



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 combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina*

1. The Committee considered the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina ([CEDAW/C/BIH/4-5](#)) at its 1146th and 1147th meetings, on 19 July 2013 (see [CEDAW/C/SR.1146](#) and [1147](#)). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in [CEDAW/C/BIH/Q/4-5](#), and the responses of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina are contained in [CEDAW/C/BIH/Q/4-5/Add.1](#).

A. Introduction

2. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its detailed combined fourth and fifth periodic reports, its written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the Committee's pre-sessional working group, and the responses to the questions posed orally by the Committee.

3. The Committee commends the State party for its delegation, which was headed by Samra Filipovic-Hadziabdic, Head of the Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and included the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations Office at Geneva, as well as representatives of the Gender Equality Agency, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the Gender Centres of the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Permanent Mission. The Committee appreciates the dialogue that took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration, in 2006, of the State party's combined initial, second and third periodic reports ([CEDAW/C/BIH/1-3](#)) in undertaking legislative reform, in particular:

* Adopted by the Committee at its fifty-fifth session (8-26 July 2013).



(a) The adoption, in 2009, of the law on the prohibition of discrimination, which includes sex, sexual expression or sexual orientation as prohibited grounds of discrimination;

(b) Amendments, in 2009, to the law on gender equality (2003);

(c) Amendments, in 2010, to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which include a definition of trafficking in line with international standards (article 186).

5. The Committee commends the State party for improving its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, including:

(a) The adoption of the Bosnia and Herzegovina gender action plan (2006-2011) and the funding mechanism for the implementation of the plan;

(b) The adoption of the national action plan to combat trafficking and illegal migration (2008-2012);

(c) The adoption of the action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security (2010-2013) and the establishment of a coordinating committee, in 2011;

(d) The adoption of the national war crimes prosecution strategy, in 2008.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of its previous combined reports, the State party, in addition to having accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, in 2012, has ratified or acceded to the following international and regional instruments:

(a) The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, in 2012;

(b) The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in 2012;

(c) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2010;

(d) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2010;

(e) The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in 2008;

(f) The European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in 2008;

(g) The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, in 2008.

7. The Committee commends the State party for having adhered to the nine major international human rights instruments. The Committee also welcomes the ratification by the Parliament, referred to during the dialogue, of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and notes that the instruments of ratification will be deposited.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Parliamentary Assembly

8. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the State party were adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly. While reaffirming that the Government has the primary responsibility and is particularly accountable for the full implementation of the obligations of the State party under the Convention, the Committee stresses that the Convention is binding on all branches of Government and invites the State party to encourage the Parliamentary Assembly, in line with its procedures and where appropriate, to take the necessary steps with regard to the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting process under the Convention.

Women in post-conflict situations

9. While recognizing the State party's efforts to improve the situation of women in post-conflict situations, the Committee is deeply concerned about:

(a) The slow pace of prosecutions and very low level of conviction rates of perpetrators of sexual violence, which result in pervasive impunity, despite the implementation of the 2008 national war crimes prosecution strategy;

(b) The inadequate definition, at both the State and entity levels, of acts of sexual violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity, in particular the elements of the crime of rape, which are not in line with international standards; the large number of cases at the district and cantonal levels, at which rape continues to be prosecuted as an ordinary crime, without taking into account the dimension of the armed conflict; and the parallel applicability of different criminal codes, resulting in inconsistent jurisprudence and lenient sentencing practices;

(c) Long delays in adopting measures to address the needs of a large number of women victimized by the conflict;

(d) The lack of adequate victim reparation in war crimes trials, where victims are being referred to initiate separate civil proceedings, while such claims can be submitted and ruled upon during criminal proceedings;

(e) The deficiencies of witness protection measures in cases prosecuted at the district and cantonal levels, where the law on the witness protection programme is not applicable;

(f) Women's inadequate and unequal access to compensation, support and rehabilitation measures for violations suffered during the war, such as enforced disappearances. These measures include sustained psychological and medical support as well as financial and social benefits, which are regulated differently in the entities;

(g) The lack of measures taken to address the systematic stigmatization faced by women victims of wartime sexual violence, which hampers their access to justice and social reintegration.

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

(a) **Speed up the implementation of the national war crimes strategy and increase the number of prosecutions of war crimes cases by allocating more financial resources and investigative capacities to address the large backlog of cases;**

(b) **Amend all relevant criminal codes to include a definition of wartime sexual violence in line with international standards, including a specific definition of rape as a war crime and a crime against humanity, in order to adequately reflect the gravity of the crimes committed and intensify its efforts to harmonize the jurisprudence and sentencing practices of its courts throughout the State party, by establishing effective cooperation mechanisms between prosecutors and courts competent to deal with war crimes at all levels of the State party;**

(c) **Expedite the adoption of pending draft laws and programmes designed to ensure effective access to justice for all women victims of wartime sexual violence, including adequate reparation, such as the draft law on the rights of victims of torture and civilian war victims, the programme for victims of sexual violence in conflict and torture (2013-2016) and the draft strategy on transitional justice aimed at improving access to justice;**

(d) **Ensure the effective implementation of the new law on the witness protection programme and establish sustainable and operational witness protection measures at the district and cantonal levels;**

(e) **Develop a comprehensive approach to improve the status and position of all women victims of the war, including by combating the stigma attached to sexual violence; and expand the provision of compensation, support and rehabilitation measures and benefits, and ensure equal access to such services for all women victims, irrespective of their place of residence.**

11. The Committee is concerned about the lack of effectiveness of the Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) action plan regarding women's participation in peace, reconciliation and rehabilitation processes.

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the full implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) through the State party's action plan and develop concrete measures to enhance the participation of women in decision-making processes relating to post-conflict policies and strategies, taking into account the needs of women and girls, in particular as regards their social rehabilitation and reintegration.**

Constitutional and legislative framework

13. While acknowledging the existing definitions in the gender equality law, the Committee is concerned that the Constitution does not at present include a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, in line with article 1, or of the principle of equality between women and men, in line with article 2 of the Convention.

14. **In the light of the constitutional review process, the Committee recommends that the State party specifically incorporate into its new Constitution a definition of equality between women and men and a prohibition**

of direct and indirect discrimination against women in the public and private spheres, in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention.

Legal complaint mechanisms

15. In the light of the direct applicability of the Convention, the Committee is concerned about the limited number of court proceedings where provisions of the Convention were directly invoked or applied, as well as the low number of complaints related to gender-based discrimination brought before the Gender Equality Agency and the Institution of Human Rights Ombudsmen, which indicates a continuing lack of awareness among women themselves and among the judicial and legal professions about the rights of women and the remedies available under the State party's legal framework, the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, as well as about the Committee's general recommendations. The Committee is also concerned that the provision of legal aid remains fragmented and unregulated in some cantons of the Federation, that it continues to be provided largely by privately funded non-governmental organizations, and that the adoption of a State-level law on free legal aid is still pending.

16. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Provide systematic and mandatory training to judges, prosecutors and lawyers on the gender equality law and the law on the prohibition of discrimination, as well as on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations and views adopted on individual communications, encourage them to refer to the Convention to give it greater visibility, and ensure that they form an integral part of legal education;

(b) Increase women's awareness of their rights and the remedies available to enable them to seek redress in cases of gender-based discrimination;

(c) Expedite the adoption of the draft law on legal aid, aimed at unifying the provision of free legal aid in the State party in order to facilitate access to justice for all women, in particular those belonging to disadvantaged groups.

National machinery for the advancement of women

17. While welcoming the continued cooperation between the Gender Equality Agency and the Gender Centres of the entities and the forthcoming adoption of a new gender action plan (2013-2017), the Committee is concerned about the limited cooperation between existing gender equality bodies and relevant ministries at all levels; insufficient gender mainstreaming within ministries at all levels; the resulting weak implementation of the gender action plan owing to, notably, an unclear division of responsibilities among the competent bodies; and the insufficient inclusion of disadvantaged women in the formulation of policies and programmes. The Committee also reiterates its concern that the Gender Equality Agency is not sufficiently visible and that its position within one State-level ministry may create obstacles to its effectiveness in working with other ministries. Furthermore, while noting that the mandate of gender equality bodies includes the submission of opinions prior to the adoption of new laws and regulations, the Committee is concerned about the limited human, financial and technical resources of the national machinery to efficiently promote, coordinate, monitor and evaluate national gender equality legislation and policies in the State party.

18. In view of the implementation of the new gender action plan, the Committee calls upon the State party to establish effective cooperation mechanisms between the gender equality bodies and the relevant ministries in order to increase gender mainstreaming in all areas and at all levels, including with regard to disadvantaged groups of women. The Committee also calls upon the State party to strengthen the Gender Equality Agency by giving it greater visibility and authority vis-à-vis relevant ministries and the Council of Ministers. In addition, the Committee recommends that the State party provide the national machinery with the necessary human, financial and technical resources to improve its effective functioning, in particular by including technical capacity-building activities and capacity for enhanced cooperation with civil society, as well as introduce effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms at all levels in the context of its system for gender mainstreaming, including sanctions for non-compliance.

Stereotypes

19. The Committee reiterates its concern about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society at large (see [CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/3](#), para. 23). It notes that such attitudes and stereotypes constitute a significant impediment to the implementation of the Convention, as they are root causes of: (a) women's disadvantaged position in the State party in political and public life, especially in decision-making positions and elected offices, as well as in the labour market; (b) the prevalence of violence against women in the State party; and (c) gender segregation as reflected in women and girls' educational choices. In addition, the Committee regrets the serious delays in addressing the remaining gender stereotypes found in school textbooks and materials.

20. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Remove, as a matter of priority, gender stereotypes from educational textbooks and teaching materials;**

(b) **Disseminate the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality throughout the educational system, both formal and informal, with a view to enhancing a positive and non-stereotypical portrayal of women, by incorporating human rights and gender equality into training and educational materials and by providing training on women's rights to teaching staff;**

(c) **Develop a comprehensive, wide-ranging strategy across all sectors, with proactive and sustained measures, targeted at women and men, girls and boys, to overcome patriarchal and gender-based stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, in particular in areas where women are in the most disadvantaged position, such as public and political life and employment;**

(d) **Intensify its cooperation with civil society and women's organizations, political parties, education professionals, the private sector and the media, and disseminate information to the general public and to specific audiences, such as decision-makers, employers, youth and disadvantaged groups of women, on women's rights in the private and public spheres.**

Violence against women

21. While welcoming the State party's increased efforts to combat domestic violence, the Committee reiterates its serious concern about the high prevalence of domestic violence and the lack of monitoring and accountability mechanisms regarding the implementation of existing strategies, at both the State and entity levels; insufficient data collection to assess the phenomenon of domestic violence; and insufficient support services dependent on non-governmental organizations and foreign funding. The Committee is also concerned about the inconsistent application of the laws regulating domestic violence by the courts of both entities, which undermines women's trust in the judicial system despite the comprehensive legislative framework in place; the underreporting of domestic violence; the limited number of protective measures issued; and the lenient sentencing policy, including a large percentage of suspended sentences. In addition, the Committee regrets the absence of information regarding Brčko District and the insufficient information on other forms of violence against women in the State party.

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

(a) **Establish effective institutional mechanisms to coordinate, monitor and assess the effectiveness of the impact of the strategies developed and measures taken with a view to ensuring the consistent application of the laws at all levels;**

(b) **Encourage women to report incidents of domestic violence by de-stigmatizing victims and raising awareness about the criminal nature of such acts, and intensify its efforts to ensure that all reported cases of domestic and sexual violence against women and girls are effectively investigated and that perpetrators are prosecuted and sentenced commensurate with the gravity of the crime;**

(c) **Collect statistical data on domestic violence, including femicide, disaggregated by sex, age and relationship between victim and perpetrator, and undertake research on the extent of all forms of violence against women and its root causes;**

(d) **Provide mandatory training for judges, lawyers and law enforcement officers on the uniform application of the existing legal framework, including on the definition of domestic violence and on gender stereotypes;**

(e) **Provide adequate assistance, protection and rehabilitation to women victims of all forms of violence, including by strengthening the capacity of existing shelters and by enhancing cooperation with and funding for non-governmental organizations providing shelter and rehabilitation to victims.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

23. While noting the new legislative framework in place at the State level, the Committee remains concerned about the low number of prosecutions, undue delays in proceedings and the leniency of sentences, despite the growing trend of internal and international trafficking in the State party. It is particularly concerned that the Criminal Codes of the entities and of Brčko District have not been harmonized with the State Criminal Code and therefore do not allow adequate prosecutions at the entity and district levels with corresponding punishments and convictions of acts of

trafficking, especially internal trafficking. Furthermore, while noting the adoption of regulations protecting victims and witnesses and the development of a new strategy for combating trafficking in human beings, the Committee is concerned about the lack of effective victim identification procedures, especially regarding women and girls from Roma communities and internally displaced women who are increasingly affected, and that most of the shelters providing adequate services to victims of trafficking, are operated by non-governmental organizations that rely on external funding.

24. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Amend the Criminal Codes of both entities and of Brčko District to harmonize them with the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to ensure that acts of trafficking are adequately prosecuted;

(b) Ensure the effective implementation of the new legislative framework and the timely prosecution and punishment of traffickers, as well as review its sentencing policy in trafficking cases;

(c) Provide mandatory and gender-sensitive training for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officers on applicable legal provisions, including regulations on the protection of witnesses of trafficking;

(d) Strengthen mechanisms aimed at the early identification and referral of victims of trafficking, with a special focus on Roma and internally displaced women, as well as preventive measures such as raising awareness about the risks of trafficking for disadvantaged groups of women;

(e) Ensure adequate funding for anti-trafficking activities undertaken by non-governmental organizations.

25. The Committee expresses concern at the fact that the State party remains a country of origin, destination and transit for trafficking in human beings, in particular women and girls, for purposes of sexual exploitation. It is also concerned at the fact that prostitution that is punishable as an administrative offence, as well as at the absence of research and data on the prevalence of exploitation of prostitution in the State party and the lack of policies and programmes to address that phenomenon.

26. The Committee calls upon the State party to:

(a) Amend its legislation to ensure that women victims of prostitution are no longer punished by a fine; ensure the investigation, prosecution and punishment of those who exploit prostitution; and take measures to discourage the demand for prostitution;

(b) Pursue a comprehensive approach to addressing the exploitation of prostitution, including by developing strategies to support and provide rehabilitation for women who wish to leave prostitution; and provide, in its next periodic report, comprehensive information and data on the prevalence of exploitation of prostitution.

Participation in political and public life

27. The Committee notes with satisfaction that article 20 of the Gender Equality Law requires the State party to ensure 40 per cent participation of women in political life, that the electoral law provides for a mandatory 40 per cent quota of female candidates on political parties' lists, that the law on the financing of political parties was amended to encourage political parties to promote female candidates running for national parliamentary elections, and that the representation of women in the judiciary and the civil service has increased. However, the Committee notes with concern the stagnant low representation of women in Parliament and in government positions at the State, entity, district, cantonal and municipal levels, particularly at the decision-making level. The Committee is also concerned that female candidates are not given sufficient visibility by the media and by political parties in pre-election campaigns and that women are often absent from important decision-making processes, such as the ongoing discussions about constitutional reforms.

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

(a) **Develop effective mechanisms for the application of quotas in order to increase women's political representation, by placing women in winnable positions and establishing benchmarks with a concrete timetable and sanctions for non-compliance;**

(b) **Introduce procedures to ensure the implementation of article 20 of the Gender Equality Law at the State, entity, district and municipal levels to promote, inter alia, the participation of Roma women and rural women in elected office and appointed bodies; and promote women in leadership positions in the executive branch and the public service, through the use of temporary special measures where appropriate;**

(c) **Increase its efforts to provide training and capacity-building to enable women to enter public office, and enhance awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of women's full and equal participation in political and public life, including activities targeting leaders of political parties;**

(d) **Continue providing incentives for political parties to nominate equal numbers of women and men as candidates, and harmonize their statutes with the Gender Equality Law;**

(e) **Encourage the media to ensure that female and male candidates receive equal visibility, especially during pre-election campaigns, including by fully implementing the relevant provisions of the law on public broadcasting service regarding the equal appearance and representation of both men and women in programming content and programming policy.**

Nationality

29. The Committee is concerned about the lack of effective implementation of universal birth registration in the State party, in particular among Roma women and girls, which places them at risk of statelessness and hinders their access to basic services. It notes with concern that the lack of information, as well as the existence of administrative and financial obstacles, may prevent Roma women from registering births and obtaining birth certificates.

30. The Committee calls upon the State party to:

(a) Ensure that all children born on the territory of the State party, in particular Roma children, are registered at birth, as a means of preventing statelessness and to ensure their access to education, social services, health care and citizenship; and develop measures to identify unregistered children and ensure that they are provided with personal documents;

(b) Strengthen its public awareness-raising campaigns to ensure that Roma women are aware of the importance of birth registration and of the procedural requirements to obtain certificates, and ensure their access to registration services and procedures.

Education

31. While commending the State party for the high level of education of women and girls, the Committee remains concerned about the persistent segregation of fields of study at the post-secondary level, with women concentrated in traditionally female-dominated areas and underrepresented in technical/vocational education. The Committee is also concerned about the existing mono-ethnic school system, which discriminates against girls on the basis of their ethnicity and has a negative impact on their education opportunities. In addition, the Committee expresses concern about the low enrolment rates and high dropout rates of Roma girls at the primary school level.

32. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Further encourage young women to choose non-traditional fields of study and professions and implement programmes aimed at counselling boys and girls on educational choices;

(b) Implement the recommendations developed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science, in collaboration with the education ministers of the Federation, with a view to eliminating the mono-ethnic school system;

(c) Promote access for Roma girls to education and their retention at all levels of education, by raising awareness of the importance of education as a human right and as the basis for the empowerment of women, and strengthen the implementation of re-entry policies enabling Roma girls who have dropped out to return to school.

Employment

33. The Committee notes that the State party has taken various measures to support the participation of women in the labour market, as part of the Bosnia and Herzegovina strategy for employment (2010-2014) and the entities' employment strategies; that the gender action plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2013-2017 gives priority to women's economic participation by developing measures aimed at facilitating the reconciliation of private and professional life; and that a framework law was enacted in order to unify and harmonize the social sector in the State party, including through maternity protection. However, the Committee remains concerned about:

(a) The markedly low participation rate of women in the labour force, in spite of their high level of education, as reflected by the disproportionately high unemployment rate among women;

(b) The concentration of women in such sectors as health care, education and agriculture, in the informal sector and in the “grey economy”, and the large number of women employed with temporary contracts; and the exclusion from the formal labour market of disadvantaged groups of women, such as internally displaced women, rural women and Roma women;

(c) The lack of an institutional framework to enforce the prohibition of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment at work and the lack of measures to facilitate the reporting of such acts and to inform women of their rights;

(d) The lack of childcare facilities, which constitutes an obstacle to the full exercise of women’s right to work;

(e) The 12 different existing regimes with different regulations on maternity protection depending on women’s place of residence, which have a negative impact on their ability to participate in the labour force and reinforce the unequal division of family responsibilities between women and men.

34. The Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Adopt temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and with the Committee’s general recommendation No. 25, aimed at achieving de facto equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, including disadvantaged groups of women; and establish special training programmes and counselling for different groups of unemployed women, including by promoting women’s entrepreneurship;

(b) Take effective measures to integrate disadvantaged groups of women and women working in the “grey economy” into the formal labour market;

(c) Closely monitor the working conditions of women in the informal sector and those employed with temporary contracts, by strengthening labour inspections; ensure their access to social services and social security; and consider ratifying International Labour Organization Convention No. 189 (2011), concerning decent work for domestic workers;

(d) Adopt effective measures, including temporary special measures, to eliminate horizontal and vertical occupational segregation based on stereotypes related to gender;

(e) Develop a confidential and safe system for filing complaints related to gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, and ensure that victims have effective access to such means of redress;

(f) Enhance the availability and affordability of childcare facilities to help women exercise their right to work, in order to increase women’s access to the labour market;

(g) Ensure that the implementation of the framework law regulating the social sector results in the harmonization of pregnancy and maternity protection in the State party, in order to guarantee paid maternity leave for all women;

(h) **Carry out awareness-raising and education initiatives for both women and men on the sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men and provide incentives for active participation by men in such responsibilities, e.g., by introducing special non-transferable paternity leave.**

Health

35. The Committee is concerned at the absence of unified laws and policies in the area of health, resulting in unequal access to health-care services and health insurance coverage, depending on the place of residence of women and the financial capacities of the district and/or canton concerned, which disproportionately affects Roma women and rural women. The Committee is also concerned about the low rate of modern contraceptive use in the State party, resulting in high numbers of teenage pregnancies. While noting the implementation of the young people's health policy (2008-2012) in Republika Srpska and the 2010 strategy to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Federation, the Committee is concerned about the absence of information on the measures taken and the results achieved.

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

(a) **Intensify its efforts to harmonize its health-care system and to integrate a gender perspective into all health sector programmes and reforms, in order to ensure that women, including disadvantaged groups of women, have equal access to health-care services and adequate health insurance coverage throughout the State party;**

(b) **Raise awareness of and enhance effective access to affordable modern contraceptive methods, including in rural areas, so that women and men can make informed choices about the number and spacing of their children;**

(c) **Introduce age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in school curricula, including issues relating to gender relations and responsible sexual behaviour, with the aim of preventing early pregnancies and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV;**

(d) **Undertake systematic gender impact assessments of current strategies and policies, and include such information in its next periodic report.**

Disadvantaged groups of women

37. The Committee expresses concern about the situation of various disadvantaged groups of women, including Roma women, internally displaced women, many of whom continue to live in collective accommodation, so-called minority returnee women, rural women, older women and women with disabilities, who are more vulnerable to poverty and are at risk of intersectional forms of discrimination in terms of education, health care, employment and public and political participation. It regrets the insufficient information provided by the State party in this regard and the limited information provided on the use of temporary special measures.

38. **The Committee calls upon the State party to take effective measures to eliminate discrimination against Roma women, internally displaced women and minority returnee women, rural women, older women and women with**

disabilities, particularly in the areas of education, health and employment and in political and public life, by developing targeted strategies, including temporary special measures, to increase equality in those areas. The Committee also recommends that the State party increase its cooperation with civil society organizations in this regard and requests that it include detailed information, including disaggregated data and information, on the situation of disadvantaged groups of women in its next periodic report.

Marriage and family relations

39. The Committee is concerned about the prevalence of the practice of early marriage within Roma communities and about the lack of sustained, systematic and concrete action taken by the State party to address this harmful practice, despite the legal prohibition of such acts.

40. **The Committee recommends that the State party develop comprehensive measures to combat the practice of early marriage and to raise awareness among Roma communities about the legal prohibition of child marriage, as well as its negative effects on girls' health and their completion of education, notably by establishing cooperation with community leaders.**

Data collection and analysis

41. The Committee notes that the law on the census of the population, households and dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina was adopted 3 February 2012 and that, accordingly, a new census will be undertaken in 2013. However, as acknowledged by the delegation, the Committee regrets that insufficient statistical data disaggregated by sex, age, race, ethnicity, geographical location and socioeconomic background were provided in many areas covered by the Convention, which has created gaps and inconsistencies in the legislative reforms undertaken, as well as in policies and programmes developed, and has misdirected available funding. It notes that such data are necessary for an accurate assessment of the situation of women and for informed and targeted policymaking with regard to all areas covered by the Convention.

42. **The Committee urges the State party to improve the collection and analysis of statistical data, disaggregated by sex, age, race, ethnicity, geographical location and socioeconomic background, in all areas covered by the Convention, as required under article 22 of the law on gender equality, including with respect to disadvantaged groups of women, in order to assess the progress made towards de facto equality, the impact of measures taken and the results achieved. The Committee also calls upon the State party to ensure that all relevant bodies comply strictly with article 22 and requests that such data be included in its next periodic report.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

43. **The Committee calls upon the State party to utilize the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.**

Dissemination

44. The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It urges the State party to give priority attention to the implementation of the present concluding observations and recommendations between now and the submission of the next periodic report. The Committee therefore requests the timely dissemination of the concluding observations, in the official language(s) of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional, local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the Parliamentary Assembly and the judiciary, to permit their full implementation. It encourages the State party to collaborate with all stakeholders concerned, including, inter alia, employers' associations, trade unions, human rights and women's organizations, universities, research institutions and media. It also recommends that its concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local community level to permit their implementation. In addition, the Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto, the relevant jurisprudence and the Committee's general recommendations to all stakeholders.

Follow-up to concluding observations

45. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10 (a) to (d) and 34 (a) to (h) above.

Preparation of the next report

46. The Committee invites the State party to submit its sixth periodic report in July 2017.

47. 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/MC/2006/3](#) and Corr.1).