



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

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

Forty-fourth session

20 July – 7 August 2009

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

Guinea-Bissau

1. The Committee considered the combined initial, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports of Guinea-Bissau (CEDAW/C/GNB/6) at its 903rd and 904th meetings, on 3 August 2009. The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/GNB/Q/6 and CEDAW/C/GNB/Q/6 Rev.1 and the responses of Guinea-Bissau are contained in CEDAW/C/GNB/Q/6/Rev.1/Add.1.

Introduction

2. The Committee commends the State party for ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women without reservations. It expresses its appreciation to the State party for its combined initial, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports, which provided a candid picture of the situation of women in Guinea-Bissau, while regretting that the report was long overdue, and did not follow the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of reports or reference the General Recommendations of the Committee. The Committee also expresses its appreciation for the written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-session working group, and for the oral presentation and responses to the questions posed by the Committee.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its delegation headed by the President of the Institute for Women and Children, which included representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry for Women, the Family, Social Cohesion and Poverty Reduction, and the Institute for Women and Children, as well as the Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the frank dialogue which took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee.

Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the creation, in 2000, of the Institute for Women and Children as an operational structure for the development and coordination of policies on women's rights, gender equality and the advancement of women.

5. The Committee commends the State party for ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in August 2009.

6. The Committee commends the State party's ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children in 2007.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

7. While recalling the State party's obligation systematically and continuously to implement all the provisions of the Convention, the Committee 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 calls upon the State party to focus on those areas in its implementation activities and to report on action taken and results achieved in its next periodic report. It also calls upon the State party to submit the present concluding observations to all relevant ministries, other Government structures at all levels, to Parliament and the judiciary in order to ensure their effective implementation.

Parliament

8. While reaffirming that the Government has the primary responsibility and is particularly accountable for the full implementation of the State party's obligations under the Convention, the Committee stresses that the Convention is binding on all branches of Government and invites the State party to encourage its national Parliament, in line with its mandate and procedures, where appropriate, to take the necessary steps with regard to the implementation of these concluding observations and the Government's next reporting process under the Convention.

Legal status of the Convention

9. While noting that Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution provide, *inter alia*, that the fundamental rights enshrined therein do not exclude any other existing right under the laws of the Republic or the applicable rules of international laws, and that the State party asserts that "in the event of discriminatory practices or acts against women, the Government encourages judicial authorities to implement the relevant provisions of international conventions in order to discourage such behaviour" the Committee is concerned that the Convention has yet to be incorporated in national law and it is not justiciable in Bissau-Guinean courts.

10. The Committee urges the State party to take immediate steps to ensure the full incorporation of the Convention into national law. It recommends that the State party consider, in the process of its constitutional reform currently underway, the adoption of an explicit provision ensuring that human rights treaties which it has ratified have legal effect as part of the State party's national law and have superiority over any incompatible national laws.

Non-discrimination and equality

11. The Committee is concerned at the absence of a definition of discrimination in the State party's Constitution or legislation in line with article 1 of the Convention. While the Committee commends the State party's constitutional provisions guaranteeing the *de jure* equality between women and men before the law, it is concerned that this provision is not entirely in line with article 2 (a) of the Convention.

12. The Committee urges the State party to incorporate into appropriate national legislation or the Constitution, currently

under review, a definition of discrimination against women, which encompasses both direct and indirect discrimination, in line with article 1 of the Convention, as well as the principle of equality between women and men in accordance with article 2 (a) of the Convention.

Discriminatory laws

13. Despite assertions by the State party that the Constitution is the supreme law and that any laws contravening its provisions are deemed unconstitutional, the Committee is deeply concerned that laws which discriminate against women in both purpose or effect remain in force, in contravention of the State party's obligations under the Convention. The Committee is also concerned that, despite information provided by the State party on draft legislation relating to various substantive areas of the Convention, it was not able to get a clear picture of their full scope and content, timeframe for discussion and adoption, and plans for, their implementation.

14. The Committee urges the State party to systematically review its domestic legislation, with a view to ensuring without delay that all discriminatory legislation is explicitly amended or repealed and brought into full compliance with the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations. It also encourages the State party to introduce a process by which all draft legislation is analysed in light of the obligations set out in the Convention.

15. The Committee recognizes the economic, social and political obstacles stemming from periods of conflict and political and institutional instability in the State party, as well as its precarious situation of extreme poverty, which have had a negative impact on the entire population, in particular on women and girls, and constitute serious obstacles to the full implementation of the Convention.

16. The Committee encourages the State party to continue to seek support from the international community, the United Nations system, and donor organizations as necessary and appropriate, to build the capacity necessary to allow it to strengthen the rule of law and fully implement its obligations under the Convention, and to work with its development partners to ensure that attention to gender equality is mainstreamed in all such assistance, including official development assistance. While encouraging the State party to continue to collaborate with non-governmental and community-based organizations, it points out

that the implementation of the obligations under the Convention is the responsibility of the State party.

Access to justice, visibility of the Convention

17. The Committee is concerned that, despite article 33 of the Constitution which lays out the entitlement of all citizens to seek recourse in judicial organs in order to obtain redress for violations of their constitutional rights, women lack access to justice and that they cannot claim their rights under the Convention. It is further concerned about the general lack of awareness about the Convention in Guinea-Bissau, in particular amongst the judiciary, legal professionals, and law enforcement officials.

18. The Committee requests the State party to ensure that all impediments women may face in gaining access to justice are removed. It urges the State party to take special measures to enhance women's legal literacy and awareness of their rights, including their right to seek legal redress in courts. The Committee calls on the State party to ensure that the Convention and related domestic legislation are made an integral part of legal education and the training of legal professionals, including judges, lawyers and prosecutors, and law enforcement officers, government officials, traditional and community leaders so as to create a legal culture supportive of women's equality and non-discrimination. It also calls on the State party to disseminate the Convention widely to the general public, including in Crioulo and other local languages, so as to create awareness of women's human rights.

National machinery for the advancement of women

19. While welcoming the establishment of the Institute for Women and Children, under the Ministry of Women, the Family, Social Cohesion, and Poverty Reduction, the Committee notes with concern the lack of clear political and operational mandates, and sufficient authority, resources and capacity of the national machinery to fully implement the Convention. While also welcoming policies and strategies for the integration of women into development, including the Women and Development Framework Plan, as well as the stated intent of the State party to draft a national gender equality policy, and other action plans, programmes, policies relating to gender equality and the advancement women, the Committee notes with concern that

the State party lacks clear programmatic and policy frameworks guiding the work of the national machinery, and the capacity to develop and effectively implement them.

20. The Committee calls on the State party to strengthen its national machinery for the advancement of women and provide it with the necessary human and financial resources, clear mandates and authority. It also calls upon the State party to adopt a national gender equality policy, which consolidates the variety of pending plans and policies on the subject. The national gender equality policy should have clear programmatic and policy frameworks to better allow it to implement the Convention and coordinate the gender mainstreaming strategy across all sectors and levels of Government. Such programmatic and policy frameworks should include mechanisms to systematically monitor the impact of its gender mainstreaming efforts, including through the establishment of concrete benchmarks and timeframes. The Committee encourages the State party to include in its next report information on results achieved, obstacles encountered and steps taken to overcome such obstacles.

Temporary special measures

21. The Committee is unclear whether temporary special measures are provided for in Bissau-Guinean law. It is concerned that the Government lacks a clear understanding of the full scope and possible use of temporary special measures, provided for in article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and further elaborated in the Committee's general recommendation 25, to accelerate the achievement of de facto equality between women and men in all areas addressed by the Convention.

22. The Committee encourages the State party to implement temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25, and ensure that they have a clear legislative basis, either in the Constitution or other appropriate legislation. It draws the State party's attention to the fact that such measures are part of a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality for women in all areas covered by the Convention. It urges the State party to establish concrete goals, through, *inter alia*, quotas and timetables, in the application of temporary special measures, in order to accelerate achievement of substantive equality between women and men in all areas.

Stereotypes, cultural practices

23. The Committee is deeply concerned about the persistence of harmful traditional practices, patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in all spheres of life. The Committee expresses concern that such norms, customs and practices justify and perpetuate discrimination against women, including violence against women and the persistence of harmful traditional practices, such as food taboos, early and forced marriage, and levirate marriage. It regrets that no sustained and systematic action has been taken by the State party to modify or eliminate such harmful traditional practices, patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes.

24. The Committee urges the State party to view culture as a dynamic dimension of the country's life and social fabric, subject to many influences over time and therefore subject to change. It urges the State party to put in place, without delay, a comprehensive strategy, including clear goals and timetables, to modify or eliminate cultural practices and stereotypes that are harmful to, and discriminate against, women and promote women's full enjoyment of their human rights in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention. This strategy should include specifically designed educational and awareness-raising programmes targeting women and men at all levels of society, including government officials and traditional and community leaders, and should be aimed at creating an enabling environment for the transformation and change of stereotypes and discriminatory cultural values, attitudes and practices. It also encourages the State party to put in place monitoring mechanisms to regularly assess progress made towards the achievement of established goals.

25. While noting the steps taken by the State party to address the scourge of female genital mutilation, including draft legislation explicitly prohibiting and punishing this practice and the establishment of a national multi-stakeholder committee to address harmful traditional practices, the Committee remains extremely concerned at the persistence of this practice, which is a grave violation of girls' and women's human rights to bodily integrity and health, and the State party's obligations under the Convention.

26. The Committee urges the State party to strengthen its awareness-raising and educational efforts, targeted at both women

and men, including government officials at all levels, traditional and community leaders, and religious leaders, to eliminate the practice of female genital mutilation and its underlying cultural justifications. It also urges the State party to enact without delay legislation explicitly prohibiting female genital mutilation and ensure that offenders are prosecuted and punished in accordance with the severity of this violation, including, in the interim, under existing provisions in the penal code.

Violence against women

27. While noting that legislation on domestic violence is currently pending before the National People's Assembly, and while welcoming steps taken to provide support for victims of domestic violence, the Committee is concerned that the State party lacks a comprehensive approach to address all forms of violence against women and girls, including a legal framework that provides access to justice and means of support for victims and punishment of perpetrators. The Committee is concerned about the lack of clear information on different forms of violence against women in Guinea-Bissau, including the incidence of sexual and domestic violence and harmful traditional practices, and on measures taken by the State party to combat it.

28. The Committee urges the State party to prioritize the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive approach to address all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, and to enact pending legislation as part of a comprehensive legal framework, which takes account of the relevant articles of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 19. It urges the State party to raise public awareness through media and education programmes that all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, are unacceptable. The Committee calls upon the State party to train the judiciary, law enforcement officials, legal professionals, social workers and health care providers on violence against women to ensure that violence against women is duly investigated, perpetrators of violence against women are effectively prosecuted and punished with the required seriousness and speed, and that effective and gender-sensitive support is provided to victims, including shelters and legal, medical and psychological support. In particular, the Committee is concerned with those women and girls affected by violence during periods of conflict and political and institutional instability, and requests the State party to take adequate steps to support them. The Committee requests the State

party to provide information in its next report on the laws, policies and programmes in place to deal with all forms of violence against women and on the impact of such measures, as well as on data and trends in the prevalence of various forms of such violence.

Trafficking

29. While welcoming steps taken by the State party to combat trafficking in persons including bilateral agreements with neighboring countries, aimed at coordinating efforts to combat trafficking in persons, and noting that draft legislation on trafficking in children has been submitted for consideration by the National People's Assembly, the Committee is concerned about the lack of clarity on the extent of trafficking of women and girls in Guinea-Bissau, and the limited scope of its efforts to combat trafficking against women, as its anti-trafficking efforts are currently focused on children.

30. The Committee requests the State party to incorporate into the draft legislation aimed at trafficking in persons, a definition of trafficking in line with article 3 (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Committee encourages the State party to undertake an assessment of the extent of trafficking in women and girls in Guinea-Bissau, both internally and across borders, and begin to systematically collect data in this regard, with a view to design and implement a comprehensive plan to prevent and combat trafficking, including the provision of assistance and support to women victims. It also encourages the State party to address the root causes of trafficking and improving the economic situation of women so as to eliminate their vulnerability to exploitation and traffickers. The Committee invites the State party to enhance its collaboration and coordination with countries in the region aimed at the prevention and combating of trafficking in women and girls.

Political participation and participation in public life

31. The Committee is concerned about the low level of participation of Bissau-Guinean women in political and public life, and their very low representation at the highest levels of decision-making. While noting plans to draft legislation which would establish a 40 per cent quota for the representation of women in all structures, it is concerned that measures to accelerate women's equal participation with men in

political life appear to be insufficient. It is also concerned with the absence of concrete and sustained steps taken by the State party to address the underlying causes, including prevailing social and cultural attitudes, of women's lack of participation in all spheres of public life.

32. The Committee urges the State party to take concrete measures to accelerate the increase in the representation of women in all branches and levels of Government and, in accordance with article 7 and 8 of the Convention and its general recommendation 23 on women in political and public life, including through the use of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25. The Committee also encourages the State party to implement awareness-raising campaigns to highlight the importance to society as a whole of women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels. The Committee invites the State party to establish concrete goals and timetables to increase the number of women in political and public life and in decision-making processes, to monitor the impact of measures taken and the results achieved, and to report thereon in its next periodic report.

Education

33. The Committee welcomes steps taken by the State party in the area of education, with the assistance of the international community, donor organizations, and non-governmental organizations, such as school feeding programmes and the provision of micro loans to parents who send their girls to schools, as well literacy programmes for women and girls, and the 2006 resolution of the Council of Ministers which established a 50% quota in granting scholarships. However, the Committee is extremely concerned about the alarmingly high rates of illiteracy in Guinea-Bissau, very low rates of girls' school enrolment and completion of schooling at all levels, and the persistence of structural and other barriers to quality education which constitute particular obstacles to the education of girls and young women. These include extreme poverty, a lack of physical infrastructure, and trained and qualified teachers, especially female teachers, which may increase girls' vulnerability to violence and abuse in schools. In particular, it is concerned about cultural barriers to education and the negative impact of harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage, on girls' education.

34. The Committee stresses that education is a key to the empowerment of women and that the low level of education of girls and women is among the most serious impediments to their full enjoyment of human rights. It recommends that the State party take immediate steps to implement measures to ensure equal access for girls and women to all levels of education and retention of girls in school, including through temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25. It urges the State party to increase its investment in education, especially in rural areas, and to raise awareness of the importance of education as a human right and as a basis for the empowerment of women. It encourages the State party to take steps to overcome traditional attitudes that constitute obstacles to girls' and women's education, to develop non-stereotyped educational curricula that address structural causes of discrimination against women, to provide adequate and gender-sensitive training for teachers and school personnel, and to ensure that women and girls have access to safe educational settings that are free from violence and abuse. The Committee calls on the State party to make strong efforts to improve the literacy level of girls and women through the adoption of comprehensive programmes at the formal and non-formal levels, and through adult education and training.

Employment and women's economic empowerment

35. While welcoming information provided on the State party's ratification of various International Labour Organization Conventions, and General Labour Act's section on women's work, the Committee regrets that the report did not provide sufficient information, including data disaggregated by sex, thereby preventing it from gaining a clear understanding of women's enjoyment of rights enshrined under article 11 of the Convention. In particular, the report does not give a clear picture of women's participation in the labour force in urban and rural areas and in the informal sector, where the vast majority of women work, their unemployment rates, vertical and horizontal labour force segregation, women's ability to benefit from new economic opportunities, and the State party's efforts to ensure their rights and social benefits, including maternity protections.

36. The Committee requests the State party to take all appropriate measures to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, in accordance with article 11 of the Convention, including through the use of temporary special

measures in accordance with its article 4, paragraph 1. The Committee calls on the State party to implement International Labour Organization Convention No. 100 on equal remuneration, and incorporate the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value into its labour laws and policies. The Committee invites the State party to provide in its next report detailed information, including trends over time, about the situation of women in the field of employment, in both the formal and informal sectors, and about measures taken and their impact on realizing equal opportunities for women through creating new economic activities. The Committee further recommends that the State party pay particular attention to the conditions of women workers in the informal sector and invites the State party to provide, in its next report, information regarding credit, training, technology and access to markets, as well as social services and protection.

Health

37. The Committee takes note of efforts made by the State party to address HIV/AIDS in Guinea-Bissau, including the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2007-2011, which specifically targets women as a priority group, to reduce maternal mortality, and to draft legislation on reproductive health. However, the Committee regrets that it was unable to gain a clear understanding of the health status of women and girls in Guinea-Bissau based on the information provided by the State party. It expresses concern about the significant structural barriers hindering access of women and girls to adequate health care and services, including sexual and reproductive health, among which are a lack of adequate physical infrastructure and capacity constraints, both human and financial. In this regard, it notes in particular the negative effects on women and girls in rural areas. The Committee is also concerned about the high rates of maternal mortality, female genital mutilation and early pregnancy.

38. The Committee urges the State party to take steps to improve the country's health infrastructure, in order to ensure women's access to health care and services, including sexual and reproductive health, and related information, especially in rural areas. It calls on the State party to integrate a gender perspective in all health sector programmes and policies. The Committee recommends that it step up its efforts to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS, maternal mortality and early pregnancy, and to improve availability of sexual and reproductive health services,

including family planning information and services and sex education, as well as access to antenatal, post-natal and obstetric services to reduce maternal mortality. It calls on the State party to enhance work with community leaders and health workers so as to eliminate female genital mutilation and early marriage.

Rural women

39. While welcoming the inclusion of strategies aimed at the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women in the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Committee is concerned about the precarious situation of women in rural areas, who form the majority of women in Guinea-Bissau and who live in situations of extreme poverty. It is also concerned, in particular, about their access to education, including informal education, basic literacy and occupational training, health care, and other basic social services. It is concerned as well with their access to and ownership of land, and access to credit facilities, productive resources, and technology, the lack of which impedes their economic empowerment. It expresses its particular concern about the persistence of customs and traditional practices in rural areas that violate the human rights of women and girls and adversely affect their equality and empowerment.

40. The Committee urges the State party to pay special attention to the needs of rural women, and to ensure that they enjoy access to basic services and infrastructure, and economic opportunities, including income-generation projects and credit facilities, on an equal and equitable basis with men. It also urges the State party to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women with respect to ownership and inheritance of land. It urges the State party to make the promotion of gender equality an explicit component of its national development plans and policies, in particular those aimed at poverty alleviation and sustainable development, and ensure that women participate in development processes at all levels, including community decision-making processes and the design and implementation of development of poverty reduction plans.

Family relations

41. The Committee expresses its concern that laws which discriminate against women in both purpose and effect remain in force in Guinea-Bissau, in contravention of articles 15 and 16 of the Convention. It is particularly concerned that numerous provisions of

the Civil Code remain in force, despite the State party's assertion that they have been repealed pursuant to article 25 of the Constitution. The Committee is also deeply concerned with the prevalence of harmful traditional practices under customary law in Guinea-Bissau, such as early and forced marriage, polygamy, and levirate marriage, that violate the human rights of women and girls.

42. The Committee urges the State party, in accordance with articles 15 and 16 of the Convention and in line with its general recommendation 21, to explicitly repeal all discriminatory provisions in national legislation and customary law in the areas of marriage and family relations as a matter of priority. It also urges the State party to take appropriate measures to eradicate harmful traditional practices and those customs and traditions which justify and perpetuate them.

Preparation of reports

43. The Committee notes with concern that the preparation of the combined initial, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth periodic report of Guinea-Bissau (CEDAW/C/GNB/6) and its responses to the Committee's list of issues and questions (CEDAW/C/GNB/6/Rev.1/Add.1) relied heavily upon the use of consultants.

44. The Committee calls on the State party to use the preparation of reports as a planning tool that enables it to see the real situation of women in the country, assess the extent of implementation of the Convention and further as capacity building for staff of the sector ministries engaged in the exercise. The Committee therefore calls on the State party to establish an intersectorial mechanism that involves stakeholders, and avail itself of technical assistance in order to be able to prepare the next periodic report.

Data collection and analysis

45. While noting recent efforts to improve the collection of sex-disaggregated data, including recent work undertaken by the National Statistics and Census Institute, the Committee is concerned at the lack, or limited availability, of data disaggregated by sex in a number of areas of the Convention, which are necessary for targeted policy-making. It is also concerned about the lack of systematic monitoring and the consequent difficulties in ensuring an evaluation of progress

achieved towards women's de facto equality and the accurate assessment of the situation of women and trends over time, with regard to all areas covered by the Convention.

46. The Committee calls on the State party to give priority to the systematic collection of comprehensive data disaggregated by sex and measurable indicators to assess trends in the situation of women and the progress towards de facto equality, and calls its attention to general recommendation 9. The Committee invites the State party, as necessary, to seek international assistance for the development of such data collection and analysis efforts, and ensure that such efforts are informed by the needs of users of data. The Committee requests that statistical data and analysis, disaggregated by sex and rural and urban areas, indicating the impact of measures and results achieved, be included in its next periodic report.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

47. The Committee urges the State party to utilize fully, in the implementation of its obligations under the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which reinforce the provisions of the Convention, and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

Millennium Development Goals

48. 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 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.

Ratification of other treaties

49. The Committee notes that States' adherence to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ enhances the

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, the International

enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. Therefore, the Committee encourages the Government of Guinea-Bissau to ratify the treaties to which it is not yet a party, namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, all of which it signed in 2000, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Dissemination of concluding observations

50. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Guinea-Bissau of the present concluding comments in order to make the people, including Government officials, politicians, parliamentarians and women's and human rights organizations, aware of the measures that have been taken to ensure de jure and de facto equality of women, as well as the further steps that are required in this regard. It requests the State party to continue to strengthen the dissemination, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, of the Convention, its Optional Protocol, 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".

Amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

51. 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.

Follow-up to concluding observations

52. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to

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.

implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 26 and 34 above.

Technical assistance

53. The Committee recommends that the State party avail itself of technical and financial assistance in the development and implementation of a comprehensive programme aimed at the implementation of the above recommendations as well as the Convention as a whole. The Committee expresses its willingness to continue the dialogue with the State party, including through a country visit by Committee members to provide further guidance on the implementation of the above recommendations and the State party's obligations under the Convention. The Committee also calls upon the State party to strengthen further its cooperation with specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Statistics Division and Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

Date of next report

54. 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 combined seventh and eighth periodic report in 2014.
