



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Thirty-third session

s for the advancement of women dealt with many issues, such as the fight against HIV/AIDS, rural development, communications, employment and work, health, education, the national policy for the advancement of women and the National Population Policy. In addition, Burkina Faso's policy letter on sustainable human development addressed the situation of women.

5. Efforts to publicize the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the establishment of legal clinics and the revision of the content of school textbooks had led to a sea change in traditional social standards. In particular, existing laws had been strengthened in order to prohibit levirate, dowry, forced and early marriage and female genital mutilation.

group and for the oral presentation which added further information about the situation of women.

15. The Committee commends the State party for its high-level delegation, headed by the Minister for the Advancement of Women and which included the Minister of Health and representatives of other ministries with responsibility for implementation of the Convention. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the frank and constructive dialogue held between the delegation and the members of the Committee and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions orally posed by the Committee.

Positive aspects

16. The Committee congratulates the State party for its recent legislative reforms and policy measures to empower women and to eliminate discrimination against them, including the amendment to the Labour Code (Act No. 033-2004/AN) to prohibit sexual harassment, the policy letter on sustainable human development which provides for a more active role for women in development and the policy letter on decentralized agricultural development which includes as one of its specific objectives the promotion of the role of women in the agricultural sector.

17. The Committee welcomes with satisfaction the fact that the State party signed in 2001, and is in the process of ratifying, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

18. **T**he Committee welcomes the establishment of the National Committee to Combat Discrimination responsible for monitoring implementation of the

22. The Committee reiterates these concerns and recommendations and urges the State party to proceed without delay with their implementation.

23. The Committee is concerned about the lack of specific legislation to eliminate violence against women, including domestic violence. While the Committee notes the State party's contention that victims of violence receive medical and legal services, it is concerned that the State party did not provide any details about such services, and their accessibility to women. The Committee further expresses concern about the paucity of information and statistics provided on the incidence of various forms of violence against women.

24. In accordance with its general recommendation 19, the Committee urges the State party to give high priority to putting in place comprehensive measures to address all forms of violence against women and girls, recognizing that such violence is a form of discrimination against women and constitutes a violation of their human rights under the Convention. The Committee calls upon the State party to enact, as soon as possible, legislation on violence against women, including domestic violence, so as to ensure that violence against women constitutes a criminal offence, that women and girls who are victims of violence have access to immediate means of redress and protection and that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished. The Committee recommends that the State party also implement educational and awareness-raising measures aimed at law enforcement officials, the judiciary, health providers, social workers, community leaders and the general public, in order to ensure that they understand that all forms of violence against women are unacceptable. It also recommends the establishment of shelters and counselling services for victims of violence. The Committee requests the State party to provide information in its next report on the laws and policies in place to deal with violence against women and the impact of such measures. The Committee also requests the State party to provide details of services provided to victims of violence, including details about access to and scope and effectiveness of the services.

25. While welcoming the Individual and Family Code which provides for women's equality with men in many respects in the areas of marriage, divorce and death and inheritance, the Committee is concerned about the persistence of several discriminatory provisions in the Code, particularly in relation to the minimum age of marriage, which is 17 years for girls and 20 years for boys, and the legality of polygamy under the Code.

26. The Committee urges the State party to accelerate the process of legal reform to raise the minimum age of marriage of girls and to prohibit polygamy in order to ensure compliance with articles 2 and 16 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 21 on equality in marriage and family relations.

27. While welcoming legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation, forced and early marriage, levirate and sororate, dowry and practices that prevent women from owning land and inheriting from their husbands, the Committee remains concerned about the continuing strong prevalence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes and of customs and traditions that discriminate against women, particularly women in rural areas, and constitute violations of their human rights. The Committee is concerned that these practices persist in contravention of the

provisions of the Convention, as well as national legislation. The Committee is also concerned that women are not informed of remedies under relevant legislation.

28. The Committee calls upon the State party to take all necessary measures to ensure full compliance with the provisions of the Convention, the Individual and Family Code, the Penal Code and other laws in regard to harmful traditional or customary practices that violate women's rights. The Committee recommends that these efforts be undertaken in combination with educational programmes designed to raise awareness and challenge discriminatory customs and traditions and stereotypic attitudes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women in the family and society, as required under articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention. The Committee enco 10.263162s10.02 199.9827 569.2802 TSe.399 6747 Tm(t)Tj10.263h9.9

33. The Committee is concerned about the situation of rural women, particularly in view of their extreme poverty and lack of access to adequate nutrition and sanitation, health care, education and income-generating opportunities. This situation leads to multiple forms of discrimination against rural women. The Committee is also concerned about the absence of statistical information related to the situation of rural women.

34. The Committee urges the State party to pay special attention to the situation of rural women so as to enhance compliance with article 14 of the Convention. In particular, the Committee calls upon the State party to ensure that rural women have full access to education, health services and credit facilities, and can fully participate in decision-making processes. The Committee also urges the State party to implement provisions of the Agrarian and Land Reform that give women equal access to arable land and housing and provisions of the Individual and Family Code so as to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women with respect to ownership and inheritance of land. It also urges the State party to place emphasis on women's human rights

State party to provide in its next report detailed statistical and analytical information on measures taken to improve women's access to health-related services and information, including in regard to sexual and reproductive health and family planning, and the impact of these measures, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation 24 on women and health. The Committee calls upon the State party to carefully monitor implementation and results of the national plans to combat HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (2001-2005) and any follow-up programmes and strategies, to be reflected in its next report.

37. While noting the increase in the number of women in the National Assembly from 3 in 2000 to 13 in 2005, the Committee remains concerned about the low level of representation of women in public and political life and in decision-making positions, including in the foreign service. It notes with concern the absence of temporary special measures to increase women's participation in political and public life despite the Committee's recommendation in paragraph 273 of its previous concluding comments (A/55/38).

38. The Committee urges the State party to implement temporary special measures, including quotas, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25 and to establish concrete goals and timetables so as to increase the number of women in political and public life and in decision-making positions. The Committee also draws the State party's attention to general recommendation 23 on the participation of women in public life and urges full implementation of the measures recommended therein

and the future steps required in that regard. It also requests the State party to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

44. The Committee requests the State party to respond to the concerns expressed in the present concluding comments in its next periodic report under article 18 of the Convention, which is due in November 2008.

Notes

- 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 or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.