



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women  
Sixty-eighth session**

**Summary record of the 1532nd meeting\***

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 24 October 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Leinarte

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\* No summary record was issued for the 1531st meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention**

*Seventh periodic report of Burkina Faso (CEDAW/C/BFA/7; CEDAW/C/BFA/Q/7 and Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Burkina Faso took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso), introducing her country's seventh periodic report, said that Burkina Faso attached great importance to eliminating violence against women and remained committed to improving their situation and living conditions. The report in question, which covered the period from 2007 to 2013, was the outcome of an inclusive and participatory process undertaken by a multisectoral committee comprising representatives of public institutions and civil society organizations. The draft report had been approved at a national workshop before being formally adopted by the Council of Ministers in April 2015.

3. Since the adoption of the report, the Government had taken measures to strengthen its legal and institutional framework for the protection and promotion of women's rights and had devised and implemented a number of plans and strategies to combat discrimination against women, including the National Economic and Social Development Plan for the period 2016-2020, the National Strategy for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation for the period 2016-2020 and the National Strategy for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Marriage for the period 2016-2025. Responsibility for implementing the various plans and strategies lay with the Ministry for Women, National Solidarity and the Family. The National Commission to Follow up on the Commitments of Burkina Faso regarding the Advancement of Women and the National Human Rights Commission also played a role in their implementation.

4. A number of temporary special measures had been adopted in the areas of education, health, the economy, employment, politics and vocational training with the aim of improving the situation of women in the country. Measures had also been taken to reduce the inequalities facing rural women and to protect women against domestic violence, forced and early marriage, sexual harassment and female genital mutilation. Training and awareness-raising initiatives were essential tools in the fight against such harmful practices. The programme for fostering a protective environment for adolescents who had fallen victim or were at risk of falling victim to early marriage for the period from 2011 to 2016 had served to reduce the prevalence of that practice. The most significant initiative to combat domestic violence was the Joint Programme to Combat Violence against Women and Girls for the period 2014-2015. Moreover, the opening of a comprehensive care centre for victims of gender-based violence, which was equipped with a helpline, had yielded positive results. An increase had also been observed in the number of convictions of perpetrators of female genital mutilation and care was routinely provided to women suffering from the effects of excision.

5. Act No. 061-2015/CNT on Prevention and Punishment in respect of Violence against Women and Reparation and Care for Victims prescribed a prison term of between 1 and 5 years and a fine of between 600,000 and 1,500,000 CFA francs, or only one of the two penalties, for the act of hunting, excluding, rejecting or mistreating a woman or girl accused or suspected of practising witchcraft. Monitoring committees operating at the local and national levels had facilitated the identification and rescue of 1,442 victims of trafficking in 2016. The victims were receiving comprehensive care and steps were being taken to facilitate their social reintegration.

6. Efforts to increase the participation and representation of women in the public and political life of the country had taken the form of advocacy activities and a re-reading of the bill on the introduction of gender quotas. At that time, 7 of the country's 32 ambassadors, 7 of its 29 ministers, 15 of its 127 Members of Parliament and 4 of its 13 regional governors were women. Training on gender-sensitive budgeting had also been provided to the gender

committee of the National Assembly. Certain groups of women's organizations had been receiving funding from the State budget since 2015.

7. Free basic education in public schools had been introduced for children aged between 6 and 16 years. In order to accelerate girls' education and women's literacy, school attendance had been made compulsory for all children aged between 3 and 16 years. The National Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education for the period 2012-2021 had yielded positive results. A gender analysis showed that, although the gross enrolment rate continued to rise for both boys and girls at the post-primary level, it had increased more quickly for girls. Measures had also been taken to increase the availability and accessibility of secondary and higher education. In 2015, the Government had allocated more than 40 per cent of higher education bursaries to female students. A number of regulatory provisions had been adopted in an effort to increase the number of bursaries awarded to female students.

8. The persistence of major gender disparities in access to employment and vocational training had prompted the Government to establish the Special Job Creation Programme for Young Persons and Women. Under the programme, some 11,000 women had received training in entrepreneurship and finance and 250 women had been granted working capital in 2016. A further 1,300 women were expected to receive driving lessons and training in agribusiness and other fields in 2017.

9. The country's national development programmes served as a tool for mainstreaming gender equality in economic and social policy. One of the objectives of the National Economic and Social Development Plan for the period 2016-2020 was to transform women into dynamic development actors by achieving gender parity in business ownership by 2020. The National Strategy for the Promotion of Female Entrepreneurship had been adopted in June 2015 with the aim of reducing poverty among the population by 2025. The Integrated Programme for the Economic Empowerment of Women for the period 2016-2020 had helped 500 rural women acquire farming inputs in 2017. The Government had taken a number of measures to facilitate rural women's access to credit, health care, water and sanitation, land and decision-making bodies. One such measure was the 2015 decision to grant at least 30 per cent of developed land to women.

10. The situation of women's health had improved in recent years. According to a demographic health survey conducted in 2015, the maternal mortality ratio and the under-5 mortality rate had both decreased between 2010 and 2015. The modern contraception prevalence rate had increased from 14 per cent in 2010 to 22.5 per cent in 2015. A number of strategies had also been devised with the aim of increasing men's involvement in matters relating to reproductive, maternal, neonatal and children's health. A decree introducing free health care for women and children under 5 years of age had been adopted in March 2016.

11. Reforms had been undertaken to remove from the country's domestic legislation any provisions that might infringe women's rights. A revised Personal and Family Code and Criminal Code had been submitted to the Council of Ministers for re-reading prior to adoption. The Government's efforts to guarantee the enjoyment by women and girls of their Convention rights would only bear fruit if they were supported by its technical and financial partners and by civil society organizations.

#### *Articles 1 to 6*

12. **Ms. Schulz** said that, while the State party was to be commended on the wide range of measures to improve the situation of women, the Committee found regrettable the slow pace of reform and the continued existence of discriminatory provisions in its domestic legislation. She asked whether a specific time frame had been set for the adoption of the revised Personal and Family Code and Criminal Code and whether the State party foresaw any obstacles to that process. Recalling that the Constitution of Burkina Faso established the primacy of international treaties over domestic legislation and that the definition of discrimination against women contained in article 1 of the Convention was therefore already an integral part of the country's body of law, she asked whether the State party intended to incorporate that definition into the new Constitution and into all relevant

domestic legislation. It would also be useful to know what stage had been reached in drafting the new Constitution and when it would likely be adopted.

13. It was her understanding that the former National Human Rights Commission was no longer accredited with B status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and that it had not conducted any activities related to the protection of women's rights, despite that being part of its mandate. She asked whether the new Commission, which had been established in March 2016, had applied to GANHRI for A status and how the State party would ensure that it accorded priority to the issue of discrimination against women.

14. She asked whether mobile courts continued to operate in Burkina Faso and to what extent the mobile court system facilitated access to justice for women living in remote areas. She would also be interested to know whether the State party planned to extend the legal aid system to cover the entire country or to relax the requirements for proving financial insecurity to allow more impoverished women to enjoy that benefit. The Committee had received reports that women who were awarded compensation by the courts seldom received the full amount, as fees were often deducted from the total. She wondered whether that was indeed the case and, if so, how the State party planned to remedy that situation. It would also be helpful to hear more about how the State party planned to go about restoring women's trust in the judiciary, which many women viewed as corrupt and discriminatory.

15. Noting that matters related to the family and inheritance were governed by both State and customary law in Burkina Faso, she asked what measures were in place to ensure that women who were not subject to the Personal and Family Code enjoyed equal treatment with women who were and had equal access to justice in court cases involving family disputes.

16. **Ms. Ameline** said that the State party was to be congratulated for its numerous peace initiatives and its willingness to participate in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. She asked whether women were adequately represented in the High Council for Reconciliation and National Unity and the National Human Rights Commission and whether they had the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. It would also be useful to hear more about the nature of the coordination between those entities. How did the State party ensure that women played a central role in the implementation of national development strategies?

17. She would be grateful if the delegation could provide an update on the investigations launched by the Council into crimes and rights violations dating back to the 1960s and, more recently, to 2014 and 2015, indicating the number of cases in which legal proceedings had been instituted and the number and affiliation of the persons prosecuted.

18. The Committee was aware that Burkina Faso was currently playing host to more than 30,000 Malian refugees and to more than 6,000 internally displaced and stateless persons. Noting that the State party had recently acceded to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, she asked whether a strategy for its implementation had been devised. Were women encouraged to take up positions of responsibility either in refugee camps or in the entities responsible for providing them with assistance or facilitating their return?

19. The current situation of insecurity in the north of the country was a serious cause for concern. Noting that a climate of mistrust prevailed between the public and the security forces, she asked how civil society and women in particular might help to restore trust. She would also appreciate information on any initiatives undertaken to promote religious tolerance in the country and on the specific role played by women in that connection. Lastly, the delegation might indicate whether it considered the international assistance that it received to be sufficient to help the State party consolidate the rule of law throughout the national territory.

20. **Ms. Tamboura Dofini** (Burkina Faso) said that it was not possible to give an exact time frame for the adoption of the Personal and Family Code or the Criminal Code. The drafts were still under consideration by the various ministerial councils, and could therefore

still be amended. Once consensus had been reached on the text, they would be submitted to the National Assembly.

21. **Ms. Yameogo Sankara** (Burkina Faso) said that the mobile courts were still in operation, most notably to deal with cases of female genital mutilation. The fact that they worked as decentralized bodies made them an important resource for sensitization of the rural population to such issues.

22. As to the new Constitution, once again, it was not possible to give a precise timetable for adoption. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality had argued strongly for women to be represented on the Constitutional Commission, and 11 of the 90 seats were held by women. It had also encouraged civil society to organize meetings to inform women about their rights under the new Constitution, which included new provisions on discrimination and violence against women.

23. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that the mobile courts were a means of ensuring that justice was accessible to all women. Women could also seek support from the legal aid fund set up by the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity.

24. **Ms. Tamboura Dofini** (Burkina Faso) said that, under new legislation, the National Human Rights Commission was to be restructured taking into account all the recommendations that had been made to ensure compliance with the Paris Principles. The process of appointing a more representative membership was nearly complete, and it was to be hoped that the new body would receive A status accreditation.

25. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that the Higher Council for Reconciliation and National Unity had started hearings, and it was hoped that closure could be achieved in the cases before it. However, it was important to bear in mind that the cases dated not only from 2014 and 2015 but from the 1960s onwards, and that they needed to be dealt with rigorously enough to ensure that the population could achieve reconciliation and thereby a lasting peace.

26. **Ms. Tamboura Dofini** (Burkina Faso) said that, since ratifying the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, Burkina Faso had adopted a plan of action for 2017 to 2020 in order to reduce statelessness. Activities under the plan included awareness-raising and information sessions for those working in the justice system and for the general public.

27. With regard to the reconciliation process, it was important to note that, since the adoption of the 2001 Act on the regulations governing the judiciary, the executive and the judiciary had been properly separated and that the cases in question were being dealt with in judicial proceedings.

28. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality was rolling out various programmes and projects to address the problem of insecurity in the north of the country and the Sahel region. Under the Emergency Programme for the Sahel, for example, measures were being taken to ensure that girls could go to school without fear and to empower women by involving them in revenue-generating activities. At the regional level, a strategy was being put in place by the women's ministries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (Sahel G-5) in order to give women a role in combating terrorism and radicalization. The five member States, including Burkina Faso, were currently conducting a needs analysis that would provide a basis for resource provision and sharing.

29. **Ms. Schulz** said that she welcomed the news of the restructuring of the National Human Rights Commission, but had been disappointed to hear that the Personal and Family Code and the Criminal Code had still not been adopted and indeed might be subject to further amendment, not necessarily for the better. The existing Personal and Family Code contained clearly discriminatory provisions, and the State party had informed the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in July 2016 that the new text would be before the National Assembly by the end of that year.

30. **Ms. Ameline** said that she would be interested to know what role the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality played in the implementation of the national plan of action to implement Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820

(2008). The various threats to national security required the mobilization of women and of civil society. Women's role in the decision-making processes in respect of peace, security and development needed to be seen as truly strategic, particularly in a country that was at a crossroads in its development and had chosen the path of democracy.

31. **Ms. Chalal** said that she would appreciate an explanation of the information given in the Government's written replies to the effect that the legal aid fund was not fully operational. She would also welcome some information on the systems in place for the reception and reintegration of returning refugees.

32. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that it was important to take the time needed to ensure that the Personal and Family Code and the Criminal Code were complete, rather than adopt texts that might later prove to be inadequate. The definition of discrimination in accordance with article 1 of the Convention was enshrined in the Constitution and the Personal and Family Code, in the Labour Code and in Act No. 061-2015/CNT on Prevention and Punishment in respect of Violence against Women and Girls and Reparation and Care for Victims.

33. **Ms. Tamboura Dofini** (Burkina Faso) said that the Higher Council of the Judiciary was empowered to investigate cases of corruption under legislation passed in 2015. Disciplinary and criminal proceedings were already under way in some cases. The legal aid fund established in 2009 had proved to have shortcomings and had been reviewed in 2016, after which it had become fully operational. Funds were also available to victims under Act No. 061-2015/CNT under certain conditions, notably where the woman could produce a certificate of indigence issued by the municipality or in the case of a widow with children. In addition, the court could order the perpetrator to pay the woman's court costs, but, under the new legislation, no costs could be recovered from any amount awarded to a victim.

34. **Mr. Sinka** (Burkina Faso) said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had established a permanent secretariat to help resettle returning nationals. In dealing with returnees the State worked closely with partners such as the International Organization for Migration.

35. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that, on 12 October 2017, it had been possible for the first time to close two refugee camps. The residents had been settled in host families or given plots of land to build houses with the help of various partners. Also for the first time, funding had been available from the day the programme had been launched, thanks to the engagement of partners for each component of the programme.

36. **Ms. Yameogo Sankara** (Burkina Faso) said that efforts were currently being made to finance a revision of the national plan of action to implement Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Components of the plan included conflict-prevention strategies, the involvement of women in peacebuilding processes and rehabilitation of women victims of conflict. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality had been working with civil society on presentations to encourage women to become involved in peacebuilding processes and representations had been made to the Army to increase women's participation in peacekeeping operations. The Ministry had reached out to women's faith-based organizations to encourage cooperation in conflict prevention and management and was also highly active in the Sahel G-5 regional projects.

37. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that, thanks to a funding pledge recently received from a financial and technical partner, it would now be possible, on the delegation's return to the country, to organize a workshop to review the national plan of action to implement Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

38. **Mr. Koudougou** (Burkina Faso) said that the statistics showed around 99,000 persons in situations of emergency and rehabilitation over the past five years. In 2016, 75 million CFA francs had been disbursed to provide survival kits, food, sanitation and resettlement assistance. In 2015, 84 women, representing 3 per cent of the total forces involved, had taken part in police and gendarmerie peacekeeping operations, a figure that had risen to 110 (4 per cent) in 2016. In all, the gendarmerie had had 269 women officers in 2016.

39. **Ms. Song Wenyan**, noting that numerous policies and national and ministerial bodies had been put in place in order to strengthen the State party's national machinery for

the advancement of women and address discrimination, said she would like to know more about how they were coordinated. She asked what major mechanisms were now in place and whether any of them had been restructured or reorganized. She enquired whether the 2 per cent of the national budget allocated to women's advancement and the promotion of gender equality went to the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality only or was shared with other mechanisms. She also wondered whether the budget allocated to the national machinery was sufficient to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities.

40. She would be interested to hear more about the relationship between the National Council for the Advancement of Women and other similar mechanisms. How was coordination among the various entities dealing with women's issues ensured? She also wished to know the extent to which the National Commission to Follow Up on the Commitments of Burkina Faso regarding the Advancement of Women had been effective. She wondered what had been the impact of the first action plan related to the National Gender Policy, covering the period 2011-2013, and what were the objectives of the recently adopted second action plan, covering the period 2017-2019.

41. **Ms. Chalal** said that, while the Committee welcomed the establishment of gender quotas for parties' candidate lists for municipal and legislative elections, mentioned in paragraph 37 of the report, such special measures should be repealed once their objective had been achieved. She asked whether the State party had established any temporary special measures in keeping with the recommendations made in the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 and whether any such measures had been extended to groups of disadvantaged women.

42. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that the secretariat of the National Council for the Advancement of Women was attached to the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity and the Family and reviewed programmes rolled out by the various ministries to ensure that gender issues were taken into account in all policies, programmes and projects. Furthermore, all ministries had interministerial units tasked with ensuring that the gender perspective was included where needed. While the budget of the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity and the Family for tackling gender issues was very small, the relevant staff of various ministries, as well as outside entities including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), had recently received training in gender budgeting, which was expected to lead to the allocation of greater amounts for gender issues.

43. Women's access to various basic services had improved; for example, free medical care was provided for pregnant women and for children under the age of 5. Girls' access to education was improving, and Burkina Faso was moving towards a zero-tolerance policy with regard to female genital mutilation. Her Government was working to improve the representation of women in decision-making positions and public and political life. The impact of the 30 per cent gender quota for candidate lists for municipal and legislative elections was being reviewed; her Government's ultimate aim was to achieve gender parity in representative bodies.

44. To support the economic and political empowerment of women, her Government had recently launched an online portal allowing women to register their areas of skill and expertise. It had also launched a programme to facilitate women's access to technology and related training and was working to encourage more women to enter male-dominated professions such as truck driving and certain types of factory work.

45. **Ms. Ameline** asked how the National Economic and Social Development Plan reflected the Sustainable Development Goals, what factors, in the delegation's view, speeded up development and whether Burkina Faso had a ministry or mechanism for the implementation of the Goals. She also asked whether administrative decentralization was expected to advance women's interests in the context of sustainable development.

46. **Mr. Koudougou** (Burkina Faso) said that the Plan dealt with the development of human capital, which included the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A sectoral plan was being drafted; the priority action plan in place for the time being was fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. His Government believed that, once women were economically empowered, other relevant Goals would be more easily achieved.

47. **Ms. Acar** said that the many measures to eliminate violence against women and girls had not been very successful. Female genital mutilation was still widely practised, as were forced and early marriage, sexual violence, including marital and other forms of rape, sexual harassment, social exclusion of those accused of witchcraft and the ostracism of unmarried pregnant girls. Family violence was also prevalent. As all those behaviours stemmed from gender inequality, they needed to be tackled through a comprehensive strategy that included awareness-raising, legal reform, training of professionals in the relevant fields and the overall empowerment of women. That in turn required political will. She asked whether the Government was committed to implementing the existing plans, strategies and measures in a systematic and dedicated manner. The Committee was under the impression that they were in fact implemented sporadically and inconsistently.

48. The Committee would appreciate more data on the incidence of various forms of violence against women. The fact that different forms were covered by different laws was a cause for concern, since judicial workers might be less familiar with the laws than with the Criminal Code. She asked why marital rape was so narrowly defined in the State party's legislation and whether there were plans to harmonize the different legal definitions of various forms of violence under the law. Furthermore, enforcement of the various prohibitions against such violence remained inconsistent. Did the State party intend to further train members of the judiciary to ensure consistent implementation of the law?

49. While the minimum legal age for marriage had been raised to 18, the threshold seemed to apply only to civil marriages, whereas most marriages in the country still took place under traditional law. Were there plans to remedy the situation? She asked what was the time frame for fully implementing Act No. 061-2015/CNT. She also wished to know what types of services were offered to victims of violence, how many shelters were available to them, where the shelters were located, how they were funded and who operated them, how many women had sought refuge in them, whether the helpline for victims ran round the clock and whether those staffing it were appropriately trained.

50. **Ms. Gabr** said that the Committee had in its concluding observations on the State party's sixth periodic report (CEDAW/C/BFA/CO/6) requested that the State party should include in its next report information on the results of the study on human trafficking carried out by the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity. She wished to know the status of the study, as its findings would form the basis of any plan of action. It would be helpful to hear more about the coordination mechanism for the action plan, including its terms of reference, the human and financial resources available to it and its effectiveness to date. She wondered if the State party received technical or financial support from international organizations, or benefited from cooperation with regional entities such as the African Union, to further its efforts to combat trafficking. Additional information on the forthcoming guide for judicial workers dealing with victims of trafficking as well as on shelters for victims, on the process for identifying victims and on cooperation with NGOs would be welcome.

51. She asked what penalties were in place for the recruitment of children for forced labour, including begging. She wished to know more about the helpline for victims of such practices. She wondered what was being done to reduce the demand for prostitutes' services, and how prostitutes were assisted with rehabilitation and reintegration. She asked whether efforts were made to increase public awareness of the danger of exploitation of migrant domestic workers in countries such as Libya and Qatar.

52. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said her Government was aware that much remained to be done to protect and promote women's rights. It was committed to continuing its efforts in that regard. Her country had 13 shelters for women, most of which were spread across the provinces. As at December 2016, the shelters had housed a total of 913 women.

53. **Ms. Tamboura Dofini** (Burkina Faso) said that the Criminal Code was being reviewed with the aim of harmonizing definitions of various crimes, including rape, found in the Code and in other legislation. Legislation on the prevention and punishment of violence against women and girls would be taken into consideration in that review. Her Government was working to raise awareness of the issues associated with traditional

marriages. Act No. 029-2008/AN on Combating Human Trafficking and Related Practices prohibited the predatory activities of some marabouts in that regard. While prostitution, per se, was not a crime, pimping and soliciting on the streets were, as was child prostitution.

54. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity and the Family provided assistance to couples wishing to enter into a civil marriage, including by subsidizing the cost of obtaining the necessary documents.

55. **Ms. Yameogo Sankara** (Burkina Faso) said that a decree implementing Act No. 061-2015/CNT was being drafted. In the meantime, her Government, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, had in 2016 provided training for judges and magistrates on handling cases involving violence against women and girls and on the invocation of the Convention and its Optional Protocol before the courts. The centre for victims of gender-based violence provided health services and financial and legal assistance and housing. Focal points in the country's 13 regions assisted with the identification of victims.

56. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that a number of shelters and training centres had been established to provide assistance, in the form of food, clothing, health care and vocational training, to street children. Toll-free hotlines had also been set up to receive complaints of female genital mutilation and violence against women.

57. **Mr. Sinka** (Burkina Faso) said that diplomats received training at a higher institute for international studies, which provided instruction on a variety of subjects, such as peacekeeping. It also held workshops that were also attended by members of the security forces in order to facilitate greater information sharing on issues relating to international humanitarian law.

58. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that considerable information and awareness-raising efforts had been undertaken with a view to changing certain behaviours and tackling issues such as human trafficking. Other measures to combat trafficking in persons included the use of patrols, conducted alongside the security forces, in order to intercept vehicles transporting suspected victims of human trafficking.

59. **Ms. Gabr** said that human trafficking was a serious issue in Burkina Faso. She wondered whether a plan of action had been formulated or was envisaged not only to combat trafficking in persons but also to provide support and assistance to victims. Given that bilateral and multilateral cooperation and financial aid were crucial in the fight against human trafficking, she would like to know whether diplomats received specific training on the subject. Lastly, she asked what types of cases of human trafficking had been identified through the special hotlines and how many marabouts involved in the trafficking or exploitation of street children had been prosecuted and punished.

60. **Ms. Acar** said that she wished to know whether the country's emergency shelters were for women victims of violence only or whether they also housed victims of trafficking and prostitution. In a similar vein, she wondered whether the toll-free hotlines dealt with reports of offences such as human trafficking as well as violence against women. She was concerned to hear that the Criminal Code, which was in the process of being reviewed, was to be harmonized with Act No. 061-2015/CNT, which contained a very narrow definition of marital rape. She wondered, therefore, whether there was a time line for amending article 14 (2) of that Act to ensure that marital rape was criminalized.

61. **Ms. Chalal** asked what measures were in place or envisaged to help women engaged in prostitution to find alternative livelihoods.

62. **Ms. Schulz** said that women who turned to prostitution were often the victims of stigmatization and abuse, including from law enforcement officials. In that light, she wondered what recourse they had against clients or police who abused them.

63. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that dedicated 24-hour hotlines had been set up to enable the reporting of offences such as female genital mutilation, violence against women and child trafficking and facilitate the collection of related statistical data. The Ministry of Women, Social Action and National Solidarity carried out awareness-raising and information activities for women engaged in prostitution and provided access to

financial assistance and training opportunities for women wishing to find alternative sources of employment.

64. **Ms. Tamboura Dofini** (Burkina Faso) said it was true that Act No. 061-2015/CNT contained a narrow definition of marital rape. It was, however, due to be reviewed. Moreover, the revision of the Criminal Code provided a timely opportunity to ensure that the legislation was in line with the country's international commitments. It was thus possible that, in the course of amending the Criminal Code, a more comprehensive definition of marital rape than the one contained in the Act would be formulated. Under Act No. 029-2008/AN, mechanisms had been put in place to ensure that women victims of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and prostitution were able to gain access to justice.

65. **Ms. Yameogo Sankara** (Burkina Faso) said that the situation of women in prostitution was taken into account by the Ministry of Women, Social Action and National Solidarity. While women prostitutes often faced discrimination, all persons had equal access to the courts without any discrimination, including women victims of violence. The National Commission to Follow up on the Commitments of Burkina Faso regarding the Advancement of Women was an intersectoral body made up of representatives of ministries, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

66. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that statistical data on cases of female genital mutilation, violence against women and human trafficking would be provided to the Committee in writing.

67. **Mr. Sinka** (Burkina Faso) said that diplomats were increasingly aware of the problem of transnational crime, including human trafficking and, in particular, trafficking in children. Training was provided on the issue and symposiums were held on the subject, most recently in 2006.

68. **Ms. Gabr** said that national plans of action to combat trafficking in persons should focus on all at-risk groups, not just children. It should include, for example, women in prostitution and women migrant domestic workers, since the latter were often subjected to sexual exploitation abroad. Moreover, it should also contain measures to raise awareness and improve implementation of related legislation and ensure that adequate training on the issue was provided to law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges, among others.

69. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that the country had both comprehensive and individual plans of action to combat trafficking, taking into account all vulnerable groups of society. Moreover, various departments of the Ministry of Women, Social Action and National Solidarity had their own action plans covering specific issues within their areas of competence. For example, the Directorate General for Gender Promotion had plans of action relating to women, including women victims of trafficking and prostitution, at home and abroad, while the General Directorate for the Protection of Children had action plans covering street children and child victims of trafficking. Awareness-raising efforts were also carried out to inform vulnerable groups of the risks of human trafficking. Training on dealing with women and children victims of trafficking was also provided to the security forces.

#### *Articles 7 to 9*

70. **Ms. Narain** said that legislation adopted in 2009, which established a minimum gender quota of 30 per cent on candidate lists for legislative and municipal elections, had not had the hoped-for results in the 2015 elections. However, the Committee had received reports that no action had been taken by the relevant authorities to punish breaches of that law. She wished to know whether that was indeed the case and, if so, why. Noting that there were plans to amend the Electoral Code and review the law establishing gender quotas, she wondered what new measures were envisaged, what timeline had been established for the amendment of those laws, whether there were plans to increase the quota threshold from 30 per cent to 50 per cent and to what extent civil society had been consulted on the proposed amendments. She would welcome information on any specific non-legislative initiatives implemented by the Government to eliminate prejudices against women in the political sphere, educate the electorate and provide training for women wishing to stand as

candidates for elected office. She invited the delegation to comment on reports that, during the recent elections, women candidates had been subjected to threats that had caused them to withdraw their candidacy.

71. Just 7 of the State party's 32 ambassadors were women. She asked how many of those women were career diplomats and how many had been appointed as ambassadors. She also wished to know how many women had been recruited by the diplomatic service in the previous year and what measures the Government was taking to increase the number of women working in intergovernmental organizations.

72. **Ms. Schulz** said that, despite major efforts by the State party to improve the system of birth registration, more than 20 per cent of children were still not registered at birth, especially in rural areas, potentially depriving them of access to public services. Moreover, there were many adults in the State party who had never been registered. She wondered whether the Government intended to make use of innovative technologies to simplify the birth registrations and when the State party expected to achieve universal birth registration across the country.

73. **Ms. Zongo Hien** (Burkina Faso) said that breaches of the electoral law had been subject to penalties. For example, candidate lists that were not in compliance with the requisite gender quotas had been withdrawn pending their reformulation during the previous elections. As a candidate herself during those elections, she had not heard any reports of threats being made to other women standing for election. If such threats had been made, however, action would be taken.

74. **Mr. Koudougou** (Burkina Faso) said that the numbers of women in elected and appointed posts had risen steadily since 1994, demonstrating that efforts to enable women to participate in public and political life were having the desired effect. Regarding non-legislative measures to increase women's participation, a comprehensive programme had been devised to increase women's economic, political and social empowerment. One of its objectives was to ensure that women occupied at least 30 per cent of decision-making posts in the political sphere by 2020, with the ultimate goal being to achieve gender parity. As far as the amendment to the law on gender quotas was concerned, it was currently awaiting approval by the Council of Ministers before a final decision could be taken by the parliament.

75. **Mr. Nignan** (Burkina Faso) added that political parties that failed to meet the required gender quotas on their candidate lists had also lost 50 per cent of their government funding.

76. **Mr. Sinka** (Burkina Faso) said that, of the seven women ambassadors referred to earlier, five were career diplomats. Ministry of Foreign Affairs recruitment processes took account of gender parity from the outset and women were encouraged to pursue careers in diplomacy. Moreover, women from Burkina Faso occupied executive posts in international and regional organizations, such as the African Union.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*