



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

Distr.: General  
19 May 2023

Original: English

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Eighty-fifth session

### Summary record of the 1978th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 12 May 2023, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Peláez Narváez

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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 China (continued)* (CEDAW/C/CHN/9; CEDAW/C/CHN-HKG/9; CEDAW/C/CHN-MAC/9; CEDAW/C/CHN/Q/9; CEDAW/C/CHN-HKG/Q/9; CEDAW/C/CHN-MAC/Q/9; CEDAW/C/CHN/RQ/9)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of China joined the meeting.*

*Articles 7–9*

2. **Ms. Haidar** said that, overall, women's participation in the political sphere in China remained limited and the proportion of women in leadership positions at all levels was very low. The Committee was particularly concerned that, since October 2022, there were no longer any women among the 24 members of the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party. The Committee would therefore like to know what measures the State party was taking to increase the number of women in political positions at all levels and to encourage women to stand for election. It would also be interested to hear about steps being taken to address the situation in Hong Kong, China, where the proportion of women in both the Legislative Council and the Executive Council stood at only 19 per cent.

3. It would be useful to know what efforts were being made to increase the number of women in diplomacy, including at the most senior level. Clarification as to whether the State party intended to make women's empowerment and human rights a constant feature of its development cooperation would also be appreciated.

4. The increase in the proportion of women judges to 32.7 per cent in 2017 was a welcome development; she would appreciate details of the positions they occupied and their distribution around the country. She would be interested to hear about any policies in place to encourage greater representation of women at the senior level in companies, including that of chief executive officer.

5. In the light of reports from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerning the difficulties that they faced in carrying out their work for the promotion, protection and realization of women's rights, she would like to know what measures were being taken to create an enabling environment for women activists in all the Chinese territories, to support the work of NGOs and to protect women human rights defenders from harassment, punishment, retaliation and defamation.

6. **Mr. Safarov** said that he would be grateful if the delegation could explain why China had not yet ratified either the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and state whether it planned to do so. He would welcome information on the restrictions in place, in law and in practice, on Chinese citizens wishing to leave the country. With regard to the Nationality Law, he would be interested to know more about the reasons for the difficulties faced by certain women, especially women from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in obtaining citizenship for their children who were born to Chinese fathers. He would appreciate information on the measures in place to stop discriminatory practices against certain minority groups, particularly Tibetan and Uighur women. Lastly, he would like to know more about the legal basis for the confiscation of passports and official documents by State agencies.

7. **A representative of China** said that the Government had been stepping up efforts to promote women's participation in politics and a positive trend was being observed in that regard, largely thanks to improvements in women's education. Women could participate fully in decision-making and governance at the central, provincial and municipal levels. In the National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the National People's Congress, women's participation had increased by between 1.6 and 2.9 percentage points. The proportion of women in the civil service had also increased by 4.7 percentage points between 2020 and 2021. In the judicial system, women currently accounted for 40 per cent of prosecutors and 38.5 per cent of all

judges. While progress had been made in terms of women's representation, more remained to be done to ensure that women reached senior positions.

8. **A representative of China** said that the rights of women belonging to ethnic minorities to participate in politics were fully protected. There was a quota for the participation of deputies from ethnic minorities in each National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and many of those deputies were women. In the current fourteenth National People's Congress, the quota for ethnic minority deputies had been set at 360 but there were in fact 442 deputies, 190 of whom were women. Women deputies belonging to ethnic minorities also accounted for 24 per cent of all women deputies nationwide, even though they made up a smaller proportion of the female population. Efforts would continue to be made to increase the participation of women from ethnic minorities in political and public governance.

9. Citizens from all ethnic groups could apply for passports and were not denied a passport on ethnic grounds. The laws and regulations on entry and exit and on the issuance of passports protected citizens' rights to leave and enter the country.

10. **A representative of China** said that, according to the latest statistics, there were currently 2,560 women diplomats working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, making up 35 per cent of all diplomats. The 16 women ambassadors accounted for 10 per cent of the total, while the 20 women consuls general accounted for 25 per cent of the total. The Ministry was engaged in efforts to encourage women's participation in international work, particularly at the senior level. It provided support for women's career development and a range of training. Fifty women diplomats were now working in international organizations, accounting for 44.2 per cent of all Chinese diplomats working in those organizations. Four of those women were at the director-general level or above. Prominent Chinese women diplomats included Xue Hanqin, a judge at the International Court of Justice, and Fu Ying, a former ambassador to the United Kingdom and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

11. **A representative of China** said that 3 of the 10 grand justices of the Supreme People's Court were women.

12. **Ms. Lam Shuet-lai** (Hong Kong, China) said that the Convenor of the Executive Council of Hong Kong was a woman. Approximately 18 per cent of the members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region were women. There was nothing in the laws or practice of Hong Kong to bar or discourage women from participating in elections to the Legislative Council, and the legislation governing voter registration and the eligibility of candidates did not establish any obstacles on grounds of gender. In the Hong Kong Government, 5 of the 21 ministers were women. In the civil service, 12 out of the 18 permanent secretaries and 40 per cent of all directorate officers were women. The quota of 35 per cent for women's representation on government advisory boards had been met.

13. **Ms. Manalo** said that she would like to know what proportion of the women participating in public and political life were Tibetan or Uighur, for example, and what programmes were in place to support women belonging to minority groups to become civil servants or diplomats.

14. **Mr. Safarov** said that he would welcome a response to his questions on the reasons for the failure to ratify the two conventions on statelessness and the legal provisions that could be used to restrict foreign travel and justify confiscating the passport of Chinese citizens.

15. **A representative of China** said that, in 2020, 33 per cent of civil servants in the Tibet Autonomous Region had been women.

16. **A representative of China** said that 46 per cent of civil servants in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region were women.

17. **A representative of China** said that, in China, women belonging to ethnic minorities had equal rights to join the civil service and their numbers were increasing. Various measures, such as skills training and development programmes and peer exchanges, were in place to

support the advancement of women belonging to ethnic minorities to leadership positions. There were specific requirements for the inclusion of women in local leadership teams.

18. **A representative of China** said that he was not aware of the reasons why China had not yet acceded to the conventions on statelessness but would provide a reply in writing, following consultation with the relevant authorities. It was important to note, however that the law on nationality did contain two articles pertaining to stateless persons, so there were no legal voids or loopholes in that area.

19. **Ms. Huang Xiaowe** (China) said that one example of a woman from an ethnic minority background in a senior position was Shen Yiqin, one of the five State councillors, who was of Bai ethnic heritage.

20. **A representative of China** said that there were no regulations permitting the confiscation of passports by individuals or organizations. Any decision to retain an individual's passport would be taken only in very specific circumstances by the public security authorities or the courts. The Chinese Government did not impose any restrictions on citizens wishing to move to another country and become a national of that country. However, under the law on nationality, dual citizenship was not recognized, so anyone wishing to become a naturalized citizen of another State would automatically lose his or her Chinese citizenship. Specific groups, such as military personnel, were not allowed to renounce their Chinese citizenship unless they received exceptional approval.

#### *Articles 10–14*

21. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she wished to know whether measures were being taken to revise textbooks and curricula and adapt teaching methods to eliminate gender stereotypes at all levels and in all forms of education. She would appreciate information on curricula for teaching human rights, including women's and girls' rights, at all levels of education and in all regions. She would like to hear what measures were in place to provide education in minority languages, including Tibetan, Uighur and Mongolian. She would appreciate data, disaggregated by sex, disability, ethnic group, religion and province, on learning outcomes at all levels of education, including preschool education. She would be interested to hear about measures taken to address the gender imbalance in the education workforce, where female teachers were overrepresented from pre-primary to secondary level and underrepresented in management positions.

22. She wished to know what was being done to increase the participation of women in vocational training and encourage them to enrol in training in traditionally male-dominated subjects such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Lastly, she wondered whether the State party had any legislation prohibiting sexual harassment, cyberbullying and harmful practices that would interfere with school attendance and, if so, what monitoring mechanisms were in place and what measures were taken to ensure that schools were safe and free of violence and sexual harassment.

23. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she wished to know whether there were any plans to introduce a legally binding guidance document on the establishment of anti-harassment mechanisms in the workplace; whether the State party intended to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) or at least incorporate its provisions into domestic law; and whether the provisions on employer liability for sexual harassment would be strengthened. She would appreciate specific data on the implementation of policies and laws against sexual harassment, including the number of complaints and litigation cases. For example, she would be interested to know whether the allegations of sexual harassment made by athlete Peng Shuai had been investigated. She wished to know how the State party planned to protect migrant workers from abuse if the draft law proposed by the Hong Kong Labour Department was passed, which allowed the withholding of identification documents from migrant workers, the majority of whom were women. Lastly, she wondered whether the State party planned to take measures to promote and create conditions for women and men to share family responsibilities.

24. **Ms. Mikko** said that the protectionist provisions in the State Party's Labour Law had created certain obstacles for women in employment. She would be interested to know how the State party intended to address the low labour-force participation rate of single mothers

and the fact that the earlier retirement age for women made it difficult for them to qualify for social security provisions. Although Chinese law prohibited gender discrimination in hiring, discrimination in the nature of employment remained widespread. The delegation might comment on why job announcements for civil service positions still discriminated against applicants based on gender.

25. In view of a report by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery expressing concern about labour transfer and vocational training programmes in the Tibet Autonomous Region, she would welcome gender-disaggregated data on the number of Tibetan farmers, herders and nomads who had been forcibly removed from their lands within the previous decade and the number of Tibetan women subjected to forced labour training programmes across China. Lastly, she would welcome information on measures taken to independently investigate reports of forced labour among Uighur women, particularly in the textile and cotton-picking industries, and on whether education centres for Uighur Muslims and other ethnic minority women were still in use.

26. **A representative of China** said that her country attached great importance to human rights education in schools. Textbooks and modules on human rights had been developed and integrated into a number of subjects, including history and politics. Efforts had also been made to fight gender stereotypes in both primary and secondary education, particularly with a view to protecting women's acquired rights and advocating equality between the sexes. Every care was taken to ensure gender balance in school textbook illustrations. If an illustration contained an odd number of figures, the majority would be female, and male figures would be shown engaged in occupations such as nursing a sick child or cooking. Prominence was given to the role of Chinese female scientists, such as astronauts, and female students were encouraged to enrol for STEM subjects at universities. In fact, women accounted for around 40 per cent of undergraduate and postgraduate students in those areas, and for 33 per cent of finalists in the international college students' "Internet+" innovation and entrepreneurship competition organized by Chongqing University.

27. The authorities took robust action to prevent sexual harassment and violence in schools. The Ministry of Education had issued a code of conduct for teachers at all levels and formulated recruitment guidelines that included background checks on prospective staff. Persons found to have previously committed acts of sexual harassment or similar violations could not be employed in the teaching profession, while existing staff who committed such acts were immediately suspended and could be held criminally accountable.

28. Via its online portal, the Ministry published annual statistics on students, disaggregated by age, ethnicity and disability. The portal also contained data on other matters, including investment in education and numbers of teaching staff. Teaching was a popular choice of profession in China and the number of female teachers, including school principals, was relatively high.

29. **A representative of China** said that on 8 March 2023, International Women's Day, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security had issued a guide on combating sexual harassment in the workplace. The guide was a short, user-friendly document that could be downloaded free of charge from the Ministry's website. It contained just 20 articles, which each company could adapt into a code of conduct for its own workforce. In line with the guide, companies were required to take a public stance of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment and to deal directly with any acts of sexual harassment that did arise. The guide clarified the procedures for reporting such behaviour and underscored the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Prosecutors could refer to the guide when conducting public interest litigation in cases of sexual harassment. The guide had been drafted taking full account of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). In fact, China was a founding member of ILO; it sat on the Organization's Governing Body and had ratified 28 ILO conventions, including 7 of the 10 fundamental conventions.

30. **A representative of China** said that sexual harassment was not only morally repugnant but was very clearly criminalized under the law. During the recent revision of the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women, legislators had considered the possibility of defining what specific forms of behaviour constituted sexual harassment. However, they had come to realize that it was a very complex issue and that it was difficult

to identify an exhaustive list of actions that could unequivocally be considered to constitute harassment. For most practical purposes, law enforcement agencies and the courts decided, in the light of all relevant circumstances, whether an action amounted to sexual harassment. Thus, following extensive consultation, legislators had decided that the revised Law should focus on prevention. Significantly, the Law required companies and schools to take action to prevent sexual harassment, and they could be held liable if they failed to do so. The Law also expanded the avenues through which victims could seek redress.

31. **A representative of China** said that schools of all levels in Tibet had sufficient well-qualified teachers to teach the Tibetan language, which was a compulsory part of the school examination and counted towards the grading of students' overall academic performance. Statistics on Tibetan language teaching would be submitted in writing.

32. **A representative of China** said that there was no such thing as forced or coerced labour in China. All work was undertaken voluntarily on the basis of a signed contract between the employer and the employee. Thanks to large-scale mechanization, the amount of manual labour in the cotton industry was very low; in fact, up to 85.6 per cent of cotton harvesting was done by machines.

33. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that she wished to commend the State party for its health-care system, which had led to a steady decline in maternal and infant mortality and an increase in life expectancy. She hoped to hear about steps being taken to address outstanding issues, such as the prevention and treatment of breast cancer. The Committee had noted the legislation and policies in place for the ageing population but was concerned by the absence of a focus on the reproductive health of older women. She would be interested to hear about any plans to establish a family support system to meet older women's health needs and about measures to improve the health of women with disabilities, women from ethnic minorities and rural women.

34. It would be useful to hear how the State party intended to enforce its three-child policy and whether its actions in that regard would be guided by the lessons drawn from the previous two-child policy. For example, would the sanctions envisaged under the old policy still be applied, and how would problems such as infanticide, child abandonment and child neglect be addressed? She hoped that the delegation could comment on reports that the Committee had received to the effect that birth rates in two Uighur-majority prefectures had dropped significantly between 2015 and 2018. In particular, she wished to know if any investigations had been launched into the reportedly high rates of sterilization and forced implantation of intrauterine devices. Could the delegation provide disaggregated data on birth rates among different ethnic groups? What interventions were in place to ensure equal access to health services for migrant women from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea?

35. She was pleased to note that the State party acknowledged the important role that women – who accounted for two thirds of medical personnel – had played during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In that connection, she wished to know what measures were in place to ensure that the pandemic had not created new mental health issues arising out of isolation. She would be particularly interested to hear about any mental health safeguards intended to protect women and girls in detention and those in confined environments, such as domestic workers and Tibetan children in forced residential schools.

36. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she wished to congratulate the State party on its achievements in improving social protection and economic empowerment for women. In fact, recent reports showed that China had the highest number of self-made female entrepreneurs, that women owned 30.9 per cent of all businesses in the country and that 29 per cent of women-led corporations and large enterprises worldwide were Chinese. In that regard, she wished to know if the State party was willing to share with key partners its successful model for women's economic empowerment, so that it could be adapted to boost private-sector implementation of the Convention, the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Women's Empowerment Principles.

37. She wished to know if the Government was considering accelerated legal, policy and regulatory action so as to incorporate gender considerations into service delivery guidelines in State-owned enterprises. That would provide inclusive business models that other privately owned corporations and investors could emulate. Despite the fact that women had proven

their capacity to lead and contribute to economic growth and wealth creation in areas such as real estate, retail, consumer goods and e-commerce, information showed that they were still concentrated in low-paid work in the service sector and the rural economy. In that connection, the delegation should indicate if enterprises made voluntary declarations of affirmative action, corporate social responsibility or gender-responsive investments.

38. Despite a number of recent social reforms in China, the Committee remained concerned that welfare was still linked to the *hukou* household registration system, which limited internal migrants' access to basic public services in host cities, such as health insurance and social assistance. For female internal migrants, that was reported to lead to high-risk pregnancies, among other hazards. How did the State party plan to reform the system to better protect migrants, including internal migrants, female migrants, migrants from ethnic minorities and other nationalities?

39. **A representative of China** said that older women, women with disabilities and rural women all enjoyed equal access to public health services, including primary health care and regular screening for cervical cancer and breast cancer. China had adopted its three-child policy in 2021, with a view to optimizing development. The sanctions that had marked the previous two-child policy had been lifted. The new policy was supported by a raft of services intended to lessen the burden of childbearing and child-rearing for women, as well as by measures to increase parental leave entitlements, encourage co-parenting and introduce provisions to help women balance work and family life.

40. **A representative of China** said that the birth rate in China had declined, as it had in many other countries around the world. The falling birth rate in ethnic areas was in line with the national average, although the rate among ethnic minorities was more than double that among Han Chinese. Overall, lower birth rates were a reflection of economic development and of changing perceptions. In particular, women tended to be better educated than in the past and to have better employment opportunities. Women from ethnic minorities were also choosing to have fewer children.

41. Reproductive rights were protected under the Constitution. Citizens were free to use or not to use contraception and to choose their contraceptive method. No individual or organization could interfere with their freedom of choice in that regard. The Government was not aware of any forced sterilization or implantation of intrauterine devices. If such cases were to arise, they would be investigated and dealt with in accordance with the law.

42. **A representative of China** said that laws and regulations had been formulated to protect the mental health of women and children. Services provided included screening, a preventive action plan and targeted interventions for high-risk groups. The services were delivered via more than 1,300 health centres and around 2,700 medical cooperatives at the county level. Every effort had been made to prevent discrimination against women and to protect their mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, female front-line health-care workers had been provided with support and counselling. Whenever problems had been identified, the Government had intervened swiftly to rectify them.

43. **A representative of China** said that residential schools were designed to enable students living in high-altitude areas to attend school in areas with more favourable conditions, regardless of their family background or ethnicity. Residential schools looked after students' mental health by organizing open days, involving parents in school management and enabling students to return home on weekends or to celebrate festivals.

44. **A representative of China** said that action to promote enterprises' corporate and social responsibility was taken by a large number of ministries. A tripartite mechanism had issued a nine-point document aimed at ensuring harmonious labour relations. Enterprises were required to establish trade unions and labour dispute mechanisms and to support and care for female employees, including through the provision of maternal services. The programme that was currently being implemented included pilot projects for enterprises, standards for family-friendly employers and awards for good performance. Examples of good practice had been identified.

45. **The Chair**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, said she wished to know what action was being taken to guarantee access to health-care services for disadvantaged women, such

as women from ethnic groups, older women and women with disabilities, and to combat poverty in such cases. She also asked when the practice of confinement or internment of girls and women with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities would be terminated.

46. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** reiterated her questions regarding affirmative action, corporate social responsibility and gender-responsive investments, as well as on matching capital and credit facilities for vulnerable women.

47. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that, while she commended the action taken by the State party to improve the situation of women living in rural areas, poverty was nonetheless widespread among rural women and vigorous long-term measures were necessary to address the issue. She would therefore be grateful for information regarding such measures, and she wished to know whether the All-China Women's Federation was cooperating with civil society organizations in rural areas.

48. Sexual stereotypes presented major challenges. She asked whether the State party had established a monitoring body to assess compliance with existing legislation and prevent violations of rural women's rights. It would be useful to know how many cases concerning contracts governing women's right to the use of land had been considered by arbitration or villagers' committees, and whether there were specific procedures for appealing against their decisions. She wondered whether the State party had considered the possibility of establishing a dispute settlement mechanism. She also wished to hear about the implementation of articles 72, 73 and 77 of the recently amended Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women on legal aid and public interest litigation for women.

49. She would be grateful for information on the improvement of legislation aimed at guaranteeing the protection of the rights of rural women in the event of separation or divorce. She wished to hear about the steps being taken to enhance the regulations aimed at recognizing and guaranteeing the rights of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons in the family environment and social life.

#### *Articles 15 and 16*

50. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she wished to clarify a question that she had raised at the previous meeting. She had referred to the paucity of women judges from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in permanent appointments on the Supreme People's Court, rather than in the judiciary as a whole.

51. As the previous amendments to the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women had not been justiciable, she wished to know whether the revised Law would be fully enforceable in a court of law. Noting that an estimated 890,000 public complaints or administrative petitions had been received in 2021, she would appreciate receiving gender-disaggregated data and information on the percentage of complaints that had concerned gender-related issues. She wished to know how the regulations issued by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council in April 2022 would affect women petitioners who faced discrimination at the local level. Given the recent digitalization of access to justice throughout the world, she asked whether the State party might consider expanding access to justice by means of a hybrid digital court strategy.

52. The Supreme People's Court required all courts to refer, under the "guiding case" system, to a case that was similar to the case before them. However, very few cases dealt with gender equality or gender stereotypes. She asked how judges would be trained to use guiding cases under the revised Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women for setting precedent in providing legal remedies. She wished to know how model cases on intersectional equality would be systematized.

53. The regulations on generative artificial intelligence issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China in April 2023 required companies to ensure that the training data used did not discriminate against people based on ethnicity, race or gender. She asked whether the regulations were enforceable in a court of law and what remedies were available in the event of violations. She also wished to know whether regulatory measures were envisaged to address cases of dissemination of deepfake images on the Internet, and whether tools would be developed to mitigate gender bias in artificial intelligence.



54. With regard to the elimination of discrimination in marriage and family relations, she wished to hear about the role of men in the “Civilized Family” initiatives and “Most Beautiful Family” campaigns. Noting that the three-child policy reinforced the stereotype that women were the primary caregivers, she asked whether men were encouraged to play an equal role in caregiving. She would also like to hear about paid family leave and paternal leave. It would be interesting to learn how the President’s directive on marriage pranks or *naohun* would be implemented. She wished to know whether the revised Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women addressed the issue of forced marriage.

55. Although article 13 of the amended Marriage Law provided for equitable property distribution during divorce, rural women encountered unique challenges to property rights. Women who married men from other villages, unmarried women, divorced women and widows faced discrimination in terms of land distribution and inheritance. She asked how the State party intended to address such cases.

56. Lastly, she wished to note that the marriageable age in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was 16 years, which was lower than the legally accepted age of majority under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, male descendants of indigenous villagers in the New Territories in Hong Kong had access to benefits under the Small House Policy that were not available to women.

57. **Ms. Huang Xiaowei** (China) said that there were 70 types of women’s organizations in China with more than 7 million members. Under the guidance of the All-China Women’s Federation, their members paid regular visits to rural women in order to ascertain their practical problems, especially their financial difficulties.

58. **A representative of China** said that rural women had been provided with loans amounting to more than 380 billion yuan between 2009 to 2018 for the launching of their own businesses. A total of 1.36 million women had applied for microcredits amounting to more than 63 billion yuan. In addition, about 140,000 women had participated in training courses, workshops, cooperatives and over 3,300 micro-business projects. The Water Cellar for Mothers project provided access to safe drinking water.

59. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs had taken steps to identify and register contractual rights to land. During a period of five years, more than 200 million peasants had been granted relevant certificates, which included women’s names. The All-China Women’s Federation had cooperated with organizations in rural areas to provide training courses on registration. Persons who were not registered on account of marriage to persons in different villages or other circumstances had been added to the registration system.

60. The number of land disputes involving rural women had been reduced to about 8,000 cases in 2022. The majority of rural women were currently entitled to their land rights. Village rules and regulations had also been amended to prevent discrimination against women. Where discrimination occurred, women could submit a complaint to the Government or a court.

61. **A representative of China** said that the courts had provided legal aid in 2021 and 2022 to 35,000 women and children, who had accounted for 44.35 per cent of all beneficiaries. The revised Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women stipulated that public interest litigation could be launched on behalf of members of rural women’s collective economic organizations. Information regarding such litigation had been published by the Supreme People’s Court. In the previous decade, the Supreme People’s Court had promoted an online litigation and trial system. The Court had also published information on guiding cases, which helped lower-level courts to standardize their working methods.

62. **A representative of China** said that the Constitution and legislation did not discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.

63. In January 2021, a woman was found to have been trafficked and forced to have eight children. Many departments had collaborated in resettling her and providing her with free medical care in a psychiatric hospital, with a view to her rehabilitation. Her husband had been charged in July 2022 with abuse and forced imprisonment and sentenced to 9 years’ imprisonment. Five persons had been charged with trafficking of women and sentenced to prison terms of between 8 and 13 years.

64. **Ms. Lam Shuet-lai** (Hong Kong, China) said that the marriageable age in Hong Kong was 21 years without parental consent and 16 years with parental consent. The Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong had recommended the retention of the latter age with parental consent. The Family Council had undertaken a study of the situation and had endorsed that recommendation. According to the available data, only 0.08 per cent of girls married for the first time at the ages of 16 and 17 years. The situation would, of course, be kept under review. As the Small House Policy involved a host of complicated legal, environmental and land-use issues, any review would need to be conducted prudently and without undue haste.

65. **A representative of China** said that 60 training courses had been held on gender equality and domestic violence since 2016, with some 1,500 members of the judiciary trained in the first year. The Supreme People's Court had provided an online training course in 2022 on the applicability of legislation on gender equality and domestic violence, in which 30,000 judges had participated.

66. **A representative of China**, referring to a question regarding misogyny and gender-biased narratives in media outlets, said that article 28 of the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women prohibited such narratives. Other regulations applicable to the media prohibited discrimination against women and other groups. If the Cyberspace Administration of China was notified of such cases, it could decide to refer them to the courts.

67. **A representative of China** said that the Government promoted rules and regulations governing the management of civil society organizations in order to create an enabling environment for their work and to encourage them to protect women's rights and interests. They were provided with tax incentives and venues for their activities. Support had been provided for 339 fundraising projects on their behalf. The All-China Women's Federation had organized training courses for 1,600 organizations involved in protecting women's interests.

68. **A representative of China** said that the gender equality policy allowed women to balance their employment and family duties. More than 70 per cent of persons interviewed in a survey believed that men and women shared their family duties equally and 80 per cent believed that family decisions should be taken by both husbands and wives.

69. **Ms. Huang Xiaowei** (China) thanked the Committee members for their pertinent and constructive recommendations aimed at eliminating discrimination and promoting gender equality. Her country had diligently complied with its obligations under the Convention for many years. As a vast developing country with about 680 million women, China still faced a myriad of challenges. It would therefore carefully study the Committee's concluding observations with a view to promoting further progress towards gender equality.

*The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.*