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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women****Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of  
the Kingdom of the Netherlands\*****A. Introduction**

1. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State Party of its seventh periodic report, which was prepared in response to the list of issues prior to reporting (CEDAW/C/NLD/QPR/7).

2. The Committee also appreciates the State Party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/NLD/CO/6/Add.1). It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue. However, the Committee regrets that the report does not cover Aruba and Sint Maarten and that only limited information was provided in respect of Curaçao.

3. The Committee commends the State Party on its comprehensive delegation, which was headed by Her Excellency Ms. Mervin Wyatt-Ras, Minister of Public Health, Social Affairs, Elderly Care and Addiction Care of Aruba, and included representatives from the Ministry of Social Development, Labor and Welfare of Curaçao, the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor of Sint-Maarten, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands, The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Public Health of Aruba, the Department of Foreign Affairs of Aruba, the Department of Product Development and Projects of Curaçao, and the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

**B. Positive aspects**

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration of the State party's sixth periodic report (CEDAW/C/NLD/6) in 2016 in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of:

(a) The Anti-Discrimination Protection Law for Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, providing the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights with competence to hear discrimination-related complaints in the Caribbean Netherlands, in 2025;

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-second session (2 - 20 February 2026).

(b) The Law amending the Termination of Pregnancy Law, in 2023, together with the Decree of 24 April 2024 amending the Termination of Pregnancy Decree, expanding access to early pregnancy termination through general practitioner;

(c) The Sexual Offences Law, introducing a consent-based definition of rape and criminalizing sexual harassment in the public sphere, both online and offline, including catcalling and various forms of online sexual harassment, in 2024;

(d) The Combating Marital Captivity Law, making it unlawful to cooperate in terminating a religious marriage, in 2023;

(e) The amendment of article 1 of the Netherlands Constitution, explicitly prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of disability and sexual orientation, in 2023;

(f) The Balanced Ratio of Women and Men Law (Diversity Law), introducing a statutory 33% gender quota for supervisory boards of listed companies, in 2021.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption and establishment of the following:

(a) The Stop Femicide! Action Plan, in 2024;

(b) The National Action Programme on Sexually Transgressive Behaviour and Sexual Violence, in 2023;

(c) The Dutch Policy Compass, in 2023;

(d) The second National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (2022-2026), in 2022;

(e) The second National Action Plan on Labour Market Discrimination in the Netherlands (2022-2025), in 2022;

(f) The fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2021-2025), in 2020.

### **C. Sustainable Development Goals**

6. **The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of mainstreaming the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It urges the State Party to recognize women as the driving force of sustainable development in the State Party and to adopt gender-responsive policies and strategies to that effect.**

### **D. Parliament**

7. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see [A/65/38](#), part two, annex VI). It invites the States General of the Netherlands and the parliaments of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, as the four countries that constitute the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in line with their mandates, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.**

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

#### **Domestic application of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto**

8. The Committee notes with concern:

- (a) Significant disparities in the implementation of the Convention across the Kingdom and its integration into legislation, policy-making and adjudication;
- (b) The lack of clarity regarding the direct applicability of the Convention and its application by courts and administrative bodies in the State party;
- (c) Limited capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and other legal professionals on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations.

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

- (a) **Ensure the implementation of the Convention across all parts of the Kingdom and adopt systematic measures to fully integrate its provisions into legislation, policy-making and adjudication;**
- (b) **Provide clear guidance on the direct applicability of the Convention and ensure its consistent application by courts and administrative bodies;**
- (c) **Strengthen capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and other legal professionals on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations, enabling them to directly apply the Convention and interpret national legislation in light of it.**

**Constitutional and legislative framework and definition of discrimination against women**

10. While acknowledging the constitutional and legislative framework prohibiting discrimination, the Committee notes with concern:

- (a) That the legal definition of discrimination against women does not adequately cover intersectional discrimination and discrimination by private actors, within the meaning of articles 1 and 2 of the Convention;
- (b) The lack of adequate proactive measures to prevent and address discrimination against women by private actors, including employers and goods and services providers, and the limited enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation in both the public and private spheres;
- (c) The limited constitutional judicial review of legislation for compatibility with constitutional equality provisions, which may weaken the constitutional prohibition of discrimination against women and girls.

11. **Recalling the links between articles 1 and 2 of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States Parties under article 2 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) **Strengthen the legal definition of discrimination against women to explicitly cover intersectional discrimination and discrimination by private actors;**
- (b) **Adopt legislative and regulatory measures to prevent and address discrimination against women by private actors, establish effective monitoring and inspection mechanisms, impose adequate sanctions for discriminatory practices, and strengthen the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation in both the public and private spheres;**
- (c) **Strengthen constitutional judicial review mechanisms to ensure that all legislation can be reviewed for compatibility with constitutional non-discrimination provisions and international human rights obligations, including the Convention.**

**Access to justice**

12. The Committee is concerned about persistent barriers to women's effective access to justice. In particular, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) Barriers to legal aid that disproportionately affect marginalized groups of women, women in family disputes involving gendered power imbalances, and women in Caribbean parts of the State party, and that women must pay significant personal contributions and may face cost orders even when State legal aid is available;

(b) That fear of deportation prevents undocumented migrant women, including survivors of gender-based violence or trafficking, from reporting abuse and accessing remedies;

(c) Delays in the investigation and prosecution in cases of GBVAW and survivors' limited access to compensation, specialized trauma care, legal aid and psychosocial support services, despite increased reporting of sexual crimes after the entry into force of the Sexual Offences Law in 2024 in the Netherlands;

(d) Ensure timely, adequate and effective remedies for all victims of the Childcare Benefits Scheme scandal, establish safeguards to prevent algorithmic discriminatory bias and profiling, and adopt accountability mechanisms and guarantees of non-repetition.

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

(a) **Ensure that legal aid services are accessible, gender-sensitive, affordable and, if necessary, free of charge, and reduce or eliminate personal contributions and cost orders for women;**

(b) **Ensure that reporting gender-based violence and abuse does not result in deportation, administrative detention or other adverse consequences under immigration or administrative law;**

(c) **Ensure the timely investigation and prosecution of all forms of GBVAW and effective remedies for survivors, and allocate adequate resources to cope with the increased reporting of sexual crimes;**

(d) **Ensure timely, adequate and effective remedies for all victims of the Childcare Benefits Scheme scandal, establish safeguards to prevent algorithmic discriminatory bias and profiling, and adopt accountability mechanisms and guarantees of non-repetition.**

**Data collection and analysis**

14. The Committee is concerned about deficiencies in the State party's data collection, analysis, and publication, which undermine evidence-based policymaking and monitoring of women's rights across the State party. In particular, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The fragmentation of data collection across ministries and institutions throughout the State party, the lack of coordination and standardized methodologies, the partial gender-neutral approach in statistics, and the limited accessibility of consolidated and comparative data;

(b) The lack of systematic disaggregation by sex and other factors, including age, disability, socioeconomic status, nationality and geographic location, which prevents the identification and monitoring of intersecting forms of discrimination;

(c) The absence of publication of law enforcement data on GBVAW in the Netherlands, disaggregated by type of offence, sex, relationship between the victim and the perpetrator and geographical location;

(d) The near absence of comprehensive, gender-disaggregated data for the Caribbean parts of the State party;

(e) The lack of reliable data on women sex workers, including women in unregistered sex work, their socioeconomic and residence status, circumstances and needs.

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

(a) **Establish a coordination mechanism to harmonize data collection across ministries, institutions and all parts of the State party, develop standardized**

**methodologies and indicators, and ensure that consolidated gender-disaggregated data are publicly accessible and comparative;**

**(b) Systematically collect, analyse and publish data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, socioeconomic status and geographic location, with a view to identifying and addressing intersecting forms of discrimination;**

**(c) Resume the regular publication of law enforcement data on GBVAW in the Netherlands, and establish comparative data collection on gender-based violence across all parts of the State party;**

**(d) Strengthen the data collection capacity in the Caribbean parts of the State party and allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources, and include comprehensive information on the implementation of the Convention in the State party's next report;**

**(e) Strengthen data collection on women in sex work, including women in unregistered sex work, their socioeconomic and residence status, circumstances and needs.**

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

16. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to advance women's substantive equality through the introduction of gender impact assessments and the Policy Compass in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, it notes with concern:

**(a) The limited explicit references to the Convention in the State party's legal and policy framework, the fragmentation of gender equality policies which are scattered across multiple action plans and policies throughout the State party without a coordinated consolidated strategy, the weakening of cross-ministerial coordination and accountability mechanisms, and budgetary cuts potentially weakening the implementation of the Convention;**

**(b) The limited use of gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming across all government departments throughout the State party, particularly its Caribbean parts;**

**(c) That intersectional gender impact assessments are not subject to mandatory reporting, publication or independent monitoring, limiting the transparency and accountability for non-compliance, and the decreasing use of gender equality criteria in legislative and policy drafting processes;**

**(d) The discontinuance of the feminist foreign policy of the Netherlands, substantial budgetary reductions affecting gender equality programming within the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the lack of clarity on how a gender perspective is ensured in decision-making on women, peace and security, including the licensing of arms exports.**

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

**(a) Adopt a consolidated overarching gender equality strategy and concrete action plans explicitly based on the Convention and other international human rights standards and systematically mainstream an intersectional gender approach across all ministries and government departments, and allocate adequate resources for the effective implementation of the Convention;**

**(b) Systematically apply gender-responsive budgeting across all government departments and at all levels of government throughout the State party;**

**(c) Ensure that all policies and legislation are subject to mandatory intersectional gender impact assessments that are public and independently monitored, strengthen accountability mechanisms in legislative and policy drafting processes, and ensure adequate gender expertise across all ministries;**

**(d) Systematically and explicitly integrate a gender perspective in its foreign policy and in all women, peace and security policies, including arms exports licensing,**

**and ensure the equal representation of women in decision-making on women, peace and security, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.**

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

18. The Committee welcomes the entry into force of the Anti-Discrimination Protection Law for Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba on 1 January 2026, providing the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights with competence to consider discrimination-related complaints in the Caribbean Netherlands. Nevertheless, it notes with concern:

(a) The limited ability of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights to address discrimination by State authorities in the Netherlands;

(b) That the Ombudsperson institutions of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten have not been accredited by the Subcommittee for Accreditation of the GANHRI, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles, see General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/134 (1993)).

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

(a) **Strengthen the mandate of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights to enable it to effectively investigate and address discrimination against women by State authorities and ensure its effective operation in the Caribbean Netherlands;**

(b) **Support the accreditation of the Ombudsperson institutions of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, in line with the Paris Principles (see General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/134 (1993)), and consider seeking technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in that regard.**

#### **Civil society**

20. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That public funding mechanisms privilege project funding over core funding for women's rights organizations, that restrictions on the use of public funds for advocacy activities limit the ability of those organizations to hold the State party accountable, that public tenders and policymaking consultations reportedly favour larger organizations over smaller, community-based organizations with specialized expertise in supporting women facing intersecting forms of discrimination;

(b) The increasingly hostile environment for women human rights defenders, particularly those defending the rights of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LBTI) women as well as asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant women, and the lack of accountability for misinformation and fake news aimed to discredit advocacy for women's rights and gender equality;

(c) The limited engagement of non-governmental organizations in the Caribbean parts of the State party in the review process.

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

(a) **Ensure adequate and sustainable core funding for women's rights organizations, ensure equal access to public tenders and policymaking consultations for smaller, community-based organizations with specialized expertise in supporting women facing intersecting forms of discrimination;**

(b) **Ensure that women human rights defenders can operate freely and safely, protect them from harassment, threats, intimidation and violence, including online, and systematically challenge misinformation and fake news seeking to discredit their advocacy for women's rights and gender equality;**

(c) **Strengthen support for civil society organizations in the Caribbean parts of the State party to enhance their capacity to monitor the implementation of the Convention and participate effectively in the reviews process before the Committee.**

#### **Temporary special measures**

22. The Committee notes the measurable increase in women's representation on supervisory boards of listed companies and approximately 5,000 large unlisted companies in the Netherlands through the Balanced Ratio of Women and Men Law (Diversity Law) of 2022, which introduced statutory entry quotas and benchmarks subject to fines for non-compliance. However, the Committee regrets that temporary special measures remain limited in scope and underutilized in other areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged. In particular, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The non-binding character of objectives and targets to achieve gender parity in all decision-making bodies and areas where women are underrepresented in the lack of effective penalties in case of non-compliance;

(b) That the Higher Education and Scientific Research Law continues to be interpreted as preventing the use of temporary special measures in selection processes in higher education institutions;

(c) That the Jobs Agreement and Quota for People with Disabilities Law of 2015 does not adequately promote substantive equality of women with disabilities and that its eligibility and remuneration criteria perpetuate low-income employment and limit career progression;

(d) The inconsistent application, monitoring and funding of temporary special measures across all parts of the State party and the lack of gender-disaggregated data to evaluate outcomes.

23. **In line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures and No. 40 (2024) on equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Systematically adopt and expand the use of temporary special measures, such as binding quotas, targets with clear timelines and adequate penalties for non-compliance, to accelerate substantive equality in all decision-making bodies and areas where women are underrepresented;**

(b) **Amend the Higher Education and Scientific Research Law to permit the use of temporary special measures to increase women's participation in educational professions and fields of studies where they are underrepresented;**

(c) **Ensure that the Jobs Agreement and Quota for People with Disabilities Law promotes substantive equality of women with disabilities through adequate remuneration schemes and career progression opportunities;**

(d) **Ensure the consistent application, monitoring and funding of temporary special measures across all parts of the State party, supported by reporting mechanism and comprehensive gender-disaggregated data collection to evaluate their effectiveness.**

#### **Gender stereotypes and harmful practices**

24. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) Persistent discriminatory gender stereotypes in political life, education, employment, care and the media, often reinforced online, including stereotypes stigmatizing mothers who use childcare to exercise their right to work, and that the measures of the State Party to address gender stereotypes remain reactive and insufficient;

(b) Persistent challenges to prevent, identify, report on and protect women and girls from harmful practices, including forced marriage and female genital mutilation involving coercive control, threats of abandonment and economic dependency, forced sterilization and imposition of contraception on women with disabilities as compulsory care,

and unnecessary and irreversible medical interventions on intersex children without their free and informed consent, and significant barriers to reporting due to fear of stigma, retaliation and distrust in reporting processes and authorities;

(c) The low reporting and rates in cases of harmful practices and the risks for girls who are abducted abroad or flee harmful practices, including loss of protection, education and support.

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

(a) **Strengthen measures to eliminate gender stereotypes, including those that stigmatize mothers who use childcare to exercise their right to work, address misogyny and intersectional gender-based hate speech, particularly online, and ensure accountability for violations;**

(b) **Reinforce prevention, identification and protection from harmful practices, ensure accessible and confidential reporting channels, and provide specialized victim support services;**

(c) **Ensure that all reports of harmful practices are effectively investigated, perpetrators prosecuted and adequately punished, as well as effective protection, continuous education and adequate support services for victims of harmful practices, including girls abducted abroad under coercive circumstances or fleeing harmful practices.**

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

26. The Committee welcomes the entry into force of the Sexual Offences Law in 2024, and the Administrative Agreement 2026-2029 signed by the Caribbean Netherlands and Dutch ministries to address violence against women, domestic violence and child abuse. However, it notes with concern:

(a) That responsibilities for preventing and responding to GBVAW remain fragmented, that decentralization has resulted in uneven protection and victims support services, as well as gaps in law enforcement due to the shortage of specialized investigators, inconsistent training, and long delays;

(b) That prevention programmes continue to be insufficiently funded, protection measures vary by municipality, and barriers to reporting persist, including fear of retaliation, lack of trust in reporting processes and authorities, and victim blaming beliefs, particularly affecting women facing intersecting forms of discrimination;

(c) That the legislative framework on domestic violence is gender-neutral and does not recognize it as a deeply gendered phenomenon rooted in structural gender inequality, and that the legal definition of domestic violence fails to specifically recognize economic violence, contrary to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention);

(d) The persistent limited number and capacity of safe shelters, resulting in women being turned away or women in situations of serious risk being referred to alternative accommodations such as hotels that may not adequately ensure their safety and specialized needs, unequal access to shelters for women without secure residence status, and user fees that municipalities may charge;

(e) The limited availability of specialized and accessible victim support services, the insufficient capacity of law enforcement authorities, and gaps in the coordination of GBVAW prevention in the Caribbean parts of the State party.

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

(a) **Ensure the effective coordination of gender-based violence strategies and responses, strengthen the capacity of law enforcement by recruiting specialized investigators and ensuring consistent trauma-informed training, and reduce the delays in investigations;**

(b) **Allocate adequate resources for the prevention of GBVAW, ensure consistent protection measures across all municipalities, remove barriers to reporting by strengthening police responses and addressing stereotypes and victim blaming beliefs, and adopt targeted measures to protect for women facing intersecting discrimination;**

(c) **Adopt a gender-responsive legislative framework on domestic violence that recognizes it as a deeply gendered phenomenon, amend the legal definition of domestic violence to specifically include economic violence in line with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) and provide adequate economic support and victim services for women leaving abusive relationships;**

(d) **Increase the number and capacity of safe shelters to meet demand, ensure equal access to shelters for all women regardless of residence status, and remove user fees for accessing safe shelters;**

(e) **Strengthen specialized victim support services, which must be accessible, the capacity of law enforcement agencies, and coordination of GBVAW and femicide prevention in the Caribbean parts of the State party.**

#### **Trafficking in women and girls and exploitation of prostitution**

28. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The persistent prevalence of trafficking in women and girls to the different parts of the State party for sexual and labour exploitation, including in domestic work and work in the care sector, and that victim identification remains inadequate, particularly among asylum-seeking, refugee and undocumented migrant women and unaccompanied children;

(b) The limited effectiveness of investigations, low prosecution and conviction rates, lenient sentences and lengthy proceedings in trafficking cases;

(c) That victim identification and anti-trafficking functions are entrusted to immigration police which trafficking victims may perceive as linked to migration control, discouraging undocumented women from reporting exploitation;

(d) That access to specialized assistance, including shelters, psychosocial support as well as to temporary residence permits, beyond the reflection period is conditional on cooperation with the prosecution authorities, and insufficient, that victim protection is fragmented, and that victims are reluctant to cooperate due to lengthy procedures, re-traumatization and lenient sentences for traffickers;

(e) That repressive local policies have reduced licensed workplaces, banned home-based sex work, increased dependence on brothel operators, pushed independent sex workers into the illegal sector with reduced access to protection, health care and social services, and that the draft Sex Work Regulation Law in the Netherlands may further violate sex workers' right to privacy, deepen stigma, limit access to police and services, and increase their exposure to GBVAW;

(f) That in Curaçao, only foreign women are permitted to engage in regulated sex work through temporary permits, which renders them vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation;

(g) The risk of forced prostitution, minor sex workers, and limited access to exit programmes for women who wish to leave sex work due to language barriers and indebtedness.

29. **Recalling the Committee's general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen early identification of trafficking victims through systematic screening, specialized training for frontline professionals, and gender-sensitive identification procedures;**

(b) **Strengthen investigations and prosecutions of traffickers by allocating adequate resources to law enforcement agencies, reducing case processing times, and ensuring that dissuasive prison sentences are consistently applied;**

(c) **Ensure the institutional separation of anti-trafficking functions from immigration enforcement, establish safe reporting channels to ensure that victims will not face deportation or detention;**

(d) **Ensure access to specialized assistance, including shelters, psychosocial support, legal aid and temporary residence permits, irrespective of victims' ability or willingness to cooperate with the prosecution authorities, increase the number of specialized shelters, and adopt victim-sensitive protocols to prevent re-traumatization of victims in the criminal justice system;**

(e) **Reverse repressive local policies, ensure access to safe and legal workplaces, including home-based sex work, prevent abandonment to unsafe conditions, and adopt targeted measures to protect transgender women, particularly migrant transgender sex workers, and amend the draft Regulation Law in the Netherlands to ensure it does not criminalize sex workers or increases their vulnerability;**

(f) **Abolish the discriminatory permit system in Curaçao that restricts regulated sex work to foreign women, ensure that sex work regulations do not discriminate against women based on nationality or migration status, and protect all women sex workers from trafficking and exploitation;**

(g) **Prevent and address forced prostitution and sex work among minors, simplify access to exit programmes for women and girls who wish to leave sex work, provide adequate support services and reform police reporting procedures to ensure that they are accessible, confidential and victim-centered.**

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

30. The Committee notes with satisfaction the steady increase in women's representation at the national level. Nevertheless, it notes with concern:

(a) The underrepresentation of women in decision-making in political life across the State party, including at the municipal/local level, in leadership positions within political parties, as well as in senior positions in the private and semi-public sectors, and the insufficient intersectionally disaggregated data on women's participation in political life in the Caribbean parts of the State party;

(b) That the Political Reformed Party ("Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij") continues to present all-male candidate lists for parliamentary elections, in violation of women's equal right to stand for election;

(c) The prevalence of GBV and hate speech against women in politics, women in sports and women human rights defenders, including online harassment, threats and intimidation, that women public figures facing intersecting forms of discrimination are disproportionately targeted by sexualized hate speech, racist abuse and threats, and that existing prevention and response measures are insufficient.

31. **Recalling the Committee's general recommendations No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life and No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt targeted measures, including temporary special measures, such as mandatory quotas, to achieve parity in political decision-making at all levels across the State party, ensure their uniform implementation, and systematically collect comprehensive data to monitor their effectiveness;**

(b) **Ensure women's passive voting rights and that all political parties comply with constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination in compliance with the Convention and constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination;**

(c) **Ensure a safe environment for women in political and public life by preventing gender-based violence and hate speech, including online, ensure effective protection, remedies and reparations for victims, and hold perpetrators as well as social media platforms accountable for user-generated content.**

### **Nationality**

32. The Committee notes with concern the lack of disaggregated data and limited access to legal assistance for women claiming nationality rights in the Caribbean parts of the State party. It further notes with concern:

(a) The appeal by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands against the December 2025 judgement of The Hague District Court recognizing article 9 (2) as directly applicable in a case where it found discrimination against a mother's seeking to transmit her nationality to her child;

(b) That women and girls subjected to forced marriage, forced abandonment and transnational coercive control abroad face barriers in obtaining documentation and securing nationality, including high costs and procedural obstacles, placing them and their children at an increased risk of statelessness.

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

(a) **Ensure that article 9 (2) of the Convention is directly applied by courts and administrative authorities of the State party and consider withdrawing its appeal against the December 2025 judgement of the Hague District Court;**

(b) **Amend nationality procedures, reduce costs and address barriers to prevent statelessness and ensure that women and girls, who are subjected to forced marriage, forced abandonment and transnational coercive control, can effectively exercise their nationality rights.**

### **Education**

34. The Committee notes the recent measures of the State party aimed at reducing discrimination against girls in schools, strengthening education in sexual and reproductive health and rights and improving support for students during pregnancy and parenthood. Nevertheless, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The persistence of gender segregation in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and information and communication technology, including artificial intelligence, where women and girls are underrepresented, and their concentration in traditionally female-dominated educational fields;

(b) That measure to support and ensure the retention and reinsertion of pregnant students and young mothers in the education system are not harmonized across education tracks, that access to maternity benefits depends on the type of institution, and that the absence of statutory entitlements to financial support to pursue higher education may discourage pregnant students from continuing their studies;

(c) The inconsistent implementation of comprehensive education in sexual and reproductive health and rights, including gaps in the coverage of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender diversity, that lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex students face discrimination and harassment in educational environments, and that schools do not consistently provide safe learning environments for girls;

(d) The limited access to inclusive education for girls with disabilities, who are disproportionately represented among out-of-school children, and that educational data are not disaggregated by sex, disability and other factors.

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

(a) **Eliminate gender segregation in education by implementing targeted programmes, awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns aimed at increasing women's and girls' representation in fields where they are underrepresented;**

(b) **Harmonize the measures to support, retain and reinsert pregnant students and student parents across all education tracks and amend the Education Law to guarantee them access to maternity benefits and financial support in higher education;**

(c) **Include comprehensive education in sexual and reproductive health and rights in curricula at all levels of education, including coverage of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender diversity and ensure safe learning environments for lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex students, including through mandatory teacher training;**

(d) **Ensure access to inclusive education for girls with disabilities by ensuring adequate support and reasonable accommodations, remove barriers to education, promote their retention in the education system, and systematically collect comprehensive educational data disaggregated by sex, disability and other relevant factors.**

### **Employment**

36. The Committee notes that sex is among the most common grounds of workplace discrimination in the State party. It notes with concern:

(a) The persistent vertical and horizontal occupational segregation, women's disproportionate care responsibilities leading to higher rates of part-time work and withdrawal from employment, and the resulting gender pay and pension gaps;

(b) The lack of initiatives to encourage active fatherhood and shared parental responsibility, that employers discourage fathers from using parental leave, that the planned introduction of universal near-free childcare has been delayed until 2029, and insufficient accessible and affordable childcare facilities;

(c) The delayed transposition of the European Union Pay Transparency Directive into domestic law, which limits progress towards enforceable pay transparency and effective remedies and sanctions;

(d) Widespread and persistent pregnancy-related discrimination in recruitment, contract renewal, promotion and training, insufficient proactive regulatory measures to prevent and address such discrimination, and inadequate enforcement mechanisms and penalties;

(e) That women with disabilities are twice as likely to be unemployed, and that the eligibility and remuneration criteria in the Jobs Agreement and Quota for People with Disabilities Law of the Netherlands perpetuate low-income employment and limit career progression.

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

(a) **Eliminate occupational segregation, including targeted programmes to increase women's participation in higher-paying sectors, address their concentration in part-time work, and reduce barriers that lead women to exit employment for caregiving responsibilities;**

(b) **Adopt comprehensive measures to encourage active fatherhood and shared parental responsibility including through awareness campaigns and employer incentives, ensure fathers can utilize parental leave without employer discouragement, accelerate implementation of affordable childcare, and expand accessible and high-quality childcare facilities including full-week early childhood education;**

(c) **Accelerate the transposition of the European Union Pay Transparency Directive, including its provisions on effective penalties, and enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value through regular pay audits and adequate penalties for breaches;**

(d) **Adopt measures to prevent and address pregnancy-related discrimination, ensure regular inspections of workplaces and impose adequate penalties for discriminatory practices;**

(e) **Strengthen labour market inclusion of women with disabilities through targeted employment support programmes and reform the Jobs Agreement and Quota for People with Disabilities Law to ensure adequate remuneration schemes and career progression opportunities.**

### **Health**

38. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That women spend more years in poor health due to inadequate attention to health conditions affecting women after reproductive age, misdiagnosis and mistreatment, and restrictions on health services for migrant women;

(b) Limitations on autonomous primary midwifery services and postnatal home care, and high maternal and infant mortality rates among migrant women and children;

(c) That sexual and reproductive health services, including access to modern contraceptives and education in sexual and reproductive health and rights, are not guaranteed in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, where HIV/AIDS rates among women have increased;

(d) That abortion remains criminalized in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, and that migrant women face barriers in accessing safe and affordable abortion services throughout the State party;

(e) The increase in suicide rates among young women, particularly those belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, migrant women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.

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

(a) **Strengthen gender- and age-sensitive approaches in medical research, clinical diagnosis and treatment, ensure adequate attention to health conditions affecting women after reproductive age, and remove barriers to health services for migrant women;**

(b) **Ensure adequate funding for autonomous primary midwifery services and postnatal home care, and address maternal and infant mortality among migrant women and children in the Caribbean parts of the State party;**

(c) **Guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health services, including modern contraceptives and education in sexual and reproductive health and rights, and strengthen specialized HIV/AIDS services and antiretroviral medication;**

(d) **Decriminalize abortion in all cases and legalize abortion at the very least in cases of rape, incest, risk to the life or health of the pregnant woman and severe foetal impairment in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, and ensure women's access to safe, legal, culturally sensitive and affordable abortion services throughout the State party;**

(e) **Address the increase in suicide rates among women and girls by strengthening mental health support services, by ensuring access to crisis interventions and suicide prevention programmes.**

### **Women's economic empowerment and social benefits**

40. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That parental leave schemes provide reduced salary compensation;

(b) That poverty risks are not adequately measured, particularly for women-headed households and single women, and that the lack of gender-disaggregated data on poverty, living conditions and access to social benefits impedes the identification of gaps in the design of targeted interventions;

(c) Economic insecurity among older women due to lower pension benefits as well as the gendered risks of homelessness and housing insecurity, especially for women escaping GBV, women with low incomes, and lesbian, bisexual and transgender and intersex women;

(d) That the Childcare Benefits Scheme scandal disproportionately affected single mothers, migrant women, women belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and women from racialized backgrounds, exacerbating their economic insecurity;

(e) That income-based child benefits are underutilized in the Caribbean parts of the State party.

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

(a) **Increase salary compensation under parental leave schemes to adequate levels to prevent economic hardship for lower-income families;**

(b) **Strengthen poverty measurement to capture poverty risks for women-headed households, single women and women facing intersecting forms of discrimination, and collect comprehensive gender-disaggregated data on poverty, living conditions and access to social benefits;**

(c) **Minimize the gender pension gap and adopt targeted measures to support older women, prevent and address homelessness and housing insecurity, in particular among women escaping GBV, women with low incomes, and lesbian, bisexual and transgender and intersex women;**

(d) **Address the long-term economic consequences of the Childcare Benefits Scheme scandal on affected women, including through comprehensive debt relief, restoration of creditworthiness and facilitated access to housing and loans;**

(e) **Expand the use of income-based child benefits in the Caribbean parts of the State party.**

#### **Women facing intersecting forms of discrimination**

##### *Rural women*

42. The Committee notes with concern that rural development programmes, do not incorporate specific measures to encourage women's participation in climate resilience and energy transition policies.

43. **The Committee recommends that the State Party integrate a gender perspective into rural development programmes and ensure women's equal participation in the formulation and implementation of climate resilience and energy transition policies.**

##### *Women with disabilities*

44. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The multiple and intersecting barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities, including dependence on caregivers, institutions, or segregated services which increases their vulnerability to GBV, including sexual violence;

(b) The disproportionately high poverty levels affecting women with disabilities, and that employment quotas for people with disabilities, which are not met in the public sector, are insufficient to address their needs;

(c) The limited decision-making autonomy of women with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, in relation to health, sexual and reproductive health and rights and family relations, the overuse of substituted decision-making arrangements, and the risk of coercive reproductive interventions including forced sterilization and the imposition of contraception as compulsory care.

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

(a) **Remove barriers to community-based care and support services for women with disabilities, ensure adequate access to shelters, psychosocial counselling and legal assistance, strengthen measures to prevent and address gender-based violence, and phase out institutional and segregated settings;**

(b) **Address the disproportionately high poverty levels affecting women with disabilities, and ensure that employment quotas account for their specific needs and are complied with in the public sector;**

(c) **Limit substituted decision-making arrangements and ensure that women with disabilities exercise full legal capacity and decision-making autonomy in all areas of life, including sexual and reproductive health and in family relations, and explicitly prohibit coercive reproductive interventions on women and girls with disabilities.**

*Lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women*

46. The Committee notes with concern persistent discrimination, stigma, violence and hate crimes against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women with heightened risks for those with disabilities, those belonging to ethnic minorities, migrants and young women, and barriers to gender-affirming health care including long waiting periods, insufficient insurance coverage and continued pathologization.

47. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen measures to prevent and address discrimination, stigma, violence and hate crimes against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women with targeted measures for those facing intersecting forms of discrimination, and remove barriers to gender-affirming health care by reducing waiting periods, ensuring adequate insurance coverage and eliminating pathologization.**

*Asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant women*

48. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant women face intersecting forms of discrimination in the State party, based on gender, race, migration status and socio-economic vulnerability, as well as labour exploitation, precarious and informal work, and discrimination in low-paid and feminized sectors;

(b) Migration status dependency for women whose residence status is linked to a spouse or family member, which may prevent them from leaving an abusive relationship or report violence due to fear of losing residence rights or being separated from their children;

(c) That asylum procedures and personnel are not sufficiently gender-responsive and trauma informed and fail to recognize gender-based persecution;

(d) Safety and privacy concerns in asylum reception centres, including harassment, intimidation and gender-based violence in shared accommodation, particularly for young women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.

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

(a) **Address intersecting forms of discrimination affecting asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant women and strengthen labour protection and eliminate exploitation in precarious work;**

(b) **Remove migration status dependency by ensuring that migrant women's residence status is de-linked from their spouse or family member in cases of gender-based violence;**

(c) **Ensure that asylum procedures and personnel are gender-responsive and trauma informed and recognize gender-based persecution as a ground for international protection;**

(d) **Ensure women's safety and privacy in asylum reception centres, prevent harassment, intimidation and gender-based violence, segregate women from men, as needed, and establish accessible and confidential reporting mechanisms.**

*Women deprived of liberty*

50. The Committee is concerned that women deprived of liberty face harassment, sexual abuse and gender-based violence including by staff, lack access to effective complaint

mechanisms and reparations, adequate gender-sensitive healthcare including mental health support, experience disruptions to family life, employment, housing and child custody, and that alternatives to detention are insufficient.

**51. The Committee recommends that the State party prevent and address harassment, sexual abuse and GBV against women in detention, ensure access to effective complaint mechanisms and reparations, and adequate gender-sensitive healthcare including mental health support, prioritize community-based alternatives to detention and establish open prisons for women.**

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

52. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That domestic violence is not systematically taken into consideration in child custody proceedings due to the absence of mandatory screening and risk assessments, shortcomings in information-sharing between criminal and family jurisdictions, and courts' reliance on "parental alienation", which undermines victim protection and fails to recognize "vicarious violence" against children used to control mothers;

(b) Reliance on alternative dispute resolution in custody and parental authority cases involving reported or suspected domestic violence

(c) That post-separation arrangements do not reflect structural gender inequalities in earning capacity and unpaid care work, that women in de facto unions face disadvantages regarding maintenance, property and inheritance, and that the lack of automatic pension-sharing schemes heightens the risk of poverty for older women;

(d) Challenges in the implementation of the criminalization of marital captivity including insufficient safety guarantees, limited guidance on religious marriages from relevant authorities, and inconsistent training of judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers.

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

(a) **Ensure that domestic violence is adequately taken into consideration in all legal proceedings on custody and visitation rights, protect women and their children from re-victimization, and coercive control, and establish safeguards against excessive reliance on the concept of "parental alienation";**

(b) **Prohibit alternative dispute resolution processes, including mediation and conciliation, in cases involving domestic violence, in accordance with article 48 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention);**

(c) **Strengthen the economic protection of women in de facto unions regarding maintenance, property and inheritance, and provide for adequate pension-sharing arrangements;**

(d) **Strengthen the implementation of marital captivity and strengthen legal safeguards against marital captivity, provide structural capacity building to judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers on marital captivity as well as guidance on religious marriages.**

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

**54. Following the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Committee calls upon the State Party to reaffirm its implementation and to re-evaluate the realization of the rights enshrined in the Convention in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.**

#### **Dissemination**

**55. The Committee requests the State Party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official languages of the State Party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the**

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**Government, the parliaments and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation, as well as to civil society, including nongovernmental organizations, in particular women's organizations, to raise full awareness within the State Party.**

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

56. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State Party to the nine major international human rights instruments<sup>1</sup> and relevant regional instruments would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State Party to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.**

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

57. **The Committee requests the State Party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 27 (c), 29 (g), 37 (b) and 39 (d) above.**

#### **Preparation of the next report**

58. **The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the eighth periodic report of the State Party in line with a future clear and regularized schedule for reporting by States Parties (General Assembly resolution 79/165, para. 6) and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State Party. The report should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.**

59. **The Committee requests the State Party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).**

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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.