



Annex

**Progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action
based on the review of reports to the Commission on the Status
of Women of States parties to the Convention on the
Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

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

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I. Introduction

1. The Beijing Platform for Action,¹ adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995, is an agenda for women's empowerment. It aims to build on and accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking

child, women and law, violence against women and children and health.

9. The Committee has commended States parties on efforts to implement the Platform, noting their national action plans, of which the Secretariat has now received 105, as well as specific mechanisms put in place to implement the Platform, such as policies and plans for women's advancement or commissions, intergovernmental machineries or designated offices established to encourage implementation. Strategies to implement the Platform developed in cooperation with non-governmental organizations have been particularly welcomed, as has the inclusion of non-governmental organizations in monitoring implementation. Mention has also been made of innovative approaches to implementation. For example, the convening of national workshops to address implementation and the development of community programmes on the basis of those workshops, as well as periodic reporting to the public on the Platform have been welcomed, as have the enactment of legislation and earmarking of resources to encourage overall implementation of the Platform.

10. The Committee has noted where States parties have failed to address the Platform for Action in presenting their reports, and has sometimes suggested that plans for implementation are inadequate. It has called on States parties

primary and secondary curricula and tertiary curricula has also been introduced in at least one State party.

15. Several States parties have taken steps with respect to the Convention, including ratification without reservations. A number have removed reservations and committed themselves to removing further reservations. Others have indicated that they are working towards removal of reservations, including through drafting legislation. States have lodged objections to reservations by other States parties. Support for strengthening the Convention, including through the adoption of the amendment of article 20(1) and support for the draft optional protocol to the Convention, has also been welcomed by the Committee.

16. Law reform measures, implementing both the Convention and the Platform, have included the revision of personal status codes, establishment of family courts, and the adoption of family code and reform of citizenship laws. Several States parties have recognized gender-based persecution in refugee law, while provisions in immigration legislation to protect the human rights of immigrant women have also been adopted. One State party has adopted an agrarian reform law giving women the right to inherit land.

17. Several States parties have revised existing labour legislation to incorporate equality provisions, including with regard to equal pay for work of equal value, and others are considering such steps. Expanded and enterprise-subsidized child day-care facilities, the consideration of social security for homemakers and legislation on parental leave have facilitated combining work with family responsibilities. Programmes have been initiated to make female employees aware of their rights in the workplace, and provisions against sexist language in job classifications are being considered. One State party has initiated consultations on ways to measure women's unremunerated work within the national economic

18. Implementation with regard to education has included provisions that make primary and secondary education compulsory for girls and legislation that guarantees the right of pregnant teenagers to complete their education. Affirmative action efforts have also been introduced at the university level. Human rights have been incorporated at various levels of the school curriculum, and women's studies courses have been established at some universities.

19. Efforts to address traditional stereotypes have been initiated in some States parties. These have included the development of curricula, revision of textbooks and teaching methods to eliminate gender-based prejudices from educational programmes, research on the impact of depiction of women in textbooks, and non-traditional career orientation

training for girls and women. Educational programmes to rural women and in relation to health, including sexual health.

20. Traditional stereotypes and discrimination against women have also been addressed in the media, through television, radio and advertising, including programmes dealing with women's issues, women's participation and portrayal of women's image. Some Governments have initiated efforts to make mass media more aware of the need to eliminate sexism, including the projection of women as sex objects.

21. Significant steps have been taken to address the various forms of violence against women by States parties, with a number of States emphasizing the eradication of violence against women, including through its identification as a priority area in a national crime prevention strategy. Several States parties have ratified a regional convention relating to violence against women and legislation with regard to violence against women in the home, and criminalizing violence against women in the home, and criminalizing violence against women in the home. Some States parties have introduced legislation in some States parties, including legislation making the State Treasury responsible for the payment of damages to the victims of violence, provisions shifting the burden of proof from complainants to alleged perpetrators and restraining orders.

22. States parties have established or supported services for victims of violence against women, including hotlines, counselling services, shelters and crisis centres, and emergency medical provision for victims. Measures to ascertain the extent and causes of violence in the home. Many of these have been developed in collaboration with non-governmental organizations. Measures aimed at sensitizing the public, particularly men, to the impact of violent behaviour have been introduced, including public awareness campaigns. Training and sensitization for judiciary and law enforcement officers have been introduced. Special units to handle domestic violence complaints have been established and protocols for police officers dealing with sexual assault developed. Victim-friendly courts have also been established in some States parties.

23. Steps have been taken to address acts of violence against women allegedly perpetrated by soldiers during

have not been introduced. Few States parties have taken steps to assess the economic value of unpaid work.

40. Progress in implementation has also been slow in the area of education. Female illiteracy, particularly among rural and indigenous women, is a significant problem in many States parties. Stereotypical attitudes continue to result in large drop-out rates for girls at primary and secondary levels of education and failure to enrol in tertiary education. These trends are more pronounced in the rural sector and among minority and indigenous populations. In several States parties, pregnancy results in expulsion from school, while in others there is no support to allow pregnant girls to finish their education.

41. Female students are typically clustered in certain disciplines at all levels of education, and there is a reluctance to direct girls to scientific and technical fields of study. In several States parties, schools have been established for female students, which teach “household management” and other typically “female” skills, while certain schools admit only boys because of their physical abilities.

42. The Committee has noted that limited progress has been made in the area of women and decision-making. Representation in political and public life, including the legislature, policy-making and administrative positions in public and private-sector employment, trade unions, the judiciary and the military is low. Women are particularly poorly represented at higher decision-making levels. In some States parties, the representation of women in politics has fallen despite measures in this regard. In others, the removal of quotas by political parties has reduced the number of women in decision-making positions. The Committee is particularly concerned that States parties have made insufficient use of temporary special measures to increase the participation of women in this sector, and has also noted that there has been insufficient networking between women’s machinery and women in decision-making.

43. Consideration of States parties reports indicates that rural women continue to experience discrimination in many contexts. They have fewer employment opportunities, and many work in family enterprises, work which is not recognized in the formal economy. Rural women suffer more as a result of prevailing negative attitudes and discriminatory practices, and are vulnerable with regard to basic health protection, including family planning. Rural women are disadvantaged in terms of education and literacy, and have less access to legal literacy programmes. In several States parties, rural women are unable to own land and are unable to participate in land reform programmes. They are also affected disproportionately by the application of

discriminatory customary laws, particularly with regard to inheritance and land ownership.

44. Although many States parties have introduced national machineries to promote women’s advancement, in several States parties there is no national machinery or an ineffective national machinery, with limited human and financial resources. In several States parties, the national machinery has no effective authority or an advisory or coordinating role only.

45. The Committee has noted that lack of data disaggregated by sex and gender sensitive information are obstacles to the implementation of both the Convention and the Platform. Gender-sensitive data is unavailable in particular sectors, including employment and health, violence against women, HIV/AIDS, political participation and prostitution.

IV. Towards accelerated implementation

46. Review of reports since the Fourth World Conference on Women has allowed the Committee to make specific recommendations towards accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action.

47. It has particularly stressed the value of **temporary special measures** aimed at accelerating de facto equality between women and men envisaged under article 4.1 of the Convention. The introduction of such measures has been recommended in the context of political and public life, with the Committee frequently calling on States parties to implement or maintain temporary special measures, with numerical goals and quantitative targets and timetables to accelerate de facto equality with regard to political participation and decision-making positions. The Committee has also suggested the introduction of **measures of affirmative action**, such as quotas with respect to all governmental and governmentally appointed bodies, particularly those dealing with business and economic matters, to ensure equal participation of women.

48. Temporary special measures and programmes have also been recommended in the context of education and training, where the Committee has recommended the use of gender-specific temporary measures with numerical goals and timetables to encourage women to enter diverse disciplines, and to avoid clustering of girls and women in certain traditional disciplines in schools and universities. Where temporary special measures, including quotas, have been introduced, the Committee has emphasized the importance

of the evaluation of their impact. In particular, it has suggested that the advantages and disadvantages of different electoral systems for representation of women be examined.

51. The Committee has emphasized the role of **human rights education**, and has urged that education in women's rights, including the Convention, should be provided in

public sectors, is considered by the Committee to be a critical element in the achievement of equality in employment. Similarly, access to affordable, quality child care is essential, especially for pre-school children. In this regard, it advocates that women and men should be educated towards a culture of shared obligations and responsibilities of family work and the rearing of children. Consistent with the Platform for Action, the Committee has recommended the inclusion of the value of women's unremunerated work, including in rural enterprises, into national accounts, by way of satellite accounts.

55. Poverty eradication strategies should be gender-sensitive and a gender perspective mainstreamed in poverty eradication efforts and measures. In this regard,

and protection during court proceedings, facilitation of prosecution of domestic violence and increasing penalties for sexual crimes, are also recommended. Specific suggestions concerning the elimination of violence against women in armed conflict have included the establishment of a witness protection unit in courts and tribunals, ensuring that women serve as judges in such courts and the training of human rights field operations with regard to gender issues. As a long-term strategy to eliminate violent conduct, the Committee has urged the incorporation of non-violent forms of conflict resolution in education and the media.

58. In the context of trafficking in women and the exploitation of prostitution, the Committee has urged

Notes

¹ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

² *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15–26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

³ General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

⁴ See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women ...*, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 25.

⁵ The General Assembly noted the amendment with approval in its resolution 50/202.

⁶ Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Panama, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

⁷ See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women ...*, paras. 322 and 323.

⁸ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/51/38)*, para. 335; for a discussion of the implications of the results of the Fourth World Conference on Women for the Committee, see paras. 367–373.

⁹ See Assembly resolution 52/231 of 4 June 1998.

¹⁰ In its resolution 51/68 of 12 December 1996, the General Assembly authorized the Committee to meet annually for two three-week sessions, each preceded by a pre-session working group meeting.

¹¹ Initial reports: Morocco, Slovenia (sixteenth session), Armenia, Namibia (seventeenth session), Azerbaijan, Croatia, Zimbabwe, Czech Republic (eighteenth session), Slovakia, South Africa (nineteenth session); Algeria, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein (twentieth session); combined initial and second reports: Cyprus, Iceland, Paraguay (fifteenth session), Israel, Luxembourg (seventeenth session); combined initial, second and third reports: Ethiopia (fifteenth session), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (sixteenth session), Antigua and Barbuda (seventeenth session); second report: Belgium (fifteenth session); combined second and third reports: Cuba (fifteenth session), Turkey (sixteenth session), Argentina, Italy (seventeenth session), Bulgaria, Indonesia (eighteenth session), Nigeria, Panama, United Republic of Tanzania (nineteenth session), Greece, Thailand (twentieth session); combined second, third and fourth reports: Dominican Republic (eighteenth session); third periodic reports: Hungary, Ukraine (fifteenth session), Venezuela, Denmark (sixteenth session), Australia (seventeenth session); combined third and fourth reports: Philippines, Canada (sixteenth session), Bangladesh (seventeenth session), Mexico (eighteenth session), New Zealand, Peru, Republic of Korea (nineteenth session) China (twentieth session);

fourth reports: Colombia (twentieth session); reports submitted on an exceptional basis: Rwanda (fifteenth session), Zaire (sixteenth session).

¹² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/49/38)*, paras. 812–816; and *ibid.*, *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/53/38/Rev.1)*, part II, para. 397.

¹³ See, for example, the concluding comments with regard to Azerbaijan in *ibid.*, part I, para. 79.

¹⁴ The present report is based on a comprehensive analysis of the Committee's concluding comments on reports of States parties which were considered during its fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth sessions; identification of the States parties referred to throughout the report is available in the Division for the Advancement of Women, on request.