



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
5 April 2011

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Forty-eighth session

17 January–4 February 2011

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

South Africa

1. The Committee considered the combined second, third and fourth periodic report of South Africa (CEDAW/C/ZAF/2-4) at its 967th and 968th meetings on 21 January 2011 (see CEDAW/C/SR.967 and 968). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/ZAF/Q/4, and the responses of the State party are contained in CEDAW/C/ZAF/Q/4/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its combined second, third and fourth periodic report, which was well structured and, in general, followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of reports, although it lacked references to the Committee's general recommendations, and to some specific sex disaggregated data, and was long overdue. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its oral presentation, the written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-session working group, and the further clarifications to the questions posed orally by the Committee.

3. The Committee commends the State party for its high-level delegation, headed by the Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, which included several representatives from relevant ministries and the judiciary, with expertise in the areas covered by the Convention. The Committee appreciates the frank and constructive dialogue that took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee.

4. The Committee notes with appreciation that the report was prepared in a participatory process involving Government institutions, Parliament and national civil society organizations, including women organizations.

B. Positive Aspects

5. The Committee commends the State party for its extraordinary efforts and the impressive results obtained in the 15 years since the abolition of the apartheid regime in promoting equality for women, and the fight against discrimination. The Committee further welcomes the progressive legislative framework of the State party to ensure *de jure* equality between women and men, and the achievements in this regard since the consideration of the State party's initial report in 1998 (CEDAW/C/ZAF/1), such as the adoption of the following laws:

- a) Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007;
- b) Children's Act of 2005, which seeks, among other things, to ensure a gender-responsive treatment of girls in conflict with the law; and
- c) Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Equality Act), 2000.

6. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the State party has adopted a number of policies, programmes and plans of action to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination against women, such as the establishment of the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality branch within the recently created Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities (2009), the National Gender Policy, and the 365-day National Plan of Action to end gender violence.

7. The Committee welcomes the adoption in 2006 of the Strategic Framework on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality within the Public Service, and the fact that the State party exceeded the 50 per cent target for representation of women at all levels of senior management – women currently represent 54.38 per cent of Public-Service staff.

8. The Committee notes with satisfaction that South Africa has adopted the 50/50 gender parity in line with the Southern African Development Community's Protocol on Gender and Development (SADC Protocol), and that currently women represent 44 per cent of parliamentarians and 43 per cent of the members of the Cabinet.

9. The Committee notes with satisfaction that in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified or acceded to a number of international human rights treaties, namely:

- a) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on 18 October 2005;
- b) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, on 24 September 2009;
- c) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as its Optional Protocol, on 30 November 2007;
- d) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, on 30 June 2003;
- e) Optional Protocols I and II to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on 28 August 2002; and
- f) Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, on 27 November 2000.

C. Principle areas of concern and recommendations

10. The Committee recalls the State party's obligation to systematically and continuously implement all the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and considers the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding observations as requiring the State party's priority attention between now and the submission of its next periodic report. Consequently, the Committee urges the State party to focus on these areas in its implementation activities, and to report on action taken and results achieved in its next periodic report. It calls on the State party to submit the present concluding observations to all relevant ministries, Parliament and the judiciary, so as to ensure their full implementation.

Parliament

11. While reaffirming that the Government has the primary responsibility and is particularly accountable for the full implementation of the State party's obligations under the Convention, the Committee stresses that the Convention is binding on all branches of Government, and it invites the State party to encourage Parliament, in line with its procedures, where appropriate, to take the necessary steps with regard to the implementation of these concluding observations and the Government's next reporting process under the Convention.

Visibility of the Convention and its Optional Protocol

12. The Committee welcomes the elaboration of the Women's Human Rights Resource Book which summarizes all international human rights instruments. However, the Committee is concerned about the general lack of awareness of the Convention and its Optional Protocol in the State party, in particular among the judiciary and other law enforcement officials. It is further concerned that women themselves are not aware of their rights under the Convention, or of the complaints procedure under the Optional Protocol, and thus lack the necessary information to claim their rights.

13. The Committee calls on the State party to:

a) Take the necessary steps to ensure the adequate dissemination of the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations among all stakeholders, including Government ministries, parliamentarians, the judiciary, law enforcement officers, and religious and community leaders, so as to create awareness of women's human rights; and

b) Take all appropriate measures to enhance women's awareness of their rights and the means to enforce them, including through providing women with information on the Convention and the Optional Protocol.

Incorporation of the Convention

14. While welcoming the efforts of the State party towards incorporating the Convention through the adoption of specific legislation, the Committee regrets that neither the Constitution nor other relevant legislation of the State party embodies the principle of substantive equality between women and men, or prohibits direct and indirect discrimination against women in accordance with article 1 of the Convention.

15. The Committee calls on the State party to expedite the consultations on the Green Paper towards a Gender Equality Bill in order to submit it as soon as possible for adoption to the Parliament, and achieve *de jure* equality for women and compliance with the State party's international treaty obligations. It also urges the

State party to fully incorporate into the Gender Equality Bill the principle of equality between women and men in accordance with article 2(a) of the Convention, as well as to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, in line with article 1 and other relevant provisions of the Convention.

Access to Justice

16. While the Committee acknowledges that the State party is currently undergoing a reform to ensure women's access to justice, in particular, as stated by the State party during the interactive dialogue, to improve prosecution and conviction of cases related to violence against women in the country, the Committee expresses concern about certain provisions of the Traditional Courts Bill, currently under discussion, which may jeopardize women's access to justice and equality of treatment before the law, including by using a vague wording that enables the continuing representation of women by male family members (art. 9.3 (b)).

17. The Committee urges the State party to:

a) Strengthen its judicial system to ensure that women have effective access to justice and to facilitate women's access to justice by, for example, providing free legal aid to women without sufficient means;

b) Discuss with the legislators reviewing the Traditional Courts Bill the importance of harmonizing the provisions of the bill with the State party's constitutional principles relating to non-discrimination and equality between women and men, as well as with its obligations under the Convention, and make the necessary amendments before its adoption; and

c) Provide systematic training to judges, lawyers, labour inspectors, NGOs and employers on the application of legislation prohibiting discrimination, in light of its obligations under the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

National machinery

18. While noting efforts undertaken by the State party to restructure and strengthen its National Gender Machinery (NGM), notably with the establishment of the Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, the Committee is concerned about the weak institutional capacity of this Ministry, including inadequate human, financial and technical resources. It is concerned that such inadequacies could prevent it from effectively discharging its functions of promoting specific programmes for the advancement of women, effectively coordinating efforts among the different institutions of the National Gender Machinery, at various levels, and ensuring comprehensive gender mainstreaming in all areas of government policy

19. The Committee recommends that the State party expeditiously strengthen its National Gender Machinery, in particular the Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, in order to ensure a strong institutional mechanism for the promotion of gender equality. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to provide the national machinery with adequate human, financial and technical resources to coordinate the implementation of the Convention, and work effectively towards promoting gender equality. It calls on the State party to strengthen the linkages between the national, regional and local levels in relation to gender-equality activities, including through the provision of training in gender sensitization and gender mainstreaming by the South African Management Institute and/or the Local Government Leadership Academy.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

20. The Committee is concerned about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes concerning women's roles and responsibilities that discriminate against women and perpetuate their subordination within the family and society. It notes that such discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes constitute serious obstacles to women's enjoyment of their human rights and the fulfilment of the rights enshrined in the Convention. The Committee is thus concerned about the inadequate implementation of effective and comprehensive measures to modify or eliminate stereotypes and negative traditional values and practices in South Africa. The Committee also expresses serious concern about the persistence of entrenched harmful cultural norms and practices, including *ukuthwala* (forced marriages of women and girls to older men through abduction), polygamy and the killing of "witches". The Committee is also concerned about the continuing stereotypical portrayal of women in the media, which encourages discrimination and undermines the equality of women and men.

21. The Committee urges the State party to

a) **Accelerate the implementation without delay of a comprehensive strategy, including review and formulation of legislation and establishment of goals and timetables, to modify or eliminate harmful practices and stereotypes that discriminate against women, in conformity with articles 2(f) and 5(a) of the Convention. Such measures should include efforts to raise awareness of this subject, targeting women and men at all levels of society, including traditional leaders, in collaboration with civil society;**

b) **More vigorously address harmful practices, such as *ukuthwala*, polygamy, the killing of "witches", and the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) among certain populations;**

c) **Use innovative and effective measures to strengthen understanding of the equality of women and men, and work with the media to enhance a positive, non-stereotypical and non-discriminatory portrayal of women;**

d) **Undertake an assessment of the impact of these measures in order to identify shortcomings, and to improve them accordingly; and,**

e) **Report, in its next periodic report, on any developments regarding consultations on legislation to prohibit *ukuthwala*, which is being conducted by the South African Law Reform Commission.**

22. The Committee expresses serious concern about a provision in the Children's Act of 2005, according to which virginity testing of girls above 16 years old is allowed if the girl has given her consent. The Committee is further concerned that the practice of virginity testing of girls as young as 3 years old is increasing in the State party without respecting the physical and mental integrity of girls, and exposing them to increased risks of sexual violence.

23. **The Committee calls upon the State party to take the necessary actions to amend the Children's Act with the aim of prohibiting virginity tests for girl children, irrespective of their age, and to design and implement effective education campaigns to combat traditional and family pressures on girls and women in favour of this practice, in order to comply with its international obligations, including under the Committee's General recommendation No. 19 (1992) and article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that State parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse.**

Violence against women

24. While noting that a number of policy, legislative, administrative, victims empowerment and other measures, based on a multi-sectoral approach at the operational level, have been put in place to combat violence against women in the country, the Committee expresses serious concern at the inordinately high prevalence of sexual violence against women and girls, and widespread domestic violence. The Committee is also concerned that such violence appears to be socially normalized, legitimized and accompanied by a culture of silence and impunity. It is further concerned at the low levels of prosecution and conviction, and at reports indicating that some police officers fine rape perpetrators in lieu of reporting the cases. The Committee regrets the lack of information on the impact of the measures and programmes in place to reduce incidences of all forms of violence against women and girls. The Committee is also concerned that social support services, including shelters, are inadequate due to inappropriate budgetary allocations.

25. The Committee calls upon the State party to:

a) **Give priority attention to the results of the report of the study, commissioned by the Government and conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, which addresses the prevalence, nature and causes of sexual violence in South Africa (released in November 2010), in order to review the State party's multi-sectoral action plan to combat violence against women, and expeditiously adopt comprehensive measures to better address such violence, in accordance with the Committee's General recommendation No. 19;**

b) **Raise public awareness, through the media and education programmes, on the fact that all forms of violence against women are a form of discrimination under the Convention, and therefore a violation of women's rights;**

c) **Put in place mechanisms of accountability to ensure the implementation of the provisions contained within policies and legislation, such as the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act, to combat violence against women;**

d) **Ensure the necessary budgetary allocations for the implementation of the various projects and programmes, including social support services for victims;**

26. **Moreover, the Committee requests the State party to provide in its next periodic report detailed information on the causes, scope and extent of all forms of violence against women, disaggregated by age, and urban and rural areas, and on the impact of measures taken to prevent such violence, investigate occurrences, prosecute and punish perpetrators, and provide protection, relief and remedies, including appropriate compensation, to victims and their families.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

27. The Committee is concerned about the lack of information about the extent of the phenomenon of trafficking in women in the country, despite the acknowledgement on the part of the State party, in its report, that it was a country of origin, transit and destination of victims of trafficking. The Committee notes with concern that statistics on the number of women and girls who are victims of trafficking for sexual and economic exploitation are not available, in light of the fact that prostitution is criminalized. It is also concerned at the State party's failure to address the root causes of trafficking and prostitution, including poverty, which impedes the State party's efforts to address these issues in a serious way. In addition, the Committee regrets the lack of information provided on the existence and implementation of regional and bilateral memoranda of understanding and/or agreements with other countries on trafficking, and the inadequate information provided on prosecution and punishment of traffickers.

28. The Committee urges the State party:

- a) **To expedite the adoption of the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill in order to fully implement article 6 of the Convention, including through the effective implementation of this new legislation on trafficking, ensuring that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished and victims adequately protected and assisted;**
- b) **That in all parts of the country information and training on how to identify and deal with trafficking victims and on anti-trafficking provisions in the domestic law be provided to the judiciary, law enforcement officials, border guards and social workers;**
- c) **To conduct comparative studies on trafficking and prostitution and address their root causes, including poverty, in order to eliminate the vulnerability of girls and women to sexual exploitation and trafficking and to undertake efforts for the recovery and social integration of the victims;**
- d) **To ensure systematic monitoring and periodic evaluation, including the collection and analysis of data on trafficking and exploitation of women in prostitution, and to include such data in its next periodic report;**
- e) **To increase its efforts at international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination to prevent trafficking through information exchange and to harmonize legal procedures aiming at prosecution of traffickers; and**
- f) **To consider using the OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking (2002) as a basis for their implementation.**

Participation in political and public life

29. While acknowledging the significant increase in the number of women in Parliament, diplomacy, and decision-making positions within the public administration as a result, inter alia, of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, the Committee notes that the same level of progress has not been achieved, and that obstacles to the advancement of women still remain, in other areas of public and professional life, as well as in decision-making positions, including in the judiciary, local government, trade unions and the private sector.

30. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- a) **Pursue sustained policies aimed at the promotion of women's full and equal participation in decision-making as a democratic requirement in all areas of public, political and professional life by utilizing the Committee's General recommendation No. 23 concerning women in public life, and by continuing to adopt, wherever necessary, temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and the Committee's General recommendation No. 25, in order to accelerate women's full and equal participation in public and political life, in particular within the judiciary;**
- b) **Implement awareness-raising activities on the importance of women's participation in decision-making for society as a whole, and the development of targeted training and mentoring programmes for women candidates and women elected to public office, as well as programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for current and future women leaders; and**
- c) **Carefully monitor the effectiveness of measures taken and results achieved, and inform the Committee thereof in its next report.**

Education

31. The Committee notes with appreciation the measures undertaken by the State party in the area of education, including the National Education Infrastructure Management System, the National School Nutrition Programme, the Girls Education Movement (GEM), and the development of the Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Sexual Violence and Harassment in Public Schools. The Committee is concerned that teenage pregnancy is the most common reason why girls leave school, resulting in high drop-out rates, and it is further concerned about the lack of information on re-enrolment rates after giving birth. The Committee also expresses grave concern about the high number of girls who suffer sexual abuse and harassment in schools by both teachers and classmates, as well as the high number of girls who suffer sexual violence while on their way to/from school. The Committee is concerned, in particular, at reports indicating that prostitution, exploitative sex and rape are perpetrated in connection with a child's access to education. The Committee notes that education is key to the advancement of women, and that the low level of education of women and girls remains one of the most serious obstacles to their full enjoyment of their human rights.

32. The Committee calls on the State party to:

a) Take steps to ensure de facto equal access of girls and young women to all levels of education, to retain girls in schools, and to strengthen the implementation of re-entry policies enabling young women to return to school after pregnancy, across the country;

b) Provide safe educational environments free from discrimination and violence, as well as safe transportation to and from schools, and closely monitor the implementation of the Safe Schools Programme;

c) Strengthen awareness-raising and training of school officials and students, and the sensitization of children through the media; and establish reporting and accountability mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators of sexual abuse and harassment are prosecuted and punished;

d) Widely disseminate the Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Sexual Violence and Harassment in Public Schools, and ensure enforcement and monitoring of the provisions recommended to curtail the problem; and

e) Ensure the necessary budgetary allocation for the implementation of various projects and programmes.

Employment

33. The Committee acknowledges the State party's efforts to implement legislative measures aimed at eliminating discrimination against women in employment, such as the Employment Equity Act, and the establishment of the Employment Conditions Commission to ensure the right of equal remuneration for women and men. However, the Committee is concerned about the persistence of discrimination against women in the labour market, in particular the high rate of unemployment affecting women (30 per cent), the wide gender/wage gap, and occupational segregation. The Committee also regrets that even though the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the Equality Act (2000) prohibit discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997) protects maternity leave, there is no provision in domestic legislation for remunerated maternity leave.

34. The Committee requests the State party to ensure equal opportunities for women in the labour market, in accordance with article 11 of the Convention. To this end, the Committee urges the State party to adopt effective measures in the formal

labour market to eliminate both horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, narrow and close the wage gap between women and men, and ensure the application of the principle of equal remuneration and equal opportunities at work. The Committee further calls on the State party to review the relevant legislation under discussion, in particular the Employment Equity Amendment Bill, and the Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Bill, with a view to ensuring, in accordance with international standards, that all mothers receive leave with pay, and also to provide effective sanctions and remedies for violation of laws on maternity leave.

Health – HIV/AIDS

35. The Committee is concerned about the high levels of maternal mortality rates (65/100 000 live births) and data indicating that a significant proportion of maternal deaths are attributed to non-pregnancy related infections, mainly AIDS (43.7 per cent). While acknowledging information provided on various initiatives undertaken by the State party to prevent and combat HIV/AIDS, including the implementation of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) for HIV and AIDS, 2007-2011, the Committee notes with deep concern that the State party continues to face a serious epidemic, and that women and girls are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, as the prevalence among women is higher (13.6 per cent) than among men (7.9 per cent). The Committee is further concerned about the discrepancies among the provinces of South Africa in the percentage of HIV-positive pregnant women that have access to antiretroviral treatment. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of information on specific measures addressing the intersection between violence and HIV/AIDS risks, given the high levels of sexual violence against women. It is also concerned about the prevalence of HIV-related stigma which places women living with HIV at risk of being subjected to violence and discrimination.

36. The Committee calls on the State party to:

a) Ensure the implementation of the Maternal Child and Women's Health Strategy (2009-2014);

b) Take continued and sustained measures to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls, as well as its social and family consequences;

c) Take measures to broaden and strengthen PMTCT services in order to achieve its target rate of 5 per cent for Mother to Child Transmission, as indicated in the State party's replies to the list of issues and questions;

d) Develop policies aimed at addressing multiple discrimination and violence against women, based on the intersection between violence and HIV/AIDS;

e) Undertake awareness-raising campaigns throughout the State party and among Government personnel in respect of prevention, protection and maintenance of confidentiality, in order to systemize and integrate approaches for multiple government sectors; and,

f) Report on measures taken in this respect, as well as on obstacles encountered and results achieved, in its next report.

Rural women

37. The Committee reiterates its concern at the disadvantaged position of women in rural and remote areas who constitute the majority of women in South Africa, which is characterized by poverty, difficulties in access to health and social services, and a lack of participation in decision-making processes at the community level. The Committee also reiterates its concern that customs and traditional practices, prevalent in rural areas, prevent women from inheriting or acquiring ownership of land and other property.

38. The Committee calls on the State party to take the necessary measures to increase and strengthen the participation of women in designing and implementing local development plans, and to pay special attention to the needs of rural women, in particular women heads of household, by ensuring that they participate in decision-making processes and have improved access to health, education, clean water and sanitation services, fertile land and income-generation projects. The Committee also urges the State party to eliminate all forms of discrimination with respect to ownership, co-sharing and inheritance of land. It further urges the introduction of measures to address negative customs and traditional practices, especially in rural areas, which affect full enjoyment of the right to property by women.

Sexual orientation

39. The Committee notes that the State party has in its Constitution the prohibition of discrimination based on the sexual orientation of individuals. However, the Committee expresses grave concern about reported sexual offences and murder committed against women on account of their sexual orientation. The Committee further expresses serious concern about the practice of so called “corrective rape” of lesbians.

40. The Committee calls on the State party to abide by its Constitutional provisions and to provide effective protection from violence and discrimination against women based on their sexual orientation, in particular through the enactment of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that would include the prohibition of multiple forms of discrimination against women on all grounds, including on the grounds of sexual orientation. The Committee further recommends that the State party continue its sensitization campaign aimed at the general public, as well as provide appropriate training to law enforcement officials and other relevant actors.

Marriage and family relations

41. The Committee notes that the Constitutional Court of South Africa has held as discriminatory, and therefore unconstitutional, rules of customary laws on marriage and succession. The Committee also notes that as a result of these judgements, a reform of the Customary Law of Succession and Related Matters Amendment Bill, which seeks to abolish the customary law rule of male primogeniture, is currently under discussion. However, the Committee is concerned that other customary and religious laws and practices that discriminate against women in the field of marriage and family relations, such as polygamy, are being upheld by the State party’s preservation of a combination of civil, customary and religious marital regimes, and by the adoption of legislation such as the Customary Marriages Act.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party increase support for law reform, in line with its Constitutional principles, with regard to non-discrimination, and to comply with its international obligations through partnerships and collaboration with religious and community leaders, lawyers, judges, civil society organizations and women’s non-governmental organizations. To this end, the Committee urges the State party to:

a) Expedite discussion of the Customary Law of Succession and Related Amendment Bill, with the aim of adopting it; and

b) Prepare a unified family code in conformity with the Convention, in which unequal inheritance rights, property and land rights and polygamy are addressed, with the aim of abolishing them, including the option of civil provisions available for all women.

Article 20, paragraph 1

43. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the State party has endorsed the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1 of the Convention concerning the duration of the Committee's meetings (paragraph 2.17 of the State party's replies to the list of issues of questions). The Committee encourages the State party to send a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations notifying of the State party's endorsement of the proposed amendment to article 20, paragraph 1 of the Convention.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

44. The Committee urges the State party, in the implementation of its obligations under the Convention, to fully utilize the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which reinforce the provisions of the Convention, and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

Millennium Development Goals

45. The Committee emphasizes that full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It calls for the integration of a gender perspective, and explicit reflection of the provisions of the Convention in all efforts aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

Dissemination

46. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in South Africa of the present concluding observations, in order to make the population, government officials, politicians, parliamentarians, women's and human rights organizations, and the media aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure the de jure and de facto equality of women, as well as the steps that still need to be taken in that regard. The Committee recommends that the dissemination of the concluding observations include the local community level. The State party is encouraged to organize a series of meetings to discuss progress achieved in the implementation of these observations. The Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate as widely as possible, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Committee's General recommendations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on the theme "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

Ratification of other treaties

47. The Committee notes that the State party's adherence to the nine main international human rights instruments¹ would enhance women's enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the Government of South Africa to consider ratifying the

¹ The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman, 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.

treaties to which it is not yet a party, namely, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 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.

Follow-up to concluding observations

48. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 15 and 42 above.

Preparation of next report

49. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the wide participation of all ministries and public bodies in the preparation of its next report, as well as to consult a variety of women's and human rights organizations during that phase.

50. The Committee requests the State party to respond to the concerns expressed in the present concluding observations in its next periodic report to be submitted further to article 18 of the Convention. The Committee invites the State party to submit its fifth periodic report in February 2015.

51. The Committee invites the State party to follow the Harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1), approved at the fifth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies, in June 2006. The treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee at its fortieth session in January 2008 must be applied in conjunction with the harmonized reporting guidelines on the common core document. Together, they constitute the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The treaty-specific document should be limited to 40 pages, while the updated common core document should not exceed 80 pages.
