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## **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

### **Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia\***

1. The Committee considered the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia (CEDAW/C/ARM/5-6) at its 1449th and 1450th meetings, on 4 November 2016 (see CEDAW/C/SR.1449 and 1450). The Committee's list of issues and questions are contained in CEDAW/C/ARM/Q/5-6 and the responses of Armenia are contained in CEDAW/C/ARM/Q/5-6/Add.1.

#### **A. Introduction**

2. The Committee appreciates that the State party submitted its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group. It welcomes the oral presentation of the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party's high delegation, which was headed by Mr. Virgen Kocharyan, Deputy Minister of Justice. The delegation also included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues, the Social Affairs Department of the Government Staff, and of the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

#### **B. Positive Aspects**

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2009 of the State party's combined third and fourth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/ARM/4) in undertaking legislative reforms, and in particular the adoption of:

(a) Amendments to the Electoral Code, reinforcing special temporary measures to promote women's participation in decision-making positions, in 2016;

(b) The Law on Social Assistance, introducing definitions of violence, gender-based violence against women in the domestic sphere and prior identification measures, in 2014;

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fifth session (24 October-18 November 2016).

(c) The Law on Identifying and Assisting Victims of Trafficking and Human Exploitation, in 2014;

(d) The Law on Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, in 2013.

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) The Plan of Action on gender balance among candidate judges, in 2015;

(b) The Council on Men and Women Equality Affairs, in 2014;

(c) The Fourth National Programme on Combating Human Trafficking 2013-2015, in February 2013;

(d) The Strategic Programme for Legal and Judicial Reforms (2012 - 2016), in 2012, which encloses reforms introducing different forms of domestic violence and practical mechanisms for responding to and preventing them in legislation;

(e) The 2013 – 2018 Employment Strategy in 2012, introducing assistance to the unemployed and counselling for entrepreneurial activities;

(f) The Gender Policy Strategic Programme (2011-2015) and the Gender Policy Action Plan, both in 2011;

(g) The National Programme against Gender-Based Violence (2011-2015), in 2011;

(h) The State Programme for Social and Psychological Recovery of Victims of Trafficking, in 2010.

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 instruments:

(a) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2010;

(b) The Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, in 2013.

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

### **Parliament**

7. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). It invites the Parliament, in line with its mandate, to take necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.**

### **Legislative framework**

8. The Committee notes the supremacy of international treaties in case of clash with national legislation and also notes that article 14 of the State party's Constitution contains a general non-discrimination clause and that article 143 of the Criminal Code punishes violations of human and citizen rights based on discrimination. However, the Committee expresses concern at the lack of comprehensive legal provisions prohibiting discrimination against women, and the state party's preference for gender-neutral policies and programmes, which may lead to inadequate protection for women against direct, as well as

indirect discrimination, hinder the achievement of formal and substantive equality between women and men, and result in a fragmented approach to the recognition and enforcement of women's human rights.

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

**(a) Expedite the adoption of a stand-alone law on non-discrimination, in line with articles 1 and 2, subparagraph (b), of the Convention, which includes a broad definition of discrimination against women, covering direct and indirect discrimination by both state and non-state actors and encompassing intersecting forms of discrimination, in line with General Recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the Core Obligations of States Parties under Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4, Para. 13);**

**(b) Include in its next report information about the results of these measures as well as disaggregated data in line with the Committee's General Recommendation No. 9 (1989) on statistical data.**

**Access to justice and legal complaint mechanisms**

10. The Committee welcomes the free legal services provided to women by the Office of the Public Defender, such as for family matters, heritage, property, mediation and arbitration. The Committee however notes with concern the lack of state financial resources limiting the scope of the services of the Public Defender. The Committee is also concerned by the failure of the Compulsory Enforcement Service of the Ministry of Justice to enforce court decisions on child custody, as well as stigmatization and discrimination faced by women claiming violations of their rights, including when they file complaints with the police and public prosecutors.

**11. In line with its General Recommendation No. 33 (2014) on women's access to justice, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Ensure the provision of free legal aid to women without sufficient means, including rural women, women with disabilities and women belonging to minority groups, to enable them to claim violations of their human rights before the courts;**

**(b) Encourage reporting of violations of women's human rights, such as sex- and gender-based discrimination and violence against women, to the relevant judicial and quasi-judicial bodies, including by identifying referral pathways on national, regional and local level and raising awareness of women and responsible state officials on these pathways;**

**(c) Sensitize the judiciary, law enforcement officials, education professionals, health care providers and social workers on the need to protect women's human rights and to comply with their reporting obligations in case such rights are being violated, and provide capacity building to judges, prosecutors, the police and other law enforcement officials on the strict application of relevant criminal law provisions;**

**(d) Ensure the systematic and effective enforcement of court decisions by increasing the human, technical and financial resources of the Compulsory Enforcement Service of the Ministry of Justice, imposing appropriate sanctions and awarding compensation to the aggrieved party in case of delayed or non-enforcement of child custody decisions.**

**National machinery for the advancement of women**

12. The Committee notes the different mechanisms mandated to protect and promote women's human rights at national and local levels in the State party, including the Advisor

on women's Issues to the Public Defender on Women's Issues, the Council on Men and Women Equality Affairs, its adjacent Working Group, as well as regional commissions dealing with gender issues. The Committee also notes the increase in budget for the Public Defender, as well as the operation of a hotline for women victims of gender-based violence. However, the Committee notes with concern that the Advisor to the Public Defender reportedly does not actively fulfil her mandate. It is also concerned about the limited effectiveness of the several mechanisms in charge of monitoring and implementing gender policies due to difficulties in the coordination amongst them. The Committee thus welcomes the plan to transform the Council on Men and Women Equality Affairs into a national mechanism for monitoring and implementing gender policies.

**13. The Committee calls upon the State party to:**

**(a) Include in its next periodic report information on the mandates of the Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities between women and men, the adjacent working group and the regional commissions for gender, as well as on the coordination of their activities;**

**(b) Strengthen the capacity of the Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities between women and men to efficiently monitor and implement relevant policies on gender equality and coordinate between institutions implementing this framework, to mainstream a gender perspective throughout all government departments and to operate as a national machinery for the advancement of women;**

**(c) Increase human, technical and financial resources of the adjacent working group to the Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities between women and men and of regional commissions for gender.**

**Stereotypes**

14. The Committee is concerned about the negative perception of the concept of "gender", as well as the persistence of discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, undermining women's social status and their educational and professional careers. The Committee has been informed that such stereotypes and degrading images of women are conveyed through school textbooks and the media without sufficient monitoring. Moreover, the Committee is alarmed about the limited acceptance in Armenian society of provisions implementing the international and national framework for gender equality.

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

**(a) Adopt a gender communication strategy that is adapted to the current use of technology in Armenian society in order to promote understanding of the concept of "gender" and the acceptance of the principle of equality between women and men;**

**(b) Sensitize the general public on the concept of gender, the principle of equality between women and men and the need to eliminate gender stereotypes, and ensure that the media promote positive images of women as active participants in social, economic and political life;**

**(c) Implement educational and awareness-raising measures aimed at the judiciary, law enforcement officials, health providers, social workers, community leaders and the general public to promote understanding that all forms of discrimination are unacceptable and contrary to the law;**

**(d) Introduce mandatory education on gender equality, women's rights and gender based violence in school curricula at the primary and secondary levels, as well as in legal training;**

(e) **Design and implement awareness-raising campaigns which specifically target men and women, public servants, the judiciary and the police and inform on available support services tackling the realization of women's human rights under the Convention;**

(f) **Continue to review all school textbooks to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes, in line with the Committee's previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4, para. 31);**

(g) **Ensure participation of civil society, as well as religious and community leaders, lawyers, judges, labour unions and women's non-governmental organizations in the design of legal reforms and programmes aiming to protect women's rights in order to ensure engagement in their implementation.**

#### **Gender-based violence against women**

16. The Committee notes the elaboration of a draft law in 2012 on domestic violence, as well as the establishment of an inter-ministerial Working Group in 2016 to develop a new draft on different forms of gender-based violence against women in the domestic sphere. The Committee also notes the recruitment of female police officers, the provision of training on gender based violence for civil servants, social workers and police recruits and the creation of a specialized police department to prevent and investigate cases of gender based violence. However, the Committee remains concerned about:

(a) The delay in the adoption of a comprehensive law on the prevention, prohibition and prosecution of gender based violence against women;

(b) Under-reporting of acts of gender based violence against women by victims and the resulting lack of data;

(c) Persistent attitudes of police officers accepting and justifying gender based violence against women and perceptions that this type of violence, particularly in the domestic sphere, is a private matter;

(d) Under-reporting of cases of femicide and lenience in the prosecution of perpetrators.

17. **In accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Expedite the adoption of a comprehensive law specifically criminalizing gender-based violence against women, including femicide and marital rape, in line with General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women and with the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4, para. 23), which employs a victim-centred approach, provides for civil and criminal remedies, defines the body responsible for its implementation and guarantees access to immediate means of redress and protection, including protection orders;**

(b) **Ratify the Convention of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating gender based violence against women and gender-based violence against women in the domestic sphere;**

(c) **Ensure the availability of a sufficient number of adequate shelters in all regions of the State party and that victims receive counselling, rehabilitation and support services for their reintegration in society;**

(d) **Provide capacity building for the judiciary, the police and law enforcement personnel and health-service providers on a zero tolerance and gender-sensitive approach in dealing with cases of gender-based violence and providing assistance to victims;**

(e) **Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to the recently established special police division to address gender-based and sexual violence against women and children;**

(f) **Systematically collect statistical data on gender based violence disaggregated by sex, age, ethnic origin and relationship between the perpetrator and the victim and include such data in its next periodic report;**

(g) **Take effective measures to prevent gender based violence against women, such as femicide and marital rape, study the phenomenon and guarantee that criminal charges are brought against perpetrators.**

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

18. The Committee welcomes the introduction of regulations to identify and assist victims of trafficking and human exploitation. It also notes the establishment of an Council on Human Exploitation (Now called Inter-ministerial Council on Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation, an adjacent working group, the Commission on Identifying Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings. The Committee also notes the assistance of victims for their return to Armenia, including through legal and financial assistance, accommodation, psychological counselling, and access to education and professional training, as well as to social protection. However, the Committee remains concerned about

(a) The lack of measures to address the root causes of trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, and exploitation of prostitution, such as poverty and discriminatory gender stereotypes;

(b) The lack of preventive measures targeting women at risk of trafficking and the stigma faced by women victims of trafficking, which hampers their reintegration into society;

(c) Insufficient consultation of victims during prosecution of cases; ;

(d) The very limited data available on trafficking in women for purposes of sexual exploitation to, in and from the State party;

(e) The administrative fine imposed on women in prostitution.

#### **19. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive state policy to address the issue of trafficking in persons and exploitation of prostitution of women and girls;**

(b) **Strengthen mechanisms for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of trafficking offenders as well as victim and witness protection programmes and ensure sufficient consultation of victims in prosecution;**

(c) **Train judges, prosecutors, the police and immigration officers on the strict application of criminal law provision to prosecute traffickers, as well as on gender-sensitive ways to approach victims of trafficking;**

(d) **Integrate disaggregated statistical data on the extent of different types of exploitation of prostitution and trafficking and the countries of origin, as well on the destination of victims of trafficking in the next report;**

(e) **Further expand funding of shelters for victims of trafficking, in line with the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4, para 25);**

(f) **Allocate sufficient resources for rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for victims of trafficking and exit programmes for women wishing to**

leave prostitution, including by providing alternative income generating opportunities;

(g) Provide financial and other forms of support to civil society organizations assisting women victims of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution in order to facilitate their rehabilitation and reintegration;

(h) Intensify efforts aimed at bilateral, regional and international cooperation to prevent trafficking, including by exchanging information and harmonizing legal procedures to prosecute traffickers, with countries of origin, transit and destination, and particularly with those in the region;

(i) Suspend imposing administrative fines on women in prostitution and reinforce preventive measures to discourage the demand for prostitution.

#### **Participation in political and public life**

20. The Committee notes the electoral quota adopted by the State party and the recent amendment to the Electoral Code in 2016, increasing the minimum quota for women's representation to 25% for the 2017 elections and to 30% for subsequent national elections. The Committee remains nevertheless concerned about:

(a) Persistently low levels of participation of women at the highest levels of decision making such as in the National Assembly, the government, regional and local municipalities, the judiciary, the foreign service, as well as in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict;

(b) The lack of awareness raising campaigns on the importance of women's participation in political and public life and engagement of women for such campaigns.

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

(a) **Adopt measures, including temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's General Recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures and General Recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, in order to accelerate women's full and equal participation in elected and appointed bodies, including in National Assembly, Ministerial positions, regional and local municipalities, the judiciary and the foreign service;**

(b) **Introduce a gender parity system for appointments and accelerated recruitment of women in senior positions in the public and private sectors;**

(c) **Implement national awareness raising campaigns about the importance of women's participation in public and political life, specifically in rural areas, in consistency with its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4, para 29);**

(d) **Increase the availability of training and capacity-building programmes for women wishing to enter or hold public office and continue encouraging the media to ensure that female and male candidates and elected representatives receive equal visibility in the media, especially during election periods;**

(e) **Ensure the safety of women in political life, in line with previous CEDAW recommendations (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4, para 29).**

#### **Education**

22. The Committee notes the abolition of separate classes for boys and girls and the progress made in promoting girls' enrolment at the secondary level of education, including in secondary vocational schools. It is nevertheless concerned by seasonal absences of girls from class due to labour migration of parents. The Committee also notes with concern

women's and girls' concentration in traditional fields of study. The Committee is also concerned about the absence of data on school enrolment and drop out of girls from ethnic minorities, as well as its links with early marriage in the State party.

23. **The Committee encourages the state party to:**

(a) **Strengthen strategies to address discriminatory stereotypes and structural barriers that may deter girls from enrolling in traditionally male-dominated fields of study, such as mathematics, information technology and science;**

(b) **Ensure that girls and women who have dropped out of school are re-admitted to the education system in age-appropriate classroom environments and that they have access to technical and vocational training opportunities facilitating their professional reinsertion, in line with previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4, para 31).**

#### **Employment and economic empowerment**

24. The Committee welcomes that the State party is implementing several programmes to promote women's access to employment, entrepreneurship and financial credit. However, it is concerned about the persistent vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the labor market, the high unemployment rate among women, and their concentration in part-time work and in low paid jobs in the informal sector. The Committee notes with concern the low representation of women in management positions and the persistent gender wage gap. It is also concerned by the existence of a list of professions declared dangerous for women, which reinforces discriminatory stereotypes and occupational segregation. Moreover, the absence of legislation on sexual harassment and therefore of disaggregated data on sexual harassment in the workplace is also an important source of concern for the Committee.

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

(a) **Apply the principle of equal pay for work of equal value as well as gender-neutral analytical job classification, evaluation methods and regular pay surveys, in line with previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4, para 33);**

(b) **Abolish the list of jobs and professions dangerous for women, minors, and people with limited capabilities for work, contained in decision N 2308-N of December 29 2005;**

(c) **Create more opportunities for women to gain access to formal employment, including by promoting the equal sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between men and women, providing sufficient and adequate childcare facilities, and strengthening incentives for men to exercise their right to parental leave; and adopt a time-bound plan to implement ILO Recommendation No. 204 concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy (2015), with a view to facilitating women's access to the formal economy;**

(d) **Provide a regulatory framework for the informal sector and ensure that women in this sector have access to social protection, maternity protection and childcare support;**

(e) **Adopt legislation to define and prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace and include in the next periodic report data on the number of reported cases of sexual harassment, investigations, prosecutions and sentences imposed on perpetrators;**

(f) **Reinforce measures to expand women's access to microfinance and microcredit at low interest rates, enabling women to engage in income - generating activities and to start their own businesses;**



(g) **Develop a confidential and safe system for filing complaints related to gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, and ensure that victims have effective access to such means of redress.**

### **Health**

26. The Committee welcomes the introduction of a separate budget line for the free distribution of modern contraceptives and the modernisation of medical centres and rural health care centres, as well as the creation of new medical centres. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The low percentage of the State party's budget allocated to health care, including sexual and reproductive health services;

(b) Women's limited access to basic health-care services and sexual and reproductive health services, including modern contraceptives, and to the treatment of cancer of reproductive organs, in particular for rural women, women with disabilities, women from ethnic minorities, and adolescent girls;

(c) The use of abortion, including unsafe abortion, as a means of contraception;

(d) The disproportionately high HIV/AIDS infection rate among Armenian migrant workers and their partners in the State party;

(e) Reports of discrimination by health personnel against women with disabilities and women living with HIV / AIDS.

27. **In line with its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue efforts to make affordable contraceptives accessible and available to all women and girls, in particular to those living in poverty and in rural or remote areas;**

(b) **Enhance women's access to basic health care and sexual and reproductive health services, in particular for rural women, women with disabilities and women from ethnic minorities, including by increasing allocations from the State budget to health care and the introduction of a mandatory health insurance system;**

(c) **Ensure access to modern contraceptives and family planning services, as well as access to safe abortion for all groups of women;**

(d) **Develop and implement awareness raising campaigns and capacity building for health personnel to eliminate discrimination against women with disabilities and women living with HIV/AIDS in the provision of health care services;**

(e) **Develop and implement specific awareness raising campaigns on HIV/AIDS and responsible sexual behaviour, including in boarder areas and in migrant communities.**

### **Sex-selective abortion**

28. The Committee notes the amendment of the Law on Human Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights in August 2016, prohibiting sex-selective abortions, introducing counselling, as well as a three day period of reflection before the final decision for women who applied for abortion and defining procedures for medical staff acting against this legislation. The Committee also notes the recent decrease in the bias of sex-ratio. However, the Committee remains concerned by the wide-spread practice of sex-selective abortion.

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

(a) **Implement the newly adopted law to eradicate the practice of sex-selection abortion;**

(b) **Ensure that the practice of sex-selective abortion is immediately halted through measures such as broader gender equitable policies and support for families with girls, as suggested in the 2012 study on “Sex Imbalances at Birth: Current trends, consequences and policy implications” conducted on the initiative of the Ministry of Health.**

#### **Rural women**

30. The Committee notes that the State party has taken economic empowerment measures for rural women, supporting co-operatives and making credit and grant programmes available in rural environments. The Committee is however concerned by the lack of social, health and economic infrastructure in rural environments, as well as by the concentration of rural women in the informal sector. The Committee is moreover concerned that rural women are particularly affected by labour migration of partners, which exposes them to higher risks of economic distress and high HIV/AIDS infection rates.

31. **In line with General Recommendation Nr. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Pay special attention to the needs of rural women in state policies and ensure that rural women have equal access to basic services and infrastructure;**

(b) **Ensure that rural women participate in decision-making processes, including community decision-making processes and development planning;**

(c) **Guarantee the access of rural women to economic opportunities, including income-generating projects and credit facilities, on an equal and equitable basis with men and also with their urban counterparts;**

(d) **Raise awareness in rural communities on ways to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and especially address the issue of labour migration.**

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

32. The Committee notes the large number of women and girls affected by the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and is concerned by their situation, especially the internally displaced women and girls, who remain in a vulnerable situation, in particular with regard to access to education, employment, health and housing and protection from all forms of violence. The Committee is further concerned by the absence of a National Action Plan on women, peace and security, as well as the lack of women’s participation in peace talks.

33. **The Committee recommends the State party:**

(a) **Address the specific needs of women affected by the conflict in terms of access to education, health and economic opportunities, in line with General Recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations;**

(b) **Strengthen its efforts towards conflict resolution, in line with Security Council Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013), and fully involve women in all stages of the peace process;**

(c) **Finalize and adopt the National Action Plan to implement Security Council Resolution No. 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, in cooperation with women’s organizations and take into consideration the full spectrum of the Security**

**Council's women, peace and security agenda as reflected in the above mentioned Security Council Resolutions.**

**Disadvantaged groups of women**

*Women in disaster affected areas*

34. The Committee is concerned by the situation of women in areas affected by earthquakes and their limited access to services especially regarding the high number of women with disabilities living in these zones.

**35. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt specific and sufficiently funded programmes for disaster risk reduction and to ensure access for women in areas affected by earthquakes to appropriate housing, health care and other services.**

*Persons with disabilities*

36. The Committee notes the draft law on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. It is however concerned about the lack of involvement of civil society in the preparation of this draft law. The Committee also notes with concern the discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities in the access to education, employment and health care, about their exclusion from public and social life, and from decision-making processes. Moreover, the Committee is preoccupied by the situation of economic dependency women with disabilities face, putting them at risk of situations of violence. The Committee is also preoccupied by the State party's maintenance of so-called gender-neutral programmes, which do not meet the specific needs of women of disadvantaged groups, such as women with disabilities.

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

**(a) Include specific measures to address the needs of women with disabilities in State policies and programmes;**

**(b) Adopt a specific budget to promote the access of women with disabilities to education, employment, health care, social life and decision making processes;**

**(c) Implement awareness raising campaigns and provide capacity building for State officials on the rights and special needs of women and girls with disabilities;**

**(d) Collect, analyse and include specific data on violence against women with disabilities in its next report.**

*Women asylum-seekers and returnee Armenian migrant women*

38. The Committee acknowledges the existence of a special agency appointed to help the reintegration of migrants, but is concerned by reports of lacking support for the reintegration for returnee Armenian migrant women. However, the Committee notes reports about inadequate accommodation, non-respect for legal procedures, and gender based violence against asylum-seeking women in the State party.

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

**(a) Allocate sufficient human, technical and financial resources, allowing efficient intervention of the special agency appointed to help the reintegration of returnee Armenian migrant women;**

**(b) Provide income generating opportunities for returnee Armenian migrant women;**

**(c) Ensure an appropriate number of reception facilities for migrants and asylum seekers, allowing for safe accommodation of women;**

**(d) Implement the adopted procedures “for placing asylum seekers in temporary reception centres and providing them with subsistence means” of November 2009, as well as the recommendations issued by the EU Advisory Group in its study on the reception capacity in Armenia.**

*Women from ethnic minorities*

40. The Committee notes the allocation of a special state budget to address educational and cultural issues of ethnic communities and the constitutional liberty to preserve ethnic identity, develop ethnic traditions, language and culture. The Committee is however concerned by early marriage in Yezidi and Molokan communities, school drop out of girls from these communities and difficulties in the access to health and other state services.

**41. The Committee recommends the State party take all appropriate measures – including temporary special measures, where needed – to combat all forms of discrimination against women belonging to ethnic minorities so as to ensure their equal access to justice, education, health, social security and social services, housing and employment.**

*Older women*

42. The Committee is concerned with difficulties older women face in the access to health care and social services.

**43. In line with General Recommendation No. 27 (2010) on older women and the protection of their rights, the Committee recommends that the state party take measures to ensure that adequate and affordable health care and social services are accessible and available to everyone, especially older women in rural areas.**

*LBTI women*

44. The Committee notes discriminatory declarations, hate speech and acts against LBTI women.

**45. The Committee invites the State party to criminalize hate speech and acts against LBTI women and provide victims with effective access to justice.**

**Marriage and family relations**

46. The Committee notes the adoption of amendments to the Family Code and the Law of Civil status acts in 2013, pursuant to which difference of legal age for marriage has been removed. However, it remains concerned with the persisting option to defer from this rule on cultural, ethnic and other grounds. The Committee is also concerned that women and their children in de facto unions are left without any form of legal protection for economic matters upon termination of such a union.

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

**(a) Include in the next periodic report statistical data disaggregated by sex and ethnicity on the exceptions that have been approved for the celebration of marriage before the age of 18;**

**(b) Remove the possibility to approve exceptions to the minimum age of marriage at 18, in accordance with article 16 of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 21;**

**(c) Ensure the legal protection of the economic rights of women in de facto unions, and of children born in such unions, in accordance with General Recommendation No. 29 (2013) on economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution.**

**Amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention**

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

**Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

49. The Committee calls upon the State party to utilize the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.

**2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

50. The Committee calls for the realization of substantive gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Dissemination**

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

**Technical Assistance**

52. 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**

53. 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 ratify the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, to which it is not yet a party.

**Follow-up to concluding observations**

54. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 17 (a) and (b) and 29 (a) above.

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<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.

**Preparation of the next report**

55. The Committee invites the State party to submit its seventh periodic report in November 2020. In case of delay, the report should cover the entire period until the time of its submission.

56. 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/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1).

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