



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ethiopia\*

1. The Committee considered the eighth periodic report of Ethiopia (CEDAW/C/ETH/8) at its 1665th and 1666th meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.1665 and CEDAW/C/SR.1666), held on 21 February 2019. The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/8, and the responses of the State party are contained in CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/8/Add.1.

#### A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its eighth periodic report. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-session working group, the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee notes that, owing to financial constraints, the State party's delegation could not travel to Geneva to be present for the consideration of the report and that the dialogue was therefore conducted by videoconference. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister of Women and Children, Semegn Wube, and included representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Women and Children, the Office of the Federal Attorney General, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, as well as the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

#### B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2011 of the State party's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports (CEDAW/C/ETH/6-7) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

\* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-second session (18 February–8 March 2019).



- (a) Proclamation No. 1113/2019 on civil society organizations of 5 February 2019;
- (b) Proclamation on refugees of 17 January 2019;
- (c) Proclamation No. 1064/2017 on federal civil servants, which provides for the prohibition of sexual harassment;
- (d) Proclamation No. 1049/2017 on the amendment of the registration of vital events and the national identity card, which extends the scope of the standardized vital events registration system to refugees and other non-nationals;
- (e) Proclamation No. 923/2016 on overseas employment, which protects the rights, safety and dignity of Ethiopians who take up employment abroad;
- (f) Proclamation No. 943/2016 on the establishment of the Office of the Federal Attorney General of Ethiopia, which covers the provision of free legal services to women who do not have sufficient resources;
- (g) Proclamation No. 970/2016 on the amendment of the Proclamation on the Federal Government of Ethiopia financial administration, which integrates a gender perspective into the preparation of the budget programmes;
- (h) Proclamation No. 909/2015 on the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

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 of the following:

- (a) National women development and change strategy, in 2017;
- (b) National human rights action plan, covering the period 2016–2020;
- (c) National reproductive health strategy, covering the period 2016–2020;
- (d) National free legal aid strategy;
- (e) National social protection policy, in 2014;
- (f) Gender strategy in the education and training sector, covering the period 2014/15;
- (g) National strategy and action plan on harmful traditional practices against women and children, in 2013;
- (h) Federal Supreme Court revised sentencing guideline No. 2/2012, in 2012;
- (i) Criminal justice policy, in 2011, which provides for specific protection for women and children.

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) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, in 2014;
- (b) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in 2014;
- (c) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, in 2012;

(d) Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, in 2012.

### **C. Sustainable Development Goals**

7. **The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It recommends that the State party recognize women as the driving force of the sustainable development of the State party and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.**

### **D. Parliament**

8. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see A/65/38, part two, annex VI). It invites the parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.**

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

#### **Legislative framework**

9. The Committee notes that the Constitution refers to the principle of non-discrimination and gender equality and that, in accordance with article 9.4 of the Constitution, international human rights instruments ratified by the State party form an integral part of Ethiopian law. However, the efforts made to promote equality and combat various forms of discrimination against women often involve strategies and action plans that are not supported by a specific legal framework. The Committee is concerned that the legal framework, including the Criminal Code of 2005, does not cover all forms of discrimination against women and is not being implemented properly. The Committee is also concerned about the failure to enforce the criminal justice policy of 2011.

**10. In line with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Review and strengthen its legislative framework to ensure that it covers all forms of discrimination against women, and ensure its effective implementation, monitoring and assessment;**
- (b) Implement the criminal justice policy of 2011 without delay;**
- (c) Revise the Criminal Code of 2005 in order to include all forms of discrimination against women.**

#### **Access to justice**

11. The Committee notes the adoption of Proclamation No. 943/2016, which establishes that the Office of the Federal Attorney General is responsible for providing free legal services to women who do not have sufficient means. It is

concerned, however, that the national free legal aid strategy developed in 2015 has not been adopted yet, that women are not fully aware of their rights regarding access to legal aid and that training programmes for judges on gender issues and women's rights do not sufficiently take into account the need for training to be adapted to the specificities of Islamic and customary courts.

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

**(a) Adopt the national free legal aid strategy developed in 2015 with the provision of procedural and age-appropriate accommodations;**

**(b) Ensure that appropriate budget allocations are made for the provision of legal aid to women and girls;**

**(c) Intensify efforts to encourage and enable women to gain access to justice by increasing their awareness of their right to legal aid;**

**(d) Provide appropriate training on women's rights and gender equality, specifically adapted to the needs of Islamic and customary courts.**

**National machinery for the advancement of women**

13. The Committee notes that the ministry responsible for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment has been restructured to increase the focus on gender issues and that a high-level national coordinating body chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister has been set up to oversee the equal participation of women and young people in the State party's development process. The Committee is concerned, however, that that ministry still faces challenges regarding the coordination and decentralization of its activities and that its resources and capacity continue to be limited.

**14. The Committee, recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/ETH/CO/6-7, para. 17), its general recommendation No. 6 (1988) on effective national machinery and publicity and the guidance provided in the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular regarding the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national mechanisms, recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Strengthen the existing national machinery at all levels by providing it with adequate human, technical and financial resources to increase its effectiveness, including in coordinating and overseeing the preparation and implementation of legislation and policy measures in the field of gender equality and in mainstreaming gender perspectives in all laws and policies, and ensure its coverage of the entire territory;**

**(b) Ensure effective coordination and collaboration in the implementation of the Convention among the various partners involved in combating discrimination against women in the State Party, including the Federal Attorney General's Office, in particular public prosecutors at all levels of government, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, civil society organizations and universities.**

15. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Proclamation No. 970/2016 on the amendment of the Proclamation on the Federal Government of Ethiopia financial administration, which integrates a gender perspective into the preparation of budget programmes. It remains concerned, however, about the lack of disaggregated data on the implementation of measures under the proclamation and the proclamation's impact in eliminating discrimination against women.

16. **The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to effectively implement Proclamation No. 970/2016 to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men, while ensuring that adequate training is provided to government officials in that regard. The Committee also recommends that, with the help of supporting data, the State party assess the implementation and effectiveness of Proclamation No. 970/2016.**

#### **National human rights institution**

17. The Committee welcomes the establishment of eight branches of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in the State party, including directorates on women and children, and the opening of legal aid centres by the Commission in collaboration with universities and civil society. The Committee notes that the State party is reviewing Proclamation No. 210/2000 on the establishment of the Commission, with a view to strengthening it. It is concerned, however, that the Commission lacks independence, impartiality and resources.

18. **The Committee recommends that the State party accelerate the process for the revision of Proclamation No. 210/2000, so that the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission can discharge its mandate effectively, independently and in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and that it provide the Commission with sufficient human, technical and financial resources to carry out its mandate.**

#### **Temporary special measures**

19. The Committee notes that the Constitution guarantees temporary special measures and that the State party has implemented such measures in politics, education, employment and housing. The Committee is concerned that there is no regulatory framework in place to ensure the systematic implementation of temporary special measures in the electoral system and is also concerned about the lack of an institutionalized system to promote the representation of women in decision-making positions. It is further concerned that special measures are not extended to other areas in which women are not sufficiently represented and by the lack of adequate monitoring and assessment of adopted special measures.

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

(a) **Adopt a regulatory framework to ensure the effective, harmonized and mandatory implementation of temporary special measures to achieve substantive equality between women and men, in particular in political and public life, while ensuring the establishment of accountability mechanisms to monitor compliance;**

(b) **Undertake capacity-building programmes on the non-discriminatory nature and importance of temporary special measures for achieving substantive equality between women and men in all areas.**

#### **Discriminatory gender stereotypes and harmful practices**

21. The Committee is concerned that the national strategy and action plan on harmful traditional practices against women and children, adopted in 2013 to combat female genital mutilation, child marriage and abduction, remains subject to a lack of proper implementation, monitoring and evaluation and that the increased penalties envisaged for female genital mutilation under the Criminal Code of 2005 (arts. 561, 562, 567, 569 and 570) have not been implemented. It is also concerned about the prevalence of female genital mutilation and child marriage and the underreporting of

cases of traditional harmful practices, including child marriage, female genital mutilation and abduction. The Committee is further concerned that deep-rooted cultural values, attitudes and traditions, including other intersecting forms of discrimination, including against persons living with albinism, the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and the limitation of women's roles in society, remain a barrier to combating discrimination against women.

**22. Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/ETH/CO/6-7, para. 19), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Ensure adequate implementation of the revised penalties envisaged for female genital mutilation under the Criminal Code of 2005 (arts. 561, 562, 567, 569 and 570);**

**(b) Effectively implement the national strategy and action plan on harmful traditional practices against women and children and assess its impact in order to identify shortcomings and make improvements accordingly;**

**(c) Adopt a comprehensive and inclusive strategy to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, and regularly monitor and assess the measures taken to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes and harmful practices;**

**(d) Expand public education programmes on discriminatory stereotypes, with a focus on religious leaders;**

**(e) Intensify collaborative efforts with the media to inclusively and accessibly raise public awareness of gender stereotypes that persist at all levels of society, with a view to their elimination.**

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

23. The Committee notes the adoption of the strategic plan for an integrated and multisectoral response to violence against women and children and child justice in Ethiopia and revised sentencing guideline No. 2/2012, which requires judges to increase the lower threshold for penalties when handing down sentences for crimes of gender-based violence and sexual violence covered under the Criminal Code. It also notes the establishment of child and protection units in police and justice offices and specialized courts dealing with sexual violence, as well as the creation of one-stop centres. It further notes that modules on violence against women, child marriage and female genital mutilation were included in the Ethiopian demographic and health survey in 2016. The Committee remains concerned, however, that women continue to face gender-based violence, including domestic violence, marital rape and emerging forms of violence such as acid attacks and gang rape. It is further concerned about the following:

(a) The absence of a comprehensive and inclusive law on gender-based violence, the fact that marital rape is still not criminalized and the fact that the extenuating circumstances set out in article 557 (1) (b) of the Criminal Code are still applied to domestic violence cases;

(b) The lack of tangible results following the implementation of the strategic plan and assessments of its effectiveness;

(c) The lack of effective implementation of the revised sentencing guideline;

(d) The lack of sufficient training on gender-based violence for members of the judiciary, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials;

(e) The lack of disaggregated data on gender-based violence against women.

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

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive and inclusive law on gender-based violence, addressing all forms of violence against women, including acid attacks, domestic violence, rape, marital rape, gang rape and other forms of sexual violence;**

(b) **Implement the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/ETH/CO/6-7, para. 21 (a)) to amend the Criminal Code of 2005 with a view to increasing the penalties for female genital mutilation set out in articles 561, 562, 567, 569 and 570, repealing article 563, criminalizing marital rape and excluding the applicability in domestic violence cases of the extenuating circumstances set out in article 557 (1) (b);**

(c) **Effectively implement revised sentencing guideline No. 2/2012;**

(d) **Accelerate and improve the implementation of the strategic plan for an integrated and multisectoral response to violence against women and children and child justice in Ethiopia, and regularly monitor and review the measures implemented under it;**

(e) **Further provide members of the judiciary, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials with adequate training on women's rights and on gender-sensitive investigation and interrogation procedures in cases of gender-based violence against women;**

(f) **Collect data on gender-based violence against women, disaggregated by age, ethnicity, race, geographical location and disability, including on the number of cases of violence against women and complaints lodged, the sanctions imposed on perpetrators, the number of women who are victims of violence who have been provided with legal assistance and relevant support services, and the number of women who are victims of violence who have received compensation.**

**Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

25. The Committee is concerned that the bill revising Proclamation No. 909/2015 on the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants is still pending adoption. The Committee also remains concerned about the following:

(a) The limited data on trafficking in women and girls and the lack of data on the extent of exploitation of prostitution of women and girls in the State party;

(b) The lack of information on programmes implemented for the benefit of women and girls who are victims of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution;

(c) Inadequate trafficking controls and inspection, and limited protection of Ethiopian women and girls who fall victim to trafficking within the State party;

(d) Insufficient regional and international cooperation, training and awareness-raising programmes on trafficking in women and girls.

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

(a) **Adopt, as a matter of priority, the bill revising Proclamation No. 909/2015 on the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, while clarifying their application to refugees and Ethiopian nationals;**

(b) **Strengthen the protection of women and girls who have been victims of trafficking, including Ethiopian nationals and refugees, provide them with**

free and immediate access to specialized shelters, medical care, psychosocial counselling, legal aid and rehabilitation and reintegration services, and provide adequate resources for inclusive support and accessible services;

(c) **Continue to raise awareness about trafficking in women and girls, and provide training to law enforcement and border personnel on the early identification of women and girl who are victims of trafficking, on their referral to appropriate services and on the strict application of relevant criminal law provisions, and ensure that social workers and medical staff supporting victims are also provided with training;**

(d) **Enhance bilateral, regional and international cooperation to prevent trafficking.**

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

27. The Committee welcomes the measures taken to increase the participation of women, including in the parliament, and improve gender parity in the Cabinet through the appointment of the first female President, as well as the appointment of women as President of the Federal Supreme Court and Chair of the National Electoral Board. The Committee is concerned, however, that women are still underrepresented in permanent positions of the civil service, managerial positions and in the diplomatic and the judicial service.

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

(a) **Continue to make sure that temporary special measures are implemented, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention, 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 and enhance the enforcement of such measures, in particular in the civil service, managerial positions and the diplomatic and the judicial service;**

(b) **Take specific measures to build the capacity of women candidates and provide incentives to encourage political parties to nominate equal numbers of women and men to stand for election;**

(c) **Improve the representation of women at the international level and in diplomatic positions;**

(d) **Conduct awareness-raising campaigns for politicians, community and religious leaders, the media and the general public on the importance of the participation of women in political life and decision-making positions.**

29. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Proclamation No. 1113/2019 on civil society organizations of 5 February 2019. However, the Committee is concerned, inter alia, about limitations of the scope of the activities of international non-governmental organizations and the existence of administrative obstacles under the new law.

30. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that civil society organizations, including women human rights defenders and activists, are able to freely carry out their work of protecting women's human rights.**

#### **Nationality**

31. The Committee notes the progress made by the State party towards the establishment of a standardized vital events registration system, including the adoption of Proclamation No. 760/2012 on the registration of vital events and the national identity card, which provides for compulsory, permanent and universal registration and certification of vital events, and the establishment of the Vital Events



Registration Agency under Regulation No. 278/2013. The Committee is concerned about challenges regarding proper territorial coverage of the vital events registration system, in particular in remote areas, and about risks associated with the falsification of civil status documents that can affect the rights of women and girls. It is also concerned that the State party has not ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

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

- (a) **Ensure adequate territorial coverage of the vital events registration system;**
- (b) **Secure the registration system in order to prevent the falsification of civil status documents;**
- (c) **Consider ratifying the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.**

**Education**

33. The Committee notes the fifth education sector development programme, covering the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20, and the revised gender strategy in the education sector, aimed at eliminating gender barriers in education. It remains concerned, however, about the following:

- (a) The fact that primary school is still not compulsory, the high dropout rate of girls at the primary school level and the fact that the completion rate for girls lags behind that of boys;
- (b) The fact that school infrastructure does not sufficiently take into account the needs of girls and does not provide sufficient clean and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys;
- (c) The continued high levels of illiteracy among women compared with men;
- (d) The persistence of discriminatory gender stereotypes that perpetuate the domination of men in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics;
- (e) Sexual harassment, abuse and gender-based discrimination in schools, including by school authorities.

**34. Recalling its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education and its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/ETH/CO/6-7, para. 31), the Committee recommends that the State party promote the importance of girls' education at all levels as a basis for their empowerment and:**

- (a) **Ensure that primary education is compulsory for and inclusive of all children and reduce the indirect costs of schooling, with a view to eliminating them;**
- (b) **Intensify efforts to improve enrolment, retention and completion rates for women and girls at all levels of education;**
- (c) **Ensure that every school has adequate and accessible sanitation facilities for girls to prevent them from missing or dropping out of school because of menstrual management challenges;**
- (d) **Ensure a safe school environment for girls and strengthen effective reporting and accountability mechanisms for investigating and prosecuting cases of sexual abuse and harassment of girls in schools;**

(e) **Strengthen efforts to eradicate illiteracy by reducing the gap in the illiteracy rate between women and men;**

(f) **Strengthen measures to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes and structural barriers to the enrolment of girls in non-traditional fields of education, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as in the digital field, but not at the expense of the arts and social sciences.**

### **Employment**

35. The Committee notes the implementation of Proclamation No. 1064/2017 on federal civil servants, which prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace and guarantees women four months of maternity leave. The Committee also notes the adoption of the national social protection policy, in 2014, which targets the promotion of the socioeconomic rights of women and the implementation of temporary special measures to promote women's employment. It is concerned, however, about the following:

(a) The gender pay gap between women and men in the private sector and the large concentration of women in the informal sector who are not covered by social and labour protection;

(b) The lack of adequate protection for women domestic workers, who are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation;

(c) Prejudice, discrimination and sexual harassment against women in the workplace;

(d) The lack of sufficient childcare facilities in the public and private sectors.

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

(a) **Continue to implement temporary special measures to effectively combat horizontal and vertical occupational segregation in the public and private sectors;**

(b) **Effectively enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, especially in the private sector, in order to narrow and close the gender pay gap;**

(c) **Accelerate the adoption of the national action plan on business and human rights, aimed at enhancing the protection of human rights, including women's rights, in the private sector;**

(d) **Increase women's access to decent work, promote their transition to the formal sector and ensure that women employed in the informal sector are effectively covered by social and labour protection;**

(e) **Effectively implement Proclamation No. 1064/2017, including by ensuring that victims of sexual harassment in the workplace have access to effective complaints procedures and to protection measures and have recourse to remedies, as well as ensuring that the perpetrators are prosecuted and punished appropriately;**

(f) **Ensure that women domestic workers are guaranteed the same level of protection and benefits as other workers, and strengthen efforts to protect them from abusive and exploitative working conditions;**

(g) **Effectively implement maternity protection, provide sufficient and adequate childcare facilities and ensure expansion into the private sector;**

(h) **Continue to enhance gender-informed data collection systems on women's employment.**

## Health

37. The Committee welcomes the efforts made by the State party to improve the health situation, including through the launch of the five-year health sector transformation plan and the national reproductive health strategy, which covers the period 2016–2020. It notes the community-based health insurance and the social health insurance programmes. It remains concerned, however, about the following:

(a) The disparities in the cost and availability of, and access to, health services and family-planning services from one region to another, and the limited number of doctors and midwives, in particular in rural areas;

(b) The lack of information on the assessment and results of the national reproductive health strategy that covered the period 2005–2015;

(c) The lack of information on the budget allocated for the implementation of the national reproductive health strategy for the period 2016–2020;

(d) The lack of adequate programmes for fistulas and the shortage of medical personnel qualified to perform abortions;

(e) The fact that women, in particular women with disabilities, have difficulties gaining access to reproductive health services and that the health-care system often does not properly provide such services and cannot ensure reasonable accommodation for women with disabilities.

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

(a) **Improve the coverage of and access to health services at a lower cost throughout its territory by allocating sufficient budgetary resources to the establishment of hospitals, in particular in rural and remote areas, which should be equipped with doctors and adequate facilities to ensure access to high-quality and accessible health care for women, in particular obstetric services, including abortions;**

(b) **Provide more resources to ensure that women affected by fistulas benefit from adequate programmes and health services;**

(c) **Increase and improve the provision of sexual and reproductive health information and services to women and girls, including in rural areas, on the basis of the principles of inclusion and accessibility;**

(d) **Ensure that all women and girls with disabilities have access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, and are provided with reasonable accommodation;**

(e) **Provide more information in its ninth periodic report about the budget allocated for the implementation of the national reproductive health strategy for the period 2016–2020, in addition to the measures taken to assess the previous strategy and the results of that assessment.**

39. The Committee, while noting that the State party has implemented measures to improve access to health services for women and girls affected by leprosy, is concerned that affected women and girls face discrimination, stigmatization and social exclusion. It is also concerned about the lack of sufficient prevention and awareness-raising programmes with regard to leprosy.

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

(a) **Carry out programmes to eliminate discrimination against women and girls affected by leprosy;**

(b) **Grant women and girls affected by leprosy equal rights and opportunities in political, social and economic life;**

(c) **Implement prevention and awareness-raising programmes with regard to leprosy.**

#### **Empowerment and economic and social benefits**

41. The Committee notes the entry into force of the national women development and change strategy in 2017, which aims to improve the participation and empowerment of women. It is concerned, however, that the number of women benefiting from microcredit services and large-scale loans remains low and that no evaluation has been conducted of the impact of the microcredit services that have been implemented. It is also concerned that there is no coordination mechanism between the structures overseeing microcredit services at the federal level.

42. **The Committee recommends that the State party increase the access of women to loans and other forms of finance, including by providing them with soft loans and improving their business and financial knowledge, and promote their access to income-generating activities, such as the establishment of small enterprises and the marketing of locally produced merchandise.**

#### **Rural women**

43. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to ensure access to services and infrastructure, including health care, education, housing, water and sanitation in rural areas, as well as outreach to pastoralist women through the pastoral community development programme, which incorporates women's rights. It also notes the proposed revision of the law on land ownership. It remains concerned, however, that many services are not available to rural women or are difficult for them to obtain, especially in pastoralist areas, and about the feminization of poverty in rural areas. It is also concerned that the joint land certificate process has not yet been realized to a sufficient extent to contribute to the economic empowerment of rural women.

44. **In line with its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that the proposed revision of the law on land ownership addresses discrimination against women, including rural women, in conformity with the Convention;**

(b) **Intensify efforts to ensure that rural women effectively have access to health care, education, employment, housing, safe water, adequate sanitation and family planning services, especially in pastoralist areas;**

(c) **Continue to strengthen and ensure the effective implementation of existing policies and programmes for the economic empowerment of rural women, including by further promoting their ownership of land and enhancing the security of their land tenure, and ensure that rural women are involved in the development and implementation of agricultural policies, including with regard to decisions on land use;**

(d) **Expand the access of rural women to microfinance and microcredit at low interest rates to enable them to engage in income-generating activities and start their own businesses, with a view to combating poverty among rural women and promoting their advancement.**

45. The Committee notes that the State party temporarily closed the Lega Dembi mine in the Oromia region and is assessing the impact of the closure. It is concerned,

however, about the grave health, environmental and socioeconomic impact of the operations of the mine on Guji rural women and their families.

**46. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure full transparency and independence during the assessment process, including by publishing the results and sharing them with the Guji people, address the environmental and health damage caused and provide adequate reparations and compensation to the victims.**

#### **Rastafarian women**

47. The Committee notes the provision of national registration cards to some Rastafarians in 2017, but that Rastafarian women have limited access to basic social services and are exposed to discrimination and gender-based violence.

**48. The Committee recommends that the State party address the issue of the nationality of Rastafarian women and girls born in Ethiopia and implement measures to eliminate discrimination against them and protect them from violence.**

#### **Women and girls with disabilities**

49. The Committee is concerned about the multiple forms of discrimination suffered by women and girls with disabilities, the lack of sufficient information regarding their situation in all aspects of life, the restriction of their legal capacity and their increased likelihood of exposure to violence and abuse.

**50. Recalling its general recommendation No. 18 (1991) on disabled women, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Provide, in its next periodic report, detailed information on women with disabilities and measures that have been taken to deal with their situation in all aspects of life;**

(b) **Mainstream the rights of women and girls with disabilities in legislation on gender equality, in consultation with their representative organizations;**

(c) **Repeal any provisions of the Civil Code and other legislation that restrict the legal capacity of persons with disabilities;**

(d) **Guarantee appropriate access to justice for women with disabilities.**

#### **Refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons**

51. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the revised Proclamation on refugees of 17 January 2019, which contains a non-discrimination clause and provisions on women's enjoyment of equal rights and protection, including specific measures protecting them from gender-based violence. The Committee also notes Proclamation No. 1049/2017, which extends the scope of the standardized vital events registration system to refugees and other non-nationals. It is concerned, however, that refugee women and girls continue to face gender-based violence, including sexual violence. It is also concerned that, in the context of forced displacement, school dropout rates among girls are particularly high and that, in some regions, such as the Somali region, a lack of documentation can lead to child and forced marriage because a girl's age may be unknown and thus disregarded.

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

(a) **Effectively investigate and prosecute cases of gender-based violence, including sexual violence against refugee women and girls, as well as cases**

**involving child and forced marriage among displaced women and girls, and bring perpetrators to justice;**

**(b) Put in place adequate training for government officials, including border officers, on gender-appropriate and culture- and age sensitive individual screening and assessment procedures to ensure the systematic and early identification of refugees and asylum seekers, in particular women and girls who have been victims or are at risk of gender based violence;**

**(c) Increase the number of awareness-raising programmes, especially among internally displaced women, on the harmful impact of child and forced marriage on the health, development and education of girls, and take the measures necessary to ensure that internally displaced girls have access to education;**

**(d) Accelerate the process, which is already under way, of ratifying the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa of 2009.**

### **Migrant women**

53. The Committee notes the adoption of Proclamation No. 923/2016 on overseas employment, enacted with the aim of protecting the rights of Ethiopian migrants engaged in employment abroad. It notes that the State party lifted the ban on travel to the Middle East, which had been introduced to prevent the abuse of Ethiopian women travelling to that region as domestic workers or caregivers. The Committee also notes that the State party has concluded bilateral agreements with three receiving countries and opened training centres to provide potential migrants with skills to protect themselves. The Committee is concerned about the lack of information on migrant women and girls, including irregular migrants, as well as the lack of programmes to address discrimination against them.

**54. The Committee recommends that the State party ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and provide further information on the situation of regular and irregular migrant women and girls.**

### **Women in detention**

55. The Committee notes that thousands of political prisoners, including women, have been released and that arbitrary detention is prohibited under the Constitution and by law. It is concerned, however, about the prevalence of gender-based violence against women in detention, in particular rape, and reports that in some cases torture, ill-treatment and rape have been committed against women by government security forces in places of detention. It is also concerned that: (a) political prisoners and prisoners of conscience reportedly face harsh conditions and are deprived of access to basic services; (b) in some detention centres, women and men are held together; and (c) there are no publicly available data on the number of women in detention.

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

**(a) Promptly investigate all alleged cases of ill-treatment, torture, rape and violence involving women in detention, including by government security forces, and ensure that women in detention, including political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, have access to due process and legal counsel;**

**(b) Ensure that women in detention have adequate access to health care, nutrition and hygiene and that women and men are separated in all detention facilities;**

(c) **Grant the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission full and effective access to detention facilities to monitor the detention conditions of women.**

#### **Marriage and family relations**

57. The Committee notes the legislative measures taken by the State party to eliminate child marriage, including article 35 (4) of the Constitution, article 648 of the revised Criminal Code of 2005 and the revised Family Code of 2000. It notes the implementation of the Proclamation on the registration of vital events and the national identity card, which calls for the registration of all births, marriages, divorces and deaths and is expected to bolster State party efforts to eliminate child marriage. The Committee is concerned that article 7 of the revised Family Code still contains an exception to the minimum age of marriage of 18 years of age and that legal provisions on bigamous and polygamous marriage have not been harmonized at the federal level. The Committee reiterates its concern that the Afar and Somali regions have not yet enacted family laws in conformity with the revised Family Code.

58. **The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) remove the exception to the minimum age for child marriage; (b) harmonize the legal provisions on bigamous and polygamous marriage at the federal level; and (c) remove its reservations to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa regarding marital rape and polygamy. It recalls its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/ETH/CO/6-7, para. 15) and calls upon the State party to ensure that the Afar and Somali regions adopt family laws in conformity with the Family Code and the Convention and take measures, including awareness-raising and training initiatives, to raise the awareness of the population and enable public officials to enforce the revised Family Code effectively.**

#### **Optional Protocol to the Convention and amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention**

59. **The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.**

#### **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

60. **The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.**

#### **Dissemination**

61. **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 and local), in particular to the Government, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.**

#### **Technical assistance**

62. **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**

63. 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 to ratify 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, to which it is not yet a party.

**Follow-up to the concluding observations**

64. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 22 (a) and (b) and 24 (a) and (b) above.

**Preparation of the next report**

65. The Committee requests the State party to submit its ninth periodic report, which is due in March 2023. The report should be submitted on time and cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

66. 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/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).

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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.