



REFERENCE: YH/follow-up/Samoa/63

13 May 2016

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur for Follow-up on Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honour to refer to the examination of the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Independent State of Samoa at the Committee's fifty-second session, held in July 2012. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations were transmitted to your Permanent Mission (CEDAW/C/WSM/CO/4-5). You may recall that in the concluding observations, the Committee requested the Independent State of Samoa to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 15 and 29 of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report received with a 15-month delay in October 2015 (CEDAW/C/WSM/CO/4-5/Add.1) under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its sixty-third session, held in February-March 2016 in Geneva, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 15** of the concluding observations that the State party “expeditiously strengthen the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development by providing it with adequate human, financial and technical resources for it to coordinate and work effectively for the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes across all sectors and levels of the Government”: The State party indicated that it has invested in strengthening the workforce capacities of the Ministry's staff as well as key personnel from the different ministries to coordinate gender mainstreaming initiatives across all sectors of the Government. It further indicated the receipt of a large financial grant from the Government of Australia, to roll out a 5-year program to improve gender equality in Samoa, including as a key outcome capacity development support for the Ministry to strengthen gender policy development and monitoring and evaluation, as well as the creation of the posts of Gender Specialists and Gender Programme Manager. The State party further indicated an increased budgetary allocation to the Ministry to support human and operational costs over a three year period (2014-2015), including the recruitment of additional senior staff to support the scale up of programmes on, inter alia, the advancement of women. The State party underscored, however, that this extra-budgetary allocation is not ring-fenced for gender initiatives as it has been diverted, for example, to finance national disasters recovery efforts. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the State party to strengthen the human, technical and financial capacities of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development to coordinate gender mainstreaming initiatives across all

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sectors of the Government. However, it considers that the State party did not indicate whether steps were taken to promote gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes at all levels of the Government. The Committee considers that the State party took some steps towards the implementation of the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “strengthen its impact assessment mechanisms so as to ensure that its gender equality policies are properly monitored and evaluated and their implementation assessed”: The State party mentioned the creation of the National Human Rights Institution of Samoa in June 2013, which is empowered with a mandate to inquire into and report on human rights violations. It further indicated the creation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development in 2014, which includes as a tool, a gender checklist and glossary of gender terminologies to assist staff in collecting and analyzing of and reporting on gender disaggregated data. The State party has confirmed that four new senior-level positions have been approved to assist with the capacity gaps in the monitoring and evaluation functions of the Ministry. Furthermore, the State party mentioned the development of a set core of minimum gender indicators in the collection of official statistics. The Committee welcomes the various measures taken by the State party to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation mechanisms so as to ensure that its gender equality policies are properly monitored and evaluated and their implementation assessed. The Committee considers that the State party took significant steps towards the implementation of the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been implemented**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to paragraph 15 of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to strengthen the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development by providing it with adequate human, financial and technical resources for it to coordinate and work effectively for the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes across all sectors and levels of the Government.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 29** of the concluding observations that the State party “address barriers to the education of women and girls, such as negative cultural attitudes and excessive domestic duties, to take steps to reduce and prevent dropouts among girls and to strengthen the implementation of re-entry policies enabling girls who dropout to return to school”: The State party indicated that school attendance and retention at both primary and secondary school levels has been promoted as a result of a school fees relief scheme to cover some costs of attending school (i.e. tuition fees, stationery, textbooks) and the introduction of a “grace time” period for parents to cover other costs over an extended time period (i.e. school uniforms, registration and lunch fees). The State party further reported on the instauration of penalties for parents or guardians who fail to enrol their children in school as well as the conduct of spot checks by Attendance Officers to enforce compulsory attendance. The State party signalled the intention of the Ministry of Education to develop policy and legislation that ensures pregnant students will not be expelled, that education is accessible and inclusive for these young women and supports the completion of their education. Furthermore, it mentioned the recommendations made by the Samoa Law Reform Commission to undertake legislative reform to address, inter alia, issues relating to teenage pregnancy. The State party also informed that it runs outreach programs to promote sexual and reproductive health rights. The Committee notes the measures taken by the State party to address barriers to the education of women and girls, including by easing the financial burden of attending school, enforcing the requirement for compulsory attendance, undertaking the development of policy and legislation to prevent dropouts among pregnant girls, and conducting awareness-raising campaigns on sexual and reproductive health rights. However, the Committee notes that the State party did not provide information on measures taken to address negative cultural attitudes and excessive domestic duties which constitute important barriers to the education of women and girls. Moreover, it considers that the State party did not take concrete measures to strengthen the implementation of re-entry policies enabling girls who dropout to

return to school. The Committee considers that the State party took some steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “implement measures to eliminate traditional stereotypes and structural barriers that might deter girls from enrolling in science and mathematics education at the secondary and tertiary levels”: The State party reported that the enrolment of female students at the National University of Samoa outnumbers the males and that females are well represented in Commerce, Science Arts and Nursing fields. The State party further mentioned the measures taken to strengthen its school science curriculum through improving the qualifications of high school science teachers as well as by centralizing the teaching of science programs in the upper years of high school. The Committee notes the data on women’s enrolment in tertiary institutions, as well as the initiatives to strengthen the science curriculum. However, it considers that the State party did not take concrete measures to eliminate traditional stereotypes and structural barriers that might deter girls from enrolling in science and mathematics education at the secondary and tertiary levels. It considers that the recommendation **has not been implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “step up efforts to provide girls with career counselling that exposes them to non-traditional career paths, in particular in technical-vocational areas”: The State party mentioned a project to improve the digital literacy of high school students and on the establishment of an annual forum in which, inter alia, women in leadership positions in the public sector provide mentoring testimonies to encourage secondary and college female students to pursue higher education. The Committee notes the measures taken by the State party to improve the digital literacy of high school students and to encourage secondary and college female students to pursue higher education. However, it notes that the digital literacy program is not specifically targeted towards girls and that the annual mentorship forum was not established with the particular objective of exposing girls to non-traditional career paths. It considers that the recommendation **has not been implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “provide safe educational environments free from discrimination and violence and to institute measures to protect girls from sexual harassment and violence in schools, in particular in rural areas”: The Committee considers that it **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “strengthen awareness-raising and training for school officials and students, and for children through the media, and to establish reporting and accountability mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators of sexual abuse and harassment in schools are prosecuted and punished”: The Committee considers that it **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “ensure that the attention paid to underperformance of boys does not result in a refocus of policies and strategies away from girls and their educational needs”: The Committee considers that it **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to paragraph 29 of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

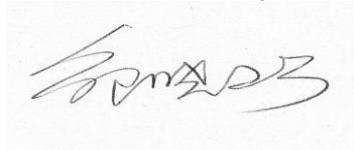
- 1) Address barriers to the education of women and girls, such as negative cultural attitudes and excessive domestic duties, to take steps to reduce and prevent dropouts among girls and to strengthen the implementation of re-entry policies enabling girls who drop out to return to school;

- 2) Implement measures to eliminate traditional stereotypes and structural barriers that might deter girls from enrolling in science and mathematics education at the secondary and tertiary levels;
- 3) Step up efforts to provide girls with career counselling that exposes them to non-traditional career paths, in particular in technical-vocational areas;
- 4) Provide safe educational environments free from discrimination and violence and to institute measures to protect girls from sexual harassment and violence in schools, in particular in rural areas;
- 5) Strengthen awareness-raising and training for school officials and students, and for children through the media, and to establish reporting and accountability mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators of sexual abuse and harassment in schools are prosecuted and punished; and
- 6) Strengthen awareness-raising and training for school officials and students, and for children through the media, and to establish reporting and accountability mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators of sexual abuse and harassment in schools are prosecuted and punished; and

The Committee looks forward to pursuing its constructive dialogue with the authorities of the Independent State of Samoa on the implementation of the Convention.

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

Yours sincerely,



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Rapporteur on follow-up  
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