



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

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

### **Russian Federation**

1. The Committee considered the combined sixth and seventh report of the Russian Federation (CEDAW/C/USR/7) at its 930th and 931st meetings, on 15 July 2010 (see CEDAW/C/SR.930 and 931). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/USR/Q/7, and the responses of the Russian Federation are contained in CEDAW/C/USR/Q/7/Add.1.

#### **Introduction**

2. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its combined sixth and seventh periodic report, which was well structured and in general followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of reports, with references to the previous concluding observations, although it lacked references to the Committee's general recommendations and was overdue. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its oral presentation, the extensive written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the Committee's pre-session working group and the further clarifications to the questions posed orally by the Committee.

3. The Committee commends the State party for its high-level, large and multisectoral delegation, which was headed by the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Development and which included a large number of women and men representing ministries and other governmental bodies with responsibilities for the implementation of measures in the areas covered by the Convention. The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue that took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee, but it regrets that not all of its oral questions were answered.

**Positive aspects**

4. The Committee notes with appreciation the ratification by the State party, on 28 July 2004, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

5. The Committee also commends the State party for its submission of detailed statistical and sex-disaggregated data in respect of a number of areas covered by the Convention, including public and political participation, employment and health.

6. The Committee welcomes the State party's ratification, on 18 February 2010, of Protocol No. 14 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms amending the control system of this Convention. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the ratification allowed for the entry into force of the Protocol on 1 June 2010.

7. The Committee also notes with satisfaction 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 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, on 24 September 2008;

(b) 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 Convention, on 26 May 2004.

**Principal areas of concern and recommendations**

8. **The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement all the provisions of the Convention and views the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding observations as requiring the priority attention of the State party between now and the submission of the next periodic report. Consequently, the Committee urges 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. The Committee calls upon the State party to submit the present concluding observations to all relevant ministries, to the Parliament (State Duma and Federation Council) and to the judiciary, so as to ensure their full implementation.**

**Parliament**

9. **While reaffirming that the Government has the primary responsibility and is particularly accountable for the full implementation of the obligations of the State party under the Convention, the Committee stresses that the Convention is binding on all branches of Government, and it invites the State party to encourage its Parliament (State Duma and Federation Council), in line with its procedures, where appropriate, to take the necessary steps with regard to the implementation of the present concluding observations and the Government's next reporting process under the Convention.**

**Accountability of the federal Government**

10. While the Committee is cognizant of the complex federal and constitutional structures in the State party, it underlines that the federal Government is responsible

for ensuring the implementation of the Convention and providing leadership to the municipal and regional governments and the governments of other autonomous entities in that context. The Committee notes with concern that the federal Government may lack the will and an efficient mechanism to ensure that the municipal and regional governments and other autonomous entities establish legal and other measures to fully implement the Convention in a coherent and consistent manner.

**11. The Committee, taking into account the legal responsibility and leadership role of the federal Government in the implementation of the Convention, calls upon the State party to use its leadership and funding power to set standards and establish an effective mechanism aimed at ensuring accountability and the transparent, coherent and consistent implementation of the Convention throughout its territory in which all levels of government can participate.**

#### **Definition of equality**

12. The Committee remains concerned that neither the Constitution, which recognizes women's right to equality before the law, nor other appropriate legislation, contains a definition of discrimination or expressly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex. While noting the draft federal law on "State guarantees of equal rights and liberties for men and women in the Russian Federation and equal opportunities for their realization", the Committee is concerned that the State party has not yet adopted a gender equality law.

**13. The Committee urges the State party to incorporate in the Constitution or other appropriate legislation a specific right of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, and a definition of discrimination that encompasses both direct and indirect discrimination and discrimination in the public and private spheres, in conformity with article 1 of the Convention. The Committee also calls on the State party to develop, in accordance with article 2 of the Convention, a gender equality law in order to fulfil the necessary internal procedures for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. The Committee recommends that the State party address the following issues in this law: the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex in all areas covered by the Convention; the de jure equality of women and men, including through effective sanctions in cases of violations of the law; the use of temporary special measures to overcome effects of structural and historical discrimination and accelerate the achievement of de facto equality of women and men; the provision of a basis for the establishment of national and decentralized institutional mechanisms for gender equality within government structures; a mandate of government agencies at all levels to apply gender mainstreaming to all their policy areas and processes; and a mandate for the adoption of comprehensive periodic national action plans for gender equality.**

#### **Visibility of the Convention and its Optional Protocol**

14. The Committee takes note of various campaigns to raise awareness of the Convention and its Optional Protocol and the fact that international instruments, including the Convention, are part of Russian law and can be directly invoked before the courts. The Committee remains concerned, however, that there is inadequate knowledge in society in general, including among all branches of

Government, including the judiciary, of the rights of women under the Convention and its Optional Protocol, the Convention's concept of substantive equality of women and men and the Committee's general recommendations. The Committee is also concerned that the State party did not provide information on cases in which the provisions of the Convention had been directly invoked in court. It is further concerned that women themselves, especially those in rural and remote areas, are not aware of their rights under the Convention and its Optional Protocol and thus lack the capacity to claim them.

**15. The Committee urges the State party to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Convention and its Optional Protocol are sufficiently known and applied by all branches of Government, including the judiciary, as a framework for all laws, court decisions and policies on gender equality and the advancement of women. The Committee recommends that the Convention, its Optional Protocol and related domestic legislation be made an integral part of the legal education and training of judges, magistrates, lawyers and prosecutors so that a legal culture supportive of the equality of women with men and non-discrimination on the basis of sex is firmly established in the country. It urges the State party to enhance the awareness of women of their rights through, inter alia, legal literacy programmes and legal assistance and to ensure that information on the Convention and its Optional Protocol is provided to women in all parts of the country through the use of all appropriate measures.**

#### **Legal complaint mechanisms**

16. The Committee takes note of the activities of the Ombudsman of the Russian Federation, but it is concerned at the information provided in the State report that no complaints have been received by the Ombudsman from women concerning their discrimination. The Committee is therefore concerned that the State party does not have a comprehensive and effective legal complaint system for women. It is also concerned that the recommendations of the Ombudsman are not binding on the Government. The Committee is further concerned that the State party did not provide information on the number of cases of discrimination against women that have been brought before the courts and other bodies.

**17. The Committee urges the State party to strengthen its efforts to protect women against any act of discrimination, including by strengthening the mandate and visibility of existing mechanisms, such as the Ombudsman of the Russian Federation and by ensuring that the composition and activities of this latter institution are gender-sensitive and fully address the issue of the promotion and protection of women's human rights, including by considering the establishment of a separate department for women's rights. The Committee also recommends that the State party take the necessary measures to sensitize women and encourage them to seek redress against discrimination. The Committee further requests the State party to provide information in its next report on the number of cases of discrimination against women that have been brought before the Ombudsman, the courts and other bodies.**

### National machinery

18. While noting the establishment, in 2006, of an Inter-Agency Commission for issues relating to guaranteeing the equality of men and women in the Russian Federation, the Committee expresses its deep concern at the lack of a national machinery for the advancement of women. In this respect, it is concerned that the former Commission on the Enhancement of the Status of Women has been reorganized. While noting the information provided by the delegation that the State party is currently preparing a new national plan of action for the advancement of women, the Committee regrets that this action plan has not yet been adopted.

**19. The Committee recalls the State party's responsibility to fully ensure Government accountability for formal and substantive equality of women and men and women's enjoyment of all human rights in the implementation of the Convention. In this respect, the Committee refers to the guidance, provided in its general recommendation No. 6 and in the Beijing Platform for Action, on national machinery for the advancement of women, in particular regarding the necessary conditions for the effective functioning of such machinery. The Committee urges the State party to establish expeditiously a national machinery for the advancement of women, to confer a clear mandate on such machinery and to provide it with the necessary human, financial and technical resources for its effective functioning. The Committee further recommends that the State party develop and adopt a comprehensive national plan of action for the advancement of women. The Committee calls on the State party to take due consideration of the Committee's recommendations in the formulation of this action plan and to ensure its effective implementation, including monitoring and regular evaluation of strategies and measures used in its implementation, and to establish a regular reporting system to the government and parliament.**

### Stereotypes and cultural practices

20. The Committee reiterates its concern at the persistence of practices, traditions, patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in all spheres of life. In this respect, the Committee is concerned at the State party's repeated emphasis on the role of women as mothers and caregivers. The Committee is concerned that such customs and practices perpetuate discrimination against women and girls; that this is reflected in their disadvantageous and unequal status in many areas, including in education, public life, decision-making, marriage and family relations, and the persistence of harmful traditional practices, honour killings, bridal kidnappings and violence against women; and that, thus far, the State party has not taken effective and systematic action to modify or eliminate stereotypes and negative traditional values and practices.

**21. The Committee urges the State party to put in place without delay a comprehensive strategy, including the review and formulation of legislation and the establishment of goals and timetables, to modify or eliminate traditional practices and stereotypes that discriminate against women, in conformity with articles 2 (chapeau), 2(f) and 5(a) of the Convention. Such measures should include efforts to raise awareness of this subject, targeting women and men at all levels of society, including at the local community level, in collaboration with civil society organizations. The Committee notes that a shift from a focus on**

**women primarily as wives and mothers to individuals and actors equal to men in society is required for the full implementation of the Convention and the achievement of equality of women and men. The Committee also calls upon the State party to use innovative and effective measures to strengthen understanding of the equality of women and men and to work with the media to promote a positive, non-stereotypical and non-discriminatory portrayal of women.**

#### **Violence against women**

22. The Committee is seriously concerned that violence against women in all its forms has increased, both in the private and public spheres. In this respect, the Committee expresses its concern at the absence of a holistic approach to the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women. It is particularly concerned that, due to strong patriarchal values, husbands are generally considered superior to their wives with the right to assert control over them, legitimizing the general opinion that domestic violence is a private issue. Furthermore, social stigma is connected to sexual and domestic violence, pressuring victims to keep silent and resolve any conflicts within the family. In addition, the Committee notes with concern that domestic violence cases are often treated as private charges to be filed by the victim, not the prosecutor. The Committee is also concerned at recent amendments to the Criminal Code whereby article 134 (4) would appear to exempt first-time offenders from criminal liability for having sex with a minor if he marries the victim. The Committee regrets the lack of data and information on the incidence of various forms of violence against women and girls, as well as the lack of studies and surveys on the extent of violence and its root causes and it is further concerned at the lack of a national programme that provides shelter to victims of domestic violence, that the few shelters that do exist in selected cities are extremely limited in their capacity to help these victims and that most shelters restrict access to Russian nationals who are local residents.

23. **The Committee urges the State party to give priority attention to combating violence against women and girls and to adopting comprehensive measures to address such violence, in accordance with its general recommendation No. 19. Such measures should include the expeditious adoption of a comprehensive law on violence against women, including domestic violence, the criminalization of marital rape, sexual violence, sexual harassment, institutional violence and crimes committed in the name of honour. They should also include the development of a coherent and multisectoral action plan to combat violence against women. The Committee also urges the State party to amend article 134 (4) of the Criminal Code to ensure that perpetrators of violence against women do not benefit from any reduction in penalty. The Committee further calls upon the State party to increase, in a significant manner, the number of shelters and the capacity thereof, ensure an adequate geographical distribution of such shelters and remove any barriers to access, such as registration or residency requirements. The Committee recommends that the State party provide the police, public prosecutors, the judiciary and other relevant government bodies with the necessary training on domestic violence, and it also requests the State party to provide data and information on trends in the prevalence of various forms of violence against women, disaggregated by age and ethnicity, and by urban and rural areas.**

### **Violence against women in the northern Caucasus**

24. The Committee notes with deep concern that the two military operations and the high level of violence in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation over the past 15 years have had a serious impact on traditions and social norms and that existing patterns of discrimination against women have become more acute. In this regard, the Committee is particularly concerned at the increasing rate of violence against women and killings of women in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation as well as harmful traditional practices, such as honour killings and bride-kidnapping. The Committee also notes with concern that such cases of violence and killings are rarely documented, prosecuted and punished.

**25. The Committee urges the State party to take immediate action to ensure the protection of the human rights of women in the northern Caucasus, including the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. The State party should take all necessary measures to end the impunity for violence against and killings of women and girls in the northern Caucasus, by ensuring that such cases are fully and promptly investigated and that perpetrators are brought to justice, regardless of whether they are State or non-State actors. The Committee calls on the State party to ensure the provision of adequate reparation to the surviving victims, including the families of the deceased, and to send a clear message that human rights abuses will not be tolerated and will be addressed through human rights complaints, thorough investigations, fair trials and punishment of the perpetrators. The Committee also calls on the State party to take the necessary measures to implement the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, following her visit to the Russian Federation in December 2004.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Committee requests the State party to adopt programmes aimed at reintegrating women into development processes in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation.**

### **Trafficking**

26. The Committee notes the introduction, in 2003, of norms prohibiting the trafficking in human beings in the Criminal Code of the State party. However, it expresses its concern at the high prevalence of trafficking in the State party, which has increased more than sixfold during the reporting period. While noting with concern that the Russian Federation is a source, transit and destination country for trafficking, the Committee regrets the lack of disaggregated data on the number of victims of trafficking, including minors, and compensation received as well as statistics on complaints, investigations, prosecutions and penalties imposed on the perpetrators of such crimes. It is also concerned at the failure of the State party to address the root causes of trafficking, which impedes the efforts of the State party to address the trafficking problem in a serious way. The Committee is further concerned at the lack of special legislative and other measures for the protection of women and girls from recruitment agencies engaging in trafficking in persons and from marriage agencies specializing in marriage with foreign citizens. In addition, it is concerned at the limited information provided on the existence and implementation of regional and bilateral memorandums of understanding and/or

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<sup>1</sup> E/CN.4/2006/62/Add.2, para. 86, section C.

agreements with other countries on trafficking, including within the Commonwealth of Independent States.

**27. The Committee urges the State party to fully implement article 6 of the Convention, including by speedily enacting specific national legislation and a comprehensive policy and action plan on the phenomenon of trafficking, to ensure that perpetrators are punished and victims adequately protected and assisted. The Committee calls upon the State party to increase its efforts at international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination through information exchange in order to prevent trafficking, and to harmonize legal procedures aimed at the prosecution of traffickers, including within the Commonwealth of Independent States. Such efforts should include the dissemination to risk groups and the police of the methods used by the recruiters. The Committee also recommends that information and training on the anti-trafficking legislation be provided to the judiciary, law enforcement officials, border guards and social workers in all parts of the country. In addition, the Committee recommends that the State party conduct comparative studies on trafficking and address its root causes in order to eliminate the vulnerability of girls and women to traffickers and to undertake efforts for the recovery and social integration of the victims. The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure systematic monitoring and periodic evaluation, including through the collection and analysis of data on trafficking, and to include such data in its next periodic report.**

#### **Exploitation of prostitution**

28. The Committee expresses its concern at the lack of data on the prevalence of prostitution in the State party. The Committee is also concerned that owing to the fact that engagement in prostitution is an administrative offence under Russian law, women engaged in prostitution are vulnerable to harassment and various types of abuse by the police who commit such violations with impunity and that no special health protection programmes for women engaged in prostitution have been adopted.

**29. The Committee urges the State party to pursue a comprehensive approach in addressing the question of prostitution, including exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution, and focus on the investigation, prosecution and punishment of those who exploit prostitution. The Committee calls upon the State party to take all necessary measures to protect women engaged in prostitution from harassment and abuse by the police. The Committee also calls upon the State party to ensure systematic monitoring and periodic evaluation, including through the collection and analysis of data on exploitation of women in prostitution, and to include such data in its next periodic report.**

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

30. The Committee notes the measures taken by the State party to enhance women's participation in political and public life, including amendments to its electoral laws. The Committee is concerned, however, that the number of women in federal legislative bodies is at present insignificant and that women constitute only a small percentage of the national reserve of high-potential administrative personnel.



The Committee also expresses its concern about the continuing underrepresentation of women in public, political and professional life, including in diplomacy and as university professors, and in decision-making positions, including in senior management.

**31. The Committee recommends that the State party pursue sustained policies aimed at the promotion of the full and equal participation of women in decision-making in all areas of public, political and professional life. It recommends that the State party fully utilize the Committee's general recommendation No. 23 and calls upon the State party to adopt temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, in order to accelerate the full and equal participation of women in public and political life. The Committee recommends the implementation of awareness-raising activities on the importance of the participation of women in decision-making for society as a whole and the development of targeted training and mentoring programmes for women candidates and women elected to public office, as well as programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for current and future women leaders. The Committee also recommends that the State party carefully monitor the effectiveness of measures taken and results achieved and that it inform the Committee thereof.**

#### **Female journalists and human rights defenders**

32. The Committee expresses its serious concern at reliable reports of harassment, violent attacks and murders of female journalists and human rights defenders in the State party, in particular those working in the northern Caucasus, including in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. The Committee regrets the lack of effective measures taken by the State party to protect the right to life and security of those persons.

**33. The Committee calls on the State party to take immediate and effective steps to ensure the protection of journalists and human rights defenders monitoring and reporting violations of women's rights from intimidation and from any unfavourable circumstances they might suffer as a result of their professional activities. The Committee urges the State party to ensure the prompt, impartial and effective investigation and punishment of such cases.**

#### **Education**

34. The Committee expresses its concern at the unbalanced gender proportions in teaching personnel, with teachers having higher degrees and leaders of educational institutions being mostly male. It is also concerned at the gender segregation in students' choice of field of education (girls are mostly studying the humanities while boys are mostly studying technical subjects), and it regrets the lack of information on any incentives to encourage women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields of study. It further regrets the lack of sufficient disaggregated data covering the field of education.

**35. The Committee urges the State party to enhance its compliance with article 10 of the Convention and to raise awareness of the importance of education as a human right and as the basis for the empowerment of women. It recommends that the State party take the necessary measures, including the use**

of temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, to increase the number of female teachers at the higher levels of education and in leadership positions. The Committee also recommends that the State party take effective measures to overcome the de facto segregation in the fields of education, to actively encourage the diversification of educational and professional choices for women and men and to offer incentives for women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields of study. The Committee also requests the State party to include in its next report statistical data covering the field of education, disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, rural and urban areas and federal and regional levels.

### **Employment**

36. The Committee reiterates its concern at the lack of a separate law on equal employment opportunities in the State party. The Committee also remains concerned that the situation of women in employment is deteriorating and that women are the overwhelming majority of workers in lower level and low-paid jobs in the various parts of the public sector. It is further concerned that women continue to experience significant discrimination in the private sector, and have a low share of the high-paid jobs in that sector. In this respect, the Committee notes with concern the wide gender pay gap, with the average income of women being 64 per cent of the average income of men across the country. While noting the State party's policy of protecting women against unsafe working conditions, the Committee reiterates its concern about the exclusion of women of childbearing age from a list of more than 400 jobs, which may result in the effective exclusion of women from certain employment sectors. The Committee is, however, aware that this list is under consideration, and it also notes that employers may employ women in the prohibited jobs if the necessary standards are in place. The Committee is also concerned at the narrow definition of sexual harassment as the victim performing sexual acts against his or her will.

37. **The Committee requests the State party to ensure equal opportunities for women in the labour market, in accordance with article 11 of the Convention. To this end, the Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party enact an equal employment opportunity law, prohibiting discrimination in hiring, promotion, employment conditions and dismissal, requiring equal pay for work of equal value and providing for effective enforcement procedures and remedies. The Committee also reiterates its recommendation that the State party require all employers to conform to the mandated standards, which would allow both women and men to work in proper conditions of health and safety. Bearing in mind article 11, paragraph 3, of the Convention, the Committee recommends continued review of the list of prohibited jobs, in consultation with women's non-governmental organizations, with a view to reducing their numbers in order to limit the restrictions to cases where exclusions are strictly necessary to protect women's reproductive health and to ensure that measures are proportional to the nature and scope of the protection required. The State party is further encouraged to widen the definition of sexual harassment and adopt concrete measures for addressing sexual harassment, including in the workplace.**

## Health

38. While commending the efforts made by the State party in the area of health care, including the “Give me life” campaign, and the decrease in maternal mortality rates (from 44 per 100,000 births in 1998 to 22 per 100,000 births in 2007), the Committee notes with concern that the reduction of governmental expenditure on public health services has had a negative impact on access to health services, especially in rural areas. The Committee is concerned at the limited access to reproductive and sexual health services, especially in rural areas, that only 27 per cent of women of childbearing age make use of modern methods of contraception, and that family planning programmes are not included in school curriculums. The Committee also notes with concern that, although the rate of abortions has decreased, abortion continues to be used as a method of birth control. The Committee is further concerned that the proportion of women among early-stage HIV-infected patients has increased annually.

**39. The Committee calls upon the State party to take all necessary measures to ensure women’s access to health care and health-related services, within the framework of the Committee’s general recommendation No. 24. The Committee requests the strengthening and expansion of efforts to increase knowledge of and access to affordable contraceptive methods throughout the country and to ensure that women in rural areas do not face barriers and have full access to family-planning information and services. It also recommends that sex education be widely promoted and targeted at adolescent girls and boys, with special attention to the prevention of early pregnancy and the control of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.**

## Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women

40. While welcoming the statement by the delegation that discrimination is not allowed on any grounds in the State party, including on the grounds of sexual orientation, the Committee expresses its concern about acts of violence against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, including reports of harassment by the police and incidents of people being assaulted or killed on account of their sexual orientation. The Committee is also concerned about discrimination in employment, health care, education and other fields.

**41. The Committee calls on the State party to provide effective protection against violence and discrimination against women based on their sexuality, in particular through the enactment of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that includes the prohibition of multiple forms of discrimination, including on the grounds of sexual orientation. The Committee also urges the State party to intensify its efforts to combat discrimination against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, including by launching a sensitization campaign aimed at the general public, as well as providing appropriate training to law enforcement officials.**

## Rural women

42. The Committee notes with concern the statement in the State party report that the situation of rural women remains difficult. While noting the information provided on the existence of a number of policies and programmes on the rural population, the Committee expresses its concern at the limited information provided

on national policies, strategies or programmes carried out by the State party to improve the situation of rural women, girls and older women, including their access to health care, education, employment, land, credit and decision-making. The Committee also regrets the lack of information on measures taken to increase rural women's awareness of the rights enshrined in the Convention.

**43. The Committee requests the State party to include in its next report detailed information on any national policy, strategy or programme carried out by the State party to improve the situation of rural women, girls and older women, including their access to health care, education, employment, land, credit and decision-making, as well as the impact and achievements of such governmental initiatives. The Committee also calls on the State party to enhance the awareness of rural women of their rights enshrined in the Convention through, inter alia, legal literacy programmes and legal assistance. The Committee further calls on the State party to ensure the participation of women in the council of elders.**

#### **Ethnic minority women**

44. The Committee expresses its serious concern at the situation of ethnic minority women in the State party. The Committee notes with concern that the State party has not adopted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation aimed at protecting ethnic minorities, in particular Chechens, Roma and persons of African origin. It is further concerned that traditional female stereotypes are most prevalent in the ethnic communities. In addition, the Committee regrets the lack of information provided with regard to human rights education offered to ethnic minority women, including education on gender equality.

**45. The Committee calls upon the State party to pay special attention to the needs of women and girls belonging to ethnic minorities and adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation aimed at protecting ethnic minorities. It also encourages the State party to use innovative methods to improve information on and awareness of the provisions of the Convention and the Optional Protocol among women and girls belonging to ethnic minorities. The Committee requests that comprehensive information be included in the next periodic report, including sex-disaggregated data and trends over time, on the de facto position of ethnic minority women and on the impact of measures taken and results achieved in the implementation of policies and programmes for these women and girls.**

#### **Multiple forms of discrimination**

46. The Committee is concerned at the very limited information and statistics provided about certain groups of women and girls, including female domestic workers, asylum-seeking women, refugee women, internally displaced women, and girls living in the street. The Committee is also concerned that those women and girls often suffer from multiple forms of discrimination, especially with regard to access to education, employment and health care, protection from violence and access to justice. The Committee is further concerned that the national Law on Refugees does not provide any special procedures for recognizing women seeking asylum as refugees.

47. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, in its next report, a comprehensive picture of the de facto situation of disadvantaged groups of women and girls in all areas covered by the Convention and information on specific programmes and achievements. The Committee calls on the State party to include in the national Law on Refugees special procedures for recognizing women seeking asylum as refugees.**

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

48. The Committee is concerned about the persistence of early marriages of girls and polygamy, especially in the northern Caucasus. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of a legal framework for de facto unions and the resulting precarious situation in which women in such unions may find themselves when their relationship breaks down and there is a need for a division of property and assets without the benefit of adequate prior contractual agreement. The Committee is further concerned that women attempting to escape a violent relationship are frequently unable to access independent housing or shelters and thus often compelled to share the same residence with a violent partner, even after an official divorce.

49. **The Committee calls upon the State party to implement measures aimed at eliminating polygamy in all cases, as called for in the Committee's general recommendation No. 21, and to take all necessary measures to combat the practice of early marriage. The Committee also recommends that the State party take effective measures to ensure that women are guaranteed equal rights with men to property and assets accumulated during de facto unions when their relationship breaks down. The Committee further calls upon the State party to create the necessary conditions for women's access to independent housing or shelters, including for women attempting to escape a violent relationship.**

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

50. **The Committee encourages the State party to accept the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, concerning the meeting time of the Committee.**

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

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

#### **Millennium Development Goals**

52. **The Committee emphasizes that full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It calls for the integration of a gender perspective and an explicit reflection of the provisions of the Convention in all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.**

**Dissemination**

53. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in the Russian Federation of the present concluding observations in order to make the people, including government officials, politicians, parliamentarians and women's and human rights organizations, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure the de jure and de facto equality of women, as well as the further steps that are required in that regard. The Committee recommends that the dissemination include the local community level. The State party is encouraged to organize a series of meetings to discuss progress achieved in the implementation of the present observations. The Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Committee's general recommendations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on the theme "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

**Ratification of other treaties**

54. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments<sup>2</sup> would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the Government of the Russian Federation to consider ratifying the treaties to which it is not yet a party: the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

**Follow-up to concluding observations**

55. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within one year, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendation contained in paragraph 25 above and to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendation contained in paragraph 31 above.

**Preparation of next report**

56. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the wide participation of all ministries and public bodies in the preparation of its next report, as well as to consult a variety of women's and human rights organizations during that phase.

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<sup>2</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.

57. The Committee requests the State party to respond to the concerns expressed in the present concluding observations in its next periodic report under article 18 of the Convention. The Committee invites the State party to submit its next periodic report in July 2014.

58. The Committee invites 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, approved at the fifth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies, in June 2006 (HRI/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1). The treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee at its fortieth session, in January 2008, must be applied in conjunction with the harmonized reporting guidelines on a common core document. Together, they constitute the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The treaty-specific document should be limited to 40 pages, while the updated common core document should not exceed 80 pages.

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