



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

Burkina Faso

1. The Committee considered the sixth periodic report of Burkina Faso (CEDAW/C/BFA/6) at its 945th and 946th meetings, on 5 October 2010 (see CEDAW/C/SR.945 and 946). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/BFA/Q/6 and the responses of Burkina Faso are contained in CEDAW/C/BFA/Q/6/Add.1.

Introduction

2. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its sixth periodic report, but regrets that it only covers the period from 2001 to 2006. The Committee also expresses its appreciation to the State party for the written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by its pre-session working group, its oral presentation and the further clarifications to the questions posed orally by the Committee which together provided further insights into the situation of women in the State party and the implementation of the rights contained in the Convention.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation led by the Minister for the Promotion of Women, which provided additional written and oral responses to questions posed by members and enabled a frank and constructive dialogue between the delegation and members of the Committee.

Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the National Gender Policy in July 2009, and the adoption of the National Action Plan for 2009-2013, "Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation".

5. The Committee 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 10 October 2005.

- b. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in July 2009;
 - c. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 6 July 2007;
 - d. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, on 31 March 2006;
 - e. The 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2006.
6. The Committee also welcomes the enactment of new laws to advance the status of women and combat discrimination, including:
- a. The adoption in 2008 of the law to combat trafficking in persons and similar practices (Act No. 09296AN/2008), which criminalizes all forms of trafficking, expands the definition to include trafficking of young girls and women, places an emphasis on the need to protect victims of trafficking and prescribes punishments for convicted offenders;
 - b. The Reproductive Health Act of 2005 (Act No. 049-2005/AN), articles 17 and 18 of which penalize failure to inform a partner of HIV infection and voluntary transmission to partners;
 - c. Act No. 28-2008/AN on the Labour Code protecting pregnant employees and Article 303 of Act No. 033-2004/AN of 14 September 2009 which establishes the principle of equal pay for work of equal value for women and men.

Principle areas of concern and recommendations

7. The Committee recalls the State party's obligation to implement systematically and continuously all the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and views the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding observations as requiring the State party's priority attention between now and the submission of the next periodic report. Consequently, the Committee urges the State party to focus on these areas in its implementation activities and to report on action taken and results achieved in its next periodic report. It calls upon the State party to submit the present concluding observations to all relevant ministries, to the Parliament and to the judiciary, so as to ensure their full implementation.

Parliament

8. While reaffirming that the Government has the primary responsibility and is 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, 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.

Legal status of the Convention, the principle of equality, definition of discrimination and discriminatory laws

9. The Committee regrets that national legislation does not prohibit direct and indirect discrimination against women in line with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention. While noting with appreciation the State party's commitment and efforts to address challenges with

regard to the human rights of women, the Committee remains concerned that customary and traditional practices and stereotypical perceptions of the role of women pose significant obstacles to implementation.

10. The Committee calls on the State party to provide in its Constitution or other appropriate legislation provisions that prohibit discrimination against women that encompasses both direct and indirect discrimination in line with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention. It urges the State party to continue and increase sensitization and education efforts with regard to discrimination against women.

Visibility of the Convention and the Optional Protocol

11. While noting with interest that certain provisions of the Convention, in particular with regard to employment, have been invoked in court cases, the Committee is concerned about the overall lack of awareness of the Convention and its Optional Protocol in the State party, in particular among the judiciary and other law enforcement officials. Furthermore, it is concerned that women themselves are not aware of their rights under the Convention or of the complaints procedure under the Optional Protocol and thus, lack the necessary information in order to claim their rights.

12. The Committee urges the State party to widely disseminate the Convention and the Optional Protocol by providing training and awareness-raising programmes to familiarize the population, in particular women, with the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations. It recommends that such programmes be broad-based and target also government ministries, parliamentarians, the judiciary, non-governmental organizations, and women in particular.

National machinery for the advancement of women

13. The Committee commends the adoption of the National Gender Policy and the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat of the Action Plan for the Advancement of Women in the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, as well as the establishment of gender focal points in all government departments and national institutions. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned about the insufficient financial and human resources of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, and that as a result, it is unable to effectively coordinate the different initiatives carried out in the State party to promote gender equality and full implementation of the Convention.

14. The Committee calls on the State party to strengthen the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and provide it with the necessary resources to address the specific needs of women and girls. In particular, it urges the State party to enhance the authority and capacity of this Ministry to effectively coordinate the work carried out to promote gender equality and the full implementation of the Convention, across all sectors and levels, and to effectively monitor and evaluate progress in this regard. It also encourages the State party to continue to provide training to technical staff in charge of budgeting at the national and local levels on how to establish gender-sensitive budgets.

Access to justice and legal complaints mechanisms, including a national human rights institution

15. The Committee notes with interest measures carried out by the State party, including the legal assistance fund created by decree on July 22, 2009 with a view to improve access to public legal aid services and to increase women's access to justice. Nevertheless, the Committee expresses its concern that, in practice, women's ability to access justice and to bring cases of discrimination before the courts is limited by factors such as lack of

information on their rights, legal costs, the persistence of traditional justice systems, illiteracy, complexity of legal procedures and other practical difficulties in accessing courts. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that enforcing court rulings remains a challenge. The Committee further notes that, although the State party has carried out a reform to the National Human Rights Commission, it has yet to allocate sufficient financial and human resources for its effective functioning.

16. The Committee urges the State party to take all appropriate measures to remove impediments to women's access to justice. It urges the State party to facilitate access by women to the newly created legal aid services, to implement legal literacy programmes, and to disseminate knowledge on the available legal remedies against discrimination and their use, as well as on accessing courts. It recommends that the State party assess, monitor and measure the impact on women of efforts to improve access to justice and that it include this information in its next report. The Committee also recommends that the State party undertake, in consultation with a broad base of civil society representatives and with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the necessary steps to empower the National Human Rights Commission, in accordance with the Paris Principles, and to work with it to enhance women's awareness of their rights to be able to claim those rights.

Temporary special measures

17. While welcoming the new Law on the Quota as well as the promotion of girls in primary and secondary education to close the broad gap that exists between the enrolment rate of boys and girls, the Committee reiterates its concern (CEDAW/C/BFA/CO/4-5 par. 37 of 2005 and A/55/38 para. 273 of 2001) about the continuing underrepresentation of women in all areas of public, political and professional life and the existing challenges to the implementation of measures to address the situation. Moreover, the Committee is concerned that existing measures do not comply with the Committee's recommendation to set concrete numerical objectives, nor do they include specific timelines.

18. The Committee reiterates its recommendation to the State party that it implement temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25.. The Committee requests that the State party include information on the use of such temporary special measures, in relation to the various provisions of the Convention, and the impact of such measures, in its next periodic report.

Patriarchal stereotypes and harmful practices

19. The Committee reiterates its concern about the strong persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes concerning women's roles and responsibilities that discriminate against women and perpetuate their subordination within the family and society, and in particular in rural areas (CEDAW/C/BFA/CO/4-5, para. 27). It is concerned that these norms and practices persist in contravention of the provisions of the Convention and national legislation, and continue to pose serious obstacles to women's enjoyment of their human rights and the fulfilment of the rights enshrined in the Convention.

20. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation to the State party and urges it to establish without delay a comprehensive strategy, including clear goals and timetables, to modify or eliminate negative practices and patriarchal stereotypes that are harmful to and discriminate against women, and to promote women's full enjoyment of their human rights, in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention.

Violence against women

21. The Committee reiterates its concern that the State party has not yet adopted any specific legislation to eliminate violence against women, including domestic violence, which appears to be tolerated in society (CEDAW/C/BFA/CO/4-5 para. 23). The Committee regrets the lack of information and statistics on the number of incidents of the various forms of violence against women. It also expresses its concern about the lack of legal aid, shelters and counselling services for victims.

22. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation in full and, in accordance with its general recommendation No. 19, urges the State party to enact legislation on violence against women, including domestic violence, so as to ensure that violence against women is prohibited and sanctioned, that women and girls who are victims of violence have access to immediate means of redress and protection and that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished. In this regard, it urges the State party to give high priority to putting in place comprehensive measures to address all forms of violence against women and girls. The Committee encourages the State party to ensure that legal aid is provided to assist victims. It also recommends that the State party carry out educational and awareness-raising trainings for the judiciary and public officials, in particular law enforcement personnel, health service providers and social workers, community leaders and the general public so as to raise awareness and sensitization that all forms of violence against women are unacceptable and to provide adequate support to victims of all forms of violence against women. Further, it also reiterates its recommendation that the State party establish shelters and counselling services for victims of violence.

23. The Committee reiterates its serious concern about the continuing prevalence of discriminatory harmful practices, including female genital mutilation, forced and early marriage, levirate and sororate marriage, dowry, as well as practices that prevent women from owning land and inheriting from their husbands.

24. The Committee reiterates that the State party incorporate awareness-raising and educational campaigns addressed to women and men, girls and boys, religious and community leaders, parents, teachers and officials. It encourages the State party to undertake such efforts in collaboration with civil society organizations, women's groups and community and religious leaders and eradicate discriminatory harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and forced and early marriages explicitly recognizing that such practices should not violate human rights under any circumstances. The Committee also encourages the State party to effectively use innovative measures to strengthen understanding of the equality of women and men and, in particular, to develop outreach programmes for rural populations. It further calls on the State party to periodically review the measures taken in order to assess their impact and to report thereon to the Committee in its next report.

25. The Committee welcomes the various initiatives carried out by the National Committee to Combat the Practice of Excision to eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation and welcomes the fact that the State party has succeeded in reducing the incidence of the practice. Nevertheless, the Committee remains highly concerned that the practice continues to be widespread and is being performed with a higher degree of secrecy and at a younger age.

26. The Committee encourages the State party to increase its efforts to fully eradicate female genital mutilation and to carry on its robust public advocacy strategy, especially among parents and traditional leaders so as to change traditional perceptions connected with this practice. It also calls upon the State party to bring offenders, including parents, to justice.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

27. The Committee welcomes the adoption of a new law aimed at combating trafficking in human beings and other relevant laws related to similar practices and the protection of victims, as well as multilateral agreements to combat trafficking, especially in women and children. The Committee also notes with interest the ongoing study carried out by the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity on the situation of trafficking in women with a view to taking specific action. Nevertheless, the Committee expresses its serious concern over the trafficking in girls for domestic work and labour into neighbouring countries as well as trafficking in foreign women for the purpose of exploitation of prostitution. It further regrets the lack of available information about this matter.

28. **The Committee recommends that the State party put the necessary coordinating mechanisms in place to reinforce the implementation of new legislation and multilateral agreements to combat trafficking in girls and women for labour and sexual exploitation. The Committee encourages the formulation and implementation of a national plan of action against trafficking which ensures the prosecution and punishment of offenders and which enhances the necessary legal and psychosocial assistance and reintegration initiatives to victims of trafficking. The Committee also reiterates its recommendation to continue preventive measures aimed at improving the economic situation of girls and women and their access to land, gainful employment and other resources to eliminate their vulnerability to traffickers. The Committee requests that the State party include information on the results of the study on human trafficking carried out by the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity and action strategy in its next report.**

Political participation and participation in public life

29. The Committee commends the Gender Caucus within the Parliament as well as civil society working with governments at the local level for their active role in promoting the participation of women in political life and decision making in the State party. The Committee also notes the various activities carried out in the State party to improve the representation of women in public life, but is concerned about the continuing under-representation of women in appointed positions in the executive and judiciary branches and public administration as well as with respect to international representation.

30. The Committee reiterates its recommendation to the State party that it fully utilize general recommendation No. 23 concerning women in public life, including to develop guidelines for the application of the provisions of the Law on the Quota in the upcoming elections, with a view to accelerate the full and equal participation of women in public and political life. It calls upon the State party to establish concrete goals and timetables to accelerate women's equal participation in public and political life at all levels and in international representation and that it endeavour to create the necessary conditions for the achievement of such goals. It also calls on the State party to highlight the importance to society as a whole of women's full and equal participation in leadership positions. The Committee requests that the State party include in its next report disaggregated data on the participation trends of women in decision making including in diplomacy.

Education

31. The Committee welcomes the legislative measures adopted by the State party to address the gaps between boys and girls with respect to primary and secondary education, the various initiatives to improve access for girls and women to formal and non-formal education and the removal of negative stereotypes of women from textbooks and teaching content. However, the Committee is concerned that access to basic education in the State

party remains limited, in particular on the basis of sex, geographic area and residence, and that obstacles to keep girls until the end of the education cycle remain significant. The Committee is also concerned that violence is a serious problem affecting girls and that access to educational services, including safe schools, dormitories and school environments are a persistent challenge. Moreover, the Committee notes with concern that payment of school fees and social and traditional attitudes continue to keep girls out of school.

32. The Committee encourages the State party to provide universal basic education free of charge, including by eliminating dues paid to Parent-Teacher Associations, to identify measures to reduce and prevent drop-outs among girls and to consider developing accredited non-formal education programmes for girls who drop out. It urges the State party to implement the legislative order of 2009 dealing with violence at schools and to continue efforts to improve basic school infrastructures including dormitory facilities. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to allocate adequate resources to education and that it improve the quality of teacher training and recruitment of skilled teachers. Further, the Committee urges the State party to challenge traditional beliefs among parents, teachers and community leaders regarding the importance and value of education for girls and to instil the values of non-discrimination and equality, and recommends that it incorporate human rights and gender equality into training and educational material.

Employment

33. The Committee regrets the lack of available information on monitoring mechanisms and enforcement of existing legislation and on the impact on women of new labour laws. While appreciating the information provided by the State party on employment, the report did not provide sufficient information on existing available skills training and resources available for women and on pay differentials between women and men in practice. The Committee expresses its concern about the discrimination faced by women in employment, as reflected in the limited and low-level job access for women, their high participation in the informal sector and in poor-quality jobs, as well as an unemployment rate that is twice that of men. It also remains concerned about the lack of social security or labour protection available to women.

34. The Committee recommends that the State party carry out the necessary measures to guarantee implementation of the provisions of article 11 of the Convention and application of International Labour Organization Conventions, in particular those on non-discrimination in employment (No. 111) and equal remuneration for women and men performing work of equal value (No. 100). The Committee recommends that measures should be taken to eliminate occupational segregation, including through the adequate allocation of resources for education and skills training. While noting efforts taken to improve social protection for workers who can afford to enter the fund system, the Committee urges the State party to improve the working and living conditions of women workers, with particular attention to the conditions in the informal sector. It calls on the State party to provide in its next report disaggregated data about the situation of women in the field of employment and work, including in the informal sector, and measures taken and their impact on realizing equal opportunities for women.

Economic empowerment

35. The Committee notes with interest the specific policies carried out in the State party to finance rural activities in general and those targeted at women, in particular, but is concerned that most women still face discrimination and violation of their human rights in their economic empowerment given the widespread poor socio-economic conditions among

women. While welcoming measures taken by the State party at different levels to reduce poverty and promote access to credit by women, including the strategic microfinance plan adopted in 2005 by the Ministry of Finance and Budget, the Committee notes that access to credit facilities remains a challenge owing to women's lack of collateral. The Committee is especially concerned about the situation of rural women and women heads of households, particularly in view of their precarious living conditions and lack of access to justice, health care, ownership of land, administration of property and inheritance, education, economic opportunities and community services.

36. The Committee urges the State party to make the promotion of gender equality an explicit component of its national, state and local development plans and programmes, in particular those aimed at poverty reduction and sustainable development so that equality constitutes a focus of attention in all public policies. The Committee also encourages the State party to continue its efforts to promote the economic empowerment of women through their access to employment, credit, land and other resources taking into account their social realities. It recommends that the State party increase its efforts at encouraging and supporting women's entrepreneurship, especially among rural women, including by providing training and access to credit.

Health

37. The Committee notes with interest the steps taken by the State party to improve the access of women to healthcare, health services and related information. It notes with satisfaction the importance given to reaching the targets on health set by the Millennium Development Goals by the State party but is concerned that the percentage of women visiting healthcare centres remains low. While welcoming measures taken by the State party to protect the sexual and reproductive health of women and young girls, the Committee reiterates its serious concern about the sexual and reproductive health in the State party. It regrets that lack of information among many women, and accountability of the members of the medical service, as well as insufficient implementation of government policies constitute major obstacles for the establishment of health policies that address the specific health needs of women, including those of reproductive and mental health.

38. The Committee urges the State party to address the obstacles to women's access to healthcare including socio-cultural norms and the weak economic status of women in rural and urban areas that constitute a risk to women, including discriminatory practices whereby a woman has to request permission from her husband to use contraceptive methods. The Committee encourages the State party to allocate, as a matter of urgency, more human and financial resources to preventive health care and to ensure that all free treatment or subsidized options adopted by the government are actually available. The Committee recommends that the State party take actions to involve men in the use of contraceptives with a view to foster responsible parenthood, and to adequately fund family planning services and healthcare centers with a view to improving accessibility to women in rural areas. The Committee also urges the State party to provide data and information on the mental health situation of women in its next report.

39. The Committee expresses its concern that many births are not assisted by skilled personnel, partly because of the lack of such personnel but also because of an inadequate distribution of those who are available, and that overall morbidity and mortality rates remain high. The Committee welcomes the efforts carried out by the State party to increase the availability of family planning services, including the promotion of training of health professionals so that they adequately inform women of their pregnancy as a result of personal choice. In this regard, the Committee notes with concern the high number of

unintended pregnancies and the increase in the birth rate by 3.8% in one year. The Committee also expresses its concern about the lack of available information on the link between the maternal mortality rate and the practice of clandestine abortions, as well as on the effects of criminalization of abortion with regard to the high maternal mortality rate. While noting the overall high rates of maternal mortality, the Committee finds the situation in the Sahel region to be of utmost concern.

40. The Committee calls upon the State party to create strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms for the work of healthcare personnel. The Committee recommends that it reinforce the role of “sages femmes” and that they become part of the health service providers available to women. It encourages the State party to introduce a gender perspective in the National Programme of Sanitary Development, bearing in mind the impact that its measures will have on women. The Committee also urges the State party to increase the resources allocated to the Sahel region, in order to enable women to access health services. It encourages the State party to undertake necessary measures to decrease the maternal mortality rate. The Committee also requests that the State party include, in its next report:

- a. Additional disaggregated data on illnesses prevalent in the State party;
- b. Information on the link between the practice of clandestine abortions and the number of maternal deaths. In this regard, the Committee urges the State party to reconsider the criminalization of women who undergo abortion, in line with the Committee’s general recommendation No. 24;
- c. Information relative to existing mechanisms of regional collaboration in the provision of health services, as well as on evaluations carried out to detect and address inequality in the resources between the different provinces and regions.
- d. Information regarding the actions carried out to address the obstacles to women's access to healthcare and their progress.

41. The Committee notes that progress has been made to reduce the HIV prevalence rate. Nonetheless, the Committee expresses its concern that preventive policies are insufficient and that data to explain the trend towards feminization of HIV/AIDS in the State party is not available.

42. The Committee urges the State party to increase care for women and young girls living with HIV/AIDS, and that it fully subsidize treatment options for women, girls and children infected with HIV/AIDS. It recommends that the State party strengthen its awareness raising campaigns via more and clearer education about how HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases are spread and urges the State party to address the social norms which increase women's vulnerability to HIV infection and sexually transmitted diseases.

Rural women

43. The Committee reiterates its concern about the difficulties faced by rural women and the huge disparities in access to facilities between rural and urban areas. The Committee expresses concern about discriminatory customs and traditional practices remaining prevalent in rural areas which do not recognize the formal law promoting the equality of men and women and which prevent women from enjoying their rights, including inheriting or acquiring ownership of land, and participating in key domestic decisions. It is further concerned that cases of discrimination are dealt with by traditional chiefs, as bringing cases to justice adds social pressure on the complainant.

44. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation and urges the State party to pay special attention to the needs of rural women, ensuring that they can fully

participate in decision-making processes and have full access to education, health services and credit and marketing facilities. The Committee further urges the State party to ensure that rural women have access to health services, education, clean water, electricity, land, and income-generating projects. It recommends that the State party design and implement gender-sensitive rural development strategies and programmes, ensuring the full participation of rural women in their formulation and implementation. The Committee also urges the State party to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination with respect to ownership and inheritance of land. It encourages the State party to continue its efforts to improve women's access to courts including sensitization as well as translation of relevant legal provisions into local languages. The Committee also calls upon the State party to provide information about the impact of the Strategic Framework for Reducing Poverty on rural women.

Discrimination of older women

45. The Committee expresses concern about the socio economic situation of older women, who often face multiple forms of discrimination including on the basis of age and poverty. While noting the efforts made by the State party, the Committee is concerned by the cultural beliefs affecting older women, including the fact that under customary laws, widowers are denied the right to inherit land and assets. The Committee is especially concerned by accusations of witchcraft against older women made in particular in Mossi society and within polygamous families, which subject women to violence and often expulsion from their homes and their families.

46. The Committee recommends that the State party pay special attention to the precarious situation of older women, to ensure that they have full access to health and social services. It calls upon the State party to protect women's rights to assets and inheritance and to improve access to justice for women and especially isolated, older women. The Committee urges the State party to undertake appropriate educational measures to change traditional views regarding older women, and to combat all forms of discrimination and violence against them, particularly accusations of witchcraft and expulsions from their homes and families. It recommends that the State party include making use of sanctions and punishment for offenders. It further calls upon the State party to adopt special programmes that address the psychological trauma, physical harm, social exclusion and impoverishment suffered by women accused of witchcraft.

Refugees and stateless women

47. While commending the State party for its efforts relating to the status of asylum-seekers and refugees, including the adoption of laws and regulations in this regard and the fact that the State party is host to asylum-seekers and refugees from neighbouring countries, the Committee is concerned that asylum-seeking and refugee women and girls remain in a vulnerable and marginalized situation, in particular with regard to conferring nationality and statelessness at birth. It is also concerned that the State party has not yet acceded to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

48. The Committee urges the State party to ensure protection for asylum-seeking and refugee women and their children in line with international standards. It recommends that the State party consider accession to international instruments to address the situation of stateless persons, namely the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Family relations

49. The Committee notes with concern the persistent discrimination towards women in certain laws relating to family life. Despite the existence of the Individual and Family Code, the Committee is concerned about the different age of marriage for women and men in this Code and that the practice of child marriage of girls much younger than the age specified by the Code still prevails in rural areas. The Committee also notes with concern that while monogamy is established in the Code as the marriage regime, polygamy remains a legal option. While noting that only marriages celebrated in front of a registrar are valid and capable of giving rise to claims if one of the parties fails to meet his or her obligations, it is concerned that different types of marriages including civil, religious, customary marriages, and civil partnerships are common, including early marriages in rural areas, with no adequate legal protection to women.

50. The Committee urges the State party to repeal all laws relating to family life that are discriminatory towards women, and reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party eliminate those provisions in the Individual and Family Code relative to polygamy (Articles 257-262 of the Code) in accordance with article 16 of the Convention and article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in light of the Committee's general recommendation No. 21, urges the State party to accelerate the legislative reform of the Individual and Family Code so as to standardize the minimum legal age of marriage at 18 years for both women and men (Article 238 of the Code) to ensure equality in family laws. The Committee further urges the State party to take all legal and other necessary measures to combat child marriages.

Data collection and analysis

51. The Committee welcomes the "Women and Men in Burkina Faso" booklet produced by the National Institute of Statistics and Demography in 2010 which shed light on persisting gaps between women and men. Nevertheless, the Committee regrets that in spite of previous recommendations to establish a comprehensive system of data collection and assessment of trends in the situation of women there is still no available information on the impact on women of measures taken and results achieved in various areas of the Convention.

52. The Committee reiterates its recommendation to the State party to establish a comprehensive system of data collection and assessment of trends in the situation of women. The Committee encourages the State party to include specific, measurable and time-bound indicators with a view to allow the adequate monitoring and analysis of results over time.

Follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action

53. 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.

The Millennium Development Goals

54. 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

55. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in the State party 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 further measures that are required in that regard. The Committee recommends that dissemination should include dissemination at 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

56. The Committee notes that adherence by the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ enhances the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all spheres of life. The Committee encourages the State party to continue its efforts to fulfil its international reporting obligations under the international human rights instruments it has ratified.

Follow-up to concluding observations

57. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 22 and 50 above.

Financial and Technical assistance

58. The Committee recommends that the State party avail itself of technical and financial assistance from the international community in the development and execution of a comprehensive programme aimed at the implementation of the above recommendations and the Convention as a whole. The Committee also calls upon the State party to strengthen its cooperation with relevant United Nations organizations, specialized agencies and programmes and that it envisage the possibility of regional cooperation and exchange of best practices with countries of the region.

Preparation and date of next report

59. 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.

¹ The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

60. 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 October 2014.

61. 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, that were approved at the fifth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies, in June 2006 (see 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.
