



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

Distr.: General
26 February 2019

Original: English

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

Summary record of the 1661st meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 19 February 2019, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Gbedemah

Contents

Solemn declaration by new and re-elected members of the Committee (*continued*)

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

Ninth periodic report of Colombia

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.

GE.19-02803 (E) 250219 260219



* 1 9 0 2 8 0 3 *

Please recycle The recycling symbol, consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Solemn declaration by new and re-elected members of the Committee *(continued)*

1. *Ms. Nadaraia made the solemn declaration provided for in rule 15 of the Committee's rules of procedure.*

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

Ninth periodic report of Colombia ([CEDAW/C/COL/9](#); [CEDAW/C/COL/Q/9](#) and [CEDAW/C/COL/Q/9/Add.1](#))

2. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Colombia took places at the Committee table.*

3. **Ms. Mejía** (Colombia), introducing her country's ninth periodic report ([CEDAW/C/COL/9](#)), said that Colombia was building its institutional capacity and consolidating the rule of law throughout the country. Women were playing a crucial role in that context, promoting equity, social transformation and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. The definition of discrimination against women under the Colombian constitutional and legislative framework was in line with the definition contained in article 1 of the Convention, and steps were being taken to incorporate the provisions of the Convention in all areas. In particular, local authorities were being provided with the tools they required to ensure the effective exercise of women's rights. The National Gender Commission of the Judiciary promoted gender mainstreaming in the administration of justice, and the high court judges had developed procedural guidelines for that purpose.

5. The office of Vice-President was currently held by a woman for the first time in the country's history. The President had also appointed the first ever cabinet with equal representation of women and men, with women heading 8 of the 16 ministries (the Interior, Justice, Labour, Telecommunications, Transport, Mines and Energy, Education and Culture). In addition, 44 per cent of deputy ministerial offices were held by women and, in the foreign service, 35 per cent of diplomatic missions and 42 per cent of consulates were headed by women.

6. The 2018–2022 National Development Plan, "Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity", included a pact for gender equity based, inter alia, on the following policy lines: educational and economic empowerment of women to eliminate inequalities in the labour market, political empowerment of women, promotion of sexual health and reproductive rights for girl children and adolescents, the right of women to a life free of violence, support for rural women as agents of change, and equal participation of women in promoting stability and social harmony.

7. The Government planned to enhance the technical, administrative and budgetary capacities of the Presidential Council for Women's Equity. A national women's system would be established as a high-level forum for the discussion and adoption of State policies on gender equity and women's rights, and for the promotion of a gender perspective in all public institutions and at various levels of government. A mechanism would be put in place to involve women's organizations and women victims in the formulation of public policies.

8. **Ms. Riveros** (Colombia) said that her Government appreciated the vital contribution made by women social leaders and human rights defenders to the promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It strongly condemned all acts of aggression or violence perpetrated against them and urged State authorities to prosecute those responsible. The Government had taken steps to strengthen existing safeguards so that human rights leaders could work freely on behalf of their communities.

9. The Attorney General's Office had established a special investigation unit in 2017 and had solved 53.05 per cent of cases of homicide perpetrated against human rights defenders between 2016 and 2018. New measures to bolster the investigation and prosecution of crimes

against human rights leaders had been adopted recently based on advice from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

10. On 24 August 2018, the President had signed the Pact for the Life and Protection of Social Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, and an action plan for the protection of human rights defenders, social and community leaders and journalists had been adopted on 19 November 2018. The National Commission on Security Guarantees, established under the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed by the National Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP), had met in the first week of January 2019.

11. The Government recognized that it was the State’s obligation to ensure access to justice for women and girls who had suffered acts of violence or discrimination. The adoption of Act No. 1257 of 2008, which set out a definition of violence against women, had helped to foster greater understanding of the problem and a stronger commitment to addressing it.

12. **Ms. Mejía** (Colombia) said that a system had been set up to monitor and follow up on the actions taken by the family commissioner’s offices (*comisaría de familia*), in particular the protection and care measures offered to women victims of violence pursuant to Act No. 1257. Female genital mutilation was recognized in the Integrated Information System on Gender-based Violence and in the National Public Health Surveillance System as a form of sexual violence inflicted on girls and women, especially members of indigenous communities. Its recognition in the System meant that it could be reported by health-care institutions. The Individual Reparation Strategy for Women Victims of Sexual Violence in the Context of the Armed Conflict had been established with a view to providing compensation and other support for women, who made up 51 per cent of the victims of the internal armed conflict. The National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons had been adopted to prevent trafficking and punish perpetrators, who were liable to prison terms of between 13 and 23 years.

13. The current Government viewed education as a powerful tool for promoting equity. As part of efforts to change culturally entrenched attitudes and practices, the Ministry of Education and the Presidential Council for Women’s Equity had taken steps to raise awareness of women’s rights throughout the country by means of education and communication strategies, particularly in schools.

14. The Government had also encouraged women’s participation in a variety of spheres, and women currently held 23.4 per cent of seats in the Senate and 18.7 per cent of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Nevertheless, although women were, on average, more highly educated than men, their participation in the labour market was some 20 per cent lower than that of men. The rates in 2018 had been 74.8 per cent for men and 53.6 per cent for women. The Government was therefore taking steps to promote the sharing of domestic work and care-related activities. Additional support would be provided for a national programme and plan for the promotion of labour equality.

15. The Ten-year Public Health Plan (2012–2021) had resulted in health-care coverage for 95 per cent of Colombians and contributed to the reduction of multidimensional poverty through improved access to health-care services and health insurance. There were plans to consolidate the health sector component of the National Development Plan during the period from 2018 to 2022, focusing on the prevention of sexual violence and comprehensive health care for victims.

16. Approximately 21.2 per cent of Colombian women lived in rural areas and an estimated 23 per cent of rural households were headed by women. Only 37 per cent of rural women engaged in agricultural activities, about 30 per cent in commercial activities and about 22 per cent in activities such as mining, construction and financial intermediation. In addition, about 93 per cent of rural women spent part of their time in care-related activities; the time spent by men in such activities was, on average, three times less.

17. The Government was committed to promoting rural development. Through its comprehensive rural reform initiative, it aimed to support the social and economic empowerment of rural women through their involvement in the formulation of public policies under rural development programmes. The Ministry of Justice and Law had launched a

procedure in 2018 aimed at identifying barriers to justice encountered by rural women, especially in obtaining access to land.

18. Colombian society continued to face major challenges, in particular as a result of the large influx of migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, more than 1,150,000 of whom had entered the country between mid-2016 and late 2018. At the same time, some 400,000 Colombian citizens had returned to the country. Notwithstanding its limited resources, Colombia had provided childbirth care for an average of 254 Venezuelan women per month who had entered the country to seek medical care. In addition, more than 17,000 migrant girls had been enrolled in the public education system.

Articles 1 to 6

19. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that the Committee was aware of the challenges faced by the State party in implementing the peace agreement and protecting women victims of the conflict. An alarming number of women leaders and human rights defenders had been brutally murdered during 2018, and she wondered why the State party had not been able to find a way to control the armed groups that threatened and killed women. Did the Ministry of the Interior have sufficient human resources and funds to implement the Comprehensive Programme of Guarantees for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders, and were steps being taken to raise awareness among officials throughout the country of the risks faced by such women?

20. The Committee was concerned by reports that it was more difficult for some groups of women, such as Afrodescendants and indigenous women, to benefit from the peace process and for women who had formerly been members of armed groups to be reintegrated into society. She would like to know whether the State party planned to incorporate the National Policy for Social and Economic Reintegration of Former FARC-EP Members into the 2018–2022 National Development Plan and to allocate the necessary funds for that purpose. She also wished to know whether budgetary funds had been allocated for the implementation of the gender equality components of the National Development Plan and whether implementation monitoring procedures had been put in place.

21. The Committee would be interested in hearing what measures had been taken to ensure that women with disabilities, indigenous women, women of African descent, lesbians, transsexuals and rural women enjoyed the right to be heard by the justice system. Had steps been taken to increase the budget of the justice system in order to ensure that it covered all parts of the country that had been affected by the conflict, especially rural and remote areas? It would also be helpful to know what measures had been taken to implement the procedural guidelines for the administration of justice with a gender perspective and what sanctions were imposed for non-compliance with or misinterpretation of national and international norms applicable in the State party.

22. The Committee would also appreciate information on whether the judgments relating to women's rights handed down by the Constitutional Court were mandatory for government agencies and whether sufficient funds were available to disseminate its judgments throughout the country, especially in rural and remote areas. Lastly, the Committee would like to know whether the State party had considered withdrawing its reservations to articles 8 and 9 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

23. **Ms. Ortiz** (Colombia) said that the country's Constitutional Court had found creative ways of ensuring that its decisions were enforced, for example by interpreting laws in a such a way as to enable it to devise methods of requiring compliance with its decisions. A person who failed to comply with a judicial decision could be prosecuted and sentenced to prison. In proceedings involving *tutela* applications (applications for protection of constitutional rights), however, there was a more expeditious summary mechanism for ensuring compliance with Court decisions. The Constitutional Court monitored the effect given to its decisions, and was currently looking into whether its monitoring mechanisms were sufficiently robust to ensure the protection of imprisoned women.

24. The resources allocated to enforcing court decisions had not always been what the courts considered sufficient, and additional resources were therefore being sought. Two United Nations agencies, for instance, had provided support to the National Gender

Commission, which had helped to develop guidelines for the incorporation of a gender perspective in judicial decisions. Judges could also order persons found responsible for violations of women's rights to undergo training. In 2016, for example, all army personnel had been ordered to receive training on the rights of women.

25. **Mr. Soler** (Colombia) said that resources were appropriated each year to protect the human rights of women human rights defenders and ensure that they could carry out their activities. Since a court decision of 2015, organizations of women leaders and women human rights defenders had been involved in the design, financing, execution and assessment of the country's comprehensive rights protection plans. A programme of safeguards for such women had also been adopted and alternatives for implementing the programme would be explored in the coming year through a series of regional pilot projects.

26. The Ministry of the Interior had set aside resources for a nationwide campaign, planned for the first half of 2019, to raise awareness of the work of women leaders and women human rights defenders. Plans for the medium term included the execution of a prevention and protection action plan for human rights defenders, social leaders, community leaders and journalists. The longer term would see the development of guidelines for the implementation of an umbrella protection plan that would enable the formulation and implementation of annual action plans.

27. **Ms. Riveros** (Colombia) said that, as the negotiator responsible for ensuring that the peace agreement signed with FARC-EP incorporated a gender perspective, she had had the opportunity to draft the provision requiring the development of special methodological plans for dealing with the consequences of the most serious crimes committed against women, children and adolescents, human rights defenders and leaders of social or political movements. The unit responsible, which was part of the Attorney General's Office, had been created in 2016 and currently had 85 staff members, whose investigations into the violations of the rights of human rights defenders took them from one end of the country to the other, including the remote, rural areas where many killings had taken place.

28. Directive No. 002 of the Attorney General's Office (paper copies of which had been made available to Committee members) had established general guidelines for the investigation of crimes committed against human rights defenders, including by groups fighting over control of the territories abandoned by FARC-EP. Under the guidelines, investigators were required to premise their investigations into the killing of a human rights defender on the assumption that the victim had been killed for his or her defence of human rights. As a result of the introduction of that requirement and other changes made to expedite investigations, the clearance rate for the murders of human rights defenders had risen to more than 75 per cent.

29. **Ms. Mejía** (Colombia) said that answers to questions about the country's reservations to articles 8 and 9 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention would be provided in writing. Information on investment in the justice system and on the National Policy for Social and Economic Reintegration of Former FARC-EP Members would also be provided in writing.

30. **Ms. Manalo** said that she would welcome details on the programmes that the State party had developed to provide support to marginalized women, including rural women and women with disabilities. In addition, she wondered whether women had been prepared to face the dangers of guerrilla warfare, in which it was not always clear who the enemy was.

31. **Mr. Soler** (Colombia) said that the country's minorities were a priority for the Government. In August 2018, for example, two days after his inauguration, the President had invited representatives of all the country's campesino and minority organizations to the presidential palace to consult them on their plans and hear what they needed to make them viable. During those consultations, a promise had been made to include specific sections on minority groups in the National Development Plan 2018–2022.

32. Between 15 and 20 per cent of the indigenous authorities registered by the Ministry of the Interior in recent years were women. Indigenous women had been encouraged to play leadership roles in their communities, and organizations of indigenous people had grown stronger, in part with the Ministry's support. Displaced indigenous women had been given greater access to educational services, and efforts had been made to bring government

educational plans more closely into line with the world view of indigenous peoples. The ancestral knowledge of the country's indigenous peoples and traditional medicine systems had also been taken into account in national public health plans. Efforts to encourage the involvement of minority groups in matters that could affect them, such as the design of the National Development Plan, had been successful.

33. **Ms. Restrepo** (Colombia) said that equality between men and women had been enshrined in the country's Constitution. The percentage of female lawmakers in Colombia was among the highest in Latin America. Sufficient light had nonetheless not been shed on a black chapter in the country's history – namely, the victimization, sexual and otherwise, of women. The Congress of Colombia, of which she was a representative, had adopted laws in a bid to prevent perpetrators of crimes against women and children from remaining unpunished.

34. **Ms. Bethel** said that she wondered whether the State party, with a view to ensuring the implementation of its Public Policy on Gender Equity, the National Development Plan 2018–2022 and the peace agreement, had considered establishing a mechanism for permanent dialogue between the government machinery for the advancement of women and women's organizations at the national and local levels. She also wondered what systematic steps the State party intended to take to act on its priorities for the advancement of women, especially those who were the most vulnerable and highly marginalized.

35. She would be interested in learning what mechanisms would be used to ensure that the steps taken by the Government were coordinated, what role the Vice-President would play in efforts to coordinate those steps, whether agreements had been reached with institutions or sectors that could monitor efforts to act on priorities or provide resources for such efforts, how often progress towards gender-related goals was assessed and how often priorities were reviewed. She would also like to know whether the State party had considered giving ministerial rank to the Presidential Council for Women's Equity.

36. She would welcome an indication of whether sufficient resources had been allocated to support the activities of the intersectoral commission responsible for coordination, follow-up and assessment of the Public Policy on Gender Equity. Information on how the State party planned to engage institutions at the national and local levels and ensure the participation of women, including marginalized women, in the design of phase II of the Policy would also be appreciated. In addition, it would be interesting to learn what strategies had been deployed to make the intersectoral commission more prominent and influential and what budgetary provisions had been made to ensure the financial sustainability of the Policy.

37. She wished to know whether the State party had strengthened the assessment and analysis capacity of the Observatory on Gender Issues and defined methods to enable the Observatory to make connections among different information-gathering mechanisms. She also wished to know whether measures had been taken to ensure that consideration was given by the Observatory to all the variables that informed a differentiated approach – namely, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and identity, disability status and place of residence.

38. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** asked whether the new Government planned to introduce temporary special measures to improve the situation of the country's marginalized women, such as lesbians and transgender or bisexual women, women with disabilities, women of African descent and indigenous women. If so, she would like to hear how it intended to involve those women in the design, adoption and assessment of those measures. In the same connection, she wondered what training public officials would receive to ensure that the measures were implemented and how the intersectional forms of discrimination faced by marginalized women would be tackled. What steps had been taken or were planned to support women with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities?

39. **Ms. Muñoz** (Colombia) said that the Public Policy on Gender Equity had been formulated in 2013 through a participatory process that had taken due account of women's diversity. The action plan drawn up under the Strategy to Strengthen the Public Policy on Gender Equity (CONPES 161) had run until 2016 and been evaluated over the following two years, giving rise to a series of recommendations for State action and coordination in order to meet women's practical and strategic needs. Phase II of the action plan would reflect input from various sources. Rural women in particular would be encouraged to participate in the

process; a special methodology and various alternative tools had been developed in order to include those with limited literacy skills.

40. The Presidential Council for Women's Equity was the lead agency responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Public Policy. It did not execute programmes directly but rather facilitated the adoption of affirmative measures by ministries and authorities at the various administrative levels and in the various communities. The establishment of a ministry to address all aspects of equal opportunities for women had not been discounted and might be a goal to work towards. In the meantime, the mechanisms for the advancement of women were being progressively strengthened: the Presidential Council, for example, had seen its initial budget tripled.

41. As part of the implementation of the gender equity components of the National Development Plan, the Government was committed to establishing offices for women at the departmental and municipal levels. They would be responsible for coordinating national policy with local action in order to ensure effective implementation in the various regions and districts.

42. The Observatory on Gender Issues was a unit of the Presidential Council. Its job was to analyse information passed to it by the government bodies responsible for implementing public policy with a view to determining what affirmative action was needed in order to narrow the gaps identified. In addition to gender analysis, its studies took an intersectional approach that provided a detailed picture of the situation of different groups of women.

43. **Ms. Ortiz** (Colombia) said that the National Gender Commission of the Judiciary, with the support of United Nations agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), had been working to sensitize indigenous women to their right of access to justice and to highlight situations of intersectional discrimination that deserved to be raised in the courts or in indigenous judicial bodies. The exercise had been well received and had proved productive.

44. **Mr. Soler** (Colombia) said that, following the consultation on the ethnic chapters of the National Development Plan, more than US\$ 9 billion had been allocated for development in areas such as land, education, health, the environment, human rights and institution-building. On the issue of disability, the Government had also developed regional workshops on legislation and regulations relating to disability with a view to ensuring that persons with disabilities could fully enjoy their rights. Moreover, 74 universities around the country were assisting the Government by carrying out studies on gender and disability. A training programme for judges with disabilities was being developed. As to ex-combatants, a gender panel had been set up in the National Council on Reintegration, comprising representatives of women, the Government and the new People's Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC) party, to ensure that all action on reintegration incorporated a gender perspective.

45. A plan of action for the implementation of the public policy on the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex population (Ministry of the Interior Decree No. 762 of 2018) had been developed in a participatory process. Once a technical consultation had been completed, work could begin on making improvements in that area, with the involvement of all stakeholders.

46. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would appreciate an answer to her question concerning the establishment of a formal mechanism for permanent dialogue on the peace agreement, the gender equity policy and the National Development Plan. In her view, such a mechanism was critical for Colombian women. She would also like to know whether services for women such as shelters, counselling centres and vocational centres, were regulated and licensed by the State and, if so, whether such regulation was done through the national machinery for the advancement of women.

47. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she would like to know how the gender equity policy catered for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and women with disabilities. How did the State ensure that all services specifically for women were inclusive and accessible? In particular, how did it ensure equal treatment and access to public services for women in the most vulnerable groups?

48. **Ms. Muñoz** (Colombia) said that there were various forums for dialogue and follow-up on the Public Policy on Gender Equity. The Special Women's Forum on Gender Mainstreaming Follow-Up had been established specifically to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement. It comprised eight women chosen from organizations representing diverse groups of women, including women victims, rural women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex women. The Forum issued recommendations to institutions on the implementation of the peace agreement and served as a mechanism for ongoing dialogue with women's organizations throughout the country. The Intersectoral Commission for Including a Gender Perspective in the Implementation of the Peace Agreement constituted a similar mechanism of permanent dialogue. Shelters and other services for women were not regulated by the Presidential Council for Women's Equity, which merely provided technical support.

49. **Ms. Rana** said that, notwithstanding the campaigns to publicize the State's gender equity policy, alternate sources continued to report entrenched stereotypes that perpetuated discrimination in everyday practices. It appeared that there had been insufficient resources, capacity and coordination to permit the effective implementation and sustainability of the policies and plans introduced. She would like to know what plans the State party had to strengthen institutional capacity in order to guarantee the sustainability of its education campaigns and communication strategies and whether it intended to increase resource allocation. She also wondered how the State party planned to engage with civil society and the media in targeting not only women and girls but also boys and men.

50. She would appreciate information on the State party's plans to address the intersectional discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization faced by indigenous, Afro-Colombian, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and women with disabilities. Would the State party consider establishing guidelines to address cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence against women in those groups? She wondered whether the State party intended to continue providing officials with training courses in sexual orientation and gender identity.

51. Implementation of Act No. 1257, on violence against women, was reportedly weak. She would like to know how the State party planned to ensure that there were enough family commissioner's offices, with adequate human and financial resources, to support victims, and what plans there were to reduce tasks that bore no relation to their judicial role, in order to improve their effectiveness. She also wondered what steps were being taken to include the family commissioner's offices in inter-institutional coordination efforts and data collection.

52. It would be interesting to hear what plans the State party had to ensure consistent application of the indicators for monitoring the implementation of Act No. 1257 across institutions, and to move towards the use of the Integrated Information System on Gender-based Violence as the standard system for collecting fully disaggregated data. She would welcome information on how the State planned to ensure the participation of women's rights organizations in mechanisms for follow-up of the implementation of the Act. Information on the State's plans for establishing and strengthening shelter homes in the various regions would also be appreciated.

53. Female genital mutilation remained prevalent in certain indigenous communities and impunity in cases of sexual violence was common. She would like to know how the State party intended to ensure financial and institutional capacity for the implementation of the Inter-institutional Action Plan for the Eradication of Practices Harmful to the Life and Health of Indigenous Women and Girls. She would also like to know how the State party intended to ensure sufficient capacity and resources to investigate cases of femicide and other violence against women using the specific methodologies developed by the Attorney General's Office.

54. **Ms. Leinarte** said that the State party was to be commended for the steps it had taken to fight human trafficking. She wondered, however, how the statistics on trafficking offences in Colombia could be made more reliable. The figures given in the State party's report to the Committee were at variance with those given in the United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report. Moreover, the State party's statistics did not draw sufficient distinctions between trafficking and other gender-based offences such as rape. She would like to hear the delegation's thoughts on what could be done to stem internal trafficking,

victims of which could be found in mining, agriculture and domestic service. Children working as street vendors, for example, were vulnerable to trafficking for sexual or labour purposes.

55. She noted that, in 2018, 18 people had been arrested in Cartagena for sexual exploitation of more than 250 women and girls, many of them from Venezuela. She would like to know what steps the Government was taking to ensure that migrant women and girls from Venezuela were not trafficked to legal Colombian brothels and what was being done to hold clients criminally liable if they purchased sex from victims of trafficking?

56. She would be grateful if the delegation could provide information on the number of temporary permits granted over the previous two years to enable foreign victims of trafficking to stay in the country for the duration of the investigative process. Lastly, given that the Government did not operate any special shelters for adult victims of trafficking, she wondered how it organized assistance to victims in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 1069 of 2014, which set out the implementing regulations for Act No. 985 on assistance to trafficking victims.

57. **Ms. Riveros** (Colombia) said that a 2017 Supreme Court judgment had restricted the concept of the “family unit” to people living under the same roof. The Attorney General’s Office had submitted a bill to Congress that would extend the concept to cover persons not living under the same roof, which would allow prosecution of partners and former partners who did not live with the victim. The bill would also help to prevent re-victimization by admitting the victim’s initial statement as evidence in court, thereby obviating the need for the victim to come face-to-face with the perpetrator.

58. Femicide had been a separate crime in Colombia since 2015, incurring penalties that were proportionate to the gravity of the offence. In 2018 a total of 1,050 women had been killed, i.e., 3 per day. The Attorney General’s Office had treated all of them as femicide, and the perpetrators had been convicted in over 400 of the 1,430 cases registered.

59. Human trafficking, too, was a separate offence. The Attorney General’s Office had charged 806 individuals with the offence and obtained 35 convictions. Twenty-three of the victims in the Cartagena case had been rescued and five leaders of the criminal gangs involved had been deprived of their liberty. It was true that the statistics were not yet coordinated or standardized. Further information regarding statistics would, however, be provided in writing.

60. **Ms. Restrepo** (Colombia) said that a number of laws had been enacted to protect women from gender-based violence and femicide, notably Act No. 1761 of 2015, which established the offence of femicide, and Act No. 1719 of 2014, which guaranteed access to justice for victims of sexual violence and other forms of violence against women.

61. **Ms. Muñoz** (Colombia) said that studies had revealed worrying attitudes towards violence against women not only in society at large but also among public officials. For example, 26 per cent of officials surveyed had agreed with statements such as “women who stay with a partner who beats them do so because they like it”. Campaigns to raise awareness of women’s human rights were clearly needed in order to combat such institutionalized stereotypes and attitudes. The Presidential Council for Women’s Equity, in coordination with the Ministry of Justice, had designed a set of technical tools to strengthen the family commissioner’s offices, partly to improve their capacity to support women in such situations and partly to encourage the commissioners to reflect on women’s rights and the relevant legislation and jurisprudence.

62. Studies had also shown that the armed forces needed training on women’s rights, and the Presidential Council had been working with the Ministry of Defence on training courses, mainly for new recruits. A public policy on gender had been in place for the defence sector since 2018, which had improved working conditions for women in the armed forces and facilitated the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

63. A number of digital tools had been developed, including applications to identify abusive practices, such as “sexting”, on social networks of children and teenagers. Television spots had also been broadcast nationally to highlight instances of everyday sexism that

perpetuated discrimination against women. Lastly, assessments of the work of the family commissioners had highlighted a number of weaknesses, as a result of which technical tools had been developed to aid commissioners in assessing risk and identifying women and child victims of family violence.

64. **Ms. Leinarte** said that she wished to know whether there were any State-run shelters for women victims of trafficking or whether such services were provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) alone. She would also like to know what measures were in place to enable women engaged in prostitution to find alternative livelihoods.

65. **Ms. Rana** said that she would be interested to know whether the State party intended to increase resource allocations and establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of the numerous policies, tools and plans introduced to combat negative gender stereotypes and violence against women. While the Committee had noted the State party's efforts to eliminate sexual violence in the context of armed conflicts, it remained concerned at the high rates of sexual violence perpetrated by all armed actors – including newly emerged groups – and the levels of impunity in such cases. She wished to know what measures were being taken to implement fully the Victims and Land Restitution Act; Constitutional Court Order No. 092 of 2008, requiring the investigation and prosecution of conflict-related cases of sexual violence; and strategies to combat impunity.

66. In the light of the increasing numbers of women, including human rights defenders, who had been killed by firearms, she wondered whether the Government intended to become a party to the Arms Trade Treaty; how it proposed to strengthen controls on the legal and illegal firearms trade and on ownership and carrying of weapons; and what measures it envisioned to address conflict-related sexual violence, combat impunity and ensure the security of women human rights defenders. It would also be useful to know whether the State party planned to develop a national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

67. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she wished to know whether there were any specific policies and measures to prevent violence, especially sexual violence, against girls and to prevent sexual violence against girls and women living in State institutions. In particular, she wondered what safeguards were in place to ensure that women and girls with disabilities, who were often deprived of their legal capacity upon entering such institutions, were able to gain access to justice in the event of family or other forms of violence.

68. **Ms. Riveros** (Colombia), summarizing the information contained in paragraphs 18 to 22 of her country's periodic report ([CEDAW/C/COL/9](#)), said that combating impunity in cases of sexual violence was one of the main priorities of the Attorney General's Office, which had placed emphasis on investigating and prosecuting offences of sexual violence and understanding the impact of domestic and gender-based violence on women and girls, in particular indigenous and Afrodescendent women and girls and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and girls. The current objectives of the Attorney General's Office included doubling the number of investigations and convictions in cases of sexual violence and preventing domestic violence from escalating to domestic homicide. Protocols for the investigation of sexual offences and the care of victims had been established and training had been provided on appropriate investigation techniques. Although prosecution rates remained low, conviction rates had increased by 46 per cent in 2016. In one landmark case involving the sexual assault and killing of a young indigenous girl, Yuliana Samboní, inter-agency cooperation had led to the swift investigation and conviction of the perpetrator.

69. **Ms. Ortiz** (Colombia) said that strategies were in place to combat the use of stereotypes and prevent discrimination against women and vulnerable groups of society in judicial proceedings, including through performance evaluations of judges. If it transpired that a decision or evaluation of the evidence had been based on factors that could be viewed as discriminatory, various options were available and could even lead to the dismissal of the judge. Lastly, the National Gender Commission of the Judiciary had trained more than 2,000 legal officials on gender issues in 2018 and manuals on dealing with cases of sexual violence were provided to judges.

70. **Ms. Mejía** (Colombia) said that the carrying of small arms and light weapons was prohibited, with exemptions granted only in exceptional cases of risk. Information on the remaining issues raised would be provided in writing.

Articles 7 to 9

71. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wished to know what obstacles could account for the low numbers of women candidates who had been elected to Congress and what measures were being taken to overcome them. Regarding electoral reform, she wondered why the Government had set aside proposals to introduce the use of closed lists – whereby voters cast their votes for political parties as a whole, rather than for individual candidates – as a means of achieving gender parity. Lastly, she would be interested in receiving information on equal opportunities for women in the country’s diplomatic service, including whether ambassadors were promoted from the ranks of career diplomats or appointed.

72. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that the Committee had been informed that individuals born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents often had difficulty in obtaining identity documents and that their birth certificates were not considered as proof of nationality, which also made it difficult for those individuals to gain access to health care and education. She wondered how the State party intended to address those challenges. Was it a party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness? If not, did it intend to become a party?

73. **Ms. Mendoza** (Colombia), providing an overview of her experience as a career diplomat, said that entry to the diplomatic service was through competitive examinations, which were held in various locations around the country. Women were broadly represented in the diplomatic service. Although some political appointments were made, more and more ambassadorships were held by career diplomats who had come up through the ranks.

74. **Ms. Restrepo** (Colombia) said the Government was not convinced that introducing closed lists would guarantee gender parity in elections. A bill to introduce the so-called zipper system, whereby men and women candidates appeared alternately on party lists, thus ensuring a gender balance, had been debated in Congress but had not achieved the requisite number of votes. Efforts were now being made to identify other ways to increase women’s political representation, which, at just 20 per cent, was admittedly low. Nevertheless, more than 40 per cent of high-level positions in the Government were occupied by women and gender parity had been achieved in the Cabinet of Ministers. Regarding the situation of children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents, more than 8,000 pregnant women had recently entered the country, all of whom were receiving the necessary health-care services, free of charge. All children born in Colombia were provided with free health care and education.

75. **Ms. Mejía** (Colombia) said that Colombia had acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in 2014. Children of Venezuelan parents born in Colombia received a birth certificate, although they did not automatically receive Colombian nationality. Responsibility for registering their births rested with the Venezuelan consulates. The Colombian Government had issued special residency permits to more than 600,000 Venezuelan individuals, thus enabling them to gain access to employment, education and health care.

76. **Ms. Manalo** asked how many career diplomats were women and what time frame was envisaged for achieving gender parity in the diplomatic service.

77. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** said that she would be interested to know to what extent gender stereotypes might be an obstacle to women’s greater representation in political life and, in particular, whether political leaders evoked those stereotypes as a means of undermining women candidates during elections. She would also like to know what was being done to increase the political participation of indigenous women and women of African descent.

78. **Ms. Mendoza** (Colombia) said that, of the 770 persons serving in Colombian diplomatic missions around the world, 437 were women and 333 men.

79. **Mr. Soler** (Colombia) said that gender stereotypes and biases against ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities or other vulnerable groups were rarely used in the political sphere or in the media. Although women’s participation in political life remained

low, it had increased over the years. The Government was committed to increasing women's political participation by promoting their empowerment and involvement in the community and reducing so-called horizontal hostility against women. Among other measures, training and workshops had been held to promote and support women's participation in political life; a website entitled "Más Mujeres Más Democracia" (More Women, More Democracy) had been established; and the annual Summit of Elected Women had taken place, with participants at the 2018 event discussing topics such as promoting women's leadership and combating gender-based violence. In addition, a cross-party round table had met to discuss affirmative action and temporary special measures that might be used to encourage more women to become involved in politics.

80. **Ms. Restrepo** (Colombia) said that, as part of the political reforms under way, there were various proposals to stimulate women's political participation, such as the establishment of educational focus groups in cooperation not only with international NGOs but also within political parties themselves. It should not be forgotten, however, that several hundred women had stood for office in the previous elections. Thus, although only around 20 per cent had ultimately been elected, when compared to other countries in the region, Colombia was treading the right path towards increasing the number of women in elected public office.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.