



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Qatar\*

1. The Committee considered the second periodic report of Qatar (CEDAW/C/QAT/2) at its 1690th and 1691st meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.1690 and CEDAW/C/SR.1691), held on 2 July 2019. The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/QAT/Q/2, and the responses of Qatar are contained in CEDAW/C/QAT/Q/2/Add.1.

#### A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the timely submission by the State party of its second periodic report. It also appreciates the State party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/1/Add.1) and its written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group, as well as the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Soltan bin Saad al-Muraikhi. The delegation also included the Director of the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Faisal bin Abdullah al-Henzab; a representative of the Advisory Council, Hend Abdulrahman al-Muftah; the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Ali Khalfan al-Mansouri; representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Planning and Statistics Authority; and other representatives of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-third session (1–19 July 2019).



## **B. Positive aspects**

4. The Committee welcomes the efforts made by the State party since the consideration in 2014 of the State party's initial report to undertake legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) Act No. 13 of 2018 amending provisions of Act No. 21 of 2015 on the entry and exit of foreigners and their residence, which enables certain groups of women migrant workers covered by the Labour Act (Act No. 4 of 2004) to leave the State party without having to obtain an exit visa, in October 2018;

(b) Act No. 10 of 2018 on permanent residency, in October 2018;

(c) Act No. 11 of 2018 on political asylum, in September 2018;

(d) Act No. 15 of 2017 regarding domestic workers, in August 2017;

(e) Act No. 13 of 2017 establishing one or more committees to issue rulings in connection with all disputes relating to the interpretation of the Labour Act (Act No. 4 of 2004) or employment contracts, in August 2017;

(f) Act No. 1 of 2015 amending provisions of Labour Act (Act No. 4 of 2004), regarding the protection of wages, in February 2015.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption of a second national development strategy, covering the period from 2018 to 2022, which was adopted in March 2018 with a view to increasing the number of women in leadership positions and establishing a civil society organization to promote women's issues, as set out in the Qatar National Vision 2030.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has acceded to the following international instruments:

(a) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in May 2018;

(b) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in May 2018.

## **C. Sustainable Development Goals**

7. The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also acknowledges the measures taken by the State party with the aim of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, including the adoption of the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the national development strategy for the period 2018–2022. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It urges the State party to recognize women as the driving force of the sustainable development of the State party and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.

## D. Parliament

8. The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see [A/65/38](#), part two, annex VI). It invites the Advisory Council, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.

## E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

### Reservations

9. The Committee notes with appreciation the information provided by the State party's delegation regarding the adoption of a strategy to review the State party's reservations to international human rights treaties, including the Convention, as part of its gradual approach to legal reform. It nevertheless remains concerned that the State party continues to maintain its reservations to articles 2 (a), 9 (2), 15 (1) and (4) and 16 (1) (a), (c) and (f) of the Convention. The Committee also reiterates its previous concern that the State party's reservations to articles 2 and 16 are contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention and undermine the implementation of the fundamental principle of formal and substantive equality between women and men in all aspects of public and private life ([CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/1](#), para. 7).

**10. Recalling its previous concluding observations (ibid., para. 8), the Committee recommends that the State party establish a clear timeline to review its reservations to the Convention, with particular emphasis on articles 2 and 16, given their centrality to the purpose and objective of the Convention, with a view to withdrawing them.**

### Visibility of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations

11. The Committee notes with appreciation the activities undertaken by the Department of Family Affairs in the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs and the National Human Rights Committee to raise public awareness of women's rights. Nevertheless, it reiterates its previous concern that the State party has not taken adequate measures to promote the visibility of the Convention and that there is inadequate knowledge among government officials, judges, members of the Advisory Council and the general public of the rights of women under the Convention, the concept of substantive equality of women and men and the Committee's general recommendations.

**12. Recalling its previous concluding observations (ibid., para. 10), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Adopt comprehensive measures to ensure that the Convention and the concept of substantive equality of women and men are sufficiently known among the general public and that women in particular are aware of their rights under the Convention and the remedies available to claim violations of those rights;**

**(b) Undertake systematic and regular capacity-building to ensure that the Convention and the concept of substantive equality of women and men are known among government officials, judges and members of the Advisory Council so that the provisions of the Convention are effectively applied by all branches of government.**

### **Constitutional and legislative framework and discriminatory laws**

13. The Committee notes the information provided by the State party that all international treaties concluded by the Emir become part of the national legal order pursuant to article 68 of the Constitution and that articles 18–19 and 34–35 contain legal guarantees of the principle of equality. It also takes note of the information that the State party has recently established a committee to review national legislation to bring it into conformity with international human rights treaties. The Committee remains concerned, however, about:

(a) The unclear status of the Convention in the national legal order, given that article 68 of the Constitution stipulates that treaties relating to the rights of citizens or those that involve an amendment of national laws will enter into force only when they are “issued as law”;

(b) The absence in national law of a definition of discrimination against women that explicitly prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in both the public and private spheres, in line with article 1 of the Convention;

(c) The lack of progress made in repealing or amending the discriminatory provisions in the laws referred to in the previous concluding observations (*ibid.*, para. 15), including the Family Act (Act No. 22 of 2006), the Nationality Act (Act No. 38 of 2005) and the Criminal Code;

(d) The absence of a constitutional court in the State party, notwithstanding the adoption of Act No. 12 of 2008, which provides for the establishment of such a court.

**14. Recalling its previous concluding observations (*ibid.*, paras. 12, 14 and 16) and the links between articles 1 and 2 of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Clarify the status of the Convention in its national legal order and adopt legislation incorporating its provisions into national law;**

**(b) Adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that includes a definition of discrimination against women that is in accordance with article 1 of the Convention, encompassing direct and indirect discrimination, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in both the public and private spheres, and guarantees effective remedies for victims of gender-based discrimination;**

**(c) Repeal all remaining legal provisions that discriminate against women and girls, especially in the areas of marriage, divorce, custody of children, inheritance and property rights, nationality and the requirement of the authorization of a guardian for single women under the age of 25 years to travel abroad;**

**(d) Take immediate measures to implement Act No. 12 of 2008 to establish a fully functional constitutional court without further delay.**

### **Access to justice**

15. The Committee expresses concern about the lack of an independent judiciary in the State party, as noted by the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (see [A/HRC/29/26/Add.1](#)), and the fact that women face institutionalized discrimination at many stages of the justice system, including when filing complaints with the police or appearing before the courts. It is also concerned that women and girls experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination, such as migrant women and

women and girls with disabilities, face significant barriers in terms of access to justice, resulting in impunity for violations of their rights.

**16. Recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue its efforts to strengthen the independence and effectiveness of the justice system, including by implementing the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (ibid.);**

(b) **Ensure that the principle of equality before the law is given effect by abolishing any existing laws, procedures, regulations, jurisprudence and practices that directly or indirectly discriminate against women, including corroboration rules that discriminate against women as witnesses, complainants and defendants by requiring them to discharge a higher burden of proof than men to establish an offence or seek a remedy, as well as procedures that exclude or accord inferior status to the testimony of women;**

(c) **Step up efforts to remove barriers faced by women and girls, in particular migrant women and women and girls with disabilities, in terms of access to justice, including by providing legal aid and independent and professional translation and interpretation services, when needed, and repealing any provisions of the Civil Code and other legislation that restrict the legal capacity of women and girls with disabilities;**

(d) **Ensure that the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations are made an integral part of legal education and training curricula for judges, prosecutors and lawyers, with a view to enabling them to apply the Convention directly and/or to interpret national legal provisions in line with the Convention.**

#### **National machinery for the advancement of women**

17. The Committee notes that the Supreme Council for Family Affairs has been abolished and that a department of family affairs, responsible for women's affairs, has been created within the Ministry of Labour, Administrative Development and Social Affairs pursuant to Emiri Decree No. 4 of 2016. It remains concerned, however, about that department's limited mandate, authority and capacity to ensure that gender equality legislation and policies are properly developed and fully implemented in the work of all ministries and government offices. In particular, the Committee notes with concern that the mandate of that department is to "maintain strong and cohesive families that adhere to moral and religious values" and that its programmes and activities are focused on family cohesion and the role of women in the family, rather than on promoting and protecting the rights of women, regardless of their marital status.

**18. The Committee, referring to the guidance provided in the Beijing Platform for Action regarding the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national machineries, recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt a clear strategy to consolidate and reinforce the capacity of the national machinery for the advancement of women and ensure that it has adequate decision-making power and human and financial resources, including experts on gender equality, to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention and gender mainstreaming across all government entities and legislative and policy areas;**

(b) **Ensure that the national machinery develops policies and programmes aimed at achieving gender equality and equal rights for all women, regardless of their marital status;**

(c) **Improve the collection of data, disaggregated by sex, age, marital status, ethnicity, migration status, disability and other relevant factors, to monitor and assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes implemented by the national machinery.**

#### **National human rights institution**

19. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Act No. 12 of 2015 to safeguard the independence and functional immunity of the members of the National Human Rights Committee and appreciates its work to promote the rights of women, including by issuing recommendations to bring the State party's legislation into compliance with the Convention and undertaking awareness-raising campaigns on the Convention. Nevertheless, the Committee expresses concern about the lack of implementation by the State party of the recommendations issued by the National Human Rights Committee and the absence of information on the outcome of cases of violations of women's rights considered by that body.

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

(a) **Fully implement the recommendations made by the National Human Rights Committee to bring national legislation into compliance with the Convention and ensure that all cases of violations of women's rights considered by the National Human Rights Committee are investigated, the perpetrators brought to account and the victims provided with effective remedies;**

(b) **Provide sufficient human, technical and financial resources to the National Human Rights Committee to ensure that it can effectively carry out its mandate to promote and protect the rights of women in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles);**

(c) **Take specific steps to address the concerns expressed by the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in its report of November 2015, including in relation to the adoption of a transparent, participatory and merit-based selection process of members and safeguards to protect against real or perceived conflicts of interest.**

#### **Civil society organizations**

21. The Committee appreciates the presence of government-sponsored non-governmental organizations from the State party during the consideration of the report, in addition to the information provided by those organizations. Nevertheless, it reiterates its previous concerns about the lack of independent civil society organizations engaged in advocacy for women's rights in the State party, the burdensome registration requirements for those organizations and the prohibition against those organizations engaging on political issues under Act No. 12 of 2004 on associations and private organizations (CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/1, para. 29).

22. **Recalling its previous concluding observations (ibid., para. 30), the Committee recommends that the State party amend Act No. 12 of 2004 on associations and private organizations to create an enabling environment in which civil society organizations, in particular women's non-governmental organizations and associations, may be freely established and engage in political and public life, in accordance with article 7 (e) of the Convention.**

### Temporary special measures

23. The Committee, noting the information provided by the State party on the laws and policies that it considers to be temporary special measures to advance the rights of women, such as those guaranteeing the right to maternity leave with full pay, the right to take time off for breastfeeding and the right to equal pay for equal work, recalls its previous concluding observations (*ibid.*, para. 20) and remains concerned about the lack of a clear understanding by the State party of temporary special measures. It regrets the absence of such measures, including a system of quotas aimed at achieving substantive equality between men and women with clear time frames and benchmarks.

**24. Recalling its previous concluding observations (*ibid.*, para. 21), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt and implement temporary special measures, including time-bound goals, quotas or preferential treatment, in order to achieve de facto or substantive equality between women and men in areas in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged;**

(b) **Avail itself of international technical assistance to ensure that relevant State officials have a clear understanding of the concept of temporary special measures within the meaning of article 4 (1) of the Convention, as elaborated in the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures.**

### Discriminatory gender stereotypes

25. The Committee notes the efforts made by the State party to promote the participation of women in the workplace and by the media to combat discriminatory gender stereotypes. It remains concerned, however, about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deeply rooted discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, which stress the role of women as mothers and caregivers. The Committee notes with particular concern:

(a) The State party's declaration under article 5 (a) of the Convention, which states that the "question of modification of 'patterns' referred to in article 5 (a) must not be understood as encouraging women to abandon their role as mothers and their role in child-rearing, thereby undermining the structure of the family";

(b) Laws that reinforce discriminatory stereotypes, such as the Family Act (Act No. 22 of 2006), which stipulates that the duty of the wife is to obey the husband, to be responsible for the household and to take care of children;

(c) Programmes and policies aimed at assisting women to reconcile family and professional duties that reinforce such stereotypes.

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

(a) **Undertake a comprehensive review of its national legislation and amend all provisions that legitimize or perpetuate discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society;**

(b) **Review programmes and projects aimed at strengthening family cohesion and assisting women to reconcile family and professional duties, with a view to eliminating stereotypes about women's roles as mothers and caregivers only;**

(c) **Encourage the involvement of men in domestic and childcare responsibilities, in line with article 5 (b) of the Convention, including by launching public campaigns portraying men in such roles and the resulting benefits to the family and society as a whole;**

(d) **Strengthen engagement with civil society, including with men and boys, as well as the media, to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes and intersecting forms of discrimination;**

(e) **Withdraw its declaration under article 5 (a) of the Convention.**

#### **Gender-based violence against women**

27. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party on the work of the Community Policing Department of the Ministry of the Interior to operate a domestic violence hotline, assist victims and undertake early intervention to prevent gender-based violence. It also welcomes the activities undertaken by various government-funded associations, such as the Protection and Social Rehabilitation Centre Aman, which provide assistance to victims of domestic violence. It remains concerned, however, at:

(a) The lack of progress made in ensuring that domestic violence and marital rape are explicitly criminalized in national legislation;

(b) The underreporting of cases of domestic and sexual violence owing to cultural and social stigma and fear of reprisals against victims and their families, as well as the lack of awareness among victims about their rights;

(c) The lack of awareness about and training in relation to gender-based violence against women and girls among judges, prosecutors and police officers to enable them to respond effectively to such cases in a gender-sensitive manner;

(d) The absence of comprehensive data on gender-based violence against women and girls, including on the number of complaints, prosecutions and convictions and the sanctions imposed on perpetrators, as well as on the remedies provided to victims.

28. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt legislation to criminalize all forms of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence and marital rape, without exemptions and within a clear time frame;**

(b) **Adopt a national plan of action to combat all forms of gender-based violence against women, with a particular focus on domestic violence;**

(c) **Encourage reporting of cases of gender-based violence against women and girls by combating the cultural and social stigma attached to reporting and ensuring that effective remedies are available and accessible to all victims;**

(d) **Ensure that victims of gender-based violence, including women domestic workers, have effective access to justice, protective measures, appropriate support services, rehabilitation and adequate redress and reparation, including compensation;**

(e) **Take effective measures to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable, by complying with its due diligence obligation to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish cases of gender-based violence against women, including women domestic workers;**

(f) **Provide mandatory training for judges, prosecutors and the police on the criminal nature of all forms of gender-based violence against women and on gender-sensitive interrogation methods;**

(g) **Systematically collect data on all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, disaggregated by age and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.**

#### **Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

29. The Committee welcomes the adoption of a national plan to combat trafficking in persons, covering the period 2017–2022, the establishment of a national committee to combat trafficking in persons, in 2017, and the State party's efforts to combat trafficking in the region. It also notes the information provided by the State party on investigations into cases of forced labour and trafficking. Nevertheless, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) That the State party remains a transit and destination country for women and girls subjected to trafficking in persons, including for purposes of forced labour;

(b) The lack of information on the number of complaints, prosecutions and convictions in trafficking cases, on the number of women and girls who have been identified as victims of trafficking and on the assistance and support provided to them;

(c) Reports that victims of trafficking are arrested, detained and deported for committing violations of immigration law, seeking to escape from their employers or sponsors or engaging in prostitution;

(d) The lack of measures taken to decriminalize women in prostitution, who continue to face a sentence of imprisonment of up to five years.

30. **Recalling its previous recommendations (ibid., para. 26), as well as target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure the effective implementation of the national plan to combat trafficking by allocating adequate technical, financial and human resources for its implementation;**

(b) **Investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators of trafficking in women and girls, ensuring that sentences are commensurate with the gravity of the crime and that victims are exempted from criminal liability;**

(c) **Establish mechanisms aimed at the early identification of victims of trafficking and their referral to appropriate assistance and support, and ensure that they have effective access to justice;**

(d) **Ensure that victims of trafficking, including women migrant domestic workers, may lodge complaints without fear of arrest, detention or deportation, including by ensuring that they are informed of their rights in a language that they understand and through an accessible medium;**

(e) **Strengthen support for victims of trafficking, in particular migrant women, by ensuring that they receive protection and have adequate access to counselling and rehabilitation services, reparations and compensation;**

(f) **Amend relevant legislation to decriminalize women in prostitution and provide exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution;**

**(g) Adopt measures to reduce the demand for prostitution, including by carrying out educational and awareness-raising measures targeted at the general public, in particular men and boys, with a focus on combating all notions of the subordination of women and all forms of objectification of women.**

#### **Participation in political and public life**

31. The Committee notes with satisfaction the increasing number of women who participate in political and public life in the State party, as well as the adoption of Emiri Decree No. 22 of 2017, providing for the appointment of women to the Advisory Council for the first time. The Committee notes with concern, however, that:

(a) Women remain underrepresented in the Advisory Council, with only 4 women out of 45 members (less than 10 per cent);

(b) Deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and cultural traditions continue to constitute a barrier to the political participation of women;

(c) Women are underrepresented in central municipal councils, ministerial positions and decision-making positions in the foreign service, the judiciary and the legal profession.

**32. Recalling its previous concluding observations (ibid., para. 28), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Take further measures to reach gender parity in the Advisory Council and ensure that, in addition to women who are appointed by the Emir, women are also elected through a democratic process;**

**(b) Adopt and implement temporary special measures, such as minimum quotas with benchmarks and specific timetables, to increase the participation of women in political and public life in the State party, including in central municipal councils and local government units, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25;**

**(c) Adopt legislation to ensure that political parties nominate equal numbers of women and men as candidates, allocate sufficient funding for campaigning by women candidates and impose fines on parties for non-compliance with such legislation;**

**(d) Implement programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for women candidates;**

**(e) Remove structural barriers to access by women to decision-making positions in the judiciary, the foreign service and the Government, including ministerial portfolios that are traditionally dominated by men.**

#### **Nationality**

33. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Act No. 10 of 2018 enabling children of Qatari women with foreign spouses to obtain permanent residence in the State party, which allows them to gain access to education and health care and to own property. It remains concerned, however, that no progress has been made in revising the Nationality Act (Act No. 38 of 2005) to enable Qatari women to confer their nationality upon their children and foreign spouses on an equal footing with Qatari men, as previously recommended by the Committee (ibid., para. 32). The Committee also expresses concern that children of Qatari women married to foreign spouses with permanent residence status are unable to enjoy the same rights as nationals and that they continue to be exposed to a high risk of statelessness.

34. **Recalling its previous concluding observations (ibid.), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Amend the Nationality Act (Act No. 38 of 2005) to bring it into full compliance with article 9 of the Convention by enabling Qatari women to confer their nationality upon their children and their foreign spouses on an equal footing with Qatari men;**

(b) **Withdraw its reservation to article 9 (2) of the Convention;**

(c) **Consider ratifying the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.**

### **Education**

35. The Committee welcomes the State party's progress in ensuring that women and girls have equal access to education, in addition to the high rates of enrolment among girls at all levels of education. It also notes that school curricula are being reviewed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in collaboration with the National Human Rights Committee, to include education on human rights and gender equality. Nevertheless, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The concentration of women and girls in traditionally female-dominated fields of study and the low percentage of girls enrolled in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

(b) That some university faculties, such as those pertaining to health and pharmaceutical studies, are currently only accepting women owing to "the needs of the State based on the particularities of the labour market", which may perpetuate gender stereotypes and horizontal occupational segregation;

(c) That women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women and girls with disabilities and migrant women and girls, experience difficulties in gaining access to high-quality education;

(d) The persistent gender stereotypes in school curricula, portraying women in the household and men in the workplace, and the lack of training provided to teachers on women's rights and gender equality;

(e) The limited age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights;

(f) That most professorships and decision-making positions in higher education are held by men.

36. **In line with article 10 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education, as well as Sustainable Development Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt temporary special measures, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25, to increase the number of girls and women in non-female-dominated fields of study and career paths, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;**

(b) **Eliminate women-only admission policies for specific fields at the tertiary level, which perpetuate gender stereotypes and the concentration of women in occupations that are traditionally dominated by women;**

(c) **Improve access to inclusive and high-quality education by all women and girls facing intersecting forms of discrimination, including women and girls with disabilities and migrant women and girls;**

(d) **Continue to review curricula and textbooks at all levels of education in order to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes and enhance professional training for teachers on women's rights and gender equality;**

(e) **Ensure that mandatory, age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on responsible sexual behaviour, the concept of consent in sexual relations and the criminal nature of sexual violence and harassment, are incorporated as a mandatory subject into all school curricula;**

(f) **Take measures, including temporary special measures, to increase the number of women professors and women in decision-making positions in higher education.**

### **Employment**

37. The Committee appreciates the priority accorded by the State party to increasing the participation of women in the labour market, as set out in the Qatar National Vision 2030, and the adoption of laws to strengthen the protection of the rights of migrant domestic workers. It remains concerned, however, about:

(a) The continued existence of regulations and de facto discriminatory practices that require Qatari women to present a letter of consent from a male guardian to obtain employment;

(b) The underrepresentation of women in the formal labour market, noting the information provided in the report that the majority of Qatari women “stay home as housewives”;

(c) The underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision-making positions in the public and private sectors;

(d) The persistent gender wage gap, noting that men earned 29 to 38 per cent more than women between 2011 and 2015;

(e) The discriminatory provisions in Labour Act (Act No. 14 of 2004), which prohibit women, but not men, from being employed in work that is considered hazardous, arduous or harmful to their health or morals or in other types of employment specified by the Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs and allow women to work only during hours that are specified in a decision of the Minister;

(f) The lack of provisions in the Labour Act (Act No. 14 of 2004) guaranteeing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

38. **Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/1, para. 36), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Abolish regulations and de facto discriminatory practices that require Qatari women to present a letter of consent from a male guardian to obtain employment;**

(b) **Take proactive and specific measures, including temporary special measures, to enhance access by women to the formal labour market and to increase their representation in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors;**

(c) **Strengthen measures to encourage women and girls to choose non-traditional career paths, including by providing incentives and increasing access to apprenticeships and vocational training in fields in which they are underrepresented, with a view to eliminating horizontal and vertical occupational segregation in the public and private sectors;**

(d) **Promote the equal sharing of family and domestic responsibilities between women and men, including by introducing compulsory paternity or shared parental leave following childbirth and increasing the number of childcare facilities to enable women to pursue their careers;**

(e) **Repeal sections 94 and 95 of the Labour Act (Act No. 14 of 2004), which prohibit women from being employed in work that is considered hazardous, arduous or harmful to their health or morals and impose arbitrary restrictions on the working hours of women, respectively;**

(f) **Amend the Labour Act (Act No. 14 of 2004) to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value;**

(g) **Consider ratifying the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and other relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO).**

#### **Health**

39. The Committee welcomes the measures adopted by the State party to improve women's access to high-quality health-care services, including the adoption of a national health strategy for the period 2017–2022. Nevertheless, it reiterates its concern that abortion continues to be criminalized, even in cases of rape or incest, and that women migrant workers are subjected to mandatory HIV testing and deported if found to be HIV-positive.

40. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (ibid., para. 40) that the State party:**

(a) **Legalize abortion in cases of rape, incest, threat to the life or health of the pregnant woman or severe fetal impairment and decriminalize it in all other cases, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health;**

(b) **Ensure that women and girls, including women migrant workers, have effective access to sexual and reproductive health information and services, including modern methods of contraception;**

(c) **Revise the policy of mandatory HIV testing for women migrant workers, so as to prohibit any involuntary testing, and end the deportation of women migrant workers living with HIV.**

#### **Economic and social benefits**

41. The Committee expresses concern that widows and divorced women face difficulties in obtaining land grants and housing loans provided by the State party, owing to the restrictive eligibility requirement under the Housing Act (Act No. 2 of 2007) that a woman must be single and over 35 years old, or divorced or widowed for at least five years, as well as the lack of transparency of the procedures to gain access to such benefits.

42. **The Committee recommends that the State party review the Housing Act (Act No. 2 of 2007) to ensure that all widows and divorced women have equal**

**access to land grants and housing loans to ensure that their land ownership and housing are on an equal footing with other women and men.**

#### **Gender and climate change**

43. The Committee welcomes the establishment of a national committee on climate change and clean development to follow up on the recommendations issued under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, as well as the participation of the State party in the Global Dryland Alliance to tackle food insecurity and the negative environmental and economic impacts associated with climate change. It remains concerned, however, that the carbon emissions per capita in the State party are among the highest in the world, which has a significant negative impact on the rights of women and girls, as elaborated in the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change.

**44. Recalling its general recommendation No. 37, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen efforts to reduce its carbon emissions and provide, in its next periodic report, information on:**

(a) **The participation of women in the development and implementation of initiatives aimed at combating climate change, including the National Committee on Climate Change and Clean Development and the Global Dryland Alliance;**

(b) **Measures taken to incorporate a gender perspective into climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.**

#### **Women migrant workers**

45. The Committee welcomes the measures adopted by the State party to strengthen the rights of women migrant workers, including Act No. 15 of 2017 regarding domestic workers, Act No. 1 of 2017 on the regulation of entrance, exit and residence of expatriates and Act No. 13 of 2017 establishing a labour dispute resolution committee. It also welcomes the signing in November 2017 of a three-year technical cooperation programme with ILO that aims to ensure compliance with the ILO conventions ratified by the State party, including by abolishing the *kafalah* system. Nevertheless, the Committee expresses concern that:

(a) Domestic workers, who are predominantly women, do not enjoy the same legal protection as other migrant workers whose rights are covered by the Labour Act (Act No. 14 of 2004), noting in particular that Act No. 15 of 2017 regarding domestic workers fails to include guarantees of a minimum wage, the right to sick leave, the right to benefits and protection relating to maternity and the right to establish or join labour unions, as well as a guarantee that migrant workers may enjoy daily and weekly rest periods agreed upon between them and their employers, especially in the absence of labour inspections, which may lead to exploitation and abuse;

(b) Women migrant workers, in particular domestic workers, continue to face significant barriers to bringing complaints against their employers and obtaining redress in cases of abuse, including owing to fear of retaliation, detention or deportation;

(c) The lack of information on the situation of migrant women, including pregnant women and women with children, who are detained in the Doha deportation detention centre; the number of complaints about violence, including sexual violence, brought by women migrant workers during the reporting period; and the number of investigations and prosecutions and the sentences imposed on perpetrators.

46. Recalling its previous concluding observations (*ibid.*, para. 38) and its general recommendation No. 26 (2008) on women migrant workers, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take further legislative measures to ensure that domestic workers are granted the same legal protection as other migrant workers whose rights are covered under the Labour Act (Act No. 14 of 2004) and develop and implement measures for labour inspection, enforcement and penalties with due regard for the special characteristics of domestic work;

(b) Continue to collaborate with ILO through the technical cooperation programme to abolish the *kafalah* system;

(c) Ensure that women migrant workers, in particular domestic workers, have effective access to legal aid and complaint mechanisms, shelters and rehabilitation services;

(d) Systematically investigate all allegations of exploitation, abuse and violence against migrant domestic workers and ensure that abusive employers are held accountable and punished with sanctions commensurate with the gravity of the offence;

(e) Provide information on the situation of migrant women, including pregnant women and women with children, who are detained in the Doha deportation detention centre; the number of complaints about violence, including sexual violence, brought by women migrant workers; and the number of investigations and prosecutions and the sentences imposed on perpetrators;

(f) Ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

#### **Women and girls with disabilities**

47. The Committee acknowledges the efforts made by the State party to raise awareness about women with disabilities, including the broadcasting of a weekly television programme to combat stereotypes in that regard. Nevertheless, it remains concerned that women and girls with disabilities face discrimination in various fields of life, especially in relation to access to employment, and are exposed to higher risks of violence and abuse.

48. Recalling its general recommendation No. 18 (1991) on disabled women, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Provide in its next periodic report detailed information on the situation of women and girls with disabilities and on the measures taken to deal with their particular circumstances in relation to all aspects covered by the Convention;

(b) Mainstream the rights of women and girls with disabilities in its national development policies and programmes aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of women, in consultation with their representative organizations.

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

49. The Committee notes with concern the lack of progress in amending the Family Act (Act No. 22 of 2006), which continues to contain provisions that are discriminatory towards women with regard to marriage and family relations. In particular, it reiterates its concern that:

(a) The minimum age of marriage remains 16 years for girls and 18 years for boys, with legal exceptions allowing for the marriage of girls under 16 years;

- (b) Women may marry only with the permission of a male guardian;
- (c) Polygamy remains permitted for men, who have the right to be married to up to four wives simultaneously;
- (d) Men are able to unilaterally divorce their spouses (*talaq*) while women cannot, unless this possibility is stipulated in the marriage contract and the woman pays the spouse mutually agreed compensation;
- (e) Women are denied custody of their children if they remarry someone outside of the family circle following divorce;
- (f) Female siblings receive half the inheritance received by their brothers.

50. **Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/1, para. 42), its general recommendation No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations and its general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, the Committee recommends that the State party repeal discriminatory provisions in the Family Act (Act No. 22 of 2006) without further delay and ensure that the law guarantees the equal rights of women and men in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. In particular, it recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Raise the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years, remove all legal exceptions and ensure that women have the right to marry without the permission of a guardian;**
- (b) **Prohibit polygamy and raise awareness about the harmful effects of polygamy on women, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 21 and joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2014) on harmful practices;**
- (c) **Ensure that men and women have equal rights in divorce, including equal grounds and procedures for obtaining a divorce;**
- (d) **Grant equal rights of legal guardianship to both parents following dissolution of the marriage based on the best interest of the child, regardless of whether the woman remarries;**
- (e) **Ensure the equal rights of women and men to inheritance;**
- (f) **Draw on the examples of countries with similar religious backgrounds and legal systems that have reconciled their national legislation with the legally binding international instruments that they have ratified, specifically regarding equal rights for women and men concerning marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance.**

#### **Data collection and analysis**

51. The Committee regrets the limited availability of statistical data, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, migration status, disability and other relevant factors, that would enable the State party to determine the magnitude and nature of discrimination against women and girls, develop informed and targeted policies and systematically monitor and evaluate progress achieved towards the realization of substantive equality between women and men in all areas covered by the Convention and the gender-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

52. **The Committee recommends that the State party enhance the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive data, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, migration status, disability and other relevant factors, and use**

measurable indicators to assess trends in the situation of women and progress towards the realization by women of substantive equality in all areas covered by the Convention and the gender-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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

53. The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

#### **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

54. The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to further evaluate the realization of the rights enshrined in the Convention in the context of the 25-year review of the implementation of the Declaration and Platform in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.

#### **Dissemination**

55. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the Advisory Council and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.

#### **Technical assistance**

56. The Committee recommends that the State party link the implementation of the Convention to its development efforts and that it avail itself of regional or international technical assistance in this respect.

#### **Ratification of other treaties**

57. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments<sup>1</sup> 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 ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a party.

#### **Follow-up to the concluding observations**

58. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 14 (a), 14 (d), 46 (a) and 50 (a) above.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

**Preparation of the next report**

59. **The Committee requests the State party to submit its third periodic report, which is due in July 2023. The report should be submitted on time and cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.**

60. **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/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).**