



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

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

Summary record of the 1799th meeting

Held via videoconference, on Wednesday, 24 February 2021, at 12.30 p.m. Central European Time

Chair: Ms. Acosta Vargas

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The meeting was called to order at 12.30 p.m.

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

Ninth periodic report of Denmark (continued) (CEDAW/C/DNK/9, CEDAW/C/DNK/Q/9 and CEDAW/C/DNK/RQ/9)

1. **Ms. Svendsen** (Denmark) said that legislation requiring the municipalities to offer temporary accommodation and free counselling to women in shelters also applied to women with disabilities. Several shelters for women victims of violence had been designed to accommodate women with disabilities and a list of such shelters had been published on the website of the National Organization of Women's Shelters (Landsorganisation af Kvindekrisecentre). Some shelters specialized in providing counselling to women victims of violence who had disabilities. Women who received support under the Act on Social Services could continue to receive those forms of support during their stay in a shelter. The National Board of Social Services provided information and tools for professionals working with women with disabilities who had been exposed to violence.
2. **Ms. Aller** (Denmark) said that, in 2020, the Government had published a report on the results obtained by migrant students in schools. According to the report, which was based on the data produced by the Programme for International Student Assessment in 2018, the scores obtained by migrant girls had improved slightly in relation to previous years. Migrant girls and boys had similar absence patterns. The data suggested that ethnic minority girls had a lower school dropout rate than ethnic minority boys. The Ministry of Children and Education used a process of risk-based screening to monitor upper secondary schools that had poor results, high numbers of migrant students and high dropout rates. Measures were subsequently taken to assist such schools.
3. **Ms. Midttun** (Denmark) said that the right of patients to choose the hospital where they were treated had been temporarily suspended in order to ensure that hospitals had sufficient capacity to treat patients with coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or other acute or life-threatening illnesses. Although a few routine operations had been postponed, access to health care had remained unchanged during the COVID-19 pandemic. The health-care needs of pregnant women had been prioritized, guidelines for such women and their families had been published and some aspects of their care had been modified in response to the pandemic. For instance, antenatal classes were currently being delivered online. There had been an increase in the number of pregnant women who wished to give birth outside the hospital, but it was still a relatively low number, accounting for about 3 per cent of expectant mothers. However, the entitlement to the support of a midwife for home births had been suspended, as the capacity of midwives was needed at the hospitals.
4. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she wished to know what measures had been taken or envisaged to ensure that the algorithms used in computerized recruitment tools did not discriminate against vulnerable groups of women, including migrant women and women with disabilities.
5. **Mr. Safarov** said that it would be useful to know how many stateless and refugee women and girls had submitted successful applications for citizenship and how many such women had had their applications refused. It would also be interesting to learn the main reasons why applications for citizenship were refused, what impact the COVID-19 pandemic was having on the naturalization process and what measures were being taken to ensure that stateless persons born in Denmark did not remain stateless for an extended period of time. The State party might indicate whether it collected data on the number of stateless persons in the country and whether it ensured that refugees and stateless persons did not face excessive barriers in their efforts to acquire citizenship. The Committee would be interested to hear whether the Government had plans to simplify the naturalization process for women and girls who had fled conflict situations or domestic violence in other countries.
6. **Mr. Larsen** (Denmark) said that the political agreement on the conditions for acquiring citizenship by naturalization contained a chapter on stateless persons born in Denmark, who were covered by the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The chapter in question provided that children born stateless could be naturalized without having to meet the usual requirements for obtaining

citizenship if they filed their application prior to turning 18 years of age and were legally resident in Denmark.

7. There was no significant difference in the proportions of male and female applicants for citizenship whose applications were approved between 2015 and 2020. A total of 239 stateless women and 149 stateless men had acquired citizenship in 2015 while 170 stateless women and 181 stateless men had done so in 2020. A total of 77 women and 77 men had had their applications for citizenship refused in 2015 while 155 women and 117 men had had their applications refused in 2020. Although no statistics were available on the reasons why applications were refused, there was no evidence to suggest that a greater proportion of women than men had had their applications refused or that the reasons given to justify refusals of women's applications differed from those applied to men.

8. Refugees and stateless persons who had been granted asylum were entitled to apply for citizenship when they had been resident in the country for eight years rather than the nine years normally required under the regulations. The Ministry of Immigration and Integration did not keep any record of whether applicants for citizenship had been granted refugee status, with the exception of those who did not meet the minimum residence requirement of nine years. Consequently, no statistics were available on the number of approved and rejected applications submitted by women and girl refugees. The COVID-19 pandemic had not had any effect on the number of refugees and stateless persons who had been granted Danish citizenship.

9. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she wished to know whether, in the Government's view, gender-neutral legislation was suited to the task of mitigating the disproportionate effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and, if not, what measures would be taken to compensate for the inadequacy of such legislation. In view of the fact that property distribution and spousal maintenance following a divorce often favoured husbands, it would be interesting to know how the legislation on the dissolution of marriage adopted in 2018 made it possible to ensure that marital property was divided in a genuinely equal manner. She wondered what measures would be taken to protect women whose right to family reunification was restricted and women who risked losing their residence permit when they divorced because the permit had been granted as part of a family-reunification procedure. The Committee would appreciate information on forced religious marriages and any actions taken to prevent them. It also wished to know whether the State party's courts would consider applying section 243 of the Criminal Code, which related to psychological abuse, in cases involving violence within a religious marriage.

10. **Ms. Appel** (Denmark), addressing the Committee's concerns about gender-neutral legislation, said that all proposed legislation was reviewed in order to determine whether it would have any adverse implications for gender equality. Every year, the number of assessed bills was reported to the parliament. Although the Government's Action Plan on Intimate Partner Violence employed gender-neutral language, it was drafted in a way that took account of the different levels of risk faced by women and men.

11. **Ms. Akar** (Denmark) said that, in 2016, the parliament had amended the Danish Aliens Act to withdraw the right to family reunification from beneficiaries of temporary protection status who had not held a residence permit for at least three years. The amendment had been adopted because the Government at the time had found it necessary to restrict the influx of asylum seekers in the interests of maintaining social cohesion. The three-year waiting period applied only to persons who had been granted temporary protection status, such as persons who had fled a situation of armed conflict in their home country. The immigration authorities examined all cases to determine whether it was necessary for family reunification to take place before the three-year waiting period had elapsed. The right to family reunification was always upheld when so required by the international obligations of Denmark.

12. When a migrant woman holding a temporary residence permit obtained a divorce, the immigration authorities were required to determine whether she had been forced to leave the marriage because her former spouse had subjected her to assault, abuse or other forms of ill-treatment. Women who had left their spouses because of ill-treatment stood a greater chance of being granted leave to remain in Denmark, even if their stay in the country had been

relatively short. In order to be granted such leave, however, they were required to show evidence of their willingness to integrate into Danish society, for instance, by enrolling on a language course or finding employment. An apparent lack of willingness to integrate was not held against women whose former spouses had prevented them from doing so.

13. **Mr. Thøgersen** (Denmark) said that, under Danish family law, a couple's assets were divided equally if they decided to divorce. Couples who were unable to agree on how their assets were divided had the option of settling the matter through the courts.

14. **Mr. Safarov** said that he wished to know whether the Government was taking steps to simplify nationality procedures for women and girls who were victims of armed conflict or domestic or other kinds of violence. He also wondered whether the Government had envisaged any reform of the nationality requirements for second- or third-generation non-nationals living in Denmark. Furthermore, a full account of the child custody procedures for families in which one parent was a non-national in the State party would be welcome.

15. **The Chair** said that she would be grateful if the delegation could provide answers to those questions in writing.

16. **Ms. Gant** (Greenland, Denmark) said she wished to clarify that, although the government of Greenland was territorially and not ethnically defined, it could be described as a de facto indigenous government on account of indigenous Greenlanders' making up the overwhelming majority of the population, which was small and spread out over a vast territory. The vast majority of women could therefore be categorized as indigenous and rural.

17. Although the current government was a caretaker government, it would be sure to apprise the incoming Minister for Gender Equality of the dialogue with the Committee and encourage him or her to bring the Committee's observations and recommendations to the attention of parliament for debate and possible action.

18. Greenland was still laying the groundwork for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and would soon publish a report setting out its approach. It would be for the incoming government to develop a coherent implementation strategy and related action plans.

19. As Greenland was not a member of the European Union, it did not have access to the funding programmes available to member States. However, it would be entitled to a share of the €500 million earmarked for the 13 overseas countries and territories associated with the European Union under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027. A total of €225 million would be allocated to support the development of the territory's education sector and the diversification of its economy. Greenland would also be eligible for funding to carry out projects designed to address emerging challenges in the territory and to complement international initiatives.

20. The prohibition of gender-based discrimination was regulated by the Greenlandic Act on Equality of Men and Women, which also established the Council of Gender Equality. The Council had a mandate to examine, on its own initiative or by request, measures relating to gender equality and provided advice to individuals. Individuals who had suffered gender-based discrimination could initiate court proceedings or, if the discriminatory treatment had been meted out by the public authorities, file a complaint with the Greenlandic Parliamentary Ombudsman. There were currently no plans to expand the mandate of the Council of Gender Equality. The cooperation between the Danish Institute for Human Rights, whose mandate extended to Greenland, and the Human Rights Council of Greenland, was embedded in law. The Council, which was an independent body, proposed activities to the Institute and was represented on its board of governors. Similarly, a representative of the Institute attended the Council's meetings. The Danish parliament had recently allocated DKr 12 million, to be disbursed equally over the next four years, to strengthen the cooperation between the two bodies and to further promote human rights in Greenland. Lastly, she wished to clarify that the Greenlandic government's National Strategy and Action Plan against Violence for the period 2014–2017 remained valid and was still being implemented.

21. **Ms. Poulsen** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that, since 2012, the government of the Faroe Islands had been working to implement various initiatives provided for in its action plan to combat domestic violence. Although the Faroe Islands had not ratified the Council of

Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), the government had taken specific measures to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. Additional funding had been allocated to shelters, support had been provided to perpetrators of such violence and to victims of childhood sexual abuse, awareness-raising campaigns had been carried out and data on violence and abuse had been collected. An action plan to combat sexual abuse had been developed and was being implemented.

22. **Ms. Ameline** said that she would like to hear more about the efforts being made to accelerate the legal harmonization between Denmark and Greenland and the Faroe Islands in order to achieve a more effective implementation of the Convention. She would also like to know whether there were plans to introduce a mechanism to enhance cooperation between the different parliaments and governments in matters such as gender equality. The delegation might also explain how the government of Greenland intended to guarantee women living in remote communities equal access to the courts and to legal aid. She wished to point out that, by ratifying the Istanbul Convention, the Faroe Islands could contribute to greater legal harmonization throughout the State party.

23. **Ms. Nolsøe** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that, while the government of the Faroe Islands was legally competent to act in most areas, it did not have jurisdiction over matters such as citizenship, the Supreme Court or foreign policy, or over areas where legal competence had not yet been transferred to it, such as policing, prosecutorial authority and judicial administration. The Department of Legal Affairs at the Faroese Prime Minister's Office had taken steps to raise the awareness of the public authorities of the Convention. All bills were scrutinized to ensure their compatibility with laws of a higher standing, general laws and any applicable international conventions. A handbook on drafting legislation, which included a checklist to be used by public authorities to determine a bill's potential impact on human rights, had been published. It was a requirement for all bills to be drafted in gender neutral language. Assessing the potential human rights impact of bills ahead of time helped to prevent conflicts with existing legislation. Relevant courses had been organized for lawmakers and law enforcement officers.

24. The revised Administration of Justice Act had entered into force in the Faroe Islands in January 2021. The same rules therefore applied with regard to Danish and Faroese complaint mechanisms. All persons in need could receive free legal advice under the Faroese legal aid system. Individuals could submit complaints regarding adverse administrative decisions to one of several bodies. The Faroe Islands also had its own Ombudsman, who was elected by the Faroese parliament.

25. **Ms. Horni** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that, with regard to the recommendation calling for the establishment of a national human rights institution in the Faroe Islands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had set up a task force to examine the different possibilities and to make recommendations. The task force had published its report and the government was working to identify feasible solutions. She wished to recall that, in the absence of a national human rights institution, there were several systems in place to protect citizens' rights in the Faroe Islands.

26. **Ms. Frederiksen** (Denmark) said that, although Denmark and Greenland cooperated closely on matters relating to administration of justice, due to the significant linguistic, social and cultural differences between them, and between the different regions of Greenland, in the territory, justice was administered through the subsidiarity principle – in other words, by district courts and locally appointed judges. The application of that principle ensured that Greenlandic citizens could obtain access to justice locally and in their own language and that the courts had an understanding of local culture.

27. **Ms. Gant** (Greenland, Denmark) said that Greenland was in fact complying with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention and was taking measures to protect victim's rights without any form of discrimination.

28. **Mr. Kristiansen** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that violence against women with disabilities was dealt with as severely as violence against any other individual or group and was prosecuted under the same law. Special provision was made for persons with disabilities involved in criminal cases. For example, witnesses with disabilities could be questioned

outside ordinary court rooms. The government of the Faroe Islands recognized that women with disabilities were at greater risk of suffering violence and abuse than other persons. In 2017, a conference had been held to raise awareness of issues related to the sexuality and the sexual abuse of persons with disabilities. All the initiatives provided for in the current action plan to combat domestic violence were also aimed at women with disabilities.

29. Migrant women were overrepresented in the women's crisis centre in Tórshavn, the Faroe Islands. Several initiatives had been launched to inform migrant women of their rights. In late 2020, the Faroese migration authorities had hired an integration officer to assist newcomers to the territory. A welcome pamphlet had also been produced and distributed to migrant women.

30. **Ms. Poulsen** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that the results of an extensive national survey on violence and abuse would soon be published. The data provided by the survey would help the government to combat domestic violence and abuse in a more targeted and systematic fashion. The women's crisis centre had been producing data on domestic violence since its establishment. Data on violence had also been collected by the government in cooperation with the University of the Faroe Islands.

31. **Ms. Blaasvær** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that, although there was no evidence of prostitution in the Faroe Islands, that possibility could not be completely ruled out. Prostitution was outlawed by the revised Faroese Criminal Code. The Faroese police had no reason to believe that human trafficking was taking place in the territory and had received no reports of prostitution. The women's crisis centre had likewise found no evidence to suggest that organized prostitution or trafficking were taking place in the territory. The government did not therefore see any need to conduct a study on the prevalence of trafficking in women and girls, or of prostitution.

32. **Ms. Gant** (Greenland, Denmark) said that violence against women was of great concern to the government of Greenland. It was estimated that over 60 per cent of women in Greenland had been exposed to violence at some point in their adult life. A 2019 study showed that women aged between 25 and 34 were especially vulnerable to violence, particularly domestic violence at the hands of a current or former partner. Steps were being taken to improve the collection of data on social issues in Greenland, including statistics on violent crimes.

33. The Greenlandic government's National Strategy and Action Plan against Violence provided for initiatives to prevent and combat domestic violence, including public information campaigns. Several institutions were tasked with rehabilitating perpetrators and caring for victims of violence. A permanent crisis centre had been opened in northern Greenland, which, in 2020, had sheltered and cared for a number of battered women with serious psychological and social problems. Another institution had treated some 60 persons, the majority of whom were men aged between 18 and 39 years, for violence and aggression. There were plans to further strengthen the capacity of shelters and family centres and to upgrade the skills and competencies of staff by amalgamating those establishments. Tools for preventing and addressing violence against women were available on the website of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Justice.

34. Surveys showed that many more girls than boys had been subjected to childhood sexual abuse by either a peer or an adult. Efforts to eradicate the sexual abuse of children took the form of general action to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people, and targeted prevention measures. Specific treatment and support were made available to children who had been sexually abused and efforts to strengthen those services were ongoing. Denmark and Greenland had undertaken a number of joint initiatives to prevent vulnerable children and young people in Greenland from falling victim to sexual abuse and to support survivors and rehabilitate perpetrators. A national action plan to address parental neglect and a strategy to combat sexual abuse, both covering the period up to 2030, were already in place. The impact of the work carried out by the special teams tasked with assisting survivors of childhood sexual abuse would be assessed in 2021.

35. **The Chair** said that the Committee was particularly interested in the plight of girls who had been subjected to sexual abuse in Greenland. She wished to invite the delegation to submit any specific information on that subject to the Committee within 48 hours.

36. **Ms. Gant** (Greenland, Denmark) said that there was no tradition of prostitution in Greenland and no evidence to suggest that the phenomenon existed in the territory. As for trafficking in women, the Danish Aliens Act applied to Greenland and, with only two transatlantic airports and no land borders to speak of, it was all but impossible to enter the territory illegally from abroad.

37. **Ms. Gabr** said the fact that there was no evidence to suggest that prostitution or trafficking in women took place in Greenland or the Faroe Islands did not preclude the existence of those phenomena. She wondered whether the absence of cases was not attributable to a lack of awareness raising. She asked how the governments of Greenland and the Faroe Islands intended to remedy that shortcoming, what the government of the Faroe Islands was doing to protect migrant women from exploitation and what steps the government of Greenland was taking to protect women from exploitation in the workplace.

38. **Ms. Gant** (Greenland, Denmark) said that, as Greenland had an extremely small population spread across just 76 settlements, social control was very tight. Accordingly, any incidents of trafficking in human beings would be immediately detected. Recent years had brought growing numbers of migrant workers to Greenland, mainly from Asia, and the government of Greenland was aware that the working conditions and pay of those migrants, who currently numbered close to 800, had not always been satisfactory. Fortunately, the trade unions had monitored their situation closely and had even taken a few cases to court, resulting in a small number of women receiving compensation. The government would continue working to ensure that the equal pay principle was also applied to migrant workers.

39. **Ms. Poulsen** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that the government of the Faroe Islands ran a number of information and awareness-raising campaigns each year, addressing sexual issues and the situation of migrant women, among other subjects. It had also put together a welcome pamphlet for migrant women, which informed them of their rights and addressed issues surrounding gender-based violence.

40. **Ms. Gant** (Greenland, Denmark) said that 12 out of 31 members of the parliament of Greenland, 2 out of 7 ministers in the outgoing government and 3 out of 5 municipal council mayors were women. In addition, since 2011, the two members of the Danish parliament that represented Greenland had been women. The composition of the current Cabinet in fact represented an exception from the generally upward path towards gender equality in politics.

41. Turning to the subject of discrimination in education, she said that the government of Greenland acknowledged the tendency among young persons to make educational choices along traditional gender lines, with men going into the trades and women moving into education, social work or health care. However, its major concern was not gender segregation but the relatively low level of educational achievement among the population in general: currently only 30 per cent of secondary school leavers moved directly into further education and recent data showed a decrease in that percentage among both women and men, although girls outperformed boys at school and had accounted for 73 per cent of students in higher education in 2019.

42. The new legislation on parental leave following birth or adoption had been designed to equalize entitlements and make the option of taking parental leave more attractive for young mothers and fathers alike. All employees in both the public and private sectors were now entitled to paid maternity or paternity leave and to receive an amount at least equivalent to the public parental benefit. The act benefited new parents in several ways, offering them the option of using up to four weeks of their entitlement flexibly in order to ease the transition back to work. The leave conditions for same-sex parents had also been improved.

43. Although men continued to earn an average of 25 per cent more than women, disposal income had increased by 7 per cent for the entire population since 2017, with women enjoying a more pronounced increase than men. Furthermore, there were currently fewer unemployed women than men: employment had increased slightly among both sexes, but the increase among women had been marginally greater.

44. There had also been slight improvements in the gender composition of the boards of directors of government-owned joint stock companies. At present, women accounted for 46.6 per cent of the 71 members of those boards, but between 2015 and 2018 they had held a

majority of board positions and 5 of the 14 boards had been chaired by a woman. In January 2021, the government had launched a new recruitment portal that would make it easier for potential candidates to register an interest in joining the board of a joint stock company while at the same time promoting a more even gender balance among board members. So far, 99 male candidates and 53 female candidates had registered an interest.

45. **Ms. Blaasvær** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that, as the government of the Faroe Islands had assumed full competency for legislation governing abortion in July 2018, the question of whether that legislation should be aligned with current Danish legislation would require some discussion. In the meantime, all women and girls in the Faroe Islands had access to safe and legal abortion in cases of rape, incest, threats to the women's life or health and severe fetal abnormality.

46. **Ms. Ludvíksdóttir** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that research and statistical analysis to assess the psychological effects of COVID-19-related isolation were under way but that, to date, no clear deterioration in women's mental health had been identified, possibly because the lockdown in the Faroe Islands had been less severe than elsewhere. Furthermore, there were various programmes in place to help persons experiencing isolation and other mental health problems. In 2019, the Council for Public Health had launched the "ABC (Act-Belong-Commit) for Mental Health" programme and, in 2020, a law on free psychological assistance for young persons aged between 13 and 35 who were suffering from anxiety and mild depression had taken effect, fulfilling recommendations contained in the national mental health action plan launched in 2018.

47. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she would like information about specific measures taken to combat sexual harassment in Greenland and the Faroe Islands given the increased prevalence of sexual violence generally. She particularly wished to know whether complaints mechanisms were effective and women victims had unobstructed access to justice, and whether data on such violence was systematically collected and analysed. She would like to receive any available data and information concerning complaints and judicial and other decisions taken by the respective bodies in cases of sexual violence in the last two years.

48. **The Chair** said that, owing to time constraints, the delegation should provide written answers to Ms. Tisheva's question. Any other information on mental health, and specifically suicide prevention, that they wished to share should also be submitted in writing.

49. **Ms. Gant** (Greenland, Denmark) said that the corporate governance policy of the government of Greenland was set out in its statement on the ownership and development of government-owned joint stock companies and its guidelines for good corporate governance in government-owned joint stock companies. Those documents, which were intended to support the construction of a self-sustainable economy, to secure transparency and to guarantee social responsibility, required joint stock companies to report annually on their corporate governance activities and undertakings, following up on past government recommendations, and to conduct a yearly review of action taken to ensure diversity, including equal opportunities and equal gender representation, in their management. In addition, their policy on social responsibility should be clearly stated in their annual reports.

50. Ownership and control of carbon resources was in the hands of the government. Currently, there were only two mining sites in operation, between them employing 93 persons, including 25 women, but there were plans to open an additional mine. Although mines tended to be located in remote, uninhabited areas, strict rules were in place for the conduct of environmental impact assessments, including assessments of the effects on human health, before a licence was granted. In addition, tripartite agreements concluded between the licensees, the government and the affected municipalities ensured that mining activities benefitted the local communities, for example, by providing employment and skills development opportunities. Although the agreements did not specifically promote women's rights, other legislation on health, conditions of work and equal pay as well as the provisions of the Gender Equality Act applied to all mining activity.

51. **Ms. Øregaard** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that outlying islands in the Faroe archipelago were not as remote as those of other countries: most islands were connected by bridge, tunnel or ferry and in most cases it was possible to reach the metropolitan area in around an hour. Women living in remoter communities therefore had good commuting

possibilities and were not excluded from work opportunities in the capital. The government provided financial support to the most remote islands, nonetheless, having granted funding for cultural initiatives, cafes and the maintenance of landing sites in the course of 2020. The projects it supported increased the options available for women who preferred to work closer to home and maintain tighter links with their community. Residents of the remoter islands also benefited from lower tax rates.

52. **Ms. Bethel** said that she remained concerned about the lack of a gender dimension in corporate policies for sustainable development. It was important that Inuit women had a central role in the development of policies related to extractive industries and their impact and policies to address the climate crisis in Greenland.

53. **Ms. Gant** (Greenland, Denmark) said she could assure the Committee that the Inuit people were very much in control of climate change mitigation policies and decisions related to mining activity. The Government was unaware of any forced religious marriages taking place in Greenland. Its communities were very homogenous in religious terms and marriage was governed simply by the Act on the Formation and Dissolution of Marriage.

54. **Ms. Poulsen** (Faroe Islands, Denmark) said that the Family Law Administration was unaware of any cases of forced religious marriage in the Faroe Islands and that the authorities therefore saw no need for preventive action.

55. **Ms. Hansen** (Denmark) said that gender equality was a cornerstone of Danish democracy, central to its growth, cohesion and social welfare, yet, despite ambitious targets and a high degree of parity, the country had still to achieve de facto gender equality. The Government acknowledged the important areas of concern highlighted by the Committee, which included women's underrepresentation in decision-making, gender segregation in the labour market, the gender pay gap, gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings, as well as the need for gender neutrality, affirmative action and better sex-disaggregated statistics. The COVID-19 pandemic had been an undercurrent in many of the questions raised and, with that observation in mind, she wished to assure the Committee that the Government would continue to work to ensure that no woman, man, girl or boy was left behind during the crisis. It would monitor the situation of vulnerable women especially closely, mindful of the fact that preliminary studies of the pandemic's consequences indicated that persons in situations of financial instability, women victims of violence and mentally vulnerable people were suffering most. The delegation wished to thank the Committee for the very constructive and open dialogue and looked forward to receiving its concluding observations.

56. **The Chair** said that she wished to thank the members of the delegation for their responses and explanations and to remind them that any information that time constraints had prevented them from sharing during the meeting should be submitted to the Committee in writing.

The meeting rose at 2.35 p.m.