



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

Distr.: General  
1 March 2019

Original: English

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

**Summary record of the 1665th meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 21 February 2019, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Gbedemah

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*Eighth periodic report of Ethiopia*

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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)*

*Eighth periodic report of Ethiopia* ([CEDAW/C/ETH/8](#); [CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/8](#) and [CEDAW/C/ETH/Q/8/Add.1](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Ethiopia took places at the Committee table.*
2. **The Chair** said that she wished to welcome the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the United Nations Office in Geneva. At the invitation of the Committee, other members of the delegation would be speaking via video link from Addis Ababa.
3. **Mr. Kassaye** (Ethiopia) said that the delegation looked forward to informing the Committee, and the international community, about the progress made in implementing the Convention in Ethiopia .
4. **Ms. Wube** (Ethiopia), introducing the eighth periodic report of Ethiopia ([CEDAW/C/ETH/8](#)), said that recent reforms in her country had benefited women in a number of ways. Ethiopia now had its first female president and had become one of the few countries in the world to have achieved gender parity in its Cabinet. The new Ministers of Defence, Peace, Trade and Industry, and National Planning were all women, while women had also been appointed to key roles such as President of the Supreme Court and Chair of the Election Board.
5. Many women had also been among the political prisoners and detained journalists and activists who had been released from prison as part of the reforms. More generally, the release of prisoners had been accompanied by greater freedom of expression and the lifting of restrictions on websites and social media. Many political activists had returned from exile. Major reforms were being undertaken in the justice and labour sectors. In addition, the parliament had eased restrictions on civil society organizations, allowing them to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights, including women's rights. Work was also under way to amend laws that had restricted freedoms.
6. As a country in transition, Ethiopia still faced challenges, however. Conflict and displacement affecting numerous people across the country were still serious problems. The Government understood the particular impact conflict and displacement had on women and children and, in taking measures to meet the needs of the affected population, it maintained a special focus on the needs of women and children.
7. The State party's report was the result of a participatory process that had involved many ministries as well as grass-roots women's organizations, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, the Women and Children's Affairs Standing Committee, the judiciary and religious coalitions. She wished to draw Committee members' attention to the fact that the names of certain of the bodies mentioned in the report had changed as a result of the reforms.
8. Ethiopian law provided comprehensive protection against all forms of discrimination including on the basis of sex. Government strategies on development and change focused on further empowering women in the political, economic and cultural spheres.
9. The National Strategy on Harmful Traditional Practices aimed to eliminate the most prevalent harmful practices, namely child marriage, female genital mutilation and abduction. The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs had prepared a road map to guide work towards those goals between 2019 and 2023. The implementation of the Vital Events Registration and National Identity Card Proclamation was expected to further efforts to eliminate child marriage.
10. To address violence against women, the Government had established a coordinating body and was implementing the Strategic Plan for an Integrated and Multisectoral Response on Violence Against Women and Children and Child Justice. Response measures

– aimed notably at preventing double victimization – included the establishment of protection units in police stations and of specialized courts to deal with sexual violence, and the creation of one-stop centres for victim support. The 2016 Demographic and Health Survey had yielded nationally representative data that could be used as a baseline to measure progress with regard to the elimination of violence against women, child marriage and female genital mutilation. Explicit prohibitions on sexual harassment in the workplace had been included in the Civil Servants Proclamation and also in the Labour Proclamation, which governed labour relations in the private sector.

11. Mindful of the serious impact human trafficking had on women, the Government had enacted the Proclamation on the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in persons and Smuggling of Migrants, introducing harsh penalties for traffickers and better protection for victims. Persistent reports of abuse of Ethiopian domestic workers and caregivers working in Middle Eastern countries had prompted the Government to ban labour migration to that region in 2013 until proper protection mechanisms could be put in place. The ban had been lifted in 2018 after bilateral labour agreements had been concluded with several receiving countries. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had opened training centres to improve migrant workers' skills.

12. Her Government was committed to ensuring that women's concerns were effectively mainstreamed in national programmes and development plans. Accordingly, women's participation was one pillar of the second five-year Growth and Transformation Plan. The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs had prepared a Gender Mainstreaming Manual and provided training on its implementation. A gender-responsive budgeting manual had also been introduced.

13. While institutional mechanisms for women's, children's and youth affairs existed at the federal, regional, zonal and *woreda* (district) levels, at the grass-roots level it was women's development groups that fostered women's active participation in the country's social, economic and political development efforts. The groups had been instrumental in enhancing women's knowledge and skills in a range of areas, from health care to harmful traditional practices, and the Government had encouraged them by providing training.

14. In terms of education, the gender gap in school enrolment had narrowed, though most progress had been made at the primary level. Girls' participation in technical and vocational training now exceeded that of boys. A priority for the Ministry of Education had been to address school violence; guidelines had been issued to staff and reporting mechanisms for students, teachers and parents had been put in place.

15. In order to guarantee women's health-related rights, the Government had implemented policies, strategies and programmes that had contributed to better maternal and reproductive health. The Health Extension Programme had yielded exemplary results in improving health indicators for women. Community-based health insurance and the Social Health Insurance Programme had improved access to quality health care for women with economic, cultural and mobility-related constraints.

16. Income-generating opportunities for women had been promoted by facilitating access to financing and training. Given the importance of agriculture in Ethiopia, land was a critical issue for rural women. Under the Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation, they could be issued with joint landholder certificates. Pastoralist women received support through the Pastoralist Community Development Programme, a multidimensional programme that incorporated women's rights.

#### *Articles 1 to 6*

17. **Ms. Toe Bouda** said that, although equality between the sexes was enshrined in the Ethiopian Constitution and discrimination on the basis of sex was prohibited by law, there appeared to be significant problems in achieving equality. She noted that the State party had recently ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), but with certain reservations. She would like to know what those reservations were and why the State party had entered them.

18. One obstacle to the achievement of equality was that certain forms of violence that might not have been identified at the time the Criminal Code had been drafted, such as gang rape and acid attacks, were not properly addressed under criminal law. Sexual harassment was not clearly defined under the law and marital rape was not criminalized. It would be worth reviewing existing legislation, applying a gender lens. Legislation on gender-based violence, in particular, was urgently needed.

19. She would like to know whether an adequate budget had been allocated for the implementation of the Criminal Justice Policy adopted in 2011, which, according to the Government, catered for the special needs and situation of women. In light of information before the Committee regarding the arrest of women without due process – for expressing particular opinions, for their political affiliation or for their membership of ethnic groups – she wondered whether the State party intended to implement legislation and create mechanisms to prevent arrest and detention on such grounds and without due process.

20. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission had been criticized for failure to flag human rights violations and lack of impartiality, despite the State party's claim that it had been established pursuant to the Paris Principles. The Committee understood that the Commission had received 62 complaints regarding women's rights between 2014 and 2019 and that 48 convictions in cases involving the violation of women's rights had been handed down in five years. She would like to know how the State party explained those rather low figures: was it a problem of lack of awareness of the infrastructure, a lack of access, or a lack of confidence in the system? The Committee was aware that dispute settlement mechanisms other than the national judicial system existed, such as customary courts and Islamic courts, and would be grateful if the delegation would explain the procedure whereby parties to proceedings determined which court to approach.

21. **Mr. Jemaw** (Ethiopia) said that the reservations entered by Ethiopia to the Maputo Protocol related to marital rape and polygamy. It would not be acceptable to criminalize marital rape in Ethiopia, as to do so would conflict with the concept of the sanctity of marriage and the intimacy of the family, as well as with the obligation on spouses to consummate the marriage. The other reservation related to a provision that encouraged polygamy.

22. **Mr. Gezaw** (Ethiopia) said that his Government agreed that current laws did not adequately cover behaviours such as sexual harassment and gender-based violence. In the context of the ongoing reforms it would therefore be willing to review the relevant legislation. The Government would also be willing to look into any allegations of arrest or detention of women on arbitrary grounds, although at the start of the political reform it had released thousands of political prisoners, including women detained for expressing their political opinions. Arbitrary detention was already prohibited under both the Constitution and the law, which also made due provision for the institutional framework required to prevent detention without due process. The occurrence of arbitrary detention in the past had resulted from a failure to apply the law, reflecting the political priorities of the time.

23. The Human Rights Commission, like many of the country's other institutions, did have some shortcomings. The Government was reviewing the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Establishment Proclamation with a view to enhancing the Commission's independence and impartiality and ensuring that its findings and recommendations were implemented by other government agencies.

24. His Government took the view that gang rape and similar heinous behaviours were adequately criminalized, inasmuch as the law provided for aggravating circumstances that entailed much harsher penalties for crimes of that nature. The legal framework existed to treat such offences with due gravity, and severe sentences had been handed down by courts of law in such cases. However, the Government was quite prepared to look into any gaps in the legislation.

25. **Mr. Jemaw** (Ethiopia) said that, under article 78 (5) of the Constitution, religious and customary courts had received official recognition. Their jurisdiction was similar to that of the ordinary courts on certain civil and family-related matters, such as marriage, divorce and maintenance. However, parties had to give their consent in order for a case to be submitted to those courts.

26. **Ms. Verges** said that she wished to know what measures the State party had taken to strengthen the legislative framework aimed at addressing discrimination against women and girls, ensure its full and effective implementation and provide specialized training on the subject for judges of the customary and religious courts. She noted that the Convention had rarely been invoked in the courts and wondered what remedial action was being taken in that regard. Concerning legal aid, she would like to know whether the National Free Legal Aid Strategy developed in 2015 had been adopted, what services were provided to women through the legal aid centres set up by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and how many women had benefited from them.

27. **Mr. Gezaw** (Ethiopia) said that measures were being taken on several fronts to strengthen the legal framework on women's rights and ensure its effective implementation. For example, a law to combat gender-based violence was being amended to take women's needs more fully into account, special units for investigating gender-based violence had been established and prosecutors and judges had received specialist training on dealing with such cases.

28. **Mr. Jemaw** (Ethiopia) said that training on women's rights, as enshrined in the Constitution and the Convention, had been provided to all judges, including those in the customary and religious courts. Consultations on the National Free Legal Aid Strategy were under way and it was hoped that it would be adopted later in the year. The legal aid centres could provide women with assistance on both civil and criminal matters.

29. **Ms. Mamo** (Ethiopia), speaking as a representative of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, said that, in cooperation with the law faculties of a number of universities, centres had been set up to provide free legal aid, ranging from simple advice to representation in court. Owing to financial challenges, the number of universities involved had fallen by more than half; however, United Nations agencies had pledged to provide additional funding to support the project.

30. **Ms. Nadaraia** said that the State party was to be commended for the various measures it had taken to improve the situation of women, such as issuing Finance Proclamation (Proclamation No. 970/2016), requiring government departments to develop gender-sensitive budgets, and repealing Proclamation No. 621/2009, on the registration of charities and societies, thus creating a broader democratic space in which human rights and civil society organizations could operate. She wished to know whether the newly restructured Ministry of Women and Children Affairs had sufficient human and technical resources to enable it to carry out, coordinate and decentralize its activities. She would also welcome information with regard to the gender-responsive budgeting strategies in place and the amount of budget allocated to ensure the full implementation of gender equality programmes and projects in all areas of the country.

31. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission had been accredited with category B status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, which had raised a number of concerns, such as the absence of a specific mandate for the Commission to monitor places of detention. She wished to know what action had been taken or was envisaged to bring the Commission into full compliance with the Paris Principles, what role it played in the implementation and promotion of women's human rights and whether it was able to perform its functions in an effective and independent manner.

32. **Ms. Peláez Narváez**, welcoming the notable increase in women's participation in public and political life, the gender balance in the Cabinet of Ministers and the appointment of the country's first woman president, said that, although the use of temporary special measures in the public and private spheres was provided for in the Constitution, no regulatory framework existed to ensure their consistent application in the political, electoral and administrative spheres, including in relation to improving women's representation in decision-making posts in the civil service. She wished to know what specific measures were being taken to ensure the use of temporary special measures in those spheres, including through the adoption of relevant rules and guidelines making it clear how temporary special measures should be implemented and where and with whom the responsibility lay for ensuring and following up on their application. Lastly, she wondered whether any temporary special measures had been adopted with a view to eliminating the

multiple forms of discrimination faced by vulnerable groups of women, including older women, women with disabilities, rural women and refugee and internally displaced women, and ensuring their equal rights and opportunities in all areas of life.

33. **Mr. Gezaw** (Ethiopia) said that efforts were under way to amend the relevant enabling legislation so as to strengthen the independence, resilience and impartiality of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. However, it should be noted that, under Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Establishment Proclamation (Proclamation No. 210/2000), the Commission had the right to visit any place of detention at any time, although it had not necessarily been able to exercise those legally mandated powers to the fullest extent. It was true that improvements and capacity-building were needed. That being said, the work of the Commission had become more visible in recent years, and it had successfully investigated human rights violations, finding government bodies responsible for violations in certain cases. The Government was committed to providing the Commission with adequate resources to enable it to become a strong advocate for the protection of human rights in all areas of the country.

34. **Mr. Tegyebelu** (Ethiopia) said that, pursuant to the Finance Proclamation, all government departments were required to incorporate a gender perspective into their budgets, and gender was one of the criteria taken into account when considering budget requests and prioritizing budget allocations. The Proclamation also provided for monitoring budget planning and expenditure related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

35. **Ms. Verges** said that she would like more information on how gender-responsive budgeting was implemented in practice. Since gender was a cross-cutting concern, were all ministries required to carry out gender projects and activities? Noting that Ethiopia was a large multi-ethnic country, she said that she would also be interested in hearing how the Government ensured that its gender policy was implemented consistently, especially in areas where government ministries had little presence, and what human and financial resources were allocated for that purpose.

36. **Ms. Ameline** said that she wished to know to what extent the Government was harmonizing its plans and strategies related to women and gender equality with its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Since the Government was currently in the process of establishing mechanisms and restructuring its institutions, now seemed to be an opportune time to align those two interrelated priorities.

37. **Mr. Kassaye** (Ethiopia) said that, among other measures, women's rights, gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals had been mainstreamed into the country's national development plan, known as the Growth and Transformation Plan.

38. **Ms. Wube** (Ethiopia) said that the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth had offices at the regional and grass-roots levels. Hence, a structure was in place to ensure that its policies were consistently applied, although there were, admittedly, budgetary challenges. Regarding temporary special measures, information additional to that already detailed in her country's periodic report would be provided in writing.

39. **Ms. Tisheva** said that the reforms introduced by the State party in recent years demonstrated its ability to tackle gender stereotypes and modify social and cultural norms. However, women's status continued to be lower than that of men in many parts of the country. Many women were unable to take independent decisions on childbearing, and male family members often took decisions that had a direct impact on women's health and well-being.

40. Gender-based violence was common in all regions and among all ethnic groups, and women and girls continued to be subjected to harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation, early marriage and abduction, despite the adoption in 2013 of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children in Ethiopia. Polygamy still existed, and phenomena such as gang rape and acid attacks against women were not adequately tackled. Gaps remained in women's and girls' access to justice. Women still faced stereotyping by the law enforcement and judicial authorities, and there were insufficient guarantees of high-quality free legal aid.

41. The Committee was concerned about the lack of comprehensive legislation to protect women and girls against gender-based violence and about the restrictions imposed on women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that worked to put a stop to such violence and to harmful traditional practices. She would like to know whether the Government intended to enact a comprehensive law and establish competent monitoring bodies on gender-based violence and, if so, within what time frame. She also wondered whether it intended to establish a reliable legal and institutional basis for compiling statistics on the root causes and prevalence of such violence and further develop the multisectoral response to domestic and other forms of gender-based violence. The Committee would be grateful if the delegation could indicate whether criminal law and proceedings would be strengthened in order to ensure full protection against gender-based violence and provide data for the previous two years concerning prosecutions and convictions. It would also appreciate data on the number of crisis centres and shelters throughout the country.

42. It would be interesting to learn whether the State party intended to promote awareness among schoolchildren, from an early age, of the need to fight gender stereotypes, gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. Information about educational and training measures to tackle stereotyping by institutions would also be welcome. In addition, it would be useful to know whether the State party intended to intensify programmes to prevent female genital mutilation, especially in regions where the practice was highly prevalent, and whether it intended to harmonize regional laws concerning marriage and family relations with national legislation and to monitor their implementation. Lastly, she would like to know what measures were envisaged to protect particularly vulnerable women, including women with disabilities, women with different sexual orientations, refugees, migrants and internally displaced women.

43. **Ms. Gabr** said that the Committee had been informed of the existence of a bill concerning human trafficking. It was unclear, however, whether it was a new law or an amendment to the existing Proclamation for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (Proclamation No. 909/2015). She would like to know how the authorities were responding to the reported lack of funds to implement the Strategic Action Plan for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling. She also wished to know how the victim rehabilitation fund was financed. In addition, she would appreciate information concerning internal trafficking, the role of labour inspectors and the training provided for such inspectors. In her view, the situation of internally displaced persons and migrant workers deserved greater attention. She would welcome a comment from the delegation in that regard.

44. The report made no mention of action to tackle corruption among public officials. The Committee would welcome either oral or written information on any such action. It would also appreciate data on the State party's cooperation with international agencies and donors in providing training courses for officials responsible for combating trafficking. Information about training for social workers and medical staff who supported victims of trafficking, including in shelters, would be welcome, as would information on how many shelters existed for women and child victims and how they were financed. It would also be interesting to hear whether any awareness campaigns on human trafficking and smuggling were being conducted in the media.

45. The Committee would appreciate additional information on sex trafficking and tourism and on action to prevent the exploitation of domestic workers, especially girls from rural areas who emigrated illegally to Gulf countries. There appeared to be a lack of standard procedures to identify trafficking victims among vulnerable migrants. How would the State party address that shortcoming?

46. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that the Government was taking multisectoral action to prevent child marriage, female genital mutilation, and violence against women and children. Medical, social and legal services were provided to victims of sexual violence in 16 one-step centres and 13 shelter homes. Services were also provided in all sectors to vulnerable groups, including women with disabilities and older women.

47. Data management systems in the education and health sectors had been improved, and steps were being taken in the justice system to produce comprehensive disaggregated data on victims of gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and child marriage. Federal and regional laws were being harmonized and there were plans to open a family court for the two regions that currently lacked such a court.

48. **Mr. Jemaw** (Ethiopia) said that the Government was intensifying its efforts to abolish harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and polygamy. It was implementing awareness-raising campaigns and taking steps to ensure that the legislation governing such practices was strictly applied. Ethiopia had ratified diverse international instruments providing for the protection of migrants and trafficking victims. Proclamation No. 909/2015 provided for the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. However, as some legal loopholes had been identified, the Government was currently drafting a new proclamation to remedy the situation.

49. **Ms. Assefa** (Ethiopia) said that the Government had prohibited certain overseas employment owing to human rights violations. The Overseas Employment Proclamation (Proclamation No. 923/2016) required the Government to conclude bilateral agreements with receiving countries, and agreements had been negotiated to date with three countries. Potential migrants were provided with training intended to give them the skills they required to protect themselves.

50. **Ms. Tefra** (Ethiopia) said that many programmes had been conducted to raise public awareness of labour migration issues. The Government had produced a manual and assigned a labour attaché to protect the rights of migrant workers in Middle Eastern countries.

51. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia**, acknowledging that harmful traditional practices, especially female genital mutilation and early marriage, were a major problem, said that the Government had produced a road map to address the problem that focused on pastoralist areas such as the Afar region, where people tended to pay greater attention to the views of religious leaders than to those of the Government or relevant organizations. Awareness campaigns directed at religious leaders were therefore being conducted.

52. **Ms. Gabr** asked what measures were being taken to assist women in escaping prostitution, ensure their rehabilitation and provide them with job training.

53. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she would like information concerning specific measures to protect girls from sexual abuse and exploitation and from harmful traditional practices. The police and judicial authorities were reportedly reluctant to accept evidence provided by women with disabilities who submitted complaints concerning violence, and their complaints were therefore deemed inadmissible. She would appreciate a comment from the delegation in that regard. Albino women were allegedly at risk of ill-treatment, which had reportedly led in some cases to loss of life. She wondered whether the State party had adopted a policy aimed at protecting persons with albinism.

54. **Ms. Wube** (Ethiopia) said that most of the 16 one-stop centres, which provided legal, medical and psychosocial support, were run and financed by the Government. The 13 shelter homes provided similar services for victims of gender-based violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation, and undertook the investigations required to institute legal proceedings. Some homes were run by the Government but most were run by NGOs. The Government recognized that the number of shelters was insufficient and planned to establish additional homes, especially in areas where the phenomena of female genital mutilation and early marriage were widespread.

55. Budget funds were allocated to support the Government's multisectoral actions to protect girls from sexual violence, female genital mutilation and child marriage, and support was also provided by NGOs and United Nations agencies. Special investigation and prosecution units had been established. They were staffed by public prosecutors, police officers and psychosocial support providers, who were trained to address such issues. However, challenges arose where offences were not reported or police officers lacked the requisite training.

56. **Mr. Jemaw** (Ethiopia) said that prostitution as such was not criminalized, but procurement of a person for prostitution constituted a criminal offence and offenders were liable to a 5-year term of imprisonment and a fine of up to 10,000 Ethiopian birr.

57. **Mr. Gezaw** (Ethiopia) said that the police were occasionally reluctant to believe that women had been victims of abuse, even where signs thereof were discernible. Such attitudes stemmed from widely publicized incidents in which false complaints had been lodged against alleged offenders. Action was being taken to eliminate such attitudes through rigorous training courses for the police, public prosecutors and the judiciary. Disciplinary action, including discharge, could be taken against officers who failed to take abuse complaints seriously, and criminal proceedings could be instituted in severe cases.

58. Beliefs that had prompted amputations and other violence against albino persons in some countries did not exist in Ethiopia, and albino women did not, as far as the Government was aware, face threats of attack.

59. **Ms. Gabr** said that it would be advisable to have shelters specifically for women victims of trafficking, who required special psychological and medical care.

*Articles 7 to 9*

60. **Ms. Tisheva** said that, while great strides had been made in increasing women's representation in positions of power at the national level, they were still insufficiently represented in the civil service and in managerial, diplomatic and judicial positions. The Committee would welcome an indication of the number of women who represented the Government at the international level and participated in the work of international organizations. It would also like to receive information – including proposed timelines – about the State party's plans to develop a system for the regular collection of disaggregated data on women and men in positions of power and on the impact, in terms of legislation and policies, of women's increased participation in political life.

61. The Committee would be grateful if the delegation would indicate what initiatives had been undertaken in the previous year to build the leadership capacity of women, including women from rural or remote areas and what legislative measures, including the introduction of quotas, had been taken to ensure that women participated more fully in public life. It would be interesting to learn what had been done to promote women leaders as role models for other women. It would also be interesting to hear what had been done to encourage an equitable division of household tasks.

62. She would like to know what action had been taken to ensure that the intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders and civil society activists were promptly and independently investigated and that the perpetrators of such abuses were held accountable. Lastly, she wondered whether the Government intended to remove all obstacles to the work of NGOs and, if so, what the timeline for the removal of those obstacles was.

63. **Ms. Nadaraia** said that she wished to know what measures the State party had taken to address the high cost of the operations of the Vital Events Registration Agency and ensure that the Agency covered the entire country. In the same connection, she would welcome an update on the status of Vital Events and National Identity Card Proclamation (Proclamation No. 760/2012) and on the results of efforts to combat the commission of identify fraud in order to facilitate early or forced marriage. In addition, she wondered what steps the State party had taken with a view to becoming a party to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

64. **Mr. Gezaw** (Ethiopia) said that the representation of women at the international level had been a matter of concern for the Government for some time. As had been noted in the country's periodic report, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was working to ensure that women accounted for 50 per cent of entering classes at the Foreign Relations Training Institute. As women had already accounted for 45 percent of the 2014/15 entering class, the Ministry's target was within reach. A number of women were also in positions of leadership at the Ministry. In 2016/17, more than one third of national-level government positions had been held by women, considerably more than in 2009/10.

65. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that the Government believed that women's empowerment and leadership were crucial to the future of the country and it was therefore offering training designed to encourage women at the regional level to become more involved in public life. About a hundred women had participated in a first round of training; a second round would be offered in 2019.

66. **Mr. Jemaw** (Ethiopia) said that if assessments showed that accession to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness would promote the rights of stateless persons in Ethiopia, women in particular, the accession process would be launched. The matter was currently under study.

67. **A member of the delegation of Ethiopia** said that the Government had made significant efforts to ensure that birth registration and other services provided by the Vital Events Registration Agency were available at grass-roots level throughout the country. The authorities were aware that measures taken to empower women had cumulative effects, and in most governmental and non-governmental sectors, such measures had been taken. The number of women in positions of power in the Government had increased since the appointment of the country's first female president. Systematic efforts to empower women would continue.

68. **Ms. Verges** asked what requirements – not simply incentives – the State party intended to introduce to ensure that the representation of women in the parliament remained high. She also asked what percentage of regional, *woreda* and *kebele* councils were chaired by women.

69. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wished to know whether the State party had ever had a female Minister of Foreign Affairs and whether it had any female politicians who could be appointed to that position. Similarly, it would be interesting to know whether there were any female lawmakers on the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, whether data on the number of male and female foreign service officers were readily available, whether a gender parity plan had been put in place in the diplomatic service and what incentives had been offered to encourage women to enter the service.

70. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she wondered whether all live births, including in the country's most remote areas and its refugee camps, were promptly registered.

71. **Ms. Adam** (Ethiopia) said that Ethiopia had not had a female Minister of Foreign Affairs. However, two of the four State ministers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were women, as were two of the five permanent secretaries. Special training, including in institutions of higher education, was available to persons interested in entering the diplomatic service.

72. **Mr. Gezaw** (Ethiopia) said that, under the electoral laws in force and the proposed amendments thereto, political parties had strong incentives to ensure that at least 30 per cent of their candidates for office were women. The Government was aware that there should be other means of encouraging women to participate in the political life of the country and that further outreach would be required in order to achieve gender parity. In recent consultations with representatives of the country's political parties, the Prime Minister had stressed that women's empowerment was indispensable to sustainable democratic governance. It was interesting to note that, until the launch of the recent reforms, women had been better represented at lower levels of government than at higher levels. Currently, women made up about 49 per cent of the members of the regional councils.

73. Birth registration was mandatory. All births must be registered within 90 days.

*Articles 10 to 14*

74. **The Chair**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, said that she would like to know whether the State party had any plans to make primary education compulsory and whether there was a mechanism to ensure that children with disabilities attended school. While primary school enrolment was ostensibly free, she wondered whether there were any hidden costs and whether education was free for non-Ethiopian nationals. She also wondered

whether parents, especially those in rural areas, were given incentives to enrol their daughters in school and ensure that they did not drop out.

75. It would be interesting to learn whether the educational system was used to combat the high rates of early marriage in the State party, which contributed to high school dropout rates among girls. She would welcome information about any mechanisms that had been put in place to monitor attendance and ensure completion. She wondered whether anyone was held accountable in that regard, whether teachers were given training on human rights and gender, and whether parents were made aware of the social and cultural norms that could thwart efforts to ensure that girls finished school. In addition, she would like to hear about any temporary special measures introduced to encourage more girls and women to study in fields, such as science and technology, traditionally dominated by boys and men.

76. She would like more information on policies to combat sexual harassment in schools. Did all schools have such policies? How well known were the policies and how many cases of such harassment had been reported? She also wondered what efforts schools had made to ensure that girls could manage their menstrual periods in a safe and dignified manner and to provide underprivileged girls with sanitary products. Lastly, she wished to know what steps had been taken to ensure that schools were inclusive and that students with disabilities were provided with reasonable accommodation.

77. **Ms. Chalal**, commending the State party for a number of public health achievements, said that the Committee wished to know what measures the Government planned to take to address the large differences between urban and rural areas in the cost and availability of health services and remedy the shortage of physicians and midwives, especially in rural areas. In that connection, the Committee would welcome up-to-date information on the number of female health extension workers.

78. She wondered whether the National Reproductive Health Strategy 2005–2015 had been evaluated and, if so, what the results of the evaluation had been. She also wondered whether there had been studies aimed at determining the causes of the persistently high rates of teen pregnancy in the State party. She wished to know what strategy had been developed to ensure that the need for contraceptives in rural areas was met, what family planning outreach activities involving community and religious leaders were planned and how much had been budgeted for the National Reproductive Health Strategy for the period 2016–2020. In addition, she wondered whether data on the number of women living with HIV/AIDS were available, whether data on abortions were collected and whether abortions were performed by qualified personnel, and how prevalent obstetric fistula was. Information on steps taken to ensure that women with disabilities had access to reproductive health services would be welcome, as would information on efforts made to provide women with leprosy with dignified and appropriate medical treatment and rehabilitation, including reconstructive surgery.

*The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.*