



**Convention on the Elimination  
of all Forms of Discrimination  
Against Women**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on 9 August 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. IDER

later: Ms. Ilic

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article 18 of the Convention (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER  
ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

1. Ms. EL-FETOUH, speaking on a point of order, submitted a draft amendment to article 19 of the Committee's rules of procedure. The word al-arabiyah ("Arabic") should be inserted between the word al-siniyah ("Chinese") and the word al-fransiyah ("French") in the second line of the Arabic text of article 19 so that the article would read as follows: "Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the official languages and the working languages of the Committee."

2. Of course the point might be raised that Arabic was not one of the working languages of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, which were English, Spanish and French. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to envisage that a Committee which fought discrimination did not accord the same treatment to Arabic as to Chinese and Russian, which had been accepted as working languages of the Committee.

3. The CHAIRPERSON, reminding delegations that the text of the amendment had been distributed to them in all the languages, asked Ms. El-Fetouh to agree to defer consideration of the amendment, on which the Committee must take a decision, so as to permit the representative of Cuba to present her country's report.

4. Ms. EL-FETOUH said she agreed to the Chairperson's proposal but urged the Committee to consider the draft amendment at an appropriate time.

5. Ms. Ilic took the Chair.

6. Ms. FINLAY (Cuba), presenting her country's report, began by referring to the background information in the introduction, which described the evolution of the economic, political and social situation in Cuba. She emphasized in particular the appalling economic, political and social underdevelopment from which Cuba suffered in 1959, the year of the revolution. Women, in particular, were affected by the grinding poverty, deplorable health conditions and alarming illiteracy which characterized that time.

7. In just 20 years, the Cuban Government had managed, by revolutionary means, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women before the law, to ensure equal access to education and to free health services and to provide employment for a large number of women. All those measures had been taken despite the economic and political blockade imposed on Cuba.

8. Nevertheless, despite those measures, which had benefited the entire Cuban population, much still had to be done in order to ensure complete equality between the sexes in Cuba. It was necessary in particular to eliminate prejudices rooted in people's minds and an entire mentality based on what was commonly called "machismo".

(Ms. Finlay, Cuba)

9. The Cuban representative was well aware of the shortcomings of the report but hoped that on the basis of observations and comments from members of the Committee, and with the aid of the guidelines to be approved for the preparation of future reports, her country would be able to submit a second report which would be both more informative and more concise.
10. Turning to the content of the report, she drew attention to the fact that the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba established the principle of equality of all citizens and prohibited discrimination based on sex. That constitutional principle was laid down in all the relevant laws and regulations in force today.
11. It was the task of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic to ensure that those laws were enforced at the municipal, provincial and national levels.
12. Although there was no actual discrimination, it must be noted that very few women held very high positions in Cuba. The psychological factors she had mentioned were responsible for that state of affairs. In particular, few women held the posts of minister, deputy minister or ambassador.
13. Equal access to education was also guaranteed by the Constitution and it should be noted in that connection that more women than men were now entering university in Cuba. Nevertheless, there was still a very high drop-out rate among young women, particularly in the rural areas. To combat that trend, Cuba was currently engaged in an educational campaign aimed at ensuring that everyone over the age of 14 would eventually attain an educational level tantamount to a junior high school equivalency certificate ("ninth form"). Good results had already been obtained in adult education, with women comprising 43.8 per cent of the students registered in those courses in 1980-1981.
14. Women had also made impressive gains in employment; in March 1983 more than 1 million women, i.e., 35.7 per cent of the working population, had a job, a figure unprecedented in the history of Cuba. In order to ensure the total integration of women in the work force, the Government had adopted a number of measures in addition to the ones indicated in the report, such as resolution 550 of 1980, which conferred official status on work in the home, and resolution 605 of 1981, which established co-ordinating commissions on employment for women. Those commissions, established at municipal, provincial and national levels, were directed by the national labour organization, the trade union organization and the organization of women. Their task was to conduct studies and propose the adoption of measures for creating new jobs for women, to analyse women's place in the world of work and at the level of technical and vocational training and to give them access to more responsible positions, an area in which much still remained to be done.
15. In addition, the Cuban Government was currently studying legislation to protect the maternity of working women in accordance with article 11, paragraph 3 of the Convention.
16. The Cuban representative noted that her country, although small and underdeveloped, had spared no effort in the past 24 years to establish a way of life based on social justice and equity. She also recalled that Cuba was the first

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(Ms. Finlay, Cuba)

country to sign the Convention, an instrument whose spirit was completely in conformity with its national legislation as well as with the wishes and desires of the Cuban Government and people.

17. In conclusion, she stated that she was prepared to provide whatever clarifications the members of the Committee might request and to see that their questions and comments were taken into account in the preparation of her country's next report.

18. Ms. Ider resumed the Chair.

19. Ms. BIRYUKOVA commended the authors of Cuba's report and the Cuban representative for her excellent presentation. The report indicated that considerable progress had been made in Cuba towards achieving equality between the sexes. That progress was all the more admirable as it was the culmination of barely 20 years of effort. As clearly stated in the report, Cuban women's gains were not just on paper; they were the result of the active participation of Cuban women, through their organization, the Federation of Cuban Women, in formulating their country's legislation, in particular the 1978 Constitution, the 1975 Family Code and the Code for Young Persons, and Cuban national policy.

20. As she had found in 1981 during a visit to Cuba, the Cuban Government spared no effort to promote education at all levels, and to protect the family.

21. She stressed the comprehensive nature of the report. She merely wished that the representative of Cuba had provided additional details on the role of the Federation of Cuban Women in promoting peace at the national, regional and international levels.

22. Ms. LAMM was gratified by the quality of the Cuban report and by the manner in which it had been presented. She particularly appreciated the first part of the report, which traced the history of Cuban legislation.

23. The report clearly demonstrated not only the progress made but also the obstacles encountered on the road to equality between the sexes. She had been particularly impressed by the information contained on page 25, which revealed that today 48 per cent of the staff of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs were women holding posts of ambassador, director or expert, performing technical functions or employed in the services sector. The explanations relating to implementation of article 10 of the Convention were also extremely interesting. Nevertheless, she wished to receive additional information on the system of grants and the percentage of women receiving such grants.

24. Ms. SMITH joined previous speakers in congratulating the representative of Cuba on the report and her presentation, and, in particular, on the candor with which she had referred to the psychological difficulties hampering implementation of the laws guaranteeing equality of men and women. She wished to know whether the provisions of the Convention could be cited before the Cuban courts and applied directly by them.

(Ms. Smith)

25. Cuban women seemed to have the same rights and opportunities as men, but were, perhaps, in need of guidance and encouragement so that they could choose an education giving them access to jobs traditionally done by men.

26. There did not seem to be enough in the report on the measures taken to promote women's education and the kind of education which women chose. The report did not indicate the kind of work that women preferred and the opportunities actually open to them.

27. She was less impressed than Ms. Lamm by the percentage of women working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since that figure did not indicate the level at which those women were employed. Similarly, on page 18, the report referred to a programme entrusted to the Committee to deal with the question of the role of the family in socialism, but nothing was said of the practical results of that programme. She would also like more detailed information on what had been done specifically to facilitate the incorporation of Cuban women in the economically active population and their social activities. The report showed that Cuba was making major efforts to protect family unity, but gave no information on the incidence of divorce and what happened, in case of separation, to family property, children, etc.

28. Ms. NGUYEN NGOC DUNG thought that the structure of the report submitted by Cuba should serve as a model for future reports. The introduction contained a review giving the background of the radical changes which had taken place after the Revolution, and also stressed the progress made by the country in record time. She had particularly welcomed the frankness and modesty with which the Cuban Government had explained the objective and subjective factors still hampering the equality of women and which explained why certain objectives had still not been realized. The report also stressed the role played by non-governmental organizations and associations in which Cuban women were very active, and which were devoted to building, consolidating and defending socialist society. Those organizations included the Federation of Cuban Women, which had been one of the most important and most effective agents of the integration of women in the revolutionary process.

29. Since the report was extremely comprehensive, she had no questions. She congratulated the Cuban Government on its success in the social sphere, particularly in promoting equality for women; it was all the more praiseworthy as economic conditions and security problems in Cuba were particularly difficult.

30. Ms. MUKAYIRANGA said that she had been particularly impressed when the Head of State of Cuba, at the Second Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women in 1974, had personally expressed an interest in the rights and equality of women and the protection of mothers. In that connection, the report contained, under the heading "The implementation of article 5" of the Convention, (p. 18 of the English text of the report) resolutions on the role of the family in socialism and the means of strengthening it, in particular by upgrading women's work in the home. Finally, the notes contained in the annex to the report contained a wealth of detail on Cuban legislation, which was extremely modern and progressive.

(Ms. Mukayiranga)

31. However, she would welcome clarification on some points. For example, with regard to the implementation of article 3 of the Convention, the report stated, on page 12 of the English text, that (women's access to education was) "greater in the case of primary and secondary studies than for men, a fact which results in the greater number of women who enter higher level studies". In that connection, she inquired whether there were more women than men in the population. She also wanted more information on the role and structure on the Inspectorate General of the Republic, which seemed to play a very important role in monitoring strict compliance with the law.

32. Ms. BERNARD also felt that Cuba's report should serve as a model for reports to be submitted by States parties in the future. It was particularly noteworthy that all the useful information was contained in the annex. The general impression given by the report was that the Republic of Cuba had succeeded in ensuring equality between men and women. That was apparent, in particular, from the fact that 48 per cent of the staff employed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were women and that there were no limits on the employment of women, and many other examples. The Cuban Government recognized, however, that further progress was still possible, especially with regard to women's participation in the Government and Party structures. It was no doubt merely a question of time. She particularly admired the Family Code instituted by the Republic of Cuba, in the drafting of which women's organizations had played a major role.

33. Nevertheless, clarification of certain points of detail would be welcome. She wished to know, for example, whether all Cuban women were members of the Federation of Cuban Women and, if not, which organs were open to those who did not belong to the Federation. The report indicated that prostitution had been abolished; it would be interesting to know how that had been done and what sanctions there were for offenders. Finally, she wished to know whether there were many women in the judicial system and what percentage of posts they occupied.

34. Ms. DE REGO DA COSTA SALEMA MOURA RIBEIRO said that the report demonstrated clearly and comprehensively the de jure and de facto status of women in Cuba. She congratulated the Cuban Government representative on her presentation of the report and had particularly appreciated her remarks on machismo, which, in her own country, was one of the most serious obstacles to equality between men and women. Nevertheless, there were gaps in the report and she would welcome answers to a number of questions.

35. With regard to women's participation in political life, she wished to know whether there were women in the higher organs of the State and, in particular, whether women sat on the Supreme Court. She also wished to obtain more information on the part played by women in the formulation of the draft Constitution. She had, moreover, noted that the report gave no information on abortion. It would be of interest to know in what circumstances abortion was available, whether it was free, etc.

(Ms. De Rego Da Costa Salema Moura Ribeiro)

36. Another important point had caught her attention. Referring to the implementation of article 13 of the Convention, the report stated, in paragraph (c) on page 42 of the English version, that the Fundamental Law of the Republic postulated freedom in artistic creation and of forms of expression in art "provided always that its content is not contrary to the Revolution". That last phrase required precise elucidation.

37. Finally, on page 15 of the English version of the report, the statement made by the President of the Republic of Cuba at the closure of the Second Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women in 1974 implied that women were primarily considered as mothers. The statement and, in particular, the words "... there must be some small privileges and some small inequalities in favour of women", called for detailed comment.

38. Ms. OESER endorsed the remarks of those members of the Committee who had already stressed the comprehensive and detailed nature of the report, and the usefulness of the footnotes and references to the documentation used in drafting the report, which provided all the detail necessary. In her view, the structure of the report offered a valuable guide for future reports.

39. She was particularly impressed by the progress made by Cuban women in the legal sphere. Thus, referring to article 2 of the Convention, the report stated that the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba recognized not only women's right to equality, but also prohibited all forms of discrimination, whether based on sex, race, colour or national origin, and also recognized the equality of all members of society. Similarly, the Penal Code proscribed the defence of ideas based on superiority or racial hatred. Women's equality and non-discrimination against women could thus be seen in the broader context of the equality of all members of society and non-discrimination against any of its members. She had also been struck by the remarks made on the Cuban judicial system and the monitoring carried out by the General Public Prosecutor of the Republic, who could, when necessary, initiate legal proceedings before the competent courts, thus guaranteeing the rights contained in the Constitution. Such progress benefited society as a whole, and, as was stated on page 8 of the English version of the report, further progress was possible.

40. She found the information supplied satisfactory but wished to receive clarifications on the implementation of article 4 of the Convention. The point at issue was "privileges and inequalities" in favour of women and had already been raised. In her view, women had no need to be "overprotected". The objective to be attained was simply to give them the same opportunities as men. She would like the Cuban Government's views on the matter to be expanded and clarified.

41. Ms. MACEDO DE SHEPPARD referred to the implementation of article 2 of the Convention (p. 9 of the English version of the report). The report stated that the Constitution prohibited, and provided for the penalization of, discrimination of any kind. Yet the text of the report and the Penal Code cited in the annex did not specify the penalties that could be imposed.

(Ms. Macedo De Sheppard)

42. Furthermore, it seemed that there was a contradiction between the principle of equal rights for women recognized by the Constitution and the Law on Protection and Hygiene at Work, which provided: "Women will not be employed in such work as may prove to be specially prejudicial to them, given their physical and physiological peculiarities". Similarly, pregnant women were exempt from overtime and night shifts, etc. She wished to know whether that law was enforced and exactly what jobs were considered prejudicial to women. With respect to the implementation of article 1 of the Convention, reference was made, on page 8 of the English version of the report, to the objective factors still hampering equality between men and women. Among those factors was the fact that "many women do not possess the required level of skills". That seemed to be contradictory, since men and women had an equal right to education.

43. With reference to the implementation of article 6 of the Convention, the report stated that prostitution as a social phenomenon had ceased to exist in the country since the 1959 Revolution and that Law No. 993 had designated the exploitation of any form of prostitution as an "index of dangerousness". She wished to know exactly what was meant by the words "index of dangerousness" and what provision was made in the Penal Code to punish such dangerous phenomena as procuring, prostitution and the exploitation of exercise of socially reprehensible vices.

44. She also wished to have further details of the electoral system and wished to know, in particular, what figures were available on women's participation in elections.

45. Article 10 of the Convention concerned the equality of men and women with regard to access to education. In particular, under Cuban legislation, men and women were guaranteed access to the same courses, the same examinations and the same grants for continuing their education, and Cuban women increasingly were taking advantage of the educational opportunities available to the population. She wished to know how gains had been made in that field. The report stated (p. 27, para. (c)) that co-education was a fundamental principle of Cuban pedagogy. She wished to know whether co-education was the only means envisaged to eliminate all stereotyped concepts regarding the role of men and women in teaching.

46. Finally, referring to the implementation of article 12 of the Convention, relating to the right to health and, in particular, the provision of adequate nutrition for the most vulnerable groups, especially pregnant women, the report stated that "The availability factors regarding foodstuffs are not debatable in our society, where pregnant women are guaranteed a supplementary diet during the period of gestation". She wished to know how, in practice, the policy of equitable distribution of foodstuffs to the whole of the population, and in particular the most vulnerable groups, was implemented.

47. Ms. PEYTCHEVA congratulated the Cuban Government on its report which, both in its structure and in the exhaustive information it contained, reflected the remarkable efforts the Government had made not only to embody the provisions of the Convention in its legislation but also to put them into practice, thereby creating the material conditions necessary for women to play their rightful part in

(Ms. Peytcheva)

society. The role assigned to women in the social, economic, political and cultural life of Cuba, their active participation in the formulation and execution of Government policies, their participation in non-governmental organizations, the high percentage of women employed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the positive results achieved in the field of education and the provisions of Cuban legislation guaranteeing women equal rights in the fields of employment, health and marriage were especially remarkable in the light of Cuba's long colonial past.

48. She requested more detailed information about the Federation of Cuban Women, which was mentioned in the report in connection with the implementation of article 7, and specifically about the Federation's role in relation to other non-governmental organizations in Cuba dealing with political and social problems. In particular, it would be of interest to know whether the Federation of Cuban Women was authorized to propose draft laws.

49. Ms. CORTES congratulated the Cuban Government on its very comprehensive report, particularly with regard to the legal measures designed to eliminate discrimination against women. She also congratulated the representative of Cuba on her presentation of the report and thanked her for the additional information she had provided. She was impressed by the efforts the Cuban Government had made to promote popular participation in the elaboration of legislative measures in such important fields as health services, employment and family law.

50. With regard to the implementation of article 1, the report indicated that, to ensure the incorporation of women in social work, the State ensured that they were given jobs that were compatible with their physical constitution. In that respect, she asked to what extent women could choose their jobs. Referring to the implementation of article 6, the report stated that, under Cuban penal law, procuring, prostitution and the exploitation or exercise of socially reprehensible vices were established as "indices of dangerousness". Although the texts relating to the "state of danger" and the preventive security measures which could be taken in that regard were reproduced in footnotes 21 and 22, she requested additional details about the "indices of dangerousness" and their implications.

51. Referring to the information on page 21 of the report, that the Federation of Cuban Women, a non-governmental organization, had been one of the most important and capable vehicles of the Cuban Government, as was indicated she asked how a non-governmental organization could be "a vehicle" of the Government.

52. Although the legislative provisions guaranteeing the right to work were mentioned in connection with article 11, the report did not contain any figures relating to either unemployment or underemployment. Accordingly, she asked what the situation was in that respect.

53. It would be interesting to have figures relating to the staff of the health services and, in particular, the percentage of women employed as health personnel. She also asked exactly what was meant by the "system of collective feeding" referred to in the report.

(Ms. Cortes)

54. With regard to the implementation of article 13, page 42 of the report stated that freedom in artistic creation was guaranteed, provided that its content was not contrary to the Revolution. Since that statement seemed to contain a contradiction, she requested a clarification.

55. Lastly, referring to the information in the report concerning the number of women working as technicians, holding managerial posts or carrying out administrative tasks, she requested that the relevant figures should be expressed as percentages of the numbers of men performing the same jobs.

56. Ms. REGENT-LECHOWICZ congratulated the Cuban Government on its very clear and comprehensive report, which not only described the legal and administrative measures adopted to implement the Convention but also contained a great deal of information on the legislative provisions designed to put it into effect. At the same time, the report underscored the difficulties, created by the existence of prejudices, which the Cuban Government had encountered in its efforts to eliminate discrimination against women. In addition, she congratulated the representative of Cuba on the frankness and modesty she had displayed in introducing the report.

57. She had had an opportunity to visit Cuba in order to sign an agreement on mutual legal assistance on behalf of the Polish Government and, having studied Cuban legislation at that time, she had been able to see how modern and progressive such legislation was, particularly as it related to the family. She had also been struck by the important role played by the Federation of Cuban Women in many areas. The progress achieved in Cuba was all the more remarkable in view of the burden of history, as was stressed in the introduction to the report.

58. She requested additional information concerning the General Public Prosecutor's Office which was referred to in paragraph (d) on page 10 of the report, in particular with regard to its composition, jurisdiction and practice.

59. Ms. EL-FETOUH thanked the representative of Cuba for her statement introducing her Government's report and for the additional information she had provided on the participation of Cuban women in various social activities and in political decision-making. Since the report was extremely detailed, she had questions about only two points. First, she asked why the retirement age had been set at 55 for women and at 60 for men and whether that did not constitute discrimination against one of the sexes. In particular, she asked whether that distinction was based on scientific studies which had determined that women, unlike men, were no longer capable of working after the age of 55 or whether it was due to factors inherent in Cuban society. Secondly, the report cited a legal provision exempting pregnant women, and those with children under one year of age, from overtime work and night shifts. In that connection, she asked whether overtime and night shifts were mandatory in Cuba.

60. Ms. ILIC, noting that the report submitted by the Government of Cuba stated that the true and definitive reinstatement of women in society had been initiated in Cuba from 1959, said that the report was very comprehensive, and the additional information provided by the representative of Cuba showed that since that time women had made great progress in all areas of social life. She would, however,

(Ms. Ilic)

like to have more complete information on the participation of women in development, since Cuba was a developing country. Similarly, she would like to have more details on the part played by women in decision-making. Finally, she found it difficult to understand possibly because of the translation, the provision of the Law on Protection and Hygiene at Work by which women were not to be employed in such work as might prove to be specially prejudicial to them, given their physical and physiological peculiarities, and she would like some clarification.

61. Ms. ESCUDERO-MUSCOSO congratulated the Cuban Government on its noteworthy report, which gave a complete picture of legislative provisions and practical measures adopted to ensure equality between men and women. She had been particularly struck by the comments of the representative of Cuba on male chauvinism as a sociological factor and on the prejudices embedded in the minds of the population, something which was very difficult to change. It would be interesting to know what the Cuban Government intended to do to change those attitudes, present in virtually all developing countries.

62. She would like to know how the extensive system of social security in Cuba was financed. Some aspects of that system appeared, however, to have more to do with social welfare than with social security in the strict sense.

63. The report stated that the Federation of Cuban Women had organized a programme to enable women to continue their studies up to the ninth grade in centres close to home, and it would be interesting to know how it had been possible to organize and structure an undertaking on such a scale by using, moreover, volunteers, who did not necessarily have the required training as teachers.

64. With reference to the plan to enable women to have a paid job at home, she asked whether, looking beyond its obvious advantages, there was not a danger that such a plan would mean that women had too much work to do, since it added another activity to the household tasks they carried out at home.

65. Finally, she found particularly interesting the idea of including in the report extracts of speeches in which the Cuban Head of State examined the changes in the status of women and the progress achieved and expressed his hopes in that area, stressing the efforts that still had to be made.

66. Mr. NORDENFELT associated himself with the previous speakers in congratulating the Cuban Government: the report it had submitted was very complete and well laid out, and the notes in the annex made for easy reference.

67. He was disturbed by the provision of the Fundamental Law that artistic creation was free as long as its content was not contrary to the Revolution since it seemed to allow discrimination based on opinions or convictions. Similarly, the provision of article 26 of the Code for Children and Young Persons, which made "a correct integral attitude" a condition for study in centres for higher education, which proviso might give rise to discrimination. However, such questions fell more within the competence of the Human Rights Committee.

(Mr. Nordenfelt)

68. He would like to know the justification for having different retirement ages for men and women. He would also like to know why the age of majority was 18 years while the right to vote was granted at 16.

69. In the field of family law, he noted that the tribunal granting a divorce could decide that both spouses should retain authority over the children, that principle was certainly admirable from the point of view of fairness, but it could be asked how parental authority could be shared in practice, especially when the parents disagreed. Finally, with respect to adoption, he asked whether a bachelor could adopt a child.

70. Ms. FINLAY (Cuba) thanked the members of the Committee for the praise addressed to her Government and said she was gratified that they had taken note of the progress achieved in less than 20 years to integrate women fully in the developing process of the country. The comments made would be useful, and she intended to reply to the questions raised once she had prepared a complete list with the co-operation of the Secretariat.

Consideration of the proposed amendment to rule 19 of the rules of procedure of the Committee submitted by Ms. El-Fetouh

71. Ms. CREYDT (Secretary of the Committee), said that, according to article 51 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish were both the official and the working languages of the General Assembly, its committees and its sub-committees. However, the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, when it had prepared its rules of procedure under article 19 of the Convention, had not included Arabic in its working languages. Nevertheless, she had consulted the Department of Conference Services, which had informed her that including Arabic in the working languages of the Committee would present no difficulty and would entail no financial implications, given that the documents issued thus far had also been issued in Arabic.

72. The CHAIRPERSON said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposed amendment to rule 19 of the rules of procedure of the Committee submitted by Ms. El-Fetouh for the inclusion of Arabic among the working languages of the Committee.

73. It was so decided.

74. Ms. CORTES said she felt that the amendment of the rules of procedure should have been made through the adoption of a formal proposal.

75. Ms. BERNARD said she shared that opinion, since it would have been better to abide by the provisions governing amendments to the rules of procedure. In that connection, she recalled that rule 54 of the rules of procedure of the Committee stipulated that such decisions should be taken by a two thirds majority of the members present and voting and at least 24 hours after the proposal for the amendment had been circulated.

76. Ms. BIRYUKOVA said she recalled that, at its first session, the Committee had agreed to try to adopt decisions by consensus. In the present case, there had been consensus, and the adoption of the proposed amendment had therefore been in order.
77. Ms. MUKAYIRANGA said she agreed that, above all, an effort should be made to adopt decisions by consensus, and that the adoption of the proposed amendment had therefore been in order.
78. Ms. BERNARD said that she had not requested a debate on the proposed amendment but had wished to draw attention to the provisions of the rules of procedure governing the amendment of those rules. In order to conform to those provisions, it would have been sufficient to submit a proposal, which the Committee would have had no difficulty in adopting, and the Committee's report would have thus stated that the rules of procedure had been amended by the required majority.
79. The CHAIRPERSON requested the Committee to agree, on an exceptional basis, to uphold the decision that had been taken, on the understanding that, in future, the Committee would take Ms. Bernard's comments into account when adopting amendments.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.