



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of Japan*

1. The Committee considered the ninth periodic report of Japan (CEDAW/C/JPN/9) at its 2104th and 2105th meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.2104 and CEDAW/C/SR.2105), held on 17 October 2024.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its ninth periodic report, which was prepared in response to the list of issues and questions prior to reporting (CEDAW/C/JPN/QPR/9). It also appreciates the State party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8/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.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its distinguished delegation, which was headed by the Director General of the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office, Keiko Okada, and included representatives of the Cabinet Secretariat, the Cabinet Office, the Imperial Household Agency, the National Police Agency, the Children and Families Agency, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, as well as the Permanent Representative, Atsuyuki Oike, and other members of the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2016 of the State party's previous reports (CEDAW/C/JPN/7-8) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) Amendment to the Civil Code, abolishing the waiting period for women to remarry upon divorce, in 2024;

* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-ninth session (7–25 October 2024).



(b) Act on Payment of Compensation, etc. to Persons Who Underwent Eugenic Surgery, etc., providing compensation and other payments to persons who were victims of eugenic surgery under the now defunct Eugenic Protection Law, in 2024;

(c) Definition of rape as non-consensual sexual intercourse, removing the requirement of use of force, and new legislation that raises the age of sexual consent from 13 to 16 years, in 2023;

(d) Revised Law on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims, providing for protection orders in cases involving psychological abuse, in 2023;

(e) Amendment to the Civil Code, raising the legal minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both women and men, in 2022;

(f) Amendment to the Act on the Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field, which stipulates that the number of women and men candidates running for public office should be as equal as possible, to include provisions for the establishment of consultation procedures on the subject of sexual harassment and harassment related to pregnancy and childbirth, 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 or establishment of the following:

(a) Task force on women and peace and security, in 2024;

(b) Action plan to combat trafficking in persons, in 2022;

(c) Fifth basic plan for gender equality, in 2020.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, in 2017.

C. Sustainable Development Goals

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

D. Parliament

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

E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Visibility of the Convention and ratification of the Optional Protocol thereto

9. The Committee notes with interest that the fifth basic plan for gender equality, which was adopted in 2020, indicates that the State party will seriously consider the early ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Committee regrets, however, that despite holding 23 interministerial study group meetings on the issue, the State party has taken too long to consider ratifying the Optional Protocol. In addition, the Committee expresses concern regarding:

(a) The insufficient efforts to raise awareness about the Convention and to promote its implementation, as awareness-raising is limited mainly to posting information online;

(b) The lack of capacity-building for the judiciary and law enforcement agencies on the domestic application of the Convention, which has resulted in the limited use thereof in legal proceedings.

10. The Committee recommends that the State party promptly address and remove any obstacles to the ratification of the Optional Protocol, in line with its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, paras. 8, 9 and 50). It further recommends that the State party strengthen capacity-building for judges, lawyers and law enforcement professionals on the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations and its jurisprudence under the Optional Protocol to ensure that they are fully taken into consideration in legal proceedings.

Definition of discrimination against women and discriminatory laws

11. The Committee notes the absence of a comprehensive and explicit definition of discrimination against women, covering both direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, in line with article 1 of the Convention, resulting in inconsistencies in the interpretation and enforcement of legislation. It also takes note of the State party's position that the provisions of the Imperial House Law are not within the purview of the Committee's competence. The Committee considers, however, that allowing only male offspring from the male line of the imperial lineage to succeed to the throne is incompatible with articles 1 and 2 and the object and purpose of the Convention. The Committee also notes with concern that several of its previous recommendations regarding existing discriminatory provisions have not been addressed, in particular:

(a) That no steps have been taken to revise article 750 of the Civil Code requiring married couples to use the same surname, which in practice often compels women to adopt their husbands' surnames;

(b) That the provision in the Family Register Law concerning the discriminatory description in relation to birth notification for children born out of wedlock has been retained.

12. The Committee recommends that the State party incorporate into its legislation a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, covering both direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention and target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls. The Committee recommends that the State party look at the good practices of other States parties that have reformed their succession laws

to ensure the equality of women and men and amend the Imperial House Law to guarantee the equality of women and men in the succession to the throne. Recalling its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para. 13), the Committee also recommends that the State party:

(a) Amend legislation regarding the choice of surnames for married couples in order to enable women to retain their maiden surnames after marriage;

(b) Abolish all discriminatory provisions regarding the status of children born out of wedlock and protect them and their mothers from stigma and discrimination in society.

Women and peace and security

13. The Committee notes that Japan will co-chair the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network in 2025. It notes with appreciation the establishment of a task force on women and peace and security to better coordinate efforts to strengthen the participation of women, both domestically and internationally, in decision-making related to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The Committee also commends Japan for its efforts to vigorously promote the women and peace and security agenda as one of its major foreign policies. It nevertheless notes with concern existing challenges regarding the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security, including in relation to the presence of the military of the United States of America on Okinawa and the territorial disagreement between the State party and the Russian Federation over disputed islands.

14. The Committee highlights as critical the meaningful and inclusive participation of women at all stages of peace and reconstruction processes so that women's priorities and experiences of armed conflict are fully integrated into those processes, as required under the Convention and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), with a view to achieving lasting peace. The Committee recalls its general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations and recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure the meaningful and inclusive participation of women at all stages of peacebuilding efforts and the negotiation of bilateral military agreements that affect the State party's territory;

(b) Ensure that the development, peace and security concerns of women are fully integrated into the national security architecture and development priorities, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Provide capacity-building training and awareness-raising seminars for civil servants and diplomats on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security.

Extraterritorial State obligations

15. The Committee notes with concern reports that investments made by Japanese companies in extractive sectors in third countries in North Africa and elsewhere have a harmful impact on local communities and resources and more particularly on women, who face increased levels of gender-based violence in the workplace and labour exploitation.

16. The Committee recommends that the State party put in place mechanisms to ensure that investments made by Japanese companies in extractive sectors in third countries do not contradict the State party's extraterritorial obligations

and that women workers in those sectors are protected from gender-based violence and exploitation.

Women's access to justice

17. The Committee notes with concern:

- (a) The lack of effective legal complaint mechanisms for women;
- (b) That women face numerous barriers in terms of access to justice, including a limited number of courts and qualified judicial personnel with training on handling gender-responsive cases;
- (c) Reports that traditional and informal justice mechanisms, such as mediation or community-based conflict resolution, often discriminate against women and are not subject to judicial control, further undermining women's access to justice.

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

- (a) **Ensure that women, including older women, women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities and migrant women, have effective access to justice throughout the State party, by establishing confidential, effective and gender-responsive complaints mechanisms, and that women and girls are aware of their rights and the remedies available to claim them;**
- (b) **Increase the number of courts throughout the State party's territory and develop capacity-building programmes on the Convention and women's rights for judicial personnel to ensure that cases are dealt with in a gender-responsive manner;**
- (c) **Ensure that mediation and community-based conflict resolution uphold women's rights and are subject to judicial review and raise public awareness of the importance of addressing violations of women's rights through judicial remedies.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

19. The Committee takes note with interest of the State party's indication that the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office functions as the secretariat of the national machinery for the advancement of women and monitors the implementation of the fifth basic plan for gender equality. It notes with concern, however, that the State party does not have a dedicated ministry in charge of women's affairs. It further notes that the Gender Equality Bureau is merely a coordinating body within the Cabinet Office and is limited in terms of its authority, budget and personnel. The Committee is further concerned at reports that, notwithstanding the commitments made under the fifth basic plan for gender equality, the engagement of civil society in the implementation and assessment thereof has been insufficient.

20. **Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para. 17) and the guidance provided in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in particular regarding the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national machineries, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Establish a dedicated ministry in charge of women's affairs and gender equality to coordinate all public policies and strategies for gender equality and the advancement of women, including current and future iterations of the basic plan for gender equality, with corresponding units at the prefectural**

and local levels throughout the State party to monitor and ensure consistency in the implementation of gender equality policies and strategies;

(b) Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to such a ministry and ensure gender-specific expertise among its staff, mainstream gender equality across all government policies and develop gender-responsive budgeting at all levels of governance, including at the prefectural and municipal levels;

(c) Ensure the meaningful and specific engagement of women's civil society organizations representing diverse backgrounds, including in the development and implementation of the sixth basic plan for gender equality, and enhance technical and financial support for those organizations to enable them to carry out their crucial role in advocating for women's rights and gender equality.

National human rights institution

21. The Committee notes with concern that the draft law on the establishment of a human rights commission has been pending since 2012 and that no time frame has been set for the establishment of an independent national human rights institution.

22. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para. 15) that the State party establish, within a clear time frame, an independent national human rights institution, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and ensure that its mandate covers women's rights and gender equality and that it is provided with adequate human, technical and financial resources to be able to carry out its mandate effectively and independently. The Committee further recommends that the State party seek the advice and technical support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in this regard.

Temporary special measures

23. The Committee notes with concern that while the fifth basic plan for gender equality contains specific initiatives and targets to expand the participation of women in all areas, they are voluntary measures and incentives, rather than time-bound temporary special measures, such as mandatory statutory quotas. The Committee also notes with concern:

(a) That the State party has not considered reducing the deposit of 3 million yen that is required to run for parliament as a temporary special measure to accelerate women's political participation, bearing in mind that women's access to campaign financing is more limited;

(b) That the State party has not adopted any temporary special measures to address the plight of women and girls who are survivors of the Fukushima disaster.

24. Recalling its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para. 19), the Committee recommends that the State party adopt temporary special measures, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality between women and men in all fields where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged. It also recommends that the State party take measures, including capacity-building and awareness-raising, to promote understanding among State officials and the general public of the non-discriminatory nature and importance of temporary special measures as a tool to advance substantive equality and national development. The Committee further recommends that the State party:

(a) **Reduce the deposit of 3 million yen that is required for women to run for parliament as a temporary special measure to accelerate their equal representation in this decision-making body;**

(b) **Adopt temporary special measures to ensure that women and girls who are survivors of the Fukushima disaster have full enjoyment of their fundamental rights, freedom from discrimination and equal access to opportunities, including social services, healthcare (including maternal healthcare), education, decision-making systems and employment.**

Gender stereotypes

25. The Committee notes with appreciation that the fifth basic plan for gender equality addresses the need to eliminate gender stereotypes by promoting awareness of unconscious gender bias and challenging norms. It remains concerned, however:

(a) At the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted gender stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, including in education, employment and public life;

(b) About gender stereotyping, sexist messages and portrayals of women and girls, including in parliament and on television, the Internet and social media;

(c) That gender stereotypes continue to be the root causes of sexual and gender-based violence against women and that pornography, video games and animation products such as manga could promote sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls;

(d) About persisting gender stereotypes against ethnic minorities, such as Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Korean women and girls.

26. **Recalling joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, as revised, and its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para. 21), the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive strategy with proactive and sustained measures, targeted at women, men, girls and boys at all levels of society, to eliminate patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, allocate sufficient resources to it and ensure monitoring and evaluation of its implementation;**

(b) **Provide capacity-building to public officials and the media to enable them to address gender stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, including through gender-responsive language, and promote positive portrayals of women as active drivers of development in the media;**

(c) **Effectively implement existing legal measures and monitoring programmes in order to address the production and distribution of pornographic material, video games and animation products that exacerbate discriminatory gender stereotypes and reinforce sexual violence against women and girls;**

(d) **Draft a national policy and implement comprehensive and sustainable measures to ensure that gender stereotypes against women and girls from ethnic minority groups, such as Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Korean women and girls, are effectively addressed throughout all sectors of the State party.**

Gender-based violence against women

27. The Committee recognizes the State party's efforts to reform its legislation regarding rape. It regrets, nevertheless, that while it is possible to prosecute marital rape under the general laws on rape, marital rape is not explicitly criminalized as a separate offence. The Committee further notes with concern:

(a) Reports of a lack of funding and staffing of shelters and counselling services for victims of domestic violence;

(b) That, notwithstanding the extension under the 2023 Domestic Violence Act of the duration of protection orders from six months to one year, women may be exposed to repeated instances of gender-based violence once an order expires;

(c) Reports that access to support services for victims of gender-based violence is particularly challenging for rural women and women who face intersectional discrimination, such as ethnic minority women, migrant women, women with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, and that migrant women are reportedly especially reluctant to report cases of gender-based violence due to fear of having their residence status revoked, as they are required to provide "justifiable reasons" for maintaining their protection status under the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act;

(d) Gender-based violence against women committed by United States military personnel on Okinawa military bases.

28. **Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para. 23) and in line with its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, as well as target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, the Committee recommends that the State party amend the Penal Code to explicitly criminalize marital rape as a separate offence and conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the criminal nature of marital rape. It further recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Address resource gaps in order to provide protection for victims of gender-based violence against women, including through the allocation of adequate funding for shelters and counselling services for victims of domestic violence;**

(b) **Streamline the process for extending protection orders to prevent the revictimization of women who are survivors of gender-based violence;**

(c) **Provide or adequately fund support services and shelters, including in rural areas, for survivors of gender-based violence against women, which are fully accessible and tailored to the needs of women in all their diversity, including rural women, women with disabilities and migrant women, and ensure that the requirement to provide "justifiable reasons" for protection is clearly eliminated from legislation and protect victims regardless of their immigration status;**

(d) **Take appropriate measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators and to provide adequate reparations to the survivors of sexual and other forms of conflict-related gender-based violence against women and girls on Okinawa.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

29. The Committee is concerned:

(a) That current legal provisions do not fully encompass the non-coercive forms of exploitation, particularly in labour trafficking, and that gaps remain in addressing exploitation through “abuse of power” or “vulnerability”;

(b) That the survivors of trafficking and sexual exploitation face barriers in terms of access to shelters and legal services, including language issues, and that the availability of long-term reintegration support is limited;

(c) That labour trafficking remains significantly underreported;

(d) That, notwithstanding legal prohibitions, child exploitation persists, especially online, with continued reports of child prostitution and pornography-related offences.

30. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration and its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para. 27), the Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts to combat trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, by:**

(a) **Revising legal provisions to ensure that they adequately address non-coercive forms of exploitation in labour trafficking, targeting in particular “abuse of power” and “vulnerability”;**

(b) **Eliminate barriers for women and girls who are survivors of trafficking and sexual exploitation to access to shelters and legal services, including by addressing linguistic barriers and providing them with temporary residence permits, and enhance support for their reintegration;**

(c) **Encourage the reporting of labour exploitation by women through the establishment of independent, confidential and gender-sensitive complaint procedures and increased labour inspections and ensure that cases of trafficking are effectively investigated and that the perpetrators and their accomplices are prosecuted and adequately punished;**

(d) **Strengthen measures to combat child exploitation, particularly online, and to prevent child prostitution and pornography-related offences.**

31. The Committee notes with concern that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated economic hardships, driving many young women and girls into prostitution and sexual exploitation.

32. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt targeted measures to prevent the sexual exploitation of and trafficking in young women and girls, particularly those forced into prostitution due to economic hardship or family instability.**

Comfort women

33. The Committee commends the State party’s efforts with regard to addressing the rights of “comfort women”. It considers, however, that such efforts need to be sustained and expanded to ensure the rights of victims and survivors to truth, justice and reparations.

34. **The Committee draws the attention of the State party to the fact that Economic and Social Council resolution 1158 (XLI) serves to confirm that, in international law, “the principle that there is no period of limitation for war crimes and crimes against**

humanity” must be accepted. Recalling its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para. 29), the Committee recommends that the State party expand and strengthen its efforts to effectively implement its obligations under international human rights laws with regard to “comfort women” to ensure that the rights of victims and survivors are holistically addressed.

Equal participation in political and public life

35. The Committee notes the awareness-raising efforts undertaken by the national Government, local governments and private companies to promote and encourage the participation of women in political and public life. It nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) The continued underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions in political and public life, in particular in the National Diet and at the ministerial level, in local governments, as well as in the judiciary, the diplomatic service and in academia;

(b) Opposition from certain political parties to the setting of specific targets for female candidates in national elections and the fact that gender stereotypes continue to hinder progress, especially in balancing family life with a political career;

(c) That the Act on the Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field does not provide quotas or penalties in the event of non-compliance, but rather voluntary measures;

(d) That the target set out in the fifth basic plan for gender equality of ensuring that women hold 30 per cent of leadership positions by early 2020 falls short of parity and has still not been met;

(e) The underrepresentation of women with disabilities and ethnic and other minority women, such as Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Korean women, in decision-making systems that affect their lives.

36. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, as well as target 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt more temporary special measures, such as statutory quotas, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 25, in order to accelerate women’s full and equal participation in elected and appointed positions;**

(b) **Carry out targeted and effective awareness-raising and sensitization campaigns aimed at political parties, as well as at the general public, to address gender stereotypes and raise awareness about the importance of the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems in political and public life;**

(c) **Amend the Act on the Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field to provide incentives for compliance and penalties for non-compliance with the provisions thereof;**

(d) **Raise the 30 per cent target in the fifth basic plan for gender equality to 50/50 parity in the sixth basic plan for gender equality for the representation of women at the legislative, ministerial and local government (mayoral) levels, as well as in the judiciary, in the diplomatic service and in academia;**

(e) **Take specific measures, including temporary special measures, to promote the representation of ethnic and other minority women, such as Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Korean women, in decision-making systems that affect their lives.**

Education

37. The Committee notes with appreciation that the fifth basic plan for gender equality is aimed at promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics career choices for women and that the guidelines on university admission selection have been revised to prohibit universities from applying discriminatory selection criteria based on gender. The Committee notes, however, with concern:

(a) The wide gender gap in top-ranked universities, as well as in fields of study that are traditionally male-dominated, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology;

(b) The low participation of women in senior management and decision-making positions in educational institutions and their concentration in lower-paid positions, including as part-time lecturers, as well as the low proportion of women teaching staff in senior positions, particularly in leadership roles such as principals and university executives;

(c) The reported censoring by some politicians and public officials of the language used in and the content of sexuality education and the inadequate length thereof;

(d) Reports that references to “comfort women” have been deleted in textbooks by publishers, which have the flexibility to determine how they reflect historical issues;

(e) That difficult teaching conditions, which include long working hours, no overtime pay, sleep deprivation and the need to take work home, have a disparate impact on female teachers, such as the need to take extensive sick leave, attrition or early retirement due to additional domestic responsibilities;

(f) Possible gender disparities between single-sex and co-educational institutions in relation to educational approaches and opportunities, which may have an impact on the career outcomes for women and perpetuate and validate the segregation of women and men in other areas.

38. **In the light of its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Promote women’s access to top-ranked universities and non-traditional educational choices and career paths for girls and women, in fields such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and information and communications technology, including through gender-responsive study and career counselling;**

(b) **Adopt targeted measures, including temporary special measures, to increase the representation of women in senior management and decision-making positions in educational institutions, promote career progression for women in academia and employ more women in full-time teaching positions;**

(c) **Ensure that age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, including education on responsible sexual behaviour to prevent early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, is appropriately integrated into school curricula through the provision of regular lessons and without the interference of politicians and public officials with respect to the content and the language used;**

(d) **Ensure that national guidelines on the publication of textbooks call for the adequate reflection of the historical lived experiences of women, including “comfort women”, in textbooks, so that historical facts are objectively presented to students and the general public, and monitor the extent to which publishers respect those guidelines in order to ensure accuracy and the standardization of textbooks in all educational institutions;**

(e) **Strengthen and enforce measures to ensure gender-sensitive working conditions for teachers, prioritizing work-life balance through reduced hours and accommodating policies;**

(f) **Implement comprehensive reforms to standardize educational approaches across all types of institutions and promote gender-inclusive curricula and career guidance, thereby ensuring equitable career outcomes for women and discouraging sex segregation within broader society.**

Employment

39. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That the gender pay gap remains wide, which is partly attributable to the inadequate enforcement of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and continued horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market;

(b) That the share of women in management roles is just 15 per cent, which is well below the 30 per cent target set by the State party;

(c) That the vestiges of the two-track employment management style have resulted in the concentration of women in low-paying clerical positions and part-time or lower-paid work, including in the informal economy, owing to their family responsibilities, which affects their pension benefits, as well as that there are persistent reports of discrimination based on maternity and childbirth;

(d) That gender and power dynamics are inadequately addressed in the State party’s “power harassment” regulations, established in 2019;

(e) That women, including Indigenous women, Buraku women, women with disabilities, migrant women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, among other groups, experience discrimination and harassment in the workplace;

(f) That, in the amendment to the Equal Employment Opportunity Act relating to indirect discrimination, the prohibited grounds for discrimination are limited to weight, height and mobility requirements and other internationally recognized grounds for discrimination, such as age, pregnancy, childcare and urban and rural population, have been omitted;

(g) That in the State party’s guidelines on artificial intelligence, gender bias issues in hiring algorithms are not explicitly addressed and that women are underrepresented in leadership positions in the artificial intelligence sector.

40. **In accordance with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take targeted measures, including temporary special measures and training on gender bias and diversity, to increase the representation of women in formal employment, including in senior positions, in sectors where they are most underrepresented, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, particularly in the field of technology, as well as in the medical and legal professions;**

(b) Increase its target for women in management roles from 30 per cent to parity, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 40, and create incentives for employing more women in senior positions;

(c) Effectively enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in order to narrow and eventually close the gender pay gap by: (i) conducting regular labour inspections; (ii) applying non-discriminatory and non-subjective job classification and evaluation methods; (iii) conducting regular pay surveys; extending the requirement for large businesses to disclose their gender wage gaps to mid-sized and smaller-sized workplaces; and (iv) encouraging employers to publish a narrative with their gender pay gap data, with a view to better understanding the reasons behind the gender wage and pension gap, and to take appropriate remedial measures;

(d) Put in place measures to identify gender gaps in employment, including by extending the requirement for large businesses to disclose their gender wage gaps to mid-sized and smaller-sized workplaces where many women work;

(e) Monitor the situation of women in the labour market and increase the number of women in formal employment by ensuring that companies provide more opportunities for women to gain access to full-time and regular employment and by extending benefits to non-regular workers, the majority of whom are women;

(f) Address the issue of male authority over women as a manifestation of power in training programmes and in workplace policy;

(g) Address harmful gender and social norms that lead to workplace discrimination, gender bias and harassment;

(h) Provide training for judges on the Convention and the use thereof in challenging discrimination and gender bias in employment;

(i) Amend the Equal Employment Opportunity Act to take into account a broader range of prohibited grounds for indirect discrimination, including pregnancy, childcare, appearance bias, urban and rural population and age distinctions;

(j) Ensure that when machine learning and large language models are trained on data, women technologists engage in bias mitigation from the very inception of model development and input the training data;

(k) Ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization.

Health

41. The Committee takes note with interest of the legalization of the abortion pill in the State party in 2023 and of the 2023 pilot scheme introduced by the Government to make emergency contraception available in pharmacies. It notes, however, with concern:

(a) That there is no timeline for the implementation of a definite policy on emergency contraception or access to other forms of modern contraceptives, such as hormone implants and hormone patches, and that the progesterone-only pill, "the mini pill", has not been approved in the State party;

(b) The limited access to legal abortion services under the restrictive exceptions contained in article 14 of the Maternal Health Act and the fact that

although abortions are expensive, they are not fully covered by Japanese national health insurance and, in cases where they are permitted, spousal consent is required;

(c) That, notwithstanding the State party's approval of oral abortion pills in 2023, very few clinics that provide abortion services offer such medication and only at a prohibitive cost similar to that of a surgical abortion;

(d) That women who wish to undergo voluntary sterilization must obtain spousal consent;

(e) The delays in amending article 3 of the Gender Identity Disorder Special Cases Law of 2003, notwithstanding a 2023 Supreme Court ruling that the sterilization requirement for legal gender recognition is unconstitutional;

(f) The absence of updated information on the safety of tap water containing perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, notwithstanding the request of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism for a report on the levels in the water supplied by 12,000 water providers, to be submitted in September 2024.

42. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health and targets 3.1 and 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on reducing global maternal mortality and on ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Provide adequate access to affordable modern methods of contraception, including emergency contraception, for all women and girls, including by removing the requirement for girls aged 16 and 17 years old to obtain parental consent in order to obtain contraceptives;

(b) Amend the Penal Code and Maternal Health Act to legalize abortion and decriminalize it in all cases and ensure that women and adolescent girls have adequate access to safe abortion and post-abortion services, so as to ensure the full realization of their rights, equality and economic and bodily autonomy to make free choices about their reproductive rights;

(c) Amend legislation to remove the requirement for spousal consent for women seeking abortion;

(d) Ensure that safe abortion services, including abortifacients, are accessible, affordable, covered by health insurance and available to all women and girls throughout the territory of the State party;

(e) Amend the Maternal Health Act to abolish the requirement of spousal consent, in order to allow all women to have access to voluntary sterilization services;

(f) Amend, without delay, article 3 of the Gender Identity Disorder Special Cases Law of 2003 to implement the 2023 Supreme Court decision and ensure that all victims who had to undergo sterilization under that article have access to effective reparations, including compensation;

(g) Provide an update on the report on safe levels of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in tap water in its next report.

Economic empowerment of women

43. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That the State party has the highest poverty rate (15.4 per cent) among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, with single

mothers and older women disproportionately affected and women overrepresented in precarious employment and also at a higher risk of falling into poverty without adequate social safety nets;

(b) The unavailability of sufficient measures to incorporate gender considerations into environmental and social impact assessment frameworks and investment prerequisites, technology-enabled production and service delivery, as well as the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Digital Compact;

(c) The limited participation of women in leadership roles in sports and cultural organizations and in recreational and cultural activities.

44. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Intensify its efforts aimed at poverty reduction and sustainable development, paying particular attention to the needs of single-parent households, widows and older women;

(b) Take steps to expand business opportunities for women, as well as their access to low interest loans without collateral, financing opportunities, including credit guarantees, high-value supply chains and high-ticket public procurement contracts, and document the percentage of overall national credit funds obtained by women;

(c) Put in place legal and policy measures to prevent gender bias and stereotypes from curtailing the economic opportunities of women, including for the environmental and social impact assessments that are prerequisites for planned investments, technology-enabled production and service delivery systems and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Digital Compact;

(d) Put in place measures to encourage the participation of women in leadership roles in sports and cultural organizations and enhance funding and investment in women-specific sports and cultural programmes to stimulate growth and ensure inclusive and sustainable sports.

Rural women

45. The Committee notes with interest that the basic plan for food, agriculture and rural areas and the agreements relating to family management are aimed at creating more accessible work environments for women, reducing the disproportionate burden of childcare and nursing on women, addressing gender stereotypes and enhancing land ownership for rural women. It is nevertheless concerned:

(a) At the low participation of rural women in decision-making, particularly in the formulation of agricultural policies;

(b) That the Income Tax Act does not always recognize the earnings of spouses and family members of self-employed persons and farmers as business expenses, which effectively impedes women's economic independence;

(c) At rural women's reportedly limited access to social benefits, including sickness and maternity leave benefits, under the national health insurance system and public welfare services.

46. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women and target 5.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, on undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property,

financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Eliminate barriers to the equal and inclusive representation of rural women at the decision-making level in the adoption, implementation and economic benefits of rural development projects;**
- (b) **Amend article 56 of the Income Tax Act to recognize the work of women in family enterprises in order to promote their economic independence;**
- (c) **Ensure that rural women, especially those in remote areas, have adequate access to healthcare, social protection and other basic services, including sickness and maternity benefits, and public transportation.**

Disadvantaged groups of women

47. The Committee is concerned that Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Korean women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and migrant women face ongoing intersecting forms of discrimination, which limits their access to education, employment and health. It particularly notes with concern:

- (a) That migrant women who participate in the Technical Intern Training Programme may receive low wages, have poor working conditions and face discrimination related to pregnancy and childbirth;
- (b) That the revised Law for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities fails to address intersecting forms of discrimination;
- (c) Systemic barriers to prenatal, birth and post-partum care services faced by women with disabilities.

48. **The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to eliminate intersecting forms of discrimination against Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Korean, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and migrant women, ensuring their equal access to employment, health and participation in public life. It further recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Set up appropriate mechanisms to ensure adequate monitoring of the work conditions of migrant women under the Technical Intern Training Programme and protect women migrant workers from discriminatory practices, such as repatriation due to pregnancy and isolation from family units abroad;**
- (b) **Amend the Law for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, to explicitly address, prohibit and provide for adequate penalties for intersecting forms of discrimination;**
- (c) **Protect women with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, from discrimination in terms of access to sexual and reproductive health services and hold medical institutions accountable for denial of care.**

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

49. The Committee welcomes information that 50 per cent of the members of the subcommittee of the Central Environment Council are women. It notes with concern, however, the low participation of women in leadership positions in the Central Disaster Management Council and in Disaster Management Councils at the local level.

50. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the Committee recommends that the State party review its climate change and disaster response strategies, taking into account the negative effects of climate change on the livelihoods of women, and ensure that women and men are equally represented in**

the development, adoption and implementation of legislation, policies and programmes on climate change, disaster response and disaster risk reduction, in particular by:

(a) Collecting disaggregated data on the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls;

(b) Incorporating a gender perspective into climate change and disaster risk reduction legislation, policies, financing and programmes, including economic infrastructure sectors and the green economy, renewable energy and clean technology, and empowering women by equipping them with the knowledge to effectively participate in climate change-related decision-making and the development of adaptation strategies and actions that build women's and girls' resilience to the impact of climate change;

(c) Introducing effective gender budgeting for climate financing and climate change adaptation activities, including those aimed at financing and encouraging a sustainable blue economy, to ensure that such initiatives are fully inclusive of women, promote women's empowerment and support the climate change agenda to help women and girls to adapt effectively to climate change and disasters.

Marriage and family relations

51. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The lack of compliance with the provisions of the Civil Code, resulting in difficulties for women with respect to the administration of assets, access to bank accounts and property titles and the equal division of property in divorce proceedings;

(b) Reports that, under the current consent divorce system, family courts often prioritize child visitation rights, even in cases involving abusive fathers and when protection orders should be issued, potentially compromising the safety of both the child and the victimized parent;

(c) That policies aimed at supporting single mothers in raising their children do not adequately address the socioeconomic challenges that they face, as well as the persistence of sexist stereotypes about single parenting;

(d) The lack of legal recognition of same-sex marriages and de facto unions and the prohibition for same-sex couples to adopt children.

52. **In line with its general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take steps to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Civil Code, to allow for the equal division of property in divorce proceedings;**

(b) **Provide affordable legal advice to women who seek to divorce and enhance and expand capacity-building for the judges and child welfare officers to ensure that they adequately take into account gender-based violence when deciding on child custody and visitation rights;**

(c) **Adopt targeted measures to support single mothers, including by facilitating the reconciliation of professional and family life through the provision of a sufficient number of affordable childcare facilities and flexible working arrangements, and eliminate sexist stereotypes surrounding single parenting;**

(d) **Recognize same-sex unions, marriages and registered unions entered into under private international law and allow the adoption of children by women in same-sex marriages or de facto unions.**

Data collection and analysis

53. The Committee is concerned about the absence of data collection in many areas relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

54. **The Committee recommends that the State party promote and build capacity for the use of the newest technology in the collection of statistical data, including on the prevalence of gender-based violence against women, the prevalence of trafficking in women and girls, access to education and the socioeconomic status of women, disaggregated by age and socioeconomic background, for the purposes of designing and implementing tailored and gender-responsive legislation, policies, programmes and budgets.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

55. **The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to further evaluate the realization of the rights enshrined in the Convention in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.**

Dissemination

56. **The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, provincial and municipal), in particular to the Government, the National Diet and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.**

Ratification of other treaties

57. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ 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, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which it is not yet a party.**

¹ 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.

Follow-up to the concluding observations

58. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12 (a), 24 (a) and 42 (a) and (c) above.

Preparation of the next report

59. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the tenth periodic report of the State party in line with a future predictable reporting calendar based on an eight-year review cycle 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.

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