



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions prior to the submission of the tenth periodic report of Sweden*

General

1. Please provide information and statistics, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, religion and location, on the current situation of women in the State party, to enable monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. In accordance with the State party's obligations under articles 1 and 2 of the Convention and in line with target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, as well as in the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/SWE/CO/8-9, paras. 25 (d), 27 (g) and 29),¹ please indicate how the State party intends to improve the collection and analysis of data pertaining to the areas covered by the Convention, including gender-based violence, harmful practices, trafficking in women and girls and prostitution, so as to support policymaking and programme development and to measure progress towards the implementation of the Convention and the promotion of substantive equality between women and men, including with regard to the specific areas covered herein. Please provide information on the impact of the introduction in 2015 of the gender-neutral pronoun into the official dictionary of the Swedish language.

Visibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations

2. With reference to the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 13), please provide information on the steps taken: (a) to give sufficient visibility to the Convention, the communications and inquiry procedures provided for under the Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations; (b) to ensure that women in the State party are aware of their rights under the Convention and related remedies; and (c) to provide capacity-building for judges, prosecutors and lawyers to enable them to interpret national legislation in accordance with the Convention.

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 15 March 2019.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the Committee's previous concluding observations.



Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework

3. Please provide information on the steps taken or envisaged to fully incorporate the provisions of the Convention into the national legal system and ensure that it is directly applicable in the national courts and to ensure that the scope of protection under the Discrimination Act includes a definition of discrimination against women in accordance with article 1 of the Convention, covering intersecting forms of discrimination against women.

Access to justice

4. Please provide updated information on the inquiry conducted by the State party to analyse access to justice in discrimination cases and on whether corrective action has been implemented, including by simplifying legal proceedings, to remove barriers for women who are victims of discrimination, including women facing intersectional discrimination, and to enable them to effectively use the Discrimination Act to claim their rights. Please also provide information on relevant cases brought before the courts with respect to discrimination against women, and the outcomes of those cases, and indicate the number of cases in which the Convention was invoked.

5. In view of the new legislation adopted in 2018, in which rape is defined as sex without consent, and the persistently low rates of conviction for rape compared with the number of cases filed, please inform the Committee about the steps taken by the State party to ensure that a gender-sensitive approach is applied and the rights and interests of women and girls who are victims are upheld in investigation procedures and judicial processes and that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished. Please also indicate whether the State party intends to undertake an assessment of the impact of the new legislation on rape, with a view to identifying the causes for the low rates of conviction. Please also provide data on the applications processed by the Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority, disaggregated by crime, gender, age, relationship between the victim and the perpetrator and the compensation awarded, and indicate the criteria employed by the Authority to assess the estimated 11,000 applications it receives each year.

National machinery for the advancement of women

6. With regard to the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, established in 2018, please provide information on its status, structure and financial and technical resources and indicate whether the agency has the authority to effectively coordinate, monitor and evaluate government policies in terms of their impact on gender equality. Please also describe how the agency ensures close cooperation with other government agencies, municipalities, city councils, regions, civil society and businesses and whether the agency is represented at the county and municipal levels and in all ministries. Please also provide examples of collaboration between the agency and businesses and civil society, including organizations and associations that promote women's rights.

7. Please provide information on the evaluation of the State party's gender mainstreaming measures for the period 2016–2018 and how it informed the development of the strategy for global gender equality and the rights of women and girls for the period 2018–2022. Please also provide information on the strategy, including on implementation and monitoring mechanisms at all levels and resource allocation, and on how the State party ensures that all ministries and government agencies receive continuous capacity-building and support in order to implement the strategy.

Extraterritorial obligations

8. Please provide information on the regulatory framework for industries and companies operating within the State party, as well as companies registered in the State party that carry out operations abroad, to ensure that their activities, including their financial flows and investments, do not negatively affect human rights or endanger environmental, labour and other standards, especially those relating to women's rights. Please also provide information on the oversight mechanisms in place for regulating the investments made abroad by enterprises domiciled under the State party's jurisdiction, including the Swedish national pension funds, in order to prevent such investments from having a negative impact on the rights of women and girls.

9. Please provide information on development cooperation policies and practices promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, in line with the feminist foreign policy of the State party.

National human rights institution

10. Please provide information on the outcome of the inquiry initiated by the State party on the establishment of a human rights institution, given that the report on the inquiry was due on 31 July 2018, and on progress achieved towards, and the timeline for, the establishment of an independent national human rights institution with a broad mandate to promote and protect women's rights and gender equality in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). Please also inform the Committee of any steps envisaged to broaden the mandate of the Equality Ombudsman and to strengthen the Ombudsman's capacity to prevent discrimination against women and girls on the basis of sex and gender.

Discriminatory stereotypes and harmful practices

11. Please inform the Committee of any measures taken: (a) to modify or eliminate discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society and how the impact of such measures is assessed; (b) to enhance positive and non-stereotypical portrayals of women in the media and in advertisements; and (c) to assess the impact of oversexualized representations of girls and women in the media and the prevalence of pornography on the increase in gender-based violence against women in the State party. Please also provide more information on the activities of the Swedish Media Council, the self-regulatory ombudsman's office of the advertising industry and other such mechanisms in identifying discriminatory attitudes towards women as portrayed in the media. With regard to harmful practices, please provide information on the prevalence of female genital mutilation, child and forced marriage and crimes committed in the name of so-called "honour" in the State party.

Gender-based violence against women

12. In view of the increased prevalence of gender-based violence against women and the persistently low rates of reporting, prosecution and conviction, please provide updated information on the measures taken: (a) to effectively implement legislation concerning gender-based violence against women and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished and that victims are provided with adequate reparations; (b) to provide mandatory capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officers on the strict application of relevant criminal law provisions and on gender-sensitive procedures for handling cases, including investigations of rape and other sexual offences; and (c) to protect migrant

women, including those with residence permits that are dependent on their spouses, from domestic violence. Please also provide updated information on the findings of the studies conducted by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention on gender-based violence against women, including whether those studies involved analysing the root causes of the persistence and increased prevalence of gender-based violence against women.

13. Please provide information on the action plan for the period 2017–2020 for the “national strategy to prevent and combat men’s violence against women” for the period 2017–2026, including its main objectives, implementing partners and monitoring mechanisms. Please also inform the Committee of any measures to raise awareness among both men and women, including through educational and awareness-raising campaigns, of the criminal nature of gender-based violence against women and to enhance the knowledge among women and girls of their right to seek redress through legal means. In view of the adoption in 2017 of new legislation regulating the export of arms, please inform the Committee about how the State party ensures a gender-specific perspective in the export of arms.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

14. Please provide information on the action plan adopted in 2018 to combat prostitution and trafficking in persons, as well as the impact of the legislation adopted in 1999 to prohibit the purchase of sexual services, in particular since the incorporation of the offence into the Criminal Code in 2005. Please also provide updated information on the measures taken: (a) to strengthen the identification, prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of trafficking in persons; (b) to ensure capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police officers, migration authorities and service providers with regard to the legislation governing trafficking, forced labour, forced begging and forced criminality; (c) to provide adequate protection, rehabilitation and reintegration services for women and girls who are victims of trafficking and prostitution, including through the provision of specialized housing for victims of trafficking; and (d) to strengthen the assistance provided to women and girls who wish to leave prostitution.

Participation in political and public life

15. Please provide information on the objectives of the feminist foreign policy adopted in 2015 and indicate the results achieved to date. With regard to the participation of women in political and public life, please provide information on the measures taken to ensure the representation of women, in particular those belonging to underrepresented groups, in political and public life, including in the parliament, the judiciary, senior leadership positions in businesses and decision-making positions in economic and environmental affairs. The State party is also invited to comment on reports of large discrepancies in ownership between men and women, with research indicating that men’s holdings of shares, real estate, forests and cars are almost twice as large as those of women and that the majority of company principals are men, and on how the findings of such research can be taken into account in the planning and implementation of policies aimed at achieving gender equality.

Education

16. Noting the current programmes on human rights education in the State party, please provide information on whether those programmes include a focus on the Convention and address the empowerment of women and girls. In the light of the Committee’s previous concluding observations (para. 33) and the strategy for global gender equality and the rights of women and girls for the period 2018–2022, please provide updated information on measures taken: (a) to address discriminatory

stereotypes and structural barriers that may deter girls from enrolling in traditionally male-dominated fields of study, including the implementation of the Higher Education Authority's recommendation to integrate issues related to gender-based violence as compulsory components of curricula; (b) to integrate gender equality into higher education institutions, including by increasing the number of women professors and implementing a gender-equal research policy; (c) to incorporate age-appropriate and gender-sensitive education on sexuality and women's human rights into school curricula; and (d) to effectively implement the State party's policy of zero tolerance of threats, violence and sexual harassment in schools. With regard to the Gender Equality Agency, please provide information on how it supports higher education institutions in their gender mainstreaming work. Please also inform the Committee of the measures taken to combat discrimination against women and girls facing intersectional discrimination, including migrant, Roma and Sami girls, in gaining access to education and provide information on any monitoring mechanisms in place to evaluate the impact of such measures.

Employment and economic empowerment

17. Please provide information on the measures taken: (a) to ensure equal opportunities for women in the labour market, including traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as science, information technology, agriculture and construction; (b) to ensure the effective implementation of existing mechanisms, such as the Swedish code of corporate governance and the Public Employment Service's guidelines on counteracting gender segregation in the labour market; and (c) to reduce the gender pay gap, which is currently estimated at 12 per cent, and ensure full respect for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the private sector, including through the introduction of mandatory annual pay surveys to detect cases of gender-based pay discrimination. It is noted that family responsibilities, including childcare, remain a predominant reason for the persistent concentration of women in part-time work and that the majority of shared parental leave is taken by women. Please inform the Committee of measures adopted: (a) to improve access for women to full-time employment; (b) to assess the impact of the legislative amendment requiring employers to convert fixed-term contracts into indefinite contracts after an initial period; and (c) to encourage the use of parental leave by men, including through incentives and awareness-raising programmes.

18. In view of the parliament's rejection in January 2017 of plans to introduce legislation to establish a mandatory quota requiring listed companies to appoint women to at least 40 per cent of board seats, please inform the Committee of measures taken or envisaged to effectively address vertical labour market segregation and to increase the proportion of women in management positions, including as chairs, managing directors and board members. Taking into account the prominence of the "Me too" movement against sexual harassment and assault in the workplace in the State party and related campaigns in various fields, including law, public service, the technology industry, journalism, sports, music, opera, film and theatre, please provide information on the measures taken to prevent and address the sexual harassment of women in the workplace, including the complaint mechanisms in place to enable victims to obtain redress. Please also inform the Committee of measures to raise awareness among women of how to report cases of sexual harassment and to seek redress and please provide data on the number of complaints that have been brought before a competent authority or the courts, as well as on sanctions imposed on perpetrators.

Health

19. Please provide information on the measures taken: (a) to prevent and address the increased prevalence of mental health challenges among women and girls and the abuse of alcohol and drugs, including the impact of the agreement between the Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions to address the mental health needs of women and the gender-sensitive strategy adopted by the State party to combat the abuse of licit and illicit drugs; and (b) to analyse the root causes of the higher prevalence of work-related illness and use of sick leave among women. With regard to women with disabilities, please inform the Committee of measures taken to ensure their access to support services, including rehabilitation and psychosocial care, and to prevent the compulsory admission to psychiatric institutions and coerced treatment of women with psychosocial disabilities.

Women facing intersectional discrimination

20. Please provide updated information and data on the human rights situation of women facing intersectional discrimination, including refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women, Roma and Sami women, Afro-Swedish women and women of African descent, and women belonging to ethno-religious minority groups, including Muslim women, and specify the measures taken to ensure that they have effective access to education, health, housing, employment and participation in political and public life, including through the use of temporary special measures. Noting that foreign-born and refugee women face specific and persistent difficulties in integrating into the labour market, as illustrated by their higher unemployment rate compared with that of women born in the State party, please provide information on the measures taken to improve their integration into the labour market, such as the “introduction jobs” initiative under the 2018 national reform programme, including through skills assessments, qualifications recognition, education and training opportunities and public awareness-raising campaigns.

21. In view of the temporary border controls that have been in effect since 2015, please provide information on the measures taken: (a) to provide further legal support for the examination and assessment of women’s asylum claims; (b) to ensure that the needs of asylum-seeking and refugee women and girls arriving in the State party are addressed as a priority concern; and (c) to evaluate the impact of the Swedish Migration Agency’s action plan for gender mainstreaming for the period 2016–2018. Please also inform the Committee of the measures taken: (a) to ensure the social integration of refugee and asylum-seeking women; (b) to implement the national plan to combat racism adopted in 2016; and (c) to address incidents of racism, xenophobia, hate speech and hate crimes against asylum-seeking and refugee women, women belonging to minority groups, including Roma and Sami women, Afro-Swedish women and women of African descent, and women belonging to ethno-religious minority groups, including Muslim women, in the State party.

22. Please provide information on how gender has been mainstreamed into the strategy for Roma inclusion for the period 2012–2032 and on the implementation of the Sami parliament’s action plan for gender mainstreaming and its gender equality programme. Please also indicate measures taken or envisaged for the ratification and implementation of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization.

Climate change

23. Please inform the Committee about the measures taken: (a) to ensure that climate change and energy policies take into account the differentiated and disproportionate impact of climate change on women; (b) to better integrate a gender

perspective into policies and programmes on climate change, including the recommended activities of the gender action plan adopted in 2017 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and (c) to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making processes on climate change at the local and national levels, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change. Please also indicate whether a gender perspective has been incorporated into current financial and fiscal policies and bank regulations, including regulations for government-backed institutions, aimed at further reducing the carbon footprint of the State party.

Marriage and family relations

24. In the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 39), please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that gender-based violence against women in the domestic sphere is taken into account in decisions on child custody or visitation rights and to study the economic consequences of divorce for both spouses, including with regard to the enhanced human capital and earning potential of male spouses on the basis of their full-time and uninterrupted career patterns. Please also provide information on the activities of the Family Law and Parental Support Authority, established in 2016, including how it ensures a gender perspective in its work.

Additional information

25. Please provide any additional information deemed relevant with regard to legislative, policy, administrative and any other measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations since the consideration of the previous periodic reports in 2016. Such measures may include recent laws, developments, plans and programmes, recent ratifications of human rights instruments or any other information that the State party considers relevant. Please note that, further to the issues raised herein, the State party is expected, during the dialogue, to respond to additional questions relating to areas covered by the Convention.
