



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

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

Thirty-seventh session

Summary record of the 768th meeting (Chamber B)

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 24 January 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Šimonović

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

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

(continued)

Fourth periodic report of the Netherlands (continued) (CEDAW/C/NLD/4 and Add.1, CEDAW/C/NLD/Q/4 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of the Netherlands took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 7 to 9

2. **Ms. Zou Xiaoqiao** noted that the percentage of women holding public office or political positions had barely increased since 2003 and, in some cases, had even dropped. She therefore wished to know what measures the Government planned to take to reach its 2010 target of 45 per cent. Although women were well represented in the judiciary, they had a low level of participation in such areas as business and diplomacy. It would be interesting to know whether the Government had conducted any targeted studies to discover the reasons for that phenomenon. She regretted that the report did not mention the participation of minorities in political life and would appreciate receiving information in that regard.

3. **Ms. Gaspard** asked why the percentage of female participation in local decision-making, in particular, was so low. She observed that women often did not stand for a second term and wondered whether the Government was taking any measures to facilitate the public and private lives of female politicians. She would also appreciate further information regarding the situation of women elected at the local level in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

4. **Ms. Gumede Shelton** said that she would like to receive data regarding the number of women in higher decision-making positions in the judiciary and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She also asked the delegation to elaborate further on the table "Heads of mission" on page 41 of the report (CEDAW/C/NLD/4).

5. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** wondered whether women from the Netherlands Antilles could be elected to the Dutch Parliament and whether the House of Representatives or the Senate included any

representatives from the Muslim community. She was disturbed that the Government had nominated so few women to the municipal and provincial councils and wondered whether it possessed the necessary political will to implement article 7 of the Convention.

6. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) said that, although the Government was responsible for promoting equal representation, it was against legal quotas for women holding public office or political positions. Women currently accounted for approximately 44 per cent of the workforce, which was in line with the targets set by the European Union at the 2000 Lisbon summit. One of the reasons why most high-ranking positions were occupied by men was that 70 per cent of women worked part-time. With regard to the participation of minorities in political life, the second chamber of the Dutch Parliament had 12 representatives from ethnic minorities, nine of whom were women. The number of minority women on local councils had risen from 53 in 2002 to 106 in 2006.

7. **Ms. Olivia Croes** (Netherlands), replying to the question on female participation in political life in Aruba, said that approximately 25 per cent of the candidates in the previous election were women, as compared with 21 per cent in 2001. The current President and Vice-President of the Parliament were both women. The Government firmly believed in the importance of non-discriminatory education and the elimination of gender stereotyping and was making every effort to enhance the position of women in general.

8. She clarified that Aruba was a sovereign, self-governing member of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and as such, it was responsible for implementing the Convention within its territory.

9. **Ms. de Leeuw** (Netherlands) said that the Government had implemented various measures to promote the participation of women in politics. Prior to the 2006 municipal and national elections, prominent officials had written to political parties to encourage them to nominate women candidates and the Ministry of Social Affairs had launched a campaign entitled "Vote for a Woman". The Government had also set up a special programme to encourage the participation of ethnic minority women in local politics, which had proved very successful.

10. With respect to the number of women in high-ranking positions, table 11 on page 42 of the responses (CEDAW/C/NLD/Q/4/Add.1) showed that, in 2005,

47.4 per cent of judges were women. In 2006, six of the 17 newly appointed ambassadors were women. The composition of committees in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was monitored by an internal working group called “An organization in balance”; the group had set certain targets for 2005-2010 and would conduct an assessment of the situation at the end of 2010.

11. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) said that women accounted for over 35 per cent of Members of Parliament, but certain targets had not been achieved in other areas of Government. The Netherlands’ obligations under the Convention ensured that the country would do everything possible to achieve equal representation, especially on Government committees, which were required to ensure equal representation. Committees unable to comply with that requirement were required to explain why, and to work gradually to achieve the target. Currently, only 20 per cent of mayors were women.

12. **Ms. Begum** asked for more details about the State party’s plans to achieve equal representation in senior management positions, particularly in the area of civil administration.

13. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** wished to know whether the six other islands of the Netherlands Antilles, apart from Aruba, were represented in the Dutch National Parliament.

14. **Ms. Gumede Shelton** asked whether any of the Netherlands’ Permanent Representations were headed by a woman.

15. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) said that, as the islands of the Netherlands Antilles had their own Governmental bodies, they were not represented in the Dutch Parliament, although citizens of the islands who were resident in the Netherlands could be elected to serve in Parliament. The special temporary measures introduced by the Government to achieve equal representation in senior management positions were often reflected in such measures adopted at the company level.

16. **Ms. de Leeuw** (Netherlands) said that none of the Netherlands’ Permanent Representations was headed by a woman.

Articles 10 to 14

17. **Ms. Patten** commended the State party’s efforts to address discrimination against women in

employment and economic life. It had developed a number of tools that were genuinely helping to promote gender equality. However in view of the high number of women in part-time employment, she wished to know whether the State party had conducted detailed research aimed at determining the underlying reasons for the persistent wage differentials, in the public and private sectors, between full-time and part-time workers and between men and women doing the same work. She wondered whether the State party had carried out a gender impact assessment on the measures introduced, such as its equal remuneration management tool. She would also be grateful to know whether the Government had reached an agreement with its social partners on training and retraining; whether companies were given incentives to expand the number of vocational centres that provided training for women, including in non-traditional sectors; and what measures were being taken to reintegrate women into the labour market and secure full-time employment. Lastly, she wished to know what specific steps had been taken to address discrimination against women with disabilities and elderly women.

18. **Ms. Zou Xiaoqiao** said that, in its responses to the Committee’s list of issues and questions, the State party had provided two sets of data on gender wage differentials. She wished to know the reason for the significant difference in the two sets of figures. She also wondered whether women in the Netherlands were generally able to make a free choice to take up part-time employment, or whether they felt compelled to do so, either because of family duties or because they could not find a full-time job. The report indicated that the qualifications of potential employees — especially women — did not always match the needs of the labour market, and she therefore wished to know what measures had been taken to resolve that problem.

19. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said it was regrettable that the delegation did not include a representative of the Netherlands Antilles, as there were certain specific issues relating to those islands which were of interest to the Committee. She wished to know details of any special programmes introduced in the islands to incorporate women into the tourism and services industries, and into administrative and technical jobs. The State party had not provided information about the situation regarding the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the islands. The disease was being spread heterosexually in the region, and she therefore wished to know what

special programmes were in place to ensure that women were able to practice safe and responsible sex. Lastly, the Committee would welcome more information about access for women with disabilities to education and vocational training aimed at ensuring their access to jobs that guaranteed their financial independence and to social benefits.

20. **Ms. Tan** wished to know whether the Government was planning to investigate the reason for the very high rate of teenage pregnancies on Aruba. The State party should indicate whether teenage girls who became pregnant were expelled from school, whether support facilities were provided for young mothers and their babies and whether it would conduct wider awareness-raising activities on the issue. She wished to know whether abortion was a problem on Aruba, what was the island's maternity mortality rate, the at-risk age group, and whether deaths had occurred as a result of abortion. Lastly, she asked whether the State party had conducted research into the social and economic conditions of single-parent households on Aruba, and whether there were any special provisions to provide childcare and employment opportunities for such households.

21. Turning to the situation in the Netherlands, she asked whether the State party had taken part in European Union programmes aimed at developing rural communities. If so, it should indicate the impact of those initiatives and whether it had a national plan for rural women in respect of equal access to education, health care, markets and financial credits. She also wondered what percentage of agricultural holdings were owned or managed by women, what proportion of farm workers were women and what percentage of those women were entitled to the same social benefits as male farm workers. She wished to know whether the business models developed for rural areas concerned children and elderly and asked for figures on the number of day-care centres for children and the elderly in rural areas and their attendance. The State party should indicate which Ministry or local authority monitored the quality of the care provided, whether the day-care centres were affordable and whether they were successful.

22. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** wished to know the State party's position on migrant women who worked as domestic workers or au pairs, who had no access to labour rights and related protection. She wondered whether the expensive integration courses and tests that

must be taken by migrant women — who usually earned low incomes and were poorly qualified — reinforced their dependence on their partners and asked if the Government had carried out a gender impact assessment on the relevant legislation. It was her understanding that female asylum-seekers did not generally qualify for refugee status on the grounds of sexual violence, and that the relevant proceedings were very stringent. She therefore wondered whether any measures would be taken to ensure adequate protection of female asylum-seekers who feared persecution or violence in their own countries.

23. **Ms. Olivia Croes** (Netherlands) said that from 1987 to 2005, a total of 435 HIV/AIDS cases had been reported in Aruba. Women made up 35 per cent of those cases, and the average number of new infections per year was 25. With the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Kingdom, the Netherlands had submitted to the European Union a proposal for a national strategic plan on HIV/AIDS. An awareness-raising programme had been implemented, but a planned capacity-building programme had not yet been implemented because of a lack of funds. Programmes had been carried out on stigmatization and HIV/AIDS in the workplace, but women had not been targeted in particular. Abortion was illegal in Aruba, and no related data were available.

24. **Ms. Jocelyne Croes** (Netherlands) said that teenage mothers in Aruba were permitted to remain in school until the seventh month of their pregnancy. Childcare facilities were available to support them and they were encouraged to remain in school and were given special financial assistance. A network of NGOs, focused on programmes to prevent early pregnancies, and other organizations, including the White Cross and Planned Parenthood were engaged in the issue. The Government provided funds to assist such agencies in their prevention and education efforts. Planned legislation aimed at facilitating access to childcare was currently being held up due to concerns over financing modalities.

25. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) said that no further data were available about the situation in the Netherlands Antilles, and he noted the Committee's regret that the delegation did not include a representative of the islands.

26. **Ms. Lousberg** (Netherlands) said that, according to the Labour Inspectorate's latest progress report on the implementation of the Equal Pay Action Plan (report, pp. 56-58), a 2002 survey had shown that a government policy based primarily on implementation of labour legislation and promotion of development tools had failed to produce enough results. Consequently, in late 2005, the Equal Pay Working Group — composed of representatives of employers, employees, the Equal Treatment Commission and the Dutch Human Resources Policy Association — had been set up to increase awareness of the equal pay regulations and compliance with them by all concerned; to publicize the equal pay development tools such as quick scan and train employers, employees, negotiators and human resources staff in their use; to foster such expertise in the organizations they represented; and to conduct necessary research. The Working Group would be making its much anticipated recommendations to the Government and the social partners within the next two weeks, and the Government would take them into account in forming its new policy.

27. The major factor in the full-time/part-time pay gap was the fact that men generally worked full-time and in higher-level posts, but also that many young people between the ages of 18 and 21 worked fewer than 12 hours a week at a minimum wage lower than that for adults.

28. One of the decisions of the Working Group had been to simplify the quick scan forms to make them easier to use by employers, but the use of that tool was too recent to be assessed. The Equal Treatment Commission, as part of its biannual research on permanent and temporary contracts, issued opinions on individual cases and also, relying on quick scan, on individual companies.

29. Women who were subjected to multiple forms of discrimination had the protection of the Equal Treatment Act concerning disability and illness, which provided special professional training to disabled women in all areas of the labour market and whose scope would soon be extended to related areas, such as transport, in which they were also at a disadvantage; and by the Equal Treatment Act concerning age.

30. **Ms. van der Zaal-Van Bommel** (Netherlands), referring to female asylum-seekers, said that while the Aliens Act 2000 did not recognize fear of sexual

violence or of honour killings as specific grounds for asylum, several paragraphs of the Aliens Act dealt with gender-related persecution and provided for a gender-inclusive approach to asylum applications that was fully in compliance with United Nations gender guidelines. There were safeguards in place for women asylum-seekers, such as granting them independent status apart from their spouses, and having them interviewed separately by female interviewers and with female interpreters. The 2003 policy guidelines had simply codified safeguards that had been in place since the 1980s. Furthermore, an applicant's fear of sexual violence could lead to the conclusion that she could be deemed a refugee under the Geneva Convention, which had been incorporated into article 29 of the Aliens Act. Most often, however, the fear of sexual violence or of honour killings and the possibility of inhuman treatment upon return were regarded as breaches of article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, also incorporated into article 29. Women at real risk on those two grounds could be granted residence permits.

31. The new Integration Act, in effect since the beginning of 2007 and too recent to be assessed, aimed to enable newly settled immigrants to participate in Dutch society by learning the language and being taught how the society worked. That was especially important for the empowerment of immigrant women without jobs or any source of income. Additional resources had been made available in 2006 and 2007 for low-cost training to promote the civic integration and participation of such women.

32. **Ms. Leeuw** (Netherlands), referring to the situation of women in rural areas, said that the Ministry of Agriculture, pursuing a strict gender-mainstreaming policy, had set a 30-per-cent target for the participation of women in agricultural committees and earmarked 10 per cent of the information budget for women. On average, rural women were less likely to hold paying jobs, they had lower educational attainments and a 3-per-cent lower participation in the labour market. The gap between urban and rural women had, however, been narrowing over the past 10 years. Unemployment was 1 per cent lower for rural women but they were also less likely to apply for work. Rural women in paid jobs worked two to six hours less than their urban counterparts, being more likely to hold part-time jobs. Rural women did more unpaid work and had less access to child care, although informal care options

were more available to them. Forty per cent of rural women, as opposed to 44 per cent of urban women, were financially independent; and rural women had a less emancipated attitude towards the intrinsic value of work and financial independence. Rural women generally held mid-range jobs, while urban women were more often in senior and scientific positions. The gender gap was even more pronounced than the urban-rural gap in the countryside: 74 per cent of rural men, for instance, were financially independent.

33. The employment of women in agriculture and horticulture had risen from 26 to 35 per cent, but in recent years women were less likely to be employed on family farms and more likely to be casual labourers. Farmers' wives often ran the farms jointly, but the percentage of farms run by women had risen from 7 to 29 per cent since 1992. Twenty per cent of women working on farms also held outside jobs. No specific data was available on migrant women employed in agricultural fields. Women who were agricultural entrepreneurs were energetic as a group and had actively pursued their own professional development, and such businesses now represented 4 per cent of all rural businesses.

34. **Ms. Lousberg** (Netherlands) said that it was up to employers to apply for work permits for their foreign domestic help, under penalty of fine. Au pairs — defined as persons between the ages of 18 and 25 who spent a maximum of one year with a host family and did only light household chores — were not classified as domestic workers and needed only a residence permit. Work permits were issued by the Centre for Work and Income, which determined if the salary being offered was standard, and approved permits for foreign domestic workers after considering if the available supply of national workers justified their employment.

35. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) said that the 2010 target of having 65 per cent of women in the labour force did not refer to full-time employment but rather to jobs of 12 or more hours per week. Unfortunately, more than nine-tenths of the 70 per cent of women working part-time claimed to be satisfied with working fewer hours, and that would make it difficult to reach the target. The Government was trying to encourage women to work longer hours in order to respond to the market needs and gain financial independence.

36. Immigrant women were by and large unprepared to work — most had no language proficiency and had not received even elementary education in their own countries. The Government offered training courses for immigrant women with a reasonable chance of entering the labour market, but not for those who were closer to social exclusion. It promoted other measures as well, such as volunteer work and community self-help organizations.

37. **Ms. Patten** asked how the Government was planning to mitigate the conditions set by insurance companies in their occupational disability insurance policies for pregnant women entrepreneurs and to compensate for the absence of any scheme for self-employed women who were temporarily unable to work due to pregnancy and/or childbirth.

38. Given the entrenched discrimination among employers against women of non-Dutch origin who wore head scarves, she asked if the Government was considering some kind of affirmative action that would send a strong signal to employers and help them enter the workforce. She also would like to know what the Government was doing to help employers to set up the necessary in-company procedures allowing women employees to submit complaints of pay discrimination.

39. **Ms. Begum** asked if the Government was envisaging the use of microfinance schemes to assist single and minority women who were more likely to be poor, and if any job security policy had been established to help the more than 70 per cent of women engaged in poorly paid, temporary part-time work. Also, regarding the health of ethnic minority women, she wondered if the Government was encouraging them to avail themselves of free breast and cervical cancer screening and if it had done an impact analysis of the termination of cost reimbursement for contraceptives for women over 21.

40. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** said that, according to research conducted in the Netherlands, au pairs worked more than 30 hours per week. A Court of Appeal judgement in 2004 had recognized that the specific situation of au pairs was equivalent to an employment relationship with the right to a minimum wage. She wished to hear the delegation's views on the subject.

41. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** said that, while the presence of two Aruban representatives on the delegation was welcome, the absence of a representative from the Netherlands Antilles was

regrettable. She was still awaiting answers to her questions concerning such issues as the right to vote, parliamentary representation and nationality of people living in those territories. She also wished to know why no response had been given to question 28 regarding the absence of a report on the implementation of the Convention in the Netherlands Antilles.

42. **Ms. Verhagen** (Netherlands) said that, while all young immigrants encountered problems when looking for work or work experience, immigrant boys were particularly affected. Measures to address the problem should therefore be aimed at both boys and girls. The Cabinet and the social partners had committed themselves to a number of activities in that regard. Employers had undertaken to comply with agreements relating to work experience placements and to avoid discrimination when awarding such placements. Under agreements drawn up by the Cabinet and the social partners in 2005, an additional 20,000 work experience placements would be created and participants who found it difficult to find a placement would be trained and, once they found a placement, supervised. As of 2006, €35 million would be allocated each year as a supplementary payment.

43. **Ms. Lousberg** (Netherlands) said that many insurance companies specified a waiting period of two years before pregnancy and maternity allowance could be claimed. Several courts were currently examining whether that was in conformity with article 7 of the Equal Treatment Act, which prohibited discrimination on the grounds of sex when providing goods and services. The Government was awaiting the outcome of those proceedings. Any policy proposal would be a matter for the next Government. Private insurance companies, however, had no problems with invalidity relating to confinement after the period of pregnancy leave.

44. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) said that the courts' verdict should provide clear guidance for insurers.

45. **Ms. Leeuw** (Netherlands), in response to the question on the number of ethnic and racial minority women availing themselves of breast and cervical cancer screening and the impact of the termination of cost reimbursement for contraceptives for women over the age of 21 in 2004, referred the Committee to the State party's response to question 26 (responses, pp. 31 and 32).

46. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) said that equal treatment and anti-discrimination legislation applied to both full-time and part-time work in the Netherlands. Consequently, part-time employees had just as much job security as full-time employees.

47. The best way for single mothers to escape poverty was to find employment, whether that meant working for someone else or starting their own business. Microfinance was developing very fast in the Netherlands and was a potential tool for people who did not have access to regular financing and credit from banks. Such assistance was available to anyone wishing to re-enter the labour market, regardless of whether or not they were currently receiving benefits.

48. **Ms. Lousberg** (Netherlands) said that the Government had adopted a number of measures to prevent au pairs from being exploited. The au pair and the host family must sign a special contract stipulating the weekly schedule, the amount to be paid and the person responsible for the activities listed when the au pair was not present. It was important to note that primary responsibility for those activities did not lie with the au pair. In addition, the Immigration and Naturalization Service had established a special hot line that au pairs could call if they had a problem.

49. When the activities to be carried out by the au pair met the requirements of an employment relationship, the contract between the au pair and the host family must be qualified as a labour contract. The au pair referred to in the Court of Appeal judgement of 2004 had spent two months renovating the host family's house. The Court of Appeal had decided that such activities belonged not to an au pair relationship, but to an employment relationship.

Articles 15 and 16

50. **Ms. Tan** wondered if there had been any evaluation of the experiments with mediation in divorce cases and conflicts arising from relationships conducted by the Ministry of Justice between March 1999 and January 2001 (report, p. 80) and, if so, what were the results. She was particularly interested to know how many couples had been involved in the experiment and how many had reached a mediated solution; who conducted the mediation efforts; whether mediation would now be offered as an alternative method of conflict resolution in divorce cases; and whether information provided by a party during

mediation could be used against them in a court of law should mediation attempts fail. According to the report (p. 80), the mediation process sufficiently safeguarded the interests of the weaker party, in particular under-age children. Did that mean it had been worked into family law procedures?

51. According to the State party's responses (pp. 17 and 21), free legal aid was available to everyone below a specific income level, including victims of domestic violence. It would be interesting to know whether free legal aid really was available to everyone or just to Dutch citizens; the income ceiling for free legal aid; how many women had benefited; and whether victims of gender-based violence were also eligible. She was also curious to know whether the pilot project to provide free legal aid to victims of sexual violence at an early stage had been successful.

52. Under the bill allowing temporary restraining orders to be issued against perpetrators of domestic violence to prevent them from entering their own homes, the Government would be granting free legal aid to the perpetrator. Would the Government also be granting free legal advice and counselling and free legal aid to the victim?

53. Lastly, according to the report on Aruba (CEDAW/C/NLD/4/Add.1, p. 16), a number of discriminatory provisions had been abolished with the introduction of the new Aruban Civil Code in January 2002. It would be interesting to learn how the situation on the ground had changed since then. She asked, in particular, whether discriminatory cultural values still prevailed and, if so, what the Government was doing to address them.

54. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** noted that the Government had recently made its rules on family reunification much stricter. While acknowledging that some of the changes were necessary, for example to prevent forced marriages, others — such as the rise in the income requirement for family reunification — would hit women hard. The Committee had heard the testimonies of a number of Dutch women who could not be reunited with their foreign husbands or partners because of the high income requirement. She wished to know if the Government had evaluated the negative aspects of its new legislation, which might constitute direct discrimination against women.

55. **Ms. Bleeker** (Netherlands) said that family reunification and family formation were not the same.

In the former case, the relationship existed before the sponsor's legal entry into the Netherlands; in the latter case, the relationship started after the sponsor became legally resident in the country. The income requirement had been increased only in the case of family formation, from 100 to 120 per cent of the minimum wage. Sponsors were also now required to have an employment contract of at least one year. The aim was to ensure that the sponsor and his or her partner were not entitled to State social assistance or municipal social services and to encourage men and women wishing to marry a partner from abroad and reside together in the Netherlands to complete their education and find a secure job before starting a family. According to figures from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the impact of the new income requirement on women had not been particularly negative; however, the issue would be studied further.

56. **Mr. Bogers** (Netherlands) said that people seeking compensation within the criminal justice system and people bringing civil suits were entitled to legal aid. Whether or not such aid was free depended on their income. Below a certain income level, legal aid was free; above that level, it was subsidized. He confirmed that migrants could also apply for free legal aid.

57. **Ms. Dopheide** (Netherlands), referring to the question on the bill allowing temporary restraining orders to be issued against perpetrators of domestic violence, said that victims would, of course, be given free legal aid too.

58. **Ms. Jocelyne Croes** (Netherlands) said that, despite the introduction of the new Aruban Civil Code, some stereotypes remained. The Government was working to eliminate those stereotypes by including emancipatory education in the school curriculum, from kindergarten to the teacher training level, and by conducting awareness campaigns, particularly at the community level. In response to a question raised at the morning meeting, there was currently no comprehensive approach to eliminating gender stereotypes in Aruba. However, as mentioned earlier, it was hoped that a new programme would be implemented with funding from Aruba's new development cooperation system with the Netherlands.

59. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) said that the delegation did not have any information on the results of the

mediation experiments. He could confirm, however, that mediation was fairly common in the Netherlands.

60. **Ms. Gaspard** asked whether the Civil Code had been amended to give parents an equal right to transmit their name to their child and whether it also applied in the Netherlands Antilles. The State party was responsible for implementing the Convention in that territory too. She hoped that its next report would contain much more detailed information in that respect.

61. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) said that the Civil Code did not apply to territories overseas. He regretted that he was unable to respond in greater detail to the questions concerning the Netherlands Antilles, but reiterated that the report for that territory was not yet available. The criticism had, however, been clearly noted.

62. **The Chairperson** expressed appreciation to the delegation for their detailed responses. She hoped that a report on the Netherlands Antilles would be available the next time the State party reported to the Committee.

63. **Mr. Licher** (Netherlands) expressed appreciation for the constructive dialogue with the Committee. He hoped that it was clear from the delegation's comments that his Government was fully committed to implementing the Convention and had made progress in substantial areas. The Netherlands looked forward to receiving the Committee's recommendations and hoped to be able to submit a progress report within the next four years.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.