



# Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Lebanon\*

1. The Committee considered the sixth periodic report of Lebanon (CEDAW/C/LBN/6) at its 1866th and 1868th meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.1866 and CEDAW/C/SR.1868), held on 17 and 18 February 2022. The list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group is contained in CEDAW/C/LBN/Q/6, and the responses of Lebanon are contained in CEDAW/C/LBN/RQ/6.

#### A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its sixth periodic report and its written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group in relation to the sixth periodic report. It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the additional clarifications provided in writing in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its multisectoral delegation, which was headed by the President of the National Commission for Lebanese Women, Claudine Aoun, and was composed of the Director General of the Ministry for Social Affairs, the Director General of the Ministry of Economy and Trade, judges and representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Acting Director General of the Ministry of Public Health, the Acting Director General of the Ministry of Labour and the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Defence, the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces, the General Directorate of General Security, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Economy and Trade, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, the National Commission for Lebanese Women.

#### B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since its consideration in 2015 of the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the following:

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-first session (7–25 February 2022).



(a) The amendment to Law No. 293 of 2014 on the protection of women and all family members against domestic violence, which recognizes economic violence as a form of domestic violence and aims at more effective protection of victims of violence, in December 2020;

(b) The adoption of Law No. 205 on sexual harassment and the rehabilitation of victims of sexual harassment, which criminalizes sexual harassment in the workplace and the public space and guarantees the rehabilitation of victims and their reintegration into society, in December 2020;

(c) The adoption of a decree establishing a national commission that is responsible for combating the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and monitoring the related situation and that includes 30 per cent of women among its membership, in January 2020;

(d) The adoption of Law No. 53, which repeals article 522 of the Penal Code, which exempted a rapist from punishment upon marrying the victim;

(e) The adoption of Law No. 62, which establishes the National Human Rights Commission, an entity mandated to monitor the human rights situation, review laws and investigate complaints of violations of human rights, in October 2016.

5. The Committee also welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality. In this regard, it welcomes the following:

(a) The adoption of a national strategy to combat violence against women and girls (2019–2029), in 2019;

(b) The adoption of a strategic plan for the protection of women and children in Lebanon (2019–2026), in 2019;

(c) The adoption of a national action plan for implementing Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security and encouraging the participation of women at all stages of peace processes, in September 2019;

(d) The adoption of a national plan for the economic empowerment of women, in January 2019;

(e) The adoption of a three-year strategic action plan (2019–2022) by the Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children, whose objectives are to undertake a comprehensive review to ensure the compatibility of legislation with the provisions of the Convention and amend or repeal all laws that discriminate against women, in 2019;

(f) The adoption of the action plan for the National Commission for Lebanese Women (2018–2022), in 2018;

(g) The adoption of a national strategy for gender equality (2017–2030), based on the national strategy for women in Lebanon (2011–2021), a strategic objective of which is to combat all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls in all spheres, in 2017.

### **C. Sustainable Development Goals**

6. **The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the**

mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It urges the State party to recognize women as the driving force of its sustainable development and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.

#### **D. Parliament**

7. The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see A/65/38, part two, annex VI). It invites the Lebanese Parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.

#### **E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations**

##### **General context**

8. The Committee is aware of the devastating impact of the combined economic, financial, social and security challenges facing the State party, the simultaneous political and institutional crisis and the impact on the national economy and stability of the explosion in the port of Beirut in August 2020, all of which constitute obstacles to the implementation of the rights enshrined in the Convention. The Committee calls upon the international community to increase its financial support for the State party to meet the extraordinary demands created by this situation, and stresses that any additional resources should be fully allocated to those most in need. Nevertheless, it notes that many initiatives have been taken to advance women's rights, including the development of a number of draft laws in the areas of civil marriage and family relations, transmission of nationality, child marriage, electoral quotas, trafficking in persons, the rights of women migrant workers and rural women and the lifting of reservations to the Convention. The Committee calls upon the State party to demonstrate its political will and commitment to ensure the rights of women by adopting, as a matter of priority, legal provisions protecting women's rights.

##### **Women's rights and gender equality in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery efforts**

9. The Committee welcomes the plan developed by the Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children to hold a series of public hearings on the theme "Women's economic security in crises" to address the negative effects of the pandemic, as well as of the other crises that Lebanon is experiencing, on women's economic security. It notes that, within the context of the pandemic, women who are victims of domestic violence are no longer required to file a complaint with the Public Prosecutor, that they can make statements over the telephone if they cannot appear in person at the specialized judicial office and that a hotline has been set up for victims of domestic violence. However, the Committee notes that no specific measures have been adopted to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on women's enjoyment of their rights.

10. **The Committee, in line with its guidance note on the obligations of States parties to the Convention in the context of COVID-19, issued on 22 April 2020, recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Implement institutional, legislative and policy measures to redress long-standing inequalities between women and men and to give renewed impetus to the achievement of gender equality by placing women at the centre of COVID-19 recovery strategies as a strategic priority for sustainable change, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals;**

(b) **Ensure that, in the context of lockdown measures, whether partial or total, and in post-crisis recovery plans, women and girls are not relegated to stereotypical gender roles;**

(c) **Ensure the equal participation of women and girls, including disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women, in the design and implementation of COVID-19 recovery programmes;**

(d) **Ensure that women and girls benefit equally from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care work, aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic.**

#### **Reservations and the Optional Protocol to the Convention**

11. The Committee notes that the National Commission for Lebanese Women is carrying out studies that will pave the way for the inclusion in the State party's civil law of a unified personal status law aimed at ensuring gender equality and also notes the progress made in the examination of a draft law aimed at recognizing the right of Lebanese women to transmit their nationality to their children. However, the Committee notes with concern that the State party maintains its reservations to articles 9 (2), on equal rights with respect to the nationality of children, 16 (1) (c)–(d) and (f)–(g), on equality in marriage and family relations, and 29 (1), on arbitration in the event of a dispute, of the Convention. It further notes that the State party has not ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

12. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/4-5, para. 16) and urges the State party to expedite its efforts towards withdrawing its reservations to the Convention, in particular to articles 9 (2), on equal rights with respect to the nationality of children, and 16 (1) (c)–(d) and (f)–(g), on equality in marriage and family relations, which are incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention and constitute an obstacle to the implementation of the Convention as a whole, as the Committee has already stated in 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.**

#### **Constitutional and legislative framework**

13. The Committee welcomes the initiatives taken by the Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children, in particular the proposals and draft laws relating to the amendment of the Penal Code to broaden the definition of rape and the amendment of the Labour Code to ensure adherence to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. The Committee notes with concern, however, that there is no legislation defining and prohibiting all forms of discrimination against women, including direct and indirect discrimination by State and non-State actors, in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination. The Committee also notes the absence of a clear time frame for the review of discriminatory laws and that sex is not included as a prohibited ground of discrimination in articles 9 and 10 of the Constitution.

14. **Recalling the links between articles 1 and 2 of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, the Committee calls upon the State party:**

(a) **To revise the Constitution, including article 9, to be consistent with the Convention and to include an explicit prohibition of discrimination based on sex;**

(b) **To ensure the adoption of legislation defining and prohibiting all forms of discrimination against women, in conformity with articles 1 and 2 of the**

**Convention, encompassing direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination;**

**(c) To adopt a time frame and expedite a comprehensive legislative review with a view to amending or repealing all laws that discriminate against women.**

#### **Women's access to justice**

15. The Committee notes that free legal aid is available to women without sufficient means and that free legal assistance is offered by lawyers in specialized centres for marginalized groups of women, including in isolated areas. It notes, however, the absence of court proceedings in which provisions of the Convention have been invoked or directly applied. The Committee notes with concern the lack of gender-sensitive investigations, prosecutions and evidence-gathering procedures, and reports of judicial gender bias, which jeopardize women's access to justice and effective remedies, in particular in cases of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence against women. It is also concerned about reports that women migrant domestic workers face barriers to justice when seeking to report abuses.

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

**(a) Build the capacity of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and police officers, including by making training on the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations a mandatory part of their professional training;**

**(b) Strengthen the gender responsiveness and gender sensitivity of the justice system, including by increasing the number of women in the judiciary and providing systematic capacity-building opportunities to judges, prosecutors, police officers, lawyers and forensic experts on women's rights and gender-sensitive investigation methods;**

**(c) Ensure that women who are victims of gender-based violence and discrimination have access to effective remedies and victim support, such as medical and psychological assistance and shelters;**

**(d) Systematically collect data on the number and types of complaints of abuse reported by women migrant domestic workers, the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions and the sentences imposed on perpetrators, especially in cases leading to suicide and death, disaggregated by nationality, age and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator;**

**(e) Continue strengthening legal aid and legal counselling programmes to ensure that women have access to affordable or, if necessary, free legal aid services, particularly women in rural and remote areas and those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, and disseminate information on the mechanisms and procedures available to women and girls for seeking redress for violations of their rights.**

#### **National machinery for the advancement of women**

17. The Committee welcomes the many initiatives taken to mainstream women's rights and implement the second national action plan (2017–2019), designed to implement the national strategy for women in Lebanon (2011–2021), in legislation, economic life and the media sector. It is concerned, however, about the limited mandate and authority of the National Commission for Lebanese Women, which reduces its impact, and the inadequate resources allocated to the Commission from the State budget. The Committee notes the establishment of gender focal points in all ministries and various other government departments and the efforts made by the State party to integrate a gender perspective into policies and programmes. It is

concerned, however, that the appointment of gender focal points has not yet been institutionalized. At the same time, the Committee notes that the State party is in the process of elaborating a new national strategy for women in Lebanon (2022–2030).

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

(a) **Ensure the independence of the National Commission for Lebanese Women, provide it with a strong mandate on women’s rights and the authority to coordinate policies on women’s rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment, and ensure that it has adequate human, technical and financial resources to carry out its mandate;**

(b) **Institutionalize the appointment of gender focal points in all ministries and government departments;**

(c) **Expedite the adoption of the new national strategy for women in Lebanon (2022–2030) by explicitly integrating the recommendations of the Committee and strengthening technical assistance from United Nations agencies;**

(d) **Consider re-establishing a ministry of women’s affairs to oversee, coordinate and direct all efforts to protect and strengthen women’s rights.**

#### **National human rights institution**

19. The Committee notes the adoption of the law creating the National Human Rights Commission but is concerned that the institution is not yet functioning.

20. **The Committee recommends that the State party provide, as a matter of priority, the national human rights institution with adequate human, technical and financial resources, and ensure that the institution cooperates with women’s civil society organizations, thereby allowing it to fulfil its mandate in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).**

#### **Temporary special measures**

21. The Committee notes that the National Commission for Lebanese Women has proposed statutory quotas for women candidates in legislative and municipal elections. The Committee also notes, however, that the State party has not adopted any temporary special measures to achieve substantive equality between women and men in areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, such as in political participation, education, employment and health care.

22. **In line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and its general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Urgently adopt the draft laws introducing a minimum quota for the inclusion of women as candidates on political parties’ electoral lists for parliamentary and municipal elections, as well as sanctions for non-compliance;**

(b) **Adopt relevant temporary special measures to promote the participation of women in all areas under the Convention where they are underrepresented or disadvantaged, in particular in political participation, education, employment and health care, with time-bound targets and benchmarks, accompanied by sanctions for non-compliance, to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men, especially in decision-making positions.**

#### **Stereotypes and harmful practices**

23. The Committee notes the study carried out by the National Commission for Lebanese Women on gender, the media and the representation of women and men in

advertisements, which noted stereotypical and discriminatory portrayals of women. The Committee also notes that media personnel have been trained on how to report on women, that a training guide and a code of conduct have been developed and that a media observatory to address discriminatory stereotypes in the media has been established. The Committee is concerned, however, that compliance by media workers with the code of conduct on how to report on women is not being monitored and that the State party has not adopted a comprehensive strategy, with a budget and results-based objectives, aimed at eliminating discriminatory stereotypes against women.

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

(a) **Ensure the independence of the media observatory and provide it with adequate human, technical and financial resources to effectively monitor respect for women's rights and gender equality in the media and enforce the code of conduct for media workers reporting on gender issues, including by issuing penalties for non-compliance;**

(b) **Continue raising awareness on women's rights and gender equality among journalists and media workers, and integrate education on women's rights in professional training for media workers;**

(c) **Expedite the adoption of a comprehensive strategy, with a budget and results-based objectives, aimed at eliminating discriminatory stereotypes on the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society.**

**Gender-based violence against women**

25. The Committee welcomes the amendment to Law No. 293 of 2014 on the protection of women and all family members against domestic violence adopted on 21 December 2020, particularly the extension of the notion of intrafamily violence to include acts committed during married life, and the criminalization of psychological and economic violence. It also notes that complaints about domestic violence are consolidated in a unified database and that data on cases of gender-based violence against women are disaggregated by age, nationality and type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Law No. 205 of 2020 on sexual harassment and the rehabilitation of victims of sexual harassment. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) That the sanctions provided for by the new law, Law No. 293, are not being strictly enforced;

(b) The long delays in establishing specialized courts for dealing with cases of gender-based violence and a special fund to support women victims of gender-based violence;

(c) The lack of victim support services, including the limited number of adequate shelters in the State party;

(d) The absence in Law No. 205 of key protections, which means that the law falls short of international standards;

(e) That cases of assault and rape committed against women by members of the security forces are investigated only at the request of the military or civilian courts, depending on the circumstances of each case.

**26. Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, and in line with target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, the Committee urges the State party:**

- (a) **To ensure the effective enforcement of the sanctions provided for in Law No. 293;**
- (b) **To establish without delay specialized courts for dealing with cases of gender-based violence and a special fund to support women victims of gender-based violence;**
- (c) **To strengthen support services for women victims of gender-based violence to match demand, including by ensuring a sufficient number of adequate shelters, and to allocate sufficient funding to ensure their sustainability;**
- (d) **To amend Law No. 205 to include key protections and to consider ratifying the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), of the International Labour Organization (ILO);**
- (e) **Ensure that cases of assault and rape committed against women by members of the security forces are investigated ex officio by an independent judicial authority.**

#### **Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

27. The Committee takes note of the draft amendment to Law No. 164 of 2011 on the fight against trafficking in human beings, which provides for penalties, the creation of a national commission to combat human trafficking, and victim assistance and protection. It notes the strategy to combat human trafficking and sexual assault, the emergency number to receive complaints and the cooperation established with civil society organizations in providing services and protection to victims of trafficking in shelters. The Committee is concerned, however, that hundreds of foreign women are recruited by traffickers every year (as many as 3,000 in 2019) through the “artist visa scheme” and subsequently forced into prostitution. It also notes with concern that these women are prosecuted under article 523 of the Penal Code and deported if they are found to have engaged in prostitution despite being entitled to protection under Law No. 164.

28. **In line with its general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Expedite the adoption of the draft amendment to Law No. 164;**
- (b) **Build the capacity of the judiciary and law enforcement officers to identify, protect and refer women and girls victims of trafficking, and ensure that women recruited through the “artist visa scheme” and found to have engaged in prostitution are exempt from criminal and any other liability and considered as victims of trafficking;**
- (c) **Ensure that victims of trafficking, including women recruited through the “artist visa scheme”, may lodge complaints about abuses without fear of arrest, detention or deportation;**
- (d) **Ensure the investigation of all cases of trafficking and exploitation, as well as the prosecution and punishment of those responsible, including public officials involved in such acts, and guarantee that victims of trafficking and exploitation for the purpose of prostitution are exempted from criminal liability;**
- (e) **Ensure that victims of trafficking are provided with medical treatment, psychosocial support, legal assistance and interpretation services;**
- (f) **Conduct awareness-raising campaigns for the general public on the criminal nature of trafficking in women and girls;**

(g) **Collect information on trafficking in women and girls and strengthen cooperation with other countries to facilitate information exchange and the prosecution of traffickers;**

(h) **Exert efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex.**

#### **Equal participation of women in political and public life**

29. The Committee notes the statement made by the delegation during the dialogue that the State party had broken a taboo in the Arab world by appointing women to lead the Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Justice for the first time. However, it notes with concern that women only represent 4.7 per cent of parliamentarians and are still underrepresented in ministries and municipal councils, as well as in leadership positions within political parties and at the decision-making level in the civil service. The Committee is concerned about reports indicating that 78 per cent of women candidates for the legislative elections of 2018 experienced violence, including threats, online violence, beatings, property damage, harassment, including sexual harassment, assaults and offensive language of a sexual nature.

30. **In line with its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life and target 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, the Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To adopt urgently, in view of the upcoming legislative elections in May 2022, amendments to establish a minimum quota of 30 per cent for women candidates on the electoral lists of political parties and require equal media coverage to promote women's equal participation in political life;**

(b) **To adopt temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention, including statutory quotas for the representation of women in decision-making positions in the civil service, the foreign service, the police and the defence force, and provide for preferential recruitment of women, where needed;**

(c) **To adopt a law on violence against women in politics, including online violence, and enhance the protection of women candidates, including through public awareness-raising campaigns, prosecute political violence against women candidates and provide effective redress for victims;**

(d) **To provide capacity-building on political campaigning and leadership skills and ensure access to adequate campaign financing for women candidates in elections.**

#### **Women and peace and security**

31. The Committee welcomes the statement by the delegation during the dialogue that, thanks to a decision adopted in 2021, the army has opened up to women and women officers now participate in decision-making. The Committee also welcomes the adoption in 2019 of the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security and the designation of the National Commission for Lebanese Women as the entity charged with monitoring its implementation. The Committee is, however, concerned about the lack of implementation of the national action plan.

32. **In line with its general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations and with Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that adequate resources are allocated to implement the national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and provide information on the results of the plan in its next periodic report;**

(b) **Ensure that women's rights organizations are effectively involved in the implementation, monitoring and assessment of the national action plan and in the development of a subsequent plan and other strategies related to post-conflict reconstruction processes.**

#### **Women human rights defenders**

33. The Committee welcomes the statement made by the delegation during the dialogue indicating that the State party is fully committed to cooperating with civil society organizations and individuals advocating for human rights. The Committee notes with concern, however, reports of harassment and excessive limitations on the right to freedom of expression for women human rights defenders and the shrinking civic space in the State party.

34. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women human rights defenders and activists can freely carry out their advocacy for women's human rights and exercise their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association without harassment, surveillance or undue restrictions.**

#### **Nationality**

35. The Committee notes that a draft law to amend the current nationality law was submitted to the Prime Minister in 2019. However, it notes with concern that Decree No. 15 of 1925 on Lebanese nationality, currently in force, contains gender-discriminatory provisions that prevent women from conferring Lebanese nationality on their foreign spouse or their children and from retaining their nationality on equal terms with men.

36. **Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/4-5, para. 16), the Committee recommends that the State party repeal Decree No. 15 and adopt legislation to ensure equal rights of women and men to confer their nationality to their foreign spouses and children.**

#### **Education**

37. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the delegation during the dialogue concerning the encouragement of boys to become teachers and of girls to pursue scientific careers, in order to diversify career paths and combat gender stereotypes, and that a unified education strategy has been adopted for all students, including the most vulnerable, and will be rolled out in 2026. It notes that textbooks are published only after the Centre for Educational Research and Development has examined their content, taking into account gender issues, and that educational materials and textbooks used in private schools are also submitted to the Centre for evaluation and validation, including a gender audit. However, it notes with concern the low number of boys enrolled in the formal education system compared to girls, that boys are forced to work because of the economic crisis or are allegedly following their fathers into business and politics and the potential impact of this situation on the value accorded to girls' education and employment prospects. The Committee further notes with concern that school-related costs, including transportation, prevent many girls from attending school and the very low attendance rates among refugee girls.

38. **In line with its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education and target 4.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to**

ensure by 2030 that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Maintain its efforts to review school curricula and textbooks to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes, portray an equal balance of females and males and an even distribution of social roles, and promote a culture of gender equality;

(b) Put in place a specific strategy and conduct large-scale public campaigns for women and men at all levels of society in order to reaffirm that education is key for opening up opportunities and allowing individuals to achieve more in their careers, and promote positive images of women as active participants in economic, social and political life;

(c) Involve school authorities in government programmes to promote gender equality and inform teachers, principals and guidance counsellors about employment prospects in strategic sectors so that they can provide girls and boys with more diversified career orientation, to combat gender stereotypes and improve prospects for equality;

(d) Intensify efforts to increase enrolment, retention and completion rates for women and girls at all levels of education and ensure the provision of free transportation for all students, especially in rural areas, to retain girls and boys in education;

(e) Take targeted measures to increase school attendance by refugee girls.

### **Employment**

39. The Committee commends the State party for adopting Law No. 205, which criminalizes sexual harassment in the workplace. It welcomes the statement made by the delegation during the dialogue that a plan has been adopted, including a media campaign, to promote the law and the ways and means to protect women. It remains concerned, however, about the persistent gender pay gap in the State party, vertical and horizontal segregation in the labour market and the lack of childcare facilities to enable women and men to reconcile family and professional life.

40. **The Committee draws attention to its general recommendation No. 13 (1989) on equal remuneration for work of equal value and to target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to achieve by 2030 full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value, and recommends that the State party:**

(a) Strengthen awareness among employers and women employees about the provisions of the Law No. 205 and the remedies available to victims, and ensure that all allegations of sexual harassment are effectively investigated and that perpetrators are adequately punished;

(b) Review wages in all sectors, applying gender-sensitive analytical job classification and evaluation methods, and enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in order to narrow and ultimately close the gender pay gap;

(c) Adopt and implement policies to eliminate horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, including by encouraging women and girls to select non-traditional career paths, in particular in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technologies, and by eliminating gender bias and breaking the glass ceiling that prevents women from attaining senior management positions;

**(d) Promote the equal sharing of family and domestic responsibilities between women and men, increase the availability of childcare facilities and introduce flexible working arrangements to enable both women and men to reconcile family and professional life.**

#### **Economic empowerment**

41. The Committee welcomes the creation of the Ministry of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth and the launch in 2019 of a national plan for the economic empowerment of women, as well as the adoption of special measures to enhance women's participation in the labour market. It notes, however, that women have only limited access to loans and other forms of financial credit, as well as to property and inheritance rights.

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

**(a) Provide adequate support for women's entrepreneurship by facilitating their access to income-generating opportunities and financial credit, including low-interest loans without collateral;**

**(b) Ensure the dissemination of information on available loan schemes and income support, and guidance and assistance to apply for loans and income support, especially for rural women;**

**(c) Accelerate the adoption of a law on civil personal status to ensure women's equal access to property and inheritance rights.**

#### **Health**

43. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the delegation during the dialogue on the provision of health services to women victims of gender-based violence, including rape. However, it notes with concern that no measures have been taken yet to introduce age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in school curricula or to increase the access of women and adolescent girls, in particular rural women and girls, to sexual and reproductive health services. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of information on the incidence of unsafe and illegal abortions and about the absence of measures taken by the State party to legalize abortion in cases of rape, incest, risk to the health of the pregnant woman and severe fetal impairment.

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

**(a) Introduce age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights for girls and boys in school curricula at all levels, including information on modern contraceptives and family planning;**

**(b) Strengthen access for women and girls, especially rural women and girls, to sexual and reproductive health services;**

**(c) Collect data and conduct research on the prevalence of unsafe abortions in the State party, disaggregated by age and geographical location;**

**(d) Legalize abortion at least in cases of rape, incest, risk to the health of the pregnant woman and severe fetal impairment, decriminalize it in all other cases and ensure access to safe abortion and post-abortion services.**

#### **Climate change and disaster risk reduction**

45. The Committee welcomes the public awareness-raising campaigns in the State party on environmental preservation and the prevention of environmental risks, as well as the mainstreaming of gender into the strategies, plans and projects of the

Ministries of the Environment and Agriculture. However, it notes with concern the absence of a gender-responsive national strategy to address environmental risks and challenges, climate change and disaster risk reduction.

**46. In line with its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women are represented and participate in the development of legislation, policies and programmes on climate change, disaster response and disaster risk reduction. It also recommends that the State party integrate a gender perspective into such plans and policies and ensure that women, in particular rural women, are consulted in their development. It further recommends that the State party take measures to address the impact of climate change specifically on women's access to resources and livelihoods, in order to ensure that women are not disproportionately affected.**

#### **Refugee and asylum-seeking women**

47. The Committee commends the State party for maintaining its long-standing open border and reception policy for Palestinian refugees and those from the Syrian Arab Republic, and for hosting more than 2 million refugees. The Committee remains concerned, however, that the 1962 law regulating the entry into, stay in and exit from Lebanon does not distinguish between asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. The Committee is also concerned about the high number of reported cases of child and/or forced marriage among Palestinian and Syrian refugee girls and women.

**48. 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) **Strengthen its procedures for identifying asylum seekers and determining asylum status, which should be gender-sensitive, age-sensitive and culturally sensitive, in order to ensure the systematic and early identification of women and girls who are victims or at risk of gender-based violence, and provide appropriate assistance to such women and girls;**

(b) **Review the 1962 law regulating the entry into, stay in and exit from Lebanon, to distinguish between the protection needs of asylum-seeking and refugee women on the one hand and those of migrant women on the other;**

(c) **Prevent and eradicate child and/or forced marriage through coordinated action, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and community leaders, in particular by raising awareness of the criminal nature and harmful impact of child and/or forced marriages on girls and women and by ensuring that all such cases are investigated and that those responsible are prosecuted and adequately punished, and systematically collecting data on the number of cases reported, investigations, prosecutions and convictions, as well as on the penalties imposed in cases of forced marriage.**

#### **Women migrant domestic workers**

49. The Committee takes note of the introduction by the Ministry of Labour of an emergency number for domestic workers to seek assistance and file complaints. However, it remains concerned about the suspension by the Council of State of the implementation of the new single standard contract for migrant domestic workers, the delay in the adoption of legislation to protect women migrant domestic workers and the absence of data on the number of reported deaths of women migrant domestic workers in the State party.

50. The Committee recommends that the State party, without further delay:

(a) Amend the Labour Code to extend its protection to domestic workers and to recognize the human rights of domestic workers in accordance with international standards;

(b) Strengthen labour inspections to monitor the working conditions of domestic workers effectively and to investigate and punish abuses;

(c) Ensure that migrant domestic workers have explicit, written terms of employment outlining their specific duties, hours, remuneration, days of rest and other conditions of work, in contracts that are free, fair and fully consented to, together with information on access to complaint mechanisms;

(d) Ensure that women migrant domestic workers have adequate access to justice to claim violations of their rights, including free legal aid and protection from abuse, as well as effective legal recourse in civil and criminal courts;

(e) Ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

#### **Rural women**

51. The Committee notes as positive the Lebanon National Agricultural Strategy (2020–2025), which aims to ensure gender equality in the field of sustainable agricultural production and rural development, as well as training for rural women on cooperative issues, business management and various other related subjects. It regrets, however, that the Labour Code does not yet include agricultural workers.

52. In line with its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women and target 5.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure the effective participation of rural women in planning and decision-making on natural resources management;

(b) Facilitate rural women's access to technical support and training for agricultural innovation and new technologies, agricultural assets such as chemicals, equipment, animal feed, seeds and energy, markets and marketing services, in addition to technologies and appropriate extension services;

(c) Expand rural women's access to low-interest loans and financial credit;

(d) Ensure that women and girls in rural areas have access to social protection, education and health services, including sexual and reproductive health services;

(e) Amend the Labour Code to include women farmers.

#### **Marriage and family relations**

53. The Committee takes note of the draft laws to ensure equal rights in marriage and family relations and prohibit child marriage in the State party. However, it notes with concern the applicability of multiple religious personal status laws containing discriminatory provisions on marriage, divorce and the custody of children. It is also concerned that the process to regulate civil marriage has been stalled for years and regrets the absence of an optional civil marriage contract and a unified civil personal status code. The Committee is further concerned that child marriage is still not prohibited and notes the high number of child marriages within refugee and internally displaced communities.

54. Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/4-5, para. 46), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt an optional civil marriage contract and a unified civil personal status code, based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination and the right to choose one's religious affiliation, in order to ensure equal rights to women and men in marriage and family relations;

(b) Adopt a law that provides for an alternative legal regime to regulate civil marriage in the State party, that is accessible to all women and that takes precedence over religious marriage;

(c) Adopt a law to prohibit child marriage and setting the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for women and men, in line with international standards, and eliminate the harmful practice of child marriage within refugee and internally displaced communities.

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

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

#### **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

56. The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to further evaluate the realization of the rights enshrined in the Convention in the context of the 25-year review of the implementation of the Declaration and Platform in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.

#### **Dissemination**

57. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the de facto official languages of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.

#### **Technical assistance**

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

#### **Ratification of other treaties**

59. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, to which it is not yet a party.

**Follow-up to the concluding observations**

60. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10 (a), 16 (a), 18 (c) and 22 (a).

**Preparation of the next report**

61. The Committee requests the State party to submit its seventh periodic report, which is due in February 2026. The report should be submitted on time and cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

62. The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents ([HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).

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