



Economic and Social Council

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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Jamaica, adopted by the Committee at its fiftieth session (29 April–17 May 2013)

1. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights considered the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Jamaica on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/JAM/3-4 and Corr.1) at its 7th and 8th meetings (E/C.12/2013/SR.7-8), held on 2 May 2013, and adopted, at its 28th meeting, held on 17 May 2013, the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the combined third and fourth periodic reports by Jamaica (E/C.12/JAM/3-4 and Corr.1), which are in conformity with the Committee's reporting guidelines and reflect the State party's effort to provide an account of the steps taken to implement the provisions in the Covenant and the recommendations made by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (E/C.12/1/Add.75). The Committee also appreciates the detailed written replies to the list of issues (E/C.12/JAM/Q/3-4/Add.1) as well as the frank and constructive dialogue with the State party's delegation.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee notes with appreciation the efforts made by the State party in promoting the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights, including the adoption of Vision 2030 Jamaica, the State party's first long-term national development plan based on human rights and environmentally sustainable principles.

4. The Committee also welcomes the ratification by the State party of the following international human rights instruments:

(a) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, in 2002;

(b) International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, in 2008; and

(c) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in 2011.

5. The Committee further welcomes the ratification of the following international instruments:

- (a) International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138 (1973) concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, in 2003;
- (b) ILO Convention No. 182 (1999) concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, in 2003;
- (c) United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol); the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, in 2003;
- (d) WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, in 2005;
- (e) Convention against Discrimination in Education, in 2006;
- (f) Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (with Protocols I, II and III), in 2008; and
- (g) 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, in 2013.

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

6. While noting that some of the rights guaranteed under the Covenant are enshrined in the Constitution and other pieces of legislation in the State party, the Committee regrets that the Covenant provisions have not yet been fully incorporated into the domestic legal order. It further regrets the absence of court cases invoking the provisions of the Covenant (art. 2).

The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate steps in accordance with article 2, paragraph 1, of the Covenant to ensure that all provisions of the Covenant are given full effect in the domestic legal order and can be invoked before courts. In this regard, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general comments No. 3 (1990) on the nature of States parties' obligations and No. 9 (1998) on the domestic application of the Covenant. The Committee requests the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, detailed information concerning measures adopted, including on the application of Covenant rights by the judiciary and measures taken to increase awareness of the Covenant rights and their justiciability among judges, lawyers and prosecutors and the public at large, as well as information on cases where the Covenant has been referred to in the court decisions.

7. While welcoming the establishment of national bodies to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights, such as the Office of the Public Defender and the Independent Commission of Investigations, the Committee regrets that the State party has not yet established a national human rights institution with a comprehensive mandate, including on economic, social and cultural rights (art. 2).

The Committee welcomes the intention expressed by the State party to establish a national human rights institution, and encourages the State party to take effective measures to this end, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles) and taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 10 (1998) on the role of national human rights institutions in the protection of economic, social and cultural rights.

8. While noting the adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms in April 2011, the Committee is concerned at the narrow scope of prohibited grounds for discrimination, which is limited to “(i) being male or female; (ii) race, place of origin, social class, colour, religion or political opinions”, thus failing to prohibit discrimination on the basis of other grounds, such as sexual orientation, disability and health.

The Committee calls upon the State party to amend its laws to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination framework law, in accordance with article 2, paragraph 2, of the Covenant, and taking into account general comment No. 20 (2009) on non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights.

9. The Committee is concerned that consensual same-sex relations continue to be criminalized under the Offences Against the Person Act, thus perpetrating discrimination against homosexual, bisexual and transsexual persons in all spheres of life, including their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights (art. 2).

The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Decriminalize same-sex relations between consenting adults through necessary legislative amendments;

(b) Take concrete, deliberate and targeted measures to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation; and

(c) Send a clear public message that any form of discrimination, harassment or violence against individuals for their sexual orientation is not tolerated, and swiftly and effectively investigate, prosecute and sanction individuals for such acts.

10. While the Committee welcomes the adoption of the National Refugee Policy in 2009 to strengthen the framework for the determination of refugee status, it regrets that legislation protecting the rights of asylum seekers and refugees has not yet been adopted. The Committee is further concerned that refugees are not issued with identification documents except for the Convention Travel Document, which is not well known in the State party and creates obstacles in enjoying a wide range of economic and social rights. It also notes that while refugees do not need a work permit to take up employment, employers are often unaware of this fact (art. 2).

The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt national legislation for the protection of economic, social and cultural rights of asylum seekers and refugees;

(b) Provide asylum seekers and refugees with recognized identification cards to ensure their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights in the State party; and

(c) Take effective measures to ensure that employers are aware of the fact that refugees do not need a work permit for employment in the State party.

11. While noting the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 and various initiatives undertaken by the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities, the Committee is concerned that persons with disabilities continue to face discrimination in employment and denial of access to schools, particularly at the primary level, and that the National Disability Bill, which has been under discussion since 2003, has not yet been adopted (arts. 2, 6 and 13).

The Committee recommends that the State party adopt the National Disability Bill without further delay and take effective measures to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities, particularly in relation to their rights to work and education, taking into account the Committee’s general comment No. 5 (1994) on persons with disabilities.

12. The Committee takes note of various policies and programmes adopted to provide equal opportunities for men and women in social, political and economic life, including the adoption of the National Policy for Gender Equality in March 2011 and the goal of achieving 30 per cent representation of women in the Senate. However, it regrets that the Gender Advisory Council, which would oversee the implementation of the National Policy for Gender Equality, has not yet been established. Moreover, despite an increase in the number of women who occupy visible positions of leadership, the Committee is concerned that women continue to be underrepresented in such positions (art. 3).

The Committee calls upon the State party to strengthen its efforts to promote gender equality in all spheres of life, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 16 (2005) on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights. In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party adopt effective monitoring and implementation mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of programmes and policies aimed at promoting gender equality.

13. While noting that the State party has been a recipient of loans from the International Monetary Fund since 1984 and classified as an upper-middle income country by the World Bank, the Committee expresses deep concern at the high ratio of debt to gross domestic product – 134 per cent – as well as the persistence of high rates of poverty, income disparity and unemployment. The Committee expresses further concern that youth unemployment is three times higher than that of adults due to inadequacies in education and skills training, particularly in rural areas, which has led to an influx of youth into urban areas and higher levels of violent crime and gang-related violence. The Committee is also concerned that despite the higher educational attainment of women, their unemployment rate remains more than twice that of men (art. 6).

The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt long-term policies and strategies with an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism to address the root causes of youth unemployment, while continuing to provide training and vocational skills training for youth;

(b) Adopt employment strategies and policies aimed specifically at women, as recommended by the Committee in its previous concluding observations; and

(c) Ensure that its obligations under the Covenant, in particular the right to work, is fully respected in bilateral and multilateral negotiations and official development assistance, as stipulated, inter alia, in the Committee's general comment No. 18 (2005) on the right to work. Further, the Committee underscores that strategies, programmes and policies adopted by States parties under structural adjustment programmes should not interfere with their core obligations in relation to economic, social and cultural rights.

14. The Committee is concerned at the wage gap between men and women who perform equal work or work of equal value. In addition, it expresses concern that section 2 of the Employment (Equal Pay for Men and Women) Act is limited to guaranteeing equal pay for "similar" or "substantively similar" work, rather than "equal remuneration for work of equal value", which encompasses work that is not only equal or similar, but also of an entirely different nature that is nevertheless of equal value (art. 7(a)(i)).

The Committee recommends that the State party revise section 2 of the Employment (Equal Pay for Men and Women) Act to ensure that the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value is reflected, and to guarantee the effective implementation of the principle in practice.

15. The Committee is concerned at the high rates of occupational deaths and accidents in the State party, and at the failure of employers, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises, to uphold laws relating to vacation and maternity leave entitlement and safe and healthy working conditions (art.7 (b) and (d)).

The Committee calls upon the State party to intensify its efforts to ensure safe, just and healthy conditions of work for all, including by adopting the Occupational Safety and Health Bill without further delay, and expanding the capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to undertake inspections and enforce compliance.

16. The Committee expresses concern at reports of discrimination against and harassment of women in the workplace, and at the lack of comprehensive legislation clearly prohibiting gender discrimination and sexual harassment in employment. It also expresses concern that the State party has not adopted the draft sexual harassment policy (art.7 (b)).

The Committee urges the State party:

(a) To adopt and enforce comprehensive legislation clearly prohibiting gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace with effective remedies for victims;

(b) To adopt the draft sexual harassment policy without further delay; and

(c) To undertake awareness-raising campaigns to combat gender stereotypes that perpetrate gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.

17. The Committee expresses concern at the high percentage of workers' votes required to exercise the right to collective bargaining, the lack of trade unions in export processing zones (EPZs) and the alleged practice by companies in EPZs of threatening workers and creating pro-employer councils to interfere with the handling of complaints. The Committee is also concerned at reports of private sector employers frequently laying off union workers and rehiring them as contractors, which hampers their ability to organize and bargain collectively. It further expresses concern at the extensive power of the Minister of Labour and Social Security to refer an industrial dispute to arbitration, including disputes that are not in essential public services, under sections 9, 10 and 11(A) of the Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act (art. 8).

The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Amend the Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act and its regulations to lower the current requirement of obtaining at least 40 per cent of the workers' votes in a unit or 50 per cent of the total votes to exercise the right to collective bargaining, in accordance with ILO Convention No. 98 (1949) concerning the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively and the observations of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations;

(b) Take effective measures against companies that prevent the right of all workers to form and join trade unions for the promotion and protection of their economic and social rights, particularly in EPZs; and

(c) Amend sections 9, 10 and 11(A) of the Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act, in accordance with the observations of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations.

18. The Committee reiterates its concern that the social security scheme in the State party does not provide for universal coverage. While noting the State party's efforts to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of its social security programme, including through the implementation of Vision 2030 Jamaica, it remains concerned that no time

frame has been established to introduce a universal social security scheme, and that a considerable portion of the disadvantaged and marginalized groups in society reportedly remain without social security, including older persons, single parents and persons with disabilities (art. 9).

The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation to strive for universal coverage of the social security system in the State party, giving priority to disadvantaged and marginalized groups in society, and draws attention to the Committee's general comment No. 19 (2007) on the right to social security.

19. Despite the measures taken by the Government to address violence against women and girls, such as the expansion of the Centre for Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse, the Committee expresses its profound concern at high rates of domestic and sexual violence, and the lack of a comprehensive strategy to address the phenomenon (art. 10).

The Committee urges the State party to intensify its efforts to combat high levels of violence against women and girls in Jamaica, including through the adoption and implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence. The Committee also underscores the importance of organizing public campaigns and trainings targeted at men, with a view to combating attitudes and behaviour that perpetrate violence against women in all forms.

20. While noting the establishment of various State agencies to ensure the protection of children, including the Child Development Agency, the Office of the Children's Advocate and the Office of the Children's Registry, as well as the adoption of the Child Care and Protection Act, the Committee remains deeply concerned at high levels of violence, use of corporal punishment in the home and in schools, abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation of children, as well as child victims' lack of access to psychosocial support. It is also deeply concerned at reports of sexual, physical and mental abuse of children at the hands of caregivers in the State party's children's homes and places of safety supervised by the Child Development Agency (art. 10).

The Committee strongly urges the State party to eradicate all forms of violence against children, including through the assistance of relevant United Nations agencies operating in the State party, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), by adopting concrete measures to:

- (a) Identify and protect children who are most vulnerable to abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation;**
- (b) Prohibit all forms of corporal punishment in all settings, including within the family; and**
- (c) Ensure the protection of children in the State party's child care institutions, including through the adoption of necessary reforms to effectively monitor, identify and prosecute individuals responsible for child abuse.**

21. The Committee expresses concern at the low minimum age for marriage, set at 16 years of age as stipulated in the Marriage Act (art. 10).

The Committee calls upon the State party to amend its legislation to raise the legal minimum age for marriage to 18 years to protect children from early and forced marriage.

22. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Child Care and Protection Act in 2004, which, inter alia, elevated the minimum working age from 12 years of age to 15 years of age and prohibits the employment of children under the age of 13 in any type of work. However, the Committee remains concerned at the continuing use of child labour in agriculture, fishing and the informal sector, despite the adoption of programmes such as the

Tackling Child Labour through Education project. It also regrets the slow pace of adopting the Occupational Health and Safety Bill containing a list of types of hazardous employment or work prohibited for persons under 18 years of age. The Committee is also concerned at the limited resources and ability of the Child Labour Unit of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to effectively enforce the Child Care and Protection Act, and the low level of arrests and prosecutions for child labour offences, as well as the lack of legislative provisions requiring employers to keep registers of employees (art. 10).

The Committee urges the State party to increase its efforts to effectively combat child labour, including through the assistance of the International Labour Organization. In particular the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Adopt the Occupational Health and Safety Bill containing the list of prohibited types of hazardous employment or work for persons below the age of 18 without further delay;**
- (b) Ensure that the Child Labour Unit of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security is provided with sufficient human and financial resources to effectively enforce the Child Care and Protection Act;**
- (c) Prosecute and effectively sanction perpetrators of child labour; and**
- (d) Adopt legislative provisions requiring employers to keep registers of employees.**

23. While the Committee welcomes the efforts made by the State party to combat trafficking in persons, including the adoption of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act in 2007 and the establishment of the National Task Force against Trafficking in Persons within the Ministry of National Security in 2005, it expresses concern at the prevalence of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and forced labour. It is further concerned at low levels of investigations, prosecutions and convictions for such cases, as well as the lack of prevention and protection mechanisms for victims, including rehabilitation schemes (art. 10).

The Committee urges the State party to intensify its efforts to combat trafficking in persons, including by:

- (a) Systematically collecting information on trafficking flows through the territory of the State party;**
- (b) Investigating, prosecuting and adequately sanctioning perpetrators of trafficking in persons;**
- (c) Ensuring that victims are provided with adequate protection and reparation, and establishing prevention and rehabilitation programmes for victims; and**
- (d) Training law enforcement officials, judges and other relevant personnel to raise awareness of this phenomenon and the rights of victims.**

24. The Committee welcomes the efforts made by the State party towards the attainment of universal access to safe potable water, as set out in the Jamaica Water Sector Policy: Strategies and Action Plans. However, the Committee remains concerned that according to the State party, almost half of the rural population lacks access to safe potable water. The Committee is also concerned at the lack of access to adequate sanitation facilities, particularly in unplanned urban squatter settlements (art. 11).

The Committee calls upon the State party to intensify its efforts to ensure universal access to safe potable water, particularly in rural areas, as well as access to adequate sanitation facilities, particularly in urban areas, and draws the attention of the State party to the Committee's general comment No. 15 (2002) on the right to water.

25. The Committee expresses concern at the acute housing situation in the State party, including the fact that almost a quarter of the population live as squatters on land they neither own nor lease, as well as the rapid growth of squatter communities in urban areas in overcrowded, unsafe and dilapidated housing. Additionally, the Committee regrets the absence of data on the extent of homelessness in the State party, as well as the lack of effective programmes and policies to address the issue (art. 11).

The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a comprehensive national housing strategy with a view to ensuring access to adequate and affordable housing with legal security of tenure for everyone. The Committee recalls that such strategy should: be developed based on a systematic needs assessment and consultation with and participation by affected individuals; include concrete targets and a time frame for implementation as well as an effective monitoring and feedback mechanism; and be allocated sufficient funding for effective implementation. The Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general comment No. 4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing, and requests that the State party provide information on measures adopted in this regard in its next periodic report, including information on the extent of homelessness and steps taken to eliminate the phenomenon.

26. The Committee takes note of the difficulties faced by the State party to guarantee the right to adequate food by way of local production due to the frequency of natural hazards, inefficient farming practices, lack of suitable land, and increases in commodity prices. While noting the importance of food importation to meet the dietary needs of the population, the Committee is concerned at the information provided by the State party that exposure to cheaper imports based on new trading agreements has led to the displacement of local farmers (art. 11).

The Committee recommends that the State party adopt effective long-term strategies aimed at improving domestic productivity in a sustainable manner and building the capacity of local farmers, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 12 (1999) on the right to adequate food. It also reminds the State party to assess the adverse impact of any trade agreements on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights of the population, and provide detailed information in its next State party report concerning trade agreements entered by the State party and their impact on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly among local farmers.

27. While welcoming the abolition of user fees for all public health facilities except for one hospital, the Committee remains concerned at the chronic shortage of trained health professionals, particularly in rural areas. It also expresses concern that there is reportedly only one hospital – with substandard conditions – that addresses the needs of persons with mental health issues (art. 12).

The Committee calls upon the State party to take further measures, including through the assistance of relevant United Nations agencies operating in the State party, such as the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization, to:

(a) Increase the availability of health-care services with qualified personnel, particularly in rural areas, including through the adoption of further incentives to create an environment that is conducive to attracting and retaining qualified health professionals; and

(b) Take further measures to increase the availability, accessibility and quality of health-care services, including for persons with mental illnesses.

28. While the Committee welcomes the decline in HIV-related deaths and mother-to-child transmission of HIV and the efforts made by the State party to combat HIV/AIDS and the stigma that is associated with it, the Committee regrets and remains concerned that:

- (a) HIV continues to be one of the leading causes of death among adults in the State party;
- (b) HIV rates remain high among youth, men in same-sex relationships, sex workers, homeless persons and drug users, whose behaviours are criminalized and/or considered immoral;
- (c) Almost two thirds of HIV-infected persons are unaware of their status; and
- (d) Stigma and discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS continue to persist, including in the workplace, particularly in relation to men in same-sex relationships and transgender persons, which not only prevents their access to essential medicines and treatment and their enjoyment of other economic, social and cultural rights, but risks undermining efforts to eradicate HIV (art. 12).

The Committee calls upon the State party to provide adequate human and financial resources to effectively implement the National HIV/STI Programme to ensure that any progress achieved so far is not reversed. The Committee also requests the State party to ensure that discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS is prohibited under its legislation, and to repeal or amend laws that stigmatize and increase the vulnerability of those most at risk.

29. While noting the adoption of a national policy for the provision of contraceptive services for teenagers under the age of 16 years in 2007, the Committee reiterates its concern at high rates of teenage pregnancies, and that abortion continues to be illegal in the State party under section 13(12)(c) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, which compels pregnant women to seek clandestine and harmful abortion services performed under unsanitary conditions by untrained personnel (art. 12).

Taking note of the draft Termination of Pregnancy Act, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that its legislation helps women avoid unwanted pregnancies and facilitates access to professional services with a view to eliminating the practice of dangerous abortions that place the lives of women and girls at risk. The Committee also reiterates its previous recommendation to ensure the provision of education on sexual and reproductive health, and to facilitate access to reproductive health services and contraceptives by all women and girls.

30. The Committee welcomes the efforts made by the State party to improve access to education, including free primary education and the abolition of tuition fees at the secondary level in 2007. Nevertheless, the Committee expresses concern at:

- (a) The underperformance and high drop-out rates of boys at primary and secondary levels;
- (b) Lack of access to formal education for children with disabilities; and
- (c) The quality of education at all levels, particularly in rural areas and in disciplines such as mathematics, science and information and technology (arts. 13 and 14).

The Committee encourages the State party to continue to take steps, including through international assistance, towards the goal of building an educational system that “develops critical thinking, life-long learners who are productive and successful and effectively contribute to an improved quality of life at the personal, national and global levels”, as enunciated in the Education Sector Plan of Vision 2030 Jamaica. The Committee calls upon the State party to pay particular attention to increasing access to education for disadvantaged and marginalized groups, such as boys from impoverished or rural areas and children with disabilities.

31. The Committee regrets the absence of a systematic data collection system concerning the ethnic composition of the population and on obstacles to the enjoyment by certain communities, such as Maroons, of their economic, social and cultural rights. In this regard, the Committee expresses concern at reports that the infrastructural needs of Maroons have been neglected by the State party, that formal education is not available in their community beyond basic education, that unemployment rates are high, and that the influx of popular island-wide culture poses a threat to their culture (arts. 2, 6, 13 and 15).

The Committee recommends that the State party take effective measures to fully guarantee the economic, social and cultural rights of the Maroon community, particularly in relation to their access to formal education, employment, basic services and infrastructure, and take effective measures to ensure the protection of their tradition and culture. The Committee also requests that the State party provide detailed information in its next periodic report concerning the ethnic composition of the population and on any obstacles faced by particular groups in their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, including the Maroons.

32. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the National Cultural Policy in 2003, aimed at promoting and protecting the rich history and cultural diversity of Jamaica, including that of indigenous communities such as Maroons and Rastafari. The Committee notes however that there is no legislation specifically addressing the protection of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples or communities as a whole.

The Committee encourages the State party to take effective measures to protect traditional knowledge and cultural expressions, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 21 (2009) on the right of everyone to take part in cultural life.

33. **The Committee requests the State party to disseminate the present concluding observations widely among all levels of society, in particular among State officials, the judiciary and civil society organizations, to publicize them as far as possible and to inform the Committee of the steps taken to implement them in its next periodic report. It also encourages the State party to engage all relevant actors, including non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society, in the process of discussion at the national level prior to the submission of its next periodic report.**

34. **The Committee encourages the State party to consider signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.**

35. **The Committee invites the State party to update its core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.82) in accordance with the requirements of the common core document in the harmonized guidelines on reporting (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6).**

36. **The Committee requests the State party to submit its fifth periodic report, prepared in accordance with the revised reporting guidelines of the Committee, adopted in 2008 (E/C.12/2008/2), by 31 May 2018.**