



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

Distr.: General
16 November 2017

Original: English

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

Summary record of the 1552nd meeting*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 7 November 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Leinarte

Contents

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

Ninth periodic report of Norway

* No summary records were issued for the 1550th and 1551st meetings.

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.



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 Norway (CEDAW/C/NOR/9; CEDAW/C/NOR/Q/9 and CEDAW/C/NOR/Q/9/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Norway took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that her Government was committed to taking measures to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5. Norwegian society was based on equality, including gender equality. Norway had adopted its first Gender Equality Act in 1978, and it had been among the first countries in the world to ratify the Convention. The Convention, together with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, underpinned the country's policies on gender equality.
3. The Norwegian Constitution, which stated that all persons were equal before the law, had been amended in 2014 to include a comprehensive list of human rights. In June 2017, the parliament had adopted the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, the specific aim of which was to improve the position of women and minorities. Lawmakers had also voted to establish an equality and anti-discrimination tribunal, which would be able to award compensation for employment discrimination. Her 2015 submission to the parliament of a white paper on gender equality had been the point of departure for the adoption of a range of measures to address the challenges still facing the country.
4. Women's participation in the workforce at a rate nearly as high as that of men was facilitated by the paid parental leave offered to working parents in Norway, which was one of the world's most generous. Parents who were having a child were entitled to 49 weeks of leave on full pay or 59 weeks with 80 per cent of their pay. With the exception of a single 10-week period that both parents were required to take, the leave could be divided as the parents saw fit. The Government, at the urging of the parliament, intended to propose restoring the length of that period, known as the father's quota, to 14 weeks. Norway was making steady progress towards gender equality. More and more women were working full time, including in management positions, and the pay gap was narrowing.
5. Although Norway had ranked second of 144 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index for 2017, closing the gap altogether would require addressing a number of concerns, including violence against women, gender segregation in education and the labour market and the labour force participation rate of female immigrants, which was low. Efforts to combat violence against women and girls included the country's recent ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and the adoption of a number of preventive measures. For instance, a strategy for youth health introduced by the Government addressed such issues as preventing violence and abuse, helping the victims and prosecuting the perpetrators. In addition, pregnant women were routinely asked about violence at medical check-ups, public funding had been provided for violence prevention activities organized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), violence and sexual abuse had been made subjects of study for students training to be teachers or police officers and awareness-raising campaigns targeting young people had been launched. The Government also intended to adopt a strategy to combat abuse on the Internet.
6. Other steps taken in recent years to improve the situation of women and children affected by violence included efforts to ensure that the police gave higher priority to domestic violence, improvements to the shelter services available to victims of violence and the adoption of measures to protect victims more efficiently. The latter measures would involve the establishment of support offices for crime victims at local police stations. The offices would provide victims with advice and practical help, including with applications for compensation, and keep them abreast of developments in criminal cases. Action plans on domestic violence, negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation had been adopted. An action plan on combating rape would be launched in 2018. In 2014, 50 million Norwegian kroner (Nkr) had been budgeted for a five-year programme

of research into domestic violence, and a study of all intimate partner homicides in Norway from 1991 to 2012 had begun in 2015. Plans had been made to set up a commission that, as part of efforts to develop better preventive measures, would review a selection of those homicides.

7. Although women in Norway were active participants in public debate, some had encountered hate speech and verbal abuse, keeping them from speaking out. Efforts to combat such speech, which included the recent launch of a relevant strategy and support for the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Movement, were high on the Government's agenda.

8. Persistent inequalities in working life in Norway were often associated with the traditional educational and career choices made by men and women. Although women accounted for 60 per cent of students in higher education and were a clear majority in such fields of study as medicine and law, formerly dominated by men, technological fields were overwhelmingly male. The Government therefore supported a programme whose aim was to increase the number of girls studying mathematics and the natural sciences.

9. While there had been some growth in the number of women holding positions of leadership in the private sector, such positions were still held largely by men. The boards of the country's largest companies, for instance, were 80 per cent male. The Government funded a research centre that was responsible for monitoring the efforts made by those companies to work towards gender parity.

10. Women born in Norway to immigrant parents were more likely to be employed than their male counterparts, but if gender equality in Norway was to be fully achieved, employment rates among immigrant women, in particular those from Asia and Africa, would have to increase. The Government had therefore proposed including a greater focus on jobs in the introduction programme that new immigrants from refugee backgrounds took part in. Starting in July 2017, only parents who had lived in Norway for at least five years had been eligible for cash benefits for caring for their children in the home. The aim of the change in the requirements had been to encourage recent female immigrants to send their children to kindergarten.

11. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that the comprehensive Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, adopted by the parliament in June 2017, would enter into force in January 2018. The Act, under which discrimination on a number of grounds was prohibited, would replace four related acts, including the Gender Equality Act. As a result, it had been criticized. Although it was true that a separate act specifically prohibiting gender-based discrimination could have some symbolic value, the comprehensive new Act did not increase women's vulnerability to discrimination. In fact, by affording women specific additional protections — it would be against the law to discriminate against women because they were pregnant or involved in caregiving, for instance — the new Act made women considerably less vulnerable to discrimination.

12. In addition, the Act would be enforced by an equality and anti-discrimination tribunal. That tribunal, as had been noted, would have the power to award compensation in discrimination cases. As matters currently stood, the only way to obtain such compensation was to apply to the ordinary courts.

13. The country's laws, policies and programmes had always been gender neutral. In its policies and programmes, the Government nonetheless maintained a focus on obstacles to gender equality. According to the revised Instructions for Official Studies of Central Government Measures, about which the Committee had expressed concern, it was necessary to analyse the potential implications of legislative measures for all affected parties. Those impact assessments therefore gave due consideration to the potential effects of proposed legislative measures on gender equality. A measure that was expected to make a major impact in respect of equal opportunity, discrimination or gender equality was submitted to the Ministry of Children and Equality before public consultations were held. An assessment of the impact of the revised Instructions would be conducted in the coming years.

14. **Mr. Austad** (Norway) said that the Ministry of Justice and Public Security oversaw ongoing efforts to combat violence against women and domestic violence. Particular efforts were made to improve training for law enforcement personnel and widen the range of tools available to the police and the Public Prosecution Service. Offenders could be made to wear alarms that restricted their freedom of movement, for example, and officers in every police district had received training in the use of a spousal assault risk assessment tool. All districts also had full-time family violence coordinators and would shortly set up teams to work on intimate partner violence.

15. As part of its social media outreach efforts, the Government had created a new web portal on domestic violence and rape. Research on the causes, prevalence and consequences of domestic violence was ongoing. One of the aims of an Internet campaign run by the police was to encourage boys and young men to be protective of their fellow classmates at school-leaving celebrations (*russetid*), which were the scene of many reported rapes.

16. Ongoing efforts were made to improve police investigations of alleged rapes. A groundbreaking study of such investigations had shown that police interviews met high standards. The survey had also identified practices that could be improved. In a number of cases, convicted rapists were acquitted on appeal by juries whose members did not explain their decisions. The system of trial by jury in the country's appellate courts had been abolished, however, and the grounds for the verdicts handed down by those courts would henceforth have to be put down in writing. The effect of that change on rape cases would be watched with considerable interest. In addition, the courts had recently begun handing down stiffer penalties for rape and sexual assault.

Articles 1 to 6

17. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that, under the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, women were regarded as no different from any other group that was subject to discrimination. The replacement of the separate Gender Equality Act by a more comprehensive new act appeared to be an example of the increasing gender neutrality of the State party's laws, which the Committee had expressed concern about on more than one occasion. Gender equality had not even been enshrined in the Constitution as part of the amendments adopted in 2014.

18. In view of those developments, she wondered whether the State party would consider revising the Instructions for Official Studies of Central Government Measures so that they once again made explicit mention of the requirement to assess implications for the State party's human rights obligations, including gender equality and non-discrimination. In addition, she wondered what efforts were made to ensure that the principles of gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women remained paramount.

19. The State party's authorities could follow the example of the Government of one of its neighbours, which had organized a conference to discuss the recommendations that had been addressed to it by the Committee. In the same connection, she wished to know what steps the State party intended to take to raise awareness about the Convention — the Committee had received few communications, if any, from women in Norway — and to act on the recommendations made by the Committee in its concluding observations.

20. In addition, she wondered why the State party had made deep cuts to the funding of NGOs that provided free legal aid to women and whether it would consider restoring the funding. Such cuts were difficult to reconcile with the country's prosperity.

21. **Ms. Haidar** asked how the State party reconciled its expansion of its oil-and-gas activities in the Arctic with its obligations under the Covenant, in particular in view of the disproportionate effects of climate change on women and girls.

22. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that an English translation of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act should be available by the time the Act entered into force. The Norwegian authorities were of the view that the comprehensive approach taken by the new Act strengthened the protections from discrimination afforded to women. In many respects, it was more specific than the Gender Equality Act that it would shortly replace, in particular with regard to protection from discrimination on grounds of pregnancy. It also stated

specifically that gender discrimination based on a combination of grounds of discrimination was prohibited.

23. A response to a parliamentary resolution calling for a reversal of the decision to remove from the Act the provisions requiring employers to report on their efforts to achieve gender equality was being prepared. The Committee's concern that Norwegian laws and policies were becoming increasingly gender neutral was misplaced. They had always been gender-neutral.

24. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that the current budget allocation for free legal aid schemes was Nkr 723 million and Nkr 35 million for the legal aid grant schemes run by voluntary organizations. The allocation for the grant schemes had risen by 55 per cent between 2014 and 2017; the amount proposed for 2018 represented a Nkr 15 million reduction, but was still equivalent to the 2015 allocation and higher than the 2014 level.

25. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that, under the revised Instructions for Official Studies of Central Government Measures, all proposed draft legislation was required to take human rights and gender equality into account. The Ministry of Justice had a special responsibility to ensure that Norwegian law and administrative practice were consistent with the State's human rights obligations. Ministries were required to consider what fundamental questions a new measure raised, including issues of gender equality. Any such fundamental question would be subject to comprehensive examination. The guidelines gave comprehensive explanations and specifications of those requirements, stating that fundamental questions should be assessed when relevant. In addition, all new legislation was subject to public consultation, a process that gave further opportunities for comment. The Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs provided training for ministries on handling gender equality issues.

26. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that several methods were used in disseminating information about the reporting procedure, including meetings with civil society in preparing the State party's report, information on the Government's website and financial support to civil society in preparing shadow reports. Clear language was used to ensure accessibility and the Committee's previous concluding observations had been translated into Norwegian and North Sami, posted on the Government's website and circulated to ministries and stakeholders. In addition, a meeting had been held to present them to civil society. In the course of each reporting period, the Committee's previous concluding observations were taken into account in the preparation of new legislation such as the new Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act.

27. **Ms. Bolstad** (Norway) said that the Legal Aid Act guaranteed legal assistance to those who did not have the financial means to meet the costs of proceedings. In certain instances, aid was granted without regard to income. Aid amounting to around Nkr 700 million was granted in from 25,000 to 35,000 cases a year. The Ministry of Justice also supported special legal aid services provided by organizations working with vulnerable groups.

28. **Ms. Enersen** (Norway) said that Norway supported gender equality by supporting climate change intervention and innovation. It promoted climate investments in Africa and Asia that advanced gender equality and social inclusion through climate change mitigation or adaptation, and that reduced social and economic vulnerabilities otherwise exacerbated by the gender gap and climate change.

29. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that she wondered why, if the change in the legislative drafting instructions had made no difference to policy, the State party should have removed instructions that had been explicit and clear. The use of the term "fundamental questions" gave policymakers very broad discretion for interpretation and effectively concealed the question of discrimination against women among other considerations.

30. Although the public consultation phase on new legislation was supposed to last for three months, according to reports, it had recently been much shorter, including for the new Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, which presented problems for women's organizations. She wondered how the State party could justify such large cuts in the funding for the NGO legal aid grants scheme; she would appreciate receiving statistics on

the recipients of legal aid, disaggregated by gender and by the subject matter of cases. She enquired whether the State party had developed a methodology for dealing with cases of multiple discrimination, notably in respect of evidentiary standards and the basis for awarding compensation.

31. **Ms. Haidar** said that the focus of her question on climate change and its impact on women had not been the State party's policies on gender equality and development but rather its fossil fuel prospecting activities in the Arctic, which ran counter to its undertakings under the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

32. **Ms. Schulz** said that it was difficult to understand the reason for the cuts in the legal aid funding to NGOs. The new legislation included a welcome recognition of the need for protection against a combination of grounds of discrimination and a right to compensation, but such complex cases of discrimination required proper legal analysis, and therefore greater support for those confronted by such situations. She would like to know what had prompted such a wealthy country to cut its support to organizations that were ensuring access to justice for vulnerable groups, including women.

33. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that her delegation did not agree that the requirement to assess gender equality issues in drafting new legislation had been removed under the new instructions. The instructions set forth the various steps to be taken in preparing new legislation and the obligation to analyse fundamental questions when relevant was just as strong as under the previous instructions.

34. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that the consultation period in respect of official studies was between six weeks and three months, depending on the scope and importance of the measures in question. Her Government tried to keep to the three-month period because it greatly valued the input from civil society. Since the Equality Tribunal had not yet begun work, and as few discrimination cases had reached the courts previously, there was no experience of establishing levels of compensation for intersectional discrimination.

35. **Ms. Bolstad** (Norway) said that the Legal Aid Act did not explicitly cover cases of discrimination, which could, however, be covered by the legal assistance grants scheme in individual cases. A review of the free legal aid scheme was under way, in part to determine whether coverage should be expanded to include cases relating to gender equality and discrimination.

36. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that, in order to reduce carbon emissions, Norway had invested in electrification of the oil industry. Meanwhile, gas from Norway was replacing coal in central Europe, and that would have a major impact on global carbon emissions.

37. **Ms. Enersen** (Norway) said that Norway had shown that it was possible to combine economic success with ambitious climate policies. It aimed to work with the European Union on solid, binding and predictable European legislation that would make it possible to achieve its goal of a 40 per cent reduction from 1990 levels in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

38. **Ms. Ameline** said that the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act would have an impact on the Ministry of Children and Equality, including, she hoped, a budgetary impact. She would be interested to know how the Ministry intended to support its application. She also wondered whether any new measures of decentralization were envisaged to get municipal and county authorities actively involved in implementing the Act.

39. She would appreciate some information on how the State party intended to demarcate the competencies of the Parliamentary Ombudsman and those of the new Equality Tribunal. Could the Ombudsman conduct investigations, write reports or take cognizance ex officio of situations of violations of women's rights, for example? She enquired whether there was a mechanism inside or outside the parliament that was responsible for oversight of the implementation of the Convention. She wondered how the State party intended to coordinate its new gender policy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the general framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

40. **Ms. Narain** said that, despite the voluntary gender quotas introduced by political parties, and efforts by the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization, the number of women candidates for elected office at the various levels of government was still not satisfactory. Would Norway consider setting a mandatory gender quota in law, especially for local government elections, in order to help redress the balance?

41. Given women's underrepresentation at senior levels in private limited companies, she wondered whether measures were envisaged in order to increase women's presence in executive positions in such companies. Had incentives of any kind been contemplated and were there any campaigns specifically targeting decision makers in companies and shareholders? She asked whether the pilot project mentioned in the State party's report, on certification of workplaces that met gender equality standards, was to be renewed. She enquired whether it had been reviewed and whether it had successfully enhanced gender equality in the workplace. Could the project be extended to private limited companies?

42. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that the budget for municipalities had been increased and was at its highest level for 10 years. Counties and municipalities were responsible for their own budgets, though the Government set certain objectives and had oversight of local authorities' expenditure. The Prime Minister had asked all ministries to keep her informed of their plans for implementation of their respective Sustainable Development Goals. Overall implementation of the Goals was coordinated by a single ministry. Gender equality was mainstreamed across all Goals.

43. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act would protect women better than the Gender Equality Act. In the new law, the protection against discrimination because of pregnancy was more specific, caregiving was listed as a prohibited ground for discrimination, and a prohibition against multiple discrimination was included.

44. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that, in her country, sexual harassment was unacceptable and illegal. All public authorities, including schools, were required to actively combat the practice. Surveys nevertheless showed that sexual harassment was widespread. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology had recently conducted a survey of the phenomenon in schools and universities, and her Government was discussing the issue with business and trade union representatives. Measures to tackle the practice in the restaurant industry were planned, with the expectation that they would then be extended to other industries.

45. Sexual harassment cases were handled by the court system and not the Office of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, as the assessment of evidence in such cases often presented special challenges. Very few cases of sexual harassment reached the courts, as proceedings took time and were costly. The parliament had recommended an inquiry into possible tighter enforcement mechanisms for cases of sexual harassment, and the Ministry of Children and Equality would be following up on that recommendation. The mandate of the inquiry was being finalized, and input from the Ombud would be taken into consideration.

46. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that the number of women in leadership positions in the public and private sectors had increased substantially in the past 15 years. While legal requirements for gender balance on the boards of public limited companies had borne fruit, there were no plans to extend the requirements to other types of companies, partly because of the legal complexity of doing so. She could provide statistics about company boards on request.

47. **Ms. Ameline** asked how municipalities would be involved in enforcing laws dealing with gender equality and discrimination. Would they receive funding? Would special measures be put in place?

48. **Ms. Narain** said that her question about mandatory quotas had related to the political, not the corporate, sphere. Had gender quotas for political representation been considered?

49. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** asked whether the Government of Norway planned to implement gender budgeting in its legislative and policymaking activities. She said that

channelling all discrimination complaints to the court system could discourage victims from filing complaints. Had the Government considered boosting the capacity of the Office of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud so that it could help victims navigate the court process?

50. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that her Government funded equality centres that worked closely with regions and municipalities. In addition, some municipalities had their own gender equality plans.

51. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that her Government preferred positive measures to quotas. Most political parties applied voluntary gender quotas when nominating candidates for local and national offices. Most publicly listed companies also had voluntary quotas. Her Government had decided not to impose quotas on privately held companies. It was considering how to best increase the percentage of women on the boards of public and private companies.

52. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that her Government made use of gender budgeting. The State budget contained various gender-neutral measures and arrangements that nevertheless either benefited women specifically or furthered gender equality. Examples included subsidies for day care and an array of cash benefits for parents, children and families as a whole.

53. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that with the establishment of a new tribunal for discrimination cases, which would begin work in January 2018, the Office of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud would no longer issue conclusions regarding individual complaints. Instead, it would focus on its main task of fighting discrimination and promoting equal opportunities for all. The new arrangement was designed to emphasize the distinct roles of the courts and the Ombud, to speed up processing of cases, and to ensure that violations of the law were punished. To reflect the new distribution of tasks, the Government had proposed transferring Nkr 12.2 million from the budget of the Ombud's Office to that of the tribunal.

54. **Ms. Nygård** (Norway) said that, in addition to providing guidance to individual victims, the Office of the Ombud, as an independent entity, could also offer legal advice in connection with cases handled by the tribunal. It could also bring cases before the tribunal, where appropriate. There were no particular obstacles preventing individuals from bringing cases before the tribunal.

55. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that, following the reorganization of tasks, her Government would closely monitor the financing of the tribunal and the office of the Ombud to ensure that resources were allocated appropriately.

56. **Ms. Jahan**, noting that multiple discrimination disproportionately affected women from indigenous and minority communities, asked what measures the State party was taking to eliminate stereotypes concerning indigenous women, such as Sami women, and women and girls from immigrant backgrounds, including refugees and asylum seekers.

57. She pointed out that, despite the Government's efforts, harmful practices such as forced and child marriages and female genital mutilation persisted in Norway. She asked how extraterritorial cases of female genital mutilation involving Norwegian citizens were handled and whether forced and child marriages contracted outside Norway could be declared null and void in Norway. She encouraged the State party to consider the Committee's general recommendation No. 31, issued jointly with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, on harmful practices. Expressing concern at the increase in online harassment and violence, including sexualized hate speech and "revenge porn", she asked what measures were taken to combat those phenomena, including a specific reference to gender in the provisions of the Penal Code on hate speech.

58. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that she wished to know why the State party had not amended its criminal legislation to provide a legal definition of rape that placed lack of consent at its centre, as the Committee had urged to the State party to do in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/NOR/CO/8, para. 24). She asked whether the State party systematically collected data, disaggregated by gender, on the incidence of all forms of gender-based violence and whether separate data on femicide were gathered. She was

concerned that, in the replies to the list of issues, referring to femicide as “intimate partner homicide” detracted attention from the fact that the victims of such killings were mainly women.

59. Regarding the handling of violence against women by law enforcement agencies, she understood that an investigation by the public prosecutor’s office had revealed alarming shortcomings in investigations by police officers, such as failure to collect forensic information or use real-time on-site recordings. How did the State party plan to remedy the situation? She would appreciate an update on the use of electronic devices to protect victims of domestic violence. She asked how the State party intended to tackle the high incidence of domestic violence in the Sami community.

60. **Ms. Rana** said that, while Norway met the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking outlined in the United States of America’s Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, it had the potential to aim higher and thereby become a leader in eliminating the practice. She would like an update on the country’s international, regional and bilateral cooperation with origin, transit and destination countries to prevent trafficking, in particular among vulnerable groups of women. She asked how the State party planned to ensure that trafficked women and girls had access to the protection and services they needed, regardless of their availability or willingness to testify against traffickers. What steps had been taken to make residence permits available to all victims of trafficking?

61. She asked whether the State party planned to act on the recommendation of the Council of Europe Group of Experts against Trafficking in Human Beings to commission an independent evaluation of the implementation of the action plan on human trafficking. The Committee would like to know the timetable for commissioning the evaluation and developing the referral mechanism. Information on social measures to protect the women affected by the prohibition of the purchase of sexual services would also be welcome. She asked what the Government was doing to systematically monitor and periodically evaluate the array of efforts being made in Norway to stem trafficking and related exploitation. The Committee would like information on programmes focusing on medical care, counselling, financial and legal support, education and housing. What help was provided to women making the transition from prostitution to other ways of earning a livelihood?

62. **Ms. Horne** (Norway) said that her country had a strategy for combating hate speech and also participated in the Nordic countries’ strategy, which prioritized the following measures emphasizing women and girls: a Nordic survey on legal regulations relating to hate speech on the Internet; the provision of information to children and young people; and an international conference on hate speech. Her Government would shortly launch a related information campaign, including a website, targeting youth, teachers and parents. The Association of Norwegian Editors had prepared guidelines for editorial staff moderating online debates.

63. **Ms. Skarstein** (Norway) said that her Government’s white paper entitled “Gender Equality in Practice: Equal Opportunities for Women and Men” had highlighted the role of gender stereotypes in people’s choice of careers. Also relevant for the elimination of gender stereotypes was the national strategy for combating hate speech that Ms. Horne had mentioned.

64. **Mr. Austad** (Norway) said that, although his Government had discussed adopting a legal definition of rape in accordance with the Committee’s recommendation, deliberations on the matter had not resulted in consensus, and the law remained unchanged. However, the definition of rape in the Penal Code already covered most scenarios of sexual contact without the victim’s consent, and a change in the definition would most likely not increase the number of convictions. In his Government’s view, the report by Amnesty International stating that many rapes remained unpunished because Norwegian law was not in line with international human rights standards was highly misleading.

65. All lay judges were provided with ethics training and had access to a website containing information on dealing with cases of rape. It was not clear why a significant number of guilty verdicts handed down by district courts in rape trials had subsequently been overturned on appeal. The authorities were monitoring the changes that had been made to the jury system to evaluate their impact on that trend. Many rape cases in Norway

relied solely on the testimony of the alleged victim and the defendant, meaning that the burden of proof lay heavily on the courts.

66. **Mr. Hustad** (Norway) said that, in 2016, the Director of Public Prosecutions had presented a report evaluating the investigation and prosecution of several hundred cases of rape and violence against women by husbands and intimate partners. Given that many such cases resulted in dismissals or acquittals, the report had sought to provide constructive feedback that would help the police to better handle them.

67. **Ms. Galand** (Norway) said that the Government took the issue of violence against women in Sami communities very seriously. It was important for victims to speak out and break down taboos and for the Sami parliament and Sami organizations to engage in a discussion of the issue.

68. The general measures that were in place to tackle domestic violence also extended to Sami communities. The region of Finnmark had a crisis centre for victims of domestic violence and a shelter for victims of incest and sexual violence. The Government's plan to combat violence for the period 2016-2021 contained measures to better address violence in Sami communities, including through research on the issue and community awareness-raising initiatives. A strategy had been developed to address harassment in schools, including that directed at Sami children. Following the reports of numerous instances of sexual violence in the municipality of Tysfjord, the Government had engaged in dialogue with the Sami parliament regarding how best to monitor the situation and had provided funding to enable the municipality to care for the victims and prevent reoccurrence. At the administrative level, the relevant ministries were engaged in dialogue with the National Human Rights Institution and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman.

69. **Mr. Austad** (Norway) said that a report on the Sami community had provided a broad picture of the complex barriers hampering the provision of support to the Sami population, which did not seem to have engaged with gender equality issues. The Government was working with the Sami parliament to conduct further research in that regard. The Norwegian authorities were making strenuous efforts to provide support in connection with the recent cases of abuse that had come to light in Sami communities.

70. In 2016, the police had registered 3,450 cases of domestic violence. That figure included cases that had been instigated by the police themselves without the cooperation of the victim. The increase in the number of cases was worrying and more needed to be done to determine the causal factors involved. Government statistics on gender equality were available online and were presented by county so that local authorities could monitor their own performance.

71. While the number of women killed by their partner or former partner in Norway was low, with only six such cases in 2016, the Government was working to reduce that number to zero. An assessment of all cases between 1991 and 2012 had identified a number of risk factors which would inform the development of more effective strategies to tackle the phenomenon.

72. Work was continuing on the drafting of a white paper on the issue of prostitution. A report evaluating the ban on the purchase of sexual services had been produced in 2014 but criticism had been made of the methodology used; as such, the authorities intended to commission further studies to assess the impact of the legislation.

73. In June 2017, the Government had launched a project, with support from civil society actors, to identify ways to improve assistance for the victims of human trafficking, many of whom did not wish to cooperate with law enforcement agencies. As many of the alleged victims were foreign nationals, the authorities intended to make provision for the granting of permanent residency for those whose testimony was needed as part of a prosecution or who required protection under the asylum system.

74. At the international level, Norway awarded grants to Eastern European countries to help them tackle organized crime and assist victims of trafficking. It also took part in the planning and delivery of training events conducted by the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to cooperate with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to combat organized crime.

75. **Ms. Jahan** said that, while she welcomed the State party's efforts to combat negative stereotypes of Sami women, she would like to hear about any initiatives to improve societal attitudes towards women migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. She was concerned about reports that 34 per cent of children aged between 9 and 16 years had viewed pornographic material on the Internet and that there had been a 60 per cent increase in the number of cases of rape in which the alleged perpetrator was a minor. She urged the State party to examine whether the two issues were related.

76. **Ms. Rana** said that it would be useful to receive details of the expected time frame for the issuance of the white paper on prostitution and the more in-depth study that the Government intended to carry out on the impact of the ban on purchasing sexual services. Given that foreign nationals who were victims of human trafficking lost their entitlements to housing and childcare if they then applied for asylum following the six-month period of reflection granted to them, she wished to know how the Government intended to address that dilemma. She also wished to receive more information on how the authorities protected girls who were at risk of being trafficked.

77. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari**, noting that a study conducted by the National Criminal Investigations Service had concluded that a focus on lack of consent in rape cases would lead to more convictions, particularly in complex cases involving the word of one person against another, said that the State party had a duty to amend its definition of rape pursuant to the Committee's general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, and its obligations under the Istanbul Convention. It was unclear why gender could not be included in the list of prohibited grounds for discriminatory statements contained in the provisions of the Penal Code on hate speech. She would appreciate an update on whether the imbalance in the number of shelters provided for male and female victims of domestic violence had been addressed.

78. **Ms. Krogenæs** (Norway) said that the proposed national budget for 2018 contained an allocation of Nkr 16 million for national housing and support services for persons over 18 years who were at risk of forced marriage or honour-related violence. The authorities intended to introduce in 2018 a mentoring scheme for persons who needed to break ties with their family or community in order to escape such practices. The material that was provided to newly arrived migrants was due to be translated into a number of languages and would include an updated section on domestic violence. In October 2017, the Government had granted funding to 25 organizations working to provide information to vulnerable groups. Another planned initiative would see individuals from relevant cultural groups receive training to enable them to act as agents of change in their communities.

79. **Ms. Enersen** (Norway) said that combating violence against women and girls and eliminating harmful practices were priority issues in Norwegian foreign policy. The Government took the position that tradition and religion must never stand in the way of good health and self-determination for women. The new action plan on freedom, empowerment and opportunities included the objective of eradicating child and forced marriage within a generation. The Government was engaged in bilateral and multilateral efforts in that area, including with the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund.

80. **Mr. Austad** (Norway) said that the guidelines for the implementation of electronic devices to be worn by perpetrators of violence against women were still being finalized. The delineation of the geographical area that offenders should be permitted to enter was extremely complex and had to take into account the locations they needed to visit, the security requirements of the victim and the estimated police response time if the device was activated. The white paper on prostitution would be finalized in 2018. During the six-month period of reflection for victims of trafficking, the local municipality was responsible for providing assistance. If a victim subsequently applied for asylum, responsibility for them was transferred to the State according to the regulations in force.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.