



# 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 1553rd meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 7 November 2017, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Leinarte

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued)**

*Ninth periodic report of Norway (continued) (CEDAW/C/NOR/9; CEDAW/C/NOR/Q/9 and CEDAW/C/NOR/Q/9/Add.1)*

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

*Articles 1 to 6 (continued)*

2. **Ms. Horne** (Norway), noting that child marriage was not permitted in Norway, said that anyone who attempted to enter into marriage with a person under 16 years of age could be jailed. The minimum legal age at which an individual could enter into marriage was 18 years of age. Although persons aged from 16 to 18 could marry in certain circumstances, the Government had decided to consider repealing the section of the Marriage Act that made such marriages possible.

3. Steps were being taken to disseminate information on the online exploitation of children and to train children, parents and professionals in safe Internet use. The Government planned to set up a committee that would promote the protection of children against online pornography and ensure that nurseries and schools were better able to inform children and parents about how to prevent online abuse. In the budget for 2018, 20 million Norwegian kroner (NKr) had been allocated to strengthen the capacity of the police to investigate online violence and abuse against children.

4. **Ms. Galand** (Norway) said that, under domestic legislation, every municipality was required to provide emergency shelters for men, women and children. According to statistics provided by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, 33 services reserved for women and 17 services reserved for men had been fully occupied on at least one occasion in 2016. When a shelter for women was full, women requiring its services were referred to other shelters, additional beds were put in place or unoccupied places reserved for men were allocated to women.

5. Although the Government acknowledged that too few municipalities had established action plans on the prevention of violence, a guide had recently been developed that would help municipalities to develop such plans. The ministries involved in drawing up the guide would shortly be sending a letter to all the municipalities to inform them of its existence.

6. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that both the General Civil Penal Code and the Anti-Discrimination Act on Ethnicity contained provisions that criminalized discriminatory acts. Section 185 of the General Civil Penal Code prohibited hate speech on the grounds of ethnic affiliation, nationality, disability, religion and sexual orientation but not on grounds of gender. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion had commissioned a report on criminal liability for discriminatory conduct that had concluded that discrimination on grounds of gender should be covered in the General Civil Penal Code. The Government was planning to undertake a review of that issue in which the recommendations contained in the report would be considered.

*Articles 7 to 9*

7. **Ms. Narain**, noting that only a small proportion of women from ethnic and minority backgrounds participated in elections and occupied elected posts in local government and the parliament, asked what measures would be taken to facilitate the participation of such women in political life. She asked what measures would be taken to increase the number of women executives of public limited companies and what obstacles prevented women from being appointed to such posts when they were well represented in the civil service, participated in the labour force to the same extent as men and were well represented on the boards of such companies. Commending the State party on the high proportion of women working at senior levels of the diplomatic service, she asked what proportion of women occupied senior positions in international organizations.

8. **Ms. Rana** said that she wished to commend Norway on being one of the first countries to have launched a National Action Plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The Government's current National Action Plan on resolution 1325 (2000) acknowledged the importance of women's participation in peace and stabilization processes following periods of armed conflict and proposed ways of increasing that participation by making use of gender experts and developing funding mechanisms to support the work of women's organizations. Noting that the current Plan was now in its third year of implementation, she asked how it had contributed to increasing women's participation in peace processes, particularly negotiations. She asked what proportion of male and female diplomats were involved in supporting peace talks in the Philippines, Colombia and South Sudan and how much funding had been allocated to the goal of increasing women's participation in peace processes and supporting civil society organizations working in the area of women, and peace and security. Noting that the National Action Plan placed significant emphasis on combating and preventing sexual violence in conflict, she asked what progress had been made in that area in countries undergoing or emerging from conflict, how the implementation of the Plan was monitored and whether yearly reports on the results achieved by the Plan were issued.

9. **Ms. Jahan** said that, while legislation on the transmission of nationality to foreign spouses and children born of marriages between nationals and non-nationals appeared to be gender-neutral, the strict requirements concerning dual nationality had the potential to discriminate against women. Foreign women without dual nationality who were expelled from the country ran the risk of losing custody of their children if the children had Norwegian nationality. In view of that situation, she asked whether the Government would consider amending the legislation on dual nationality.

10. Noting that Norway lacked a stateless determination procedure and did not have a specific regime for combating statelessness, she asked whether the Nationality Act would be amended to ensure that citizenship was automatically granted to persons born in Norway who would otherwise be stateless, including the children of asylum seekers and refugees. The Committee wished to know whether birth registration was compulsory for children of women refugees and asylum seekers.

11. Recent amendments to legislation on immigration would have far-reaching and disproportionate consequences for women immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The minimum income that applicants for a permanent residence permit were required to earn had increased, as had the minimum period for which applicants were required to have held a job. As the Committee's general recommendation No. 32 indicated, the naturalization requirements established by some States could be considered to discriminate indirectly against women in that they imposed conditions that were harder for women to meet than men.

12. Currently, the resident status of immigrant women was not independent of that of their husbands. As a result, women might be forced to remain in an unhappy or abusive marriage for three years before they were able to acquire independent resident status. In view of that situation, she asked what steps had been taken to grant independent resident status to immigrant and refugee women and whether amendments would be made to the Nationality Act to increase the protections afforded to women refugees and asylum seekers.

13. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that the number of women in leadership positions in both the public and private sectors had increased significantly over the previous 15 years. In 2016, 38 per cent of public and private leaders had been women. The gender distribution of managerial positions varied significantly between sectors. Some 60 per cent of managers in local government and 56 per cent of managers in the civil service were women. In the private sector, however, 70 per cent of leadership positions were occupied by men. In spite of the fact that regulations had been introduced to ensure that women made up 40 per cent of the board members of public limited companies, the regulations in question had had little effect on the number of women chief executive officers in such companies. In response to that situation, the Centre for Research on Gender Equality had been made responsible for monitoring the situation and had introduced a gender balance scorecard for the 200 largest companies. Unfortunately, the scorecards indicated that 80 per cent of senior executives

and 93 per cent of chief executive officers in the private sector were men. By contrast, there had been a significant increase in the proportion of women chairs and chief executive officers of companies in which the State had an ownership interest. In such companies, 46 per cent of board members and 44 per cent of chief executive officers were women.

14. **Ms. Enersen** (Norway) said that the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for 2015-18 required that all actions relating to women and peace and security should take the rights, needs and priorities of women into account. The 2016 report on the implementation of the Plan had indicated that that requirement had been met in all peace processes in which Norway had been engaged. Gender considerations had been discussed in bilateral consultations with humanitarian partners and included in the reports of all organizations that received humanitarian funds from Norway. Goals relating to women and peace and security had been included in all operational orders for international operations and a gender perspective had been included in all operational analyses.

15. Guidelines had been developed to ensure that diplomats were able to follow up on the implementation of the action plan in six priority countries, namely, Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan and the State of Palestine. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs helped the embassies of those countries to become more effective in addressing matters relating to women, and peace and security. The embassies also participated in annual gatherings at which experiences were shared and training was provided.

16. The National Action Plan was implemented by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all of which had established dedicated focal points responsible for following up on the Plan. An interministerial set of indicators contained baseline values that were used to measure results and ensure accountability in relation to the implementation of the Plan. The annual report on the implementation of the Plan was not formally submitted to the parliament but was published online in English. It included information on work carried out in peace processes and mediation activities and the contributions of Norway to international peacebuilding operations, humanitarian work and efforts to combat and prevent sexual violence.

17. Specific funds had been made available to civil society organizations that worked to strengthen women's influence in peace processes and post-conflict situations. The funds in question, which amounted to between NKR 20 million and NKR 30 million per year, represented only a small proportion of the total amount that the Government provided to civil society organizations working in the area concerned. The annual report on the implementation of the Plan indicated that the Government had supported efforts to increase women's political participation in 36 per cent of all countries involved in war and conflict.

18. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that, although it was generally the case that a higher proportion of men than women voted, that discrepancy did not apply to men and women immigrants. Some 54 per cent of persons from the immigrant population had voted in the most recent parliamentary elections, while 40 per cent of that population had voted in the most recent local elections. In considering the issue of voter turnout among immigrants, it should be noted that they were generally less educated, more likely to be unemployed and of lower average age than the rest of the population.

19. **Ms. Krogenæs** (Norway) said that the Government aimed to ensure that women from immigrant backgrounds had access to information so that they could participate in society, be competitive in the labour market and enjoy their marriage and family rights. To that end, information in several languages was provided by agencies representing the health service, the police, the labour and welfare authorities, the immigration authorities and the education sector. Some 275 hours of tuition in the Norwegian language was offered to asylum seekers in reception centres and, in 2017, a 50-hour course in Norwegian culture and values had been introduced at those centres. The course on culture and values focused on the rights and obligations enshrined in law and was taught in a language that the participants understood.

20. Norwegian citizenship was not intended to be easy to obtain. The conditions for acquiring it had been designed to ensure that new citizens would become active participants

in society. In 2016, citizenship had been granted to almost 13,700 persons, 54 per cent of whom had been women. The Government intended to propose amendments to the Nationality Act that would allow individuals to hold dual citizenship.

21. In 2016, the Government had instructed the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration to ensure that applications for citizenship were handled in accordance with the European Convention on Nationality, the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Stateless applicants were exempt from a number of the terms that normally applied to applicants for citizenship. The Government had recently granted an official hearing to a proposal to increase the minimum period of residence required for citizenship.

22. **Ms. Bolstad** (Norway) said that the Government wished to implement a stringent immigration policy that would facilitate family life while ensuring that each family was self-sufficient. Applicants for permanent residence permits therefore had to satisfy a minimum income requirement. As of August 2017, that requirement had been reduced by around NKR 50,000. Regulations on immigration were gender-neutral. In order to be granted a permanent residence permit, applicants had to have held a temporary residence permit for at least three years. In that time, the authorities would be able to ensure that non-nationals had not been allowed to stay in Norway on the basis of a marriage of convenience or other fictional grounds.

23. In April 2016, the Government had proposed raising the required period of residency from three years to five years but the proposal had not been adopted by the parliament. Migrants who had experienced physical or psychological abuse at the hands of their spouse were entitled to extend their period of residency after their marriage had broken up even if they did not meet the criteria for permanent residency. In such cases, applicants' explanations were central to the decisions taken by the immigration authorities. For that reason, the police were required to ensure that qualified interpreters assisted in interviews with applicants. In 2015 and 2016, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security had conducted a review of the legislation concerned and had proposed that the provision in question should be extended to cover abuse by persons other than the applicant's partner. The proposal was currently being considered by the Ministry.

#### *Articles 10 to 14*

24. **Ms. Verges** said she was concerned that girls and boys continued to choose subjects along gender lines, with girls opting for subjects that inevitably led them into careers traditionally dominated by women. Although the State party had introduced certain initiatives to increase the proportion of girls studying non-traditional subjects, such as technology and engineering, progress had been very slow indeed. She wondered whether a more robust approach was envisaged in order to reverse that trend and eliminate the sociocultural barriers preventing girls and women from pursuing non-traditional subjects and careers.

25. Regarding admission to higher education, she wished to know whether the points-based system, which sought to address the gender imbalance by awarding extra points to applicants on the basis of gender, was up and running. In that connection, she would welcome updated information on the number of newly appointed women university professors and on the proportion of girls undertaking vocational training. Lastly, she asked what measures were foreseen to tackle the high dropout rate of children of migrants in upper secondary education and whether sexual and reproductive health were covered in the schools' social studies programme.

26. **Ms. Manalo**, referring to paragraphs 31-34 of the State party's replies to the list of issues, said she was concerned that women remained seriously underrepresented in senior and chief executive positions and continued to face a significant pay gap. In particular, women at the top of the career ladder were paid 20 per cent less than men in the same position, while the hourly rate for women in low-income professions was 6 per cent below that of their male counterparts. She wished to know why such gender disparities persisted in the State party and what concrete measures had been taken or were envisaged to remedy the situation. Noting that women with families tended to gravitate towards employment in the

public sector, she wondered how the State party intended to foster a more women- and family-friendly approach in the private sector. More detailed information regarding the State party's Job Opportunity Programme, which aimed to help immigrant women to enter the labour market, would be appreciated. Lastly, she would welcome an update on the country's au pair scheme, since there were concerns that women employed through that system had little protection and were at risk of exploitation.

27. **Ms. Hofmeister**, turning to health, said that she wished to know what action was being taken to remove the linguistic barriers that impeded Sami women's access to health and to ensure that sufficient midwives and postnatal care services, including in the form of home visits, were available in areas inhabited by the Sami population. She would welcome information on the impact of a policy aimed at mitigating the impact of Chernobyl disaster on the Sami population's reproductive health and way of life. She wondered what specific measures were being put in place to remove architectural barriers and ensure that buildings were fully accessible to women and girls with disabilities.

28. She was concerned at reports that children, in particular boys, were lacking information regarding sexuality and gender relations at an early age and that they were consumers of hard core pornography online, which put their mental health at risk. She asked what the Government was doing to ensure that gender-based and scientifically correct information was being provided to children and adolescents, particularly with respect to sexuality and reproductive rights.

29. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that 60 per cent of students in higher education were women, who also outnumbered men in law and medicine disciplines. Moreover, the data showed that girls outperformed boys at school. Girls and boys had the right to equal opportunities in education; however, their choices were often influenced by traditional gender norms as well as by their social and migration backgrounds. Gender segregation was particularly evident in vocational subjects, where construction, technical and engineering courses were dominated by boys. An expert committee had been set up to examine gender disparities in education. A separate committee was also being created to identify barriers to gender equality for children and young people, with education being one of the focus areas.

30. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that girls represented around 40 per cent of students in vocational training in 2016, when health and care courses were taken into account. According to the data provided to the Committee, in 2013, women accounted for more than half of university lecturers and senior lecturers and 43 per cent of associate professors. Women professors were in shorter supply and tended to be concentrated in humanities and medicine subjects. The proportion of newly appointed women professors had risen since 2008.

31. Efforts to increase the number of women chief executives included engaging in constructive dialogue with employers and monitoring the situation through the Gender Balance Scorecard initiative, which sought to highlight gender imbalances in the 200 largest companies in Norway. To some extent, the Scorecard also served as a way of naming and shaming companies with a poor gender rating. The Ombud also played an important role in highlighting the issue and communicating with businesses.

32. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway), referring to paragraph 107 of the replies, said that the gender pay gap had closed somewhat in recent years. The gender-segregated labour market, and the fact that women were usually employed in the public sector, where wages were lower than in the private sector, were the main reasons for the persistent gap in wages. Social partners were responsible for collective wage bargaining, with agreements being reached through negotiations between representative organizations of employees and employers. The Norwegian Technical Calculation Committee for Wage Settlements produced data on women's and men's pay to highlight the current situation and economic trends. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had launched a project to assess the measures used in Iceland to promote equal pay.

33. **Ms. Bolstad** (Norway) said that Norway had strict immigration rules governing the entry of unskilled workers from outside the European Economic Area. Consideration had been given to abolishing the au pair scheme; however, since it was a valued cultural and language exchange for persons aged 18-30, and not an employment scheme, it had been

preserved. Participants stayed with a Norwegian family and could carry out only very limited household chores and help with childcare. Penalties were applied in the event that host families breached the regulations or committed an offence against the au pair.

34. **Ms. Krogenæs** (Norway) said that the Job Opportunity Programme was aimed at improving the employment prospects of unskilled immigrants, including unemployed women immigrants not in receipt of any other training or social security benefit. For 2018, NKR 100 million had been allocated from the national budget to fund the Programme. In 2016, 40 municipalities had run 53 related projects. Around 1,800 unemployed women had participated, of whom 68 per cent were either employed or in education at the end of the project. An impact assessment was currently being carried out by the Directorate for Integration and Diversity.

35. **Ms. Galand** (Norway) said that all citizens were equally entitled to health-care services appropriate to their needs, without discrimination. The Northern Norway Regional Health Authority ensured that specialized health-care centres were familiar with Sami language and culture. A study had been conducted in respect of the health of the Sami people and had found that Sami women enjoyed better health than Sami men.

36. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that issues such as sexuality, gender equality, gender identity, sexual orientation and sexual violence were covered in the school curricula, including in science and social sciences lessons and at different school grades. All school subjects were currently under review with a view to creating a new curriculum. It would include a new subject on life skills and public health, which would encompass sex education.

37. Online bullying and abuse was an issue that schools and parents should tackle together in order to raise awareness among children of the risks of using social media and sharing pictures online.

38. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that any breaches to building regulations on universal design and accessibility were deemed as discrimination against persons with disabilities and, thus, carried penalties. All new public buildings had to comply with the principles of universal design; existing structures were also required to meet specific accessibility requirements. An action plan on universal design and covering all major sectors, including architecture and building design, was also in place.

39. **Ms. Jahan**, returning to the issue of nationality and statelessness, said that she welcomed the fact that the Government was taking steps to allow dual citizenship, which would help to address statelessness among women and children. She wished to draw the delegation's attention to the Committee's general recommendation No. 33 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women and would encourage the State party to review existing laws and new policies on immigration, nationality and family reunification with a view to removing provisions that could have a disproportionate impact on women.

40. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that she wondered whether the State party had considered using temporary special measures to promote and advance women's representation in academia. At the current rate of progress, it would take decades to reach gender parity without the use of such measures. Regarding shared parental leave, she wished to know when the father's quota, which had been cut from 14 weeks in 2013 to 10 weeks in 2014, would be returned to its previous level. Lastly, she asked whether a timeline had been set to reinstate the right for part-time employees to be given preferential consideration if they wished to increase their hours when their employer was looking to hire additional staff. The Supreme Court had, in 2016, curbed that right somewhat by ruling that part-time employees could only be given preferential consideration if they applied for the vacancy as advertised.

41. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that the Government had decided to increase the father's quota from 10 weeks to 14 weeks, effective from 1 July 2018. The mother's quota was also set to be increased to the same amount.

42. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway), replying to a question raised previously by Ms. Verges, said that the points-based system was up and running for courses where women students

were underrepresented. The Government was also considering using the same approach to encourage boys to study subjects traditionally dominated by girls at upper secondary level. Lastly, the existence of a 6 per cent difference in pay between men and women in certain sectors was unexplained.

43. **Ms. Nersten** said that a study to evaluate the extent of gender segregation in the labour market since the early 1990s was due to be published in December 2017. However, the proportion of women working part time involuntarily had never been so low. In fact, the number of women in part-time work had decreased by 3 percentage points between 2013 and 2016, and the proportion of women working full time had increased commensurately in the same period. Efforts had been taken to reduce involuntary part-time work in the health-care sector. Part-time employees continued to have the right to an extended post, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had also proposed an amendment to the relevant provisions to give part-time workers a preferential right to apply for part of a new appointment.

44. **Ms. Schulz** said that the State party had not provided information on the National Insurance Act in the context of the research being carried out by the Research Council of Norway on pension reform, including its impact on gender equality. Accordingly, she wished to know whether any results from the research project were available, whether there were any indications of worrying trends in relation to pensions and whether any results showed a need to improve the situation of women in the pension system. Regarding employment-based pensions, it appeared that women could be required to either make larger contributions or receive lower benefits owing to their longer life expectancy. She asked whether such considerations were included in the research and, if so, whether results would be available by 2018.

45. **Ms. Hofmeister** said that she would appreciate data on investigations and prosecutions of cases of sexual violence, including rape, against women and girls with mental disabilities and information on efforts to improve access to public buildings for women with physical disabilities. She would also be grateful for further information on female prison staff and asked whether the Government planned to establish a new prison tailored to the needs of female prisoners. In addition, it would be useful to have data on reported cases of online hate speech against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women. She also asked what measures were planned to promote and preserve Sami languages. She wondered what steps had been taken to establish a gender-sensitive national mechanism aimed at processing asylum cases in a timely manner.

46. **Mr. Hustad** (Norway) said that the Correctional Service had established a strategy for women in remand detention or serving a prison sentence. Women serving sentences were placed in separate prisons and prison units, and the 2018 budget provided for the establishment of a new high-security unit for women and the refurbishment of 20 lower security units. In addition, under the Government's Action Plan on Psychoactive Substances for the period 2016-2020, NKR 10 million had been allocated to strengthen municipal health-care services in prisons for mental health and substance abuse.

47. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that, in 2016, the Government had launched a cross-sectoral action plan that addressed hate speech and violence against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, and the topic was also included in the government strategy on hate speech. Her delegation would provide the Committee with information about cases of online hate speech against such women that had been gathered by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

48. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs was responsible for collecting information about the living conditions and lives of persons with disabilities; the data were disaggregated by gender in order to analyse and monitor any disparities between men and women with disabilities. In order to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, violence and ill-treatment, the TryggEst programme had been developed and would be piloted in a number of local authorities for persons with physical, psychosocial or intellectual disabilities.

49. In 2016, a public committee had produced two reports on legislation and measures relating to the South Sami, Lule Sami and North Sami languages with the aim of

establishing public services in Sami languages. The Government was discussing the findings of the reports with the Sami parliament and others and had allocated NKR 1 million to the Sami parliament for follow-up. In addition, under the 2018 budget, the Sami parliament would receive an additional NKR 2.5 million for work related to Sami languages and culture and NKR 5 million to promote the languages.

50. **Ms. Nersten** (Norway) said that, in order to create an equal pension system, it was necessary to compensate women for lower market participation, lower wages and a disproportionate share of unpaid work by encouraging and rewarding an equal balance between formal and informal work. The pension system aimed to guarantee equal pension payments through redistributive measures, including the taxation of pensions income on the basis of social security benefits. Approximately NKR 56 million had been spent on assessing the pensions system since 2011, and the Research Council of Norway would present a summary of its research to the Government in 2018. A 2017 research article published by Statistics Norway had estimated that the projected gender gap in public pensions would be reduced from 43 per cent to 7 per cent.

51. **Ms. Galand** (Norway) said that the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs had implemented a pilot project in some municipalities to help vulnerable people, including victims of domestic violence, drug addicts and people with mental health problems. A number of different models were being tested to address the specific needs of different vulnerable groups and tailor services accordingly. Some shelters were being adapted for people who found it difficult to live with others, and the Directorate was working with specialists and emergency care services as appropriate.

52. **Mr. Hustad** (Norway) said that, as of 2016, women constituted 39 per cent of staff in prison institutions. The Government was concerned by cases of women from vulnerable groups reporting rape and the matter would be addressed in the upcoming action plan against rape which would be launched in 2018. Moreover, in 2015, 58 cases of hate speech against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation had been reported to the police.

53. **Ms. Hofmeister** said that she wished to know what steps were being taken to combat discrimination against black and Muslim women.

54. **Ms. Nersten** (Norway), replying to the question concerning the impact of pension reform on gender equality, said that the Research Council of Norway had published all available information on its website, and further information would be available in 2018 following the completion of its research.

55. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that the mandate of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud included combating racism. From January 2018, the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act would come into effect, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and religion, and a new tribunal would begin to hear discrimination cases with the aim of processing such cases more efficiently. In addition, the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs was developing ethnicity-based indicators to be completed by late 2018.

#### *Articles 15 and 16*

56. **Ms. Schulz** said that she wished to know the extent to which cohabiting couples with children in common were entitled to succeed to each other's estates through written agreements and whether there were easily accessible models online for making such arrangements. She would also like to hear more about the situation of cohabiting couples who did not have children together with respect to other rights and entitlements, such as survivor, social security, pension and tax benefits, in comparison with married couples. She wondered whether any steps had been taken to guarantee women living in de facto unions economic protection equal to married women, in the form of recognizing their rights in the property accumulated during the relationship, as had been recommended in the Committee's previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/NOR/CO/8). It had been reported that women often retained fewer assets than men when such relationships ended, as women tended to spend more money on household items and men on permanent assets; she wished to know how widespread that situation was and whether there were any plans to remedy it, particularly for women who had not signed agreements with their partners. She

also wished to know the extent of public awareness of the differences between the legal status, rights and duties of cohabiting and married couples.

57. Moreover, she wished to know whether the concept of joint marital property had been amended to extend to intangible property and other assets, such as pension benefits and insurance policies, and whether the Government took steps to ensure that joint property was divided equally regardless of each spouse's individual contribution. She also asked whether the Government had undertaken research on the economic consequences of divorce for both spouses.

58. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that a number of model financial agreements for cohabiting couples were available online.

59. **Ms. Bolstad** (Norway) said that general regulations on co-ownership were in place but a wider range of legislative measures was required to provide for the situations of all cohabiting couples. Such couples could be entitled to assets through indirect contributions to the household such as domestic work, childcare and spending on household goods, and they could obtain economic compensation if, for instance, one person used the finances of the other to increase the value of his or her property. They also had the right to a share of the family home or household contents upon separation. Regarding inheritance rights, cohabiting couples with children had the same rights as married couples, including the right to retain possession of an undivided estate, whereas those without children were required to draw up individual agreements.

60. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that legislation on the division of marital property and other benefits upon divorce did not comply with the Committee's previous concluding observations or its general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on article 16 of the Convention. While there was a limited capacity to offer alimony or support in cases of large economic disparities between divorcing spouses, she asked whether the Government planned to develop a more comprehensive framework to compensate for economic imbalances between partners. In addition, she wished to know whether there were safeguards against mandatory mediation for divorcing couples with children when there was an indication of domestic violence.

61. **Ms. Schulz** said that she would appreciate the information on cohabitation in writing.

62. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that information on pension rights and marital agreements would be provided in writing within 48 hours.

63. **Ms. Krogæs** (Norway) said that existing legislation balanced the responsibility of spouses to establish contracts and the need to protect parties from unfair agreements. Spouses were free to draw up agreements within the framework of the Marriage Act. The Act included regulations on changes to agreements and the importance of the circumstances at the time an agreement was signed.

64. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that married couples and cohabiting couples alike were entitled to draw up financial agreements.

65. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that the scope of marital financial agreements was restricted by the inheritances children were legally entitled to receive following the death of a parent.

*The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.*