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

**Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth
periodic reports of Croatia***

1. The Committee considered the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Croatia (CEDAW/C/HRV/CO/4-5) at its 1319th and 1320th meetings, on 15 July 2015 (see CEDAW/C/SR.1319 and 1320). The Committee's list of issues and questions are contained in CEDAW/C/HRV/Q/4-5 and the responses of Croatia are contained in CEDAW/C/HRV/Q/4-5/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes that the State party submitted its combined fourth and fifth periodic reports. It appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by its pre-sessional working group. It welcomes the constructive dialogue with the delegation, the oral presentation of the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to most of the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue, while noting that some questions were not fully answered.

3. The Committee commends the multi-sectoral State party delegation which was headed by Helena Štimac Radin, Head of the Office for Gender Equality of Croatia, and included representatives of the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Ministry of Labour and Pension Reform, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, the Ministry of the Interior, the Croatian Employment Service and the Permanent Mission of Croatia to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

B. Positive Aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2009 of the State party's combined second and third periodic report (CEDAW/C/HRV/CO/2-3) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of:

(a) The Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence in the Homeland War Act which regulates the status of civilian victims of sexual violence and related reparations (financial, symbolic, health and psycho-social services), in 2015;

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-first session, meeting from 6 to 24 July 2015.

- (b) The Maternity and Parental Benefits Act, in 2014;
 - (c) The Free Legal Aid Act, in 2014;
 - (d) The Anti-Discrimination Act, adopted in 2008 and amended in 2012; and,
 - (e) The Gender Equality Act, in 2008.
5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption of the following:
- (a) The Strategy of Development of Female Entrepreneurship for 2014 – 2020, in June 2014;
 - (b) The National Programme of Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, in April 2013;
 - (c) The National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2013 to 2020, in 2012; and,
 - (d) The National Policy for Gender Equality 2011 to 2015, in 2011.
6. The Committee welcomes the ratification by the State party of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, in 2013.

C. Principle areas of concern and recommendations

Parliament

7. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). It invites the Parliament, in line with its mandate, to take necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.**

Constitutional and legislative framework

8. The Committee notes that the Constitution of the State party enshrines the right to gender equality and non-discrimination and also establishes it as a secular State. The Committee is also aware of the different Concordats which the State party has agreed to with the Holy See. The Committee would like to ensure that the supremacy of the Convention prevails in order to prevent setbacks in areas such as: access to sexual and reproductive health, including access to safe abortion and contraceptives; age-appropriate sexual education; and, placing primacy on the family unit rather than women as individual rights holders.

9. **The Committee urges the State party to take measures, including legislation, to ensure adequate safeguards so as to prevent sociocultural attitudes, including those of a religious origin, from constituting hindrances to the full realisation of women's rights.**

Visibility of the Convention and the Optional Protocol

10. The Committee notes that the State party took into account the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations in the formulation of the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2011 - 2015. However, it remains concerned about the lack of visibility and direct application of the Convention, as reflected, *inter-alia*, by lack of reliance on the Convention in domestic proceedings; lack of proceedings under the Optional Protocol; and, the fact that the Committee's General Recommendations had not been translated to Croatian and thereby disseminated.

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

(a) **Further strengthen legal education and capacity building programmes for judges, prosecutors and lawyers on the Convention, the Optional Protocol, the Committee's General Recommendations and the Committee's views on individual communications and inquiries, to enable them to apply, invoke and/or refer to the provisions of the Convention directly to interpret national legislation in line with the Convention;**

(b) **Raise awareness among women about their rights under the Convention and on the procedures under the Optional Protocol thereto;**

(c) **Encourage women to report cases of sex- and gender-based discrimination to the police and relevant judicial and quasi-judicial bodies; and,**

(d) **Undertake the translation and dissemination of General Recommendations of the Committee.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

12. The Committee notes that the State party has an Office for Gender Equality and an Ombudsperson for Gender Equality to serve as national machinery for the advancement of women. However, the Committee is concerned that the effectiveness of the Office for Gender Equality and the Ombudsperson is hampered by the inadequacy of human, technical and financial resources allocated to them, particularly with the recent budget cuts. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of capacity and qualified staff at the county and city committees.

13. **The Committee recommends that the State party increase the human, technical and financial resources, including at the county and city committee levels, allocated to the Office for Gender Equality and the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality in order to improve their effective functioning as national machinery responsible for the advancement of women and the full implementation of the Convention.**

Temporary special measures

14. The Committee notes the National Strategy for the Development of Female Entrepreneurship. However, the Committee is concerned that temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality and to address the situation of disadvantaged and marginalized women who are subjected to intersecting forms of discrimination, such as Roma women, rural women, women with disabilities, internally displaced women, returnee women, and older women remain underutilised by the State party. Furthermore, the Committee regrets the State party abolishing its temporary special measure on education after only one year and without an assessment of its possible impact. The Committee is also concerned at the inadequate understanding of temporary special measures amongst members of the State party's legislature, executive and civil service.

15. **The Committee recommends that the State party**

(a) **Adopt further temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and in line with the Committee's General Recommendation No. 25, 2004 on the subject, as part of a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality of women and men for instance in employment, education and health.**

(b) **Adopt temporary special measures targeting disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women, including Roma women, rural women, women with disabilities, internally displaced women, returnee women and older women,**

(c) Evaluate the impact of such measures and make its findings, including gender-relevant statistics, available to the public.

(d) Undertake an impact assessment of its recently abolished temporary special measure to use the findings to guide the establishment of other temporary special measures for gender equality. The Committee also recommends that the State party conduct training and awareness-raising on temporary special measures, particularly for members of its legislature.

Stereotypes

16. The Committee notes that the State party has recently implemented a points-based system which allocates additional funding to radio and television stations for the production of gender-sensitive content. However, the Committee is concerned about the persistence of stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society, which have the effect of perpetuating traditional roles for women as mothers and wives, and undermining women's social status and their educational and career prospects. The Committee also notes with concern that the media, particularly in advertisements and television programmes which promote the objectification of women, still convey stereotyped and derogatory images of women, notwithstanding numerous programmes and measures taken for countering this phenomenon.

17. **The Committee calls upon the State party to:**

(a) **Further develop and implement a comprehensive policy with proactive and sustained measures, targeted at women, men, girls and boys, to overcome stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society; and**

(b) **Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality and its regulatory, complaints and sanctions mechanisms for dealing with gender discriminatory media or content which objectifies women, including by providing for effective and commensurate sanctions in cases where gender discriminatory, gender stereotypical or derogatory content has been disseminated by media producers and/or distributors.**

Violence against women

18. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence and the adoption of the 2011 to 2016 National Strategy for the Protection against Family Violence. However, the Committee remains concerned that in general, the State party's legislative and policy framework is more concerned with keeping the family unit intact than with ensuring the safety of victims of gender based domestic violence against women. Particularly, the Committee is concerned at:

(a) The delay in ratification of the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;

(b) The absence of a national plan for the implementation of the comprehensive recommendations issued by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to the State party;

(c) The practice of dual arrests where women victims of domestic violence are being arrested and occasionally sanctioned, along with alleged aggressors, for verbal insults or self-defence;

(d) The accountability gap which results from women being compelled to pursue charges against domestic violence under the legal framework of misdemeanour rather than criminal prosecution as the former allows for more rapid enforcement of protection orders at the expense of precluding stronger sanctions;

(e) The exclusion of intimate partner relationships and past relationships where partners continue to pose the threat of violence from the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence in instances where partners did not live together; lived together for less than three years; or, did not have children together;

(f) The suspension of protection orders in instances where an alleged perpetrator of domestic violence appeals the order;

(g) The inadequate number of shelters for women victims of violence; and,

(h) The recent adoption of a less stringent definition of rape, as a qualified form of sexual intercourse without consent, resulting in the reduction of the gravity of rape as a criminal offence and resulting in weaker sentencing.

19. Recalling its General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Expeditiously ratify the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;

(b) Formulate and implement a national plan, with time-bound targets, for the implementation of the comprehensive recommendations issued by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women to the State party;

(c) Abolish the practice of dual arrests in cases of domestic violence;

(d) Amend its criminal legislation on domestic violence to ensure the provision of expeditious protection orders for victims while criminal proceedings are pending; and, also provide for civil protective measures that allows for both emergency, ex parte protective measures and/or long-term protective measures as appropriate;

(e) Amend its Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence to include all intimate partner relationships and past relationships where partners continue to pose the threat of violence within its scope;

(f) Adopt a precautionary approach for victims of alleged domestic violence, which provides for the continued implementation of protection orders during the consideration of an appeal against such an order;

(g) Provide adequate, secure and autonomous funding to shelters and support services for victims of violence against women; and,

(h) Amend its legal definition of rape to bring it in line with accepted international standards on this.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

20. The Committee notes with appreciation the legislative and policy measures and programmes aimed at protecting women and girls who are victims of trafficking. However, the Committee is concerned that:

(a) Perpetrators of human trafficking are often charged for offences of pimping rather than the more severe charges of human trafficking, resulting in disturbingly low rates of convictions for human trafficking;

(b) Victims of exploitation of prostitution are sometimes prosecuted rather than provided with appropriate victim support measures while persons purchasing sex from victims of forced prostitution and/or victims of human trafficking have not been consistently prosecuted and commensurately punished;

(c) There are inadequate mechanisms for identifying victims of human trafficking in situations of heightened risk;

(d) There are inadequate systems for the collection of disaggregated data on victims of trafficking, including by sex, age, ethnicity and nationality; and,

(e) There are inadequate shelters and training of personnel therein for victims of human trafficking.

(f) There are inadequate measures to address the specific vulnerabilities and needs of non-national victims of human trafficking.

21. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that perpetrators of human trafficking are sentenced with commensurate sanctions;

(b) Consider measures to discourage the demand for prostitution and ensure that women and girls victims of trafficking who have been subjected to forced prostitution are referred to adequate support measures rather than being prosecuted by default and that individuals having purchased sex from victims of trafficking are prosecuted and adequately punished;

(c) Strengthen measures to identify and provide support to women at risk of human trafficking;

(d) Establish procedures and systems for the collection of disaggregated data on women victims of human trafficking;

(e) Increase the human, technical and financial resources allocated to shelters for victims of human trafficking to increase both the number of such shelters, particularly in rural areas as well as the quality of care and legal as well as psychological counselling available at such shelters;

(f) Strengthen support measures for women, including non-nationals, who wish to leave prostitution; and,

(g) Analyse the factors leading to the involvement of non-national women in prostitution, to strengthen measures to address their specific vulnerabilities to trafficking and exploitation of prostitution.

Participation in political and public life

22. The Committee notes the Gender Equality Act as well as the Act on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament of 2015 which introduced electoral quotas of 40% for women, in order for lists of candidates to be valid. The Committee also notes that 45% of Croatian Members of the European Parliament are women. However, the Committee is concerned that the practice of the so-called preferential vote system could have the effect of nullifying the quotas for female candidates. The Committee is also specifically concerned that:

(a) Women remain significantly underrepresented in Parliament, particularly in local legislative bodies, in the Government, and the civil service, including in senior and decision-making positions;

(b) Women remain underrepresented at management and leadership positions in State-owned and private enterprises; and,

(c) Female diplomats are not provided with regular maternity leave at overseas postings and are required to return to the capital in order to exercise their right to maternity leave.

23. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Promote the full and equal participation of women in political and public life and in the civil service, especially at senior and decision-making levels;

(b) Amend its system of preferential voting to ensure the fulfilment of the mandatory 40 per cent quota for women candidates on electoral lists of political parties and adopt other temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and General Recommendation no. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures of the Committee, such as a gender parity system for appointments and accelerated recruitment of women in senior positions;

(c) Consider, including by legislation, implementing quotas for women membership on the boards of private and State owned enterprises; and,

(d) Ensure that female diplomats are able to fully exercise their right to maternity leave, including at overseas places of posting, if they so choose.

Participation of women in peace process

24. The Committee appreciates the State party's commitment to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 including its pledge to renew its Action Plan on it in 2016 and its support for the implementation of this resolution in countries affected by conflict. However, the Committee is concerned about the limited measurable impact of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women in the State party's post conflict situation, and the inadequate inclusion of women in security discussions and reconstruction processes.

25. **The Committee encourages the State party to:**

(a) Undertake measures for ensuring full accountability on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and ensure full participation of women in security and reconstruction processes;

(b) Increase support to local women's organizations and networks that are active in peace initiatives and post-conflict reconstruction processes; and

(c) Ensure meaningful and broad consultations with women and civil society working on women's rights during the formulation and implementation of the 2016 Action Plan envisaged for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Education

26. The Committee welcomes the high enrolment rate of girls in secondary education and of women in tertiary education. However, it remains concerned at the:

(a) Prevalence of traditional and patriarchal values in school curricula and lack of gender equality education;

(b) The inadequacy of age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education in schools;

(c) Continuation of sex-based differences in enrolment in secondary education whereby girls are concentrated in general secondary education as opposed to vocational/industrial education and women in traditional areas in tertiary education; and,

(d) The low rate of women in academia especially in leadership positions.

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

(a) Undertake a revision of school curricula and materials to remove discriminatory gender stereotypes and include mandatory modules on gender education;

(b) Increase the hours and quality of age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health in schools;

(c) **Intensify its efforts aimed at diversifying academic and vocational choices for women and men and girls and boys, and take further measures to encourage women and men to choose non-traditional fields of education and career paths; and,**

(d) **Apply measures, including temporary special measures, to increase the representation of women in academia, particularly in leadership positions.**

Employment

28. While noting the National Strategy for Developing Female Entrepreneurship, the Committee is concerned at:

(a) The persistent vertical and horizontal occupational segregation, the overrepresentation of women in low-paid and part-time jobs, the lack of implementation of equality legislation on the labour market and the lack of any gender impact assessments of the 2014 Labour Act Reform;

(b) The lack of implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and the persistent gender wage gap;

(c) The prevalence of employment discrimination against women on grounds of pregnancy or maternity;

(d) The percentage of fathers taking paternity leave remains low; and,

(e) The marginalisation and exclusion of Roma women and women with disabilities from the formal labour market.

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

(a) **Introduce gender mainstreaming regulating labour market measures and strengthen efforts to eliminate occupational segregation, both horizontal and vertical;**

(b) **Adopt measures to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and to narrow and close the wage gap between women and men;**

(c) **Implement existing legislation and practices to ensure women's access to effective mechanisms to complain about employment discrimination on grounds of pregnancy or maternity and the enforcement of timely and commensurate sanctions for employers engaging in such discriminatory practices;**

(d) **Encourage the use of paternity leave for fathers and ensure employers fulfil the legal obligation to make such leave available; introducing compulsory paternity leave; and,**

(e) **Increase access to formal employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women, including Roma women and women belonging to other disadvantaged groups, and improve their possibilities to combine working life with family responsibilities, including by expanding the number of childcare facilities.**

Health

30. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That the right to abortion is being denied by hospitals on the ground of conscientious objection although this "right" is recognized only to individual doctors and that hospitals are legally required to ensure the provision of abortions;

(b) The lack of inclusion of abortion and contraception into the Health Insurance Fund, thus discriminating women for services that only they require;

(c) The low use, availability and accessibility of modern forms of contraception and reproductive services, particularly for disadvantaged groups of women; and,

(d) The lack of oversight procedures and mechanisms for ensuring adequate standards of care in deliveries and protection of women's rights during delivery as well as their autonomy and the lack of options for child births outside of hospitals.

31. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) Ensure that the exercise of conscientious objection does not impede women's effective access to reproductive health care services, especially abortion and post-abortion care as well as contraceptives;

(b) Ensure universal coverage of abortion and modern contraception within the Health Insurance Fund;

(c) Ensure the availability and accessibility of modern forms of contraception and reproductive services to all women, including disadvantaged groups of women; and,

(d) Ensure adequate safeguards to ensure that medical procedures for childbirth are subject to objective assessments of necessity and conducted with adequate standards of care and respect for women's autonomy and the requirements for informed consent; and, introduce options for home births for women who wish to choose such contexts for childbirth.

Economic empowerment of women

32. The Committee notes the entry into force of the Pension Insurance Act in the State party in January 2014. However, the Committee remains concerned that low levels of social benefits and very strict eligibility criteria, result in many women living in poverty, particularly older women and women who have not been previously employed, being excluded from social protection.

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party undertake a study of the socio-economic situation of women living in poverty, particularly older women and those without previous employment. The results of the study should inform the formulation of policies to ensure that social protection measures and employment legislation address the lower average years of contribution of women, the impact of women's lower retirement age and more frequent non-contributory periods, women's lower average salaries as compared to men.**

Rural women

34. The Committee is concerned about the limited access by rural women: to land, with only approximately 28% of farms owned by women; to related resources; as well as social and health services; training facilities; economic opportunities; and, participation in political and public life, including in decision-making processes at the community level. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of childcare facilities in rural areas. It is concerned that the Croatian Rural Development Programme which was adopted by the European Commission in May 2015 does not have adequate measures to specifically address the above-mentioned issues.

35. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that rural women have adequate access to land, related resources, as well as social, health and other basic services and economic opportunities, as well as equal opportunities for women to participate in political and public life, in particular in decision-making processes at the community level. It also recommends that the State party ensure the availability of childcare facilities in rural areas. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the**

State party take into account the above-mentioned specific needs of rural women in the implementation of the Croatian Rural Development Programme.

Roma Women

36. The Committee is concerned about the lack of adequate financial resources allocated to the implementation and evaluation of measures for addressing discrimination against persons of Roma ethnicity as well as the continuing marginalization of Roma women and the intersecting forms of discrimination they face, especially with regard to access to education, employment and health care, identity documents, protection from violence and access to justice and about the persistence of traditional harmful practices such as early marriages leading to school dropout. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of information on the use of temporary special measures to improve the situation of Roma women.

37. The Committee recommends that the State party expeditiously allocate additional financial resources to national action plans and strategies aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against Roma women. In doing so, the State party should establish monitoring mechanisms and formulate clear time-bound targets, particularly on access to essential services, education, and early marriages, for the said plans and strategies. The State party should also consider adopting additional temporary special measures for meeting these targets, with a view to accelerating the realization of substantive equality for Roma women.

Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women

38. The Committee notes with concern discrimination, including by the judiciary and law enforcement personnel, against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, as well as inadequate measures taken to combat hate speech against them, including the tendency to prosecute such offences under misdemeanour law rather than hate crime provisions.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party undertake appropriate measures to enable lesbian, bisexual and transgender women to fully enjoy their human rights. In doing so, the State party should pay particular attention to ensuring the training of its judiciary and law enforcement personnel on non-discrimination on the basis of “sexual orientation” pursuant to its Gender Equality Act of 2008 (arts. 6, 13, 16, 31 and 36). It should also take measures to ensure adequate protection from hate speech and the prosecution of the perpetrators with timely and commensurate sanctions.

Women affected by the conflict

40. The Committee notes that the State party has recently passed legislation providing for compensation to be paid to victims of sexual assaults during the 1991 to 1995 conflict. However, the Committee remains concerned there has been inadequate overall progress in providing women victims of sexual violence with access to justice, truth, reparation and rehabilitation for such human rights violations, specifically that:

(a) There are no specific timelines or related targets for the effective implementation of the 2015 Law regulating the status of civilian victims of sexual violence and related reparations (financial, symbolic, health and psycho-social services); and, no data on the number of women subjected to violence and trauma, including sexual violence during the conflict, in order to facilitate the implementation of the said legislation;

(b) The failure to ensure full accountability for those responsible for violations of the human rights of women committed during the conflict means that many victims have received no reparation and/or compensation; and,

(c) Reports indicate that there are inadequate support and re-integration measures for women and children post-conflict returnees.

41. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Stipulate clear time-bound targets and transparent and impartial processes for ensuring the effective implementation of its legislation providing compensation for victims of sexual violence during the 1991 to 1995 conflict; and, in this context take measures to encourage victims of such violations to report them and establish a corresponding data collection system for obtaining data on the number of women subjected to violence and trauma, including sexual violence during the conflict;**

(b) **Further strengthen its measures to investigate, prosecute and punish all acts of violence against women, including acts of sexual violence, perpetrated by private actors and by the security and defence forces, the police and militant groups; and,**

(c) **Ensure the allocation of adequate resources to meet the needs of women and children post-conflict returnees, in particular their access to a livelihood and education for themselves and their children.**

Marriage and family relations

42. The Committee notes that the Family Act 2014 is currently suspended until the Constitutional Court reviews its conformity with the Constitution, and that the Family Act of 2003 is currently in force. The Committee also notes that the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth submitted the new draft proposal of the Family Act for public debate in early February 2015 with the final proposal of the Act. In this respect, the Committee is concerned about the lack of meaningful access by women's rights groups, particularly compared to the level of access by "men's rights" groups, to the policy fora in which critical decisions are made about legislation and other policies that have a major impact on equality in outcome of divorce and custody proceedings. Such unequal access, together with lack of transparency about decision making, results in legislation that does not comply with article 16 of the Convention as well as General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) and General Recommendation No. 29 (2013). More specifically, the Committee is concerned that:

(a) The proposed Act adopts the "friendly parent" approach, under which parents are obligated to encourage their children's contact with each other under all circumstances, including in cases of domestic violence, so a woman seeking to limit visitation by a violent parent could face heavy fines and incarceration of up to six months;

(b) While the mandatory mediation prior to initiation of divorce proceedings proposed in the Act excludes cases in which there is domestic violence, Centers for Social Welfare nevertheless pressure women victims of domestic violence to agree to joint mediation; and,

(c) While the Family Code provides that property obtained during the time of the marriage is considered joint property to be divided equally upon divorce, intangible assets such as work-related benefits are not included in this regime.

43. The Committee urges the State party, prior to adoption of the proposed Family Act, to undertake comparative research of lessons learnt in other countries that have undertaken similar family law reforms. In particular, the Committee calls on the State party to:

(a) **Amend legislation concerning child custody in divorce cases to ensure that violence by one parent against the other is identified and taken into account when deciding child custody, and that refusal to allow visitation and contact on account of alleged violence is not held against the alleging parent;**

(b) Exclude mandatory mediation in cases of domestic violence, and train all community and social workers to refrain from pressuring women to mediate in such cases; and,

(c) Take appropriate legal measures to include intangible property (i.e. pension funds; severance payments; insurance), accumulated during the relationship, within the joint property to be equally divided upon dissolution of the relationship, in line with its General Recommendation No. 29 (2013).

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

44. The Committee calls upon the State party to utilize the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.

Dissemination

45. The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement the provisions of the Convention. It urges the State party to give priority attention to the implementation of the present concluding observations and recommendations between now and the submission of the next periodic report. The Committee therefore requests the timely dissemination of the concluding observations, in the official language(s) of the State party, to the relevant state institutions at all levels (national, regional, local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the Parliament and to the judiciary, to enable their full implementation. It encourages the State party to collaborate with all stakeholders concerned, such as employers' associations, trade unions, human rights and women's organisations, universities and research institutions, media, etc. It further recommends that its concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local community level, to enable their implementation. In addition, the Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate the CEDAW Convention, its Optional Protocol and jurisprudence, and the Committee's General Recommendations to all stakeholders.

Ratification of other treaties and human rights instruments

46. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to consider ratifying the International Convention of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Family, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a party, as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

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 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.

Follow-up to concluding observations

47. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 19(a), (c), (d) and (e) and 31(b) above.**

Preparation of the next report

48. **The Committee invites the State party to submit its sixth periodic report in July 2019.**

49. **The Committee requests the State party to follow the “Harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents” (HRI/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1).**
