



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
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## **Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

### **Ethiopia**

1. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women considered the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of Ethiopia (CEDAW/C/ETH/6-7) at its 984th and 985th meetings, on 15 July 2011 (CEDAW/C/SR.984 and 985). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/6-7, and the responses of the Government of Ethiopia are contained in CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/6-7/Add.1.

### **Introduction**

2. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its sixth and seventh combined periodic report, which was detailed and in general followed the Committee's guidelines for the preparation of reports, although it lacked references to the Committee's previous concluding observations and its general recommendations, as well as some specific disaggregated data, and was overdue. The Committee notes with appreciation that the report was prepared in a participatory process under a joint treaty reporting project, with support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, involving Government bodies, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for the oral statement presented by the head of delegation, the written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by its pre-session working group and the further clarifications to most of the questions posed orally by the Committee.

3. The Committee commends the State party for its high-level delegation, headed by the Minister of Women's, Children's and Youth Affairs of Ethiopia, which included representatives of several Government departments. The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue that took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee, while noting that some questions were not answered.



**Positive aspects**

4. The Committee welcomes the ratification by the State party on 7 July 2010 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

5. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the new Criminal Code (2005), which criminalizes various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence and extramarital rape, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage and marriage by abduction, and trafficking in women and children. It also appreciates the establishment of victim-friendly benches in federal courts and of special units to investigate and prosecute crimes against women in prosecutors' offices in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa and in some regional states, as well as the steps taken so far by the State party to train judges, prosecutors and police officers on the application of the Criminal Code and on women's rights, including their rights under the Convention.

6. The Committee notes with appreciation the various policies and strategies adopted by the State party to promote gender equality and protect women's rights, including the National Plan for Gender Equality (2005-2010), the Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to Eradicate Poverty (2005-2010), which included "unleashing the potential of Ethiopian women" among its eight strategic elements, the Development and Change Package for Ethiopian Women, seeking to promote the economic and political participation of women and to eradicate harmful traditional practices, and the joint United Nations/Government of Ethiopia flagship programmes on gender equality and maternal health.

7. The Committee notes with satisfaction the increase in the number of women in the House of Peoples' Representatives, where women currently hold 27.8 per cent of seats as a result of the national elections held in 2010.

8. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to promote women's and girls' access to education, in particular in rural and pastoralist areas, including:

(a) The introduction of girls' scholarship programmes and the supply to girls of educational materials and uniforms, with the support of non-governmental organizations;

(b) The introduction of girl-friendly schools, as well as the construction of separate latrines for girls and boys in schools;

(c) The provision of incentives to parents in pastoralist areas to send their daughters to school;

(d) Training and the taking of affirmative action to raise the share of female teachers in primary and secondary schools to 50 per cent and to increase the number of female college and university instructors.

9. The Committee notes with appreciation the efforts undertaken by the State party to improve women's and girls' access to health services, including family planning and reproductive health services, through its Health Extension Programme, by training health extension workers on maternal health and emergency obstetric care and by expanding the number of primary health-care units, health centres and hospitals.

### **Principal areas of concern and recommendations**

10. The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement all of the provisions of the Convention and views the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding observations as requiring the priority attention of the State party between now and the submission of the next periodic report. Consequently, the Committee urges the State party to focus on those areas in its implementation activities and to report on actions taken and results achieved in its next periodic report. The Committee calls upon the State party to submit the present concluding observations to all relevant ministries at the federal and regional levels, to the House of Peoples' Representatives, the House of Federation and regional councils, as well as to the judiciary, so as to ensure their full implementation.

### **The Federal Houses**

11. 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. It invites the State party to encourage both Federal Houses, in line with their procedures, where appropriate, to take the necessary steps with regard to the implementation of the present concluding observations and the State party's next reporting process under the Convention.

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

12. While noting that article 9 of the Federal Constitution provides that international agreements ratified by the State party form an integral part of its domestic law, and that the core international human rights treaties, including the Convention, have been translated into Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinya by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, the Committee is concerned that the Convention has not been officially translated and published in the *Federal Negarit Gazeta*. It is also concerned that there is inadequate knowledge of the rights of women under the Convention, of its concept of substantive gender equality and of the Committee's general recommendations among all branches of the Government and the judiciary, at both federal and regional levels. The Committee is further concerned that women themselves, especially those in rural and remote areas, are not aware of their rights under the Convention and thus lack the capacity to claim them.

13. The Committee recommends that the State party officially translate the full text of the Convention and publish it in the *Federal Negarit Gazeta* in order to make it accessible to the public and to enable judges to directly apply it under conditions of legal certainty. It also calls on the State party to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations are sufficiently known and applied by all branches of Government and the judiciary at federal, regional and local levels as a framework for all laws, court decisions and policies on gender equality and the advancement of women. The Committee recommends that the Convention and related domestic legislation be given stronger emphasis in the legal education

**and training of judges, prosecutors and lawyers, including those working in sharia courts, so that a legal culture supportive of women's equality with men and non-discrimination on the basis of sex is firmly established in the State party. Lastly, the Committee recommends that the State party further enhance women's awareness of their rights and the means to enforce them through, inter alia, legal literacy programmes, and ensure that information on the Convention is provided to women in all regional states through the use of all appropriate means, including the media.**

#### **Harmonization of laws**

14. The Committee reiterates its concern that not all regional states have adopted regional family laws in conformity with the Federal Family Code (2000) and the Convention, which recognize the equal right of women and men to freely enter into marriage, as well as equal rights and responsibilities of spouses during marriage and its dissolution, and set the minimum age of marriage at 18 years, and that some regional states continue to apply their previous discriminatory family laws. The Committee also notes that the Federal Constitution does not preclude the adjudication of disputes relating to personal and family laws in accordance with religious and customary laws (article 34(5)) and for that purpose authorizes the House of Peoples' Representatives and regional councils to establish or give official recognition to religious and customary courts (article 78(5)).

**15. The Committee recalls its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/ETH/CO/4-5, para. 244), and calls on the State party to ensure that all regional states adopt family laws in conformity with the Federal Family Code and the Convention and to take measures, including awareness-raising and training, to sensitize the population and to enable public officials to effectively enforce the revised Family Code, in particular the equal right of women and men to freely enter into marriage, the equal rights and responsibilities of spouses during marriage and its dissolution, and the minimum age of marriage of 18 years. The Committee also calls on the State party to ensure that federal, regional, customary and religious laws are harmonized in line with the Convention.**

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

16. While welcoming the establishment of a comprehensive national machinery for the advancement of women, comprising the Ministry of Women's, Children's and Youth Affairs, women's affairs departments in all federal ministries, regional women's affairs bureaux, and similar structures at the zonal, woreda and kebele levels, the Committee notes with concern that the capacity, resources and efficiency of the national machinery have not been adequately strengthened to ensure the effective implementation of relevant laws and policies, follow-up, data collection, systematic gender-mainstreaming and harmonization and alignment of processes, including the monitoring and evaluation and data analysis necessary for evidence-based strategic planning.

**17. The Committee, recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/ETH/CO/4-5, para. 246), general recommendation No. 6 (1988) and relevant recommendations addressed to the State party during the universal periodic review (A/HRC/13/17, para. 97.32) and by the Committee on the**

**Rights of the Child (CRC/C/ETH/CO/3, para. 11), as well as the guidance provided in the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular regarding the necessary conditions for the effective functioning of national mechanisms, recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Strengthen the existing national machinery at all levels by providing it with adequate human, technical and financial resources to increase its effectiveness in formulating, implementing, providing advice on, coordinating and overseeing the preparation and implementation of legislation and policy measures in the field of gender equality and in mainstreaming gender perspectives in all laws and policies;**

**(b) Provide further training on women's rights, including on a short-term basis, to women and men working in the Ministry of Women's, Children's and Youth Affairs, the women's affairs departments in each federal ministry, regional women's affairs bureaux, and zonal, woreda and kebele women's affairs offices, as well as to those working in other Government offices at the federal and regional levels;**

**(c) Give priority attention to women's rights and non-discrimination and to the enjoyment of gender equality, including by taking into account the Committee's recommendations in the implementation of the Second Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to Eradicate Poverty (2010-2015);**

**(d) Further strengthen the capacity and independence of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, especially the Commissioner for Women's and Children's Rights and her department, in line with the Paris Principles (General Assembly resolution 48/134, annex).**

#### **Stereotypes and harmful practices**

18. While noting the efforts made by the State party to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and harmful practices affecting women, the Committee reiterates its concern at the persistence of adverse cultural norms, practices and traditions as well as patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in all spheres of life. The Committee is concerned that such customs and practices perpetuate discrimination against women, and are reflected in women's disadvantageous and unequal status in many areas, including in public life and decision-making, economic life, sexual and reproductive health, and in marriage and family relations. It notes that such stereotypes also contribute to the persistence of violence against women, as well as harmful practices including female genital mutilation, early marriage, the abduction of girls, and wife inheritance; and expresses its concern that the State party has not taken sufficient sustained and systematic action to modify or eliminate stereotypes and negative cultural values and harmful practices.

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

**(a) Put in place, without delay, a comprehensive strategy to eliminate harmful practices and stereotypes that discriminate against women, in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention. Such measures should include more concerted efforts, in collaboration with civil society, to educate and raise awareness about this subject, targeting women and men at all**

levels of society, especially at the woreda and kebele levels, and should involve community and religious leaders;

(b) **Address harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, marriage by abduction and wife inheritance by expanding public education programmes and by effectively enforcing the prohibition of such practices, in particular in rural areas;**

(c) **Use innovative measures to strengthen understanding of the equality of women and men, including their equal rights to participate in public life and decision-making, own land and livestock, freely make sexual and reproductive health choices and freely choose a spouse and enter into marriage, and continue to work with the media to enhance a positive and non-stereotypical portrayal of women;**

(d) **Undertake an assessment of the impact of those measures in order to identify shortcomings, and improve them accordingly.**

#### **Female genital mutilation and violence against women**

20. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to combat violence against women, including female genital mutilation and sexual and domestic violence, by, for example, revising its Criminal Code, establishing special investigation and prosecution units and victim-friendly benches in the federal court system, and providing some legal aid and assistance to women and children victims of violence. However, while noting that female genital mutilation is declining among younger women and in urban areas, the Committee notes with concern that it remains highly prevalent in rural and pastoralist areas (with the highest rates in the Afar (91.6 per cent) and Somali (79 per cent) regions) and that the penalties for female genital mutilation stipulated in articles 561-563, 567, 569 and 570 of the Criminal Code (2005) are too lenient. It is also concerned that female genital mutilation and sexual, domestic and other forms of violence against women are underreported owing to cultural taboos and victims' lack of trust in the legal system, and that criminal law provisions are not consistently enforced because of insufficient allocation of funds, lack of coordination among the relevant actors, low awareness of existing laws and policies on the part of law enforcement officials, lack of capacity to apply the law in a gender-sensitive manner and discriminatory societal attitudes. The Committee is further concerned about the State party's failure to criminalize marital rape, its delay in adopting a national strategy to combat violence against women, lack of victim assistance and rehabilitation services and the absence of disaggregated data on prosecution and conviction rates in relation to violence against women.

21. **The Committee recalls its general recommendations No. 14 (1990), on female circumcision, and No. 19 (1992), on violence against women, and its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/ETH/CO/4-5, paras. 252 and 256), as well as the recommendations of the Committee against Torture (CAT/C/ETH/CO/1, para. 32), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/ETH/CO/7-16, para. 16), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/ETH/CO/3, para. 60) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and urges the State party to:**

(a) **Amend the Criminal Code (2005), with a view to increasing the penalties for female genital mutilation in articles 561-562, 567, 569 and 570;**

repealing article 563; criminalizing marital rape; and excluding the applicability in domestic violence cases of the extenuating circumstances set out in article 557(1)(b) (gross provocation, shock, surprise, emotion or passion);

(b) Effectively enforce the provisions of the Criminal Code (2005) criminalizing female genital mutilation and sexual and domestic violence, prosecute any such acts upon complaint by the victim or ex officio, and impose appropriate penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime on perpetrators;

(c) Provide mandatory training to judges, including local and sharia court judges, prosecutors and the police on the strict application of relevant provisions of the Criminal Code;

(d) Encourage women and girls to report acts of violence to the competent authorities, by continuing to raise awareness about the criminal nature and harmful effects of female genital mutilation and other forms of violence on their health, eradicating the underlying cultural justifications of such violence and practices, destigmatizing victims, and training law enforcement and medical personnel on standardized, gender-sensitive procedures for dealing with victims and effectively investigating their complaints;

(e) Enhance victim assistance and rehabilitation, by strengthening the legal aid services of the Ministry of Justice, providing psychological counselling, supporting local women's rights organizations which offer shelter and assistance to victims, and establishing victim support centres in the regional states;

(f) Expedite the adoption and implementation of the draft national strategic plan to combat violence against women and children prepared by the Ministry of Justice;

(g) Collect disaggregated data on the number of complaints against, prosecutions or convictions of, and sentences imposed on perpetrators of female genital mutilation and sexual and domestic violence, and provide such data to the Committee.

22. The Committee takes note of the State party's denial of any acts of sexual violence against women and girls, including rape, allegedly committed by members of the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) in Somali Regional State. The Committee is nevertheless concerned at numerous and consistent reports about crimes against women and girls, including rape, torture, extrajudicial killings and forced evictions, by members of ENDF and of private militia groups in the context of armed conflict, in particular in the Ogaden area of the Somali Regional State, and about the impunity enjoyed by the alleged perpetrators of such crimes.

23. In accordance with article 2 of the Convention, and taking into account general recommendations No. 28 (2010), on the core obligations of States parties under article 2, and No. 19 (1992), on violence against women, as well as the concluding observations of the Committee against Torture (CAT/C/ETH/CO/1, para. 16), the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Investigate, prosecute and adequately punish members of ENDF and of private militia groups responsible for rape and any other crimes committed

**against women and girls, particularly in the context of armed conflict, and take effective measures to prevent the recurrence of any such crimes;**

**(b) Take immediate steps to adequately compensate and rehabilitate the victims of any such crimes;**

**(c) Favourably consider facilitating humanitarian access for international organizations and non-governmental organizations to areas where women and girls are affected by armed conflict, namely in the Somali region.**

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

24. While noting that the State party has taken measures to combat trafficking in human beings, in particular women and girls, by criminalizing it, raising awareness, training law enforcement officials, creating a special prosecution unit and concluding agreements with neighbouring countries, the Committee is concerned about the lack of data and the low prosecution and conviction rates in relation to, in particular, internal trafficking in women and children for forced labour and sexual exploitation, the limited measures to address poverty as the root cause of trafficking, the lack of victim assistance and the lack of protection of refugee and internally displaced women and children vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking.

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

**(a) Adopt a national plan of action to combat trafficking in human beings, in particular women and girls, including refugees and internally displaced persons;**

**(b) Continue raising awareness about human trafficking and training law enforcement officials on the strict application of relevant criminal law provisions;**

**(c) Address the root causes of trafficking by further enhancing the economic potential of women, including by expanding the Ethiopian Women's Development Fund to cover more regional states and beneficiaries and by further enhancing women's access to land;**

**(d) Establish appropriate mechanisms aimed at early identification, referral, assistance and support for victims of trafficking, including refugee and internally displaced women and girls;**

**(e) Collect disaggregated data on the number of complaints, investigations, prosecutions and sentences in relation to trafficking, and include such data in its next periodic report.**

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

26. While welcoming the steady increase in the representation of women in the House of Peoples' Representatives, where they currently hold 152 of 547 seats (27.8 per cent), and, to a more limited extent, in regional councils, the Committee notes with concern that no woman opposition candidate was elected to the House of Peoples' Representatives at the 2010 national elections and that women continue to be underrepresented in senior positions in the Government, the judiciary and the diplomatic service. In this regard, the Committee notes that only 3 of 23 Ministers in the current Government are women. It also notes with concern that systematic



barriers, such as negative cultural attitudes, doubts about women's leadership capabilities, insufficient affirmative action in the form of quotas for women and capacity-building for potential candidates, limited financial resources and women's limited interest due to lack of logistical support, impede women's equal participation in political life.

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

(a) **Adopt temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004), such as gender quotas that apply throughout the structure of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia as well as to political appointments, with a view to accelerating the equal representation of women and men in elected and appointed political bodies, especially in decision-making positions;**

(b) **Allocate greater funds for women candidates, including opposition candidates, in the public funding of election campaigns;**

(c) **Take affirmative action to increase the percentage of female judges, civil servants and diplomats, in particular in high-level positions;**

(d) **Provide training on gender equality to politicians, journalists and decision makers, especially men, to enhance the understanding that the full, equal, free and democratic participation of women and men in political and public life is a requirement for the full implementation of the Convention.**

**Civil society and non-governmental organizations**

28. Notwithstanding the explanations provided by the State party during the dialogue as to the need to prevent foreign influence on the political life in Ethiopia and dependency of local civil society organizations on foreign donors, the Committee is seriously concerned that Proclamation No. 621/2009, on the registration of charities and societies, which bars foreign non-governmental organizations and local non-governmental organizations that receive more than 10 per cent of their funding from foreign sources from working on human rights and gender equality (article 14), has obstructed the capacity of local women's rights organizations to provide legal aid and other support to women victims of human rights violations. It expresses concern that the decision of the Civil Society Agency to freeze 90 per cent of the assets of some local human rights organizations, including the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), previously the main local women's rights organization in Ethiopia, cannot be appealed to a court and has forced those non-governmental organizations to downsize their staff and number of regional offices and, in the case of EWLA, to suspend legal aid and hotline services for women. It is also concerned that the State party has not been able to fill the gap resulting from the suspension of those services.

**29. The Committee recalls its statement on its relationship with non-governmental organizations (2010), as well as the recommendations made by the Committee against Torture (CAT/C/ETH/CO/1, para. 34) and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/ETH/CO/7, para. 14), and calls on the State party to:**

(a) **Recognize the crucial role of non-governmental organizations in empowering Ethiopian women through awareness-raising and advocacy, victim**

assistance and rehabilitation, as well as legal and other support enabling women to claim their rights;

(b) Consider amending the law on civil society organizations with a view to lifting the funding restrictions on local human rights non-governmental organizations, including those working on women's rights, and any other restrictions on activities of local and international non-governmental organizations which are incompatible with international human rights standards, such as the right of citizens and non-citizens to freedom of association;

(c) Unblock the assets of EWLA and other local human rights non-governmental organizations, ensure that decisions of the Civil Society Agency are subject to judicial review, and guarantee the freedom of non-governmental organization workers from any form of harassment or intimidation;

(d) Cooperate with local and other women's rights non-governmental organizations to enable them to play a meaningful role in the implementation of the Convention in the State party, thereby assisting the State party to fulfil its obligations under the Convention;

(e) In the interim, devise strategies to mitigate the adverse impact of the law on civil society organizations on the capacity of local human rights non-governmental organizations, including women's rights non-governmental organizations, and fill the gap resulting from their limited ability to provide legal and other services to women, including outside Addis Ababa, in consultation with international partners.

### **Education**

30. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to increase women's and girls' access to all levels of education, such as affirmative action, awareness-raising, support to disadvantaged girls and incentives for parents to send their daughters to school, in particular in rural and pastoralist areas. However, it remains concerned about:

(a) Regional disparities and low enrolment rates of women and/or girls in primary education in rural and pastoralist areas and in secondary and higher education, as well as in traditionally male dominated fields of technical and vocational education;

(b) The high dropout rate and the low retention and completion rates of girls, in particular at the primary level, which seriously impact enrolment at the secondary level;

(c) The limited access of poor girls, girls in pastoralist areas and girls with disabilities to education due to economic and sociocultural barriers, such as indirect costs of schooling, unfavourable attitudes by male students and teaching staff, verbal and physical abuse and harassment, and long distances to schools;

(d) The low female literacy rate (38 per cent in 2004), especially in rural areas.

31. **The Committee calls on the State party to continue taking measures to address regional disparities and ensure equal access of girls and women to all levels of education, such as measures to:**

(a) **Ensure enrolment, retention and completion by women and girls at all levels of education, especially in rural and pastoralist areas, including by making primary education compulsory and taking affirmative action, such as the further training and recruitment of female teachers and quotas for female university students;**

(b) **Continue raising awareness among communities, families, students, teachers and officials, especially men, about the importance of women's and girls' education;**

(c) **Improve the quality of education and make it more attractive and safer for women and girls, including by increasing the number of girl-friendly schools and schools with separate latrines for boys and girls and by investigating and adequately punishing any abuse of women and girls by other students or by teachers;**

(d) **Strengthen support services, including scholarships, transport and tutorial support, for disadvantaged girls, such as poor girls, girls in pastoralist areas and girls with disabilities, as well as incentives and subsidies for their families;**

(e) **Ensure adequate educational opportunities for girls and boys with disabilities, including by integrating them into mainstream education;**

(f) **Encourage women and girls to choose non-traditional fields of education and careers, such as technical and vocational education and training in traditionally male dominated areas;**

(g) **Reinforce its adult literacy, adult non-formal education and alternative basic education programmes, focusing in particular on the emerging regional states.**

### **Employment**

32. While acknowledging the legislation in place protecting women's labour rights and the efforts made by the State party to enhance income-generating opportunities for women, the Committee remains concerned about the discrimination faced by women in the labour market, including:

(a) The disproportionately high unemployment rate among women;

(b) The high proportion of women engaged in unpaid family work, especially in the agricultural sector, and in low-paid jobs, owing to family responsibilities, lack of the resources necessary to acquire skills, limited access to land, credit and information, and traditional attitudes;

(c) The high percentage of women working in the informal sector without access to social protection;

(d) Unequal pay and benefits, discriminatory hiring and promotion practices and unfair dismissals based on gender, marital status, family responsibility or pregnancy;

(e) The absence of legislation prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace;

(f) The lack of protection for women domestic workers from sexual abuse by their employers or by family members of their employers;

(g) The high number of girls and boys, including those living in the street, who are exploited in situations of child labour and are vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse.

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

**(a) Expand its policies aimed at creating income-generating opportunities for women and continue taking affirmative action, for example, by giving priority to women in public sector recruitment;**

**(b) Extend its economic empowerment programmes to more women beneficiaries;**

**(c) Collect sex-disaggregated data on the situation of women and men in the private and informal sectors and take effective measures to monitor and improve the working conditions of women in those sectors;**

**(d) Undertake concerted efforts to devise, adopt and implement a national social protection scheme covering, among others, informal sector workers, including women;**

**(e) Effectively enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, through awareness-raising, increased sanctions and more effective labour inspections;**

**(f) Consider amending Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003, with a view to increasing the penalties for termination of employment based on gender, marital status, family responsibility or pregnancy, and including a prohibition of, as well as adequate sanctions for, sexual harassment in the workplace;**

**(g) Regulate and monitor the working conditions of domestic workers, in particular women, and protect them from sexual abuse by their employers;**

**(h) In accordance with International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 (1999), on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, take effective measures to protect girls and boys from exploitative child labour through increased inspections and fines for employers, expand existing and adopt additional measures for girls and boys living in the street, such as comprehensive skills programmes and family reunification initiatives, and provide them with basic services.**

**Health**

34. While welcoming the measures taken by the State party to extend basic health services to rural areas and increase women's and girls' access to family planning and reproductive health services, the Committee remains concerned about:

(a) The high maternal mortality rate (470 per 100,000 live births) due to obstetric complications such as fistulae, early pregnancy, unsafe abortion, harmful practices and other factors;

(b) The low rate of skilled birth attendance (18 per cent) and the shortage of emergency obstetric services, especially in rural areas;

(c) Low contraceptive use, exposing women and girls who are often married to older men to risk of early pregnancy and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases;

(d) The high number of unsafe abortions;

(e) The high number of women living with HIV/AIDS, the lack of antiretroviral prophylaxis to prevent mother-to-child transmission, the absence of special prevention programmes for high-risk groups such as young women, sex workers and internally displaced persons, and the lack of care and support for orphans and vulnerable girls and boys affected by HIV/AIDS.

**35. In line with its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/ETH/CO/4-5, para. 258) and its general recommendation No. 24 (1999), the Committee calls on the State party to:**

**(a) Continue training health extension workers on referring women to maternal health-care facilities, including safe abortion services, and further increase the number of health-care facilities providing safe abortion services in rural areas;**

**(b) Address the lack of medical personnel in rural health-care facilities and the shortage of emergency obstetric services in rural areas;**

**(c) Continue raising awareness among families, community and religious leaders, teachers, health-care workers and public officials about the health risks of harmful practices for women, including early pregnancy, maternal death and HIV/AIDS;**

**(d) Effectively implement the joint flagship programme on maternal and newborn health to address the lack of skilled medical care during pregnancy, childbirth and the immediate postpartum period, especially in rural areas;**

**(e) Effectively implement the National Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health Strategy (2007-2015), continue raising awareness about available contraceptive methods and encourage the use of male condoms as a safe and less costly option;**

**(f) Encourage more religious organizations and communities to include provisions on premarital HIV counselling and testing in their by-laws;**

**(g) Provide free antiretroviral treatment for women and men living with HIV/AIDS, including pregnant women, so as to prevent mother-to-child transmission;**

**(h) Train technical and administrative staff to implement the national multisectoral strategy/action framework to combat HIV/AIDS and adopt prevention programmes targeting high-risk groups, such as young women, sex workers and internally displaced persons;**

**(i) Conduct awareness-raising activities to destigmatize orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS and strengthen the material and psychological support provided to them.**

**Rural women**

36. The Committee notes that women's right to obtain and use rural land is protected by Federal Proclamation, that both PASDEP (2005-2010) and the National Plan for Gender Equality (2005-2010) are aimed at enhancing women's access to productive resources such as land and livestock, and that microfinance institutions and projects provide credit to women to start small-scale income-generating activities. However, it is concerned that most rural women depend on men for economic support, that only 19 per cent of women own land and that the number of women borrowers from microfinance institutions is decreasing. The Committee is also concerned about the leasing of vast areas of arable land to foreign companies, which may result in the displacement of local communities and further contribute to women's food insecurity and the feminization of poverty, but notes the State party's explanation that such leases concern scarcely populated areas in the malaria-infested lowlands, help the State party to feed its people, create employment and are accompanied by resettlement and compensation schemes. The Committee also notes with concern that the majority of the rural population has no sustainable access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, forcing many women and girls to walk long distances to collect water, exposing them to an increased risk of sexual violence, and preventing girls from attending school.

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

(a) **Effectively enforce women's equal right to land ownership, including by taking legal measures providing for the systematic inclusion of female spouses' names in landholder certificates;**

(b) **Facilitate rural women's access to credit and loans, by controlling microfinance repayment terms to preclude unfair payment periods and interest rates and by expanding gender-sensitive projects such as the Managing Environmental Resources (MERET) Programme and Iqqub;**

(c) **Ensure that land lease contracts with foreign companies do not result in the forced eviction and internal displacement, or the increased food insecurity and poverty, of local populations, including women and girls, and that such contracts stipulate that the company concerned and/or the State party must provide the affected communities, including pastoralist communities, with adequate compensation and alternative land;**

(d) **Continue improving access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation in rural areas by building new wells, taps and sanitation facilities.**

**Disadvantaged groups of women**

38. The Committee is concerned about the lack of disaggregated data on the situation of those women who are reportedly among the most vulnerable and neglected groups of women in the State party and typically face multiple forms of discrimination, including older women, women with disabilities, pastoralist women and refugee and internally displaced women.

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

(a) **Collect disaggregated data on the situation of women facing multiple forms of discrimination, such as older women, women with disabilities,**

**pastoralist women and refugee and internally displaced women, and include such information in its next periodic report;**

**(b) Adopt measures, including temporary special measures within the meaning of article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, to eliminate any such discrimination, ensure equal rights and opportunities for those women, including, as applicable, in political, public, social and economic life and in the areas of education, employment and health, and protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation;**

**(c) Adopt targeted policies to protect and integrate those women into society, such as, for example, a national policy on internally displaced persons and policies for the local integration of refugees.**

#### **Discrimination against women in marriage and family relations**

40. The Committee is concerned about reports that, in practice, sons inherit family land because it is assumed that daughters will eventually move to the homes of their husbands; that the family of a deceased husband often claims the land from his widow; that women frequently lose their property to their husbands upon divorce; and that the Civil Code does not provide for financial support for women from their former spouses, nor for remedies enabling them to claim child maintenance from their former husbands.

**41. The Committee calls on the State party to ensure equality between women and men in family relations in line with article 16 of the Convention and protect women from property-grabbing, including by the husband and his family; to effectively enforce the equal rights of women and men to inherit property, including land, and to equally divide joint property upon divorce; and to consider amending its revised Civil Code with a view to providing for financial support obligations of spouses, as well as for effective remedies enabling women to claim child custody from their former husbands.**

42. While noting that article 34 (5) of the Federal Constitution requires the consent of both parties to the adjudication of disputes relating to personal or family laws by sharia courts, the Committee is concerned that there are no sufficient safeguards to ensure that the consent of women to such adjudication is informed and free from undue pressure by their husbands, families or communities, and that decisions of sharia courts cannot be appealed to the regular courts, except on grounds of error of law.

**43. The Committee recalls the concluding observations of the Committee against Torture (CAT/C/ETH/CO/1, para. 23), and calls on the State party to provide for effective safeguards to ensure the free and informed consent of women to have their cases adjudicated by sharia courts and that all decisions taken by sharia courts can be appealed to the regular courts, on grounds of law as well as of factual error.**

#### **Optional Protocol**

**44. The Committee calls on the State party to review its position concerning the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to favourably consider ratifying the Optional Protocol.**

**Amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention**

45. **The Committee encourages the State party to accelerate the acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.**

**Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

46. **The Committee urges the State party, in the implementation of its obligations under the Convention, to fully utilize the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which reinforce the provisions of the Convention, and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.**

**Millennium Development Goals**

47. **The Committee emphasizes that the full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It calls for the integration of a gender perspective and explicit reflection of the provisions of the Convention in all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.**

**Dissemination**

48. **The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Ethiopia of the present concluding observations in order to make the people, Government officials, politicians, parliamentarians and women's and human rights organizations aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de jure and de facto equality of women and the further steps that are required in that regard. The Committee recommends that dissemination should include dissemination at the local community level. The State party is encouraged to organize a series of meetings to discuss the progress achieved in the implementation of the present concluding observations. The Committee requests the State party to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Committee's general recommendations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on the theme "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".**

**Ratification of other treaties**

49. **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**

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<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.



life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to consider ratifying the treaties to which it is not yet a party, namely, 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.

#### Follow-up to concluding observations

50. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 21 and 37 above.

#### Technical assistance

51. The Committee recommends that the State party avail itself of technical assistance in the development and implementation of a comprehensive programme aimed at the implementation of the above recommendations and the Convention as a whole. The Committee also calls upon the State party to strengthen further its cooperation with specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

#### Preparation of the next report

52. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the wide participation of all ministries and public bodies in the preparation of its next periodic report and, at the same time, to consult a variety of women's and human rights organizations.

53. The Committee requests the State party to respond to the concerns expressed in the present concluding observations in its next periodic report under article 18 of the Convention. The Committee invites the State party to submit its next periodic report in July 2015.

54. The Committee invites 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 that were approved at the fifth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies, in June 2006 (HRI/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1). The treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee at its fortieth session in January 2008 (A/63/38, annex I) must be applied in conjunction with the harmonized reporting guidelines on a common core document. Together, they constitute the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The treaty-specific document should be limited to 40 pages, while the updated common core document should not exceed 80 pages.