



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Eighty-third session**

Summary record of the 1923rd meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 19 October 2022, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Acosta Vargas

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

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

Ninth periodic report of Ukraine (continued) (CEDAW/C/UKR/9;
CEDAW/C/UKR/QPR/9)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Ukraine joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the delegation of Ukraine to the meeting, explained that additional members of the delegation would be participating via video link.

Articles 1–6

3. **Ms. Gabr** said that she would like to know whether ensuring that trafficking in persons for the purposes of prostitution was set out as a specific criminal offence was one of the 24 areas addressed by the draft recovery plan mentioned during the delegation's introductory statement. If it was not already included, it was extremely important that it should be added.

Articles 7–9

4. **Ms. Nadaraia**, noting that just 27 per cent of senior public officials and 13.6 per cent of government ministers had been women in 2020, said that she wished to know what strategies were in place to further increase the share of leadership roles and decision-making positions held by women in all political bodies, including the parliament, provincial councils and the civil service. As at early 2021, 80 subnational authorities at various levels had become parties to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life; it would be interesting to hear how the State party planned to further promote the Charter. She would be grateful for details of any strategies in place to advance women in roles in the diplomatic service and international forums, as the proportion of women in such posts had reportedly risen from 7 per cent in 2017 to 22 per cent in 2021. The report made no mention of the number of women employed in the judiciary or in the private sector. She would appreciate information, including statistical data, on strategies to promote women's employment in those spheres.

5. She would also like to know what strategies the State party envisaged to protect women politicians and public figures from sexist attacks, such as the use of disrespectful language and stereotypes in public statements. It would be useful for the Committee to hear detailed information about measures taken to allow internally displaced women, women belonging to national minorities and women with disabilities to participate as voters and candidates in elections and for it to receive statistical data on the numbers of women elected to public office during the 2019 elections. Lastly, she hoped to receive further information on the implementation of the quota established by the Electoral Code, in particular its successes and failures.

6. **Mr. Safarov**, observing that many pregnant women and mothers with newborns had been among the more than 9 million Ukrainians forced to flee their country since 24 February 2022, said that such women were unable to apply in person for Ukrainian citizenship for their children and that the legislation in force reportedly prevented them from applying after a certain period had elapsed. He wondered whether the State party planned to amend its legislation – even temporarily – to make it easier to apply for citizenship for children outside Ukraine or in the occupied territories. He noted that the Committee on the Rights of the Child had, in its concluding observations of 2011 (CRC/C/UKR/CO/3-4), recommended that the State party amend its legislation so as to guarantee the right to a nationality of children who would otherwise be stateless. The Committee would like to know how the State party was resolving problems of birth registration in territory not controlled by the Government. It would also like to receive information on how access to Ukrainian citizenship was ensured for women of Crimean Tatar and Roma ethnicity who lacked access to State agencies. The Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption protected children from problems with their citizenship and helped in the struggle against trafficking in persons. Would the State party consider ratifying it?

7. **A representative of Ukraine**, speaking via video link, said that the Government wished to identify the needs of sex workers, to develop a road map towards bringing an end to prostitution and to adopt a special programme for reintegrating women who, having stopped sex work, wished to establish new lives for themselves.
8. **A representative of Ukraine** said that the issue of increasing the proportion of decision-making positions held by women had been incorporated into the State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030. The Strategy included the establishment of a network of female leaders and the launch of training programmes to improve the image of women in leadership positions and to combat stereotypes. At the end of 2021, 29 per cent of senior public officials had been women; the figure had risen to 32 per cent by July 2022.
9. **A representative of Ukraine**, speaking via video link, said that 80 per cent of the staff of the State Migration Service of Ukraine and 62 per cent of its managers were women, as were 28 per cent of the officers of the National Police and 16.5 per cent of its senior officers; 22 per cent of the staff of the State Emergency Service and 20 per cent of its managers; and 21 per cent of the staff of the State Border Guard Service and 14.5 per cent of its managers. Although, according to the official figures, just 7 per cent of members of the National Guard were women, the true figure was likely to be higher, as the National Guard had recruited heavily as a result of the war.
10. **A representative of Ukraine**, speaking via video link, said that 40 per cent of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been female in 2021, and that figure was continuously increasing. Following a gender audit conducted with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Ministry had begun implementation of a gender strategy, which would be in operation until 2025. Its measures included a mentorship programme for women and encouragement for men to take parental leave.
11. **A representative of Ukraine** said that, owing to the war of aggression waged by the Russian Federation since February 2022, the latest statistical data on the economy covered the situation only up until the end of 2021. At that time, some 7.4 million women had been employed in a variety of sectors, including 570,000 in managerial positions. In view of the country's large number of internally displaced persons, those figures were unlikely to still be accurate. The Government operated schemes to find jobs for displaced persons, including women. For instance, businesses could claim compensation up to the value of the minimum wage for each internally displaced person they employed.
12. **A representative of Ukraine** said that, under amendments made to the legislation, political parties in which women accounted for at least 30 per cent of their electoral lists were eligible for additional State funding. For example, Holos (Voice) and Yevropeiska Solidarnist (European Solidarity) would receive 44 million hryvnias (Hrv) in 2022.
13. **A representative of Ukraine** said that 20 per cent of the more than 80 subnational authorities that had become parties to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life had already set out their plans for implementing the Charter.
14. **Ms. Levchenko** (Ukraine), speaking as head of the delegation, said that the political parties had procedures in place for combating sexist attacks against women in politics. They took action swiftly when necessary. Since 2018, the issue of sexist attacks had been monitored by the Parliament Inter-factional Caucus on Equal Opportunities. On promoting the rights of women with disabilities, the Government Commissioner for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities worked with organizations of persons with disabilities to hold training sessions and workshops to help women with disabilities participate actively in decision-making at the local, regional and central levels.
15. **A representative of Ukraine**, speaking via video link, said that the Ministry of Justice had established a simplified court proceeding for registering births or deaths that had occurred in the temporarily occupied territories. Registration took place on the day of the court decision, and applicants' court fees were waived in cases relating to children born in the occupied territories. The proceeding had been used to register 5,391 births in 2020, 5,941 births in 2021 and 902 births in the first half of 2022. The Ministry had also drafted a bill that

would allow for electronic birth certificates to be issued. That would also be possible in the temporarily occupied territories.

16. In addition, the Ministry had conducted an awareness-raising campaign to help ensure that persons of Roma ethnicity registered the birth of their children. The number of such registrations had increased from 2,462 in 2019 to 2,845 in 2021. During registration, the absence of the mother's or father's passport could not be cited as grounds to refuse registration.

17. At the Ministry of Justice, 73 per cent of the staff members were female, as were 50 per cent of persons holding leadership positions.

18. **A representative of Ukraine** said that persons who had been forced to leave Ukraine could use the Diia mobile application to apply for a birth certificate. The application could be submitted by anyone – not just parents or relatives – from anywhere, with supporting documentation sent electronically. Individuals from ethnic minorities, including Roma persons, could also apply using the Diia mobile application. The National Agency for Public Service had worked with international organizations to develop 16 training programmes to encourage women's participation in politics. Every year some 3,500 civil servants at all levels of government underwent such training.

19. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wished to know whether Ukraine had ever had a female Minister of Defence or Deputy Foreign Minister. She also wondered whether women were admitted into all branches of the country's armed forces and, if so, what percentage of the various ranks was female. In addition, she would like to know whether the State party had female military attachés at any of its embassies.

20. **Ms. Levchenko** (Ukraine) said that several women in the defence and security forces had been promoted to the rank of general in recent years, and that women had been appointed to the posts of Deputy Minister of Defence and Minister for Veterans' Affairs. Thanks to the removal, in 2017 and 2019, of legal obstacles to women's participation in the defence and security forces, the number of women at all levels of those forces was increasing. Operational needs caused by the war of aggression waged by the Russian Federation were also a factor. Some 38,000 women were in the armed forces. All branches of the defence and security forces had gender advisers and conducted training on gender issues.

21. The Russian occupiers were preventing Ukrainian citizens living in the temporarily occupied territories from travelling to Government-controlled areas. As well as being a breach of the law of armed conflict, that caused huge problems that violated their right to freedom of movement. It put their lives at risk and prevented them from receiving State services.

Articles 10–14

22. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that the Committee welcomed the efforts made by the State party to align the content of educational materials with the principles of the Convention, including the review and analysis of textbooks from a gender perspective. The amendments to the Regulation on the Military (Naval) Lyceum removing restrictions on the admission of girls were also commendable. It would be helpful to obtain an update on the current status of the draft strategy on gender mainstreaming in education.

23. The delegation might wish to comment on reports that 2,500 schools had been earmarked for closure and that local authorities were still able to decide to close secondary schools, despite the fact that a moratorium had been declared against such closures. The Committee would like to know how many schools had been closed and how the closures and the conflict-related damage to education infrastructure had affected children's access to education. Taking into account the particular vulnerability of girls in conflict situations, it would be useful to know what had been done to counteract the disproportionate effect of the conflict on their access to education. She wondered how the State party ensured access to online education for girls, especially for those living in rural areas or with disabilities. The delegation might also wish to explain how the Government intended to close the education gap that had opened owing to the conflict. It would be interesting to learn of any special

training provided to school counsellors and educators to mitigate the psychological effect of the conflict and to hear about the measures taken to ensure the safety of schools.

24. It would be helpful to find out whether the State party intended to use the opportunity of reconstruction to include disability, gender, human rights and peace education in school syllabuses. It would also be interesting to find out how the Government planned to address gender stereotypes in textbooks, give greater visibility in history textbooks to women's contributions and promote consent-based sex education in school.

25. The Committee would like to know what measures had been taken to enhance access to education for Roma girls, internally displaced persons, girls with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, and to combat prejudice against them.

26. **A representative of Ukraine**, speaking via video link, said that the education system had continued to function throughout the war. On Knowledge Day, the traditional beginning of the school year held on 1 September 2022, the new school year had been launched in online, hybrid and in-person formats. In-person classes had been largely limited to safe areas in western Ukraine.

27. Thus far, 170 schools, 91 kindergartens and 17 universities had been completely destroyed during the war, and 1,069 schools, 841 kindergartens and 51 universities had been severely damaged.

28. From the first day of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, psychological support services had been provided to students and teachers. In the framework of the National Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Programme, 25,000 school psychologists had been mobilized to work with children traumatized by the war. Separate counselling services were available for teachers, who had to rise to the dual challenge of teaching children affected by trauma while dealing with their own distress.

29. In the territories liberated from the Russian aggressor, educational activities had continued. Teachers had relocated to safer regions and continued teaching online. Between 95 and 97 per cent of Ukrainian children were reportedly connected to online teaching platforms.

30. Gender and anti-discrimination assessments had been conducted for all State-funded textbooks and online teaching materials, and any materials containing gender stereotypes had been removed. Subjects that had traditionally been taught to girls and boys in separate groups were now taught in mixed classes.

31. The information that 2,500 schools had been earmarked for closure was not entirely accurate. The schools were part of an optimization strategy whereby schools with low enrolment were consolidated with others. In very remote parts of the country, a small number of schools had been closed. The relevant statistics would be submitted in writing.

32. The Strategy for Integrating Gender Equality in Education up to 2030 included measures to improve Roma children's access to primary and secondary education. Awareness activities were currently being carried out, in cooperation with the local authorities, to promote their enrolment.

33. From June 2022 onward, an audit of safety features had been conducted in all schools in Ukraine. More than 65 per cent had been equipped with bomb shelters; the intention was to equip all schools and other educational institutions with shelters by the end of 2022. Data on the inclusion of girls with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons in the education system would be provided in writing.

34. **A representative of Ukraine**, speaking via video link, said that the Ministry of Internal Affairs attached high priority to the safety and security of educational establishments. Police officers and staff of the State Emergency Service actively participated in guaranteeing safe school environments. The choice of teaching format – in-person, hybrid or online – currently depended on the security situation in the region in question, which was closely monitored. State Emergency Service personnel were on site at all times and the Service had drafted guidance for teachers on communicating security-related issues to pupils. In remote communities, police officers and State Emergency Service personnel visited schools to train teachers and children in matters of security. Several schools worked with

trained experts who were tasked to evaluate the safety and security of a particular facility. Internal and external surveillance activities were conducted to ensure safe school transport and the safety of school perimeters and surrounding streets. The security situation in and around schools was closely monitored.

35. **A representative of Ukraine** said that in the framework of a project entitled “I have Rights”, citizens learned to exercise and defend their rights, especially when faced with bullying. Any violation of anti-bullying regulations was liable to prosecution. First-time offenders were subject to a fine ranging from Hrv 850 to Hrv 2,000 or 48 hours of community service; repeat offenders incurred a fine of Hrv 3,400 or a maximum of 80 hours of community service. The failure to properly report cases of bullying was punishable by a maximum fine of Hrv 3,400.

36. **A representative of Ukraine** said that efforts to increase the enrolment of Roma girls in education mainly focused on early development. In six regions of Ukraine, regional representatives of the Romani Early Years Network (REYN), which brought together educators, social workers, health workers, government representatives and volunteers, worked with Roma children to support their early development needs. As a result, in Zakarpattia region, for example, 244 Roma children, 50 per cent of whom were girls, had enrolled in school.

37. **Ms. Levchenko** (Ukraine) said that the National Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030 provided for equal access to education and prohibited discriminatory content in educational materials. The attendant action plan provided for anti-discrimination assessments of educational content and a gender audit of educational establishments. All actors in the education system were provided with the relevant training. Details of those measures were contained in the Strategy for Integrating Gender Equality in Education up to 2030, which had been submitted for Government approval. The strategy contained detailed actions for mainstreaming non-discrimination across all levels of education. A group of experts had been entrusted with modernizing educational contents. The review and analysis of educational materials would be expanded further.

38. Ukraine was a highly digitalized country. A nationwide project was being implemented to promote digital literacy. The Ministry of Digital Transformation had established a network of more than 6,000 digital education hubs, including in rural areas. Prior to the Russian invasion, there had been 6,200 such hubs; 200 were located in the temporarily occupied territories and had suspended their operations.

39. A national strategy for the creation of a barrier-free space in Ukraine had been developed in 2021. The strategy took a holistic approach to helping people overcome gender, age or disability-related access barriers to education and other areas of life. The Ministry of Regional Development of Ukraine conducted inclusiveness audits of educational establishments with a view to ensuring equal access. All educational facilities and events were designed to create gender awareness among both girls and boys. The HeForShe campaign was very popular in Ukraine.

40. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that, while she appreciated the efforts made to enhance access to education for girls with disabilities and Roma girls, the Committee needed specific enrolment data. It remained unclear how the State party intended to address the absence of women’s contributions in history textbooks. At the current crucial juncture in the country’s history, where women played critical roles, history books should be revised to reflect their contributions adequately. The State party might wish to include educational materials produced by private publishers in its gender analysis, as the State’s responsibility also extended to the publications of private actors.

41. **Ms. Bethel** said that the State party had taken a series of commendable steps to enhance equality in the field of employment, including the introduction of equal parental leave, its joining the Equal Pay International Coalition and the adoption of an action plan to implement its commitments under the Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality. The Committee was nevertheless concerned that segregation continued to place women in jobs in low-income sectors and that women had been affected disproportionately by conflict-related dismissals. It would be useful to know whether the State party might envisage a national

recovery plan that included a human rights-based approach and ensured that capital investment projects focused on substantive gender equality, non-discrimination and effective support for women's economic empowerment.

42. She would like to know whether the findings and recommendations from the Study on Business and Human Rights in Ukraine conducted by the United Nations Development Programme in 2021 would be used to improve women's labour rights, especially for women belonging to vulnerable groups.

43. While it was encouraging to note that the legal prohibition against women working in 458 occupations had been lifted, the large pay gap remained a serious obstacle to equality in the field of employment. She asked how the State party envisaged facilitating women's access to previously inaccessible occupations in the post-conflict era. She wondered whether any steps had been taken to prepare women's entry into those sectors by encouraging them to enrol in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programmes, vocational training and tertiary education. It would be useful to learn of any measures taken to implement the State's commitment to equal pay for work of equal value in public and private sector employment. She was also curious to find out how the State party planned to tackle the problem of shadow employment, which contributed to the pay gap. Were there any plans to ratify the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) of the International Labour Organization (ILO)?

44. It was unclear how the State party intended in the post-conflict era to address the disproportionate unemployment levels among young women, in particular women from vulnerable groups, and to generate access to full-time, formal employment, including for women subjected to intersectional discrimination and women with disabilities.

45. She asked what proactive measures were being taken to prevent the practice whereby women of reproductive age, upon recruitment, were required to submit a resignation notice with an open date, which would be used if they became pregnant. It would be useful to learn of any plans to ratify the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 103) and the measures taken to implement the ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156). The State party might wish to inform the Committee of the status of the revision of the Labour Code of 1971 and provide a timeline for the enactment of legislation on gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment at the workplace.

46. **A representative of Ukraine** said that, although the gender wage gap had been reduced by 7.4 per cent over the past five years, the Government was keenly aware of the need for additional efforts. An action plan had been developed and Ukraine had joined the Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality. A working group had been set up to develop a national strategy and action plan to tackle the gender wage gap. Its adoption was envisaged for late 2022.

47. The Labour Code of 1971 was vastly outdated and was currently being amended. The new Code would provide for equal pay for equal work, set forth principles of equality and non-discrimination and enable legal recourse against unfair pay practices.

48. The legislation on parental leave had been amended in 2021 to provide for equal rights for mothers and fathers, regardless of whether or not they were married. Of the 15.5 million people in employment at the end of 2021, 3 million were in shadow employment, 40 per cent of whom were women. Shadow employment was most common in the wholesale, retail and agriculture sectors. A grant programme had been launched in 2022 whereby businesses and entrepreneurs were eligible for a Hrv 8 million agriculture grant, on the condition that they employed no fewer than 25 workers. The grant was repaid to the State through salary and other deductions in the course of 3 years. Similar grants were available for wholesale and retail traders. Microgrants in the amount of Hrv 250,000 were available to small businesses or entrepreneurs who undertook to provide employment for at least two persons. The grant programmes aimed to move people progressively into legal employment. Of the 1,400 beneficiaries, 600 were women.

49. The labour legislation had been amended to replace the quota system by an approach whereby companies were rewarded through tax incentives to employ certain categories of workers, including women in long-term employment, single mothers and women with

disabilities. The new labour provisions would prohibit gender-based discrimination, including on grounds of pregnancy.

50. **A representative of Ukraine** said that, since early 2022, gender audits had helped to measure the efficiency of State bodies; 47 such bodies had been audited during the course of the year. Various private and government-owned enterprises applied the methodological guidelines developed by the Ministry of Social Policy in 2021. Training was provided before the audits were conducted, and the audit results were fed into action plans. Audits were used to evaluate working conditions for women, including women with children, and to assess anti-discrimination measures in the workplace. The reasons behind wage gaps in specific entities were examined and recommendations were put forward to address them.

51. **A representative of Ukraine** said that recent legislative amendments provided for non-standard working arrangements, without fixed hours of work, to accommodate the needs of men and women with family obligations. Since 2020, compensation had been available to women for the care they provided to relatives.

52. **A representative of Ukraine** said that the laws containing the code of ethics for employees of the State Emergency Service, National Police and State Migration Service and the disciplinary code of the armed forces, State Border Guard Service and National Guard had been amended in recent years to strengthen liability for sexual harassment. The appropriate response procedures were set out in guidelines. The Ministry of Internal Affairs had developed guidelines for the prevention of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in its hiring and promotion bodies and conducted regular training sessions for employees on the prevention of such practices in the workplace.

53. **A representative of Ukraine** said that the State Employment Service made funds for training, including training in STEM subjects, available to unemployed men and women. There had been a decrease in horizontal and vertical segregation in all sectors of the Ukrainian economy.

54. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wished to know how many women had led labour unions in Ukraine, how the State party encouraged women to participate in unions and take on leadership roles and whether women's and men's rates of union membership were roughly the same.

55. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would like to know what steps were being taken to raise women's awareness of the areas of work that had formerly been prohibited to them, to provide vocational training opportunities in such fields and to address the discriminatory attitudes reportedly faced in the job market by women who used drugs.

56. **A representative of Ukraine** said that the existing law on labour unions dated from 1993 and had never been updated. A bill on collective agreements was being prepared by the Government and would facilitate participation in unions. Women were already very active at all levels of the labour movement. A new Labour Code was being prepared and was expected to come into force in March 2023; it would help address the stereotypes surrounding pregnant women and women with young children in the workforce. No programmes existed specifically to help women who used drugs to find employment, but those women had the same access to the training and employment services of the State Employment Service as all other women.

57. **Ms. Levchenko** (Ukraine) said that the deputy heads of labour unions were often women and many unions had gender commissions. The Government had expanded women's access to STEM-related professions, and female representation in fields such as software development and information technology now exceeded 40 per cent.

58. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonso** said that, given the war's impact on Ukrainian health-care infrastructure, she wished to know what measures the State party was taking to make contraceptives available to women, to give girls access to vaccinations and to provide services to women requiring perinatal care, women with HIV, older women, women needing hormone therapy, women with disabilities and women with chronic degenerative diseases. She wished to learn about the care provided to women who had been victims of gender-based violence in their homes or in the places where they had been relocated and to victims of rape

as a weapon of war, and she would appreciate information on the mental health services available to the public.

59. **A representative of Ukraine** said that many of the gains that had been made since the Government's launch of its health-care reform process in 2017 – a process that had seen government spending on health care almost double between 2018 and 2022 – had been halted or reversed because of the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, during which 176 health facilities and 18 maternity wards had been damaged. Mobile maternity teams had been set up with the help of the country's international partners, including the United Nations Population Fund, and one had started operating just a few days earlier in Iziium, a city where the Russian occupation had ended, but which was still being shelled. Multidisciplinary mobile teams, which provided comprehensive check-ups, obstetrical and gynaecological services, counselling on contraception and emergency contraception, a variety of laboratory tests and mental health consultations, were also operating in cities and towns where the occupation had ended. The requirement that citizens must declare their primary care physicians before being able to receive free primary health care was being waived for the 4 million internally displaced men, women and children in the country, to allow them to have uninterrupted access to health care in their new places of residence.

60. More than fifty pharmacies had closed since the beginning of the war after many of their employees, who were primarily women, had fled to safety with their families. The Government had taken steps to ensure that hospital pharmacies remained open. It had also worked with international partners to transfer some 2,000 patients who were either wounded or had chronic diseases from Ukrainian hospitals to health facilities in 29 countries, which were providing care free of charge. Under a programme to help partners be present during the birthing process, male soldiers had been able to be present at the birth of their children. Support was being provided to school health and reproductive health services to enable them to better support adolescents during the conflict. About 1 per cent of Ukrainian doctors had fled to other European countries and were now able to help Ukrainian refugees in their countries of destination. A survey conducted with the World Bank and the World Health Organization had found that some 15 million Ukrainians needed some form of psychological support and would continue to need it after the war. The health care sector cooperated with law enforcement agencies and the Office of the Prosecutor General in cases where there were allegations that rape was used as a weapon of war. Medical response mechanisms were in place and included specially trained gynaecologists and other health professionals who documented the evidence of the crime.

61. **Ms. Ameline**, noting the serious risk of poverty facing much of the population of Ukraine, said that she wished to know what proportion of the recipients of social assistance were women; whether any temporary social insurance or minimum income measures currently in place would be converted into long-term mechanisms; and whether women who were living in or had fled occupied areas of the country had access to benefits under the country's social protection laws. Given the large amount of housing that had been destroyed, she wished to learn about any plans to provide for the accommodation of returning refugees. It would be helpful to know what steps were being taken to protect older persons and persons with disabilities during the conflict. She would also like to learn about any targeted measures to promote entrepreneurship among women, including through loans and training, and to improve women's digital literacy skills.

62. **Ms. Levchenko** (Ukraine) said that infrastructure continued to be destroyed in the Russian attacks; air raid sirens had at that very moment sounded in Kyiv, which had forced the members of her delegation who were taking part by video link to take cover. Buildings in many cities had no power or water. The country's ability to overcome poverty and mitigate the consequences of the destruction would depend on the amount of aid provided to it.

63. **A representative of Ukraine** said that a government programme had been launched in March 2022 to relocate companies from areas with active hostilities. Companies wishing to participate submitted an application explaining why they needed to be relocated, and their assets were transported by the Ukrainian railway and postal services. Local and regional authorities helped search for housing for any employees relocating with the company, and the State Employment Service was required to find replacements for any employees who

could not relocate. A total of 63 women entrepreneurs had been relocated through the programme.

64. **A representative of Ukraine** said that legislative amendments had been enacted to ensure that Ukrainian women who were still living in the country continued to receive statutory social benefits. For example, new mothers were provided with starter kits containing essentials for their babies in addition to financial assistance. New mothers residing abroad could apply for financial assistance online. Internally displaced persons could gain access to public services online through the Diia platform and another website. The delivery of financial and other types of assistance to internally displaced persons was coordinated through a centralized platform. Persons in a particularly vulnerable situation were identified and provided with financial assistance automatically.

65. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, more than 30 establishments providing care to persons with disabilities and older persons had been destroyed, displacing some 5,000 such persons. The Government was working with civil society and international organizations to provide those persons with temporary accommodation.

66. **A representative of Ukraine** said that, under an agreement signed with a German bank, some €2 billion would be made available to fund mortgage loans with an advantageous interest rate of 3 per cent for internally displaced persons and their families. Since the start of the invasion, several hundred families had been selected to receive mortgages by means of a lottery system. To date, some 400 contracts had been signed. As at October 2022, almost 30,000 displaced families had applied for mortgages.

67. A methodology was being developed for assessing the damage caused by the conflict to the different sectors of the Ukrainian economy and to individual households and would soon be adopted. In the meantime, efforts to estimate the damage were under way. Compensation for damages could be paid out only once the assessment process had been completed. The parliament had reviewed and adopted on first reading a bill on the allocation of compensation, which, it was hoped, would soon be signed into law.

68. **Ms. Manalo** asked what measures the State party had taken to improve access to social and health-care services for rural women in general, and rural women with disabilities in particular, and to ensure that such services were both physically and financially accessible.

69. **A representative of Ukraine** said that measures had been taken to ensure that all women living in rural areas, including older women, single women and internally displaced women, had access to digital technologies and to tailored administrative, social, health-care, legal and employment services. The network of administrative offices operating in rural areas had been expanded and more pharmacies had been opened. Telemedicine had been introduced and additional preschool education establishments and day-care and temporary care centres had been set up for children. Steps had likewise been taken to combat violence against rural women. Women and girls living in rural areas had received training and the capacity of civil society organizations representing different groups of rural women had been strengthened. Household surveys had been conducted to measure the evolution of the living conditions of rural dwellers. The data that had thus been collected showed an improvement in several areas, including access to drinking water.

70. An affordable loans and financial leasing programme had been implemented in rural areas. The regulations governing the provision of State support for entrepreneurs and businesses had been amended to enable eligible individuals and entities, including agricultural producers, to receive additional financial support. That measure was aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and creating new jobs in rural areas and at restructuring existing debts to help overcome the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the conflict. Several businesses had been set up by women to support the Ukrainian armed forces and to assist internally displaced persons in the country. A network to support and mentor women entrepreneurs living in rural areas had also been created.

71. **A representative of Ukraine** said that the Government was committed to ensuring that all women, regardless of where they lived, enjoyed equal access to health care. Accordingly, a system for delivering health-care services to women living in rural areas had

been developed and additional resources had been directed towards improving the services offered in remote and mountainous areas. Transport links and medical supply chains had been strengthened and, since the beginning of the conflict, mobile teams had been deployed to ensure that women living in rural areas had access to primary health care and outpatient treatment. Under the country's affordable medicine programme, Ukrainian citizens could obtain certain medicines free of charge or at a discounted price. Rural dwellers could submit prescriptions and requests for sick leave or disability-related documentation via an online platform and could also schedule medical appointments electronically.

72. **Ms. Leinarte** said that the Committee had been informed that internally displaced families were often required to share a single room or to live in open-plan communal spaces and that unemployment was rife within the displaced population. She wondered what measures the Government was taking to address those issues.

73. **Ms. Levchenko** (Ukraine) said that, regrettably, under the prevailing circumstances, internally displaced persons were often forced to live in unsatisfactory conditions, including in schools and the premises of cultural associations. While every effort was made to provide the displaced population with adequate temporary accommodation, the fact remained that Ukraine was at war and that any temporary structures built to house them could be shelled and destroyed at any given moment. The Government had only limited resources to assist them. It was impossible to know how long the conflict would last or how many more people would be displaced. She wished to call on the United Nations to support the Government and people of Ukraine in dealing with the humanitarian and environmental fallout from the Russian invasion. It was seldom reported that thousands of hectares of Ukrainian territory had been infested with landmines or that large swathes of the country's forests had been burned to the ground by the Russian troops. Extensive resources would be required to repair the environmental damage done to areas not under the Government's effective control.

Articles 15 and 16

74. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that, even though the minimum age for marriage in Ukraine had been raised to 18 years, she understood that many exceptions to that rule continued to exist and that many girls, especially in the Roma community, still married early. It would be useful to know whether the State party planned to further amend its laws to abolish those exceptions and what measures it had taken to prevent child marriage and to raise awareness of its harmful consequences.

75. The Committee had received reports that, in some cases, women with disabilities had been forced to marry so that their new husbands could flee the country under the guise of personal assistants. She wished to know what legal safeguards were in place to protect women with disabilities from forced marriage.

76. In its previous concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/UKR/CO/8](#), para. 47), the Committee had expressed concern about the Ukrainian courts' failure to take account of acts of domestic violence committed against women when determining child custody arrangements and visitation rights. The Committee had been informed that in some cases violent fathers had used the conflict as a pretext to remove their children from their mother's custody, and even to take them out of the country. She would like to know whether the State party had taken legislative measures to oblige the courts to take acts of domestic violence against women into account when rendering child custody or visitation decisions and whether the Government had taken steps to raise the awareness of judges of the impact of such violence on children's development. She would also like to hear about any measures in place to prevent violent fathers from taking their children out of the country without the consent of the mothers.

77. She had been given to understand that, in some cases, women with disabilities or women drug users had lost custody of their children simply because of their disability or drug use. She would be interested to know what was being done to support those mothers instead of separating them from their children.

78. The Committee had received reports that many impoverished women in Ukraine had turned to surrogacy to make money. She wished to know whether the State party had taken any steps to address the poverty and other factors that drove women towards surrogacy, and

whether there were legal safeguards in place to ensure that surrogates acted of their own free will and to protect them from trafficking and other forms of exploitation. She also wondered whether the right of children to know their origins would be taken into account as part of the reform of the legislation on surrogacy.

79. She noted with concern that many children continued to reside in institutional care facilities in Ukraine and that some of the children who had been evacuated from such facilities during the conflict had been transferred to similar facilities under agreements concluded with neighbouring countries. The Committee had even received reports that some institutionalized children had been sent to the Russian Federation or to territories under its control. The situation of children with disabilities was particularly alarming. Many had allegedly been placed in care institutions where they were neglected and mistreated. The delegation might wish to describe the measures taken by the State party to protect and ensure the physical and emotional well-being of institutionalized children, including those with disabilities, and to help their parents regain custody, with a view to deinstitutionalizing as many of those children as possible, both inside and outside the country.

80. Lastly, she would appreciate information on the steps taken to provide adequate social protection to women who had been widowed and children who had lost their fathers as a result of the ongoing conflict.

81. **A representative of Ukraine** said that the evacuation of children residing in institutions, orphans and children with disabilities and their transfer to safer countries was continuing, and that it was subject to effective oversight. Children relocated abroad stayed with their appointed legal representatives; their situation was monitored by the authorities of the country in question. The legislation governing child custody and guardianship arrangements had been amended to allow child protection services to take in children who had been orphaned during the conflict and to subsequently place them in the care of family or friends, a foster family or, if necessary, a suitable orphanage.

82. **A representative of Ukraine** said that, on the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Ukrainian law had been amended to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both sexes. However, persons could still marry at 16 years of age if the State considered it to be in their best interests. When deciding whether to allow minors to marry, the courts took into account the individual circumstances of the petitioners, including, for example, whether the female petitioner was pregnant or had recently given birth. According to data collected by the judiciary, the number of applications for early marriage had decreased over the previous few years, and a significant number of applications had been rejected by the courts. Ukrainian law prohibited forced marriage. Numerous measures had been taken to integrate the Roma into Ukrainian society and to ensure that they had equal access to opportunities and public services, including civil status registration services. With the help of charitable organizations and NGOs, the civil registration authorities conducted annual media and information campaigns to raise the awareness of the Roma community of Ukrainian family law.

83. **A representative of Ukraine** said that a bill on reproductive technologies had recently been drafted by the Ministry of Health. The bill, which had been registered by the parliament, contained provisions aimed at regulating the surrogacy process and setting out the rights of individuals who wished to make use of surrogacy services and specifying the rights of children born to surrogate mothers.

84. **A representative of Ukraine** said that individuals with criminal records could not become children's guardians, regardless of the offence committed. The Civil Code stipulated that individuals whose parental rights had been removed and had not been restored were also precluded from exercising guardianship rights.

85. **A representative of Ukraine** said that, in 2022, 12 criminal cases involving children who had been trafficked in the context of surrogacy arrangements had been initiated by the police, which was double the number opened the previous year. Those children had been trafficked to Türkiye, France and Italy. Investigations into those cases were currently under way.

86. **Ms. Levchenko** (Ukraine) said that the delegation wished to thank the Committee for its careful consideration of its periodic report and its valuable feedback, which would assist the Government in continuing to uphold women's rights and in achieving greater gender equality in Ukraine. Mainstreaming a gender perspective and women's rights in all State programmes and policies was and would remain a priority for the Government.

87. Since the launch of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the Russian military had committed acts of mass murder, destroyed civilian infrastructure and perpetrated acts of torture and violence, including sexual violence, against Ukrainian citizens. However, the Ukrainian military and its civilian partners had taken a stand against the Russian aggressors and would continue to fight for their country until victory had been achieved.

88. She looked forward to receiving the recommendations contained in the Committee's concluding observations, which the Government would study carefully and implement as appropriate. While every effort would be made to ensure that the national recovery and reconstruction strategy, which already contained a gender component, reflected the Committee's recommendations, as long as the aggression by the Russian Federation continued, the State party would not be in a position to implement that strategy without the continued support of other countries and international organizations. Rebuilding the country was not the Government's only priority; it also had a duty to protect the rights of the millions of Ukrainian citizens who were now residing abroad, the majority of whom were women, and the citizens who had been forcibly transported to the Russian Federation or to territories currently under its control, including prisoners of war. She wished to request the Committee to take the Ukrainian diaspora into account whenever it considered the periodic reports of countries where Ukrainian citizens were now residing and countries that were international development partners of Ukraine.

89. **The Chair** said that she wished to thank the delegation for the interactive dialogue, which had provided a valuable insight into the situation of women in the State party during the conflict. The Committee wished to encourage the State party to take all the measures necessary to give effect to the Committee's recommendations with a view to ensuring a more comprehensive implementation of the Convention in the territory under its control.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.