

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

REFERENCE: BN/follow-up/Gambia/90

10 March 2025

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur on follow-up on concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honor to refer to the examination of the sixth periodic report of Gambia, at the Committee's eighty-third session, held in November 2022. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/GMB/CO/6](#)) were transmitted to your Permanent Mission. You may recall that in paragraph 52 on follow-up to the concluding observations, the Committee requested Gambia to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 20 (a), 26 (a), 34 (b) and 44 (a) of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report ([CEDAW/C/GMB/FCO/6](#)) received on time in December 2024 under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its ninetieth session, held in February 2025, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 20 (a)** of the concluding observations that the State party “**address the cultural beliefs underlying the harmful practice of female genital mutilation, including by educating parents and traditional and religious leaders on the lifelong devastating effects on both the physical and mental health of girls and women, and by raising awareness of the criminalization of female genital mutilation**”:

The Committee welcomes the efforts made in sensitizing and training of the judiciary, police, social workers, healthcare providers, teachers, students, and traditional and religious leaders to popularize and facilitate implementation of the anti-FGM law at all levels. It notes with appreciation the information provided on various community-wide advocacy projects and initiatives at the grassroots level, such as the Lahido project and the production of an animated film, which have led numerous local communities to make declarations against FGM. The Committee acknowledges the State party's participation in a coalition composed of civil society organizations, activists and survivors, opposing the Private Member Bill 2024 that sought to repeal the Women's Amendment Act 2015, following the backlash sparked by the first FGM conviction in 2023. It takes note with appreciation of the technical committee set up by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare in charge of drafting a comprehensive FGM Bill.

The Committee considers that the State party has taken steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **been substantially implemented**.

H.E. Mr. Muhammadou M.O. Kah
Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Gambia to the United Nations Office
Rue de Lausanne 45A - 47A
1201 Geneva
E-mail: info@thegambiamissiongeneva.ch

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party is extensive and relates directly to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **satisfactory**.

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 26 (a)** that the State party “**effectively implement section 15 (1) of the Women’s Act requiring all public institutions, authorities and private enterprises to adopt temporary special measures to accelerate substantive equality between women and men, including by adopting a quota of 30 per cent for the representation of either sex in the National Assembly and local assemblies, providing incentives for political parties to nominate an equal number of women and men as candidates for elections, introducing fines for non-compliance and providing for preferential recruitment of women to senior management positions in the public service, including in State-owned enterprises**”:

The Committee notes with appreciation the State party’s advocacy efforts to implement section 15 (1) of the Women’s act, including its intention to facilitate the promulgation of the Women Reservation Bill 2025, which will introduce a quota of 30% of seats for women in the National Assembly. The Committee regrets, however, that additional details regarding the bill’s contents and trajectory have not been provided. It also observes no data was submitted on the current status of representation of women in private enterprises. The Committee welcomes the slight increase of women serving as councillors since the local government elections in 2023 (from 7 in 2018 to 18 in 2023). Nevertheless, it remains concerned about the low level of women’s representation in politics, with only 5 women currently serving in the National Assembly and 3 women as cabinet ministers.

The Committee considers that the recommendation has **been partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party relates directly to the communication but is limited and incomplete. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 26 (a)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, further information on actions taken to:

Approve, adopt and implement the Women Representation Bill 2025 ensuring a 30% quota for women elected to the National Assembly; continue strategic and effective advocacy and sensitization, in consultation and collaboration with relevant actors, such as, for example, women’s organizations, the private sector, civil society, and traditional and religious leaders, aimed at increasing substantive gender equality in public and political life; and monitor and evaluate progress made.

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 34 (b)** of the concluding observations that the State party “**legalize abortion at least in cases of rape, incest, severe foetal impairment and risk to the health or life of the pregnant woman, and decriminalize it in all other cases, recognizing that the criminalization of abortion is a form of gender-based violence against women, in line with general recommendation No. 35**”:

The Committee expresses its regret that the State party has not provided any information regarding the measures taken to implement the recommendation.

The Committee considers that the State party took no steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party fails to respond to the recommendation and did not address the recommendation. It thus considers that there was **no response**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 34 (b)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Decriminalize abortion and legalize abortion at least in cases of rape, incest, severe foetal impairment and risk to the health or life of the pregnant woman.

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 44 (a)** of the concluding observations that the State party “**prevent and eliminate child marriage, including by raising awareness of the harmful effects and criminal nature of this practice, creating confidential and safe mechanisms for the reporting of cases of child marriage, providing mandatory capacity-building for religious and faith-based leaders, the judiciary, law enforcement officials, health professionals and social workers, with a view to ensuring the prosecution and adequate punishment of perpetrators, without exception, and providing adequate support to victims**”:

The Committee welcomes the development of the National Strategy and Action for Ending Child Marriage (2025-230). It regrets, however, the lack of additional information on the strategy. The Committee notes with appreciation the State party’s awareness-raising efforts and community engagement, as well as its initiatives to build law enforcement capacity to implement the Children’s Amendment Act 2016, which criminalizes child marriage, and to encourage reporting. Despite these efforts, the Committee expresses its concern that, to date, no convictions have been recorded. Considering the information provided regarding recommendation 20 (a), the Committee acknowledges the efforts to establish a specialized gender-based violence (GBV) court to address the delays in prosecuting GBV cases. It also welcomes the creation of the Gender Management Information System (GMIS) centre as part of the referral pathways framework, which coordinates safe and confidential reporting and victim services, and records and categorizes different types of GBV. The Committee takes note that these efforts pertain to all forms of gender-based violence, but the State party failed to provide specific data on child marriage.

The Committee considers that the recommendation has **been partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party is extensive but it fails to respond fully to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is only **partially satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 44 (a)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Approve and implement the National Strategy and Action for Ending Child Marriage, providing information on specific goals, timelines, and stages of implementation; strengthen law enforcement and judicial measures to ensure effective implementation of the Children’s Amendment Act 2016; take concrete steps to investigate and prosecute cases of child marriage more effectively; and collect and provide specific data on child marriage, including the number of reported cases, investigations, prosecutions, and convictions.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Natasha Stott Despoja
Rapporteur on follow-up
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women