

give family planning services to sexually active adolescents, despite there being no legal restrictions in this regard; the fact that women in rural areas often suffer more as a result of prevailing negative attitudes and discriminatory traditional practices and often work longer hours than any other group; and the lack of support systems to enable pregnant teenagers to continue their schooling, as well as the lack of detailed statistics available on teenage pregnancy.

The Committee recommended that the government, *inter alia*:

- ♦ take a more pro-active role by introducing concrete measures to abolish all discriminatory customs and practices;
- ♦ review the functions of the National Machinery with a view to providing it with the authority and financial resources to initiate and implement policy programmes to eliminate discrimination against women and enabling it to act as a coordinating body for all the gender focal points of the ministries; launch through the National Machinery a public awareness-raising campaign for gender equality, targeting both women and men; organize a campaign to promote positive images of women, involving the mass media;
- ♦ extend gender-sensitive training to all sectors, including health-care workers;
- ♦ take measures to ensure that the President and the Ministers are accountable for gender-mainstreaming within their respective departments;
- ♦ adopt temporary special measures of affirmative action to promote the status of women in all spheres of society;
- ♦ extend the function of the office of the ombudsperson to allow it to address complaints about gender discrimination in the private sphere and the private sector;
- ♦ codify family and customary laws, incorporating only those customary laws and practices that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- ♦ put in place socio-economic programmes to assist women living by prostitution; document systematically the prevalence of prostitution in order to develop assistance programmes in this regard;
- ♦ reappraise the law on abortion with a view to its liberalization and decriminalization, as illegal abortion is cited by the government as a major cause of death for women in Zimbabwe;

- ♦ increase efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic and ensure that appropriate sexual and reproductive health information, education and services are provided to all women and, in particular, to adolescents; provide sex education and practical family planning to both youth and adults;
- ♦ include, in the next report, more detailed data and adequate information on all forms of violence against women, prostitution, and trafficking in women and teenage pregnancy and the ability of young mothers to continue their education; and
- ♦ establish a functional central coordinating body with a regular budget to accelerate implementation of gender policies and programmes.

## THEMATIC REPORTS

### Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

#### **Racism and racial discrimination, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1998/79, paras. 74, 84–85)

The report notes information provided by the government referring to the Charter of Rights and provisions curbing discrimination, including discrimination based on race (article 23 of the Constitution). The government indicated that it intends to introduce legislation to prohibit discrimination based on political opinion, beliefs, and sex in a variety of contexts.

#### **Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, Special Rapporteur on the:** (E/CN.4/1998/101, para. 133)

In commentary on the connections between child labour, including child prostitution, HIV/AIDS and the lack of education, the report notes that in Zimbabwe, school sex education starts at the age of eight or nine years. The Special Rapporteur stated while this may seem very young, AIDS workers have pointed out that there is increasing incidence of child sex abuse, including rape, which makes it very important to introduce the subject during that period and even earlier.

## FIELD OPERATIONS

Zimbabwe is a member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and, therefore, a beneficiary of and participant in the Regional Human Rights Programme Office for Southern Africa, a joint project of OHCHR and UNDP, which is based in Pretoria (see profile under "South Africa").