



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
**Ninety-second session**

**Summary record of the 2186th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 6 February 2026, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Haidar

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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** *(continued)*

*Seventh periodic report of the Kingdom of the Netherlands* ([CEDAW/C/NLD/7](#); [CEDAW/C/NLD/QPR/7](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the meeting, explained that some members of the delegation would be participating via video link.
3. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Kingdom consisted of four autonomous countries of equal status: Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and the Netherlands. The three Caribbean islands of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba – collectively known as the Caribbean Netherlands – had the status of special municipalities of the Netherlands. Each country within the Kingdom was individually responsible for implementing the Convention.
4. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands had a long-standing commitment to gender equality and non-discrimination. However, persistent inequalities, intersecting forms of discrimination and emerging challenges required continuous reflection and policy development. The current dialogue came at an opportune moment, following recent elections, and the Committee's recommendations would make an important contribution to the policies of the new Government.
5. In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science coordinated national policies on gender equality and worked closely with other ministries to foster gender mainstreaming across policy areas. Gender mainstreaming had been enhanced by the introduction in 2023 of gender assessment as a mandatory component of the Policy Compass – a methodology and toolset that policymakers used when preparing, revising, evaluating or explaining public policies and regulatory proposals.
6. At the heart of all national gender equality policies lay the Government's emancipation policy plan, whose latest version, entitled "Safe Participation", had been published in June 2025 and focused on women's economic independence, labour market participation, equal access to education, social inclusion and freedom from gender-based violence. To achieve its gender equality goals, the Government had established strategic partnerships with a range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which it supported through subsidy schemes and multi-year funding.
7. In recent years, the Netherlands had made significant progress in advancing gender equality. Women's labour market participation was high, with a 69% employment rate in 2024. However, many women continued to shoulder a disproportionate share of the care burden, leading them to work fewer hours and earn less than men. To ensure that more women could participate fully in the workforce, parental leave compensation had been raised to 70% of the daily wage. The Government hoped to make childcare almost free for working parents by 2029.
8. Recent measures to boost the number of women in leadership roles were starting to bear fruit. In 2022, the Government had introduced statutory diversity quotas of 33% for both women and men on the supervisory boards of listed companies. As a result, the percentage of female board members of listed private companies had risen to 40% and the percentage of women in leadership roles in the semi-public and public sectors to 41%.
9. Gender segregation in the labour market posed a persistent challenge. Women's and girls' underrepresentation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics meant that they were missing out on promising career opportunities. The Government was therefore funding the "Becoming Who You Are" alliance to overcome gender stereotypes in education.

10. More work was needed to increase women's representation in politics, as they accounted for less than half of lawmakers, members of the Government, mayors and municipal councillors. The Government worked with initiatives such as the Política Alliance to encourage and support women in politics, providing them with training, networking opportunities and the tools to succeed, while also working to prevent harassment, hate speech and online violence against them.

11. Legislative measures to tackle sexual and gender-based violence included the Sexual Offences Act, which had come into effect in 2024, making sexual harassment (online and offline) a punishable offence and establishing a consent-based definition of rape. A national action programme on sexually transgressive behaviour and sexual violence would run until the end of 2026. In June 2024, the Government had launched the "Stop Femicide!" action plan with a view to preventing femicide and other serious forms of violence against women and girls. The plan provided for improved early detection of violence by the police, the justice system and the "Safe at Home" network, and earlier intervention in domestic violence cases. On 18 December 2025, the Government had announced its decision to appoint a national coordinator on violence against women and domestic violence.

12. As good health was a prerequisite for women and girls to thrive, the Government had taken several steps to support women's healthcare. One significant action had been the launch of the National Strategy for Women's Health for the period 2025–2030, led by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

13. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of Aruba wished to apologize for the absence of information on Aruba in the periodic report. Aruba fully recognized the importance of the Convention and remained firmly committed to its full and effective implementation. Sustained efforts had been made to strengthen treaty ratification and legislation, which were the foundations of women's rights. In 2023, the Council of Ministers had designated the Department of Social Affairs as the lead authority for ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention); however, before ratification could take place, compliance must be ensured not only with the instrument itself, but also with the implementation framework of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In 2025, the Government and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had conducted a legal gap analysis, while the No Mas No More regional group had taken action on domestic violence, including measures in relation to protection and shelters.

14. On 1 April 2024, the new Code of Criminal Procedure had entered into force; title III was fully dedicated to victims' rights, including the right to be heard, the right to timely and understandable information and the right to support and shelter. The Public Prosecutor's Office had issued guidelines for the police, identifying victim-centred treatment as a priority. The Bureau of Women's Affairs and the NGO Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional provided training modules on domestic violence as part of police education programmes. In terms of prevention, conferences on women's rights were organized annually with the participation of government institutions, NGOs and academic partners. The United Nations "Orange the World" campaign had become a permanent fixture on the national agenda, reinforcing the commitment of Aruba to prevention and awareness.

15. Progress for older women included the establishment of the Department of Elderly Affairs, which would ensure an integrated and centralized approach to policy development, well-being and formal eldercare and would give a stronger voice and dedicated representation to the island's 12,000 women over the age of 65 years.

16. Aruba continued to strengthen its commitment to equal opportunities and women's participation in national development. The Government was expanding access and opportunities for female entrepreneurs, including through participation in international initiatives. National labour and social programmes supported women's employment and entrepreneurship and were complemented by skills training and capacity-building initiatives such as the "She Means Business" workshops.

17. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**, said that, since the previous review, Curaçao had taken concrete steps to further embed the provisions of the Convention in its legislation and policies. The Government recognized that achieving full gender equality

required a sustained and collective effort, especially in a small island context. In Curaçao, gender equality was not an isolated policy objective but was closely linked to poverty reduction, education, health, economic participation and the prevention of violence. The Government continued to invest in cross-sectoral cooperation in the full knowledge that complex social challenges required integrated and coordinated responses.

18. To prevent and respond to gender-based violence, the Government had introduced the *Kódigo di Protekshon* (Protection Code) and a national plan to combat violence against children and youth and relational violence. Ratification of the Istanbul Convention was at an advanced stage. Various initiatives had been developed under the Convention on the Rights of the Child to support parents in promoting gender-equal roles within the family. Curaçao actively participated in the No Mas No More initiative.

19. The persistence of gender stereotypes and structural inequalities, combined with limited resources, small-scale systems and social vulnerabilities, required the Government to adopt an innovative, strategic and collaborative approach and to further strengthen gender-responsive policymaking and policy implementation. International cooperation and knowledge exchange were of great importance for Curaçao.

20. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of Sint Maarten considered gender equality to be a central pillar of sustainable development. Since 2016, it had strived to address gender-based violence, discrimination and exploitation. In June 2025, it had hosted the fifth No Mas No More Conference, bringing together the islands of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom to strengthen joint action against domestic violence and child abuse. The Conference had paved the way for Kingdom-wide ratification of the Istanbul Convention by 2028 through the preparation of island-specific action plans.

21. Progress was also visible in the handling of gender-based violence cases. Police officers had been trained to enhance their understanding of gender-based violence dynamics, and better cooperation between the police, the Public Prosecution Service, victim support services and civil society had strengthened multidisciplinary responses. The capacity of victim support services had been expanded, with a parental mediator offering specialized assistance to victims who shared custody with abusive partners. Trauma-informed practices had been strengthened, and public outreach through radio programmes, community discussions and educational screenings had raised awareness and improved the quality of referrals.

22. In addition, advances had been made in the fight against human trafficking. Although detection numbers remained small, awareness had increased. The establishment of the National Reporting Centre marked an important institutional step. Another achievement had been the development, with support from UNICEF and the Augeo Foundation, of the country's first Child Safety Code as a national framework for early detection, mandatory reporting and coordinated protection of children.

23. Since 2010, Sint Maarten had twice been led by female prime ministers, and women continued to hold key roles in Parliament and the Council of Ministers. The re-establishment within Parliament of a women's caucus and participation in regional and international forums reflected the Government's commitment to expanding women's leadership.

24. Despite such achievements, challenges remained. For example, underreporting, capacity constraints and inconsistent justice outcomes affected gender-based violence responses. While women's earnings had risen from roughly two thirds of men's in the 1990s to more than four fifths by 2022, a gender pay gap persisted. The Government aimed to strengthen survivor-centred approaches, improve justice-sector coordination and address the structural barriers that sustained gender disparities.

25. **A representative of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights** said that violence against women was high on the public agenda. In the previous three years, the Government had stepped up efforts to prevent and combat sexual violence and sexually transgressive behaviour, including by appointing a government commissioner and adopting a national action programme. Nevertheless, much remained to be done to tackle all forms of violence against women and to protect and support victims.

26. Although the Government acknowledged the persistence of gender inequality, it was not taking all necessary steps to address the problem, partly because the Convention, 35 years after its ratification, was not well known to many lawmakers, government officials or the general public.

27. In the labour market, firm measures were needed to address persistent problems such as pregnancy discrimination and the wage gap. Furthermore, the number of women in elected office must be increased by taking steps to eliminate obstacles to women's political participation.

28. The situation of women in the Caribbean Netherlands called for particular attention. They faced discrimination in the field of work and in access to benefits, among other issues. The Equal Treatment Act had entered into force for Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba, with the result that the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights was now competent to handle allegations of sexual discrimination in various fields, including the labour market, on those islands.

#### *Articles 1–6*

29. **Ms. Hacker** said that the State Party had made commendable progress in several areas, including women's representation in parliament and the adoption of the Sexual Offences Act. However, she was concerned to note that, in the rankings established in the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report, the Netherlands had dropped to forty-third. Other concerns related to the scarcity of gender-disaggregated data for the Caribbean territories; the gendered labour division within families, which had severe economic consequences for women; gender-based violence and insufficiently effective policies to address it; and the lack of an intersectional policy lens to address multidimensional discrimination.

30. Civil society organizations had voiced concern that the current emancipation policy plan, "Safe Participation", was less closely aligned with the Convention than the 2022–2025 iteration, "Emancipation: A Mission for All", and less well funded. She therefore wondered whether the State Party might reaffirm its strong commitment to the Convention through, for example, an overarching multi-year action plan.

31. She would like to hear how the State Party planned to enhance the direct applicability of the Convention and, given that there was no judicial review of laws to assess their compatibility with constitutional provisions, what prevented the parliament from enacting discriminatory laws. It would be interesting to learn whether the competence of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights to address gender-based discrimination in the private sector might be extended to include discrimination by government bodies.

32. She wished to know how the State Party addressed the disparities in Convention implementation in its Caribbean territories and what steps it was taking to raise awareness of the Convention and the Optional Protocol. She wondered what lessons the State Party had learned from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, what its long-term impact on women had been and how the State Party planned to ensure gender-responsiveness in future crises. It would be useful to know how the State Party applied an intersectional lens in all actions aimed at securing women's and girls' rights to equality.

33. Lastly, she was curious to learn about the impact of legal aid reform on access to justice, especially for women who had experienced gender-based discrimination and women from disadvantaged groups. How did the State Party reconcile its obligation to ensure effective access to justice with the fact that, for some women, legal aid was subject to an income-related co-payment?

34. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of Aruba had taken several policy measures to ensure effective access to justice. Free legal assistance was available to victims of domestic violence, and the Office of the Ombudsman and civil society organizations provided support for victims.

35. During the pandemic, international organizations had provided assistance to immigrant women in Aruba. One lesson learned related to the value of cooperation, as had been provided to Aruba by the Government of the Netherlands.

36. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, although the fulfilment of Convention obligations remained a high priority, the Government of the Netherlands did not have unlimited capacity, especially as budget cuts had led to a 24% reduction in the number of civil servants working on gender equality. Nevertheless, the Government would do everything within its means to advance the rights and opportunities of all women and girls in the Netherlands. The Government recognized that the Convention was an important building block in the national gender equality architecture.

37. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that women had been on the front lines and had faced the negative consequences of the pandemic. In the Netherlands, gender equality had been integrated into the national recovery and resilience plan, which contained various recovery measures.

38. The Policy Compass was a method of inclusive and responsive policymaking that envisaged mandatory gender assessments for the development of new policies and the evaluation of existing ones. All government departments and agencies were required to test whether their policies might have unintended consequences for different groups of people, taking into account the differences between them.

39. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that efforts to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in the Caribbean Netherlands included the publication of a policy plan on gender equality. In December 2025, national and local authorities had signed an administrative agreement establishing a multi-year framework for preventing and combating violence against women, domestic violence and child abuse. The Foundation for Legal Aid and Equal Treatment had been established in the Caribbean Netherlands in October 2025. It provided free information, advice and assistance in cases of discrimination, thereby enhancing access to justice for women who experienced discrimination. Gender impact assessments undertaken within the framework of the Policy Compass were required to take into account the views of women and minority groups. The Government had enhanced cooperation with women's rights organizations and representatives of different communities, including by improving information and support for them to apply for grants and assistance.

40. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, under the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, provisions of international law that were binding on all persons might have direct effect in the national legal order and be invoked directly before the domestic courts. In principle, the Convention was formulated as instructions to the State and therefore was not directly invocable; however, provisions that were sufficiently clear to function in the national legal order had direct effect and could be relied on before the domestic courts. Ultimately, the domestic courts decided whether provisions had direct effect.

41. People with limited financial resources – among whom women were overrepresented – could qualify for State-funded legal assistance under the Legal Aid Act. From 2026, the Government of the Netherlands would allocate an additional €30 million per year for legal assistance providers. The points system used for the payment of legal aid lawyers would be adjusted, leading to increased rates. In view of reports that people with a certain income level faced difficulties in hiring a lawyer but were ineligible for subsidized legal assistance, Statistics Netherlands and the Legal Aid Board were conducting research into access to legal aid for lower middle-income earners. The Government expected to take action once the study was completed. Several Dutch cities had legal clinics specifically for women (*vrouwenrechtswinkels*) that dispensed free legal advice. Online self-help, information and support were also available.

42. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, in Curaçao, progress in implementing the Convention was monitored through periodic reporting, interministerial consultations, programme evaluations and data collection by implementing agencies. Curaçao was investing in improving its data system with a view to strengthening evidence-based policymaking. The Government continuously reviewed and updated its legal framework to align it with international human rights obligations, including the Convention. Key areas of reform included criminal law provisions on domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking, victim protection measures and procedural safeguards within the justice system. Prosecutorial instructions and policy guidelines had also been updated. Information

on the response of the Government of Curaçao to the COVID-19 pandemic was set out in paragraphs 117–123 of the periodic report ([CEDAW/C/NLD/7](#)).

43. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government was working to amend the Equal Treatment Act to allow the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights to receive complaints of discrimination by government bodies.

44. **Mr. Safarov** said that he would be grateful for information on the follow-up given to the Committee's views, adopted in February 2025, on communication No. 162/2020, *S.V. v. Kingdom of the Netherlands* ([CEDAW/C/90/D/162/2020](#)). The case pertained to the levying of a fee for a woman to revert to her birth surname after divorce.

45. **Ms. Schläppi** said she would be interested to know why the results of gender impact assessments of draft legislation were not published; what was being done to raise awareness of the Policy Compass and to build gender expertise among ministries; and whether the Government planned to introduce gender budgeting. She wondered what steps were being taken to ensure gender mainstreaming and conduct gender impact assessments in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. In addition, she would like to know how the State Party intended to improve data collection and analysis in all parts of the Kingdom, including for groups of women that faced intersecting forms of discrimination.

46. It was unclear why the State Party had recently ended its commitment to a feminist foreign policy and what the impact of that decision might be. She would be interested to know why the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had reduced the budget of its gender equality programmes and whether the funding level would be maintained for women and peace and security activities. She would like to know how the State Party applied the gender perspective in all peace and security decision-making processes, including the licensing of arms exports.

47. The Committee had been informed that changes to funding policies might limit the ability of women's organizations to hold the Government to account. She therefore wished to know how the State Party would ensure that public funding strengthened advocacy by diverse women's organizations, including smaller organizations that represented specific groups of women. In the light of reports of an increasingly hostile and unsafe environment for women human rights defenders, she wondered what measures would be taken to safeguard feminist activism and to protect women human rights defenders.

48. She would be interested to know how listed companies reported on their implementation of the gender quota for their supervisory boards and what sanctions could be imposed on them for non-compliance. It would also be useful to know whether the State Party planned to introduce temporary special measures in other areas of de facto inequality and whether there were any obstacles to so doing.

49. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, in Aruba, the Bureau of Women's Affairs was mandated to advise the Government, coordinate gender equality initiatives and engage with national and international stakeholders. The national gender policy reflected a commitment to gender equality across sectors; however, the timelines and budget for its implementation remained under development, as did a formal gender mainstreaming mechanism.

50. No binding statutory quotas were in place in Aruba, but policy initiatives had been launched to promote women's participation in leadership and decision-making. Progress had been made in terms of women's increased representation in managerial positions, high female participation in government-supported entrepreneurship programmes and ongoing data collection to better assess women's participation in leadership and the labour market. Consideration was being given to the use of targeted measures to address persistent underrepresentation in specific sectors.

51. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of Aruba recognized gaps in the collection of gender-disaggregated data and was taking steps to strengthen the statistical system and improve data collection by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

52. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the right to equal treatment was taken into account during policymaking and legislative processes. For

example, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations had recently updated its Guide on Constitutional Review to ensure compliance with the right to equal treatment, while the Ministry of Justice and Security took account of the prohibition on discrimination when conducting reviews of draft legislation.

53. In the case of *S.V. v. Kingdom of the Netherlands*, the Government and the author had recently reached an initial agreement on a final settlement offer. Once the terms of the agreement had been finalized, the Government would inform the Committee of the outcome. Furthermore, on 23 January 2026, the Government had published a proposal for a simplified procedure for adults to legally change their surname and country of nationality. If that proposal became law, women would be able to revert to their birth name after divorce without having to pay high fees.

54. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands actively promoted the use of the Policy Compass, clarified the way in which it should be applied and provided training and capacity-building to different ministries. Studies on gender mainstreaming had been conducted in 2024 and 2025.

55. Every two years, Statistics Netherlands published a gender equality report, *Emancipatiemonitor*, which contained disaggregated and gender-specific data on aspects such as demographics, health, education and labour participation. Efforts were being made to enhance reporting on different groups of women. For example, the 2024 edition had included data disaggregated by urban and rural areas; the 2026 edition would include gender-specific data on the Caribbean Netherlands.

56. The Government regularly cooperated with focus groups that included representatives of specific groups of women. In addition to consulting such groups on particular issues, it hoped to increase their involvement in broader policymaking processes related to gender equality so as to better reflect the diversity of women in Dutch society.

57. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, owing in part to budgetary and staffing constraints, the Government had decided to discontinue action under the banner of “feminist foreign policy”. While no longer framed as a stand-alone priority, the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality was addressed in an integrated and structural manner across all programmes. Consequently, the systematic integration of a gender perspective had assumed increased importance. Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were required to apply a gender perspective in the development of new policies and initiatives and to use the Gender Equality Policy Marker created by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in the management of official development assistance funds.

58. Although budgets specifically earmarked for women’s rights and gender equality had been reduced, substantial resources remained available. Under a new policy framework for cooperation with civil society, approximately €210 million would be allocated to women’s rights organizations over five years, supporting women’s entrepreneurship, women human rights defenders, the women and peace and security agenda and efforts to combat violence against women, while €20 million had been set aside for women’s rights and gender equality in both 2026 and 2027. The State would continue to provide core funding to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) through 2027.

59. The State incorporated considerations relating to gender-based violence into its arms export control policy as part of human rights risk assessments conducted under the European Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP on exports of military technology and equipment. According to new criteria included in that framework following its review in 2025, export licences were to be denied when there was a clear risk that the equipment or technology concerned might be used to commit or facilitate gender-based violence or violence against children. In assessing licence applications, the authorities examined documented patterns of gender-based violence, the conduct and accountability of security forces and the likelihood that the exported equipment could facilitate or exacerbate such violence.

60. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, under the legislation on gender balance at the top of large companies, listed companies that had not reached the

required gender quota were required, when filling a vacancy on their boards, to appoint a candidate of the underrepresented gender. In the Netherlands, all large companies were required to report on the gender balance of their staff to the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands, which published an annual scorecard reflecting the results. In the previous reporting cycle, around 1,000 companies had failed to submit the required information; efforts had subsequently been made to contact those companies and ascertain the reasons for non-compliance. A comprehensive midterm evaluation of the legislation was scheduled for 2027. The authorities intended to use the review to identify remaining obstacles and determine whether additional temporary measures were required to accelerate progress. Although improvements had been observed, the pace of change remained slower than anticipated.

61. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, in Curaçao, the authorities were strengthening data systems and cooperating with international partners to improve the availability and use of data for policymaking and reporting, while efforts were under way to enhance the use of gender-disaggregated indicators. Although no stand-alone gender equality act was in place, gender equality was pursued through an integrated approach embedded in national strategies, interministerial coordination mechanisms and action plans in key policy areas. Budget allocations for gender-related issues were made through sectoral budgets rather than a dedicated gender budget line. Progress was monitored through periodic reporting, interministerial consultations, programme evaluations and data collection by implementing agencies.

62. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands was taking a range of measures to enhance the resilience of organizations engaged in the promotion of the rights of women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer persons, including the development of guidance on addressing misinformation and safety concerns. An initiative entitled “Ready for a New Reality” had been launched in response to the rise of movements opposing gender equality, and concrete steps were being taken to support organizations in their advocacy activities, including a subsidy scheme to fund measures to strengthen resilience to intimidation.

63. **Ms. Rana** said that she would welcome information on the impact of initiatives taken to tackle gender stereotypes in education and the labour market, including through the “A Working Future” alliance and the “Becoming Who You Are” alliance. She wondered whether the lessons learned through those initiatives were being incorporated into a comprehensive national strategy to eliminate such stereotypes. She would like to know more about the measures in place to combat gender-based hate speech in the media, online harassment of women politicians, and discrimination and hate speech against Muslim, migrant, asylum-seeking and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.

64. She would welcome information on the impact of the Harmful Practices Action Agenda, measures to remove barriers to the reporting of such practices, particularly within closed communities, and any plans to establish a central coordination mechanism to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women. She would appreciate further details of the action plan to be developed by the future national coordinator on violence against women and domestic violence and of the measures being taken to strengthen protections against domestic violence and femicide and ensure survivors’ access to appropriate services throughout the territory.

65. She wished to know whether the implementation of the Sexual Offences Act had resulted in increased reporting of sexual offences, whether adequate resources for combating such offences were allocated across law enforcement and support services and whether measurable improvements had been achieved in State intervention in domestic violence cases in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. She wondered how the State Party monitored the enforcement of domestic exclusion orders and what measures were in place to increase the capacity of women’s shelters nationwide and guarantee access to such shelters for all women survivors of violence, regardless of documentation or residence status.

66. **Ms. Hacker** said that she wished to know what specialized services were provided to victims of trafficking in persons, irrespective of their willingness to cooperate in criminal proceedings, and what evaluations had been undertaken to determine why legislative reforms

to combat sex trafficking had not resulted in more investigations, prosecutions and convictions. It would be useful to learn what special measures were in place to address trafficking of girls aged under 18, what steps were being taken to combat trafficking outside the sex industry, particularly in the care and domestic work sectors, and whether consideration was being given to assigning anti-trafficking responsibilities to authorities other than the immigration police. She wished to know how many prosecutions there had been of buyers of sexual services who knew or should have known that the person providing the service was a victim of trafficking. In addition, she wished to know what measures were being taken to prevent trafficking in persons in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, in particular in Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba.

67. She would welcome official data on the number of women engaged in prostitution, disaggregated by age and citizenship status, and on the proportion of those women who had accessed support services. She wondered whether the State Party intended to review its position on the decriminalization of pimping and whether it was true that women in prostitution were taxed 20% of their income without entitlement to public pension benefits, sick leave, holiday pay or unemployment benefits. Clarification of the law on payment for sex with persons aged under 18 would be welcome. She would appreciate an update on the parliamentary inquiry into whether the isolation and exploitation of married migrant women by their spouses or relatives constituted a form of trafficking in persons. Lastly, she would welcome the delegation's comments on reports that restrictive local policies had significantly reduced the number of licensed workplaces for sex workers and effectively prohibited home-based sex work, thus increasing dependency on brothel operators, driving independent workers into irregular sectors and limiting access to protection, healthcare and social services.

68. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, in Aruba, trafficking in persons, including trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation, was criminalized. A specialized police unit investigated cases of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants and a national action plan on the issue had been in place since 2018, supported by a task force comprising various stakeholders. Under local programmes such as the "Alternativa" programme, support was provided to women seeking to exit prostitution and possible indicators of trafficking were identified.

69. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, while the Netherlands was widely regarded as having relatively progressive attitudes, there remained stereotypes and negative perceptions affecting the realization of substantive gender equality. The Government actively addressed harmful gender stereotypes through educational interventions and national campaigns aimed at transforming role expectations and promoting equal parenting.

70. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Dutch Media Authority monitored the representation of women in non-fiction television programmes. Monitoring from 2023 indicated that women were more frequently shown in non-expert roles, underscoring the persistence of harmful gender stereotypes in the media. Alongside implementing the Dutch Media Act, the Government promoted professional codes, including the Code of Conduct for the Journalism Industry, which required journalists and public broadcasters to take due account of the particular vulnerability of specific groups, such as women. Violations could be reported to the relevant council for review.

71. The "Resilient Governance" programme was being carried out to strengthen the protection of local and regional politicians through home safety checks, advice on physical and digital security and support services for those facing aggression, intimidation and threats. The programme had reached approximately 170 municipal councils and provincial assemblies. A 2024 evaluation by the Netherlands School of Public Administration had found that office holders felt adequately supported by the preventive measures and support services provided. The programme was expected to continue in the coming years.

72. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands worked with ethnic minorities and refugee communities to promote gender equality and counter discrimination against women within those groups. The Politica Alliance supported a broader approach to challenging stereotypes by aiming to increase the representation of women from diverse backgrounds in political life. The Government

recognized that tackling discrimination against Muslims required urgent and determined action. It was taking significant measures to that end, including to combat the complex and intersectional discrimination experienced by Muslim, migrant and asylum-seeking women. A high-level administrative consultation on discrimination against Muslims was held every six months, coordinated by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

73. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Harmful Practices Action Agenda had concluded in 2020. Its approach had since been integrated into the broader framework for combating domestic violence. Measuring the impact of such efforts remained challenging owing to significant underreporting of harmful practices; while available data did not permit conclusions on whether prevalence had increased or decreased, campaign initiatives had achieved substantial reach among their intended audiences.

74. Efforts to prevent harmful practices included podcasts, exhibitions and social media and poster campaigns. Targeted initiatives at international airports aimed to reach potential victims at risk of being taken abroad. Cooperation with affected communities was pursued through the “Change from Within” alliance, which brought together organizations representing migrant and religious communities. Change leaders within those communities were committed to shifting norms over time. Participating organizations received funding to facilitate access to care for victims.

75. The action plan to be developed by the future national coordinator on violence against women and domestic violence would be aimed at preventing and combating all forms of gender-based violence, as defined in the Istanbul Convention and the relevant European Union directive. Although the formal deadline for the development of the plan was 2029, the intention was to complete the process as soon as possible.

76. The “Stop Femicide!” action plan included measures addressing both femicide specifically and domestic violence more broadly. A men’s alliance was being developed to promote awareness and attitudinal change, and new campaigns were under preparation, including initiatives to address coercive control as a significant risk factor for femicide. The Open Mind Foundation was implementing a nationwide photography campaign to raise awareness of femicide and its warning signs.

77. A 24-hour platform was being developed to provide advice to women in situations of domestic violence. Specialized training for professionals on femicide, coercive control and other forms of domestic violence was being expanded, risk assessment efforts were ongoing and pilot projects were planned to promote forensic investigation of non-fatal strangulation, with a view to earlier detection of femicide risk. A new femicide monitoring mechanism had been developed and research into systematic reviews of cases of fatal domestic violence and child abuse was in the early stages.

78. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that municipalities in the Netherlands were legally responsible for implementing measures to combat violence against women, under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. The Government supported them while allowing flexibility to tailor policies to local needs, emphasizing a gender-sensitive approach. It provided financial support and developed guidelines, tools and other resources to strengthen local responses to gender-based violence and encouraged regions and municipalities to exchange experiences and best practices.

79. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the “Becoming Who You Are” alliance was a five-year publicly-funded initiative to raise awareness of gender stereotypes in primary, secondary and vocational education.. Under the initiative, thousands of secondary school girls each year were given the opportunity to visit companies specializing in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

80. The inclusion of underrepresented groups, with a specific focus on women, had been introduced in 2025 as a mandatory objective in major technology education funding programmes, in which the Caribbean Netherlands also participated. The Government aimed to eliminate the influence of gender stereotypes on educational and career choices for both women and men, a central objective of Dutch gender policy. The goal of increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering and

mathematics had also been incorporated into the Action Plan for Green and Digital Jobs, which sought to expand the number of students working on the green-energy transition.

81. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the proportion of women working in technical professions in the Netherlands remained low. Moreover, retention of women in those professions continued to be a challenge.

82. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that there had been an increase in reported cases of sexual violence in the Netherlands, which might be attributable to the criminalization of additional behaviours under the Sexual Offences Act and to heightened public awareness, resulting in part from awareness-raising campaigns. Pressure on the resources of the criminal justice chain remained a challenge; to address it, additional structural resources had been allocated to the bodies responsible for the Act's implementation. Police deployment was determined locally, while municipal authorities decided on the deployment of municipal enforcement officers.

83. Various general and specialized services were available to victims of trafficking in persons, including medical, social and psychological care, legal assistance and women's shelters. No information was currently available on prosecutions of buyers of sexual services who knew that the service provider was a victim of trafficking. The regulation of pimping would be addressed under the current coalition agreement, although the nature of any further developments in that regard remained to be determined.

84. The Government's approach to sex work was aimed at ensuring a safe and healthy sector and focused on regulation, improving the social position of sex workers and supporting those wishing to exit the industry. Sex workers could operate under the "opting-in" system, which allowed them to work as semi-independent employees, or as self-employed or employed workers. Opting-in and self-employment were the most common arrangements. In both cases, sex workers paid income tax and assumed the risks associated with unemployment, illness and disability, like others in comparable arrangements.

85. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands had made a temporary funding commitment for 2026–2028 to enhance coordination among prosecutors specializing in domestic violence cases. The capacity of law enforcement agencies to handle such cases had been strengthened through the "Safety First" protocol, which provided for immediate collaboration between the police, the "Safe at Home" network, the Public Prosecution Service and the Child Protection Board. Since 2021, the Public Prosecution Service had operated under new internal instructions according to which domestic violence and child abuse cases should, in principle, lead to a formal prosecution. Officers specializing in cases involving domestic violence, child abuse and sexual offences were present in all judicial districts.

86. Non-compliance with domestic exclusion orders was punishable by a custodial sentence. Statistics Netherlands tracked, on a six-monthly basis, the number of such orders requested and imposed; in the first half of 2024, the figures had stood at approximately 10 orders requested and 9 imposed per 100,000 inhabitants. Recidivism among domestic violence perpetrators was monitored by the Research and Data Centre. The Government was exploring how temporary domestic exclusion orders might be used earlier and more effectively, not solely in acute crisis situations but also when there were substantiated indications that a person might be at risk of domestic violence. Consideration was also being given to allowing parties other than the police to request such orders. Pilots had begun, and reporting on their outcomes would be possible at a later stage.

87. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the legal framework governing the operation of women's shelters was set out in the Social Support Act; an additional implementing decision provided for access to shelters for undocumented victims. Victims willing to apply for a temporary residence permit, or who had already initiated that procedure, could obtain access to shelters; their applications could be completed during their stay, with professional assistance. The same criteria applicable to Dutch victims were used to assess whether shelter or alternative support was required.

88. An additional €12 million in structural annual funding had been committed from 2026 onward to expand capacity and create additional shelter places, on top of the €14 million

allocated annually since 2020. Formal agreements had been concluded with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities and Valente, the umbrella organization for women's shelters, to ensure that the additional funds were used to expand capacity and to monitor nationwide developments in shelter availability and use.

89. A 2024 report by Valente and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities indicated that women's shelters in the Netherlands had a capacity of over 1,000 places, corresponding to approximately one place per 70,500 inhabitants. The recommendation under the Istanbul Convention of one place per 10,000 inhabitants required adaptation to national contexts. The Government was currently seeking to determine the number of places needed in the Netherlands.

90. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that immigration enforcement powers were organized under one overarching department divided into two distinct units, one of which was primarily dedicated to cases involving trafficking in persons. No discussions were under way concerning a change to that structure.

91. There had been a decline in recorded investigations, prosecutions and convictions related to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The decline in convictions was attributable in part to the fact that, from 2022 onwards, it had no longer been possible to determine fully from judicial records whether convictions related at least partially to trafficking in persons or exclusively to other offences. The growing interconnection between the physical and digital spheres had made cases larger and more complex. The competent authority, in coordination with the police, set priorities with a view to maximizing impact, often focusing on cases involving numerous victims and cases with significant social consequences. Trends could fluctuate from year to year and did not always lend themselves to comprehensive explanation.

92. Efforts to raise awareness of trafficking in persons among law enforcement agencies in Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba had been intensified in recent years through targeted training activities and workshops. Designated focal points on trafficking in and smuggling of persons had been appointed within the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee and the Dutch Caribbean Police Force. Public awareness had been promoted in 2023 in connection with European Anti-Trafficking Day through video and radio campaigns and posters, and that intensified approach would continue in 2026. Outreach efforts had also targeted persons at risk of trafficking in their countries of origin.

93. Local approaches to the regulation of sex work in the Netherlands varied, with some municipalities requiring licences and others not. Work was under way to establish more uniform national regulation in order to reduce such differences. It was currently difficult to provide an accurate estimate of the number of persons working in the sex industry, given the transient nature of the profession and mobility within, inter alia, the European Union. Periodic research was conducted to estimate the size and characteristics of the sector, and a study currently under way was expected to yield results in 2027.

94. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that, in Curaçao, trafficking in persons was addressed as a matter of priority. Victims were eligible for temporary residence permits, protection from deportation, shelter and psychosocial support. The Government had established the Prevention of Abuse and Human Trafficking Division, a dedicated unit within the Ministry of Justice responsible for protecting and supporting victims while promoting stronger legal frameworks and raising community awareness. The Division worked in cooperation with NGOs and international partners.

95. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of Aruba regarded combating harmful practices as a priority. It had taken steps to address stereotypes and harmful gender norms through policy development, awareness-raising campaigns and education. In particular, a national policy on gender-based violence adopted in 2024 addressed structural gender inequality and harmful stereotypes. Public campaigns had been conducted in cooperation with NGOs, educational institutions and community organizations to challenge traditional gender roles, promote shared family responsibilities and prevent violence against women, with a view to fostering cultural change. While monitoring mechanisms were not yet fully formalized, the Government recognized the need to strengthen evaluation of the impact of those measures.

*Articles 7–9*

96. **Ms. Mikko** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to ensure the diverse representation of women in decision-making positions across all political bodies and companies, including in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom; what steps had been adopted to protect women with a migrant background from intimidation in political and public life; what measures were in place to ensure the meaningful participation of women in diplomacy and progress towards parity in senior international representation; what concrete action had been taken to encourage women to enter and remain in politics; what measures existed to combat hate speech, doxing and online violence and harassment against women; and what steps were envisaged to address the continued discriminatory practices of the Dutch Reformed Political Party, as reflected in its all-male candidate list for the 2025 parliamentary elections.

97. **Mr. Safarov** said that, in the light of reports that the conditions for obtaining a residence permit had been tightened and that foreign nationals continued to face significant barriers to birth registration and naturalization, including – in the latter case – high administrative fees, he would welcome details of the State Party’s position on the criminalization of undocumented migrants; measures to reduce the cost of naturalization proceedings, particularly for stateless persons; the number of stateless women and children who had been naturalized during the reporting period; procedures to facilitate family reunification for stateless persons and refugees; and naturalization procedures applicable in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. Specific information on the situation of asylum-seeking women from Afghanistan would also be welcome, as the Committee had received reports of a case in which such women faced deportation.

98. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that women in Aruba were increasingly assuming leadership roles in government, civil society and other sectors, partly owing to efforts to promote their participation in politics, including advocacy for gender quotas and initiatives promoting women as viable candidates. Following the 2021 parliamentary election, women had held 38% of parliamentary seats and 25% of government posts, including in the office of the Prime Minister. In the 2024 parliamentary election, 3 of the 11 political parties had been led by women and 37% of candidates had been women. In a survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics for Aruba, 90% of respondents had expressed support for increasing women’s representation in governance and public affairs.

99. Women were also increasingly assuming leadership roles within civil society organizations and advocacy groups working on issues such as gender equality, social justice and community development. The Government of Aruba participated in international awareness-raising initiatives on women’s rights, such as the “Orange the World” campaign, and national academic institutions conducted studies and organized symposiums to promote dialogue and research on gender issues. Training and capacity-building programmes, often supported through regional and international cooperation, aimed to strengthen women’s leadership skills and political engagement, including through governance training initiatives.

100. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Civil Code of Aruba granted women and men equal rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality. Women also enjoyed equal rights with regard to the nationality of their children and spouse. Under a new programme currently in development, individuals who had entered Aruba legally but had subsequently overstayed and were residing without legal status would be eligible to apply for a work permit.

101. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands supported women’s political participation. Following the most recent elections, just over 43% of members of the House of Representatives were women, representing the highest proportion in the country’s history. The continued development of policies aimed at enhancing women’s representation in politics remained necessary. Monitoring gender balance in elected positions helped to identify bottlenecks and informed targeted recruitment and retention measures. Work in the area of childcare was also relevant, as it influenced the opportunities available to women pursuing political careers. Efforts to advance gender parity at the international level included supporting female diplomats and

experts through targeted career development, mentoring and capacity-building initiatives, while gender balance continued to be monitored.

102. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the Government of the Netherlands sought to lower barriers encountered by women who wished to become politically active. Measures included improving maternity leave arrangements for female politicians and encouraging women's political engagement through subsidies to civil society organizations. Another tool was mentoring; for example, the organization Vote for a Woman matched aspiring women with experienced female politicians who provided guidance in pursuing political careers.

103. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science provided financial support to the Politica Alliance to promote sustainable and equal representation of women in Dutch politics. The alliance brought together several NGOs and promoted the role of men as allies in improving the political system. It organized training and workshops for women interested in entering politics; conducted and disseminated data analysis on political participation; and addressed online hate directed at politicians. It had also established a political network for women of colour, bringing together politically active and aspiring women of colour and women with a migration background to foster mutual inspiration and support.

104. With regard to efforts to combat threats and online violence against women in politics, the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations had developed standards to discourage aggression and intimidation directed against local political office holders; their implementation was being promoted through the "Resilient Governance" network. In addition, a support package containing practical measures to address online aggression and intimidation had been developed. The Politica Alliance also carried out initiatives addressing those concerns.

105. Regarding the issue of discriminatory practices by a political party in the Netherlands, in December 2025 the Minister of the Interior had sent a letter to the parliament following a parliamentary request to strengthen implementation of the relevant provisions of the Convention. The letter examined additional measures that the Government could take to more effectively implement the right to be elected and to be included on electoral lists. It outlined several options, including the introduction of quotas for candidate lists, the imposition of sanctions and other measures aimed at making political participation safer and more accessible for women.

106. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that hate speech was punishable under article 137 (c)–(g) and article 429 of the Criminal Code of the Netherlands. Criminal offences such as slander, insult and threats could also amount to hate speech. Prosecution of hate speech was prioritized whenever the available evidence provided sufficient grounds to proceed. The Digital Services Act provided an additional framework for combating online hate speech. Where online content was found to be illegal, platforms were obliged to remove it. Content containing implicit hateful messages that might not clearly meet the threshold of illegality but could nonetheless cause harm was also subject to action by platforms.

107. During the 2025 parliamentary debate on the asylum emergency measures bill, an amendment seeking to criminalize irregular stay in the Netherlands had been introduced. The amendment had been the subject of extensive parliamentary debate and remained under review; its potential implications could therefore not yet be determined. With regard to residency permits for Afghan women, those in the case brought to the attention of the Committee, who had previously not been granted such permits, had now received them following a decision by the Immigration and Naturalization Service based on a combination of facts and circumstances in the individual cases. As a matter of policy, the Government did not comment further on individual cases or on the reasoning underlying such decisions.

108. **A representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** said that the authorities in Curaçao promoted women's participation in public life through constitutional and legal guarantees, targeted leadership development initiatives and institutional measures. Training and capacity-building programmes sought to enhance women's leadership skills, political engagement and participation in governance and public policy development. In the most recent general election, only about 28% of candidates had been women. While women had

held significant leadership roles, a clear gap remained in achieving gender parity in both the legislative and executive branches.

109. Naturalization in Curaçao was governed by Kingdom-wide legislation and constituted a discretionary legal pathway through which long-term, lawfully residing migrants could acquire Dutch nationality. Curaçao also had specialized NGOs that worked closely with the Government and advocated for women's rights, including by supporting specific groups of women according to their needs. Legal assistance was provided by the Government for those groups. A framework was thus in place to support such work, while it was recognized that further efforts were needed to strengthen the protection of women with migrant backgrounds.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*