



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

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### Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Pre-session working group

Thirty-seventh session

15 January-2 February 2007

### List of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of the third periodic report\*

#### Suriname

1. The pre-session working group examined the third periodic report of Suriname (CEDAW/C/SUR/3).

#### Constitution, laws and national machinery

2. In its concluding comments in 2002, the Committee recommended that the State party take steps to incorporate the Convention into domestic law and introduce procedures that would allow women to effectively enforce the prohibition of discrimination based on sex.<sup>1</sup> Please indicate what follow-up action was taken pursuant to that recommendation and provide, as requested by the Committee, information on whether the Convention and the Constitution have been invoked by women before domestic courts.

3. Please provide information on the status of the review and amendment of laws that discriminate against women, including, but not limited to, amendments to the Penal Code, the Personnel Act, the Accident Regulation and to laws relating to marriage and to insurance.

4. The report states that the National Gender Policy Bureau will be strengthened and a network of gender coordination points within the different ministries will be set up (p. 4). Please provide information on the status of this and whether, as recommended by the Committee in its 2002 concluding comments, the National Gender Bureau has been provided with adequate human, financial and material resources to give it visibility and effectiveness and to ensure effective

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\* The page numbering in this list of issues and questions refers to the English version of the report.

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/57/38)*, para. 40.

implementation of governmental policies and programmes related to gender equality.<sup>2</sup> In addition, please provide information on the involvement and employment of indigenous and other minority women in the National Gender Bureau.

5. Please provide further details on the implementation and outcome of the programmes under the Integrated Gender Plan of Action 2000-2005 and the Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan. Are the concerns of rural women and the racial minorities reflected in the Plan of Action?

#### **Political participation and decision-making**

6. The report states that the “greatest impediment to removing gender inequality is still the influence of the political parties in the national political culture in the nomination and selection of candidates for politico-administrative organs, high organs of State, diplomatic service and senior management positions in civil service” (p. 11). What is the Government doing to address this challenge?

7. The report states that “the participation of women in public and political life is still limited” (p. 15). Has the Government considered introducing temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to improve women’s participation in political and public life, particularly at senior levels, including in the National Assembly, Government, diplomatic service and regional and local bodies? Do these measures extend to indigenous and other racial minority women?

#### **Violence against women**

8. The report refers to an assessment of four conventions that was published by the Ministry of Home Affairs and recommendations that were made in respect of violence against women, “namely that the Government should be involved more intensively with the problem of violence through regular public awareness activities, targeting young women and girls, and by setting up a database on domestic violence, so as to make an inventory of the phenomenon, together with the actors concerned, and make it possible to develop a proper approach” (p. 4). Please provide information on the implementation of those recommendations.

9. In its 2002 concluding comments, the Committee urged the State party to place high priority on measures to address violence against women in the family and in society in accordance with the Committee’s general recommendation 19 and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.<sup>3</sup> Please provide information on the steps taken to implement the Committee’s recommendation and inform the Committee if the unique conditions that predispose rural, indigenous and other minority women to high levels of violence have been included in the Government’s initiative.

10. Has the law on domestic violence been finalized? If so, please provide details about its contents.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., para. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., para. 52.

**Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

11. The report states that a special committee will be formed to look into trafficking of people in general and that “this committee will recommend policy measures and legislative measures, as well as guidelines, procedures for police and institutions” (p. 12). Has the committee been formed and, if not, when will it be formed and when is it expected to begin its work? How will the Government ensure that rural and minority women have a say in the committee?

12. In its 2002 concluding comments, the Committee recommended the development of programmes of action for women forced into prostitution by poverty and the introduction of policies to ensure the prosecution of, and stronger penalties for, those who exploit prostitutes and of adults involved in the exploitation of child prostitutes.<sup>4</sup> The Committee also recommended that the State party provide in its next report comprehensive information on prostitution and on trafficking of women and girls to allow the Committee to better understand the extent of the problems in Suriname.<sup>5</sup> Please provide information on the steps taken to implement the Committee’s recommendation and respond to its request.

**Stereotypes and education**

13. The report refers to a non-governmental organization, the Lobi Foundation, which “plays an important role in education programmes”, including in respect of family planning information and sex education (p. 32). The report states that “these activities are still in contravention of articles 533 and 534 of the Penal Code, which have not yet been amended” (p. 32). In its 2002 concluding comments, the Committee recommended that the laws restricting family planning activities be repealed.<sup>6</sup> When is it anticipated that this will be done?

14. In its 2002 concluding comments, the Committee urged the State party to adopt the necessary legal or administrative measures to prohibit schools from barring young mothers and pregnant teenagers. Please provide information on the steps taken to implement the Committee’s recommendation. Please extend the scope of this information to rural and racial minority women.

15. Please provide information on the status of the assessment of school curricula and whether fees are required from students for public education.

16. In its 2002 concluding comments, the Committee called upon the State party to take urgent measures aimed at changing stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men, including through awareness-raising and educational campaigns directed at both women and men and at the media.<sup>7</sup> Please indicate what follow-up action was taken pursuant to that recommendation.

**Employment**

17. Please provide updated data on the unemployment rates of women and men, and please include such data on women and men who live in the interior and in indigenous communities.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., para. 50.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., para. 64.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., para. 48.

18. The report states that since “women generally form part of the lower wage groups, ... [they] usually earn less than men” (p. 39). What measures are being taken by the Government to address this?

### **Health**

19. The report states that “as far as access of women to medical services is concerned, the following observations are important: lack of routine screening for cancer (Pap smear, mammograms); complications of pregnancies indicate the need for improved prenatal care and a better management of high-risk pregnancies” (p. 46). The report also states that about one third of the population does not have medical insurance (p. 46). What measures are being taken by the Government to address these problems?

20. The report states that the number of HIV-positive women rose from 1998 to 2000 from 4.1 per cent to 6.35 per cent (p. 49). In its 2002 concluding comments, the Committee urged the State party to address the gender aspects of HIV/AIDS and to ensure that women and girls have equal rights and access to health care and social services, and encouraged the State party to strengthen its efforts to raise awareness and educate women and girls on methods of self-protection.<sup>8</sup> Please provide information on the implementation of the Committee’s recommendation and include data on the spread of HIV/AIDS among minority women in the interior owing to mining activities.

### **Poverty and rural women**

21. The report states that poverty is highest among women, in particular single women who are heads of households (p. 52). Please provide information on the impact on women, in particular rural and racial minority women, of the Multi-annual Development Plan 2001-2005.

22. Please indicate how the national development plans or poverty reduction strategies that may be in place in the country, including those aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals, integrate a gender perspective and contribute to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Please ensure that data that speak to poverty reduction in the interior and among racial and ethnic minorities are included in the response.

23. The report refers to a number of problems rural women face (see, in particular, pp. 49, 63, 65, 68, 69, 71 and 72). In its 2002 concluding comments, the Committee urged the State party to give full attention to the needs of rural women, including older women, particularly Amerindian and Maroon women, to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes in all areas, in particular access to health, education, social services and decision-making.<sup>9</sup> Please provide details on what follow-up action was taken pursuant to the Committee’s recommendation.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., para. 62.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., para. 66.

**Marriage legislation**

24. In its 2002 concluding comments, the Committee expressed concern at the very low age of marriage for some communities and urged the State party to review the law on marriage in line with articles 15 and 16 of the Convention.<sup>10</sup> The Human Rights Committee, in its concluding observations in 2004, also stated that the State party should take steps to change the current marriage legislation and to bring it into conformity with the Covenant.<sup>11</sup> Please indicate what follow-up action was taken pursuant to those recommendations.

**Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20, paragraph 1**

25. Please indicate any progress made towards ratification of accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention or acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., paras. 67-68.

<sup>11</sup> CCPR/CO/80/SUR.