



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Seventy-second session

### Summary record of the 1673rd meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 27 February 2019, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Gbedemah

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

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

*Seventh periodic report of Angola (CEDAW/C/AGO/7; CEDAW/C/AGO/Q/7 and CEDAW/C/AGO/Q/Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Angola took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola), introducing the seventh periodic report of Angola (CEDAW/C/AGO/7), said that her country cooperated closely with human rights special procedures and treaty bodies. For instance, during the period from 2010 to 2016, it had hosted visits by the African Union Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants.
3. The most recent population census had been conducted in 2014. The population was currently estimated at 30 million, of whom 52 per cent were women. The human development index had increased from 0.486 in 2012 to 0.532 in 2015, which was equivalent to an average annual increase of 3.15 per cent. The index had risen to 0.581 in 2018 and Angola was ranked by the United Nations among medium human development countries. Life expectancy had increased from about 44 years in 2000 to 60 years in 2014 and 61 years in 2018.
4. She drew attention to the list of core human rights treaties signed and ratified by Angola contained in paragraph 80 of the report, and to the presidential decrees aimed at promoting gender equality listed in paragraphs 90, 150 and 155.
5. On 24 January 2019, the Government had adopted the new Criminal Code, which contained provisions aimed at promoting the implementation of the Convention and respect for the principles of equality and non-discrimination on grounds of race, sexual orientation and belief. Harsher penalties were also prescribed for offences committed against women.
6. The general elections held in 2017 had marked a turning point in terms of governance, bolstering of democratic institutions, and promotion of human rights and dialogue with civil society. The Government had adopted the following slogan: “Improve what is right and correct what is wrong”.
7. The Government was implementing the National Development Plan (2018–2022), which sought to promote equality of opportunity for women, to recognize their role in the family and in the social, political, economic and entrepreneurial domains, and to achieve sustainable empowerment of young women and women living in rural areas. Priority was being given to the following programmes: gender promotion and empowerment of women; support for families and development of family skills; support for victims of gender-based violence; and economic restructuring of communities, with a focus on women. The Government had also consolidated advisory bodies for social coordination, monitoring and control of the implementation of legislative and political measures.
8. While progress had been achieved in the training of women and in their social integration at different decision-making levels, a great deal remained to be achieved. However, implementation of the national policy for gender equality and equity had led to an increase in the number of women occupying decision-making posts. She highlighted the following percentages for women’s participation: National Assembly members: 30.5 per cent; ministers: 19.5 per cent; secretaries of state: 16.4 per cent; provincial governors: 11.1 per cent; deputy governors: 19.5 per cent; the diplomatic corps: 40 per cent; municipal administrators: 25.6 per cent; deputy municipal administrators: 22 per cent; communal administrators: 9 per cent; and deputy communal administrators: 13 per cent. Women occupied 35.5 per cent of senior offices in the civil service. In the justice sector, women accounted for 34.4 per cent of the prosecution service, 39 per cent of judges, 49 per cent of the staff of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, and 31 per cent of lawyers. However, most women were employed in the sectors of education, health and domestic service.

9. Vigorous action was taken to raise awareness of gender-based violence, to mobilize families and to ensure accountability. A total of 1,893 complaints of domestic violence had been lodged (83 per cent by women and 17 per cent by men) in 2018.

10. The Bar Association of Angola was responsible for ensuring that free legal aid was granted to persons with insufficient financial resources.

11. With a view to guaranteeing the right to citizenship, 1,800,000 new registrations had been issued during the period from 2017 to 2018. The registration programme was being expanded, particularly to include births in rural areas, through the “Nascer com Registo” (birth with registration) project supported by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the European Union. A responsible fatherhood awareness-raising campaign “Eu Apoio” (I support) had been launched in 2018 with a view to encouraging men to register their children.

12. During the period from 2013 to 2017, the net primary school enrolment ratio was 70 per cent for both genders. The net secondary school enrolment ratio was 43 per cent for boys and 37 per cent for girls. Literacy courses had been provided for 46,300 women in rural areas. The Government had launched a programme called “My Family, My Inspiration” aimed at changing people’s attitudes and conduct in the family and communities and preventing violence against women.

13. The Government sought to protect girls against sexual abuse, exploitation, violence, sexually transmitted diseases, early marriage and adolescent pregnancy. It had launched a campaign against early marriage and adolescent pregnancy in 2015 based on multisectoral measures.

14. She drew attention to the integrated package of health care for mothers and children described in paragraph 107 of the replies to the list of issues ([CEDAW/C/AGO/Q/7/Add.1](#)). The package had helped to reduce maternal and infant mortality from 377 in 2016 to 357 in 2018.

15. Referring to paragraph 49 of the replies to the list of issues concerning female genital mutilation, she said that the new Criminal Code prescribed penalties ranging from 2 to 10 years of imprisonment for such practices.

16. With a view to protecting the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, the State had adopted Act No. 10/15 of 17 June on asylum and refugee status, Presidential Decree No. 108/11 of 25 May on the legal regime governing foreigners, and Presidential Decree No. 318/18 of 31 December adopting the national migration policy. There were currently about 161,000 foreigners in Angola, of whom 65,000 were refugees and asylum seekers. They included refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who had entered the country during the conflict in Kasai Province in 2017.

17. Angola gave high priority to the fight against trafficking in human beings, especially women and children. It had recently joined the Blue Heart Campaign and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) database, and had undertaken more than 60 investigations during the past four years. Angola was currently developing a plan of action to combat trafficking in human beings.

18. Two forums had been held with civil society organizations between 2016 and 2018 to discuss matters such as access to justice, the Act on Private Associations, a statute enabling non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to have direct access to public funds, and the law on social protection for domestic workers. There were currently 542 NGOs and 16 foundations in Angola.

19. A number of bodies had been established to coordinate and oversee action taken by public and civil society institutions to promote women’s rights. They included the International Commission for the Preparation of National Human Rights Reports, the Interministerial Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the Interministerial Drug Control Commission, councils on social issues, and provincial and local networks to protect and promote the rights of the child.

20. In 2017 the Government had merged the Ministry of the Family and the Advancement of Women with the Ministry of Social Assistance and Reintegration in order

to establish the Ministry of Social Action, the Family and the Advancement of Women and combine activities that focused on women and the family.

*Articles 1 to 6*

21. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** noting that a National Strategy for the Advancement of Women had already existed in the year 2000, which aimed to provide women with legal advice, to establish community development centres in the provinces, to provide microcredit for women entrepreneurs, to create a network of women in decision-making positions and to provide training courses for gender mainstreaming, said that it would be interesting to learn about the results of those measures.

22. The State party had secured the imposition of sanctions on rebel groups in the Great Lakes Region and was implementing reforms aimed at promoting competitiveness and a market-based economy. She asked whether such action had had a positive impact on women. Large population groups, especially women, were reportedly living in poverty and were excluded from development planning processes.

23. The State party's report failed to provide explicit information about action taken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

24. The State party's recent expulsion order targeting irregular migrants was contrary to human rights standards, and the use of excessive force by security officers had left at least 330,000 returnees in precarious conditions. A number had allegedly been killed and about 100 had been injured. She asked whether the mass deportation of migrants without the requisite assessment and screening would be halted and whether the perpetrators would be held accountable.

25. She would like to know how functional access to justice for women and girls was reflected in formal and legal instruments, what policies or administrative guidelines existed to facilitate their access to justice, and how substantive and transformational equality for women was guaranteed in practice. She also wished to know what mechanisms existed for intersectoral service delivery to ensure that the infrastructure and institutional architecture was conducive to equality.

26. **The Chair**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, said that the definition of discrimination against women in the State party's Constitution was not in conformity with article 1 of the Convention, since it neither directly prohibited such discrimination nor incorporated the principle of equality between women and men. She asked how the State party intended to remedy that shortcoming.

27. The Committee had been informed that about 60 per cent of the population, especially in rural areas, resorted to the traditional justice system and that the prevalence of customary law over civil law generally discriminated against women, especially in terms of their legal right to inherit property. She would appreciate an account of the status of customary law vis-à-vis national and civil law. How were the decisions handed down by traditional courts monitored?

28. The State party had provided figures concerning out-of-court dispute settlement centres in its replies to the list of issues. She asked whether the out-of-court system covered the entire country, how many cases had been brought by women and what categories of cases were adjudicated in such forums. According to paragraph 24 of the replies, no cases of discrimination against women had been referred to extrajudicial conflict resolution mechanisms during the period from 2013 to 2018. As the Committee had been informed that there was only one functioning out-of-court dispute settlement centre in the country, she asked whether its location in the centre of the capital city rendered access difficult for women or whether they were unaware of their rights in that regard.

29. She asked whether the provinces had appropriate capacity to disseminate the Convention and what measures were in place to ensure that it was disseminated. She wished to know whether the Convention had been invoked in the courts and whether it prevailed over domestic law. She also wished to know whether judges were trained to invoke the Convention, including in traditional courts.

30. She wondered how many women judges existed in the State party and how many human rights cases had been brought before the courts. What measures were taken to protect women's rights and to punish offenders, especially those who perpetrated atrocities against women human rights defenders and the judiciary, and to provide compensation for injury?

31. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that all persons, regardless of their nationality, enjoyed the same rights under the Constitution.

32. **Mr. Bambi** (Angola) said that the Constitution stipulated that the provisions contained in all international treaties to which Angola was a party and in domestic legislation were directly applicable by the courts. Accordingly, judges and prosecutors could apply the provisions of the Convention from the outset without awaiting a request from injured parties and the Convention had been invoked in a number of cases. It enjoyed parity with domestic legislation, which did not prevail. A great deal of the country's legislation had actually been inspired by the Convention and other international human rights treaties.

33. Women and girls in Angola were afforded numerous forms of protection under the law. Physical and psychological violence and degrading treatment, for example, were defined and made punishable in the Domestic Violence Act, which also provided for the assistance and support of victims.

34. Customary law, which was recognized as a source of law in the country's Constitution, was considered legitimate to the extent that it did not interfere with a person's fundamental rights. Family councils, for example, made it possible to resolve disputes, in particular in rural areas, without resorting to the courts. The State was required to intervene when such councils or other customary mechanisms failed to respect the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. On the whole, however, the country's two systems of law complemented each other.

35. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that, although the Ministry of Social Action, the Family and the Advancement of Women was the lead agency for all policies related to the empowerment of women, a range of government ministries and departments, together with NGOs and churches, helped raise awareness about the Convention. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, for example, had produced a brochure on women's rights that contained information on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Documents on the Convention had been produced in Portuguese and other languages.

36. The country's police academies had human rights programmes, including a module on women's rights, which covered the Convention. The Ministry of Education had produced a handbook on the rights of girls and women for teachers in the country's secondary schools. Other methods of raising awareness of women's rights and the Convention included community outreach and local and national radio programmes.

37. Only Luanda, home to more than 30 per cent of the country's population, currently had an out-of-court dispute settlement centre. Other centres, however, some of which were managed by NGOs, made it possible for women to gain access to justice, and agreements on the establishment of legal aid clinics had recently been signed with eight of the country's universities. In addition, courts throughout the country were required by law to offer conciliation services. In that context, a public prosecutor could provide advice to persons who had not yet decided whether they wished to seek justice in the formal judicial system. Parties to disputes heard by local authorities in village meeting places known as *ondjango* could apply to the courts for satisfaction. It was also possible for the courts to uphold decisions made by such authorities.

38. A reference to discrimination was made in the Domestic Violence Act, and discriminatory acts had been made punishable under the recently adopted Criminal Code. It was highly unusual for there to be conflicts between the Convention and domestic law. On those rare occasions, the courts ruled on a case-by-case basis.

39. The percentage of female judges and prosecutors was likely to continue to increase, not least because women accounted for a majority of the country's law students. Nearly half

of the officials of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights were women. The President of the Court of Auditors, one of the country's three highest courts, was a woman. In short, the number of women occupying decision-making positions had increased significantly.

40. Articles 15 and 16 of the Convention had been cited in rulings No. 121 and No. 123 of the Constitutional Court. The rulings had concerned equality before the law, the right of appeal and the right not to be detained arbitrarily.

41. **The Chair**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, said that one problem with the customary system of justice was that women, lacking real alternatives, often accepted rulings that violated their rights under the Convention. In her own country, Ghana, the traditional authorities were held in high esteem, but they often perpetuated patriarchal ways of thinking. Training the traditional authorities and monitoring their decisions would go some way towards ensuring that women were not forced to accept violations of their rights. Ensuring that female judges and prosecutors served in the country's rural areas would also help.

42. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she wished to know whether the family councils were publicly funded and what steps were taken to ensure that they were independent and impartial. She would welcome the submission in writing of a list of court decisions, in particular in cases of domestic violence, in which the Convention had been cited.

43. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that it was sometimes hard to determine whether family councils acted independently. In any event, the parties to a dispute that was adjudicated by a family council could appoint two people to present their case before the council. Social workers and judges could be called on to verify that family councils had acted properly. A list of the court cases in which the Convention had been cited would be provided in due course.

44. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she would welcome a thorough description of the national machinery for the empowerment of women, including the legal framework for its establishment, the human and financial resources it was allocated and the means to ensure coordination of its work. In particular, she wished to know what measures were taken to coordinate intersectoral and interministerial activities and what percentage of the total State budget was earmarked for efforts related to the advancement of women. She also wished to know whether there were any gender-specific targets in the National Development Plan (2018–2022) and, if so, what those targets focused on. Similarly, she wondered whether any plans had been made to introduce gender budgeting, tackle stereotypes or put in place temporary special measures. In addition, she asked when a new gender equality plan would be adopted, whether training on gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women's rights was a sustainable, regular activity, whether a reliable system for collecting data disaggregated by sex had been set up and what the obstacles to the collection of such data were.

45. **Ms. Toe Bouda** asked whether it was true that the quality and number of the capacity-building programmes organized by the Ministry of Social Action, the Family and the Advancement of Women had fallen in recent years and that in the two previous years there had been no such programmes at all. She would welcome clarification of the role played by the Multisectoral Gender Council. In addition, it would be interesting to learn whether the Office of the Ombudsman had a mandate to promote and protect the rights of women. In that connection, she wished to know how many complaints of discrimination against women the Office had received since the submission of the State party's periodic report in late 2017.

46. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she wondered whether the State party had adopted or intended to adopt temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality between men and women, in particular in fields where women were seriously disadvantaged. If so, it would be interesting to know what fields the measures had targeted and what the outcome had been. Lastly, she wondered whether the Government was prepared to advocate the adoption of such measures, whether it needed guidance from the Committee in that regard and whether it had plans to adopt longer-term positive measures for the most vulnerable women.

47. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that, although the Ministry of Social Action, the Family and the Advancement of Women was located in the capital, it had offices or representatives in the country's provinces and municipalities. Some communes had Ministry focal points. Specialists were increasingly involved with the work of the family councils. Ideally, problems in communes were solved at the commune level, sometimes with the assistance of NGOs or churches and always with the aim of upholding the rights of women. The authorities were aware that government officials and others, including journalists, were in need of more training on the rights of women.

48. **Ms. Clington** (Angola) said that the mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman of Angola was to defend and uphold the people's rights, including their right not to be subjected to discrimination on the basis of their gender. The Office had appropriate technical and administrative support and its own offices. The current Ombudsman and his deputy had been elected by the National Assembly. The Office had received complaints from women, but they had generally concerned labour or land disputes, family matters or other such issues rather than discrimination on grounds of gender. The Ombudsman's deputy maintained a close working relationship with officials from the Ministry of Social Action, the Family and the Advancement of Women.

49. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that obtaining reliable statistical data was still a major problem in Angola but that efforts were being made to improve the effectiveness of the National Statistics Institute. A plan had been made to develop a system of gender indicators. An analytical report on gender issues produced by the former Ministry of the Family and the Advancement of Women would be released shortly. Up-to-date information on the country's population would also be provided in the country's common core report, which was currently in preparation.

50. Gender-based budgeting was an area where improvements were needed. Meanwhile, it was possible to deduce the level of investment in women by analysing the State's investment in the social sector, where women were the main beneficiaries. Investment in education generally had fallen between 2017 and 2018, but in higher education and health there had been an increase. The budget allocation for social protection was 6.41 per cent, for community services 3.31 per cent and for housing 1.67 per cent. In rural provinces the issue of gender was a cause for concern, although there had been an increase in budget allocations for rural development and agricultural programmes, which had gone up from 0.5 per cent to 0.15 per cent.

51. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that the Government's local development programme to combat poverty paid special attention to communities, and to women within those communities, whether peasant women, heads of household or girls in rural areas. There was also a drive to municipalize social and family services, which in practice meant setting up a one-stop shop that would refer women to the correct service depending on their query.

52. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** asked whether members of the family councils received any training and if so whether that training covered the Convention so that it could be applied at the local level. She said that she would like to know what form women's participation took, bearing in mind that many women were not very well educated.

53. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she would like to know whether the State party had considered adopting a plan for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and of the Committee's recommendations that included relevant indicators and regular reviews by the Government. Had it considered specific legislation on gender equality, including a mechanism for the advancement of women? She wondered how the Government cooperated with NGOs at the national and local levels and whether there were any constraints on NGOs' work.

54. **Ms. Peláez Narváez**, noting that the State party had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014, asked how women and girls with disabilities were taken into account in its policies on women and what objectives had been set to guarantee the participation of women with disabilities. What activities existed to ensure their social inclusion in all spheres of life? Although the 2014 census had recorded a total of 290,000 women with disabilities, she had seen no indication that specific provision was made for them: she would appreciate an explanation from the delegation.

55. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) agreed that it was essential to strengthen statistical procedures in order to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the Government's plans and programmes. She said that NGOs had a vital role to play in helping the Government to meet the challenges it faced. There were no barriers preventing the involvement of civil society; indeed, the State encouraged the formation of women's associations and the appointment of women to leadership positions. Likewise, there were no legal impediments to the inclusion of women with disabilities in any area of life.

56. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that efforts were being made to integrate human rights into the structure of the family councils. Any national plan on the implementation of the Convention would be the responsibility of the Intersectoral Commission for the Preparation of National Human Rights Reports. However, it was already the case that, after any dialogue with a human rights treaty body, a plan was drawn up, translated and published on the Government's website. There were 12 working groups within the parliament, one of which was an independent cross-party group of parliamentary women.

57. Relations with civil society were healthy and the Government worked in partnership with NGOs. The advisory centres, for example, were not State-run organizations but were managed by NGOs. Similarly, civil society organizations were represented on one of the subcommittees of the National Council for Social Action.

58. The Government was already taking action to meet its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: its first report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been prepared and a national action plan for persons with disabilities was in the pipeline. Under proposed legislation on inclusion, quotas would be set for hiring persons with disabilities: 4 per cent in the public sector and 2 per cent in the private sector.

59. **Ms. Akizuki** commended the State party on its progress in certain areas, notably combating domestic violence, since its previous dialogue with the Committee. In other areas progress had been slow: early marriage and adolescent pregnancy were two major concerns. Many communities and families were still structured around patriarchal norms that assigned women to roles as mothers and carers. She therefore wondered what impact the National Policy on Gender Equality and Equity could have on deep-rooted cultural practices and traditions. What obstacles might hinder its effective implementation? She would like to know what goals were set in that policy and what time frame was established for their attainment; she also wondered what resources were available, what monitoring systems were in place and what criteria were applied in evaluating its impact. Did the State party plan to strengthen its collaboration with NGOs as a means of boosting implementation of the policy?

60. She wondered whether the proposed strategy on early marriage and adolescent pregnancy had yet been approved and, if so, what progress had been made in its implementation. If it had not been approved, what was the obstacle and what was the time frame for approval? Did the State party intend to revise the provisions of the Family Code permitting marriage for girls at the age of 15?

61. Noting that no cases of the offence of forced marriage under the Domestic Violence Act had been registered, she said that she would appreciate receiving disaggregated statistics on all forms of violence against women, including forced marriage, giving the number of investigations, convictions and acquittals, and indicating whether compensation had been paid to the victims.

62. **Ms. Gabr** said that, although Angola had ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and had taken other commendable steps to combat trafficking and assist victims, the Committee was concerned that no convictions had been handed down in 2018, no statistics on numbers of victims had been collected and no funding had been provided for victim protection services such as shelters. Law enforcement bodies had no standard mechanism for screening potential victims and, for the third consecutive year, the Intersectoral Commission against Trafficking in Human Beings had not adopted a national action plan.

63. She wondered whether any study was envisaged to look into the prevailing forms of trafficking and their causes. Did the State party have a national referral mechanism? If so, was it used by justice officials and were those officials given training in identifying victims? She wondered what progress was being made in preparing a national action plan.

64. She would like to know whether there were any hotlines to receive victims' complaints and how many women victims had been identified during the reporting period. What was the relationship between corruption and the impunity enjoyed by some traffickers?

65. Turning to the issue of prostitution, she said that Angolan girls as young as 13 and girls under 12 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo were the victims of sex trafficking, while foreign women were recruited by gangs with promises of work but forced into prostitution. She wondered what efforts the Government was making to prosecute the perpetrators and protect and assist the victims. She also wondered what measures the Government had in place to help prevent girls and women from families in extreme poverty from turning to prostitution and what rehabilitation programmes existed to enable women to leave prostitution if they wished.

66. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that the authorities were working on early marriage and adolescent pregnancy in the full awareness that the issues were intimately linked to cultural considerations, vulnerability and poverty. Work was being done to develop a social action information system comprising a single register that would make it possible to identify the persons most at risk. Under the plans for local development and poverty reduction, each community had its own budget to enable it to address vulnerability and enhance local people's dignity. The support of traditional authorities could be sought in exerting a positive influence on young people.

67. NGOs were valuable partners for all ministries. An idea the President had put forward was that each ministry, once its budget had been approved, should meet with relevant civil society organizations and seek their input on projects. NGOs were viewed very much as part of the process.

68. The 2011 Domestic Violence Act was under review because the institutional and legislative context had changed since it had been adopted. It was important to ensure that the Act was in line with the international instruments to which Angola was a party. Many cases of domestic violence were not reported; so, although she could cite a figure of 529 recorded cases, that did not give the real picture. Complaints received by the police or other frontline agencies were referred either to the public prosecutor or the National Children's Institute depending on the nature of the complaint. Every effort was being made to create a system that would yield uniform statistics that would reflect the situation across the country.

69. Shelters for women victims of violence were being built, although women frequently preferred to remain in their home. A newer type of shelter included a training room so that, during their stay, women could learn new skills that might equip them to cater better for their own and their children's needs.

70. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that in 2017 and 2018 early marriage had taken place in three of the country's provinces. The Government intended to review the age of marriage given in article 24 of the Family Code. A major difficulty in eradicating harmful practices and domestic violence, especially with respect to early marriage, however, was the lack of education. It was important to work with civil society to combat such practices through the dissemination of information.

71. As mentioned in the introductory statement, some 60 trafficking cases had been investigated in the past 4 years. However, between 2014 and 2015, sentences had been passed in only four cases and, in 2018, only five cases. Angola was keen to improve its record in that regard. In the past two years, specialist training had been provided to more than 150 persons from different fields and, in 2018, assistance had been provided to 21 victims, some of them young people, who had been helped to return to their own countries.

72. Emphasis was placed on raising public awareness about human trafficking, since there was a lack of knowledge on the subject, especially in rural areas. In addition, the

National Institute for Judicial Studies provided human rights training to judges, prosecutors and other legal officials. Judges also received in-service training and efforts were being made to sensitize police officers to the issue and prevent their complicity in human rights abuses.

73. **Ms. Mixinge** said that she wished to draw attention to Act No. 25/12 of 2012, the Children's Act, which emphasized the child's right to be cared for by both parents and placed responsibility on the parents for the child's upbringing and behaviour. The law had done much to protect Angolan children against neglect, abuse and exploitation.

74. **Ms. Gabr**, welcoming the State party's involvement in the Blue Heart Campaign against Human Trafficking, said that she would like more information about the action plan to tackle trafficking, which reports indicated had yet to be adopted. In particular, she wished to know whether it was based on the principles of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, what main issues it sought to tackle and what measures it contained to protect victims. She wondered whether national referral mechanisms and hotlines for victims of trafficking had been established and how many shelters there were in the State party specifically for women and child victims of trafficking. It would also be useful to know what support was provided by the Government to assist families living in extreme poverty, since their children were often vulnerable to sexual exploitation or prostitution.

75. **Ms. Akizuki**, referring to paragraph 39 of the State party's report, said that she would be interested to know what could account for the significant increase in the number of reported cases of domestic violence.

76. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that the Committee was concerned at the lack of cooperation with NGOs and their absence from the interactive dialogue. She wondered whether the delegation could shed any light on why there had been so little engagement with NGOs, especially as many had previously cooperated with the Committee. Were there any conditions preventing them from interacting freely with human rights treaty bodies?

77. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that a national plan of action to combat trafficking in persons was being developed – taking into account the principles of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol – and would be opened for public consultation before finally being approved. Mechanisms were in place to provide for compensation for victims of trafficking, who were also entitled to apply for visas to stay in Angola on humanitarian grounds. Many wished to return home to their country of origin, however, in which case the necessary arrangements were made in cooperation with the authorities of that country. For those wishing to stay, social centres located around the country provided accommodation and a range of services including health care, legal advice and psychological assistance.

78. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that various efforts were under way to tackle poverty, including a new cash transfer programme for women with three or more children under the age of 5 years. The aim was to offer them financial support in the short term while empowering them to find productive ways of improving and maintaining their standard of living in the long term. Churches and NGOs were also involved in helping deprived families. Moreover, the State provided study grants to enable children from poorer families to get an education.

79. Women victims of domestic violence often wished to stay in the family home. If, however, there was a need for them to be removed from the home, accommodation was available. Steps were being taken to identify areas where more housing, or shelters, were needed. Although a hotline for victims of domestic violence had experienced some technical hitches preventing its use, there were alternatives, such as the 113 telephone line of the National Police. Social workers and other professionals working in the community were trained to identify and report signs of domestic violence, psychologists provided support to victims and rehabilitation programmes were available for perpetrators of domestic violence. Awareness-raising campaigns were also conducted to tackle the root causes of domestic violence and educate women, men and communities.

80. **Ms. Caposso Fernandes** (Angola) said that she was the president and founder of Associação Lei Com Força an NGO involved in promoting greater legal awareness and empowerment of women. There was an active civil society sector in Angola working on issues such as poverty reduction, women's empowerment and the Sustainable Development

Goals. Efforts were being made to facilitate cooperation between the Government and NGOs; any recommendations that the Committee could make in that regard would be very welcome.

*Articles 7 to 9*

81. **Ms. Chalal**, referring to paragraph 116 of the State party's report, said that she would welcome specific information on the policy measures implemented to raise awareness of the importance of women's participation in public and political life, including the number of women who had benefited from training in that regard. She wished to know whether any quotas or other measures existed to increase women's representation in decision-making and leadership in the public sector. She noted that, despite the legal requirement for political parties to ensure that women made up at least 30 per cent of candidates on party lists, there were no legal or financial penalties for failure to comply and women's political participation thus remained low. Just 11 per cent of provincial governors were women, for instance. In the light of the forthcoming municipal elections in 2020, she wondered what measures were envisaged to ensure the full implementation of the law on gender quotas, whether an independent national electoral commission existed to monitor compliance with electoral law and what role was played by the women's caucus in the National Assembly.

82. Although women were present in the executive branch, they were often confined to traditional subject areas, such as health and education. She asked whether there was the political will to improve the gender balance at local and national levels of political life, including by encouraging women to take on non-traditional positions. In that connection, she would be interested to know the proportion of women occupying senior roles in the public sector, the police and on the governing bodies of political parties and the extent to which they were involved in awareness-raising campaigns to change societal attitudes to women in leadership.

83. While welcoming the State party's accession to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which provided for women's equal representation in decision-making roles in the public and private sectors, the Committee was concerned that the number of women in senior public roles had decreased markedly, as had women's representation in the parliament. With that in mind, she wished to know whether any temporary special measures were envisaged to address women's underrepresentation in the political and public spheres and accelerate efforts to achieve gender parity. Lastly, she wondered whether updated data on women's participation in all sectors of life, which was monitored by the Multisectoral Gender Council, could be provided, whether any gender quotas or specific policies were in place to promote women's representation in the diplomatic service and in international organizations and what proportion of women were appointed to the diplomatic service.

84. **Ms. Acosta Vargas**, noting the State party's commendable efforts to improve civil registration procedures, said that she wished to know whether any challenges remained in that regard, in particular in areas of the country where difficulties in registering births and acquiring identity documents had previously been reported. Referring to paragraph 82 of the State party's replies to the list of issues, she wondered what could account for the gender disparity in the acquisition of identity documents and what measures were envisaged to facilitate women's access to such documentation.

85. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that measures to increase women's participation in public and political life included the provision of training to encourage women to broaden their horizons and set up their own businesses.

86. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that steps were being taken to increase women's participation in political life ahead of the upcoming municipal elections. In line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, legislation was being drafted to ensure that political parties adopted the "zebra system", whereby every third candidate on a party list was a woman. Women's representation in the diplomatic service had greatly improved and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs plan on making senior appointments to international organizations made provision for giving priority to women candidates.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*