



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

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### Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Fifty-second session

New York, 9-27 July 2012

### List of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of periodic reports

#### Guyana

The pre-session working group considered the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Guyana (CEDAW/C/GUY/7-8).

#### Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework

1. The report indicates that in the interpretation of the fundamental rights provisions, the executive, legislature, judiciary and other organs and agencies of the Government shall pay due regard to international law, conventions, covenants and charters bearing on human rights. Please provide information on cases in which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been invoked or referred to in national courts, as well as the outcome of such cases.
2. Reference is made in the report to budgetary resources to construct a Family Court, which was expected to be operational by the last quarter of 2010. Please provide updated information on the current status of the Family Court.
3. Reference is made in the report to the Prevention of Crimes Act, Act No. 11 of 2008, which allows for the mandatory supervision of persons convicted of domestic violence, molestation, rape, sexual exploitation, pornography, incest, prostitution and kidnapping. Please provide clear information on the provisions of this Act, whether the Act has been implemented in practice and its impact on the prevention of violence against women.

#### National machinery for the advancement of women

4. According to the report, the Women and Gender Equality Commission was established in 2009 and was expected to be fully operational by mid-2010. Please provide information on the Commission's mandate, human and financial resources, impact on women's empowerment and influence on policymaking. In addition, please provide information on whether a national action plan on gender equality has been developed.



**Stereotypes and harmful practices**

5. The report acknowledges the existence of a cultural lag in terms of attitudes, prejudices, cultural and religious traditions, and ignorance. Please provide information on measures taken to change stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men, including through public awareness-raising and educational campaigns directed at both women and men, and at the media.

**Violence against women**

6. Reference is made in the report to the creation of the National Stakeholders Forum, which has been dedicated to the prevention of crime and violence, including domestic and sexual violence against women and children. Please provide information on the activity of the Forum, in general, and its consultations, in particular, and their impact on the process of elimination of violence against women.

7. Please provide information on legislative and other measures that prohibit and eliminate corporal punishment of girls in all settings, including schools and homes, as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations *World Report on Violence against Children* and general recommendation No. 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

**Trafficking**

8. The report provides information on the establishment of the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Unit (TIPS) launched in 2008 in the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, and on the existence of statistical data on human trafficking in the Unit. Please provide further information on the impact of the Unit on combating the trafficking of women and girls, and the data on reports of human trafficking for 2010.

**Employment**

9. As is stated in the report that according to section 8 of the Prevention of Discrimination Act 2007, sexual harassment in the workplace is unlawful and that the aggrieved party can move to the Magistrate Courts to have the matter heard. Please indicate whether, in light of this law, there is a complaint mechanism in place to allow women in both the public and private sectors to confidentially report sexual harassment to the employer prior to taking the case to the Courts. It is also stated in the report that at the time of reporting, no cases of sexual harassment had been brought before the Chief Labour Officer. Please provide information on the extent of sexual harassment in the workplace and on the steps taken to protect women after they bring a case against a perpetrator.

**Health**

10. The report acknowledges that the main causes of female morbidity and mortality are high blood pressure, heart diseases and diabetes. Please provide information on specific preventive measures, such as the provision of adequate access to primary health-care services for the purpose of early screening and health education and awareness programmes that are in place to all women, in particular women who are at high risk of such diseases.

11. Reference is made in the report to the initiatives specific to maternal and child health implemented within the framework of the 2006-2010 Maternal and Neonatal Mortality Reduction Strategic Plan. Please provide information on the outcome of this strategic plan and the goals achieved, and on measures envisaged under the plan to reduce maternal mortality.

#### **Women with disabilities**

12. It is indicated in the report that the Persons with Disabilities Bill 2009 was expected to be enacted by July 2010. Please provide updated information on its current status.

#### **Rural women**

13. As is indicated in the report that the population of the State party is mainly rural, as only 27 per cent of the population is urbanized. Please provide information on access by rural women, in particular in remote areas, to health-care services, including reproductive health, employment, education and involvement in the political affairs of their communities and country as a whole.

#### **Marriage and family relations**

14. In paragraph 362 of the report reference is made to the Age of Consent Act 2006 and the Marriage Act 2006, which prohibit child marriage before the age of 16. It is also indicated in the report that at the age of 18 any male or female may get married without the consent of parents. Please clarify the legal age of marriage for both women and men.

15. Reference is made in the report to the Single Parent Assistance Programme launched in 2009, which grants an allowance to assist single parents (mainly single mothers) with day-care expenses and skills training to make them more marketable in the job market. Please provide updated information on the outcome of this programme.

16. Reference is also made in the report to section 16 (9) of the Married Persons Property Act 45:04, which relates to the distribution of property, and by which the judge, in making an order with respect to a property in dispute, may take into consideration the contribution made by the spouse to the marriage and to the welfare of the family depending upon the number of years of marriage and the working status of the claimant party. The State party respectfully submits that this Act is not "gender neutral". Please provide information on measures taken to ensure equality between men and women in family matters.

#### **Natural disasters**

17. Please provide information on the impact of natural disasters on women in the State party and whether a gender perspective has been incorporated into national disaster relief strategies and national policies aimed at combating the negative impact of climate change on families, in particular on women and children.

#### **Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20 (1)**

18. Please provide information on any progress made with respect to ratification of or accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Please also describe progress towards acceptance of the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention.