



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
2 March 2023

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Georgia*

1. The Committee considered the sixth periodic report of Georgia (CEDAW/C/GEO/6) at its 1943rd and 1944th meetings (CEDAW/C/SR.1943 and 1944), held on 8 February 2023. The list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group is contained in CEDAW/C/GEO/Q/6, and the responses of Georgia are contained in CEDAW/C/GEO/RQ/6.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its sixth periodic report. It also appreciates the State party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5/Add.1) and its written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group. It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by Niko Tatulashvili, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Human Rights Issues, and included representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the General Prosecutor's Office, the High Council of Justice, the Administration of the Government of Georgia and a Member of Parliament, as well as Alexander Maisuradze, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Georgia and other representatives of the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2014 of the State party's combined fourth and fifth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/GEO/4-5) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of:

* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-fourth session (6–24 February 2023).



(a) Government Decree No. 523 of 9 November 2022, establishing the rule that victims of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, can obtain State-funded compensation from the State Care Agency, as determined by a court decision;

(b) Amendments to the Organic Law on Normative Acts, introducing gender impact assessments related to draft laws, in 2022;

(c) Legislative amendments removing the requirement of an official status as “victim of gender-based violence against women” in order to access State-funded support services, in 2022, which will enter into force on 1 July 2023;

(d) Legislative amendments to criminalize forced marriage, female genital mutilation, stalking and forced sterilization, in 2017;

(e) Amendments to article 11(3) of the Constitution on the right to equality providing that “The State shall provide equal rights and opportunities for men and women. The State shall take special measures to ensure the substantive equality of men and women and to eliminate inequality.”, in 2017;

(f) Amendments to the Law on Gender Equality and the Local Self-Governance Code to establish gender equality adviser positions as a permanent institutional mechanism within the municipalities, in 2016;

(g) Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, which is aimed at eliminating discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, in 2014.

5. The Committee 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, such as the adoption and establishment of the following:

(a) State Concept on Gender Equality, in 2022;

(b) National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for 2022–2024, in 2022;

(c) National Action Plan on Ending Violence against Women, in 2022;

(d) Fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2022–2024, in 2022;

(e) Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan developed by the Civil Service Bureau aimed at establishing a gender-responsive public service, in 2022;

(f) Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025 for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 2021;

(g) Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, in 2017;

(h) National Strategy on Maternal and Infant Health Care 2017–2030, in 2017.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified or acceded to the following international and regional instruments:

(a) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2021;

(b) Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), in 2017;

(c) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, in 2016.

C. Sustainable Development Goals

7. 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 the sustainable development of Georgia and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.

D. Parliament

8. 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 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

Visibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations

9. The Committee notes the efforts by the State party to enhance the visibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations, including through capacity-building for relevant stakeholders and public awareness-raising campaigns on women's rights, gender equality and gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, in partnership with development partners and local civil society organizations, and by means of a communication strategy for 2018–2020 on the mandate of the Gender Equality Council as a permanent consultation body to Parliament. It is, however, concerned that the awareness and use of the relevant public services in that regard by women belonging to such disadvantaged and marginalized groups as rural women, women belonging to ethnic minority groups, women with disabilities, internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected areas, and refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant and stateless women, remains low.

10. Recalling its previous recommendation ([CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5](#), para. 9), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Intensify its efforts to widely disseminate and raise awareness of the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's concluding observations and general recommendations and provide information in its next periodic report on the follow-up measures taken on the views of the Committee on communication No. 140/2019 (*H.H., I.H. and Y.H. v. Georgia/Jeiranova*);¹

(b) Consider establishing a comprehensive implementation mechanism for the present concluding observations and involve the Public Defender's Office

¹ [CEDAW/C/80/D/140/2019](#).

of Georgia and non-governmental organizations promoting women's rights and gender equality in that mechanism, taking into account the four key capacities of engagement, coordination, consultation and information management of a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up;²

(c) **Raise awareness among women of their rights under the Convention and the legal remedies available to them to claim violations of such rights and ensure that information on the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations is accessible to all women, including women belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups.**

Constitutional and legislative framework and legal status of the Convention

11. The Committee welcomes that the State party amended its Constitution in 2017 to enshrine the principle of substantive equality of women and men (article 11) and that there are several decisions of Georgian courts that make reference to the Convention and the Committee's jurisprudence. However, it notes with concern:

(a) The unresolved conflict between the Russian Federation and the State party, which leaves Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, outside of the effective control of the State party, exposing women and girls to an increased risk of gender-based violence and resulting in a lack of protection and access to psychosocial rehabilitation services and in women's ongoing internal displacement;

(b) That the 2010 Law on Gender Equality has not yet been revised to accelerate the realization of substantive equality of women and men despite the constitutional amendments of 2017;

(c) The lack of comprehensive data on court decisions in which the Convention was directly applied or national legislation was interpreted in accordance with the Convention and the lack of information on the outcome of the decisions referred to by the State party in its replies to the list of issues and questions (CEDAW/C/GEO/RQ/6, paras. 26–27).

12. **Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 13), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue its efforts, including through the State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and in the various relevant international forums, to ensure that women and girls in Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, are able to enjoy their rights under the Convention;**

(b) **Revise the 2010 Law on Gender Equality to comply with recent constitutional amendments in order to accelerate the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) equality of women and men;**

(c) **Ensure that the Convention, the Committee's jurisprudence and general recommendations are made an integral part of systematic capacity-building for all judges with a view to enabling them to directly apply the provisions of the Convention and interpret national legal provisions in the light of the Convention, and of training for government officials, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials, as well as lawyers.**

² See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf.

Discriminatory laws

13. The Committee notes that, following a December 2021 decision of the Constitutional Court, Parliament amended the Civil Code in June 2022 in order to redefine the legal criteria for qualifying as a single parent, the vast majority of whom are women. It is, however, concerned that the new criteria are still too narrow and discriminate against women.

14. The Committee urges the State party to review and substantially amend its legislation insofar as it discriminates against women and, in particular, amend the Civil Code to establish criteria that qualify as single parents all mothers who raise a child alone, so as to provide them with adequate access to social and other support services.

Women's access to justice

15. The Committee welcomes the provision of free legal aid to women who are victims of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and domestic violence, and victims of trafficking and to women with disabilities in all legal proceedings, through the State Legal Aid Service, as well as awareness-raising campaigns on women's rights under the Convention and the remedies available to claim their rights. It is, however, concerned that women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence and domestic violence, are often reluctant to report such violence owing to prevailing gender stereotypes, fear of stigma or reprisals, and lack of trust in law enforcement mechanisms and State support services.

16. With reference to its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, the Committee recommends that the State party address the root causes of the underreporting of cases of gender-based violence against women and girls, including by:

(a) Ensuring effective protection and accessible support services to women victims of such violence, in particular rural women, women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minority groups, internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected areas, refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant and stateless women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;

(b) Providing capacity-building to judges, prosecutors, the police and other law enforcement officials on gender- and child-sensitive investigation and interrogation methods, including in relation to trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls;

(c) Conducting awareness-raising campaigns to eliminate judicial gender bias and stigmatization of women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence;

(d) Continuing the provision of free legal aid to women with disabilities and to survivors and consider extending it to other women facing intersecting forms of discrimination, such as older women, women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minority groups, internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected areas, refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant and stateless women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.

National machinery for the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming

17. The Committee notes that the State party has made efforts to strengthen its national machinery for the advancement of women, in particular in the areas of policy

formulation, by creating gender equality councils and appointing gender equality advisers at municipal levels in 2019, and that it has undertaken self-assessments for gender-responsive public financial management within the framework of the World Bank. The Committee is nevertheless concerned that:

(a) The second National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia 2022–2030, which includes a chapter on the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality and was tabled in Parliament on 5 September 2022, has yet to be adopted;

(b) The State Concept on Gender Equality does not embrace gender equality in all its dimensions and fails to address the rights of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;

(c) Institutions for the advancement of women’s rights and gender equality remain weak owing to a lack of coordination and available human, technical and financial resources, in particular as regards the gender equality councils in some municipalities;

(d) The State party does not systematically conduct a gender impact assessment related to draft laws despite legislative amendments to that effect in the Organic Law on Normative Acts carried out in December 2022 and has yet to introduce systematic gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

18. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 15), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt the second National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia 2022–2030 without delay and place a strong emphasis on the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality;

(b) Adopt legislative and policy measures to combat gender-based violence and discrimination against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;

(c) Strengthen its national machinery for the advancement of women by clearly defining and institutionally elevating its mandate and responsibilities, providing it with adequate human, technical and financial resources and enhancing the integration of local government mechanisms, so that it may effectively coordinate and monitor the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming at all levels of government;

(d) Make gender impact assessments a requirement for all draft laws tabled in Parliament, extend the requirement of a gender impact assessment to all policies in order to pursue gender-responsive planning at all levels of government, and continue to reform the public finance management system in order to implement systematic gender-responsive budgeting, including through relevant training and capacity-building for all relevant civil servants.

National human rights institutions

19. The Committee welcomes the work of the Public Defender’s Office of Georgia, in particular its department on gender equality, as the national human rights institution for gender equality and the advancement of women, including recent work on the prevention of femicide, sexual and reproductive health and rights, women belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, such as women belonging to ethnic minority groups and women and girls with disabilities, and on the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on women working in the health sector. It is nevertheless concerned about the limited human, technical and financial resources available to the Office.

20. **The Committee recommends that the State party prioritize strengthening the Public Defender's Office, including by allocating sufficient human, technical and financial resources to enable it to effectively and independently discharge 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 recognizes the temporary special measures in place for the equal participation of women in political and public life. It nevertheless notes with concern that the 2020 amendments to the Election Code instituted only a 25 per cent quota (2028 and 2032 elections: one third) for women candidates on electoral lists for parliamentary elections, which moreover applies only to proportionate candidate lists of political parties and not to the majoritarian part of the elections, so that only 20 per cent of the current members of Parliament are women. It also notes with concern that the 50 per cent quota for women candidates on proportionate lists for local councils was reversed in 2021, as well as the limited use of temporary special measures in other areas covered by the Convention in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, such as employment and entrepreneurship.

22. **Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 17), and in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt or reintroduce targeted measures, including temporary special measures, such as statutory quotas and targeted political campaign financing, and establish time-bound targets as a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality of women and men in all areas covered by the Convention in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, in both the public and private sectors, especially at the decision-making level, and with particular attention to disadvantaged groups of women;**

(b) **Establish mechanisms to monitor the implementation of temporary special measures and assess their impact on the achievement of substantive equality of women and men, and adopt adequate sanctions for non-compliance;**

(c) **Systematically collect data on the impact of temporary special measures and include such data in its next periodic report.**

Harmful practices

23. The Committee takes note of the legislative and policy measures taken by the State party to combat harmful practices such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so-called virginity testing, including by criminalizing forced marriage and female genital mutilation and creating a task force on harmful practices co-chaired by the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the United Nations Population Fund. It nevertheless remains concerned that harmful practices are still prevalent in the State party and that sentences imposed on perpetrators in cases of forced marriages are lenient.

24. **Recalling its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, paras. 19 and 21), and in line 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 (2019) on harmful practices and target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to eliminate all harmful practices, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt legislation to prohibit “virginity testing”, encourage reporting, prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators and facilitators of harmful practices commensurate with the gravity of the crime under existing applicable criminal law provisions and systematically collect data to inform a robust and evidence-based approach to addressing the root causes of harmful practices;**

(b) **Continue to conduct awareness-raising and educational campaigns, including by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, aimed at promoting understanding of the criminal nature of and the need to eliminate harmful practices, in particular among medical professionals, parents, community leaders, religious scholars, ethnic minority groups and men and boys.**

Gender-based violence against women

25. The Committee notes the considerable legislative and policy measures to combat gender-based violence against women, including their adaptation during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as a review of the scope of the previously gender-neutral formulation of provisions related to domestic violence, their extension to other forms of gender-based violence against women, the criminalization of stalking and forced sterilization, the establishment of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, as well as of a department on human rights protection and quality monitoring within the Ministry of Internal Affairs to oversee investigations and other proceedings on gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, the launch of the public awareness-raising and information campaign “No to Femicide” in 2022, and the extension of the mandate of the Public Defender’s Office to monitor femicide cases (“Femicide Watch”). It is, however, concerned about:

(a) The slow progress in reviewing legislation on gender-based violence against women, in particular the adoption of a definition of rape that is based on a lack of consent;

(b) The high incidence and underreporting of domestic and sexual violence and the low number of protection orders issued despite the availability of electronic surveillance systems and quiet alarm applications;

(c) The sharp increase in cases of gender-based violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, lodged with the district (city) courts, which more than tripled from 2020 to 2021, the unprecedented high number of femicides in 2014 and the recent resurgence of such cases after a period of decrease between 2014 and 2019, also owing to a reported lack of adequate recidivism risk assessments by criminal justice authorities and judges;

(d) The low prosecution rate in cases of gender-based violence against women, the limited capacity of the judiciary to apply gender-based motives introduced in 2018 into criminal law provisions as an aggravating circumstance to certain violent crimes, the fact that law enforcement authorities generally only record a summary of victims’ and witnesses’ statements, and the lenient sentences imposed on perpetrators of gender-based violence against women;

(e) The shortage of shelters and crisis centres, the absence of a rape crisis centre, underdeveloped systems of psychosocial support for survivors of gender-based violence against women, and barriers for women and girls with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and girls survivors of gender-based violence to access protection orders and victim support services.

26. **Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 21), and with reference to its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based**

violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Expedite its efforts to harmonize national legislation with the recommendations of the Committee and align it with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and, in particular, amend the Penal Code to base the definition of rape on the absence of free consent and define crimes committed in the name of so-called honour as well as economic violence;

(b) Encourage reporting of domestic violence and ensure that women victims have effective access to protection orders, including emergency restraining orders, and that the authorities investigate such reports and effectively enforce protection orders and impose adequate deterrent penalties for non-compliance with such measures;

(c) As a matter of priority, intensify efforts for the prevention of gender-based violence against women, in particular femicide, including by making training programmes for behaviour change compulsory for offenders, and strengthen capacity-building for judges and law enforcement officers on risk assessments;

(d) Ensure that all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, including domestic and sexual violence, are effectively investigated and that perpetrators are prosecuted *ex officio*, allow for audio-video recordings of statements of victims and witnesses, continue to provide systematic capacity-building to all judges and to prosecutors, lawyers and victim and witness coordinators, with a view to enabling them to adequately apply the aggravating circumstance of gender-motivated crimes, and ensure that sentences in cases of gender-based violence against women and girls are commensurate with the gravity of the offences;

(e) Strengthen victim support services and protection, provide adequate and accessible shelters, medical treatment, psychosocial counselling and economic support to victims, including in rape crisis centres, in all parts of the State party, including by swiftly adopting the draft law on national referral mechanisms for the identification, protection, support and rehabilitation of survivors of gender-based violence against women, with a particular focus on women facing intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women and girls with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and girls.

Trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution

27. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings 2022–2024 and the efforts made by the State party to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, by criminalizing pimping, offering multilingual legal, psychological and social support to victims of trafficking in persons and strengthening international cooperation, including during the COVID-19 pandemic by restructuring the services in shelters and crisis centres provided by the Agency of State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking. The Committee nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) The high number of girls trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, in particular from and within the State party, since 2019;

(b) The lack of early identification of women identified as victims of trafficking despite capacity-building and awareness-raising campaigns for professionals;

(c) The fragmentation of crisis, emergency and consultation helplines provided by various State agencies and the Public Defender's Office;

(d) The limited financial assistance provided to victims of trafficking (1,000 Georgian Lari);

(e) The absence of information on potential risks of trafficking in women and girls linked to international surrogacy, which is legal in the State party (one of only a few countries in the world);

(f) The lack of information on the existence of exit programmes for women wishing to leave prostitution.

28. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 23), and with reference to 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) **Take targeted measures to prevent trafficking in girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation and establish specialized gender-responsive and child-sensitive support services, including shelters, for victims of trafficking in girls, in particular those trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and having faced sexual violence, and increase and systematize public awareness campaigns as an essential measure to prevent trafficking in women and girls and the exploitation of prostitution, in particular targeting women and girls belonging to the most vulnerable groups, such as internally displaced women, women living in conflict-affected areas, refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant and stateless women, rural women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;**

(b) **Strengthen the early identification and referral of victims of trafficking in women and girls, to appropriate services, including by evaluating and, if necessary, reviewing the 2017 Guidelines on Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings at the Border of Georgia;**

(c) **Consider consolidating the various helplines for the support of victims of trafficking into one single helpline to ensure more effective provision of services;**

(d) **Increase financial assistance to victims of trafficking and extend it over a period of time that is necessary for their protection and reintegration;**

(e) **Collect information and data on the potential risks of trafficking in women linked to international surrogacy and provide information in that regard in its next periodic report;**

(f) **Collect information and data on women in prostitution, address the root causes of the exploitation of women and girls in prostitution, introduce measures to address the demand side of prostitution, provide exit programmes and alternative income-generating opportunities for women who wish to leave prostitution and provide information in that regard in its next periodic report.**

Equal participation in political and public life

29. The Committee welcomes the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan of the Civil Service Bureau aimed at establishing a gender-sensitive civil service system to enable the full and effective participation and leadership of women in decision-making processes, the Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025 for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the various awareness-raising and training programmes carried out by the Election Administration to address gender stereotypes related to the

electoral process and the participation of women in political and public life in general. It nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) That only 2 out of 12 ministers are women, women's representation at senior levels in the public service is critically low in some departments (6 per cent in 2021 in the Ministry of Internal Affairs) or has decreased (from 33 per cent in 2020 to 20 per cent in the Ministry of Defence) and that only 18 per cent of leading positions in the diplomatic missions of the State party and about 10 per cent of decision-making positions in the judiciary are held by women;

(b) That women in political and public life face sexist and misogynist political discourse, sexual harassment, sexism, threats and intimidation.

30. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 25), and in line with its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Introduce preferential recruitment of women and, as appropriate, adopt temporary special measures, such as quotas and a gender parity system, at all levels of government, the judiciary, academia, the foreign service and for secondment to international organizations, in particular at decision-making levels, which should include policies to promote and support women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minority groups and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;**

(b) **Strengthen measures to combat discrimination and hate speech against women in politics, including awareness-raising and educational campaigns among politicians, in schools, in the media and among the general public that the full, equal, free and democratic participation of women on an equal basis with men in political and public life is a requirement for the effective implementation of the Convention.**

Women and peace and security

31. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the fourth National Action Plan 2022–2024 to implement Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and the creation of an advisory platform for the enhancement of women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding. It is, however, concerned that the involvement of Georgian women in peace negotiations at the Geneva international discussions to ensure a gender-responsive implementation of the ceasefire agreement decreased from 40 per cent in 2018 to 20 per cent in 2022.

32. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 25), and with reference to the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure the effective participation of women in the implementation of the fourth National Action Plan to implement Security Council Resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), in cooperation with representatives of women's organizations, and that it take into consideration the full spectrum of the Security Council's women and peace and security agenda as reflected in Council resolutions [1325 \(2000\)](#), [1820 \(2008\)](#), [1888 \(2009\)](#), [1889 \(2009\)](#), [1960 \(2010\)](#), [2106 \(2013\)](#), [2122 \(2013\)](#), [2242 \(2015\)](#), [2467 \(2019\)](#) and [2493 \(2019\)](#).

Education

33. The Committee notes the Unified National Strategy of Education and Science for 2022–2030, which encompasses multiple activities focusing on gender equality and the establishment of a gender mainstreaming platform within the Ministry of Education and Science to strengthen gender mainstreaming and eliminate gender

stereotypes in the education system, and that public funding for the educational system is planned to reach 6 per cent of the gross domestic product. It is nevertheless concerned about:

(a) Persistent gender stereotypes in the education system and the concentration of women and girls in traditionally female-dominated fields of study and their underrepresentation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology, which reduces their employment prospects;

(b) The absence of formal and age-appropriate sexuality education, which is currently focused only on the medical aspects of reproductive health;

(c) The comparably higher dropout rates among and the barriers faced by girls with disabilities to access inclusive education, in particular in rural areas.

34. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 27), and with reference to its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Carry out awareness-raising and educational campaigns to shift social norms and eliminate gender stereotypes in education and take measures, including temporary special measures, to encourage women and girls to choose non-traditional fields of education and career paths, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology, including through career counselling, scholarships and subsidies to cover the indirect costs of education, and ensure that all fields of study and employment are accessible to women and girls;**

(b) **Integrate mandatory age-appropriate and inclusive education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in school curricula, including education on responsible sexual behaviour, modern forms of contraception, the prevention of sexually transmitted infections and the risks of unsafe abortion;**

(c) **Strengthen its awareness-raising campaigns and introduce further measures to increase school enrolment, retention and completion rates among women and girls with disabilities, in particular in rural areas.**

Employment

35. The Committee welcomes that harassment, in particular sexual harassment, in the workplace and in public life was legally defined as a form of discrimination against women in 2019. The Committee, however, remains concerned about:

(a) The disproportionately high unemployment rate among women;

(b) The continued horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market and the concentration of women in low-paid jobs and in the informal economy;

(c) The widening gender pay gap, despite economic and income growth in the State party, which unevenly benefits women;

(d) The limited access to social protection schemes for women working in the informal sector;

(e) The disproportionate burden on women of unpaid domestic and child-care responsibilities and the persistently low number of men availing themselves of parental leave while the child is below three years of age, despite the recent introduction of a parental leave scheme.

36. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 29), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take targeted measures, including under the active labour market policy, to reduce unemployment among women, with an emphasis on unemployed internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected areas, single mothers, young mothers, rural women, women with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;

(b) Take steps to eliminate horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, including by adopting temporary special measures, such as vocational training and statutory quotas, to promote women's access to formal employment, including leadership positions;

(c) Amend the Labour Code and the Law on Public Service to give effect to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the private and public sectors in order to narrow and eventually close the gender pay gap, regularly review wages in sectors in which women are concentrated and adopt measures to close the gender pay gap, including through gender-neutral analytical job classification and evaluation methods, and regular pay surveys, and consider raising the minimum wage fixed in 1999;

(d) Conduct a study to assess the participation of women in the informal economy, including with regard to access to social security coverage and retirement schemes, and on the basis of the results of that study, continue to review the current employment legislation and policy from a gender perspective, with a view to ensuring social protection for all women, including those employed in the informal economy and women with low income and/or self-employed women;

(e) Promote the equal sharing of domestic and child-care responsibilities between women and men, including by increasing the number of adequate child-care institutions and promoting the value and use of parental leave through awareness-raising campaigns;

(f) Ratify the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

Health

37. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the National Strategy on Maternal and Infant Health Care 2017–2030, which is aimed at reducing the maternal and infant mortality rates and providing all women with universal access to evidence-based prenatal, antenatal, obstetric, neonatal and postnatal care. It nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) The limitations faced by women in accessing quality health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health services and HIV treatment, especially pre-exposure prophylaxis, and the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women;

(b) That women's and girls' access to available and affordable modern contraceptives, in particular for rural women and girls and those with disabilities, remains limited despite measures to improve access in the National Action Plan for Maternal and Neonatal Health 2021–2023;

(c) The lack of available data on the impact of the five-day waiting period before a pregnancy can be terminated and on the number of early pregnancies and illegal abortions in the State party, in view of the prevalence of child and forced marriage of women and girls, and the lack of knowledge by some medical service

providers about the legal availability of safe abortion for victims of sexual violence and for all girls from the age of 14, in particular in rural areas;

(d) The still high maternal mortality rate (27.4 per 100,000 live births in 2018);

(e) The inadequate mental health services for women and girls, the lack of helplines for suicidal persons, including women and girls, and that women often do not access the mental health-care system owing to fear of stigmatization.

38. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 31), and with reference to its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Increase the budget allocated to health care to ensure the provision of accessible and affordable health services to all women and girls, including HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, in particular for women belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups;

(b) Ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of modern contraceptives for women and girls, in particular those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups and in rural areas;

(c) Ensure access to safe abortion and post-abortion services for women and girls, including through awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building targeting medical professionals, and collect data on the prevalence of illegal abortions in the State party and their causes and provide such information in its next periodic report;

(d) Take further measures to address the causes of maternal mortality by ensuring access to obstetric care and increasing the number of skilled birth attendants;

(e) Adopt measures to ensure the availability, accessibility and quality of mental health-care services and gender-sensitive addiction rehabilitation services, in both urban and rural areas, and establish suicide prevention helplines.

Economic empowerment of women, economic and social benefits, and women living in poverty

39. The Committee notes the tabling in Parliament of the State Concept on Women's Economic Empowerment in December 2022, and a number of sectoral policies and programmes, including preferential loan schemes, aimed at the economic empowerment of women, in particular in rural areas. The Committee is, however, concerned at the feminization of poverty and social exclusion in the State party, exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the lack of a comprehensive social protection scheme.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Swiftly adopt the State Concept on Women's Economic Empowerment and implement it, paying specific attention to women belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups such as rural women, women belonging to ethnic minority groups, women with disabilities, internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected areas, refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant and stateless women, and provide information in its next periodic report on the results achieved in the implementation of the State Concept;

(b) Establish comprehensive gender-responsive and adequately funded social protection schemes for women, in particular disadvantaged and

marginalized groups of women, such as single mothers, older women, widows, rural women, unemployed women, women engaged in unpaid care work, women belonging to ethnic minority groups, internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected areas and refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant and stateless women, including by facilitating access to social benefits through digital means.

Disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women

41. The Committee takes note of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration with respect to ethnic minorities for 2021–2030 and its action plans, which also mainstream women’s rights and gender equality. It nevertheless remains concerned that older women, women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minority groups, internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected areas, refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant and stateless women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women continue to face intersecting and aggravated forms of discrimination in the State party.

42. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5, para. 35), the Committee recommends that the State party adopt targeted measures, including temporary special measures, to ensure access to justice, employment and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, social protection and food security for disadvantaged groups of women, such as older women, women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minority groups, internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected areas, refugee, asylum-seeking, migrant and stateless women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, taking into account their specific needs.

Marriage and family relations

43. The Committee welcomes that the minimum age for marriage has been raised to 18 years for both women and men and that the Civil Code provides for equal personal and property rights and equal responsibilities for spouses, that care of children is taken into account as a contribution to the communal property and that spouses can choose to regulate the property regime by entering into a contract. It is nevertheless concerned about:

(a) Child marriages of girls, including informal or “cultural” child marriages entered into with the purpose of circumventing the prohibition of child marriage; and that child marriages are not always considered forced marriages under the law of the State party;

(b) The prevalence of sex-selective abortions;

(c) Cases in which mothers with disabilities living in State care institutions have not been allowed to live with their children.

44. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GEO/4-5, para. 37), and 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, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Combat the harmful practice of child marriage, in particular in rural areas, including by addressing its root causes, encouraging reporting, establishing mechanisms to detect such cases, prosecuting child marriages of girls under the criminal offence of forced marriage and requiring civil registration of all marriages; and undertake legislative reforms aimed at**

protecting the rights of women and girls in unregistered marriages and de facto unions and of the children resulting from such unions;

(b) Strictly enforce the prohibition of sex-selective abortions and establish services, including helplines, for women who are pressured into undergoing sex-selective abortion;

(c) Prioritize deinstitutionalized living arrangements for mothers with disabilities pursuant to the Strategy on the Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities and Deinstitutionalization 2023–2030 and its action plan 2023–2025 and improve support services so that mothers with disabilities and their children enjoy their right to privacy and family life.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

45. 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 order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.

Dissemination

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

Ratification of other treaties

47. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments³ 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 and the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a party.

Follow-up to concluding observations

48. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12 (b), 18 (c), 26 (a) and 44 (c) above.

Preparation of the next report

49. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the seventh periodic report of the State party in line with a future predictable reporting calendar based on an eight-year review cycle and following the adoption of a list

³ The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The report should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

50. 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).
