



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Eightieth session

Summary record of the 1834th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 2 November 2021, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Acosta Vargas

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

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

Ninth periodic report of the Russian Federation (CEDAW/C/RUS/9; CEDAW/C/RUS/9/Corr.1; CEDAW/C/RUS/Q/9 and CEDAW/C/RUS/RQ/9)

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

2. **The Chair** said that, at the invitation of the Committee, other members of the delegation would be speaking via video link.

3. **Mr. Pudov** (Russian Federation), introducing his country's ninth periodic report (CEDAW/C/RUS/9), said that his delegation included representatives of a broad range of government ministries and executive bodies, which reflected the comprehensive approach to the Convention's implementation, and that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations also took part in that endeavour. The focal point for implementation of the Convention was the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. A number of domestic and international human rights organizations, including women's NGOs, had raised issues in alternative reports that had been submitted to the Committee.

4. The importance of traditional family values as a moral foundation and as a guarantee of the country's successful development had been emphasized on numerous occasions by the President of the Russian Federation. The family was a natural and sacred union built on love, faith and freedom. As women must not have to choose between devotion to their family and their careers, all the conditions were established in the Russian Federation to allow them, after the birth of a child, to start or to resume their work activities as they saw fit. The most important issues related to their status were addressed directly in the Constitution and the Labour Code, but the Government had also adopted the National Strategy for Women 2017–2022, which defined State policy in relation to women's rights and had resulted in an increase in the number of women graduates in industrial and technical fields, both at the secondary level and in higher education, and a doubling, from 10 to over 20 per cent, of the proportion of female recipients of the WorldSkills Hi-Tech competition awards.

5. To facilitate the employment of women with young children, places in State kindergartens were already guaranteed for children from the age of 3 years, and efforts were under way to extend accessibility to cover children from the age of 18 months, at nursery facilities. The Labour Code provided guarantees for women workers, including protection against dismissal during pregnancy and parental leave to care for sick children. In the previous year, additional financial support had been provided to single parents, women in difficult financial situations and women with small children, and maternity benefits had been significantly increased at the federal level, and often by the regional administrations as well. In response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, procedures for obtaining assistance had been simplified. The Government had maintained full funding for all social programmes.

6. The participation rate of women in the workforce had historically been quite high in the Russian Federation and currently stood at 49 per cent. The boards of directors of nearly 60 per cent of the country's largest companies included women, and some 30 per cent of the country's 5.7 million small and medium-sized enterprises were headed by women. Government functions at all levels included women, and women held a large number of responsible positions in the federal administration, including the posts of a government minister, two deputy prime ministers and 26 deputy ministers, as well as dozens of representatives in both houses of the country's parliament.

7. In areas of work traditionally performed by women, such as education and health care, salaries had recently risen. The list of industries with restrictions on the employment of women, for example owing to hazards to reproductive health, was currently being revised. It would now include 100 professions and types of activity instead of the 456 that had figured in the previous list, which dated back 20 years. The new regulations would allow for the employment of women even in such functions, provided certain conditions of employment

were met. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection expected to issue the revised regulations in 2022.

8. The principles of equality of rights and freedoms of men and women, non-discrimination and State support for the family, motherhood and childhood were enshrined in the Constitution and reflected in the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Criminal Code. The Criminal Code provided specific protection to women victims of crime, and also to women convicted of crimes, for example by extending certain rights to pregnant women and women with small children who were deprived of their liberty.

9. The adoption of the National Strategy for Women 2017–2022 had resulted in a reduction in the number of cases of violence against women. Preventive measures, including official warnings about antisocial behaviour issued by the police, the prosecution of minor infractions with a view to forestalling more serious offences, and a measure akin to a restraining order that prohibited certain actions, had been proven effective.

10. Dangerous violent crimes were investigated by the Investigative Committee, a third of whose investigators were women, along with a number of senior officials. In 2021 the Investigative Committee had prepared a bill to reclassify certain acts, including acts of domestic violence, so that they would not be subject only to administrative penalties. Law enforcement agencies and the Investigative Committee were particularly attached to the principle of transparency. The authors of certain media reports sometimes presented biased accounts of their activities, with false generalizations.

11. In 2021, a system had been established by the internal affairs bodies for supervisory medical staff at health facilities to report on the admission of patients who showed signs of bodily harm. Decisions about carrying a pregnancy to term were made only by the pregnant woman herself, after an initial consultation with a psychologist or social worker. Abortion was carried out upon request after the woman provided informed voluntary consent, up to 12 weeks into the pregnancy.

12. Over 80 per cent of the university staff providing instruction in educational sciences were women, and the President of the Russian Federation had declared that 2021 was the Year of Science and Technology. Efforts to increase the representation of women in the scientific and technological domains focused not on quotas but on expanding support for persons interested in those fields, for instance by popularizing them and establishing competitive high-level centres to attract scientists.

13. The Government of the Russian Federation considered that at the international level the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the United Nations General Assembly and goal No. 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development served as a basis for achieving gender equality. In a turbulent world, the United Nations was the mainstay of efforts to conserve a healthy atmosphere of international relations, including in respect of efforts to achieve gender equality. The Russian Federation understood the importance of joint international efforts in that field. It had recently once again become a member of the Commission on the Status of Women and had begun to regularly hold the Eurasian Women's Forum, whose most recent session had involved over 2,500 participants from 111 countries, with some 3 million people following the proceedings online.

14. As a multinational State with various religious groups, the Russian Federation was home to a plethora of different national traditions, all of which commanded respect. The paradigm that united them all was attachment to traditional family values. The fact that marriage was considered to be the union of a man and woman was central to those values and was recognized in the country's Constitution.

15. **Ms. Moskalkova** (Russian Federation), speaking via video link, said that, as Commissioner for Human Rights, she had issued annual reports to the parliament and the President on the strengthening of guarantees of women's rights and had recently submitted to the Committee a commentary on the observance by the Russian Federation of the Convention. The Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights was currently working with the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a unique project for implementation of the National Strategy for Women

2017–2022, consisting of training seminars, round tables and other events for women and government officials, NGOs and the media. The aims were to enhance the competitiveness and competency of women in the country's society and economy, to ensure that they had better access to leadership positions and to prevent violence and discrimination against women, inter alia through a new programme called HELP, which provided training to law enforcement officers. Her Office was also assisting in the drafting of new legislation to combat domestic violence and was an active supporter of its adoption.

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16. **Mr. Safarov** said that, notwithstanding the progress made in recent years by the State party in ensuring the rights of women, certain problems had emerged as a result of the conflict affecting Crimea and the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Tens of thousands of women and children had been affected by the military clashes and war crimes, resulting in an influx of refugees and asylum-seeking women and girls. He would like to know what measures the State party had taken to ensure free access to psychological, legal and social services for such victims of conflict, and when it would adopt a national plan of action on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

17. The State party was to be commended for taking action to harmonize legislation and bring it into line with international standards. However, there were still multiple problems, including corruption, restrictions on freedom of speech, and limitations on access to medical and social care and to free legal support for women deprived of their liberty and for migrants, refugees, women with disabilities or members of national or religious minorities, disadvantaged women, women living in rural areas, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community, and Roma women. The Committee was concerned about reports of rape and virtual sexual exploitation, trafficking of women and girls, and cases of violence against women, female genital mutilation, femicide, and sexual harassment at the workplace. Those problems had been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the disparity in access to services between large cities and rural areas had worsened. Forced marriage, honour killings, a lack of access to psychological, legal and social services for victims of trafficking and domestic violence, increasing alcohol and drug use and certain politicians' hate speech against women remained areas of serious concern. Women drug users living with HIV/AIDS were reportedly stigmatized and marginalized, and actions had been taken by the authorities against women journalists, politicians, human rights defenders and feminist activists, who had been subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

18. The Committee would like to know what the State party had done for the adoption of legislation to prohibit discrimination, including direct, indirect and intersectional discrimination against women in both the public and private spheres; whether the Convention prevailed over the domestic legislation, both in law and in practice; and what activities had been undertaken to make the Convention better known and implemented in the country. It would appreciate information on the number of court rulings that referred to the Convention and on the status of the communications adopted by the Committee. It would like to hear what, in the delegation's view, was responsible for the development of horizontal and vertical gender segregation and what steps had been taken to reform the federal penitentiary system.

19. He would like to know whether women were involved in the negotiations taking place as part of the peace process and what the State party had done to alleviate the difficulties faced by women and children who were victims of the conflict situation. The Committee would appreciate information on the ways in which the State party protected women against disproportionate drug enforcement measures and what measures were planned to protect their freedom of expression, for example in Crimea, the northern Caucasus and among indigenous peoples. Noting that an article of the Criminal Code prohibited sex-based discrimination, he said that he would like to receive updated statistical information on the application of the article by the courts. Lastly, he would appreciate it if the delegation could outline State policies to combat alcoholism, drug use and suicide among women and girls, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

20. **Mr. Pudov** (Russian Federation) responding to the question on awareness-raising, said that information on the Convention was widely available, including on the websites of the President of the Russian Federation, the Federation Council, various ministries, the

Commissioner for Human Rights and the Eurasian Women's Forum, among others. All ministries and agencies were obliged to provide up-to-date information on their websites and, during the pandemic, efforts had been made to further develop portals for the provision of government services online. For example, the one-time individual pandemic-related payments made to women had been administered online.

21. In accordance with the Constitution, there was a very clear hierarchy of legal standards, with international treaties at the top, followed by national legislation, and lastly normative legal acts adopted in the implementation of federal legislation. Prior to the ratification of any international treaty, a comprehensive analysis was conducted to assess its compatibility with national legislation and, if necessary, a plan of action was prepared outlining the necessary legislative amendments.

22. **Ms. Rebrina** (Russian Federation) said that her country had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention in June 2006 and thus recognized the competence of the Committee to receive and consider communications from Russian citizens claiming to be victims of a violation of any of the rights set forth in the Convention. Duly ratified international instruments took precedence over domestic law in the event of a conflict between the two. However, there was a rule according to which a decision by an intergovernmental body taken on the basis of an interpretation of a treaty rule that conflicted with the Russian Constitution fell under the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court. The Supreme Court considered issues related to the adoption by the courts of the generally accepted principles of international law and international treaties in the Russian Federation.

23. The Russian courts had applied the provisions of the Convention in a number of cases. For example, the Constitutional Court had relied on provisions of the Convention concerning the equality of women and men before the courts to bring about changes to the Criminal Code, which had limited the rights of women to have their cases considered by courts at the regional level. A number of decrees had been issued based on the decisions of the Supreme Court concerning women's labour rights and pensions. On the whole, the provisions of the Convention had been incorporated into the legal system and were applied and respected by the courts and prosecutors in all relevant cases.

24. **Mr. Pudov** (Russian Federation) said that, although the Russian Federation was not a party to any military conflict, as a permanent member of the Security Council it paid particular attention to issues related to women and peace and security. United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 provided important guidance on matters related to women and armed conflict. One of the main events that had taken place during the Russian presidency of the Security Council had been a debate in October 2020 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the resolution. The Russian Federation believed that the preparation of any national strategies or action plans for the implementation of that resolution should be carried out on a voluntary basis, first and foremost by States involved in military conflicts or participating in post-conflict reconstruction.

25. **Ms. Stepanova** (Russian Federation) said that the Federal Penitentiary Service had 74 detention facilities that housed women detainees, including correctional facilities, medical correctional facilities and a drug treatment facility. As at 1 October 2021, there were 38,311 women in prison in the State party. The number of women in prison was decreasing by approximately 10 per cent per year, as alternative measures were prioritized over custodial sentences. Between 2017 and 2020, a number of legislative decrees had been adopted with a view to improving women's conditions of detention. Women could defer serving their sentences until their children reached the age of 4 years, or the age of 8 years if they were a single parent, had the right to meet their children outside the detention facility, and could benefit from early release and have the remainder of their sentence replaced with another form of punishment. Women who were convicted while pregnant received lighter sentences, were separated from the rest of the prison population and could not be subjected to any special measures. Women in prison with a child under the age of 3 years were entitled to a cell of no less than 4 square metres. The monthly financial allowance granted to detainees to cover food and other basic necessities had been increased. There were plans to develop specific standards for jail cells for women with children and areas where they could exercise. There were 13 special homes for children whose mothers were in detention, with a capacity of 940 children.

The homes were subject to specific minimum standards and provided sports and cultural activities.

26. **Mr. Evdokimov** (Russian Federation), speaking via video link, said that the number of women who were drug users was decreasing gradually. As part of the State-run drug addiction service, there were currently 77 drug dispensaries, 8 hospitals and 2 drug treatment centres. Some 1,800 medical organizations also provided drug treatment services. Those services provided high-quality medical and rehabilitation assistance free of charge through multidisciplinary teams of professionals that included psychotherapists and social workers. The effectiveness of the methods used throughout the country had been proven. Within the State-run system, all drug users were also tested for HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

27. **Ms. Polezhaeva** (Russian Federation) said that Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and the North Caucasus were subject to the Russian Constitution and national laws and to the international treaties ratified by the Russian Federation, including the Convention, which meant that the citizens of those territories enjoyed all the rights and freedoms guaranteed under those instruments without discrimination. The National Strategy for Women 2017–2022 adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation was also applied in those territories. Special regional plans for the implementation of the Strategy had been developed, led by women’s organizations, such as the all-Russian Women’s Union of Russia. Such organizations received government grants to work on a range of social issues related to the protection of women’s and children’s rights. Women’s councils had been set up in all the municipalities of the aforementioned regions, with a view to involving women in socioeconomic and political affairs.

28. **Mr. Pudov** (Russian Federation) said that the delegation was not competent to discuss the application of the Convention in the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk, as the Russian Federation did not have any jurisdiction over those areas. The Committee’s question was related to an internal Ukrainian conflict and should therefore be addressed to the authorities of Ukraine, which had submitted its ninth periodic report in March 2021. The key to resolving the internal military conflict in Ukraine was strict compliance with the Minsk agreements by the parties to the conflict.

29. **Ms. Ameline** said that the recent constitutional amendments, which had restored the primacy of the Constitution over international law, and the fact that the Convention had been only partially incorporated into domestic law weakened the State party’s commitment to equality. In that connection, she wished to know what procedure would be put in place to implement the Committee’s concluding observations.

30. Although a high-level coordinating council had been set up to implement the National Strategy for Women, it was regrettable that there was no ministry with responsibility for gender equality. She would welcome information on the budget and degree of autonomy of the department in charge of gender equality. She would also like to know whether any targets had been established under the Strategy and how sustainable multi-year funding was guaranteed for its implementation. She would be interested to know whether there was a committee tasked with reviewing the persistent discrimination in Russian legislation, particularly in criminal matters. Given that no mention was made of the Sustainable Development Goals in the State party report, she would welcome information on any national strategies that substituted for the 2030 Agenda.

31. The delegation might comment on the severe curtailment of freedom of expression and association in the country as a result of the restrictions introduced in 2018 and 2019 on individuals and NGOs classified as foreign agents, in violation of international law. She wished to know whether the Commissioner for Human Rights would be able to be accredited in accordance with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles) and whether there were any plans to strengthen that institution. She would also like to know whether the recommendations of the Council of Europe on the training of judges and strengthening of the justice system had been implemented. Given the vast size of the country, she wished to know how access to justice was ensured for all victims, regardless of their ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation.

32. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that it was clear that the State party had difficulties in adopting temporary special measures in respect of women. She would be interested to know the results of the study conducted as part of the project being run in partnership with the Council of Europe to identify how best to achieve the equal participation of women in political and public life, especially when it came to temporary special measures. She would also like to know whether disadvantaged groups of women, such as women with disabilities and migrant women, had been involved in development of the National Strategy for Women and were represented on local women's councils.

33. **Ms. Shcherbakova** (Russian Federation) said that the principle of the primacy of international agreements over national law had not changed in any way. Under article 15 of the Constitution, international agreements ratified by the Russian Federation were an integral part of its legal system. If there was a conflict between the rules set forth in an international agreement and those that existed in the Russian Federation, those of the international agreement prevailed. Under article 46 of the Constitution, everyone had the right, in accordance with the international treaties to which the Russian Federation was a party, to appeal to international bodies for the protection of human rights. The amendments made to article 79 in March 2020 merely provided that the Russian Federation could participate in intergovernmental associations and transfer some of its powers to those associations in accordance with the international treaties to which it was a party, provided that did not entail restrictions on human rights and did not conflict with the basic principles of the Constitution. The amendments also established that decisions of international bodies taken on the basis of an interpretation of the provisions of an international treaty to which the Russian Federation was a party that was in conflict with the Constitution would not be executed in the Russian Federation.

34. The amendments to the law on non-profit organizations did not aim at the creation of a blacklist of undesirable individuals, as was often claimed in the media. They merely introduced a requirement that non-profit organizations which received funding from foreign sources must declare that fact to the Government and indicate whether they intended to engage in political activity in the Russian Federation. Such an approach did not run counter to existing European norms and standards; it simply improved the accountability and transparency of NGOs as an important precondition for their legal operations, in accordance with the 2003 Fundamental Principles on the Status of Non-Governmental Organizations in Europe.

35. The change made to the status of certain non-profit organizations was not discriminatory. It applied only to organizations funded from abroad that participated in the country's political life, and it was intended to ensure that those organizations demonstrated that they used their funds and assets in accordance with the relevant regulations. Organizations that participated in political life were not prevented from receiving funding from abroad or from Russian sources.

36. **Mr. Pudov** (Russian Federation) said that the Government was required to discuss national strategies with relevant organizations before those strategies were implemented. In that connection, the Women's Union of Russia, along with other civil society organizations, had participated in the preparation of the National Strategy for Women 2017–2022. A tripartite commission made up of experts in the field had considered the strategy before it had been submitted for adoption. In such situations, the Government did not influence or participate in the selection of experts responsible for reviewing a proposed strategy.

37. The coordinating council established to oversee the implementation of the National Strategy for Women 2017–2022 was headed by the Deputy Prime Minister and made up of representatives of ministries, large companies, trade unions and the Women's Union of Russia. The council met at least once every six months. Under the National Demographics Project, 800 billion roubles had been allocated to support families in need. A project to support self-employed persons and entrepreneurs was also being implemented throughout the country. The Council of Europe and the Russian Federation were undertaking a joint project on the implementation of the National Strategy for Women 2017–2022.

38. **The Chair** said that she would be grateful if the delegation would respond to the question concerning temporary special measures before it moved on to other subjects.

39. **Mr. Pudov** (Russian Federation) said that he wished to know whether the term “temporary special measures” referred to measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

40. **The Chair** said that the Committee used the term “temporary special measures” to refer to any temporary special measures that were taken to protect the rights of women.

41. **Mr. Pudov** (Russian Federation) said that gender quotas were not used in the Russian Federation. However, no restrictions on participation in the labour market were imposed on any particular group. Although the Government had drawn up a list of 100 jobs that women were prohibited from undertaking, that prohibition was not absolute, as employers could hire women to undertake such jobs if the requisite safety conditions were met.

42. **Ms. Nadaraia** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to break down gender stereotypes, particularly those affecting women’s right to a fair trial, and to strengthen legislation on gender-based violence. In that connection, she wondered whether the Government would consider reversing the amendment made to the Criminal Code in February 2017, which provided that non-aggravated battery of a family member should be treated as an administrative rather than a criminal offence. The Government might consider broadening the definition of rape in criminal law to include marital rape and unwanted sexual acts that did not involve the use of coercion, threats or violence.

43. She wondered whether the prosecution system might be changed so that legal action could be taken against the perpetrators of rape, sexual abuse or gender-based violence without the victims having to initiate it and without the burden of proof falling solely on victims. The Committee wished to know what measures were being taken to strengthen access to justice for victims of sexual violence, femicide, abduction, female genital mutilation and domestic violence, and to ensure that such offences were effectively investigated and that the perpetrators were prosecuted and punished. The delegation might describe any measures being taken to improve the support provided to victims of gender-based violence, including the establishment of additional shelters in remote areas.

44. Noting that femicide, female genital mutilation, child marriage, abduction of women and gender-based violence were particularly prevalent in the North Caucasus region, she asked what was being done to ensure that the law enforcement agencies conducted proper investigations into those offences and whether steps would be taken to improve the implementation of federal laws criminalizing them. Would the State party consider developing a comprehensive strategy to eliminate harmful practices and gender-based violence?

45. **Ms. Gabr**, noting that relatively few victims of trafficking in persons were identified by the authorities, said that she wished to know whether the Government would amend the Criminal Code to include a definition of that offence that was consistent with international law, and whether it would develop a national strategy on combating trafficking that included plans, programmes, clear objectives and a time frame. She wondered whether the State party would establish a central coordinating body that could assign responsibilities for combating trafficking to government agencies. It would be interesting to know what funds were allocated to support mechanisms for victims of trafficking, and whether the State party had implemented the recommendations made by the International Labour Organization’s Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, particularly those concerning the establishment of shelters and crisis centres for victims of trafficking and the introduction of programmes to promote their reintegration into society.

46. Noting that the Government often failed to respond adequately to reports of trafficking in persons, she asked whether its failure to take appropriate action was caused by a lack of awareness of the offence among police officers, prosecutors, judges and other persons working in the justice system. She would be grateful to learn how many training sessions and workshops on trafficking had been conducted during the previous two years and how many officials had attended them. The delegation might state whether the Government had conducted any campaigns to raise officials’ awareness of different forms of trafficking, and whether it cooperated with NGOs to establish hotlines and shelters for victims and to promote victims’ reintegration into society.

47. She wondered what efforts were being made to combat trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and to protect minors against forced begging, forced criminality, child pornography and prostitution. The State party might consider amending its Criminal Code to criminalize the possession of child pornography and the procurement of children for the purpose of producing pornography. She would be grateful to know what measures were being taken to enable women victims of sex trafficking to abandon prostitution without being re-trafficked.

48. **Ms. Koltsova** (Russian Federation), speaking via video link, said that comprehensive measures to prevent domestic violence were being carried out at national and municipal levels. In that regard, police officers were monitoring 77,000 individuals who had been convicted of offences involving domestic violence. As a result of the measures taken, the number of offences involving domestic violence had fallen by 50 per cent over the previous five years.

49. Following amendments made to the law in 2016, persons convicted of battery of a family member were initially subject to administrative sanctions, although criminal proceedings could be brought against repeat offenders. The use of administrative sanctions against perpetrators of domestic violence had resulted in a fivefold increase in the number of persons punished for that offence from 2015 to 2020. Such sanctions also served as an effective deterrent to potential perpetrators.

50. A range of national and local laws governed the establishment of crisis centres for women victims of violence and the forms of assistance that those centres provided. The laws in question provided for women's right to receive legal assistance and to stay in a shelter, with their children, for up to six months. Currently, around 240 social assistance centres provided support to over 8,000 women, while a number of other centres provided support to children. The Government had also established a number of day centres and units that provided social assistance to women and children. All the centres provided their services free of charge to the beneficiaries, irrespective of their nationality or religious beliefs.

51. **Ms. Rebrina** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation was party to several international agreements on the prevention of trafficking in persons, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The provisions of those agreements had been transposed into domestic law. In the Russian Federation, trafficking in persons was considered to be a form of exploitation that was prohibited under the Criminal Code. Cases of trafficking were mostly related to the exploitation of women, pornography, illegal migration and the supply of cheap labour. In combating trafficking in persons, the main goal of the General Prosecutor's Office was to prevent the emergence of conditions in which the offence could take place.

52. On 24 December 2019, the Supreme Court had adopted a decree related to the abduction of individuals, forced deprivation of liberty, and trafficking in persons. The decree in question contained definitions of the offences of abduction of persons and illegal deprivation of liberty and clarified the distinction between the two offences. It also defined the term "purchase and sale of human beings" in connection with the offence of trafficking in persons.

53. The Government had stepped up its efforts to protect children against violations of their rights. The website of the General Prosecutor's Office contained a form through which citizens could submit reports of sexual, physical or psychological abuse committed against minors within their families or in schools. Offences against the life and freedom of the person were covered by various articles of the Criminal Code, including article 127.1 on trafficking in persons, article 240 on prostitution-related activities and article 242 on the unlawful circulation of pornographic materials. The vast majority of cases involving trafficking in persons were related to different forms of sexual exploitation. Offences involving trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation and labour exploitation were taken extremely seriously and the perpetrators were punished accordingly.

54. As labour exploitation and illegal immigration were closely linked, measures were being taken to ensure that migration laws were properly enforced. The authorities cooperated, if necessary, with their counterparts in other countries and were well placed to combat trafficking in persons, women and children in particular.

55. **Ms. Shatilyuk** (Russian Federation) said that when a bill that was currently under consideration became law, a number of offences that were considered administrative offences, including battery and other forms of domestic violence, would be made criminal matters. There was nothing in the Criminal Code that prevented a man from being charged with raping his spouse. A person aged 18 years or over who had sexual intercourse with a minor under the age of 16 could be charged with a crime under article 134 of the Criminal Code.

56. **Ms. Olina** (Russian Federation) said that female genital mutilation was prohibited by law. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was informed of cases of patients whose condition suggested that they had been subjected to such crimes as female genital mutilation. Rules that required health-care personnel to report suspicions of bodily harm following illegal actions had been updated earlier in the year.

57. **Mr. Pudov** (Russian Federation) said that federal laws were applied uniformly throughout the country. No law that was adopted by lawmakers in any of the country's first-level administrative divisions was incompatible with federal law.

58. **Ms. Polezhaeva** (Russian Federation), encouraging the Committee to keep in mind the fact that her country was populated by people of nearly 200 different nations, said that considerable efforts to combat discrimination against women were being made in the North Caucasus, a region whose people were characterized by their respect for women. Support, including psychological support, was provided to women who needed it. Women's councils were consulted on any legislation proposed by lawmakers in the region that would affect mothers or children. Measures were being taken, including with the assistance of NGOs, to prevent children from disadvantaged families from taking to the streets and becoming involved in crime.

Articles 7–9

59. **Ms. Leinarte** said that she wished to know why the welcome increase in the participation of women in public and political life at the local level was not mirrored by a similar increase in higher echelons of power – in the State Duma, for example, and in the executive branch of government, where only one federal ministry was headed by a woman, or in the diplomatic corps, where there was just one female ambassador, the Ambassador to Bulgaria. She wondered whether the National Strategy for Women 2017–2022 had involved the adoption of measures to ensure that women participated more fully in decision-making, including at the highest levels of government.

60. She also wondered whether Federal Act No. 121-FZ of 20 July 2012 had deprived NGOs of the funding they needed to promote the advancement of women and, if so, how many women had been affected by the loss of funding. In addition, she wondered whether a failure to recognize women's scientific or other academic achievements had caused them to lose interest in higher studies, in particular in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

61. **Ms. Reddock**, welcoming a number of steps taken by the State party in respect of the right to a nationality, said that she wished to know how many Russian-speaking nationals of the former Soviet republics and their descendants had been able to acquire citizenship of the Russian Federation in the wake of the amendments to the Federal Act on Citizenship made in 2019. She also wished to know what progress had been made towards regularizing the status of children born to Roma, refugee and asylum-seeking women who had been denied the right to register the births of their children. In addition, she asked whether the State party had begun the process of acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and what efforts it was making to ensure that all children under its jurisdiction could exercise their right to an identity.

62. **Ms. Semenova** (Russian Federation) said that, as noted earlier, women in Russia were represented at all levels of power. Seminars and workshops on enhancing the participation of women in the public and political life of the country were being organized within the framework of cooperation with the Council of Europe. In recent years, a number of events, including competitive events, had been held to celebrate the achievements of women. One leadership competition, open to both women and men, attracted large numbers of female participants. An educational project had been launched to help prospective women leaders develop their leadership skills.

63. **Ms. Trichenko** (Russian Federation) said that the achievements of her country's female scientists were renowned the world over. Approximately 40 per cent of the country's scientific researchers were women, a percentage that was one third higher than the average of the countries that were members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Although the number of students enrolling in research institutions had fallen in 2020, nearly 45 per cent of those students had been women. In addition, women were more likely than men to finish the doctoral and other graduate programmes they began.

64. **Ms. Koltsova** (Russian Federation), speaking via video link, said that a number of relevant international instruments informed Federal Act No. 4528-1 of 19 February 1993, the Refugee Act. Children could acquire citizenship by blood or by birthright. Children born to parents of different nationalities became nationals of the Russian Federation if they were born in Russia or if they were at risk of statelessness.

65. **Ms. Chumarina** (Russian Federation) said that registry offices registered births upon receipt of a birth certificate issued by the medical facility where the birth took place or, in the event of a home birth, by a gynaecologist. A declaration of birth submitted by either parent would also be accepted. Births were registered regardless of whether the newborn child was born to nationals of the Russian Federation. The births of some 2 per cent of the children in the country, almost exclusively children of migrants, had never been registered.

66. **Ms. Khvan** (Russian Federation) said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had taken a targeted approach to involving women in diplomatic service. Women accounted for just over a third of all the Moscow-based Ministry employees who had diplomatic status, slightly more than in the previous year, and for approximately 13 per cent of diplomats posted abroad. In addition to the Ambassador to Bulgaria, female ambassadors represented the country's interests in Indonesia and, most recently, Cabo Verde. As more and more women were enrolling in the School of International Relations at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University), the number of female diplomats was certain to continue increasing.

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67. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wished to know what measures the State party had taken to develop and introduce comprehensive sex education at various levels of State education. She also wished to know whether measures had been taken to combat the prejudices that kept girls from going to school and to ensure that migrant, refugee and Roma and other minority girls and women had access to all levels of education. In addition, she asked whether sexual harassment and abuse in schools and universities were monitored by the country's law enforcement agencies. Lastly, she wondered why the Russian Federation had not joined the more than one hundred countries that, as of June 2020, had endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, an intergovernmental political declaration that gave countries the opportunity to express support for protecting education from attack during times of armed conflict.

68. **Mr. Safarov** said that he would welcome confirmation that only three of the country's ambassadors were women.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.