

Labour, Human Services and Social Security, had been expanded and its resources, both human and financial, had been increased, thereby enabling acceleration of the implementation of its programme of activities across the country. Its reach had been extended through Regional Women's Affairs Officers, who monitor programmes and projects of Regional Women's Affairs Committees in all administrative regions. Moreover, the Bureau had established the Inter-Ministry Committee composed of senior personnel in the public service, through which it monitored gender mainstreaming and g

organizations and the public to further this goal and move forward in partnership on the issues of concern to women.

## Concluding comments of the Committee

## Introduction

- 10. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for its combined third, fourth, fifth and sixth periodic report, for the written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-session working group and for the oral presentation and further clarifications in response to the questions posed by the Committee.
- 11. The Committee welcomes the State party's high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister of Labour, Human Resources and Social Security, and appreciates the constructive dialogue held between the delegation and the members of the Committee.

## Positive aspects

- 12. The Committee notes with satisfaction that through the constitutional reform undertaken in 2001, all international human rights instruments, including the Convention are incorporated into domestic legislation.
- 13. The Committee notes the establishment, through the constitutional amendment of 2001, of the Women and Gender Equality Commission, which falls under the umbrella of the Human Rights Commission. In this regard, the Committee welcomes the recent appointment of the members of the Commission, thus allowing it to start functioning.
- 14. The Committee commends the State party for the adoption of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act No. 2 of 2005 and the formulation and launching of the National Plan of Action to eliminate trafficking in persons in 2004.
- 15. The Committee welcomes the intention of the Women's Bureau to develop gender-responsive indicators to assess the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

## Principal areas of concern and recommendations

16. The Committee notes the State party's obligation with respect to the

women. The Committee further urges the State party to ensure full compliance by public authorities and institutions with legislation aimed at prevention of discrimination against women, increase the availability of legal aid to women in all parts of the country, and sensitize the judiciary and law enforcement personnel to gender equality issues. The Committee urges the State party to take special measures to enhance women's awareness of their rights and legal literacy so that they can better avail themselves of available remedies and mechanisms of redress against violations of their rights under the Convention.

- 25. The Committee regrets the lack of data disaggregated by sex in regard to many of the provisions of the Convention, including all forms of violence against women.
- 26. The Committee requests that the State party provide sufficient data disaggregated by sex, and over time, in its next report so that a clear picture of progress and obstacles in the implementation of

programmatic steps outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which reinforces the provisions of the Convention, in the National Action Plan 2005-2007 so as to ensure a comprehensive approach to the promotion of legal and substantive gender equality. It requests

State party provide in its next report comprehensive information, including statistical information, on all forms of violence against women and measures to prevent and eradicate it.

- 35. The Committee recognizes the efforts of the Government to put in place comprehensive health structures. However, the Committee is concerned that women's access to health services is not monitored and there is no data to establish the de facto impact of such measures.
- 36. The Committee recommends that a broad framework for health services in line with the Committee's general recommendation 24 on article 12, on women and health, be put in place, and that access by women, especially Amerindian women and other women living in rural and hinterland areas, be monitored. It also recommends that the State party provide information on women's access to health services in its next periodic report.
- 37. While welcoming the adoption of the National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS 2002-2006, the Committee notes with concern the high and growing prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women, especially younger women, who are particularly vulnerable because of unequal power relations and limited socio-economic opportunities. The Committee is especially concerned that the low minimum age of sexual consent (13 years) puts young women and girls at particular risk of becoming