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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/JAP/9](#)) at its 2104<sup>th</sup> and 2105<sup>th</sup> 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/JAP/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 Ms. Keiko Okada, Director-General of the Gender Equality Bureau in the Cabinet Office, 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 His Excellency Mr. Atsuyuki Oike, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative, and other members of the Permanent Mission of the 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 eighth periodic report ([CEDAW/C/JPN/7-8](#)) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) The amendment to the Civil code abolishing the waiting period for women to remarry upon divorce, in 2024;

(b) The Act on Payment of Compensation, etc. to Persons who underwent Eugenic Surgery, etc. under the now-defunct Eugenic Protection Law, to provide compensation and other payments to victims of Eugenic Surgery, in 2024;

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

(c) The definition of rape as nonconsensual sexual intercourse, removing the requirement of use of force and new legislation raising the age of sexual consent from 13 to 16 years, in 2023;

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

(f) The amendment to the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field, which stipulates that the number of women and men candidates should be as equal as possible, to establish of consultation procedures on 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) The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) task force, in 2024;

(b) The Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Japan, in 2022;

(c) The 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, which was adopted in 2020, provides that the State party "will conduct serious considerations concerning the early ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", but regrets that, despite holding 23 interministerial study groups on the issue, the State party has taken too long in its

consideration of ratification of the Optional Protocol. Additionally, the Committee expresses concern that:

(a) Efforts to raise awareness about CEDAW and to promote its implementation are insufficient, 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 limited use of the Convention's in legal proceedings.

**10. The Committee recommends that the State party promptly address and remove any obstacles to ratification of the Optional Protocol, in line with the Committee's 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, the Committee's general recommendations and its jurisprudence under the Optional Protocol to ensure 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 against women in the public and private spheres, in line with article 1 of the Convention, resulting in inconsistencies in legal interpretations and enforcement. It also takes note of the State party's position that the provisions of the Japanese Imperial House Law are not within the purview of the Committee's competence. However, the Committee considers that allowing only male offspring in the male line belonging to the Imperial Lineage to succeed to the throne, is incompatible with articles 1 and 2 and contrary to 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) The retention of the provision in the Family Register Law concerning the discriminatory description in birth notification for children born out of wedlock.

**12. The Committee recommends that the State party incorporate into its legislation a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, covering 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 good practices of other States parties that have reformed their succession laws to ensure equality of women and men, and amend the Imperial House Law to guarantee equality of women and men in the succession to the throne. Recalling its previous recommendations (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, peace and security**

13. The Committee notes that Japan co-chairs the Women Peace and Security Focal Points Network in 2025. It notes with appreciation the establishment of the Women, Peace and Security task force to better co-ordinate efforts to strengthen women's participation, both domestically and internationally, in decision-making related to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. The Committee also commends Japan's efforts to vigorously promote women 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, peace and security, including in relation to the presence of the US military in 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 the armed conflict are fully integrated into those processes, as required under the Convention and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), with a view to achieving a 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 peace-building efforts and negotiation of bilateral military agreements that impact 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 trainings and awareness-raising seminars for civil servants and diplomats on Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security.**

### **Extraterritorial State obligations**

15. The Committee notes with concern reports that investments 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 facing 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 by Japanese companies in extractive sectors in third countries do not contradict the State party's extraterritorial obligations, and that women workers in these 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 accessing justice, including the limited number of courts and qualified judicial personnel trained on gender-responsive case handling;

(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 and monitors the implementation of the Fifth Basic Plan on Gender Equality. It notes with concern, however, that the State party does not have a dedicated ministry on women's affairs. It further notes that the Gender Equality Bureau is merely a coordinating body within the Cabinet Office, and is limited in its authority, budget, and personnel. The Committee is further concerned at reports that, despite commitments made under the Fifth Basic Plan, civil society has not sufficiently been engaged in its implementation and assessment.

20. **Recalling its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, paras. 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 on 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 on Gender Equality, and 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 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 government including at prefectural and municipal levels;**

(c) **Ensure meaningful and concrete engagement with women's civil society organizations of diverse backgrounds, including in the development and implementation of the Sixth Basic Plan for Gender Equality, and enhance technical and financial support to these 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 timeframe 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, annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/13 4 of 20 December 1993), ensuring 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 sets out specific initiatives and targets to expand women's participation in all areas, it continues to rely on voluntary measures and incentives, rather than on time-bound temporary special measures, such as mandatory statutory quotas. The Committee also notes with concern:

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

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

24. **The Committee recalls its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para.19) and 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 3-million-yen deposit 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 survivors of Fukushima have full enjoyment of their fundamental rights, freedom from discrimination and equal access to opportunities, including social services, health care (including maternal health care), 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 on 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, 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 the Committee's 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 that target 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 ethnic minorities such as Ainu, Buraku and Zainachi Korean women and girls are effectively addressed throughout all sectors of the State Party.**

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

27. The Committee recognises the efforts of the State party to reform its legislation regarding rape. It nevertheless regrets that, while it is possible to prosecute marital rape under the general rape laws, marital rape is not explicitly criminalised as a separate offense. 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 despite 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 the order expires;

(c) Reports that access to support services for victims of gender-based violence is particularly challenging for rural women and those facing intersectional discrimination, such as ethnic minority women, migrant women and women with disabilities and LGBTI 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" to maintain protection status under the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act;

(d) Gender-based violence against women committed by U.S. 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 offense and conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the criminal nature of marital rape. It further recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Address the resource gaps in 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 revictimization of women 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, that 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 legislation clearly eliminates the need for "justifiable reasons" to maintain protection and protect victims regardless of immigration status;**

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

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

29. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Current legal provisions do not fully encompass non-coercive forms of exploitation, particularly in labour trafficking, and gaps remain in addressing exploitation through "abuse of power" or "vulnerability";

(b) Trafficking and sexual exploitation survivors face barriers to accessing shelters and legal services, including language issues, and limited long-term reintegration support;

(c) Labour trafficking remains significantly underreported;

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

30. **With reference to its general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration and recalling 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, specifically targeting "abuse of power" and "vulnerability";**

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

(c) **Encourage 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 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 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 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 efforts of the State party 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/survivors to truth, justice and reparations.

34. **The Committee draws the attention of the State party to the fact that ECOSOC adopted Resolution 1158 (XLI) confirms that, in international law, “the principle that there is no period of limitation for war crimes and crimes against humanity” must be accepted. The Committee recalls its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8, para. 29) and recommends that the State party expand and strengthen its efforts to effectively implement its obligations under international human rights laws with regard to the “comfort women” to ensure the rights of victims/survivors are holistically addressed.**

#### **Equal participation in political and public life**

35. The Committee notes the awareness-raising efforts 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 setting specific targets for female candidates in national elections and that gender stereotypes continue to hinder progress, especially in balancing family life with political careers;

(c) That the Law on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field lacks quotas or penalties for non-compliance, relying instead on 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 the early 2020s falls short of parity and has still not been met;

(e) The underrepresentation of women with disabilities, ethnic and other minority women, such as Ainu, Buraku and Zainichi Korean women, in decision-making systems that impact 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, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, in order to accelerate women’s full and equal participation in elected and appointed positions;**

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

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

(d) **Raise the 30 per cent target in the third and fourth basic plans on gender equality to 50:50 parity in the sixth basic plan on gender equality for the representation of women at the legislative, ministerial, 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 impact their lives.**

## **Education**

37. The Committee notes with appreciation that the Fifth Basic Plan provides for the promotion of career choices for women in STEM and that the Guidelines for University Admission Selection have been revised to prohibit universities from applying discriminatory selection criteria based on gender. However, the Committee notes with concern:

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

(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 and content and the inadequate length of sexuality education;

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

(e) Difficult teaching conditions, including long working hours, no overtime pay, sleep deprivation and the need to take work home, which have a disparate impact on female teachers, including extensive sick leave and 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 career outcomes for women and that perpetuate and validate the segregation of the sexes 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 of girls and women, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and ICT, 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, to 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, with regular lessons and free from interference by politicians and public officials with its content and the language used;

(d) **Ensure that federal guidelines on textbook publication call for the adequate reflection of 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 this guideline in order to ensure accuracy and standardization of textbook 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 that standardize educational approaches across all institution types, and promote gender-inclusive curricula and career guidance, thereby ensuring equitable career outcomes for women and discouraging sex segregation in broader society.**

### **Employment**

39. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The still wide gender pay gap, 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) The share of women in management roles is just 15 percent, well below the 30 per cent target set by the State party;

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

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

(e) Workplace discrimination and harassment experienced by women, indigenous women, Buraku women, women with disabilities, migrant women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, among other groups;

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

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

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, gender-biased training and diversity training, to increase the representation of women in formal employment, including in senior positions, in sectors where they are most underrepresented, such as STEM, particularly the technology field, as well as in the medical and legal professions;**

(b) **Increase its target for women in management roles from 30% to parity, in line with the Committee’s general recommendation No.40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, and create incentives to employ 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 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-size and smaller size 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-size and smaller size 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 male authority over women as a manifestation of power in training programs 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 its use of CEDAW in challenging employment discrimination and gender bias in employment;**

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

(j) **Ensure that, when Large Language Model and ML's are trained on data, women technologists engage in bias mitigation at the very inception of 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 legalisation of the abortion pill in the State party in 2023 and of the 2023 government pilot for making emergency contraception available in pharmacies. However, it notes with concern:

(a) The absence of a timeline for the implementation of a definite policy on emergency contraception, and access to other forms of modern contraceptives, such as hormonal implants, hormone patches, and that the progesterone-only "mini pill," has not been approved in the State party;

(b) The limited access to legal abortion under the restrictive exceptions of article 14 of the Maternal Health Act, and that abortion is not fully covered by Japanese national health insurance despite being expensive, and in cases where it is permitted, prior spousal consent is required;

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

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

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

(f) The absence of updated information on the safety of tap water in relation to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, although the environment and infrastructure Ministries ordered an inquiry/report on measurements from 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 health-care services, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Provide adequate access to affordable modern methods of contraception, including emergency contraception, to all women and girls, including by removing the requirement for girls aged 16 and 17 to obtain parental consent in order to access 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 to ensure full realization of rights of women, their equality and their 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 were had to undergo sterilization under article 3 of the Law have access to effective reparation, including compensation;**

(g) **Provide an update on the report into 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 among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries at 15.4%, with single mothers and older women disproportionately impacted and women being overrepresented in precarious employment and also at higher risk of falling into poverty without adequate social safety nets;

(b) The unavailability of sufficient measures incorporating gender considerations into the environmental and social impact assessment frameworks and investment pre-requisites, technology enabled production and service delivery as well as the implementation of the SDGs and the Global Digital Compact;

(c) Women's limited participation 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 women's business opportunities, access 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 accessed by women;**

(c) **Put in place legal and policy measures to prevent gender bias and stereotypes from curtailing women's economic opportunities, including for the environmental and social impact assessment pre-requisites of planned investments, technology enabled production and service delivery systems as well as the implementation of the SDGs and the Global Digital Compact;**

(d) **Put in place measures to encourage women's participation in leadership roles in sports and cultural organisations Enhance funding and investment in women-specific sports and cultural programs 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 Family-Management Agreements aim to create more accessible work environments for women, reduce their disproportionate burden of childcare and nursing, address gender stereotypes, and enhance 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) 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 rural women's equal and inclusive representation at 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 women's work in family enterprises in order to promote their economic independence;**

(c) **Ensure that rural women, especially those in remote areas, have adequate access to health care, 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, Zainichi and Korean women, women with disabilities, LBTQI+, and migrant women face ongoing intersecting forms of discrimination, limiting their access to education, employment and health. It particularly notes with concern:

(a) That migrant women 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 postpartum care services faced by women with disabilities.

**48. The Committee recommends that the State party intensify efforts to eliminate intersecting forms of discrimination against Ainu, Buraku, Zainichi Korean, women with disabilities, LGBTI, 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 working 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 accessing 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 the Central Environment Council has 50 per cent female membership in its subcommittee. It notes with concern, however, the low participation of women in leadership positions in the Central Disaster Management Council and in local level disaster management councils.

**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) **Incorporate a gender perspective in 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 empower women by equipping them with 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 adapt effectively to climate change and disasters.**

**Marriage and family relations**

51. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The lack of compliance with provisions of the Civil Code, resulting in difficulties for women in 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 even 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 socio-economic 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 so as to allow for an equal division of property in divorce proceedings;**

**(b) Provide affordable legal advice to women seeking 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 sufficient numbers 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 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 purposes of the design and implementation of 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 languages 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 instruments<sup>1</sup> 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 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.

#### **Follow-up to 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), 42(a) and 42(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).

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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.