

A Safe, Cohesive and Just Caribbean



CARICOM Strategy: Freedom from Violence

Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) D. Violence Against Women

Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) E. Women in Armed Conflict

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Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Article 15:
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Justice

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Bahamas

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

(a) **Strengthen the judicial system, including through the allocation of sufficient human, technical and financial resources and systematic legal education and capacity-building programmes for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and other law enforcement officials on women's rights and gender equality, and raise awareness to eliminate the discrimination and stigmatization faced by women and girls who claim their rights;**

(b) **Ensure that the police and courts address complaints from women and girls about gender-based violence in an expeditious, efficient and gender-sensitive manner;**

(c) **Enhance awareness among women and girls of their rights and the remedies available to them under the Convention, including through awareness-raising campaigns, in cooperation with civil society organizations and community-based women's associations.**

Barbados

13. The Committee notes with appreciation the involvement of the State party with other countries of the region in a project to improve access to justice, in particular for women. It also notes that the State party is planning to establish a family court that will have island-wide jurisdiction to hear matters related to family arrangements at the magisterial and High Court levels. However, the Committee notes the following with concern:

(a) The insufficient resources allocated by the State party to its justice system, the overly burdensome procedural rules, considerable backlogs and lengthy delays in processing cases, the limited capacity of the police and courts to address complaints from women about gender-based violence in a gender-sensitive manner and the absence of a specialized court on family law;

(b) That women in the State party, especially those belonging to disadvantaged groups, are unaware of their rights under the Convention and thus lack the information necessary to claim them.

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

(a) **Reform and strengthen the judicial system, including through the allocation of sufficient human, technical and financial resources and systematic capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and other law enforcement officials on women's rights and gender equality, and raise awareness to eliminate the stigmatization faced by women who claim their rights;**

(b) **Give priority to the establishment of courts specializing in family law and ensure that the police and courts address complaints from women about gender-based violence in an expeditious, efficient and gender-sensitive manner;**

(c) **Enhance awareness among women of their rights and the remedies available to them under the Convention through awareness-raising campaigns and other measures, in cooperation with civil society organizations and community-based women's associations.**

Belize

11. The Committee is concerned that there is inadequate enforcement of laws and insufficient implementation of the provisions of the Convention and policies and programmes for the advancement of women by the State party. The Committee is concerned that the Convention and existing laws, policies and programmes are not sufficiently known in the State party. It is also concerned about the lack of access to justice for women.

12. **The Committee urges the State party to strengthen enforcement of its laws and recommends that the State party elaborate a comprehensive operational plan for the effective implementation of the Convention and of its policies and programmes for the advancement of women. The Committee calls on the State party to intensify its efforts**

to raise awareness about the Convention and about laws, policies and programmes that are designed to enhance women's enjoyment of their rights. The Committee encourages the State party to eliminate impediments women may face in gaining access to justice and to enhance women's legal literacy, awareness of their rights and capacity to effectively claim them.

Grenada

15. The Committee is concerned at the absence of a complaints mechanism for women to report cases of discrimination, the high costs of filing complaints under chapter 1 of the Constitution and the fact that women victims of gender-based violence, particularly of sexual assaults, usually face juries with stereotypical attitudes towards women, which may lead to undue acquittals of perpetrators.

16. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Establish a complaints mechanism and ensure that women have easy and affordable access to that complaints mechanism to report discrimination and violations of their rights;

(b) Ensure that women have effective access to justice, including through the provision of legal aid where relevant;

(c) Ensure that women victims, as well as the witnesses, in cases of gender based violence are not negatively affected by the functioning of the legal system or stereotypical attitudes of jury members.

Guyana

14. The Committee notes that women's access to justice is provided for in legislation and that since 2008 legal aid clinic services have been expanded to 6 of the 10 administrative regions of the country to facilitate greater access to justice for the poor and vulnerable. It is concerned, however, that women's ability to exercise the right and to bring cases of discrimination before the courts is limited by such factors as the absence of permanent magistrates' courts in all regions, the lack of information about women's rights and other practical difficulties in gaining access to the courts. The Committee also notes that the State party has not yet established an independent national human rights institution, despite accepting the recommendation to do so made during the universal periodic review of Guyana in 2010 (see A/HRC/15/14). The Committee again notes that no ombudsman has been appointed since January 2005 and no specific information has been provided regarding such an appointment.

15. The Committee calls upon the State party:

(a) To establish permanent magistrates' courts and to ensure that the judiciary is familiar with the Convention and the State party's obligations;

(b) To provide legal aid services in all regions, to implement legal literacy programmes, to disseminate knowledge of ways to use available legal remedies against discrimination and to monitor the results of such efforts;

(c) To take steps to establish an independent national human rights institution in accordance with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions (the Paris Principles);

(d) To appoint an ombudsman with a mandate to consider complaints and to ensure that the institution is provided with sufficient human, financial and technical resources to function effectively and so that its composition and activities will be gender sensitive and will fully address the issue of women's human rights.

Haiti

13. The Committee is concerned about the numerous obstacles women and girls face in gaining access to justice, particularly in cases of gender-based violence and abuse, including linguistic barriers, economic factors, a dysfunctional judiciary, lack of awareness of rights and reticence to file complaints because of fear of social stigma and prejudices, relationship with the offender, reservations of parents or guardians, and financial dependence of the victim. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of measures taken by the State party to eliminate those obstacles and to ensure the independence, professionalism and gender sensitivity of law enforcement professionals, including judges, prosecutors and the police. The Committee is further concerned that the State-sponsored legal aid system is limited in its outreach, and that legal aid is provided only to a minimal extent by civil society organizations.

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

(a) Ensure the creation and maintenance of courts and quasi-judicial bodies throughout the territory of the State party so that women have effective access to justice, especially women belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, such as internally displaced women and women with disabilities;

(b) Strengthen and increase the number of legal aid offices, enhance their availability and quality in all regions, and ensure appropriate resources for their operation and for the free provision of effective legal aid;

(c) Enhance women's awareness of their rights and their legal literacy in all areas of the law to empower them to claim their rights under the Convention;

(d) Ensure that all cases of violence and discrimination against women are brought under the jurisdiction of criminal court, rather than settled through mediation;

(e) Ensure that judicial proceedings are conducted in the language of choice of the victim;

(f) **Strengthen capacity-building programmes on the Convention for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and the police, and professionals in related services.**

Jamaica

13. While noting that the State party has an Office of the Public Defender, which has certain investigative powers relating to constitutional rights, the Committee is concerned about the absence of a complaints mechanism for women to report cases of discrimination and the lack of an independent national human rights institution in the State party.

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

(a) **Establish a complaints mechanism and ensure that women have easy and affordable access to that mechanism to report discrimination and violations of their rights;**

(b) **Ensure that women have effective access to justice, including through the provision of legal aid, where relevant, in all parts of the country;**

(c) **Consider establishing 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 (Paris Principles) or another specialized body, such as an ombudsperson's office specialized in women's issues, with authority to consider and issue opinions and make recommendations on complaints submitted by women alleging violations of their human rights.**

Saint Lucia

11. While noting the legislative reforms that have been completed or are under way, the Committee is concerned that no comprehensive analysis has been undertaken of national legislation with regard to their compliance with the provisions of the Convention, and the lack of data available to monitor the de facto realization of women's equality and access to justice.

12. **The Committee invites the State party to undertake a comprehensive analysis of its legislation, within an established time frame, aimed at eliminating all provisions that are directly discriminatory or that have discriminatory effects, or impacts, on women, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. It further invites the State party to undertake the data collection necessary to establish a basis upon which to monitor the de facto realization of women's equality and access to justice.**

St Kitts and Nevis

109. The Committee expresses concern about the lack of legal aid for women and the lengthy process which makes it difficult for women to take men to court in order to obtain child support. The Committee is also concerned that such a lengthy process allows men to serve a prison sentence instead of paying maintenance.

110. **The Committee urges the State party to take adequate legislative measures to make it easier for women to obtain child support and access to legal aid.**

Suriname

12. The Committee notes that women can obtain free legal aid services through the Legal Aid Bureau (*Bureau Rechtszorg*) of the Ministry of Justice and Police. Nonetheless, it regrets that there is no mechanism, policy or procedure in the State party to guarantee equal access to justice for all women, in particular those belonging to disadvantaged groups. The Committee also notes with concern information about persistent discrimination in the judicial system against indigenous women and tribal women, in particular with regard to their land rights. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of information on the complaints mechanisms available to women who are victims of discrimination and gender-based violence.

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

(a) **Conduct a study on how the Committee's general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice can be used to reform the Legal Aid Bureau and address discriminatory practices impeding women's access to justice in the State party;**

(b) **Establish, without delay, a confidential complaints mechanism for women who are victims of discrimination and gender-based violence;**

(c) **Provide free legal aid to women and girls without sufficient means, adopt gender-sensitive procedures for applications to the Legal Aid Bureau, increase its budget and provide free interpretation services for ethnic minority women.**

Trinidad and Tobago

12. The Committee notes that the Equal Opportunity Commission established under the Equal Opportunity Act, the Police Complaints Authority and the Office of the Ombudsman provide legal remedies enabling women and girls to report violations of their rights. The Committee notes with concern, however, that only a few women and girls have availed themselves of the possibility of filing a complaint with the Commission and that there is a lack of independence in the appointment of members of the Authority. The Committee is also concerned that no institution in the State party has applied for accreditation with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, formerly known as the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the

Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, and that the Office of the Ombudsman itself is not in full conformity with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

13. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women have effective access to legal remedies in all parts of the State party by addressing existing barriers and that the Equal Opportunity Commission, the Police Complaints Authority and the Office of the Ombudsman operate independently and impartially. It also recommends that the State party establish a national human rights institution with a broad mandate to promote and protect women's rights that it is in full compliance with the Paris Principles.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

The Bahamas

23. The Committee welcomes a number of measures to combat gender-based violence against women and girls such the establishment of the Domestic Violence and Counselling Unit (DVCU), the appointment of the National Task Force for Gender-Based Violence and the development of a draft National Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence. The Committee also welcomes the measures taken by the Royal Bahamas Police and judiciary, such as the establishment of a Sexual Offences Unit in the department of Public Prosecutions and the "Swift Justice" initiative to address delays in access to justice. It is, however, concerned about:

(a) The high prevalence of gender-based violence against women and girls, including domestic and sexual violence and rape, and the reported incidence of hate crimes against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, which remain culturally accepted and underreported;

(b) The lack of a comprehensive law addressing violence against women and the delay in finalising and adopting the draft bill on gender-based violence and the draft National Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence;

(c) The delay in adopting draft Amendments to the Sexual Offences Act that is fully in line with the General Recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19; and the proposed amendment that limits the right to file a complaint for marital rape to one year from the time of the violation;

(d) The delay in and the lack of timeframe to establish the Sex Offenders Register and Registry;

(e) The prevalence of corporal punishment that is widely acceptable as means to discipline children at school and at home;

(f) The significant backlog in the court system of cases of violence against women and girls;

(g) The limited number of State-run shelters for women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence and sexual violence;

(h) The lack of data on cases of violence against women and girls that have been investigated leading to prosecution and on the sanctions imposed on perpetrators in the State party, disaggregated by age and relationship between victim and perpetrator.

24. Recalling its General Recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, and in line with target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Develop and implement comprehensive measures for the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls, in particular domestic and sexual violence and rape, and assess the reported incidence of crimes against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, and intensify efforts to change social norms and cultural perceptions that tolerate gender-based violence as culturally acceptable;**

(b) **Accelerate the adoption of a comprehensive draft bill on gender-based violence and the draft National Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence, in line with the Committee's general recommendation 35;**

(c) **Adopt, without delay, the amendments to the Sexual Offences Act expressly criminalizing marital rape; remove any temporal limitations to the right to file a complaint for marital rape; and establish the Sex Offenders Register and Registry;**

(d) **Prohibit, in law and practice, the use of corporal punishment of girls in schools and at home and strengthen awareness-raising programmes, to promote non-violent forms of child-rearing and discipline;**

(e) **Ensure that cases of gender-based violence against women and girls are effectively investigated and prosecuted; and that penalties imposed on perpetrators are commensurate with the gravity of the crimes perpetrated;**

(f) **Provide mandatory capacity-building programmes for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and other law enforcement officials on the strict application of legislation criminalizing gender-based violence against women and girls as well on gender-sensitive methods and procedures to employ with women and girls who are victims of such violence;**

(g) **Provide adequate assistance, protection and rehabilitation to women and girls who are victims of violence, including by strengthening the capacity of existing shelters and by enhancing cooperation with and funding for non-governmental organizations providing shelter and rehabilitation to victims;**

(h) **Collect statistical data on domestic, sexual and other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, disaggregated by age and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

25. The Committee welcomes the various anti-trafficking initiatives and measures taken by the State party including the establishment of the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Inter-Ministerial Committee and Task Force. It, however, remains concerned about the low number of trafficking cases brought before the court and the lack of research on trends and the extent of trafficking in women and girls in the State party.

26. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Build the capacity of the judiciary, law enforcement officers, border police, social workers and health-care professionals on the identification, early referral of women and girls who are victims of trafficking, to appropriate social services and gender sensitive protocols for their treatment;**

(b) **Intensify the enforcement of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention and Suppressions) Act 2008, increase the financial resources to the programmes of TIP Committee and Task Force to combat trafficking and accelerate the establishment of the secretariat with trained professionals to efficiently carry out the mandate of these bodies;**

(c) **Conduct a study in order to establish trends and the extent of trafficking in women and girls in the State party.**

27. The Committee remains concerned about the criminalization of women in prostitution through the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, at the lack of information on the phenomenon, and at the prevalence of women involved in prostitution in the State party, as well as at the nonexistence of information on the exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution. The Committee is also concerned about the number of children involved in prostitution and child pornography, including in the context of tourism.

28. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/BHS/CO/1-5) and recommends that the State party:

(a) **Decriminalize women in prostitution;**

(b) **Address the root causes of exploitation of women and girls in prostitution by offering educational and alternative income opportunities to women who are at risk of being exploited, particularly of girls from poor families who are forced into prostitution to provide family income, as well as exit programmes for women in prostitution, including social and professional reintegration strategies;**

(c) **Take all measures necessary to eliminate child pornography, including in the context of tourism, and raise awareness among the actors directly related to the tourism industry about children, and presumably girls, engaged in certain activities related to tourism who are at risk of becoming involved in commercial sexual exploitation.**

Barbados

23. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to combat gender-based violence against women, including the establishment of the Family Conflict Intervention Unit in 2013. However, it remains concerned at the high prevalence of gender-based violence against women, in particular domestic and sexual violence, which remain culturally accepted and underreported, the lack of statistical data disaggregated by age and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, and the lack of shelters for women who are victims of gender-based violence. The Committee is also concerned at reports of the increasing rate of femicide in the State party.

24. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women and general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Accord high priority to the full implementation of the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) (Amendment) Act and the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act and ensure that perpetrators of gender-based violence are prosecuted and adequately punished;**

(b) **Specifically criminalize femicide and ensure that cases of femicide are effectively investigated and prosecuted and that the sentences imposed on perpetrators are commensurate with the gravity of the crime;**

(c) **Provide mandatory capacity-building programmes for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and other law enforcement officials on the strict application of legislation criminalizing gender-based violence against women and on gender-sensitive investigation methods and procedures to employ with victims of such violence;**

(d) **Provide adequate redress, assistance and protection to women who are victims of gender-based violence by establishing shelters, issuing and enforcing protection orders and enhancing cooperation with non-governmental organizations that provide assistance and rehabilitation to victims;**

(e) **Collect statistical data on domestic, sexual and other forms of gender-based violence against women, disaggregated by age and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

25. The Committee notes with appreciation the establishment in the Royal Barbados Police Force of a special unit on trafficking, in 2013. However, it regrets the failure of the State party to respond to questions raised during the dialogue. The Committee notes with concern that the State party remains both a source and a destination country for women and girls, including non-nationals, who are subjected to trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour, as a result of high unemployment, increasing levels of poverty and the weak implementation of anti-trafficking legislation. The Committee is particularly concerned about:

(a) The delay in the adoption of the national policy on trafficking and the policy and procedures manual for the protection of victims of trafficking, under discussion since 2008;

(b) The lack of information on the number of complaints, investigations, prosecutions and convictions related to the trafficking of women and girls, as well as on the support and rehabilitation services and specialized shelters available to victims;

(c) Reports of discrimination and gender-based violence against women in prostitution, which result in various forms of abuse, the limited assistance available to victims, and the absence of exit and reintegration programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution.

26. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Strictly enforce its legislation on trafficking in persons, increase the financial resources allocated to the implementation of laws and programmes to combat trafficking and expedite the adoption of the national policy on trafficking and the policy and procedures manual for the protection of victims of trafficking;

(b) Build the capacity of the judiciary, law enforcement officers, border police, social workers and health-care professionals on the early referral of victims of trafficking, including non-nationals, to appropriate social services and gender-sensitive protocols for their treatment;

(c) Address the root causes of trafficking by enhancing educational and economic opportunities for women and girls and their families, thereby reducing their vulnerability to exploitation by traffickers;

(d) Intensify efforts aimed at bilateral, regional and international cooperation to prevent trafficking, including through information exchange and harmonization of procedures to prosecute traffickers;

(e) Establish sufficiently funded and equipped shelters and crisis centres for women who are victims and provide reintegration programmes and alternative income-generating opportunities for women who are victims of trafficking and exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution.

Belize

19. While welcoming the new Domestic Violence Act, which takes effect in July 2007, the Committee is concerned about the continued prevalence of violence against women and the lack of social awareness about it in the country. The Committee is concerned that women victims of violence are advised to return to their abusive partners by authority figures, including the police and magistrates. It is concerned about the limited progress made in the State party in preventing and eliminating violence against women, reflected in a lack of prosecutions and convictions and lack of access to justice for women, particularly in the rural areas. The Committee is further concerned that despite the criminalization of marital rape, there are apparently no prosecutions for

that crime in the State party. It regrets the lack of information and statistical data on all types of violence against women and of steps taken to assess the effectiveness of measures undertaken to address violence against women.

20. **The Committee urges the State party to place high priority on implementing a comprehensive approach to addressing all forms of violence against women, including through the effective enforcement and monitoring of the Domestic Violence Act. It also urges the State party to raise public awareness, through media and educational programmes, that all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence and marital rape, are unacceptable and prohibited by law. The Committee calls upon the State party to provide training on the new Act to the judiciary, law enforcement officials, legal professionals, social workers and health providers and to fully sensitize them to all forms of violence against women so as to ensure that the perpetrators of violence are effectively prosecuted and punished with the required seriousness and speed. The Committee further recommends that the State party seek to increase the number of female judges and law enforcement officials as a means to encourage women to report cases of violence. It calls on the State party to establish support measures for victims of domestic violence, including increasing the number of shelters and legal, medical and psychological support. The Committee encourages the State party to make full use of the Committee's general recommendation 19 in its efforts to address violence against women. The Committee urges the State party to establish a centralized system to gather data on the prevalence and incidence of violence against women and to include such data, as well as information about the impact of measures taken, in its next periodic report.**

21. While the Committee notes the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act in 2003, the Committee is concerned that Belize is becoming a destination country for trafficked women from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of information regarding the extent of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution in the country, and the potential negative impact that increased tourism could have on the incidence of prostitution and trafficking.

22. **The Committee calls upon the State party to ensure that legislation on trafficking is fully enforced. It recommends that the State party address the root cause of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution by increasing its efforts to improve the economic situation of women, thereby eliminating their vulnerability to exploitation and traffickers, and take measures for the rehabilitation and social integration of women and girls who are victims of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution. It recommends that the State party further strengthen bilateral, subregional and multilateral cooperation to combat trafficking. The Committee recommends that the State party closely monitor the impact of increased tourism on prostitution and enhance related prevention measures.**

23. While welcoming the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act (2010) and the National Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Protocol (2011), and the drafting of a national strategic action plan for the prevention, protection and punishment of gender-based violence, the Committee notes with concern the high incidence of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual abuse and incest. The Committee is further concerned about the limited enforcement of the Domestic Violence Act; gaps in legislation on violence against women, in particular those relating to the fact that marital rape is not criminalized and to the restrictive definition of rape; the lack of sufficient awareness and training among judges, prosecutors and police officers and health professionals on violence against women; the fact that the domestic violence hotline is not operational; the limited disaggregated data available on violence against women; and information indicating that cases of gender-based violence are underreported due to prevalent social and cultural factors. The Committee is also concerned at the high prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace and in the society at large and the absence of legislation in this regard.

24. Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To urgently finalize the development of the national strategic action plan for the prevention, protection and punishment of gender-based violence for its early adoption;

(b) To ensure the strict enforcement of the Domestic Violence Act and the National Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Protocol;

(c) To review and amend the Criminal Code's section on sexual offences and the procedures that accompany them to fully address all forms of violence against women, including by revising the provisions on sexual violence and criminalizing marital rape with no preconditions, within a clear time frame;

(d) To collect and compile comprehensive data on violence against women, disaggregated by sex, age and relationship between the victim and perpetrator, and carry out an in-depth analysis of the findings and utilize them to design policies and measures to combat violence against women;

(e) To encourage reporting of domestic and sexual violence against women and girls and ensure that all such reports are effectively investigated and that perpetrators are prosecuted and sentenced;

(f) To strengthen victim assistance and support programmes through measures to provide victims of violence against women with legal aid, medical support, including mental health services, and shelters as well as rehabilitation services, as appropriate;

(g) To provide comprehensive training on combating violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence, for relevant professionals, including targeted training for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and police officers on the application of protection orders under the Domestic Violence Act and

training for health professionals on standardized procedures for dealing with victims in a gender-sensitive manner;

(h) To operationalize the domestic violence hotline;

(i) To urgently adopt comprehensive legislation to combat sexual harassment.

Trafficking and sexual exploitation

25. The Committee welcomes the ratification of the Palermo Protocol by the State party, but is concerned at the absence of specific policies and a comprehensive legislation on human trafficking, including criminalization of the offence. The Committee is also concerned at the reports of high levels of sexual abuse and exploitation, in particular of the girl child and young women, including through incest, child prostitution and transactional sex. The Committee is concerned about inadequate legislation and policy in this regard. The Committee regrets the limited data on trafficking and sexual exploitation and the limited information on efforts to address the social and economic factors and measures to support victims of such violations.

26. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt comprehensive legislation and policies to address trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation, in line with the Convention and the Palermo Protocol, and strengthen mechanisms for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of offenders and specific support programmes for victims;

(b) Gather and analyse sex-disaggregated data and information on trafficking and sexual exploitation, including prostitution;

(c) Strengthen measures aimed at addressing the conditions, for example poverty and high unemployment, that make women and girls more vulnerable to trafficking and may also drive them into prostitution; and enhance support services for the victims as well as for the reintegration into society of women and girls who wish to leave prostitution.

Guyana

22. The Committee notes the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act in 2010 and the launch of a national policy on domestic violence for the period 2008-2013 under the slogan "Break the Cycle Take Control". The Committee expresses its concern, however, at the high prevalence of violence against women in the State party, in particular domestic and sexual violence, which is culturally accepted and in many cases remains underreported. The Committee is further concerned that there is only one centre in the country providing services to victims of violence, which is funded by the State party and run by a non-governmental organization.

The Committee also expresses its concern about the acts of violence against lesbian and bisexual women and transgender persons.

23. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) **To accord high priority to the full implementation of the Sexual Offences Act and to put in place comprehensive measures to prevent and address violence against women and girls, recognizing that such violence is a form of discrimination against women and constitutes a violation of their human rights under the Convention and a criminal offence and ensuring that women and girls who are victims of violence have access to immediate means of redress and protection and that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished, in accordance with general recommendation No. 19 of the Committee;**

(b) **To provide mandatory training for judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials in procedures to deal with women victims of violence;**

(c) **To encourage women to report incidents of domestic and sexual violence by de-stigmatizing victims and raising awareness about the criminal nature of such acts;**

(d) **To provide adequate assistance and protection to women victims of violence by strengthening the capacity of shelters and crisis centres, especially in hinterland areas, and enhancing cooperation with non-governmental organizations providing shelter and rehabilitation to victims;**

(e) **To collect statistical data on domestic and sexual violence disaggregated by sex, age and relationship between victim and perpetrator;**

(f) **To provide all groups of women with effective protection against violence and discrimination through the enactment of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that includes the prohibition of all forms of discrimination against them and the decriminalization of consensual adult same-sex relations, as indicated in the oral statement by the delegation.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

24. The Committee is concerned at the continuing prevalence of trafficking in women and girls in the country, including internal trafficking, and at the low reporting rate. The Committee is also concerned at the lack of shelters and counselling services in the State party for victims of trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution.

25. The Committee calls upon the State party to fully implement article 6 of the Convention and:

(a) **To address the root causes of trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution, including poverty, so as to eliminate the vulnerability of girls and women to sexual exploitation and trafficking, and to make efforts to ensure the recovery and social reintegration of victims;**

(b) **To provide training in how to identify and deal with victims of trafficking and in provisions of anti-trafficking legislation to the**

judiciary, law enforcement officials, border guards and social workers in all parts of the country, especially in rural and remote areas;

(c) To ensure systematic monitoring and periodic evaluation, including the collection and analysis of data on trafficking and exploitation of women in prostitution, and to include such data in its subsequent periodic report;

(d) To increase cooperation at the international, regional and bilateral levels with countries of origin, transit and destination to prevent trafficking through information exchange and to harmonize legal procedures aimed at prosecution of traffickers;

(e) To take the steps necessary to ensure that trafficked women and girls have access to high-quality medical care, counselling, financial support, adequate housing, training opportunities and free legal services.

Haiti

21. The Committee commends the creation of the Office to Combat Violence Against Women and Girls in the State party and the finalization of the draft legislation combating violence against women. However, the Committee is deeply concerned that:

(a) No legislation has been adopted specifically criminalizing violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence, incest, marital rape and sexual harassment;

(b) The limited effectiveness of initiatives to combat violence against women which are not sustainable as they lack coordination and funding from the State budget and are reliant on donor funding;

(c) The limited access of women and girls to victim assistance and protection, including the lack of shelters;

(d) Domestic and sexual violence appear to be socially legitimized and accompanied by a culture of silence and impunity, as evidenced by low rates of convictions for acts of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence despite the fact that rape remains one of the most frequently reported crimes in the State party;

(e) Violence against women is underreported owing to lack of trust in the judges, prosecutors, and police officers, and that mediation and conciliation is excessively resorted to in cases of violence against women;

(f) That families frequently hide cases of incest out of shame and that the Civil Code prohibits registrars from recording declarations of birth of a child resulting from incest.

22. **The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, urges the State party:**

(a) To expedite the adoption of the draft law on combating violence against women and ensure that it criminalizes rape, including marital rape, incest, and sexual harassment and does not refer to mediation or conciliation cases of violence against women;

(b) To allocate the necessary resources for implementing the initiatives, such as the national plan of action and the Office specifically created, to combat violence against women in a coordinated and effective manner;

(c) To ensure that victims are destigmatized and encouraged to report incidents of domestic, sexual and other forms of violence against women, with guaranteed access to effective protection and redress, including compensation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators by a competent criminal court;

(d) To remove obstacles faced by victims of gender-based violence in gaining access to justice through eliminating the practice of requiring a medical certificate to initiate criminal proceedings for rape;

(e) To provide adequate assistance and protection to women and girls who are victims of violence, including by establishing shelters and providing psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration programmes to victims of violence, especially in rural areas, and through coordination of interventions and of support services in cooperation with civil society organizations and international partners;

(f) To intensify public awareness efforts, through consistent strategic media campaigns and educational programmes and implement mandatory capacity-building programmes for law enforcement officials, health service providers, educators and social workers on gender-sensitive support to victims;

(g) To amend the Civil Code to ensure that all declarations of birth are registered, without exception.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

23. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Law to combat trafficking in human beings. However, it is concerned about the lack of an action plan to ensure its implementation. The Committee is particularly concerned that trafficking in women and girls, especially at the border with the Dominican Republic, is ongoing, and that cases of human trafficking are reportedly often not investigated by the police. The Committee is further concerned about reports of women and girls who are compelled by circumstances to enter into “transactional sex” in exchange for food and other survival items, as well as cases of sexual exploitation of women and girls by personnel of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Haiti in this context.

24. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation ([CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/7](#), para. 27) and draws attention to Sustainable Development Goal 5, target 5.2, to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, and calls on the State party:

(a) To ensure sufficient human, technical and financial resources for the effective implementation of the 2014 law criminalizing trafficking in human beings, including through the development of a national plan of action to combat trafficking for purposes of, inter alia, domestic servitude and forced prostitution;

(b) **To strengthen its efforts to ensure international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination to prevent trafficking through information exchange and to harmonize legal procedures aimed at prosecution of traffickers;**

(c) **To provide ongoing capacity-building for law enforcement officials on the early identification and referral of and assistance to victims;**

(d) **To carry out nationwide education and awareness-raising campaigns about the risks and criminal nature of trafficking;**

(e) **To address the root causes of trafficking and exploitation of women, including poverty, in order to eliminate the vulnerability of women and girls to sexual exploitation and trafficking, and ensure the recovery and social integration of victims by providing them with adequate assistance, rehabilitation and income-generating opportunities;**

(f) **To put in place a legal framework to address the prevalent impunity in the above-mentioned context and take preventive measures to protect women and girls who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation by personnel of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Haiti and provide them with access to justice.**

Jamaica

21. The Committee is concerned that although the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act, 2004 creates a regime of protection orders and occupation orders to protect women from domestic violence and widens the range of persons who can seek relief under the legislation, the incidence of domestic violence remains high. The Committee is also concerned that the Sexual Offences Act, 2009 protects against marital rape only in certain circumstances and that rape within a marriage is not always criminalized. The Committee is concerned about the high prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace and in society at large and the absence of legislation in this regard. The Committee is further concerned that:

(a) Gender-based violence is reportedly widespread and cases are underreported due to the prevalence of social and cultural norms;

(b) There is insufficient awareness and training among judges, prosecutors, police officers and health professionals on violence against women;

(c) Despite the 2008 reproductive health survey on intimate partner violence, there is limited data available on violence against women and no systematic process to collect such data; and

(d) A number of factors continue to deter women from reporting and pursuing sexual offences cases, including victims' and witnesses' fear of reprisals or retaliation and delays in the judicial process.

22. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Ensure the strict enforcement of the Domestic Violence Act, the Sexual Offences Act, 2009 and all other legislation intended to protect women from violence;**

(b) **Amend the Sexual Offences Act, 2009 with a view to criminalizing all marital rape, with no restrictive conditions, within a clear time frame;**

(c) **Collect and compile comprehensive data on violence against women, disaggregated by sex, age and the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, and carry out an in-depth analysis of the findings and utilize them to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to combat violence against women;**

(d) **Institute a programme of public awareness to encourage the reporting of domestic and sexual violence against women and girls and ensure that all such acts are effectively investigated, victims and witnesses are protected, and perpetrators are prosecuted and sentenced within a reasonable time frame;**

(e) **Strengthen victim assistance and support programmes by providing women victims of violence with legal aid, medical support, mental health services, rehabilitation services, and shelters as appropriate in all areas of the country;**

(f) **Provide comprehensive training on combating violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence, for relevant professionals, including targeted training for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and police officers on the application of protection orders under the Domestic Violence Act. Enhance training for health professionals on standardized procedures for dealing with victims of violence in a gender-sensitive manner;**

(g) **Approve and implement the draft sexual harassment policy and consider urgently adopting comprehensive legislation to combat sexual harassment.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

23. While noting the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act, 2007, the Proceeds of Crime Act, 2007, the Cybercrime Act, 2010 and the Child Pornography (Prevention) Act, 2010, as well as the recent establishment by the Cabinet of an interministerial committee to oversee measures to reduce trafficking in persons, the Committee is concerned about the reportedly high incidence of transnational and internal trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls and the apparent low rate of prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators. The Committee regrets the limited data on transnational and internal trafficking and sexual exploitation and the inadequate measures to support victims of such violations. It is concerned that increased levels of poverty heighten the vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking and sexual exploitation and that insufficient economic measures are in place to discourage and prevent the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls.

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

(a) **Strengthen measures to prevent and effectively respond to incidents of transnational and internal trafficking and sexual exploitation, including through awareness-raising initiatives, the prosecution and punishment of offenders, and the establishment of specific support and rehabilitation programmes for victims;**

(b) **Systematically gather and analyse sex-disaggregated data and information on trafficking and sexual exploitation, including prostitution;**

(c) **Strengthen measures aimed at addressing the conditions (for example, poverty and high unemployment) that make women and girls more vulnerable to trafficking and may also drive them into prostitution;**

(d) **Enhance support services for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation, including alternative employment opportunities, to facilitate the reintegration into society of women and girls who wish to leave prostitution.**

Saint Lucia

19. The Committee is concerned about the lack of information regarding the extent of trafficking in women and girls and the absence of measures taken to address this issue. The Committee is also concerned about the causes and extent of prostitution in the country, and the apparent lack of awareness on the part of the State party of the scale of this phenomenon in the tourism industry. The Committee is also concerned about the exploitation of prostitution, and the absence of efforts to combat this phenomenon.

20. **The Committee recommends that the State party promptly ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and to enhance its collaboration with countries in the region to prevent and combat trafficking in women. The Committee urges the State party to pursue a holistic approach in addressing the question of prostitution, and in particular to provide women and girls with educational and economic alternatives to prostitution, including economic empowerment programmes for women agricultural workers who may have lost their livelihoods with the change in the banana trade regime. The Committee calls on the State party to address the link between tourism and prostitution, including the demand for prostitution. The State party should ensure the effective prosecution and punishment of those who exploit prostitution. The Committee requests the State party to provide, in its next report, comprehensive information and data on exploitation of prostitution and on trafficking in women and on measures taken to prevent and combat such activities. It also requests that statistics be provided on the number of prosecutions and convictions of those who exploit prostitution and traffickers.**

21. While noting the Domestic Violence Act, the Committee is concerned about the persistence of violence against women and lack of public awareness of this issue, as well as an apparent lack of effective

enforcement of existing legislation. The Committee is also concerned about insufficient measures aimed at preventing violence against women.

22. The Committee calls on the State party to intensify its awareness-raising efforts about violence against women, in particular domestic violence, and the unacceptability of all such violence. It calls on the State party to put in place concrete prevention efforts and sensitization measures, addressed at the public at large. It encourages the State party to put in place training measures aimed at judicial officers, including judges, lawyers and prosecutors, in order to enhance their capacity to deal with violence against women in a gender-sensitive manner. It also invites the State party to ensure that perpetrators are speedily brought to justice.

St Kitts and Nevis

105. Although it welcomes the legislation that has been adopted, in particular, the Law Reform Act and the 2000 Domestic Violence Act, and the programmes to prevent violence against women which are being implemented, the Committee expresses concern about the persistent high level of violence, particularly domestic violence, in the State party. The Committee is concerned about the high incidence of sexual abuse of girls particularly by older men. It is also concerned about the unwillingness of women to initiate complaints of domestic violence against husbands and to testify against them because of the unwritten code of family loyalty, which regards such violence as a private matter.

106. The Committee urges the State party to enhance its efforts to combat violence against women and girls, in accordance with general recommendation No. 19. It also encourages the State party come up with creative solutions for shelters for victims of violence, adopt a zero tolerance approach to the sexual abuse of girls, and establish telephone help lines, rehabilitation programmes for offenders, and educational programmes targeted at men and boys on the prevention of violence and the reform of traditional negative attitudes towards women. The Committee also urges the State party to prosecute the perpetrators of abuse against girls. The Committee further urges the State party to pursue prosecution of offenders in cases of domestic violence even in the absence of testimony of the victim in the Court.

107. Noting that marijuana is used in the country, the Committee is concerned about the lack of sex-disaggregated data on drug use.

108. The Committee encourages the State party to collect data on the use of drugs and alcohol and its possible correlation with violence against women. It also encourages the State party to implement measures in order to prevent addiction to all types of drugs by young people.

111. The Committee is concerned about the lack of information about the phenomenon of prostitution in Saint Kitts and Nevis. The Committee is particularly concerned about the lack of adequate measures to prosecute pimps.

112. **The Committee encourages the State party to study the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, especially in view of the recent increase of tourism in the country. The Committee also urges the State party to formulate a broad strategy against trafficking and prostitution, which should include the prosecution and punishment of traffickers and pimps.**

St Vincent and the Grenadines

20. The Committee welcomes the adoption in April 2015 of the Domestic Violence Act, which broadens the definition of domestic violence by including not only physical violence but also sexual, psychological and economic violence. The Committee also notes with appreciation the adoption in 2015 of an interministerial national action plan on gender-based violence. However, the Committee notes:

(a) That a violation of the Domestic Violence Act is only a civil offence and that only the breach of a protection or occupation order is considered a criminal offence; in addition, the measures in place to enforce such orders are weak and the penalties applied to breaches of the orders are lenient;

(b) That no provisions in the Criminal Code and/or the Domestic Violence Act explicitly criminalize marital rape;

(c) That women in same-sex relationships are excluded from the categories of persons who can apply for protection under the Domestic Violence Act, as acknowledged by the State party;

(d) That a financial burden is imposed on victims by the need to file affidavits, requiring the services of a lawyer, which is not provided for by the Domestic Violence Act;

(e) That the legal definition of rape is narrow, given that it does not cover invasive acts such as penetration with other body parts or objects. Such acts currently fall under the offence of indecent assault in the Criminal Code and carry much lighter penalties;

(f) That police attitudes sometimes actively discourage women who are victims of violence from pursuing their complaint, given that law enforcement officers treat them with contempt and hostility;

(g) That data disaggregated by sex, age, type of offence and relationship between the perpetrator and the victim are lacking on all the forms of violence covered by the Domestic Violence Act.

21. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To amend the Criminal Code and/or the Domestic Violence Act to criminalize all acts of domestic violence covered by the Act and explicitly criminalize marital rape;**

(b) **To ensure that no woman is excluded from seeking and obtaining protection under the Domestic Violence Act on the basis of the type of relationship in which she is engaged;**

(c) To ensure that women who are victims of violence and who wish to apply for protection under the Domestic Violence Act are not denied access to protection because of financial and administrative obstacles;

(d) To widen the definition of rape to include other forms of penetration, or establish new offences to cover such conduct, and to consider using the Caribbean Community model legislation on sexual harassment to do so;

(e) To provide sufficient technical, human and financial resources for the effective implementation of the Domestic Violence Act and the National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence and enhance cooperation with civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders in that regard;

(f) To develop protocols to support response, management and referral relating to domestic violence cases and provide continuous training to the judiciary and law enforcement officers on gender-sensitive procedures to deal with women who are victims of violence;

(g) To encourage women to report incidents of sexual and domestic violence by destigmatizing victims and raising awareness about the grave and serious nature of such acts;

(h) To develop protocols for the collection of information by the police, justice officials and health workers on domestic and other types of violence against women to systematize and institutionalize the collection, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive data on domestic violence that are disaggregated by age, sex, nationality, ethnic group, type of violence and relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

22. The Committee notes the positive steps taken by the State party to tackle trafficking in human beings, in particular women and girls, including the enactment in 2011 of an act on the prevention of trafficking in persons, the establishment of an anti-trafficking in persons unit within the police and the creation of a crisis centre for victims. The Committee is concerned, however, about reports of cases of sexual abuse of children in the family by persons who pay the family to be silent and not report the incidents; this leads to sexual exploitation of children, in particular girls, and effectively places them in a situation of forced prostitution. The Committee notes with concern that only three cases of human trafficking were investigated in 2014 and five in 2013, none of which resulted in prosecution. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned about the lack of alternative employment opportunities for women and girls who wish to leave prostitution.

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

(a) **Strengthen measures to prevent and respond effectively to incidents of transnational and internal trafficking for sexual abuse and exploitation, especially of girls under 18 years of age, including through awareness-raising initiatives, the prosecution and punishment of**

offenders and the establishment of specific support and rehabilitation programmes for victims;

(b) Systematically gather and analyse sex-disaggregated data and information on trafficking and sexual exploitation, including exploitation of children in the family by outsiders and sex tourism;

(c) Strengthen measures aimed at tackling the root causes of trafficking of women and girls, such as poverty and high unemployment, which may also drive them into prostitution;

(d) Enhance support services for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation, including alternative employment opportunities, to facilitate the reintegration into society of women and girls who wish to leave prostitution.

Suriname

26. The Committee reiterates its concern about the high prevalence of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, against women in the State party and the delay in adopting the draft national policy plan on domestic violence, 2014–2017. It further regrets the following:

(a) The limited information on the application of the Law on Combating Domestic Violence since its adoption in 2009;

(b) The lack of information on inter-institutional coordination mechanisms for combating gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual harassment, and the fact that there is only one shelter for victims of domestic violence, which provides care for up to 30 women and their children;

(c) The continuing practice of corporal punishment against girls and the absence of legislation explicitly prohibiting it in all settings;

(d) The lack of information on the prevalence, causes and consequences of gender-based violence against women, despite the Committee's previous recommendation ([CEDAW/C/SUR/CO/3](#), para. 20).

27. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Approve, without delay, the national policy plan on domestic violence and continue its efforts to enforce the Law on Combating Domestic Violence;

(b) Establish additional shelters for victims of gender-based violence that are accessible for all women and girls, especially those living in rural areas, and ensure that legal assistance, rehabilitation and psychosocial support is provided to victims there;

(c) Adopt legislation to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings;

(d) Systematically collect data on gender-based violence against women and girls, disaggregated by age, ethnicity, geography and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, and ensure that

research in that area serves as a basis for comprehensive and targeted interventions.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

28. The Committee welcomes the revision of the Penal Code to prohibit trafficking, as well as the establishment of the Trafficking in Persons Desk in the Public Prosecutor's Department, the Trafficking in Persons Unit in the police force to investigate cases of trafficking in persons and the Working Group to Counter Trafficking in Persons within the Ministry of Justice and Police, which is mandated to develop the national strategy and national plan of action. However, it is concerned about the following:

(a) The limited capacity and responsiveness of the institutions created to monitor compliance with anti-trafficking laws, particularly in the interior;

(b) The lack of reliable data on trafficking in women and girls, including on its prevalence and the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions and sentences imposed on perpetrators;

(c) The lack of information on the shelters available to women and girls who are victims of trafficking and the types of programmes and health services provided by those shelters.

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

(a) **Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to the new government infrastructure to combat trafficking in persons (*Schakelketting 2.0*), in order to implement the national strategy and national plan of action to combat trafficking in persons, and establish a sufficient number of adequately equipped shelters for victims of trafficking in different parts of the State party;**

(b) **Investigate, prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators and ensure that victims of trafficking and prostitution are exempted from criminal liability and provided with adequate protection, remedies and reparations, including temporary residence permits, medical care, psychosocial counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration support and compensation;**

(c) **Adopt a policy to ensure that victims of trafficking in need of protection have access to asylum procedures in the State party and that gender-sensitive identification and referral mechanisms are in place at points of entry and in detention facilities;**

(d) **Continue to carry out capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, border police, immigration authorities and other law enforcement officers on early identification and gender-sensitive protocols for dealing with victims of trafficking.**

20. The Committee notes the establishment of a central registry on domestic violence, which was launched in April 2016, but is concerned at:

(a) The high prevalence of gender-based violence against women and girls, such as femicide committed by intimate partners and other forms of domestic violence;

(b) The inadequate number of shelters, notwithstanding continuing efforts to open additional shelters;

(c) The delay in adopting regulations for the Sexual Offences Act (1986), in order to introduce a sex offender registry, which would help to deal with repeat offenders;

(d) Information about the low number of arrests for breaches of protection orders;

(e) Information that training for law enforcement officers is gender neutral and that, although the Cabinet adopted a procedural manual for police officers, law enforcement officers frequently treat domestic violence as a private matter.

21. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Ensure that all cases of gender-based violence against women and girls, in particular femicide and domestic violence, are thoroughly and effectively investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished and that the Central Registry on Domestic Violence has up-to-date statistical data on cases focusing on all forms of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, which should be disaggregated by age, type of offence and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator;

(b) Undertake a needs assessment to establish the demand for shelters by women who are victims of violence and ensure that shelters are accessible throughout the State party and sufficiently resourced;

(c) As a matter of priority, adopt regulations for the Sexual Offences Act to introduce a sex offender registry, with a view to combating gender-based violence against women by tracking repeat offenders;

(d) Ensure the effective enforcement of protection orders and promptly investigate and punish breaches;

(e) Ensure that training for law enforcement officers focuses on gender-sensitive investigation of cases of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, and adopt programmes, including mandatory courses, aimed at eliminating traditional attitudes concerning the treatment of domestic violence as a private matter.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

22. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Trafficking in Persons Act (2011) and the establishment of a counter-trafficking unit, but is concerned that the State party remains a source, transit and destination country for trafficking. The Committee is particularly concerned at:

(a) The prevalence of trafficking in women and girls for purposes of labour and sexual exploitation;

(b) Information regarding the complicity of public officials, including law enforcement officers, in trafficking offences and at the lack of data on the extent of this phenomenon;

(c) Information that there are no shelters specifically designed for women and girls who are victims of trafficking, who instead are referred to shelters established for women who are victims of violence, including domestic violence;

(d) Information on the complicity of law enforcement officers in the exploitation of women for prostitution, including the running of brothels, even though it is illegal under the Sexual Offences Act to sell and buy sexual services, and at the lack of information on exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution.

23. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Intensify efforts to address the root causes of trafficking in women and girls and to ensure the rehabilitation and social integration of victims, including by providing them with legal, medical and psychosocial assistance, and increase awareness-raising programmes aimed at encouraging the reporting of trafficking offences and the early detection of women and girls who are victims of trafficking, as well as their referral to appropriate services;

(b) Establish and provide adequate resources for specialized units within existing shelters that focus on the provision of assistance specifically to women and girls who are victims of trafficking;

(c) Enforce anti-trafficking legislation by thoroughly investigating, prosecuting and punishing perpetrators, including public officials who are complicit in such crimes and those who aid and abet the exploitation of women and girls in prostitution, and provide data in the next periodic report on the extent of these phenomena;

(d) Provide women and girls with alternative income opportunities and introduce rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women and girls exploited in prostitution, together with exit programmes for those wishing to leave prostitution;

(e) Intensify efforts aimed at bilateral, regional and international cooperation to prevent trafficking, including by exchanging information and harmonizing legal procedures to prosecute traffickers, in particular with neighbouring States and other relevant States in the Caribbean Community.