



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the eighth periodic report of Finland*

General context

1. Please provide information and statistics on the current situation of women in the State party, including older women, migrant women, women with disabilities, rural women, Roma women and Sami women, disaggregated by age, disability, national minority group status and nationality, as well as ethnicity, if permitted under the data protection laws applicable in the State party (para. 23),¹ in order to monitor the implementation of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere (paras. 265–268). Please also provide information on any new policies, strategies, programmes or action plans, including on their impact, adopted for the promotion of women's rights and the advancement of gender equality in the State party, including on the main features of the action plan for gender equality for 2020–2023 (paras. 59 and 63), a third integration programme, including for migrant women (paras. 27 and 211), and a new plan for the development of shelter services (para. 120), in particular in the Sami homeland (paras. 56–57).

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

2. Please provide information on additional measures taken to ensure the full implementation of the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the State party ([CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7](#)). Please report on measures taken to ensure that the Convention and the Committee's views under the Optional Protocol thereto, as well as the Committee's general recommendations, are made an integral part of training for all judges, lawyers and prosecutors (para. 103) to ensure that the practice of the judiciary for the application of national law is in conformity with the Convention. Please provide information about legal cases in which the Convention has been invoked and on training programmes on the Convention and the Optional Protocol conducted for the benefit of government

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 9 July 2021.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the eighth periodic report of the State party ([CEDAW/C/FIN/8](#)).



officials, law enforcement officials, teachers, employment professionals, the military, municipal and other officials, and the media (paras. 105–106, 113, 133, 141, 159, 206 and 214–215). Please also provide information on measures taken to ensure that women in the State party are aware of their rights under the Convention and about the communications and inquiry procedures provided for under the Optional Protocol, and on support available for them to invoke those rights, including by lodging complaints through the legal system when their rights have been violated (paras. 262-264).

Women’s rights and gender equality in relation to the pandemic and recovery efforts

3. In line with the Committee’s guidance note on the obligations of States parties to the Convention in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, issued on 22 April 2020, please indicate measures implemented by the State party, in addition to the measures described in the report, to redress long-standing inequalities between women and men and to give a new impetus to the implementation of gender equality by placing women at the centre of recovery as a strategic priority for sustainable change, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals; to meet the needs and uphold the rights of women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups and women in situations of conflict or other humanitarian emergencies; and to ensure that, in the context of lockdown measures, whether partial or total, and in post-crisis recovery plans, women and girls are not relegated to stereotypical gender roles. Please indicate the measures in place to ensure that all COVID-19 crisis response and recovery efforts, including the recovery and resilience plan: (a) address and are aimed at effectively preventing gender-based violence against women and girls; (b) guarantee the equal participation of women and girls in political and public life, decision-making, economic empowerment and service delivery, in particular in the design and implementation of recovery programmes; and (c) are designed so that women and girls benefit equally from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care roles, that are aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Please explain how the State party is ensuring that measures taken to contain the pandemic, such as restrictions on freedom of movement or physical distancing, do not limit the access for women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, to justice, shelters, education, employment and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services (para. 81).

Definition of equality and non-discrimination against women

4. In the light of the Committee’s previous recommendations ([CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7](#), para. 11), please provide information, supported by statistical data, disaggregated by sex, on the following: (a) gender-related enforcement, monitoring and results of the amended Equality Act and the new Non-Discrimination Act (para. 8); (b) legal standards and compensation programmes for women who are victims of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination; and (c) partial reform of the Non-Discrimination Act (para. 17). Please provide statistical data and examples of cases adjudicated by the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal involving multiple or intersecting forms of discrimination against women. Please explain why the applicability of the Equality Act and the Non-Discrimination Act and the mandate of National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal excludes matters of family and private life ([HRI/CORE/FIN/2020](#), paras. 364 and 374) and whether discrimination on the grounds of family status is covered by the Acts.

5. Please clarify the definition of “justified special treatment” in the Non-Discrimination Act and the legal conditions for, and consequences of, the

application of this concept (para. 9). Please provide information on whether temporary special measures have been adopted to promote women's rights and ensure substantive equality between women and men. Please explain whether the gender-neutral wording of new criminal legislation on sexual harassment and stalking represents a growing tendency towards gender neutrality in the State party's legislation, policies and programmes (para. 98).

Access to justice and legal complaints mechanisms

6. Please provide data on the number of complaints and prosecutions in relation to gender equality between women and men, sentences imposed on perpetrators, and remedies and compensation provided to women victims under the Equality Act and the Non-Discrimination Act by the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal, disaggregated by whether the case has been brought to the Tribunal by the Ombudsman for Equality, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman or the victims (para. 8). Please also provide information, including on the results of the study conducted by the Human Rights Centre of Finland on the entire human rights monitoring system in Finland, on good practices and challenges experienced in practice with the delimitation of the mandates of the Tribunal, the Ombudsman for Equality and the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, as well as the Human Rights Centre, including in gender equality cases of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women (paras. 10–11). Please provide information on complaints solved through mediation, which is often reported to be non-voluntary in practice and leading to a waiving of criminal charges, and their impact on gender (paras. 15 and 109–110).

National machinery for the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming

7. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 13), and in view of the reports by the State party that only around 20 per cent of legislative proposals included the gender perspective in some manner (para. 67), representing weaknesses of the Finnish model for gender mainstreaming (para. 72), please provide information on further steps taken to ensure that gender mainstreaming in legislation, policies and programmes becomes a common practice in the State party (paras. 64–72). In particular, please explain how gender mainstreaming in these areas has been ensured in the action plan for gender equality for 2020–2023 (paras. 59 and 64–65), in view of research and evaluations undertaken (paras. 64 and 69). Please also elaborate on equality and non-discrimination plans of the ministries of the State party (para. 70) and on municipal gender mainstreaming efforts (para. 66).

8. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 13), given that Finland ranks fourth on the Gender Equality Index 2020 of the European Institute for Gender Equality, and in view of the admission by the State party that Finland was progressing towards gender equality at a slower pace than many other member States of the European Union, please provide information on steps taken to establish a government institution, at the highest level and independent of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, that is responsible for the advancement of women and gender equality, and equipped with the necessary human, technical and financial resources for its effective functioning.

Temporary special measures

9. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, paras. 23 and 27 (b)), and in view of the 2015 government resolution that requires large and medium-sized listed companies to have at least 40 per cent of both women and men on their boards (para. 186) and the admission by

the State party that positive developments have ground to a halt (para. 185), please provide the following:

(a) Updated data, disaggregated by sex, on the composition of company boards and management;

(b) Information on temporary special measures taken to increase the representation of women as chief executive officers and on executive boards in all privately owned companies of the State party, as well as in companies with municipality majority ownership (para. 187);

(c) Whether temporary special measures have been adopted to accelerate the equal participation of women from disadvantaged groups, including migrant women (paras. 31 and 221), Roma women, Sami women, single mothers, older women and women with disabilities, in political participation and decision-making, education and the labour market.

Discriminatory gender stereotypes and harmful practices

10. With regard to the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 15), and in view of the reported sharp increase of all forms of hate speech against women in the State party (para. 130), please inform the Committee of any amendment to the Penal Code to criminalize sexist hate speech (para. 135) and other forms of gender-related hate speech, including against migrant women and women belonging to national minority groups. Noting the various efforts reported by the State party to address discriminatory gender stereotypes with regard to women and girls, including those experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination relating to religion, ethnicity, language, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or other characteristics (paras. 131–142), please provide further information on measures taken to tackle the phenomenon, including awareness-raising and educational campaigns, in particular since 2018, in follow-up to the research undertaken as mentioned in the report (para. 140). Please also provide data, disaggregated by sex and other characteristics, on the number, nature and outcome of complaints received by the Consumer Ombudsman since 2014 concerning negative, stereotypical and sexualized images of women and stereotypical attitudes regarding the roles of women and men in the family and society in marketing and the mass media (para. 142).

11. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 17), and in view of the measures taken by the State party to prevent and combat harmful practices (paras. 111–117), please provide information, including data, disaggregated by age, national minority group status, nationality, disability and relationship between the victim and perpetrator, as well as ethnicity, if permitted (para. 23), on the prevalence of female genital mutilation (paras. 115 and 117), child and forced marriage (paras. 151–153, 157 and 162), forced or involuntary sterilization, and crimes committed in the name of so-called "honour" (para. 86). In particular, please inform the Committee about the following:

(a) Whether the criminal provisions relating to female genital mutilation (para. 111) and forced marriages (para. 151) have been clarified in the Penal Code;

(b) Measures taken to eradicate, in legislation and in practice, forced or involuntary sterilization in the State party, and whether effective remedies for victims of such acts have been provided;

(c) Main features of the action plan for combating violence against women in relation to "honour"-related violence (paras. 86 and 91);

(d) Whether the construction of an artificial hymen is prohibited in the State party.

Gender-based violence against women

12. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 19), please provide updated data since 2014, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, national minority group status and nationality, as well as ethnicity, if permitted (para. 23), on the following: (a) the number of reported cases of gender-based violence against women; (b) prosecutions, convictions and sanctions imposed on perpetrators; (c) the issuing of restraining orders; and (d) the awarding of compensation (paras. 83 and 85), including in cases involving sexual violence committed in the Jehovah's Witnesses community (para. 87) and against women with disabilities. Please elaborate on the following: (a) a comprehensive evaluation of the action plan for the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) for 2018–2021 (para. 90); and (b) the action plan for combating violence against women (para. 92), including on the mandate of the independent rapporteur on violence (para. 93). Please provide information on the assessment of the effectiveness of restraining orders against perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and measures taken in follow-up (para. 96).

13. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 19 (e)), please indicate the steps taken to revise the legal definition of rape, including marital rape, in the Penal Code so that it is based on lack of consent of the victim, rather than on use of force of the perpetrator, in view of the legislative review conducted by the State party since 2014 (paras. 100–102). Please report on measures taken to strengthen the capacity of the police, prosecutors and judges on the strict application of relevant criminal law provisions and gender-sensitive investigations and adjudication of cases of gender-based violence against women, including cases affecting women with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups of women (paras. 106 and 108). Please provide information on steps taken to adopt an action plan for enhanced prevention, protection and redress of gender-based violence against women, in particular sexual violence, against Sami women and girls, and on any research conducted into the root causes of gender-based violence against them.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

14. Please provide updated data, disaggregated by age, disability, national minority group status and nationality, as well as ethnicity, if permitted (para. 23), on the number of reported cases of trafficking in persons, prosecutions, convictions and sanctions imposed on perpetrators, in which women and girls were victims in the State party, since 2014 (para. 157), including information on such cases in which Finnish authorities have cooperated internationally with countries of origin, transit and destination.

15. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 21), please elaborate on the following: (a) whether the Aliens Act has been amended to minimize the risk of deportation for victims of trafficking (paras. 164–165); (b) the 2015 revisions of the Penal Code concerning trafficking in persons (paras. 143 and 155); (c) the 2021 national action plan against trafficking in human beings (para. 158); and (d) cooperation between the new anti-trafficking coordinator, the new national anti-trafficking unit of the police and the national assistance system for victims of trafficking in persons (paras. 158–159). Please describe the following:

(a) The total number of women and girls recognized as victims of trafficking who have been compensated by the State party since 2014 (para. 162);

(b) Whether specific legislation on the provision of protection and assistance to victims has been enacted as recommended by a study of 2018, and report on its main features (para. 167);

(c) Gender-sensitive training provided to ensure that all relevant officials and persons working with potential victims of trafficking, including women and girls, have the necessary skills for the identification of such victims (para. 168).

16. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 21 (d) and (e)), please:

(a) Clarify the data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, national minority group status and nationality, as well as ethnicity, if permitted (para. 23), on victims of exploitation of prostitution (paras. 146–149);

(b) Provide the results of the study on the limited application of criminal law provisions concerning exploitation of prostitution (para. 150) and any remedial action taken to clarify the legal framework for prostitution;

(c) Indicate measures taken to reduce the demand for prostitution;

(d) Elaborate further on exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution (para. 149), especially those designed for women who are non-nationals.

Participation in political and public life

17. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 23), please provide information on the representation of the following: (a) women members of the European Parliament from Finland (para. 172); (b) women in high-level positions in municipalities (para. 180); (c) women in high ranks in the Finnish Defence Forces (para. 62); (d) women members of the Sami Parliament (para. 52); (e) women in the judiciary; and (f) women from disadvantaged groups in political and public life in general (para. 175). Please update the Committee on specific measures, such as statutory quotas or incentives, taken for political parties to include an equal number of women and men on their electoral lists for municipal elections (para. 173) to ensure substantive equality between women and men in political and public life.

Education

18. Please provide information on equality plans related to gender developed by the schools covered by the Equality Act, and whether this obligation has been extended to all levels of education as planned, including early childhood education and care institutions (paras. 201–207). Please describe any additional efforts to encourage women and girls to choose non-traditional fields of education and career paths, such as information communications technology, science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and to facilitate academic careers by women (paras. 181 and 213).

19. Please provide detailed information on decisive measures taken to reverse the reported worrying trend in Finland of high rates of sexual harassment, in particular with regard to the following: (a) occurrences in educational institutions, which according to the State party affects in particular women and girls who are non-nationals, women and girls with disabilities, and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and girls and intersex persons; (b) women and girls in care institutions; and (c) women in the Finnish Defence Forces. In addition, please provide detailed information on decisive measures taken to remedy the lack of support the victims receive (para. 251). Please provide information about the State party's plans

to include age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health and rights education in curricula at all levels of education, especially education designed to prevent violence. Please elaborate on structural reform of education of adult migrants, and on any gender-sensitive measures included (para. 211).

Employment

20. Please inform the Committee of the results of measures taken to reduce gender inequalities in the labour market in terms of both horizontal and vertical segregation (paras. 215–217). With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 27 (a) and (d)), please provide information on the following:

(a) Whether the State party is on track with its goal to reduce the gender pay gap to 12 per cent by 2025 (para. 226);

(b) Additional measures the State party has taken to ultimately close the gender pay gap and the pension gap, following the identification of the reasons for the existing gender pay gap, including by the Government and the Ombudsman for Equality (paras. 217–231);

(c) Sanctions imposed on companies not meeting the legal requirements of developing a gender equality plan and of publishing the gender composition of their board members, since 2017 (paras. 186 and 229);

(d) Steps taken to develop the planned reform to equalize the periods for paternity and maternity leaves (para. 235).

21. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 27 (b)), please provide information on measures taken to adopt temporary special measures to accelerate the equal participation of women from disadvantaged groups, including migrant women, Roma women, single mothers, older women and women with disabilities in the labour market, and whether comprehensive studies and recommendations on the employment of those groups of women have been carried out.

Health

22. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, para. 29), please provide information on the following: (a) measures taken to strengthen access for women and adolescent girls to health services, in particular for migrant women, including those who are undocumented (paras. 33–37), women with disabilities, women with low income, Roma women, women living in rural areas and Sami women; (b) the incidence of unsafe abortion and its impact on women's health, including maternal mortality (para. 199); (c) whether free contraceptives are available in all municipalities (para. 244); (d) the number of midwives in the State party; (e) the mental health situation, and the prevalence of eating disorders, substance and alcohol abuse, and suicide among women and girls, in view of the measures taken by the State party to address these phenomena (paras. 245–252); (f) the number of women living with HIV/AIDS in the State party, disaggregated by age, disability, national minority group status and nationality, as well as ethnicity, if permitted (para. 23); and (g) occurrence of other sexually transmitted diseases. Please provide information and data on the health situation of Sami women, and measures taken to improve their access to health care and social services (para. 54). Please also inform the Committee about the reform of the Act on Legal Recognition of the Gender of Transsexuals (para. 253) and provide justification for why the Sterilization Act, which permits the sterilization of women with disabilities without their consent, has not been repealed (para. 256).

Disadvantaged groups of women

23. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, paras. 31, 33, 35 and 37), please provide information on measures taken to address, in legislation, policies and programmes, the needs of women belonging to disadvantaged groups of women, older women, migrant women, women with disabilities, rural women, Roma women and Sami women, in order to eliminate intersecting forms of discrimination against them, including on any targeted measures to prevent and combat gender-based violence against women and girls belonging to these groups (paras. 27, 43–45, 48–49 and 55–57) and to facilitate their access to justice. In particular, please inform the Committee on the gender-related features of the following: (a) any comprehensive government integration programme and action plans concerning migrant women beyond 2020 (paras. 27–29 and 211); (b) the new action plan for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Finnish Disability Policy Programme beyond 2016 (para. 38–41); (c) the national policy on the Roma for 2018–2022 (para. 46); and (d) the truth and reconciliation process between the Government of Finland and the Sami Parliament, and programmes to support the use of the Sami languages (paras. 51 and 53). Please inform the Committee of steps taken to ensure that women in detention have secure prison conditions equal to men in all prisons and to strengthen access to health services for women in detention needing mental health care and substance abuse rehabilitation services.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

24. Please describe steps taken to integrate a gender perspective into national policies on climate change in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change. Please specify any measures taken to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making processes on climate change, disaster risk reduction and land and resource management.
