



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

Distr.: General  
20 February 2024

Original: English

## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of the Central African Republic\*

1. The Committee considered the sixth periodic report of the Central African Republic ([CEDAW/C/CAF/6](#)) at its 2047th and 2048th meetings (see [CEDAW/C/SR.2047](#) and [CEDAW/C/SR.2048](#)), held on 9 February 2024. The list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group is contained in [CEDAW/C/CAF/Q/6](#), and the responses of the Central African Republic are contained in [CEDAW/C/CAF/RQ/6](#).

#### A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its sixth periodic report ([CEDAW/C/CAF/Q/6](#)). 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's high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister for Gender Advancement and the Protection of Women, the Family and Children, Marthe Kirimât. The delegation also included representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Promotion of Human Rights and Good Governance; the National Assembly; and the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic 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 initial and second to fifth periodic reports ([CEDAW/C/CAF/1-5](#)) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of:

(a) New Constitution, establishing the obligation to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and reaffirming the promotion and protection of the rights of women, in 2023;

\* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-seventh session (29 January–16 February 2024).



(b) Comprehensive anti-trafficking law (Act No. 22.015), strengthening sentences for trafficking in persons in the Penal Code and introducing new provisions on victim protection and on prevention, in 2022;

(c) Child Protection Code (Act No. 20.016), criminalizing the recruitment and use of children in hostilities, in 2020;

(d) Gender parity law (Act No. 16.004), introducing gender parity in public, semi-public and private sector employment, on 24 November 2016;

(e) Decree No. 15.007, establishing a joint rapid response unit to combat sexual violence against women and girls, in 2015.

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 or establishment of the following:

(a) National human rights policy and related action plan, which define comprehensive objectives and provide for measures to strengthen a human rights culture in the Central African Republic, in 2023;

(b) National gender and climate change strategy (2023–2030), which seeks to empower women in decision-making related to climate change;

(c) National strategy to combat child marriage, in 2022;

(d) National strategy to combat gender-based violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation in the Central African Republic (2019–2023);

(e) Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed in Bangui on 6 February 2019, which recognizes the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and in building sustainable peace;

(f) National strategy to provide legal aid, in 2017;

(g) National committee to combat harmful practices and gender-based violence against women, including child marriage, in 2018;

(h) Special Criminal Court for prosecuting and convicting perpetrators of gender-based violence and other crimes against women and girls, in 2015;

(i) Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission and reconciliation commissions in prefectures, sub-prefectures and districts across the Central African Republic, which include women in their composition.

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 treaties:

(a) Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), of the International Labour Organization (ILO), in June 2022;

(b) Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in October 2016;

(c) African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, in July 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 the State party 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 the National Assembly, 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. Factors and difficulties preventing the effective implementation of the Convention**

##### **General context, transitional measures and peacebuilding**

9. The Committee notes with concern the continued insecurity and armed conflict in the State party, notably in prefectures and municipalities under the control of non-State armed groups; restricted humanitarian access; and atrocities such as different forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, perpetuated by deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes. It also notes with concern public reports of violations of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic by non-State armed groups and the delays in operationalizing transitional justice mechanisms, which prevent the State party from addressing grave violations of the human rights of women and ensuring accountability for atrocities. It further notes the persistent humanitarian crisis and increasing need for protection and assistance of women and girls, as well as women's limited participation in political and public life, in particular with regard to decision-making processes related to peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery and development. The Committee is furthermore concerned about the feminization of poverty and the deprivation and hardship experienced by women and girls in areas with limited humanitarian access, exacerbated by corruption, economic recession and disenfranchisement of rural communities in the context of the exploitation of natural resources.

10. **The Committee acknowledges the national human rights policy and related action plan, in which the State party reaffirms its commitment to its international human rights obligations under the Convention. It calls upon the State party to uphold women's human rights and ensure their participation in decision-making processes related to the implementation of the Convention, the national human rights policy and the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. It also urges the State party to ensure the equal participation of women in efforts to overcome political and economic instability, and address humanitarian crises. It further recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Acknowledge women as full agents of development, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery efforts;**

(b) Strengthen its international cooperation framework to ensure that international assistance and technical cooperation include a gender perspective and encompass women's human rights under the Convention;

(c) Ensure that women's human rights are upheld throughout all law enforcement procedures and actions aimed at promoting lasting peace;

(d) Strengthen its transitional justice mechanisms and ensure accountability for violations of the human rights of women related to armed conflict.

## F. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

### Conflict-related violence against women and girls and access to justice

11. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party during the transitional period to restore the justice sector across its territory, notably the establishment of the Special Criminal Court, in 2015, and its achievements in investigating and convicting perpetrators of gender-based violence against women, including former members of armed groups, on the basis of command responsibility for crimes against humanity and war crimes. It also notes with appreciation the establishment of the joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and girls, and the self-referral to the International Criminal Court of several cases of conflict-related sexual violence. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The persistence of gender-based violence against women allegedly perpetrated by State and non-State actors, including sexual violence and exploitation, rape, trafficking, forced internal displacement, sexual slavery, forced recruitment, forced marriages and psychological violence;

(b) The disproportionate risk faced by rural women and women in conflict-affected areas with regard to different forms of violence, intimidation, extrajudicial executions, internal displacement and forced disappearance perpetrated by non-State actors;

(c) The lack of support services for survivors of gender-based violence against women, with only 52 per cent of sub-prefectures offering such services;

(d) Barriers for women in reporting and filing complaints in cases of gender-based violence due to fear of reprisals and barriers in accessing justice, including legal aid;

(e) The backlog of investigations related to conflict-related sexual violence, the lack of enforcement of judgments and the prevalence of out-of-court settlements in cases of sexual violence;

(f) The weak accountability and transitional justice mechanisms for atrocities committed against women and girls during the conflict.

12. Recalling the recommendation issued by the Secretary-General in his report pursuant to Security Council resolution 2467 (2019) on conflict-related sexual violence, urging the authorities of the State party to effectively address conflict-related sexual violence within the national defence and security forces, including through effective vetting and accountability measures (S/2023/413, para. 27), and the Committee's previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/CAF/CO/1-5, para. 16), the Committee calls upon the State party:

(a) To develop a comprehensive national strategy to prevent gender-based violence against women, in particular sexual violence, perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, including through gender-responsive programmes and initiatives

**promoting a change in social norms and perceptions that legitimate gender-based violence; and ensure the meaningful engagement of men and boys in ending gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls;**

**(b) To adopt measures to ensure the protection of rural women and girls and of women and girls in conflict-affected areas that are still under the control of non-State armed groups, including by introducing early warning mechanisms and enabling the submission of complaints by women at risk;**

**(c) To expand the coverage of support services for survivors of gender-based violence against women; and ensure that women survivors of sexual violence have access to counselling and psychosocial services and immediate and free access to medical treatment, including post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and ensure the collection of forensic evidence and access to justice;**

**(d) To raise awareness among rural women about their rights and the remedies available to claim those rights; deploy mobile legal aid units and police officers to enable reporting of gender-based violence; ensure that survivors of conflict-related violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, have access to free legal aid; and provide financial, technical and logistical support to civil society organizations providing legal assistance to women;**

**(e) To strengthen the capacity and the human, technical and financial resources of the Special Criminal Court and expand the coverage of the joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and girls across the territory of the State party; allocate financial resources to establish additional branches outside the capital; ensure the appointment of women as investigators; and provide training to judges, prosecutors, the police and other law enforcement officers, as well as lawyers, on gender-sensitive investigation and interrogation methods to prevent revictimization;**

**(f) To strengthen its collaboration with the International Criminal Court in relation to investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators of international crimes committed by the parties to the conflict against women and girls, and expedite the implementation of decisions on reparations to and rehabilitation of victims and survivors of sexual violence perpetrated by peacekeepers during the conflict;**

**(g) To ensure accountability for atrocities committed against women and girls during the conflict, the full operationalization of transitional justice mechanisms across the territory of the State party and the commemoration of women victims of sexual violence.**

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

13. The Committee notes the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed in Bangui on 6 February 2019, in which the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and in building sustainable peace is recognized; the ongoing process to develop the third national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security; and the appointment of women as members of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, in 2023. However, the Committee notes with concern:

**(a) The absence of information about the participation of women in the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and in the development of the third national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#);**

(b) The absence of information about the integration of a gender perspective in the national security sector reform strategy and about the involvement of women in the implementation of the national action plan on women and peace and security;

(c) The lack of information about mechanisms to enable collaboration between women local leaders and peacekeeping operations and about the number and role of women in the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission and in the mixed-gender peace, truth and reconciliation commissions in the prefectures, sub-prefectures and districts.

**14. The Committee, reiterating its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/CAF/CO/1-5, para. 20) and recalling the recommendations of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic in his report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/54/77, para. 87 (a) and (b)), calling upon the State party to revitalize the process of implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and the joint road map for peace in the Central African Republic adopted on 16 September 2021 in Luanda, calls upon the State party:**

(a) To ensure the equal representation of women in the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, and provide women's organizations and their grassroots networks with up-to-date information on the status of implementation of the Agreement;

(b) To integrate a gender perspective and ensure the equal participation of women in the implementation of the national security sector reform strategy and adopt gender-responsive guidelines for addressing the situation and needs of women and girls in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategies;

(c) To provide for the equal participation of women in the implementation of the national action plan on women and peace and security;

(d) To develop mechanisms that facilitate communication and enable collaboration between women local leaders and peacekeeping operations;

(e) To provide women in the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission and in the mixed-gender peace, truth and reconciliation commissions in the prefectures, sub-prefectures and districts with the necessary means and support for taking up leadership roles in these transitional justice mechanisms.

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

15. The Committee observes with concern the limited understanding and lack of training for public officials on the Convention and the general recommendations of the Committee.

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

(a) Strengthen its efforts to widely disseminate and raise awareness of the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations, including in Sango and other languages used in the State party, in particular among rural women, women with disabilities, pygmy women, internally displaced women, refugee women, and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;

(b) Educate women on their rights under the Convention and the legal remedies available to claim those rights;

(c) **Train members of the judiciary, legal professionals and law enforcement officers on the Committee's jurisprudence under the Optional Protocol;**

(d) **Provide civil servants, upon initial appointment and at regular intervals, with capacity-building and training on the human rights of women and gender equality based on the Convention, the Committee's jurisprudence and its general recommendations.**

#### **Constitutional and legislative framework and definition of discrimination against women**

17. The Committee notes that the State party's adherence to international treaties, including the Convention, is reaffirmed in the preamble of the new Constitution promulgated on 30 August 2023. It also observes that the Constitution provides that political parties are bound by the concept of gender equality (art. 7), that citizens have the right to equality before the law and equal protection of the law (art. 12) and that the public authorities are obliged to eliminate discrimination against women and protect their rights (art. 14). The Committee notes with concern, however:

(a) The absence of a constitutional provision on equality of women and men, and that sex and gender are not recognized as prohibited grounds of discrimination;

(b) The absence of comprehensive gender equality and anti-discrimination legislation, covering also intersecting forms of discrimination and the differential treatment of women according to their religious affiliation or belief and of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;

(c) The delay in harmonizing national legislation with the Convention, in particular the retention in the Family Code and the Penal Code of discriminatory provisions relating to marriage, family relations, choice of residence, property and inheritance (CEDAW/C/CAF/RQ/6, para. 19).

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

(a) **Amend the Constitution to explicitly enshrine the principle of equality of women and men and ensure equal treatment of all women, including lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, irrespective of their religious affiliation or belief;**

(b) **Adopt comprehensive gender equality and non-discrimination legislation, covering direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in line with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention;**

(c) **Expedite the review of the Family Code and the Penal Code to remove all discriminatory provisions relating to marriage, family relations, choice of residence, property and inheritance, and consider availing itself of technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, if necessary.**

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

19. The Committee takes note of the mandate of the Ministry for Gender Advancement and the Protection of Women, the Family and Children and the gender focal points across all ministries to coordinate the implementation of the national policy for the promotion of equality and equity and to promote the human rights of

women and gender equality. It further welcomes the establishment of a committee on population, gender, health, social affairs and humanitarian law; and a forum of women parliamentarians, within the National Assembly, tasked with the promotion of gender equality and the human rights of women in the normative framework. It notes with concern, however:

(a) The lack of human, technical and financial resources of the national machinery for the advancement of women, which prevents the effective implementation of national policies and programmes for achieving gender equality;

(b) The limited coordination and lack of consultation mechanisms within the Cabinet to ensure gender mainstreaming across all government departments;

(c) The absence of a gender-disaggregated data on the enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights, which limits the adoption of targeted and informed strategies and programmes (CEDAW/C/CAF/6, para. 254);

(d) The absence of gender-responsive budgeting under all chapters of the State budget;

(e) The absence of information about the consultation of women's rights organizations in the State party concerning the implementation of public policies and programmes to promote the human rights of women and gender equality.

**20. Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/CAF/CO/1-5, para. 24 (a)), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Increase the human, technical and financial resources allocated to the national machinery for the advancement of women, including at the municipal, prefectural and sub-prefectural levels, to coordinate the implementation of public policies and programmes throughout the State party;**

(b) **Establish a mechanism to coordinate gender mainstreaming across all ministries and government departments;**

(c) **Collect updated gender-disaggregated data on the enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights so as to inform and assess the impact of public policies, strategies and programmes aimed at achieving gender equality, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 9 (1989) on statistical data concerning the situation of women;**

(d) **Implement gender-responsive budgeting under all chapters of the State budget;**

(e) **Strengthen collaboration with women's rights organizations in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies and programmes to promote the rights of women and gender equality.**

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

21. The Committee notes with concern that the National Commission for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom established in 2017 is not fully independent and lacks sufficient human, technical and financial resources to carry out its mandate and operate in all parts of the State party. The Committee is also concerned about the absence of information to monitor the situation of women and to address situations of inequality and discrimination.

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

(a) **Operationalize the National Commission for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom and provide it with the human, technical and financial resources needed in order for it to perform its mandate independently and in**

**compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles);**

**(b) Ensure that the National Commission for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom has a mandate to monitor the situation of women and to address all forms of discrimination against women, including intersecting forms of discrimination, and that it has the capacity to receive complaints and to conduct independent oversight of legislation, policies and practices regarding the human rights of women and gender equality;**

**(c) Support the accreditation process of the National Commission for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom before the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and seek technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in that regard.**

#### **Temporary special measures**

23. The Committee notes with appreciation the adoption of the gender parity law (Act No. 16.004) in November 2016, which provides for a 35 per cent quota for the representation of women on electoral lists and appointments to public office, as well as for the establishment of a national observatory for parity. However, the Committee observes with concern reports about the lack of enforcement of quotas for electoral lists of political parties; that temporary special measures have yet to be applied in other areas of political and public life, in the fields of education and employment and in relation to economic empowerment; and the lack of temporary measures to promote the equal representation of women facing intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women with disabilities, older women, rural women, pygmy women, Muslim women, internally displaced women and refugee women.

**24. 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) Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to the national observatory for parity and promote understanding of the non-discriminatory nature and the purpose of temporary special measures among State officials, parliamentarians, policymakers, employers and the general public;**

**(b) Enforce the gender parity law, including the penalties for non-compliance with statutory quotas;**

**(c) Adopt and effectively implement temporary special measures to achieve the substantive equality of women and men in political, public and economic life, in the fields of education and employment, and in relation to economic empowerment and social security, with time-bound targets and benchmarks, as well as penalties for non-compliance;**

**(d) Adopt temporary special measures to ensure equal representation of women with disabilities, internally displaced women, refugee women, indigenous women, Christian, Muslim and Fulani women, young women, women living with HIV/AIDS, women heads of household, and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women in all areas where they are underrepresented or face intersecting forms of discrimination.**

**Gender stereotypes and harmful practices**

25. The Committee notes the establishment of the National Committee to Combat Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Gender-Based Violence including Child Marriage (CEDAW/C/CAF/6, para. 54). However, it notes with concern:

(a) The prevalence of deep-rooted stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society in the State party;

(b) The persistence of harmful practices, such as widowhood rites, forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of so-called “honour”, polygamy, sororate, levirate, purification rites for adulterous women, dowry payment and virginity testing;

(c) The continuous stigmatization and gender-based violence against older women in the context of witchcraft practices, including through accusations of witchcraft before informal courts.

26. **Recalling its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/CAF/CO/1-5, para. 26) and drawing attention to 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, as revised, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Conduct awareness-raising campaigns, targeting traditional and community leaders, informal justice magistrates, local authorities and women and men, on stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society and on the criminal nature and negative effects of harmful practices, such as child marriage, early pregnancies, polygamy, dowry payments and purification rites;**

(b) **Increase the understanding of the value of care work and domestic work and promote equal sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men;**

(c) **Prosecute and adequately sentence perpetrators of, and provide redress to women who are victims of, harmful traditional practices, such as widowhood rites, forced marriage, crimes committed in the name of so-called “honour”, polygamy, sororate, levirate, purification rites for adulterous women, dowry payment and virginity testing, including mechanisms for submitting confidential complaints, psychosocial counselling, reparations, public apologies and guarantees of non-repetition;**

(d) **Repeal any discriminatory provisions criminalizing witchcraft and provide effective protection to women who are accused of witchcraft.**

**Female genital mutilation**

27. The Committee acknowledges the ongoing review of the Penal Code to increase penalties for female genital mutilation. However, it notes with concern that at least every fifth woman between 15 and 49 years of age has been subjected to female genital mutilation, which continues to be socially accepted in the State party.

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

(a) **Ensure that programmes to combat female genital mutilation at the regional and municipal levels are adequately funded;**

(b) **Address the cultural and religious justifications of female genital mutilation, in cooperation with women’s associations at the local level, by strengthening awareness-raising campaigns on the criminal nature and negative**

effects of this harmful practice on the health of women and girls, including obstetric fistula, targeting parents, teachers, medical personnel and traditional and community leaders; and consider retraining female genital mutilation practitioners as birth attendants or providers of other forms of health care;

(c) Prevent all forms of female genital mutilation, including cross-boundary, medicalization and paramedicalization of female genital mutilation; and require health professionals to report cases of female genital mutilation, while protecting the confidentiality of those reporting such cases;

(d) Provide specialized health care to victims of female genital mutilation and ensure that such care is affordable and in conformity with the World Health Organization guidelines on the management of health complications resulting from female genital mutilation;

(e) Provide victims and at-risk women and girls with information about available mechanisms to file complaints against perpetrators of female genital mutilation;

(f) Build the capacity of criminal investigation officers on the strict enforcement of criminal law provisions against female genital mutilation.

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

29. The Committee notes with appreciation the cooperation of the State party in the visit carried out by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to the State party, in November 2023. It welcomes the adoption of the law on combating trafficking in persons (Act No. 22.015) in 2022 (CEDAW/C/CAF/RQ/6, paras. 43–46) and the establishment of a national strategic committee to combat trafficking. The Committee notes with concern, however:

(a) The prevalence of different forms of trafficking affecting women and girls, including sex trafficking, forced marriages, domestic servitude, forced labour in agriculture, mining and street vending, sale of children, pimping and child labour affecting girls; and the fact that at least 31 per cent of children between 5 and 17 years of age involved in child labour are girls;

(b) The absence of information about prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators, and reports of alleged official complicity in trafficking in persons;

(c) The fact that support services for women who are subjected to trafficking remain insufficient.

30. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration and its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/CAF/CO/1-5, para. 30), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Ensure that the prevention of trafficking includes measures targeting girls, Aka (pygmy) women and rural women; programmes to address economic and sociocultural factors, including poverty, related to trafficking; oversight of “houses of joy” (*maisons de joie*); child- and gender-sensitive reporting procedures for women who have been subjected to trafficking; and information in accessible formats for women and girls about the risks of trafficking and mechanisms to file complaints;

(b) Strengthen cross-border cooperation activities with neighbouring countries and regional agreements to combat trafficking and to identify women and girls who are being subjected to trafficking;

**(c) Redouble its efforts to ensure the rehabilitation and social reintegration of victims of trafficking, including access to temporary shelters, psychosocial redress and reparation, including compensation.**

31. The Committee observes with concern the absence of information about the situation of women in prostitution and of legal and policy frameworks to protect these women against gender-based violence. It also notes with concern reports of attacks, physical and verbal violence, rape and confiscation of private property of transgender women in prostitution.

**32. The Committee recommends that the State party provide adequate protection for women in prostitution and decriminalize women in prostitution. It also recommends that the State party develop exit programmes, including alternative income-generating opportunities and opportunities that address structural barriers, for women wishing to leave prostitution.**

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

33. The Committee notes the election and appointment of women to high-ranking government positions, including as President (2014–2016) and Minister for Defence (2015 and 2017–2021). It also welcomes the constitutional provisions providing for equal representation of women and men in national, regional and local public institutions (art. 14) and the revision of the Electoral Code aimed at promoting the participation of women candidates in elections (CEDAW/C/CAF/6, para. 79). The Committee notes with concern, however:

(a) That only 17 out of 130 members of the National Assembly are women (13.07 per cent), and that women are underrepresented in the Government (14.70 per cent), the foreign service (14.80 per cent) and in the High Court of Justice (0.20 per cent);

(b) Reports of physical, verbal and economic violence, harassment, intimidation, hate speech, threats and reprisals against women in the context of the 2023 constitutional referendum and the kidnapping of women candidates during the 2020 electoral campaign;

(c) The low representation of women in prefectures (12.5 per cent) and sub-prefectures (8.2 per cent), where women's access to public office has been undermined by the continuous postponement of local elections;

(d) Regulations and practices that prevent Muslim and Fulani women, women with disabilities and internally displaced women from participating in political life, including denial of identity documents and of their right to vote and to stand for election.

**34. The Committee recommends that the State party address all barriers to the equal and inclusive representation of women in political and public life by conducting awareness-raising on the equal capacity of women in all their diversity to take leadership roles, on the human right of women to equal representation in decision-making systems and on the importance of the equal representation of women as a requirement for achieving political stability and sustainable development in the State party. It also recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt temporary special measures, such as quotas to attain the equal representation of women and men in decision-making positions in political and public life, including with regard to campaign financing and training on political negotiation and campaigning;**

(b) **Prevent and address gender-based electoral violence, including by prosecuting and adequately sentencing perpetrators of gender-based violence against women in politics, establishing a registry of perpetrators and precluding perpetrators from running for public office, and providing women with**

psychosocial support to address the trauma experienced in cases of harassment and hate speech;

(c) **Ensure the holding of local elections in October 2024 and create an enabling environment for women candidates, including by promoting the participation of women as election monitors and observers, by providing financial support to women candidates, enforcing quotas for the representation of women on electoral lists of political parties and requiring equal treatment of women candidates in the media;**

(d) **Facilitate voters' registration and access to polling stations or voting by absentee ballot for internally displaced women, ensure that Muslim and Fulani women obtain the identity documents required to register as voters, recognize the legal capacity of women with disabilities to vote and to stand for election, and ensure the accessibility of election information and polling stations for women with disabilities.**

### **Nationality**

35. The Committee notes the progress made by the State party in restoring birth registration services, including the establishment of birth registration units across its territory and the increase in the number of registered births in Bangui, Bimbo and Begoa. Nonetheless, it notes with concern:

(a) The delay in adopting amendments to the Nationality Code and the absence of provisions enabling women to transfer their nationality to a foreign husband;

(b) The increased risk of statelessness of children born to women of the Central African Republic who are living abroad and of children born to internally displaced women;

(c) The barriers faced by women belonging to religious minorities and by indigenous and nomadic women in accessing birth registration and birth certificates for their children and obtaining and identity documents.

36. **Recalling 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) **Set up a time frame for completing the reform of the Nationality Code and ensure that the Code recognizes the equal right of women of the Central African Republic to transmit their nationality to a foreign spouse, that it provides for the automatic transfer of nationality from mothers to their children, including children born to women of the Central African Republic who are living abroad or to internally displaced women, and that it protects women and children from statelessness, in line with the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons;**

(b) **Facilitate the access of Muslim, indigenous and nomadic women to birth registration and birth certificates for their children, and to identity documents.**

### **Education**

37. The Committee notes with appreciation the measures taken by the State party with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations to enhance educational infrastructure and to protect schools from occupation and attacks, notably the implementation of the "Safe Schools" programme and the COVID-19 education response plan. Nonetheless, it notes with concern:

(a) The low enrolment rate of girls at the primary and secondary levels of education and the educational barriers faced by women and girls, such as insufficient infrastructure, lack of enforcement of compulsory free-of-charge primary education, inadequate sanitary conditions, and conflict-related gender-based violence and internal displacement;

(b) Persistent stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society and the lack of information about educational opportunities for women and girls, such as continuous education and adult literacy programmes, including for rural and internally displaced women;

(c) The high dropout rate among girls due to child and forced marriages, early pregnancies, forced recruitment for use in hostilities, forced labour, and stereotypes discouraging women and girls from choosing non-traditional fields of study, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and information and communications technology;

(d) The lack of age-appropriate sexuality education and information on family planning.

**38. Recalling its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Ensure free universal primary education and training for teachers and promote the enrolment, attendance and retention of women and girls in schools, including at the primary and secondary levels and above, in particular for girls in rural areas, pygmy women, pregnant girls, young mothers, internally displaced women and girls, and girls with disabilities;**

**(b) Raise awareness among parents, teachers and religious and community leaders, girls and boys, as well as the general public, about the importance of girls' access to education at all levels as a basis for their empowerment;**

**(c) Provide continuous education targeting, in particular, rural and internally displaced women and promote the participation of women and girls in non-traditional fields of study and career paths, in particular in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and information and communications technology;**

**(d) Address school dropout among girls, including through targeted measures to retain female students and through programmes to facilitate the reintegration of pregnant women and girls and young mothers into the education system, prevent stigmatization related to pregnancy, and prioritize access for girls to safe learning spaces and quality education, including through the use of digital technology;**

**(e) Introduce mandatory age-appropriate and comprehensive sexuality education in school curricula at all levels of education, including education on responsible sexual behaviour to prevent early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.**

### **Employment**

39. The Committee notes the adoption of the National Document on Employment Policy in 2016, which covers the access of women to different employment sectors, namely mining, forestry, infrastructure and agriculture. The Committee notes with concern, however:

(a) The persistent gender pay gap in the State party, amounting to 40.6 per cent in the civil service and 28 per cent in the health sector;

(b) The concentration of women in the informal economy, which accounts for more than 80 per cent of women who are employed in the State party, and their exclusion from the national social security scheme;

(c) The limited enforcement of the criminalization of sexual harassment in the workplace and the lenient penalties for perpetrators;

(d) The provision of the Labour Code prohibiting women from carrying out work beyond their physical strength (art. 252);

(e) Precarious working conditions and exploitation of women domestic workers and the absence of regulations and regular labour inspections.

**40. Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/CAF/CO/1-5, para. 38), the Committee recommends that the State party develop and integrate a gender perspective in economic recovery and employment strategies and avail itself of technical cooperation from ILO and other international and regional organizations. It further recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value; regularly review wages in sectors in which women are concentrated; and adopt measures to close the gender pay gap, including through gender-inclusive job classification and evaluation methods and regular pay surveys;**

**(b) Establish a time frame for the reform of the national social security policy and ensure that it is gender-responsive and provides for social protection of women employed in the informal economy and self-employed women;**

**(c) Set up a timeline for incorporating the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), of ILO, ratified by the State party in 2022, in its domestic legal system; and introduce and enforce strict penalties in cases of sexual harassment in the workplace and gather information about the number of complaints, investigations, convictions and penalties imposed on perpetrators, as well as about redress provided to victims of sexual harassment;**

**(d) Repeal legislation that disproportionately restricts the access of women to professions on the basis of discriminatory perceptions about women's physical strength or capabilities;**

**(e) Regulate domestic work, increase the number of labour inspections, including of private households where women domestic workers are employed, and ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of ILO.**

## **Health**

41. The Committee takes note of the national health policy (2019–2030) and its focus on the reduction of maternal mortality and the provision of health services for pregnant women, and of the steps taken to rebuild the health infrastructure in the State party as part of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The Committee notes with concern, however:

(a) The underfunding of the health sector and challenges in financing the reconstruction of the health infrastructure;

(b) The limited access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls, in particular rural women and girls and women and girls who are victims of sexual violence;

(c) The criminalization of abortion except in cases of rape and the recourse of women and girls to unsafe abortion services, endangering their lives and health;

(d) The limited access to malaria prophylaxis and treatment for women, including pregnant women and girls;

(e) The high rate of HIV infections among women and the high proportion of women not using any form of contraception (82.2 per cent).

**42. In line with general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health and targets 3.1 and 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to reduce global maternal mortality and ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Increase budgetary allocations and, if necessary, seek international assistance to rebuild the health infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, and recruit more health workers, including women;**

(b) **Strengthen the access of women to antenatal, perinatal and postnatal health services and train midwives and other relevant health professionals, especially in rural areas, on gender-responsive protocols for attending to victims of sexual violence;**

(c) **Decriminalize abortion and legalize it in all cases and ensure that women and girls have adequate access to safe abortion and post-abortion services to prevent maternal mortality, and ensure their bodily autonomy and their right to make free choices about their reproductive rights, including family planning;**

(d) **Provide free malaria prophylaxis and treatment to pregnant women as part of antenatal care, as well as to girls, rural women, internally displaced women, pygmy women, women with disabilities, women in detention and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.**

#### **Economic empowerment of women**

43. The Committee notes with concern the feminization of poverty in the State party, particularly for rural women. It also notes with concern that conflict-related gender-based violence against, and internal displacement of, women and girls have exacerbated food insecurity and deprivation for women and girls and undermine their economic empowerment. The Committee further notes with concern information about the misappropriation of funds and persistent corruption in the public sector of the State party.

**44. Recalling the links between article 13 of the Convention and Sustainable Development Goal 10, on reducing inequality within and among countries, and Goal 17, on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (particularly targets 17.16 and 17.17, on multi-stakeholder partnerships), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Integrate a gender perspective in the national development plan for the period 2024–2028 and its poverty eradication strategy;**

(b) **Promote the economic empowerment of women by strengthening their access to land, low-interest loans without collateral and other forms of financial credit, training to develop managerial and financial skills, and enterprise stimulation programmes, and ensuring their food security and equal participation in decision-making on rural development plans;**

(c) **Strengthen the role of the High Authority for Good Governance in adopting measures to combat the misappropriation of funds and corruption and put in place effective accountability and monitoring mechanisms.**

### **Rural women**

45. The Committee notes with concern that rural women have limited access to land ownership and control, property and productive resources owing to discriminatory customary laws and practices. It also notes with concern the lack of information about measures to ensure the equal participation of women in decision-making on water resource management and rural development plans. It is furthermore concerned about the impact of gold, diamond and other extractive activities, as well as of the farmer-herder conflict in border areas due to desertification, deforestation and climate change, on rural women's safety and livelihoods.

46. **The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure the access of rural women to land ownership and control and to property, including by ensuring that land parcels are registered under the names of both spouses, facilitating and providing capacity-building on women's economic rights for judges, cadastral registrars, traditional authorities and community leaders, and addressing discriminatory customary laws and practices;**

(b) **Expedite the adoption of the agricultural policy and the Agropastoral Land Code and ensure that rural women participate on an equal basis in their implementation and monitoring, as well as in decision-making on strategies related to food security and the use of land and other resources;**

(c) **Adhere to the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, endorsed by Human Rights Council in its resolution 17/4 of 16 June 2011, and apply due diligence to hold extractive industries accountable for violations of the human rights of rural and indigenous women in the exploitation of natural resources.**

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

47. The Committee takes note of the national gender and climate change strategy for 2023–2030 and the consultations with women held in Bangui, Boali and Mbaiki. It notes with concern, however, the disproportionate impact of climate change and natural disasters on the livelihoods of women in the State party.

48. **Recalling 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:**

(a) **Ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into the development and implementation of policies and programmes on disaster preparedness and response and other emergencies in order to guarantee that women, in particular rural women, benefit in full from such measures, according to their needs;**

(b) **Increase climate change and disaster risk management literacy and awareness among communities, women and girls, to empower them with the knowledge needed to demand their rights and effectively participate in climate change-related decision-making and the development of adaptation and loss and damage strategies and actions which build the resilience of women and girls with respect to the impacts of climate change;**

(c) **Collect disaggregated data on the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls.**

### **Disadvantaged groups of women**

*Women with disabilities*

49. The Committee takes note of the measures taken by the State party to strengthen access to vocational training, projects to transform school environments and the provision of scholarships for girls with disabilities. However, the Committee notes with concern the absence of legislation and policy frameworks to address discrimination against women and girls with disabilities in the State party. It also notes with concern the lack of statistical data on the socioeconomic status of women and girls with disabilities. It is further concerned about the limited access of women and girls with disabilities to decision-making processes in political and public life, inclusive education, employment, sports and cultural life.

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

(a) **Adopt legislation to prohibit discrimination against women and girls with disabilities, in consultation with, and with the active involvement of, women and girls with disabilities;**

(b) **Conduct research and systematically collect data on the socioeconomic status of women and girls with disabilities to inform policy responses and identify and address discrimination against women and girls with disabilities, including intersecting forms of discrimination;**

(c) **Involve women and girls with disabilities in public decision-making and ensure that women and girls with disabilities have access to education, employment and health services, in particular sexual and reproductive health services, sports, recreational opportunities and cultural life.**

*Internally displaced women and girls*

51. The Committee notes the large internally displaced and refugee population in the State party. The Committee notes with concern the deteriorating conditions of internally displaced and refugee women and girls, who have limited access to basic services and face intersecting forms of discrimination and gender-based violence in the State party.

52. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, and its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/CAF/CO/1-5, para. 18), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its legal framework for the protection of internally displaced women and girls and develop programmes to improve the conditions and ensure food security and safety for internally displaced women and girls, especially those in camps for internally displaced persons, in line with the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa;**

(b) **Ensure the safe and sustainable return of internally displaced women and girls to their places of habitual residence and ensure their access to education, employment and health services;**

(c) **Address intersecting forms of discrimination against internally displaced women and girls, protect them from gender-based violence, and prosecute and adequately sentence perpetrators.**

*Refugee and asylum-seeking women*

53. The Committee takes note about measures taken to provide refugee women with settlement kits and on awareness-raising activities focused on social cohesion and coexistence (CEDAW/C/CAF/RQ/6, paras. 13 and 14). The Committee notes with concern, however, information about increasing humanitarian needs of returnees and refugees from countries such as Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and the Sudan, including concerning access to water, hygiene and sanitation and health care, as well as tensions between host communities and persons in refugee-like situations.

54. **The Committee recommends that the State party step up its efforts to ensure that women and girls in refugee-like situations have adequate access to education, health care and other basic services, including through emergency aid programmes, in line with the Convention, with the Committee's general recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, and with the related international human rights standards. It further recommends that the State party ensure that refugee women are able to return to the housing that they had previously abandoned or are compensated for property destroyed during the conflict.**

#### *Women in detention*

55. The Committee notes with concern reports of ill-treatment, overcrowding and food insecurity in places where women are deprived of liberty, and women detainees' limited access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services.

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

(a) **Improve the conditions in detention facilities for women, in accordance with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), and address overcrowding, food insecurity and limited access to health services in places where women are deprived of liberty, in particular for pregnant women and women detained with their children;**

(b) **Ensure independent monitoring of detention facilities and gender-responsive confidential complaint mechanisms for women in detention who are victims of gender-based violence and ill-treatment.**

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

57. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The alarming incidence of child marriage in the State party and that many girls enter into a union before they reach 15 years of age;

(b) That polygamy is permitted under the legislation of the State party;

(c) The lack of information about discriminatory customary laws and practices related to marriage and family relations, divorce, child custody and inheritance.

58. **Recalling the Committee's general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, and joint general recommendation No. 31/general comment No. 18, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Expedite the adoption of the revised Family Code to set the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for women and men without exceptions and address the root causes of child marriage, including patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes;

(b) Raise awareness about the incompatibility of polygamy with the equal rights of women in marriage and family relations and amend the Family Code to prohibit polygamous unions;

(c) Ensure that customary laws and practices are in conformity with the Convention and do not discriminate against women and girls; and provide systematic capacity-building on the equal rights of women in marriage and family relations and upon their dissolution, as well as on the equal rights of women to child custody and inheritance, for the judiciary, traditional justice system actors, including custodians of customary law, traditional and community leaders and women and girls themselves.

#### **Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention**

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

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

60. 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**

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

#### **Technical assistance**

62. 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**

63. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments<sup>1</sup> 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. The Committee also encourages the State party to ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

**Follow-up to concluding observations**

64. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within one year, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12 (e), 14 (b), 26 (c) and 44 (b) above.

**Preparation of the next report**

65. 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 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.

66. 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).

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.