



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 ninth periodic report of Japan*

1. The Committee considered the ninth periodic report of Japan (CEDAW/C/JPN/9) at its 2104th and 2105th meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.2104 and CEDAW/C/SR.2105), held on 17 October 2024.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its ninth periodic report, which was prepared in response to the list of issues and questions prior to reporting (CEDAW/C/JPN/QPR/9). It also appreciates the State party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/JPN/CO/7-8/Add.1). 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 distinguished delegation, which was headed by the Director General of the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office, Keiko Okada, and included representatives of the Cabinet Secretariat, the Cabinet Office, the Imperial Household Agency, the National Police Agency, the Children and Families Agency, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, as well as the Permanent Representative, Atsuyuki Oike, and other members of the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2016 of the State party's previous reports (CEDAW/C/JPN/7-8) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) Amendment to the Civil Code, abolishing the waiting period for women to remarry upon divorce, in 2024;

* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-ninth session (7–25 October 2024).



although abortions are expensive, they are not fully covered by Japanese national health insurance and, in cases where they are permitted, spousal consent is required;

(c) That, notwithstanding the State party's approval of oral abortion pills in 2023, very few clinics that provide abortion services offer such medication and only at a prohibitive cost similar to that of a surgical abortion;

(d) That women who wish to undergo voluntary sterilization must obtain spousal consent;

(e) The delays in amending article 3 of the Gender Identity Disorder Special Cases Law of 2003, notwithstanding a 2023 Supreme Court ruling that the sterilization requirement for legal gender recognition is unconstitutional;

(f) The absence of updated information on the safety of tap water containing perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, notwithstanding the request of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism for a report on the levels in the water supplied by 12,000 water providers, to be submitted in September 2024.

42. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health and targets 3.1 and 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on reducing global maternal mortality and on ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Provide adequate access to affordable modern methods of contraception, including emergency contraception, for all women and girls, including by removing the requirement for girls aged 16 and 17 years old to obtain parental consent in order to obtain contraceptives;**

(b) **Amend the Penal Code and Maternal Health Act to legalize abortion and decriminalize it in all cases and ensure that women and adolescent girls have adequate access to safe abortion and post-abortion services, so as to ensure the full realization of their rights, equality and economic and bodily autonomy to make free choices about their reproductive rights;**

(c) **Amend legislation to remove the requirement for spousal consent for women seeking abortion;**

(d) **Ensure that safe abortion services, including abortifacients, are accessible, affordable, covered by health insurance and available to all women and girls throughout the territory of the State party;**

(e) **Amend the Maternal Health Act to abolish the requirement of spousal consent, in order to allow all women to have access to voluntary sterilization services;**

(f) **Amend, without delay, article 3 of the Gender Identity Disorder Special Cases Law of 2003 to implement the 2023 Supreme Court decision and ensure that all victims who had to undergo sterilization under that article have access to effective reparations, including compensation;**

(g) **Provide an update on the report on safe levels of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in tap water in its next report.**

Economic empowerment of women

43. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That the State party has the highest poverty rate (15.4 per cent) among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, with single