



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

www.ohchr.org • TEL: +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: registry@ohchr.org – cedaw@ohchr.org

REFERENCE: AA/follow-up/Rwanda/52

19 September 2012

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 to sixth periodic report of Rwanda at the Committee's forty-third session, held in January - February 2009. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations were transmitted to your Permanent Mission (CEDAW/C/RWA/6). You may recall that in the concluding observations, the Committee requested Rwanda to provide, within two years, further information regarding the specific areas of concern identified by the Committee in paragraphs 26 and 36 of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report received on 6 February 2011 under the CEDAW follow-up procedure (CEDAW/C/RWA/6/Add.1). At its fifty-second session, held in July 2012 in Geneva, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in paragraph 26 of the concluding observations “to intensify its efforts to prevent and address all forms of violence against women, in particular sexual violence and domestic violence in accordance with Committee general recommendation No. 19, including by utilizing the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1); and to put in place a comprehensive strategy and action plan to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women, including in refugee camps, as well as an effective institutional mechanism to coordinate, monitor and assess the effectiveness of measures taken”: The State party mentioned the National Action Plan (2009-2012) for the implementation of Resolution 1325, the National Gender-based Violence Policy and its 5-year strategic plan. The State party also mentioned the

H.E. Ms. Soline NYIRAHABIMANA
Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Rwanda
to the United Nations
Rue de Vermont 37-39 (4th Floor)
1202 Geneva

E-mail: ambageneve@minaffet.gov.rw



establishment of: i) “GBV Committees” at the national and local levels that prevent and address gender-based violence; ii) Gender Desks in the National Police and the Rwanda Defence Forces; iii) “Anti-GBV clubs” and trainings of soldiers on the fight against gender-based violence; and iv) a special unit in the National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA) in charge of the follow-up and prosecution of gender-based violence; and v) a National Technical working group on GBV led by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion. The State party also provided information on NGO activities on the fight against gender-based violence in refugee camps and the development by the Ministry for Disaster Management and Refugees of standard procedures for fighting against gender-based violence in refugee camps in Rwanda. While mentioning a large number of measures taken, the State party failed to indicate whether the National Gender-based Violence Policy was launched after the issuance of the Concluding Observations and to provide information on the objectives of this strategy. It also failed to indicate whether the above-mentioned measures to combat GBV were taken after the issuance of the Concluding Observations. It further failed to provide information on activities in refugee camps that are part of a comprehensive strategy and action plan to eliminate all forms of violence against women. The Committee did not receive sufficient information to assess whether the State has implemented this recommendation.

Regarding the recommendation to “intensify its awareness-raising efforts with regard to all forms of violence against women, which represent violations of women’s human rights”: The State party indicated that the yearly 16 days of gender activism were focused on the theme of the collaboration between the security organs, the population and other stakeholders in fighting violence against women and pointed out that sensitisation activities were carried out at this occasion. The State party also mentioned the organization of the UN Africa Unite Campaign on violence against women and girls in Kigali in October 2010. It added that sensitisation campaigns for local leaders were put in place in 2011 and that during 2011 International Women’s Day celebrations, drama plays on the fight against gender-based violence were conveyed and disseminated through the media. The State party further indicated that sensitisation campaigns on the fight against gender-based violence among local leaders were conducted, “gender clubs” were created in all schools, as well as in public and private institutions and participation of men in the fight against gender-based violence was encouraged. The National Women Council organises field visits in districts to discuss violence against women issues. The State party also mentioned the work of the NGO “Urunana” which broadcasts drama plays about HIV/AIDS, health and reproductive health and equality between men and women. The Committee considered that the recommendation had been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation “to intensify its efforts to provide support services and a sufficient number of shelters for women victims of violence, staffed by expert personnel and provided with adequate financial resources for their effective functioning”. The State party indicated that it has established, since January 2009, two centres to receive, host, care and treat GBV survivors, offering free medical and psycho-social care for victims and legal assistance. It added that one centre operates a free hotline (para. 21). The State party further indicated that, since June 2009, it has established GBV Protection Committees in each village. It added that at least a woman police officer in charge of violence against women, is posted at the level of the 69 National police station (para. 24). Despite the efforts undertaken, the State party acknowledged that there are not enough centres in the country, and in general the country lacks qualified health personnel (para. 23). The Committee considered that the recommendation had been partially implemented.

Concerning the recommendation “to ensure the systematic collection and publication of data, disaggregated by type of violence and by the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, and to use such data as the basis for monitoring the implementation of current and future policy

and support measures”: The State party indicated that it collects data on gender-based violence, including for: i) the publication of a report twice a year on the situation of gender-based violence, containing forms of violence, their frequency and relationship between the perpetrator and the victim (para. 28); ii) the publication of tried cases by the National Public Prosecution Authority every year (para. 29); and iii) other recent studies (para. 30). The State party further indicated that the collected data served as a basis for the formulation of policies and strategies for addressing violence against women. The State party acknowledged that there is a need to better systematize, collate and coordinate all GBV-related data using a national Management Information System (MIS) (para. 28). The Committee considered that the recommendation had been partially implemented.

Concerning the recommendation “to urgently review the provisions of the Bill on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence likely to generate direct or indirect discrimination against women”: The State party indicated that Law No. 59/2008 of 10 September 2008 on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence had been integrated in the draft penal code. It added that, in this framework, the provisions that are likely to lead to direct or indirect discrimination will be reviewed (para. 35). The Committee considered that the recommendation had not been implemented.

The Committee recommends that the State party provide, in its next periodic report, additional information on the date and objectives of the National Gender-based Violence Policy and its 5-year strategic Plan and the effectiveness of the Gender Monitoring Office and National Technical Working Group on GBV.

The Committee notes that the State party has taken significant steps with regard to: (i) awareness-raising on all forms of violence against women; (ii) provision of support services and a sufficient number of shelters for women victims of violence; and (iii) the collection and publication of data; and recommends that the State party continue its efforts in this regard and report on them in its next periodic report.

The Committee also recommends that the State party provide, within one year, information on the revision of the bill on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence, in order to repeal the provisions likely to generate direct or indirect discrimination against women.

Regarding the recommendation made in paragraph 36 of the concluding observations “to take concrete measures to enhance women’s access to health care, in particular for women living in rural areas and elderly women, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 24, on women and health”: The State party mentioned the “Fistula programme” and a rapid SMS service to help pregnant women give birth at health centres (para. 37 of follow-up report). It also indicated that rural women are among beneficiaries of poverty reduction programmes (para. 39 of follow-up report). However, the State party failed to indicate whether the “Fistula programme” and the SMS service were launched after the issuance of the COBs. It also failed to indicate other specific and concrete measures taken to increase rural and older women’s access to care. The Committee did not receive sufficient information to assess whether the recommendation had been implemented.

Concerning the recommendation requesting “that the obstacles to accessing obstetric services be monitored and steps be taken for their removal and that a strategic plan to reduce maternal mortality be put in place”: The State party indicated the obstacles to accessing obstetric services: geographical accessibility and financial constraint. It mentioned various

programmes, including that at least 150 new ambulances had been acquired since 2008 (para. 46 of State party report). It also mentioned the existence of the Reproduction Health Strategic Plan (para. 47 of follow-up report). The State party has identified the obstacles to accessing obstetric services. Beside, except for the acquisition of 150 ambulances, the State party failed to indicate whether the other programmes have been launched after the issuance of the COBs and failed to indicate the date and content of the Reproduction Health Strategic Plan. The Committee considered that the recommendation had been partially implemented.

Concerning the recommendation “to take measures to prevent unwanted pregnancies, including by making contraceptives and family planning methods more widely available and by increasing awareness about family planning among women and men”: The State party indicated that the rate of contraceptive prevalence increased from 27% in 2008 to 45% in 2010 and mentioned various programmes undertaken to increase the use of contraceptive methods and family planning. Given the increase of the rate of contraceptive prevalence since 2008, the Committee considered that the recommendation had been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation stating “that the State party review its legislation relating to abortion with a view to removing punitive provisions imposed on women who undergo abortion in accordance with the Committee’s general recommendation No. 24, on women and health, and the Beijing Platform for Action”: The State party did not mention a possible review of the legislation on abortion. The Committee considered that the recommendation had not been implemented.

The Committee recommends that the State party provide, in its next periodic report, information on: a) concrete measures taken to enhance women’s access to health care, in particular for women living in rural areas and elderly women, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 24, on women and health; b) steps taken for the removal of the obstacles to accessing obstetric services; and c) date and objectives of the Reproduction Health Strategic Plan.

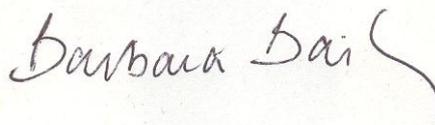
The Committee welcomes the progress achieved with respect to the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and recommends that the State party continue its efforts in this regard and provide information, in its next periodic report, on additional steps taken to prevent unwanted pregnancies, including by making contraceptives and family planning methods more widely available and by increasing awareness about family planning among women and men.

The Committee also recommends that the State party provide, within one year, information on steps taken to review its legislation relating to abortion with a view to removing punitive provisions imposed on women who undergo abortion.

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Barbara Bailey
Rapporteur on follow-up
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women