



UNITED NATIONS
**HUMAN RIGHTS
TREATY BODIES**

HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

REFERENCE: BN/follow-up/Bhutan/92

25 February 2026

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 tenth periodic report of Bhutan, at the Committee's eighty-sixth session, held in October 2023. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/BTN/CO/10](#)) were transmitted to your Permanent Mission. You may recall that in paragraph 72 on follow-up to the concluding observations, the Committee requested Bhutan to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 16, 24 (b), 36 (a) and 36 (b) of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report ([CEDAW/C/BTN/FCO/10](#)) received on 16 December 2025, one month after the two-year reporting period. At its ninety-second session, held in February 2026, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 16** of the concluding observations that the State party **"Recalling the guidance provided in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, notably regarding the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national machineries for the advancement of women, the Committee recommends that the State party review the structure and mandate of the National Commission for Women and Children and its secretariat and establish an autonomous, centralized and fully resourced body, with nation-wide outreach, under the Commission with an adequately resourced network of gender focal points and an overall mandate to coordinate all laws, public policies and strategies on gender equality and the advancement of women in a holistic and effective manner."**

The Committee notes with satisfaction the State party's indication that structural transformation was undertaken in 2022 to strengthen the Commission's focus on policy development, strategic oversight, monitoring and reporting. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the PEMA Secretariat with over 25 Protection Officers to provide integrated services to gender-based violence survivors, the appointment of Planning Officers as Gender Focal Points to enhance gender mainstreaming, and the launch of the National Strategy and Framework of Action on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence in 2025.

H.E. Mrs. Tshering Lhadn
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The Committee expresses concern, however, that the 2022 civil service reform reduced the National Commission's Secretariat to a division and placed it under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, which risks compromising the functional autonomy and independence of both the Commission and Secretariat. The Committee regrets that this structural change may create ambiguity between the Commission's regulatory and oversight role and the Ministry's service delivery mandate, potentially limiting the Commission's perceived independence and ability to function as a neutral, cross-sectoral coordinating authority on gender equality issues.

The Committee considers that while the State party has taken steps to enhance gender-based violence response mechanisms and establish gender focal points, the reduction of the Commission's Secretariat to a division under a line Ministry contradicts the recommendation's core requirement for an autonomous, centralized body. It therefore considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that while the information provided addresses several components of the recommendation, it does not adequately address how the Commission's autonomy is maintained following placement of the Secretariat under a line Ministry or provide comprehensive information on resources for the Commission and gender focal points network. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **partially satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 16** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Recalling the guidance provided in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, notably regarding the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national machineries for the advancement of women, the Committee recommends that the State party review the structure and mandate of the National Commission for Women and Children and its secretariat and establish an autonomous, centralized and fully resourced body, with nation-wide outreach, under the Commission with an adequately resourced network of gender focal points and an overall mandate to coordinate all laws, public policies and strategies on gender equality and the advancement of women in a holistic and effective manner.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 24 (b)** of the concluding observations that the State party "**The Committee recommends that the State party: [...] (b) Strengthen the enabling environment for new and existing independent NGOs and provide support to NGOs working on the promotion and protection of women's human rights in the areas of both service provision and rights advocacy, with an additional focus on women subjected to intersectional discrimination.**"

The Committee notes the State party's provision of substantial financial support to civil society organizations, and the development of a guideline to establish a framework for government-CSO partnership, capacity building initiatives, and the expansion of community service centers to 13 districts.

The Committee regrets, however, that the information provided focuses primarily on civil society organizations as service providers complementing government efforts, with no information on support for independent rights advocacy by women's rights organizations. The Committee notes



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with concern the absence of information on measures to strengthen the enabling environment for new civil society organizations or to ensure the independence of existing organizations. The Committee further regrets that while the State party references projects supporting vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities and the LGBT+ community, no concrete examples were provided of support to organizations working specifically on the promotion and protection of rights of women subjected to intersectional discrimination, as requested in the recommendation.

The Committee considers that while the State party has taken steps to support civil society organizations [in service provision], it has not addressed all elements of the recommendation regarding the enabling environment for independent organizations and support for rights advocacy. It therefore considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

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

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 24 (b)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

The Committee recommends that the State party: [...] (b) Strengthen the enabling environment for new and existing independent NGOs and provide support to NGOs working on the promotion and protection of women's human rights in the areas of both service provision and rights advocacy, with an additional focus on women subjected to intersectional discrimination.

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 36 (a)** of the concluding observations to “**The Committee recommends that the State party comprehensively address all barriers to the equal and inclusive representation of women in political and public life, including by promoting equal sharing of care and domestic responsibilities between women and men and by conducting awareness-raising on the equal capacity of women in all their diversity to take leadership roles, on their human right to equal representation in decision-making systems and on the equal representation of women as a requirement for achieving political stability and sustainable development in the State party. The Committee also recommends that the State party: (a) adopt concrete temporary special measures, such as quotas, on parity, towards reaching equal representation of women in decision-making in all areas and sectors, including with respect to decision-making roles in the security sector, the State party's work on environment and sustainable development and economic policies, including issues relating to science, technology, engineering and mathematics and culture**”:

The Committee notes the State party's various capacity building initiatives for elected and aspiring women candidates, including leadership training, coaching and mentoring programs. The Committee also notes awareness-raising and advocacy programs, as well as networking opportunities through regional forums such as the Asian Women Parliamentarians' Caucus.

The Committee regrets, however, that despite these efforts women's representation remains persistently low in the political sphere at both national and local levels, and that women are underrepresented in technical sectors such as information and communications technology, engineering and artificial intelligence, particularly in senior and decision-making roles. The Committee further regrets that despite these persistent gaps and the limited impact of soft measures,



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the State party has not adopted concrete temporary special measures such as quotas, as explicitly recommended.

The Committee considers that while the State party has implemented capacity building and awareness-raising activities, it has not adopted the concrete temporary special measures recommended. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that while the information provided describes various initiatives, it does not address the core recommendation to adopt temporary special measures. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 36 (a)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

The Committee recommends that the State party comprehensively address all barriers to the equal and inclusive representation of women in political and public life, including by promoting equal sharing of care and domestic responsibilities between women and men and by conducting awareness-raising on the equal capacity of women in all their diversity to take leadership roles, on their human right to equal representation in decision-making systems and on the equal representation of women as a requirement for achieving political stability and sustainable development in the State party. The Committee also recommends that the State party: (a) adopt concrete temporary special measures, such as quotas, on parity, towards reaching equal representation of women in decision-making in all areas and sectors, including with respect to decision-making roles in the security sector, the State party's work on environment and sustainable development and economic policies, including issues relating to science, technology, engineering and mathematics and culture.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 36 (b)** of the concluding observations to “**The Committee recommends that the State party comprehensively address all barriers to the equal and inclusive representation of women in political and public life, including by promoting equal sharing of care and domestic responsibilities between women and men and by conducting awareness-raising on the equal capacity of women in all their diversity to take leadership roles, on their human right to equal representation in decision-making systems and on the equal representation of women as a requirement for achieving political stability and sustainable development in the State party. The Committee also recommends that the State party: [...] (b) Establish processes to ensure that women are represented in all their diversity, including rural women, older women, women from ethnic and religious minorities and women with disabilities**”:

The Committee notes with satisfaction the State party's consultations among local government members, Parliament members, government officials and civil society organizations in three districts, and the Bhutan Democracy Dialogue bringing together local government leaders, young people and government officials. The Committee also notes the Inclusive Community Engagement Programme of the Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management (DLGDM), providing a platform for women at community level to build leadership capabilities.

The Committee regrets, however, that the State party has not established concrete processes to ensure representation of women in all their diversity as requested. The Committee notes the



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absence of specific information on measures targeting rural women, older women, women from ethnic and religious minorities, and women with disabilities to ensure their representation in decision-making.

The Committee considers that while the State party has conducted consultations and community engagement, it has not established the concrete processes to ensure diverse representation as recommended. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party describes general consultations and engagement programs but lacks detail on concrete processes established to ensure representation of women in all their diversity. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **partially satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 36 (b)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

The Committee recommends that the State party comprehensively address all barriers to the equal and inclusive representation of women in political and public life, including by promoting equal sharing of care and domestic responsibilities between women and men and by conducting awareness-raising on the equal capacity of women in all their diversity to take leadership roles, on their human right to equal representation in decision-making systems and on the equal representation of women as a requirement for achieving political stability and sustainable development in the State party. The Committee also recommends that the State party: [...] (b) Establish processes to ensure that women are represented in all their diversity, including rural women, older women, women from ethnic and religious minorities and women with disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jelena Pia-Comella', written over a faint, stylized graphic element.

Jelena Pia-Comella

Rapporteur on follow-up

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women