypical attitudes regarding the roles of women and men in the family through awareness-raising campaigns; amend the legal provisions and administrative forms that discriminate against women in relation to family life; and strengthen protection and support for women in common-law unions;**

(b) **Amend the Married Woman's Property Act (1896) and the Marriage Act (1903) to bring them into line with the Convention and eliminate discriminatory provisions against women in family life;**

(c) **Strengthen the provision of parental education, with the aim of promoting the shared responsibility of both parents in relation to the care and maintenance of the child;**

(d) **Review legislation and procedures for child maintenance and urgently address challenges to ensure that single mothers are provided with adequate and timely child maintenance.**

Guyana

38. While noting the adoption in 2006 of the Criminal Law (Offences) (Amendment) Act, colloquially termed the “Age of Consent Act”, and the consequential amendment to the Marriage Act in 2006, prohibiting children below the age of 16 years from entering into marriage, the Committee remains concerned at reports that the phenomenon of early marriage persists. The Committee also notes with concern that women bear the greater burden of the responsibilities of raising children and taking care of dependants and that such responsibilities deny them their right to education, employment and other activities relating to their personal development.

39. **The Committee calls upon the State party:**

(a) **To ensure de facto criminalization of early marriage;**

(b) **To carry out an awareness-raising campaign to better educate women about their rights under the Convention, including with regard to traditional negative stereotypes that prevent their free choice regarding reproductive health, and to promote the shared responsibility of both the father and mother to ensure the well-being and care of the child and to ensure the right of women to make their own choices with regard to marriage and family.**

Haiti

49. The Committee is concerned that the discriminatory provisions prevailing in the Civil Code, particularly on the inferior status of women in family relations, have not yet been repealed. Given that the majority of couples in the State party are comprised of consensual unions, the Committee is also concerned that the bill on the recognition of consensual unions (*plaçage*) is not included in the legislative agenda, thereby depriving women in the State party of equal rights with men in family relations. The Committee is further concerned about the common practice of fathers denying the paternity of their biological children, leading to the general failure of men to meet their parental obligations and resulting in the poverty of the numerous female-headed households and the children concerned.

50. **The Committee, recalling its general recommendations No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations and No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, reiterates its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/7, para. 41) that the State party expedite the adoption of the bill on *plaçage* and the revision of the Civil Code, in particular the provisions on family law, to ensure that both partners in consensual unions have equal rights and responsibilities during the union and upon its dissolution. The Committee further recommends that the State party consider reversing the burden of proof to establish paternity in claims where this is contested.**

Jamaica

37. The Committee notes with concern the prevalence of traditional stereotypes of women in relation to their role in the family. The Committee further notes with concern that while both parents are legally responsible for the maintenance of their child/children, mothers (particularly single mothers) carry a disproportionate burden of care for children because of cultural factors as well as legal and administrative inadequacies concerning child maintenance and a lack of participation by men. In this regard, the Committee notes with concern the large numbers (40 per cent) of female-headed households. The Committee is also concerned about the complicated proceedings for divorce within the State party which provides that the parties must be married for a minimum of two years and de facto separated for one year and that the courts rather than the parties would decide whether to grant the divorce based on the irreparable rupture of the marriage and only after a period of six months. The Committee is concerned that these complicated and extensive proceedings are harmful to women, particularly in cases of abusive relationships and where women may not have the same resources as men.

38. The Committee, recalling article 16 of the Convention, as well as its general recommendation No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations, recommends that the State party:

(a) **Amend the legal provisions and administrative forms that discriminate against women in relation to family life; strengthen protection and support for women in common-law unions; and strengthen its efforts to eliminate stereotypical attitudes regarding the roles of women and men in the family through awareness-raising campaigns;**

(b) **Strengthen the provision of parental education, with the aim of promoting the shared responsibility of both parents in relation to the care and maintenance of the child;**

(c) **Review the legislation and procedures for child maintenance and urgently address challenges to ensure that single mothers are provided with adequate and timely child maintenance; and**

(d) **Review the legislation and proceedings regarding divorce with the view to simplifying the process and ensuring that women are not placed in disadvantaged or harmful positions due to restrictive legal proceedings.**

Saint Lucia

35. The Committee is concerned that the Civil Code contains discriminatory provisions relating to marriage and the family, including a provision that calls for a wife's obedience to her husband. It is also concerned about lack of provisions for divorce by mutual consent. The Committee is also concerned about the potential for discrimination against women in cohabiting relationships, in particular in regard to property.

36. The Committee calls on the State party to eliminate all discriminatory provisions in regard to marriage and family in the Civil

Code, and to consider introducing the option of divorce by mutual consent. It also encourages the State party to ensure that the rights of women in cohabiting relationships are protected, in particular those to property acquired during such relationships.

St Kitts and Nevis

42. The Committee welcomes the adoption of national legislation that protects the rights of children born out of wedlock, but remains concerned about cultural attitudes and power imbalances within family relations that lead to discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls. The Committee is also concerned that women in de facto unions continue to be disadvantaged before the law, given that they do not enjoy the right to property acquired during the union or financial support from their partners. The Committee further notes with concern the existence of disparities between the child maintenance awards made by the courts to the children of unmarried mothers and those of married mothers.

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

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to eliminate stereotypical attitudes regarding the roles of women and men in the family through awareness-raising campaigns;**

(b) **Expedite efforts to undertake reforms, including legislative reforms, with a view to protecting the property rights of women upon the termination of de facto unions and giving them the right to financial support in case of need, in line with general recommendation No. 29 on article 16 of the Convention (economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution);**

(c) **Strengthen its efforts to secure child maintenance payments in adequate amounts, ensuring also that there are no disparities between those accorded to the children of married and unmarried mothers;**

(d) **Consider ratifying the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions relating to Maintenance Obligations of 1973.**

44. The Committee is concerned that the Marriage Act set the minimum legal age for marriage at 15 years for girls and 16 years for boys.

45. **The Committee urges the State party to expeditiously amend the Marriage Act to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for girls and boys, in accordance with 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 on harmful practices.**

Suriname

52. The Committee welcomes the fact that article 35 of the Constitution recognizes the equality of husband and wife before the law and the extraordinary value of motherhood, and provides for the

protection of children without discrimination. Nonetheless, the Committee is concerned that, in practice, women do not have equal rights within marriage. In particular, it is concerned about the following:

(a) The delay, since 2011, in revising the Civil Code to remove provisions that establish the father as the only parent having guardianship over children, require children to take the name of their father and define the legal incapacity of married women;

(b) The minimum age of marriage, which is 15 years for girls, the disproportionately high number of rural women, Maroon women and indigenous women 15 to 17 years of age 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, 56 (a), 217, 221, 234 and 353, raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years and guarantee the legal capacity and equal rights of married women, as well as the 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 complaints 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 the corresponding remedies;

(d) Consider extending social and economic protection to women in de facto unions.

Trinidad and Tobago

40. The Committee is concerned at the lack of information on the economic consequences of divorce for women and girls.

41. Recalling its general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, the Committee recommends that the State party undertake a comprehensive study of the economic consequences of divorce for women and girls.