United Nations CEDAW/C/IRL/CO/8

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ireland*

1. The Committee considered the eighth periodic report of Ireland (CEDAW/C/IRL/8) at its 2156th and 2157th meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.2156 and 2157), held on 20 June 2025.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State Party of its eighth periodic report, which was prepared in response to the list of issues and questions prior to reporting (CEDAW/C/IRL/QPR/8). It also appreciates the State Party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/IRL/FCO/6-7). It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State Party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister of State for Migration, Colm Brophy, and included representatives of the Ministry of State for Migration, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, the Department of Education and Youth, the Department of Health, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, the Department of Social Protection, the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency (Cuan), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, as well as the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Noel White, and other members of the Permanent Mission.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2017 of the State Party's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports (CEDAW/C/IRL/6-7) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Human Trafficking) Act 2024;

* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-first session (16 June–4 July 2025).

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(b) Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2023, criminalising stalking as a stand-alone offence;

(c) Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, providing for paid leave for victims of domestic violence and extending the breastfeeding facilitation period;

(d) Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021;

(e) Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 ("Coco's Law"), criminalizing online harassment, stalking and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images;

(f) Domestic Violence Act 2018, introducing new protections for victims and criminalizing psychological and emotional abuse in intimate relationships;

(g) Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018, legalizing abortion.

5. The Committee welcomes the State Party's efforts to improve its policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption or establishment of the following:

(a) Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019–2024);

(b) Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality in 2019 to consider gender equality issues in Ireland;

(c) National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020, aimed at promoting women's leadership and addressing systemic barriers.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State Party has ratified or acceded to the following international and regional instruments:

(a) Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), in 2019;

(b) Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) of the International Labour Organization, in 2019;

(c) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2018;

(d) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2024.

C. Sustainable Development Goals

7. **The Committee calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals and urges the State Party to recognize women as the driving force of sustainable development in the State Party and to adopt gender-responsive policies and strategies to that effect.**

D. Parliament

8. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see A/65/38, part two, annex VI) and**

invites the Parliament (Houses of the Oireachtas) to implement, in line with its mandate, the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.

E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Reservations

9. The Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/IRL/CO/6-7, para. 8) and notes with concern that the State Party maintains reservations under articles 11 (1), 13 (a) and 16.1 (d) and (f) notwithstanding its commitment to constantly review them.

10. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/IRL/CO/6-7, para. 8) that the State Party review its reservations under articles 11 (1), 13 (a) and 16.1 (d) and (f), with a view to withdrawing them within an established time frame.**

Constitutional and legislative framework

11. The Committee notes with regret that the 2024 constitutional referendum in which it was proposed to delete article 41.2 of the Constitution and replace it with gender-neutral language about care within families was defeated.

12. **The Committee recommends that the State Party conduct an independent evaluation of the referendum, carry out information campaigns on the negative reinforcement of gender stereotypes about women's roles in the home through article 41.2 of the Constitution and undertake inclusive public consultations to find alternative wording with a view to holding another constitutional referendum on amending article 41.2 to remove the stereotypical language on the role of women in the home.**

13. The Committee notes that the general scheme of the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024 was published in January 2025. It notes with concern, however, that the bill still has not been enacted into law and that, while the State Party has indicated that it is on the priority drafting list for legislation, there is no clear timeline for its enactment.

14. **The Committee recommends that the State Party expedite the drafting and enactment of legislation relating to the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024 and ensure the inclusion of the broad range of internationally recognized grounds of discrimination against women and girls, including intersecting forms of discrimination.**

Women and peace and security

15. The Committee acknowledges the leadership of the State Party, and in particular that of Irish women, in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, having placed gender equality at the forefront of the agenda of the State Party during its 2021–2022 membership of the Security Council. It notes with appreciation the State Party's stance on regulating lethal autonomous weapons systems. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The need to increase the role of minority women in sustaining peace;

(b) The lack of sex-disaggregated data across all foreign service activities, hindering assessment of the State Party's women and peace and security commitments;

(c) The limited safeguards to prevent bias in lethal autonomous weapons systems potentially disproportionately affecting women of colour and marginalized groups in conflict settings.

16. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Promote the role of minority women, such as Traveller, Roma and migrant women, in the elaboration of the upcoming national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000);**

(b) **Systematically collect and report sex-disaggregated data across all foreign service activities to support the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda;**

(c) **Operationalize gender considerations in diplomatic initiatives on emerging technologies and advocate gender-responsive human control over autonomous weapons systems.**

Access to justice

17. The Committee notes the State Party's efforts to advance access to justice for women, including redress schemes for survivors of historic abuse and training for justice sector professionals. However, the Committee remains deeply concerned about:

(a) Systemic barriers to accessing justice for women, particularly those from marginalized communities, including restrictive civil legal aid with means testing regardless of case complexity;

(b) Additional barriers faced by Traveller, Roma, migrant and rural women and women with disabilities, including intersecting forms of discrimination, lack of accessibility measures and procedural accommodations, lack of culturally appropriate services, and limited awareness of their rights;

(c) Gaps in ensuring women's access to legal representation in all relevant areas of law, including labour discrimination and welfare benefits;

(d) The lack of mandatory, gender-sensitive training for relevant personnel involved in investigations and redress processes;

(e) Arbitrary barriers to redress for survivors of historic abuse in mother-and-baby institutions, the Magdalene laundries and other residential institutions, such as a continuing lack of recognition that women and girls of the Magdalene laundries experienced degrading treatment and gender-based discrimination, length-of-stay requirements in compensation schemes, and the failure to fully implement the 2014 judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in *O'Keeffe v. Ireland*, in which it was established that the State had partial responsibility for the protection of a victim of sexual abuse that occurred in a day-school setting;

(f) The lack of the meaningful inclusion of survivors' needs and views in redress mechanisms, including the National Centre for Research and Remembrance.

18. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Remove systemic barriers to women's access to justice by eliminating restrictive financial eligibility criteria for legal aid, especially for women victims of domestic violence and marginalized groups of women;**

(b) **Provide accessibility measures and procedural accommodations and culturally appropriate services for Traveller, Roma and migrant women and women with disabilities, and raise awareness about their rights;**

(c) **Expand access to legal aid and legal representation for women in all areas of law in which discrimination occurs, including labour disputes, welfare benefits and other civil matters, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent women from accessing justice;**

(d) **Put in place mandatory, gender-sensitive training for all relevant personnel involved in investigations and redress processes for survivors of historic abuse in mother-and-baby institutions, the Magdalene laundries and other residential institutions, ensuring that such training is survivor-centred and incorporates intersectional perspectives;**

(e) **Remove arbitrary barriers to redress for survivors of historic abuse in mother-and-baby institutions, the Magdalene laundries and other residential institutions, and fully implement prior judgments, in particular the 2014 judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in *O'Keeffe v. Ireland*, ensuring meaningful redress for all survivors;**

(f) **Adopt a victim- and survivor-centred approach in the administration of justice, ensuring the meaningful participation of survivors in redress mechanisms such as the National Centre for Research and Remembrance and avoiding secondary victimization.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

19. The Committee welcomes the placement of the national machinery for gender equality under the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as well as the statutory public sector equality and human rights duty. However, it remains concerned about:

(a) The lack of an intersectional gender perspective and of clear mechanisms to ensure accountability and coordination of women's human rights and gender equality across all government departments;

(b) The fact that gender equality training for public officials, albeit widely available, is not mandatory at all levels of government;

(c) The lack of mechanisms in place for incorporating lessons learned from the previous strategy cycle and ensuring alignment with the Convention in the new National Strategy for Women and Girls;

(d) Reports of chronic underfunding of women's rights organizations, undermining the effective implementation of gender equality strategies.

20. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/IRL/CO/6-7, para. 19) and recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Apply a gender-based intersectional perspective in all thematic areas and establish accountability for and coordination of women's rights and gender equality across all government departments;**

(b) **Introduce mandatory training on gender equality for all public officials at the national and local levels;**

(c) **Incorporate lessons learned from the previous strategy cycle and ensure full alignment with the Convention in the new National Strategy for Women and Girls;**

(d) **Ensure that women's organizations have access to adequate funding and cooperate with them in the implementation of national gender equality strategies.**

National human rights institution

21. The Committee welcomes the 12 per cent increase in the 2025 budget of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. However, the Committee is concerned that the Commission is not adequately resourced to effectively discharge its expanded mandate, particularly with regard to women's human rights and gender equality. The Committee regrets that the mandate of the Commission does not explicitly include responsibility for promoting the ratification of international and regional instruments and frameworks, as recommended by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

22. **The Committee recommends that the State Party implement the recommendations of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, in particular with regard to providing the Commission with an explicit mandate to promote the ratification of and accession to international instruments, and that it allocate sufficient human, technical and multi-year financial resources to enable the Commission to discharge its expanded mandate effectively, independently and in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles, annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134).**

Temporary special measures

23. The Committee notes with concern that the State Party has not adopted statutory gender quotas for all areas, where women are underrepresented, such as local government, academia, the private sector and corporate boards. It also notes with concern that the State Party has not taken any special temporary measures to accelerate substantive equality for women belonging to disadvantaged groups, such as Traveller, Roma, migrant and rural women and women with disabilities.

24. **Recalling article 4 (1) of the Convention and its general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, the Committee recommends that the State Party adopt temporary special measures, including parity nested gender quotas, in all areas where women are disadvantaged or underrepresented in both the public and private spheres, including local governance bodies, academia, the private sector and corporate boards. The Committee also requests the State Party to adopt special temporary measures, with measurable objectives and clear time frames, aimed at accelerating de facto equality for women belonging to disadvantaged groups, such as Traveller, Roma, migrant and rural women and women with disabilities.**

Gender stereotypes and harmful practices

25. The Committee welcomes the inclusion of gender equality in the National Strategy for Women and Girls, the renewed National Council for Curriculum and Assessment specification for relationships and sexuality education, and media initiatives to combat discriminatory online content. It notes that a new National Strategy for Women and Girls is currently under development. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The lack of binding timelines or robust monitoring mechanisms in the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020 to implement educational initiatives for eliminating gender stereotypes;

(b) The persistence of gender stereotypes in schools and media, and the absence of a comprehensive strategy to combat stereotypes with measurable targets;

(c) The limited implementation of statutory guidelines for media and advertising and the lack of gender-proofing of budgetary processes;

(d) The disproportionate impact of gender stereotypes on marginalized groups of women, including women with disabilities, Traveller, Roma and migrant women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women;

(e) That although approximately 6,000 women and girls have experienced female genital mutilation, no support services have been integrated into mainstream health provision;

(f) Reported cases of forced sterilization, coercive abortion and non-consensual infertility treatment of women with disabilities and Roma women.

26. **Recalling joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure that binding timelines and robust monitoring mechanisms for educational initiatives to combat gender stereotyping are included in the upcoming National Strategy for Women and Girls;**

(b) **Develop a comprehensive strategy with measurable targets to address gender stereotypes in the education system and media;**

(c) **Fully implement the statutory guidelines for media and advertising and integrate gender-proofing into budgetary processes;**

(d) **Ensure that initiatives to combat gender stereotypes adopt an intersectional approach addressing the needs of marginalized women;**

(e) **Integrate care and support services for female genital mutilation survivors into mainstream health services, increase the number of specialized clinics and strengthen prevention efforts;**

(f) **Establish a monitoring mechanism to prevent, detect and punish forced sterilization, coercive abortion and non-consensual infertility treatment in the State Party, with particular attention to women with disabilities and Roma women.**

Gender-based violence against women and girls

27. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the statutory Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency and the adoption of the third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, which includes human rights-based training for public officials and An Garda Síochána (the Irish Police Force), with particular attention to disadvantaged groups of women, including Traveller, Roma and migrant women and girls. The Committee also notes the State Party's increased funding for non-governmental organizations that support victims of gender-based violence. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The persistence of gender-based violence in the State Party, where women accounted for 88 per cent of intimate partner violence victims and 78 per cent of domestic violence victims in 2022, and the absence of legislation specifically criminalizing femicide, familicide and domestic homicide, as well as vicarious gender-based violence;

(b) Persistent underreporting of gender-based violence against women, especially among marginalized groups such as Traveller, Roma and migrant women, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and women with disabilities; their limited access to specialized legal aid and protection orders; and reports of judicial leniency in cases of gender-based violence against women;

(c) Shortcomings in data collection and shortfalls in funding for victim support services;

(d) The lack of consolidation of sexual offence laws based on consent and inadequate protection of survivors' privacy regarding counselling notes from therapy sessions;

(e) Insufficient funding for non-governmental organizations supporting victims of gender-based violence against women.

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

(a) **Strengthen efforts to prevent gender-based violence, ensure the effective investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators and expedite the adoption of legislation specifically criminalizing femicide, familicide and domestic homicide, as well as vicarious gender-based violence;**

(b) **Raise awareness, especially among marginalized groups of women, of legislation prohibiting gender-based violence and of the remedies available to victims, provide mandatory and culturally sensitive training for judges, prosecutors and the police on the proper identification, investigation and prosecution of cases of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, and ensure access to specialized legal aid, support services and protection orders for all women victims, with a particular focus on marginalized groups, such as Traveller, Roma and migrant women, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and women with disabilities;**

(c) **Strengthen the resources and data collection capacity of the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency and ensure its cooperation with survivor organizations;**

(d) **Consolidate sexual offence laws based on consent and prohibit access to survivors' counselling notes;**

(e) **Provide sustainable long-term funding for non-governmental organizations supporting victims of gender-based violence against women.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

29. The Committee welcomes the considerable efforts of the State Party to combat trafficking in persons, including the adoption of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Human Trafficking) Act 2024, the launch of the third National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking 2023–2027, and the specific inclusion of women victims of trafficking in the third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2022–2026). The Committee further welcomes the State Party's indication that it is looking into expanding its existing shelters for victims of trafficking and simplifying the procedure for fining offenders caught purchasing sex services. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The persistently low prosecution and conviction rates and insufficient trafficking-specific expertise among judges and lawyers;

(b) Significant gaps in victim identification, particularly the exclusion of Irish nationals, European Economic Area nationals, and asylum-seekers with pending applications from the formal identification scheme, and the reclassification of child trafficking cases as "sexual exploitation", potentially excluding girls from trafficking statistics and thus obscuring the true extent of child trafficking;

(c) Both the absence of legally mandated psychological assistance for victims and reports about a lack of legal assistance and specialized services to address the physical and mental health needs of trafficking victims.

30. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Effectively enforce existing legislation on trafficking in persons by ensuring that cases are thoroughly investigated and perpetrators prosecuted and adequately punished;**

(b) **Provide systematic mandatory training for judges and lawyers on trafficking in persons and on trauma-informed and victim-centred approaches to interacting with victims;**

(c) **Strengthen mechanisms for the early identification of victims of trafficking so that all such victims, including Irish nationals, European Economic Area nationals, asylum-seekers with pending applications, girls, and trafficking victims exploited in prostitution in private homes, are properly identified, adequately supported and protected from re-trafficking;**

(d) **Put in place measures to ensure access for all victims of trafficking, particularly women and girls, to specialized assistance to address their physical and psychological health needs.**

Participation in political and public life

31. The Committee welcomes the adoption of gender quotas for national elections, the appointment of the first female Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament (Dáil Éireann) and the fact that women now hold 45 per cent of seats in the Upper House (Seanad). It notes the increase from 30 to 40 per cent of the minimum gender quota for candidate lists of political parties for general elections and notes with appreciation the attainment of 40 per cent female representation on the boards of the 20 companies included in the Ireland Overall Stock Exchange Index. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) That despite electoral quotas, women hold only 25 per cent of the seats in the Lower House and that only three out of 15 Cabinet ministers are women;

(b) The continuing low number of women in State boards, the defence and security forces and senior academic, trade and private sector positions, and the absence of gender quotas;

(c) That the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 does not extend to local government elections;

(d) That female corporate representation remains limited to non-executive appointments, with executive roles stagnating at 11 per cent, and that there are no female chief executive officers in the 20 companies of the Ireland Overall Stock Exchange Index;

(e) Reports of online abuse and threats of gender-based violence targeting female politicians, particularly at the local level;

(f) The low participation of rural, Traveller, Roma and migrant women and women with disabilities in political and public life, despite their inclusion in national

strategies, due to persistent systemic and intersectional barriers that prevent their meaningful engagement in decision-making processes.

32. **Recalling its general recommendations No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life and No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures and reiterating its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/IRL/CO/6-7, para. 35), the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Amend the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 to require parity, and extend its application to the Upper House of Parliament (Seanad) and to the nomination of Cabinet ministers and local governance bodies;**

(b) **Further strengthen targeted measures, including temporary special measures such as parity quotas, civic education programmes, mentoring and political leadership and campaigning skills training, affordable childcare and eldercare, and campaign financing, in order to increase women's representation in political and public life, particularly in the Lower House (Dáil Éireann), ministerial positions, State boards, the defence and security forces and senior academic, trade and private sector positions;**

(c) **Strengthen monitoring mechanisms for sustained female corporate leadership and adopt binding measures to increase the number of women in executive roles;**

(d) **Take concrete measures to address and combat online abuse and threats of gender-based violence targeting women in political and public life;**

(e) **Take concrete measures, including temporary special measures, to promote the participation of rural, Traveller, Roma and migrant women and women with disabilities in political and public life.**

Nationality and statelessness

33. The Committee is concerned about the absence of a dedicated statelessness determination procedure in the State Party, which results in case-by-case evaluation and may fail to provide stateless women and girls with the legal certainty and rights protection required under the Convention.

34. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Establish a clear, transparent and accessible statelessness determination procedure in line with international standards;**

(b) **Ensure that such procedures include gender-sensitive safeguards and mandatory training for decision-makers on the rights of stateless women and girls.**

Education

35. The Committee welcomes the State Party's legislative and policy advancements in education, particularly the Higher Education Authority Act 2022 and the publication of an updated relationships and sexuality education curriculum for the senior cycle in 2024. It also notes the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy for 2024–2030, which has contributed to increasing educational attainment among girls from linguistic and ethnic minority groups. The Committee nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) The lack of systematic incorporation of gender equality into the curriculum at the primary level;

(b) The limited use of teaching materials promoting gender equality and non-violent masculinities and the lack of education on same-sex relationships, gender identity, and sexual and reproductive rights;

(c) The absence of uniform, age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education at the primary level and its inconsistent implementation at the secondary and tertiary levels;

(d) The persistently low levels of educational attainment among Roma, Traveller and migrant children, and systemic barriers such as the "past pupil" school admissions rule, which allows schools to give preference to applicants who are children or grandchildren of former students and may cause de facto discrimination against Traveller, Roma and migrant children;

(e) The obstacles faced by girls and women with disabilities in accessing education and the prevalence of educational segregation for female students with disabilities in special schools.

36. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Reform the primary education curriculum to systematically incorporate gender equality and eliminate gender stereotypes;**

(b) **Ensure the use of teaching materials promoting gender equality and non-violent masculinities, including comprehensive coverage of diverse relationships, gender identity, and sexual and reproductive rights;**

(c) **Integrate compulsory and age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights into school curricula at all levels, including education on responsible sexual behaviour, modern contraception and sexual consent, and ensure that sex education is scientifically objective and regularly monitored and evaluated;**

(d) **Address the education attainment among Traveller, Roma and migrant women, including by abolishing the past-pupil criterion for school admissions, and adopt temporary special measures, such as scholarships for girls and non-stereotypical career counselling;**

(e) **Ensure inclusive accessibility to quality education for girls and women with disabilities, including through affirmative action measures that take into account their specific needs.**

Employment

37. The Committee welcomes the reduction of the gender pay gap to 9.6 per cent in 2022, the extension of gender pay gap reporting requirements, and the State Party's increased investment in childcare services and parental leave. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) That the gender wage gap persists in the State Party, despite improvements;

(b) The persistent gender pension gap of 36 per cent;

(c) That women continue to be concentrated in low-paid employment and constitute 60 per cent of low-paid workers, which adversely affects their career development and pension benefits;

(d) The high unemployment rate among Traveller and Roma women;

(e) The unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men in the State Party and the fact that high childcare costs continue to hinder women's labour force participation, particularly in rural areas;

(f) That the majority of sexual harassment complaints are withdrawn during adjudication, and the lack of effective redress mechanisms;

(g) That the State Party has not yet ratified the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) of the International Labour Organization.

38. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Close the gender pay gap, including by effectively enforcing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value; regularly reviewing wages in sectors where women are concentrated; adopting measures to close the gender pay gap, including through gender-neutral analytical job classification and evaluation methods and regular pay surveys; sanctioning non-compliance; monitoring the implementation of the minimum wage in all sectors; and ensuring alignment with the European Union Pay Transparency Directive by 2026;**

(b) **Adopt targeted measures to reduce the gender pension gap, including by recognizing and computing unpaid care work performed by women towards their pension benefits;**

(c) **Analyse root causes for women's concentration in low-paid employment and adopt targeted measures to enhance their access to formal employment and eliminate horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, including training opportunities and safeguards to protect women from discriminatory recruitment practices;**

(d) **Implement targeted interventions to reduce unemployment among Traveller and Roma women;**

(e) **Recognize, reduce and redistribute the burden of unpaid care work on women by providing access to affordable childcare facilities and care services for older persons in all regions, promote the use of shared parental leave to encourage men to participate equally in childcare responsibilities, and challenge stereotypes on traditional gender roles;**

(f) **Strengthen support for victims of workplace sexual harassment, investigate the reasons for withdrawals of complaints and ensure effective remedies and compensation for victims;**

(g) **Ratify the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) of the International Labour Organization without delay.**

Health

39. The Committee notes with appreciation legislative and public policy advances made in the field of women's health, including regarding contraception and in vitro fertilization. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The persistent barriers to healthcare access for women with disabilities, rural women and Roma, Traveller and migrant women due to geographical isolation, accessibility and linguistic barriers and digital exclusion;

(b) The limited scope of the Free Contraception Scheme, which excludes women outside the 17–35 age range and certain marginalized groups of women, as

well as the limited access to adequate gynaecological and obstetric care for rural women, women with disabilities and Roma and migrant women;

(c) The absence of a Mother and Baby Unit specializing in perinatal mental health and delays in the construction of the new National Maternity Hospital;

(d) The fact that legislation to ban conversion therapy is under development but not yet enacted;

(e) The lack of prior, free and informed consent for sexual and reproductive health interventions and treatments, such as interventions on intersex children, forced sterilization, coercive abortion and non-consensual infertility treatments;

(f) The limited availability of gender-sensitive, community-based public mental health services, particularly for women and girl victims of gender-based violence and trafficking and for women with psychosocial disabilities.

40. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure universal access to health services with specific measures for Traveller, Roma, migrant and rural women and women with disabilities and ensure their inclusion in the digital health transformation under the Digital Health Strategic Implementation Roadmap for 2024–2030;**

(b) **Expand the Free Contraception Scheme to include women of all ages and marginalized groups of women and ensure culturally sensitive sexual and reproductive health services for all women, including rural women, women with disabilities and migrant women;**

(c) **Establish clear timelines for the establishment of a Mother and Baby Unit specializing in perinatal mental health and the completion of the new National Maternity Hospital;**

(d) **Expedite the adoption of comprehensive legislation to ban conversion practices;**

(e) **Explicitly criminalize the forced sterilization of women with disabilities and Roma women and ensure that sterilizations can only be performed with their free, prior and informed consent;**

(f) **Strengthen and consistently apply protocols that guarantee free, prior and informed consent for medical interventions in the area of sexual and reproductive health, including interventions on intersex children, forced sterilization, coercive abortion and non-consensual infertility treatments;**

(g) **Integrate gender-sensitive, community-based mental health services into public health services, with special support for women and girl victims of gender-based violence and trafficking and for women with psychosocial disabilities.**

41. The Committee notes with appreciation the adoption of the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018, by which abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy was legalized, and the Health (Termination of Pregnancy Services) (Safe Access Zones) Act 2024, by which any obstruction of a person's access to abortion facilities was prohibited. However, the Committee notes with concern the failure to implement the recommendations of the 2023 independent review of the operation of the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018, the lack of available abortion services, the absence of available data, and stigma and conscientious objection among medical personnel.

42. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Urgently implement the recommendations of the 2023 independent review of the operation of the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018;**

(b) **Combat stigma and conscientious objection among medical personnel and ensure the provision of abortion services throughout the State Party;**

(c) **Provide women with access to high-quality abortion and post-abortion care in all public and private health facilities and adopt guidance on doctor-patient confidentiality in that area;**

(d) **Consider the possibility of fully decriminalizing abortion and abolishing the mandatory three-day waiting period.**

Economic empowerment and social benefits

43. Committee notes the State Party's initiatives to promote women's entrepreneurship, such as Enterprise Ireland and Local Enterprise Offices; the fact that 37 per cent of start-ups supported by Enterprise Ireland were led by women in 2022; and the introduction of fiscal measures supporting single-parent families and expanded parental leave entitlements. However, the Committee remains concerned about:

(a) The fact that rural women, women with disabilities, Roma, Traveller and migrant women and ethnic minority women remain underrepresented in entrepreneurship and face persistent barriers to access and participation;

(b) The lack of a fully individualized tax system and the absence of a comprehensive evaluation of fiscal and welfare policies from a gender perspective, despite the introduction of gender-responsive budgeting;

(c) The disproportionately high risk of poverty and social exclusion for female-headed households and the increase in the number of women facing homelessness and of women in emergency accommodation;

(d) The lack of a gender perspective and a human rights due diligence requirement in the National Plan on Business and Human Rights.

44. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Strengthen support programmes for women entrepreneurs, including targeted measures to ensure the participation of women from disadvantaged groups, particularly rural women, women with disabilities, Roma, Traveller and migrant women and ethnic minority women;**

(b) **Fully implement gender-responsive budgeting with a robust legal framework and conduct evaluations of fiscal and welfare policies to assess their differential impact on women and men, with particular attention to intersecting forms of discrimination;**

(c) **Develop a comprehensive strategy to address the feminization of poverty and female homelessness that includes specific measures for female-headed households and single women, and accelerate the provision of affordable housing, with priority allocation to women at risk of social exclusion;**

(d) **Expedite the adoption and implementation of the second National Plan on Business and Human Rights, ensuring the inclusion of mandatory human rights due diligence requirements that incorporate a gender perspective and**

address the extraterritorial impact of business activities on women's human rights.

Women facing intersecting forms of discrimination

Women with disabilities

45. The Committee notes with concern the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women with disabilities in the State Party, particularly in relation to sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, violence in institutions and access to justice. The Committee also notes the discriminatory provisions that limit or prevent women with disabilities from exercising their right to marry and found a family and to care for and have custody of their children.

46. **The Committee that recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure the exercise of all human rights of women with disabilities through a comprehensive strategy that addresses all areas covered by the Convention;**

(b) **Ensure that women with disabilities have effective access to justice and legal aid through the provision of disability-sensitive services, reasonable accommodations and procedural adjustments in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice;**

(c) **Provide mandatory training on the rights of women with disabilities to all personnel in the justice system;**

(d) **Establish comprehensive reparations for women and girls with disabilities who are survivors of institutional abuse and harmful practices, such as forced sterilization and coercive abortion, that are consistent with international standards and serve to explicitly recognize moral and transgenerational harm.**

Roma and Traveller women

47. The Committee notes the adoption of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II for 2024–2028. It nevertheless notes with concern that Roma and Traveller women and girls continue to face limited access to education, employment, health services and housing. It also notes with concern:

(a) The persistent overrepresentation of Traveller women in the prison population, accounting for 22 per cent of female prisoners while representing only 0.7 per cent of the national population, and the lack of gender-responsive prison services;

(b) Persistent barriers to access to justice and legal aid for Traveller and Roma women.

48. **The Committee recalls its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/IRL/CO/6-7, para. 49) and recommends that the State Party take concrete measures to improve access to education, employment, health services and housing for Traveller women and girls, including by ensuring the effective implementation of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II for 2024–2028, through adequate human and financial resources, and by revising the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 to penalize authorities when they fail to provide accommodation for Travellers. It further recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Address the root causes of the overrepresentation of Traveller women in places of deprivation of liberty and expand non-custodial alternatives,**

ensuring gender-responsive prison services developed in consultation with Traveller and ethnic minority women;

(b) **Ensure effective access to justice and legal aid through culturally appropriate services for Roma and Traveller women and girls.**

Women in detention

49. The Committee is concerned about the conditions and treatment of women in detention facilities in the State Party. It notes with particular concern:

(a) The significant overcrowding in women's prisons despite the expansion of prison spaces;

(b) The lack of an open prison or equivalent facility for female offenders;

(c) The absence of disaggregated data on ethnicity in the criminal justice system, which impedes effective monitoring and targeted interventions.

50. **In line with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Take immediate and effective measures to address overcrowding in women's prisons and ensure that detention conditions meet international standards;**

(b) **Expand community-based alternatives to detention and establish open prisons for women detainees;**

(c) **Systematically collect disaggregated data in the criminal justice system to enable evidence-based policymaking and monitoring of discriminatory practices.**

Rural women

51. The Committee welcomes recent policy initiatives such as the National Women in Agriculture Plan of 2024 and the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023–2027. It nevertheless notes with concern:

(a) The persistent gender gap in land ownership and the fact that women represent only 12 per cent of farm owners;

(b) The lack of systematic inclusion of women's organizations in rural policy planning;

(c) Persistent barriers to accessing education, employment, affordable childcare and health services for rural women due to limited public transport and distance to services;

(d) The underrepresentation of rural women in local governance, where women account for only 25 per cent of elected local authority councillors.

52. **In accordance with its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women and target 5.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Increase rural women's access to land ownership, through legislative reform and awareness-raising campaigns;**

(b) **Strengthen the formal role of women's organizations and ensure women's equal representation in decision-making on rural policy planning;**

(c) **Expand and adequately fund programmes promoting rural women's access to education, employment, affordable childcare and health services, including by expanding public transport in rural areas;**

(d) **Support rural women's participation in local governance through targeted initiatives and measures to address structural barriers.**

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

53. The Committee notes the 2020 judgment of the Supreme Court in *Friends of the Irish Environment v. Government of Ireland*, which found that the State Party's National Mitigation Plan lacked specificity. While the Committee notes the adoption of the Climate Action Plan 2023 and the State Party's contribution of $27 million to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, it remains concerned at the lack of a gender perspective in the climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies of the State Party. The Committee is also concerned about the absence of a gender-responsive climate strategy and inadequate inclusion of women from vulnerable communities in climate decision-making.

54. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Ensure the full integration of a gender perspective into its climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and the systematic assessment of the differentiated impact of climate change on women, particularly rural and marginalized women;**

(b) **Establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms to track the implementation of gender-responsive climate measures;**

(c) **Collect sex-disaggregated data on the impact of climate change on women and girls and incorporate a gender perspective into climate financing activities;**

(d) **Develop a gender-responsive climate strategy ensuring the meaningful inclusion of women, including women from vulnerable communities, in climate decision-making.**

Marriage and family relations

55. The Committee welcomes recent reforms, including the abolition of the requirement for single parents to seek maintenance and the exclusion of child maintenance from social welfare means tests. However, the Committee remains concerned about:

(a) The high poverty rate among single parent households, particularly women-headed households, which is almost three times higher than among two-parent households;

(b) The absence of a State child maintenance agency or effective enforcement mechanisms for child maintenance orders;

(c) The lack of published evaluations of the impact of mandatory mediation on women's rights and the lack of published research on economic consequences of divorce;

(d) Reports of discrimination against women with disabilities in child custody decisions without systematic evaluation;

(e) The use of "parental alienation" concepts, which may pose risks to women and children experiencing domestic and paternal violence.

56. **In line with its general recommendations No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations and No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, the Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Address the disproportionately high poverty rates among women-headed single parent households;**

(b) **Adopt legislation to ensure the timely and adequate payment of child maintenance, including penalties for late or non-payment, which disproportionately affect women-headed households;**

(c) **Establish effective enforcement mechanisms for child maintenance orders and court-approved agreements, including the consideration of State-backed guarantees for unpaid maintenance;**

(d) **Publish comprehensive evaluations of the impact of mandatory mediation on women's rights and research on the economic outcomes of divorce to inform evidence-based family justice reforms;**

(e) **Undertake systematic evaluation and adopt measures to address discrimination against women with disabilities in child custody decisions;**

(f) **Provide mandatory gender-sensitive training for legal professionals and establish safeguards against the misuse of "parental alienation" concepts, particularly in cases involving domestic violence.**

Data collection

57. The Committee notes with concern the lack of comprehensive, disaggregated data on Traveller and Roma women, women of colour and women with disabilities, hindering effective monitoring and evidence-based policymaking to address multiple forms of discrimination. It notes that this data gap undermines the State Party's ability to fulfil its obligations under articles 2 and 3 of the Convention and prevents the proper assessment of progress toward eliminating discrimination against women among these marginalized groups.

58. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Expedite the adoption and implementation of a national equality data strategy, ensuring systematic, intersectional data collection disaggregated by sex, minority status, disability and other relevant factors, in accordance with general recommendation No. 9 (1989) on statistical data concerning the situation of women;**

(b) **Ensure that such disaggregated data are collected with appropriate safeguards for privacy and confidentiality, in consultation with representatives of marginalized groups, particularly rural, Traveller, Roma and migrant women's organizations and organizations representing women with disabilities;**

(c) **Systematically use the data to inform the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of targeted legislative measures, policies and programmes aimed at achieving substantive equality for all women and girls in the State Party.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

59. **In view of the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Committee calls upon the State Party to reaffirm its implementation and to re-evaluate the realization of the rights enshrined in the Convention in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.**

Dissemination

60. **The Committee requests the State Party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official languages of the State Party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation, as well as to civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in particular women's organizations, to raise full awareness within the State Party.**

Ratification of other treaties

61. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State Party to the nine major international human rights instruments[1] would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State Party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a Party.**

Follow-up to the concluding observations

62. **The Committee requests the State Party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12, 14, 18 (e) and 24 above.**

Preparation of the next report

63. **The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the ninth periodic report of the State Party in line with a future clear and regularized schedule for reporting by States parties (General Assembly resolution 79/165, para. 6) and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State Party. The report should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.**

64. **The Committee requests the State Party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).**

[1] The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.