



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
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Summary record of the 757th meeting (Chamber A)

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 16 January 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Gabr (Vice-Chairperson)

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In the absence of Ms. Šimonović, Ms. Gabr, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

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

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

Second periodic report of Kazakhstan (CEDAW/C/KAZ/2; CEDAW/C/KAZ/Q/2 and Add.1)

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

2. **Ms. Samakova** (Kazakhstan), introducing the second periodic report of Kazakhstan (CEDAW/C/KAZ/2), said that major changes had taken place in Kazakhstan since the submission of the initial report. The country had experienced a period of economic growth and, as a result, the living standard had improved significantly, the average wage had increased and unemployment had fallen. The proportion of State budget resources allocated to social welfare, including child benefits and allowances for low-income families, had increased considerably. A large-scale housing programme was also being implemented.

3. Kazakhstan was home to the representatives of more than 130 nationalities and 45 different faiths, and two congresses of world religions had been held in the capital, Astana. A high level of social harmony prevailed. Action had also been taken to encourage the development of civil society institutions. The country had nine political parties, some 6,000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and a large number of private media organizations.

4. A major recent development in Kazakhstan was the adoption of the Strategy for Gender Equality for 2006-2016, which was designed to ensure not only the implementation of equal rights as enshrined in the Constitution, but also equal opportunities and equal participation in all spheres of life. The 2006-2008 Plan of Measures for Implementing the Strategy covered the political and economic advancement of women, protection of reproductive health, efforts to combat violence against women and children, and the achievement of gender equality in family relations.

5. With the adoption of the Strategy, the National Commission on Family Affairs and Women had been

reorganized as the National Commission on Family Affairs and Gender Policy under the President of Kazakhstan. Its Chairperson was also an ex officio adviser to the Head of State. The National Commission was a consultative body that took part in the drafting of legislation, policy and government programmes and had the power to demand investigations of violations of the law relating to the family and gender equality. To boost the work of the National Commission, gender focal points had been appointed in a number of national ministries and agencies and also in local government.

6. In Parliament, the Otbasý (Family) group of deputies was working to promote issues relating to the family, women and gender equality. In addition, the *Majlis* (lower chamber) of Parliament was working on the draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, which provided for the establishment of a body to monitor compliance with the relevant legislation.

7. Since its establishment in 2002, the office of the Ombudsman had considered more than 22,000 complaints, over half of them from women. Most of the complaints related to citizenship issues, alimony payments and health care. Although there was no definition of “gender-based discrimination” in national law, article 14 of the Constitution outlawed all forms of discrimination, including on the basis of gender. Moreover, reference could be made to the concept of “discrimination” in the Convention, because the Constitution provided that international agreements ratified by Kazakhstan — of which the Convention was one — were directly applicable and took precedence over national law. Nonetheless, the concept of gender-based discrimination, as defined in the Convention, was expressly included in the draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men.

8. The draft law guaranteed equal rights and opportunities in government, elections, health care, education, culture, labour relations, family relations and the raising of children. It also set out the main gender-policy priorities and provided for incorporation of the gender perspective into legislation, government programmes and budgets, and the fostering of a culture of equality. The draft law stipulated that the representation of each sex in political institutions and other spheres should be no less than 30 per cent, and also provided for equal representation of women and men in lists of candidates for elected office.

9. With regard to temporary special measures under article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, women in Kazakhstan had always participated actively in public and political life. Women accounted for high proportions of staff in the civil service and the judiciary, and three quarters of employees in the education and health sectors were women. However, there were too few women in decision-making positions. Only 9 per cent of parliamentarians were women, the number in local and rural authorities was low, and there were no women *akims* (governors) of regions or cities. Nonetheless, Kazakhstan compared favourably to other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in that regard.

10. NGOs played an important role in promoting gender equality, and a number of Government policies had been put in place to support them. Moreover, the funds provided to NGOs for social projects were increasing each year. Kazakhstan had achieved the Millennium Development Goal relating to education. Secondary education was compulsory and free of charge for all, irrespective of gender, and the number of women with higher education qualifications exceeded that of men. Nonetheless, gender stereotypes persisted in the choice of careers: girls tended to pursue humanities-related disciplines, while boys preferred technical fields. However, the demands of the growing economy were leading to a gradual increase in the number of women studying technical subjects. Moreover, women made up 62 per cent of teaching staff in higher education institutions.

11. Steps were being taken to raise public awareness of gender issues. Gender analysis of school textbooks had been carried out, manuals had been developed for teachers and students, and training courses were provided at universities. A project was under way in cooperation with the regional office of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to ensure that budgeting processes incorporated a gender perspective. Substantial assistance in the promotion of gender equality had also been received from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

12. Kazakhstan attached great importance to the elimination of discrimination against women in the field of employment, in accordance with article 11 of the Convention. The draft Labour Code, due to be adopted by Parliament in 2007, contained various

provisions enshrining the rights of pregnant women in the workplace and the right to maternity leave and childcare leave. The National Commission on Family Affairs and Gender Policy had conducted a gender analysis of the draft Labour Code and had made a number of proposals in that regard, all of which had been adopted by Parliament. Gender analysis of other national legislation was also under way.

13. Efforts had been made to boost the participation of women in business, particularly small businesses, and budget funding had been earmarked specifically for that purpose. Microcredit organizations were also involved in helping women in business. As a result of those measures, women accounted for 40 per cent of the country's entrepreneurs. Action had been taken to reduce the pay gap between men and women by increasing pay levels in sectors dominated by women, such as education and health. A number of laws had been adopted to improve women's health, including reproductive health. Steps were also being taken, with the help of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to prevent iodine deficiency disorders and anaemia.

14. Effective measures were being implemented to combat violence against women and trafficking in women. A draft law on domestic violence was due to be adopted in 2007. In the past year, 15 criminal cases involving trafficking in women had been brought before the courts. The Government had approved a plan to combat trafficking in persons for 2006-2008. Kazakhstan was a party to more than 60 international human rights instruments. It had implemented many of the Committee's recommendations with regard to the Convention and was in the process of implementing others through the Strategy for Gender Equality. Lastly, Kazakhstan supported the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

Articles 1 to 6

15. **Mr. Flinterman**, welcoming the fact that international agreements were directly applicable in national law, asked whether such agreements took precedence over subsequent laws as well as existing laws and whether there was any mechanism for bringing existing legislation into line with international agreements.

16. He welcomed Kazakhstan's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, but wondered why, to date, no references had been made to the

Convention in the decisions of domestic courts. If the reason was lack of awareness among women of their rights under the Convention, he would like to know what steps were being taken to raise awareness. Likewise, if the judiciary and the legal profession were not familiar with the Convention, the reporting State should indicate what action was being taken to remedy that situation.

17. He was pleased to note that the Ombudsman had dealt with a number of cases involving women's rights. However, it was regrettable that the Ombudsman's opinions made no references to the Convention. He would like to know what measures the Government was taking to ensure that the Ombudsman was familiar with the Convention. He asked whether the definition of discrimination in the draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities included indirect discrimination and discrimination in the private sphere. He also wished to know what the role of the proposed equal rights commission would be. For example, would it have the power to bring court cases where appropriate?

18. **Ms. Shin** asked whether the definition of discrimination in the draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men included violence against women and sexual harassment as forms of discrimination. She also wished to know whether the draft law would provide for a specific quota of female representation on the equal rights commission. A minimum of 30 per cent women would be desirable. It would be useful to know what the relationship between the equal rights commission and the Ombudsman would be and for what areas each body would be responsible. She also wished to know whether there was a time frame for Parliament's adoption of the draft law.

19. She welcomed the booklet of statistical information provided by the delegation that day, but expressed regret that few statistics relating to the implementation of article 3 in particular had been included in the report itself. The delegation should indicate how data were collected and whether the National Commission on Family Affairs and Gender Policy worked with the Statistics Agency in that regard. Data were needed on women with disabilities and women of different ethnic origins. Lastly, there seemed to be some confusion in the report between temporary special measures, as provided for in article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, and the special measures for the protection of maternity mentioned in

article 4, paragraph 2. The latter should be permanent measures. In addition, the draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men should provide that temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality were not discriminatory to men.

20. **Ms. Pimentel** noted that the draft law on domestic violence referred to on page 24 of the State party's report (CEDAW/C/KAZ/2) would be submitted to the Government for consideration in January 2007 and wondered what improvements had been introduced into it by Parliament. She requested data in support of the statement on page 6 of the report that the laws passed in 2002 and 2003 had removed many problematic issues and been instrumental in combating trafficking in persons. The Committee would also appreciate information on the impact and effectiveness of the government resolution of November 2003 approving the Concept of Gender Policy, mentioned on page 8 of the report. She asked about the outcome of judicial proceedings on women's issues and the remedies available to women victims of discrimination.

21. The Committee welcomed the implementation of international standards in national law, as noted on page 9 of the report, but wished to know about the arguments used in court decisions in support of women's rights and why they made no reference to the Convention. She expressed concern about the non-judicial forms of conflict resolution referred to on page 10 of the report; they could be useful, but they could also be dangerous. She concluded by requesting information about the number of complaints of violations of women's rights that had been resolved by the Ombudsman.

22. **Ms. Dairiam** commended the State party for the steps that it had taken to achieve an integrated, holistic approach to gender equality, as recommended by the Committee in its Concluding Comments on Kazakhstan's initial report, in particular through the gender equality law and gender strategy. She wondered what was being done to ensure a common, unified framework for the many efforts to that end, in view of the many international bodies, including United Nations agencies, that were providing assistance. The Committee wished to know whether any governmental body had been vested with a supervisory role in that regard, so as to ensure uniformity in the application of the principles set out in articles 1 to 5 of the Convention, particularly in eliminating both direct and

indirect discrimination against women and combating stereotyping.

23. She raised the question of temporary special measures, as provided for by article 4 of the Convention, and stressed that the balanced participation and equal opportunity of women and men in every field, as sought by the Government through its Concept of Gender Policy, could not be achieved unless laws were adopted to protect women against discrimination on the part of both State authorities and private actors, as stipulated in article 2 of the Convention. Lastly, she wished to know about such laws and also whether benchmarks had been established to monitor the achievement of *de facto* gender equality.

24. **Ms. Samakova** (Kazakhstan) referred to a booklet providing gender statistics on Kazakhstan, distributed to members of the Committee. In 1999 a handbook had also been published, in Kazakh, Russian and English, with the assistance of governmental and non-governmental bodies, covering all aspects of life in the Republic, in particular wages, pensions, allowances, health and discrimination, and including a presentation of the situation in relation to gender. Since that time there had been considerable progress and if there were any suggestions for further improvements, they would be welcome.

25. Kazakhstan was a party to over 60 international human rights treaties; under the Constitution, they all took precedence over national legislation. Since becoming party in 1998 to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, it had prepared a draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities, which drew on the definition of discrimination contained therein and provided for temporary special measures. Many countries did not have any such law, notably in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The law that it had taken as a model had been found in France; the drafting work, extending over a period of two and a half years, had been coordinated by a special body set up for the purpose.

26. In Soviet times, a quota system had been applied which had subsequently been discontinued in Kazakhstan. Quotas were being reintroduced, however, by way of the draft law, which laid down in particular that applications for decision-making responsibilities must include at least 30 per cent of each sex. The

possibility had been considered of raising the percentage to 40, but it had been fixed by the President of the Republic at 30 per cent, which was in fact the international standard. The use of quotas had been studied in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, and a 30 per cent quota had been found to be satisfactory. She expressed the hope that it would be achieved.

27. Over the previous 10 years, women's representation had improved, rising to 9 per cent in Parliament and to 17 per cent in representative bodies. The draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities was expected to be adopted in the current year, after being approved first by the lower chamber then by the higher chamber of Parliament, before being submitted to the expertise of the Government, entailing a study of its financial implications; upon approval, it would go to the Head of State for signature. The Committee's recommendations for the promotion of equal rights and opportunities in Kazakhstan were thereby being translated into action.

28. She attributed the delay in adopting the draft law on domestic violence to the existence in the country of an "eastern" mentality which, until recently, had failed even to recognize domestic violence. In 1999, a national commission had been set up which had started to address the issue, with the cooperation of the International Organization for Migration, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international bodies. The courts had been called on to deal with such matters, while some 26 crisis centres had been set up, to provide legal advice and inform women of their rights. Cases involving women's issues were also considered by various local or regional bodies and could also be referred to the Ombudsman, who, in the previous four years, had considered some 22,000 cases, more than half of which had been lodged by women. The Supreme Court was also active in that regard and had resolved many issues relating to women's rights.

29. More than half of the 15 million-strong population of Kazakhstan were of the female sex, and 54 per cent of State employees were women. Out of 16 ministers, three women headed the key Ministries of Justice, Finance, and Labour and Social Protection, and until recently a woman had also headed the Ministry of Science and Technology. Many deputy ministers were likewise women, as were many heads of enterprises, *akims* (governors) and principals of educational establishments. Indeed, as part of the gender strategy, a

competition was held every year to designate the best woman head of an enterprise.

30. A law had been passed on safety in the workplace. Women were protected by law from heavy work; their employers were also required to pay for their childcare immediately after a birth. They became eligible for pension five years before men: in the case of women with more than five children, the pensionable age was 53. Gender studies had been introduced into higher education, and awareness-raising was being developed among the population at large through libraries and the mass media. Most ministries were involved in the effort, which was coordinated by the National Commission on Family Affairs and Gender Policy and the Ministry of the Economy and Budget Planning.

31. **Mr. Kustavletov** (Kazakhstan) said that the process of implementation of all the international treaties to which Kazakhstan was a party entailed the alignment of national legislation with the appropriate international standards. An integrated approach was ensured through central coordination of all the Government's action in that regard, while an inter-ministerial commission reviewed all governmental decrees and national laws in the light of international laws, standards and principles.

32. **Mr. Tutkushev** (Kazakhstan) said that the draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities had been developed in Kazakhstan through an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary process. Some countries had adopted such a law in a shorter period of time but could not boast a single woman in parliament. The draft law would cover all human rights and would provide for the establishment of a body mandated to intervene in any ministerial decision involving discrimination. On the question of disabilities, women and men who were so affected were treated in exactly the same way; there was therefore no need for special measures in that regard. There was equal access to medical care and likewise to education. He recognized the need to strengthen the provisions relating to pregnancy and also to address the question of mortality rates. The fact that there was no direct reference to the Convention in national law did not mean that the principles and norms enshrined in it were not reflected therein. As for the non-judicial forms of conflict resolution mentioned, they were necessary as it was not always possible for the courts to act.

33. **Ms. Saiga** requested more information on the resources and authority of the National Commission on Family and Gender Equality Policy, including how often it met, whether it had a permanent secretariat and whether it reviewed draft legislation falling within its mandate, and on the relationship between it and the planned new equal rights body and the gender focal points in ministries. She asked if the new equal rights body would be the mechanism responsible for the concrete implementation of gender-related measures in the public and private sectors. More information would also be welcome on the role played by the gender focal points, including whether they were required to report on the implementation of gender policies, and on the monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of gender goals, for example by the National Commission.

34. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** said that, although real progress had been made, she was disturbed that there did not seem to be any sense of urgency with regard to the need to enact the draft laws on domestic violence and on equal right and equal opportunities. She asked if there were any regulations requiring the National Commission to be consulted during the preparation of gender-related measures, whether the Commission could itself make proposals, what weight such proposals would have and what recourse or avenue of appeal the Commission had if its suggestions were rejected.

35. The establishment of high-level gender focal points in ministries was a welcome development, but she underscored the need for accountability mechanisms to ensure that gender targets were met and to meet the need to provide gender-awareness training to lower-level civil servants. Gender issues should be taken into account early in the process of drafting new legislation and measures, rather than after the fact. Gender-awareness training should be strengthened to ensure that all levels of society and government played a role in monitoring the achievement of gender-related goals.

36. She welcomed the State party's intention, pursuant to the draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities, to institute a 30 per cent quota for women in political institutions and, recalling that the Constitutional Council had previously upheld the legality of temporary and special measures to improve the status of women, asked whether special measures were envisaged in labour-related matters. She also

stressed the importance of ensuring that all judges, including those in lower level courts, received training with regard to gender issues and the Convention, as well as the use of temporary special measures.

37. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** asked whether any effort was being made to provide education on gender equality to children at the primary level and to raise awareness of gender issues in the family and society in general, with a view to eliminating gender stereotyping. Information would also be appreciated on the role played by the media in gender education and on the concrete results of awareness-raising activities.

38. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** expressed dismay that the draft law on domestic violence had still not been adopted and said that it was urgent to address that problem through legislation as soon as possible. She asked whether the draft law would include provisions relating to marital rape, increase the current 3-year penalty for wife-beating and apply to informal domestic partners as well as married couples. More training should be provided to police and judges to increase their awareness of the problem of domestic violence. The Government should also assume financial responsibility for the operation of the 26 crisis centres for women and children.

39. **Ms. Neubauer** enquired whether the efforts of the Interdepartmental Commission for Suppressing the Unlawful Removal or Import of or Traffic in Persons and the 2006-2008 Plan for Suppressing, Averting and Preventing Crimes Linked to Trafficking in Persons took into account the need to tackle that problem through a coordinated multidisciplinary approach involving all national and international stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and gender-equality experts. She asked for information on the membership of the Interdepartmental Commission and on whether the Plan included mechanisms to monitor its implementation and evaluate results as well as measures to prevent trafficking, assist victims and prosecute perpetrators.

40. **Ms. Simms** stressed that there could be no hierarchy in the protection of human rights and that a State party to the Convention had an obligation to protect the rights of all women, including the disadvantaged and marginalized. With regard to Kazakhstan's situation as a source, transit and destination country for trafficking in persons, she wondered whether any statistics were available on the

numbers of individuals trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation or labour and on which countries in particular received trafficked persons via Kazakhstan. She reiterated the need to take effective measures to combat the scourge of human trafficking.

41. Although sexual exploitation and prostitution were a major factor in human trafficking, she said that prostitution was also a concern at the domestic level and requested clarification on any current legislation relating to prostitution. She understood that prostitution was not illegal but the recruitment of prostitutes or organization of prostitution was illegal. The delegation should indicate if there were any laws to prosecute the clients of prostitutes and whether prostitutes had access to health care. More information on measures envisaged to combat prostitution would be welcome, as would data on whether prostitutes tended to come from particular ethnic groups or the underprivileged.

42. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her personal capacity, reiterated the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to combating human trafficking. It was important to generate accurate data on the current situation of trafficking; there were serious discrepancies between official figures and those from non-governmental sources. Trafficking was a serious crime that warranted comprehensive legislation and severe penalties. More must be done to provide services for the victims of trafficking; despite the economic growth in the State party, no real social safety net seemed to exist, especially for the protection of the poorest and most vulnerable. It was urgent to adopt measures to protect women and children in particular from the scourge of trafficking.

43. **Ms. Samakova** (Kazakhstan) said the National Commission on Family and Gender Equality Policy had been established by Presidential decree following the Beijing Conference. It had 26 members, including representatives of the regions, Government, Parliament, non-governmental organizations and unions, and had a permanent staff of 10 working in its secretariat. The Commission discussed gender-related issues and, by virtue of its status as a Presidential body, could make recommendations to government departments at the national and local levels and require those departments to prepare follow-up reports on implementation of its recommendations.

44. The Commission as a whole met once a year; and quarterly reports on its work prepared by the Chairperson and the secretariat were submitted to the President. The President approved the reports and transmitted them to the relevant departments and local bodies. Commissions similar in nature to the National Commission, with small permanent secretariats, also existed at the local level. The quarterly reports of the National Commission included information transmitted in writing by local commissions and village forums.

45. The National Commission coordinated gender-related efforts at all levels. For example, the gender focal points in ministries had to report annually on the implementation of gender policies; those reports were then reviewed by the Commission. Although the Commission and its secretariat could not initiate legislation, they had the right to review all legislation from a gender perspective and suggest modifications. Finally, with regard to the adoption of the draft law on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, she said the bill was currently before Parliament and should be adopted by April.

46. **Ms. Moiseeva** (Kazakhstan) said that a draft law had been prepared which would, once adopted, ensure State support for the crisis centres for women and children. She confirmed that the draft law on domestic violence would also apply to informal domestic partnerships. With regard to training staff to meet the needs of the victims of violence, in 1999 the National Commission had begun to develop structures to protect women, including the establishment of a pool of experts in that area. Currently efforts had been expanded to include seminars and training courses on the issue of domestic violence for the police.

47. The Interdepartmental Commission for Suppressing the Unlawful Removal or Import of or Traffic in Persons, established under the Ministry of Justice was responsible for coordinating efforts to combat trafficking, and a special police division worked in tandem with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. A new three-year action plan to combat trafficking had been established by the Government in 2006, and efforts to further improve legislation against trafficking continued. The penalty for prostitution had been removed from the Criminal Code in 2001, however prostitution was not condoned by society. Recruiting people into prostitution was punishable by deprivation of liberty for three to seven years (art. 270), with eight prosecutions since 2003.

48. Establishing or maintaining premises for prostitution carried a penalty of imprisonment for three to five years (art. 271). The smuggling of persons from Kazakhstan or their transportation across the Republic from one foreign State to another for the purposes of exploiting them sexually or otherwise was now punishable by imprisonment for 15 years (art. 128). Provisions dealing with trafficking in minors had also been strengthened (art. 133), and abduction and illegal confinement was punishable by imprisonment for up to three years (arts. 125 and 126). In addition, article 399 afforded legal protection to citizens of Kazakhstan employed abroad.

49. **Ms. Jalmagambetova** (Kazakhstan) said that compared to some other Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan was doing a better job of overcoming gender stereotypes in education. School textbooks were being revised under the country's education reform plan with reference, inter alia, to the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2007-2008. A review of primary school textbooks had identified text and pictures that promulgated traditional gender roles. At the preschool level, children were now taught to overcome such stereotypes, while at secondary school, students studied gender issues as part of a family ethics programme.

50. The results of such initiatives were beginning to show: in 2006, 40 per cent of secondary school students studying technical subjects were female, up from 33 per cent in 2004. The number of girls studying law in higher educational establishments was also steadily rising, as was the proportion of doctorates and professorships awarded to women. Pursuant to the law on marriage and the family, responsibility for caring for children was now borne equally by both parents, and either parent was eligible to receive a child-care allowance for children up to three years of age. Under a State-funded social contract, the National Commission collaborated closely with journalists to raise awareness of women's issues.

51. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** said that she would welcome information on the budget allocated for implementation of the Strategy for Gender Equality at the national, regional and local levels.

52. **Mr. Flinterman** said that, as far as he understood, the draft law on equal rights and opportunities prohibited direct as well as indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres. He

had been concerned to learn that the Convention was not being referred to in the country's courts on the grounds that it had already been incorporated into domestic legislation. Domestic legislation must be interpreted in accordance with international obligations, which could not be viewed as static. The Convention, for example, must be interpreted in light of the Committee's general recommendations. Now that Kazakhstan had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention, it had an obligation to ensure that women were aware of their rights under the Convention, as well as the judiciary and legal profession.

53. **Ms. Neubauer** asked whether experts on gender equality were included in the Interdepartmental Commission referred to by Ms. Moiseeva. She wished to know how coordination was ensured between the various actors responsible for protecting the human rights of women victims of trafficking, including in the fields of health, education and social security.

54. **Ms. Dairiam** asked which government agency was responsible for ensuring that the various international donors maintained a unified approach to gender issues, particularly as they related to articles 1 to 5 of the Convention.

55. **Ms. Samakova** (Kazakhstan), said that the activities of international donor organizations in Kazakhstan were coordinated by the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All international treaties and conventions to which Kazakhstan was party prevailed over domestic law, which was why gender discrimination was not mentioned as such in domestic legislation. Any discrimination was prohibited, as was any action — or negligence — that constituted an obstacle to equality. Government departments responsible for implementing the Strategy for Gender Equality were allocated resources from the State budget. Funding for particular initiatives might come from national or local budgets. International donors tended to provide assistance in the form of expert consultations and funding for entities not directly under Government ministries. In 2006, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had provided \$70,000 for gender sensitization purposes and for the revision of textbooks and civil service training curricula.

Articles 7 to 9

56. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** asked whether any strategies had been put in place to secure women's full political empowerment in Kazakhstan. She had been struck by the statement that the low representation of women in politics was due to the public mindset, with women also tending to vote for men.

57. **Ms. Shin** welcomed the planned implementation under the draft law on equal rights and opportunities of a 30 per cent quota to strengthen women's participation in decision-making. She wondered what awareness-raising or other activities were being envisaged to pave the way for its implementation in all areas of public life, how male parliamentarians had reacted to the prospect of a quota being introduced in 2008, and how the President was tackling resistance to the draft law.

58. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her personal capacity, requested information on the representation of women in diplomacy.

59. **Ms. Samakova** (Kazakhstan) said that Kazakhstan was one of only three States in the Commonwealth of Independent States to have made concrete progress in promoting legislation on equal rights and opportunities. She was confident that the draft law would be enacted in due course thanks, *inter alia*, to the political will of the President. In 1999, for the first time in the country's history, as many as 75 women had registered candidacies in district (*okrug*) elections. The reaction of male colleagues varied, but they were increasingly being brought around to the idea of a quota. Her team was doing all it could to combat patriarchal stereotypes and to support women's political aspirations. Before, there had hardly been any women in Parliament, but now there were three. Conferences and round tables were being held throughout the country to promote general discussion of the issue.

60. **Ms. Jalmagambetova** (Kazakhstan) said that every country progressed at its own pace in overcoming gender stereotypes. In Kazakhstan, work on the draft law on equal rights and opportunities was being undertaken by a group known as *Otbasy* (Family), which covered some 25 per cent of deputies. Each year, the group held a series of round-table discussions to raise the gender-awareness not only of the public, but of members of Parliament also. The debate had matured over the past three years, and she was convinced that the majority of deputies would in

fact vote for the draft law. The 30 per cent quota was set to be enshrined in law. In preparation for its introduction, 1,219 seminars had been convened with the aim of empowering women politically. Women already accounted for 58 per cent of the membership of political parties, and the number of female candidates registered on party lists was steadily rising. Currently, two parliamentary committees were headed by women, which was an achievement for women's rights in Kazakhstan.

61. **Ms. Moiseeva** (Kazakhstan) said that, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and the International Organization for Migration, a shelter had been established in Almaty for those victims of trafficking who had managed to return to Kazakhstan. Housing grants and physical protection were also offered to victims and criminal cases were under way against traffickers.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.