

United Nations

Positive aspects

- 5. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Working Women’s Maternity Act (Decree-Law No. 234) in 2003, aimed at strengthening the recognition of the responsibility of both parents in child rearing.
- 6. The Committee commends the State party for amending its Penal Code in regard to domestic violence, making it an aggravating factor when violence is perpetrated by a spouse or relative.
- 7. The Committee commends the State party for its efforts to evaluate and update the National Action Plan for follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, through national follow-up seminars, aimed at ensuring that effective policies are in place to achieve the recognition of the human rights of women and gender equality.
- 8. The Committee notes with satisfaction the increased representation of women at all levels, including in Government bodies at the municipal, provincial and national levels. It also commends the high representation of women in Parliament.
- 9. The Committee welcomes the high percentage of women in employment and pursuing careers in the scientific and technical fields as an important achievement.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

10. While recalling the State party’s obligation to systematically and continuously implement all the provisions of the Convention, the Committee views the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding comments as requiring the State party’s priority attention between now and the submission of the next periodic report. Consequently, the Committee calls upon the State party to focus on those 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 comments to all relevant ministries and to Parliament so as to ensure their full implementation.

11. The Committee is concerned that, although articles 41 and 42 of the Constitution stipulate that all citizens have equal rights and that discrimination on

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14. **The Committee urges the State party to amend the legislation pertaining to age of marriage with a view to eliminating the exceptions that allow for marriage of females at age 14 and for males at 16 and to bring its legislation into line with article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years, with article 16, paragraph 2, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and with general recommendation No. 21 of the Committee.**

15. While appreciating the reasons for the State party's designation of the Federation of Cuban Women, a non-governmental organization with significant experience in advocacy for and implementation of the human rights of Cuban women, as the national machinery for the advancement of women, the Committee is concerned that this institutional status may limit the authority and influence of the national machinery within the government structure and diminish the accountability of the State party with respect to the implementation of the Convention. The Committee is also concerned that the Federation's financial resources, which consist of membership fees and its economic activities, might be insufficient and as a result, limit the Federation's effective implementation of its functions in promoting women's enjoyment of their human rights and gender equality.

16. **The Committee reminds the State party of its responsibility to fully ensure Government accountability for respecting, protecting and fulfilling women's enjoyment of their human rights under the Convention. In this regard, the Committee refers to its general recommendation No. 6 on effective national machinery and publicity and the guidance provided in the Beijing Platform for Action on national machinery for the advancement of women. The Committee further recommends that the State party expeditiously review, and if necessary, strengthen the links between the Federation of Cuban Women and government agencies to ensure gender mainstreaming in all governmental policy areas, as well as to ensure provision of adequate financial resources so that the Federation can fully implement its mandate.**

17. While welcoming the State party's efforts to eliminate gender-based stereotypes including through the revision of textbooks, curricula and teaching methods, the Committee is concerned about the persistence and pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family. These stereotypes continue to undermine women's social status, constitute serious obstacles to women's enjoyment of their human rights, present a significant impediment to the implementation of the Convention and are a root cause for the persistence of violence against women.

18. **The Committee calls upon the State party to strengthen its efforts to combat the widespread acceptance of stereotypical roles of men and women, including through awareness-raising in the media and public education programmes, so as to ensure the elimination of stereotypes associated with men's and women's traditional roles in the family and in society at large, in accordance with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention. The Committee recommends that effective measures be taken towards changing the culturally determined attitudes and behaviour that remain permissive of violence against women.**

19. While noting the introduction of provisions in the penal and family codes to address domestic violence, the Committee regrets that insufficient information was provided about the content of these provisions and their effective enforcement. It is

32. The Committee urges the State party to utilize fully in its implementation of its obligations under the Convention, 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.

33. The Committee emphasizes that the full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development