



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Summary record of the 1944th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 8 February 2023, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Peláez Narváez

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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 *(continued)*

Sixth periodic report of Georgia (continued) (CEDAW/C/GEO/6;
CEDAW/C/GEO/Q/6; CEDAW/C/GEO/RQ/6)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Georgia joined the meeting via video link.*

Articles 1–6

2. **A representative of Georgia** said that his country had made significant progress in combating domestic violence and violence against women. The maximum punishment for domestic violence had been increased from 1 to 2 years' imprisonment, while femicide was punishable by imprisonment of between 16 and 20 years. In 2021, investigations had been launched into some 6,000 allegations of domestic violence, and around 5,000 people had been charged with the offence. Imprisonment had been requested in 94 per cent of prosecuted cases and imposed by the courts in 53 per cent. Up to 20 per cent of the prison population was serving a sentence for domestic violence or violence against women.

3. The police carried out assessments of the risk of repeated violence and, when appropriate, issued 30-day restraining orders, the breach of which was punishable by imprisonment of up to 1 year. Around 10,000 restraining orders were issued annually. In September 2020, with the support of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), an electronic surveillance mechanism had been introduced to improve victim protection. Use of the mechanism, which was contingent on victims collaborating with the police, would be expanded thanks to legislative amendments due to enter into force on 1 May 2023. Compliance with restraining orders was also monitored through telephone conversations and visits.

4. The Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs ensured that legal proceedings in cases of domestic violence and violence against women were victim-oriented and that victims had access to appropriate services. Furthermore, the Ministry had launched the 112 mobile application to facilitate the reporting of offences and enable victims to be located immediately. Citizens received periodic text messages to inform them of reporting mechanisms such as the application, which had been downloaded more than 50,000 times.

5. The Office of the Coordinator of Witnesses and Victims, which had been operating within the Prosecutor's Office since 2011, aimed to facilitate the participation of witnesses and victims in legal proceedings and prevent their revictimization, including by informing them of their rights and available services and, if necessary, referring them to shelters, crisis centres or specialized non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Since 2019, the Office had assisted more than 7,000 victims of domestic violence and violence against women.

6. Through its Academy, the Ministry of Internal Affairs provided ongoing police training on issues such as gender-based violence, hate crime and access to justice for women with disabilities. An increase in reports of domestic violence and violence against women and in the number of investigations initiated and restraining orders issued gave reason to conclude that trust in the police had grown in recent years.

7. **A representative of Georgia** said that the Public Defender's Office was actively involved in the training of prosecutors. In 2022, it had developed guidelines for specialized prosecutors on identifying and prosecuting gender-based discrimination in line with international best practices and standards.

8. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's Office and the Supreme Court collected data on gender-based violence disaggregated by type of violence, age and sex of the alleged victim and relationship between alleged victim and defendant, among other factors. In 2021 and 2022, investigations had been conducted into 2,989 claims of gender-based violence, and 1,791 persons had been prosecuted.

9. In 2022, the Prosecutor's Office had launched a large-scale campaign to raise awareness about violence against women and domestic violence and prevent femicide. Specialized prosecutors had participated in public information meetings across the country and had spoken to teachers, students, social workers and municipal employees, among others. The Office had also studied cases of femicide to identify trends, achievements and challenges. Prosecutors and witness and victim coordinators had visited shelters for women victims of violence, and awareness-raising leaflets had been produced in Armenian and Azeri.

10. The Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee and the parliamentary Gender Equality Council had set up a working group on the prevention of femicide. With the support of the Council of Europe, the Prosecutor's Office had signed a memorandum of cooperation on data collection and joint reporting on hate crime with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Supreme Court and the National Statistics Office.

11. Examinations of the hymen were not compulsory in cases of suspected sexual abuse and were performed only when necessary. Allegations of violence were neither proved nor refuted on the sole basis of the state of the hymen. Persons had been prosecuted and convicted in cases in which the victim's hymen had not been damaged.

12. **A representative of Georgia** said that, in 2020, a total of 191 persons had been prosecuted for crimes against women and girls, 141 had been convicted and 34 had been acquitted. A gender motive had been established in 108 cases. In 2021, the number of persons prosecuted had reached 678, of whom 463 had been found guilty, including 351 with a gender motive. Domestic violence accounted for around 90 per cent of cases of violence against women.

13. **A representative of Georgia** said that the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs oversaw the agency responsible for providing services to victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence, which included psychosocial rehabilitation, legal advice and health care. The Ministry was working to expand the geographic scope of the services. Two additional crisis centres and one shelter were expected to be opened by the end of 2023.

14. A psychosocial rehabilitation centre for child victims of sexual violence had been opened in Tbilisi in 2022. The centre was based on the Barnahus model and aimed to provide individualized, coordinated and effective protection through a one-window approach and in a child-friendly manner to prevent retraumatization. There were plans to establish a second centre in Kutaisi, west Georgia by the end of 2023.

15. In accordance with a legislative amendment that would come into force on 1 July 2023, victim status would no longer be required to have access to shelters, crisis centres and other services for victims. On 9 November 2022, the Government had adopted rules for providing compensation to victims of violence, including in cases where the perpetrator was unable to pay. Children affected by femicide were also entitled to compensation.

16. Pursuant to the Social Work Act, more than 250 social workers in State agencies had received training in the prevention of gender-based violence and the protection of women's rights. Moreover, a multilingual hotline had been set up to provide victims with information and advice on State protection and prevention services and other measures.

17. **A representative of Georgia** said that the Government's will to combat trafficking in persons was undiminished, as evidenced by the adoption, in December 2022, of a new national action plan for 2023–2024. The plan's implementation would be monitored by an inter-agency commission chaired by the Minister of Justice and would be based on four pillars: prevention, criminal prosecution, victim assistance and domestic and international cooperation.

18. Six mobile units composed of investigators and prosecutors had been set up to identify high-risk areas for trafficking for the purposes of both labour and sexual exploitation. Moreover, labour inspectors and law enforcement officers, including border guards, received training in the proactive identification of possible trafficking cases.

19. The State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, which operated under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs, ensured the provision of a package of services to victims and possible victims, including accommodation in shelters and crisis centres and medical, psychological and legal assistance. Antiretroviral therapy was free of charge for victims of sexual exploitation. The Ministry of Justice granted residence permits to foreign victims of human trafficking under a simplified procedure.

20. Pimping had been a criminal offence in Georgia since 2018. Eleven persons had been convicted of the offence in 2022. Children in street situations were particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and sexual and labour exploitation. In 2022, there had been five recorded cases of street begging.

21. There had been 21 prosecutions for child pornography offences in 2019 and 11 in 2020. Law enforcement officers were equipped with the knowledge and tools to identify possible cases. In accordance with a joint decree of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, children born through surrogacy could not be taken out of the country without the necessary documentation.

22. The Russian Federation exercised effective control over the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, where there had been a known case of labour exploitation some years previously. Georgian law enforcement agencies were not able to investigate cases on the ground. However, victims had been rescued from the occupied territories and provided with appropriate services free of charge by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs.

Articles 7–9

23. **Ms. Stott Despoja**, noting the underrepresentation of women at high levels of the civil service and in political and judicial posts, said that she would like to know what measures had been taken to increase their numbers in leadership positions. It would be of interest to the Committee to find out if the Government would consider extending the temporary quota system for political participation beyond its currently scheduled cut-off date and increasing the threshold for women's participation in national and local elections to 30 per cent, thus bringing it into line with international standards. Would it consider similar measures to ensure their meaningful participation in political processes related to women and peace and security? The Committee would like to receive more information on efforts to increase representation of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons and women with disabilities in positions of leadership. Noting that the Public Defender and other sources had reported that the media and certain politicians had engaged in sexist and misogynist discourse and of videos targeting women politicians and candidates during election periods, she said that she would like to know if the Government had plans to address gender-specific political violence, for instance by adopting relevant cyber legislation or by apprehending and investigating the perpetrators of such acts.

24. **Ms. Akizuki** said that the Committee commended the State party on the establishment of a statelessness determination procedure, including through legal provisions and the establishment of formal recognition procedures for stateless persons. It welcomed the fact that the number of stateless persons had thus steadily decreased in recent years. Noting that the national legislation still lacked provisions to grant citizenship to children born in Georgia who without Georgian citizenship risked becoming stateless or to facilitate access to naturalization for stateless persons, she asked whether the State party planned to revise the legislation to address those lacunae and to bring its legislation into line with article 9 of the Convention and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

25. **Mr. Tatulashvili** (Georgia) said that it was unclear whether the temporary quota system would be extended, as the results of the temporary measure must be analysed before any decision could be made. The previous women and peace and security action plan, covering the period from 2018 to 2020, had included continuous training activities in State agencies on gender equality, gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment and had reached over 12,000 staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and some 5,000 of the Ministry of Defence. Those courses covered the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on violence against women and domestic violence. As a result of the action plan, between 2018 and 2020,

funding had been provided by the Ministry of Education and Science for over 400 students in the occupied territories. In 2020, over 4,000 people had received support for training through microgrants, including over 100 internally displaced women.

26. The improvement of women's participation in leadership roles was addressed in various ways by the different State agencies. For example, the Central Election Commission had actively sought to ensure gender parity among its members and had held training activities to encourage women's representation both within the Commission and in election activities. Since 2014, the Government had been working to bring the country's legislation into line with European Union legislation, including through the adoption of a new draft law on broadcasting that was currently before Parliament. The draft included provisions to protect minorities, persons with disabilities, minors and consumers and to combat hate speech and incitement to terrorism.

27. **A representative of Georgia** said that the main task of the Ministry of Internal Affairs during electoral campaigns was to maintain law and order and to ensure that the elections took place in a free, democratic and safe environment. The police code of ethics and the manual for the employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs had been revised during the election period taking into account the situation related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Law enforcement personnel received specific training and had been redeployed with a view to ensuring public safety and law and order during the elections, and contact persons had been identified among NGOs and in election observation missions. The Ministry of Internal Affairs had drawn upon the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Commission for Free and Fair Elections, which included the prohibition of the use of administrative resources to influence the outcome of elections and the prevention of violations of campaigning rules and election legislation. The Ministry had initiated investigations into all reports of violent acts during the election period.

28. **Mr. Tatulashvili** (Georgia) said that the Gender Equality Council had developed training modules for legislators and employees of the legislative branch on gender mainstreaming, empowerment, gender violence, gender budgeting and gender issues in labour relations. The parliamentary training centre had already begun a first series of such training activities. Of the country's 339 judges, 181 were women.

Articles 10–14

29. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that she would like to know whether the State party had achieved its goal of devoting 6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to funding for education by 2022, what plans remained for the next three years in relation to funding and whether the impact of any such new funding had been assessed. She would like to find out whether the Government had successfully made the education system more flexible. Noting that among students with disabilities the proportion of female students benefiting from inclusive education was far lower than the proportion their male counterparts, she asked whether the State party intended to take gender and types of disability into account in targeting temporary special measures, so as to ensure greater participation by women and girls. The Committee would like to receive more detailed information about the efforts made to increase the number of girls engaged in vocational education and training programmes. She would like to know the extent to which the Georgian reproductive health education programme met the Committee's standard for universal, institutionalized and age-appropriate, comprehensive sexuality education capable of influencing gender-related behaviours, in particular by reducing the incidence of violence against girls. She would also welcome information on measures taken to compensate for days of schooling that had been missed in recent years owing to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, including in areas affected by armed conflict.

30. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she would like to know how sanctions were determined for employers who failed to comply with labour regulations and whether the authorities had any plans to increase the levels of the minimum wage or to compel private companies to disclose imbalances in earnings between men and women in order to narrow the gender pay gap. She asked what measures had been taken to encourage women and girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The Committee would like to know whether paid maternity leave applied to all types of employment, whether paternity leave was provided to fathers independently of maternity leave provisions and, if so, the length of

such leave. The delegation was also invited to specify the measures taken to enable mothers to continue working after giving birth, to provide more affordable childcare services and to enable fathers to fulfil their family responsibilities, including when family members required care. The Committee would also appreciate information on the collection and use of data on sexual harassment at the workplace, and it would be interested to find out if the State party intended to ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), of the International Labour Organization (ILO). ILO and UN-Women had estimated that only a very low percentage of persons of working age were likely to receive social protection benefits. What measures were taken to ensure that women who worked independently or in subsistence farming were covered by the social protection scheme?

31. **A representative of Georgia** said that ensuring that quality education was accessible was a priority for the Government. It had thus increased funding for education and had set a target of 6 per cent of GDP for State funding for education in the period 2022–2030. Gender mainstreaming had been incorporated into the budgetary process of the Ministry of Education and Science, and gender needs were thus reviewed annually. Revisions of the school curricula and textbooks took place regularly, in cycles of five to seven years, in a constant revision process that involved the community and took into account the recommendations of NGOs and international standards. In 2021/22 a revision of the national curriculum on gender equality and sexual and reproductive health care had been completed. Since December 2022, sexual education had been offered as an optional course of study at the secondary level; schools were able independently to develop their courses on sexual and reproductive health care, or they could implement training developed by outside organizations, with funding provided by the State. Such courses were currently being piloted by NGOs at public schools in Tbilisi. In addition to mandatory classes on health, in 2021/22, courses on a wide range of subjects related to gender equality and healthy lifestyles, including sexual and reproductive health, had been piloted for students at the elementary level, and there were plans to extend such activities to more schools.

32. Teachers received training in sexual and reproductive health courses for educators. The courses had been uploaded to the Ministry's platform and training had been scheduled for 2023. Under the country's unified education strategy, bilingual education was provided in general education schools, with effective language teaching support for students whose mother tongue was not Georgian. Inclusiveness was also guaranteed using other tools such as guidelines and manuals to assist in the inclusion of students with special education needs or developmental disabilities, and textbooks printed in Braille or produced as audiobooks were used for students with visual impairments.

33. During the COVID-19 pandemic all schools had had the ability to deliver online services for students with special needs, and in cases where face-to-face teaching was required schools provided such services on-site, in accordance with strict safety protocols. In 2020, preschool and elementary level services had continued to be provided. The country had over 1,600 kindergartens, which were being updated with infrastructure to accommodate children with disabilities. In rural or mountainous regions, where the number of young children was generally low, the Ministry was researching and working on alternative modes to provide education services and to determine the barriers to quality preschool education and to ensure preschool education of high quality. The Ministry entrusted local authorities with the responsibility to ensure education services for children with disabilities and for children from ethnic minorities. In Georgia there were currently over 11,000 students with special needs in primary and secondary education, and most had access to quality education services.

34. **A representative of Georgia** said that a series of major amendments had been made to the Labour Code, including the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination, the incorporation of an extended list of grounds of discrimination and the introduction of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. According to information from the National Statistics Office, in 2021, the country's adjusted hourly and monthly gender wage gap stood at 15.7 per cent and 21.4 per cent respectively, and the unadjusted gap at 31.4 per cent. There had been significant investment to provide the Labour Inspection Service with the organizational, human and financial capacity to monitor efforts to reduce the gender wage gap and ensure that women were paid the same as men for work of equal value. UN-Women

had provided support for developing a methodology for inspectors to calculate the actual value of work carried out and use it to evaluate wages.

35. Amendments to the labour legislation aimed at improving maternity leave provisions and introducing parental leave had also been implemented. Women were entitled to 126 days of paid maternity and childcare leave and an additional 57 days could be taken by either parent as paid parental leave, with 182 men taking such leave since the introduction of the legislation in 2020. However, discrepancies existed between the public and private sectors: female civil servants were entitled to six months' maternity leave at full pay, while private sector workers received one lump-sum payment, which had increased from 1,000 to 2,000 lari for 2023.

36. Another amendment involved the prohibition of sexual harassment in the workplace. The Labour Inspection Service was the main entity responsible for handling harassment complaints, of which 27 had been received in 2022, with 18 inspections taking place and 5 cases of discrimination resolved. It cooperated closely with the Public Defender's Office, which was also competent to receive sexual harassment complaints. Other measures to address workplace discrimination included the organization of regular meetings with employers and employer associations, the development of guidelines on identifying and preventing discrimination in contractual and pre-contractual relations and the inspection of job vacancy sites to ensure that no discriminatory language was used in vacancy announcements.

37. Work to ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), was under way, and a regulatory impact assessment had been carried out with support from UN-Women. Discussions on the ratification of the ILO Convention No. 190 were also under way within the Tripartite Social Partnership Commission, in addition to those on the introduction of a national minimum wage. The Government had conducted assessments of the regulatory and economic impact of a nationwide introduction of a minimum wage, which, as of 2023, had only been implemented at the sectoral level for health-care workers.

38. With regard to the general care responsibilities of men and women, two new social services providing personal care assistants for people with disabilities and introducing home care for older persons should be operational by the third quarter of 2023 and would be fully funded by the Government. While no social insurance mechanism along the lines of those in many European countries existed in Georgia, so-called targeted social assistance was available and enabled vulnerable households and families to receive cash remittances. Both men and women were entitled to receive a pension from the ages of 65 and 60 respectively.

39. **A representative of Georgia** said that the country had joined the "Generation Equality" movement, drafting an action plan for 2023–2025 aimed at increasing female participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In addition, a declaration had been signed the previous year by members of the Investors Council, in which they formalized their commitment to women's economic empowerment in the private sector.

40. **Ms. Hacker** said that Georgia was one of the few countries to authorize international surrogacy in its territory. She wondered what share of the profits went to the surrogates, who funded any health services they might require and whether data was available on the health risks that they faced. More generally, she would appreciate information on plans to reduce the relatively high maternal and infant mortality rate and any relevant intersectional data (broken down by age, economic status and ethnicity, for example) or planned interventions for specific groups.

41. Noting that the number of abortions had decreased, she would like to know how the State party ensured that women and girls had access to contraception and legal abortion and that the new pre-abortion interview would not drive women to forgo abortion or undergo the procedure illegally. How many illegal abortions were estimated to have been performed? Furthermore, the delegation might comment on how it planned to address cases, not covered by legislation, in which women were forced to have an abortion where the sex of the fetus was unacceptable to their families, as well as the legal obstacles faced by women wishing to terminate a pregnancy resulting from sexual abuse. Lastly, she would appreciate information on the rates of teenage pregnancy and abortion, the funding of such abortions and the action taken to reduce early childbearing.

42. It had been reported that women with physical or mental disabilities lacked access to the services they required, including health and family planning services. She would therefore welcome details of all policies and programmes aimed at ensuring the provision of health services for those women. She wished to know whether there was a ministry responsible for promoting equality for persons with disabilities and whether the ministry responsible for health care incorporated a gender lens when dealing with those persons.

43. She would appreciate information on the rates of women with a drug or alcohol addiction and the nature of the assistance provided to them. The delegation might also comment on why unintentional HIV transmission was criminalized and how it ensured that women with HIV were not prevented from having access to health services as a result.

44. Lastly, she wondered whether transgender women were required to undergo an operation in order to be recognized as such. How easily accessible was the operation? What psychological and health services were available to transgender women, regardless of whether they underwent surgery?

45. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia**, while commending the State party for recently conducting its first gender-responsive public financial management assessment and attracting the foreign direct investment needed to pursue its targeted investment policy, said that poverty remained endemic among female-headed households and unemployment much higher among women. While a social assistance system targeting various vulnerable groups was in place, no support specifically for women was available. The delegation might comment on why that was the case and how it planned to remedy the situation.

46. Recovery efforts following the COVID-19 pandemic had failed to address the gender dimension of poverty and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women and girls. She therefore wondered how the significant funds raised by the State party for recovery would incorporate a gender component and contribute to furthering women's economic empowerment. In particular, she would appreciate information on the priorities, performance benchmarks and timeline for the women's economic empowerment strategy and on which institution would be responsible for its coordination. Data on the beneficiaries, nature, scope and services covered by the initiatives and incentives for women in agriculture would be welcome.

47. **A representative of Georgia** said that maternal and child health services, including identification and management of high-risk pregnancies, early detection of congenital anomalies, screening of pregnant women for HIV, hepatitis B and C and syphilis and provision of pregnancy supplements, were funded by the Government under the Universal Health-Care Programme. Childbirth and caesarean section costs were also covered. The National Strategy on Maternal and Infant Health Care 2017–2030 and an action plan for 2021–2023 had been adopted with a view to ensuring access for all women, by 2030, to evidence-based prenatal, antenatal, neonatal, postnatal and obstetric care and improving and standardizing the quality of, and access to, maternal, newborn and reproductive health and family planning services. Projects for the regionalization of prenatal care services had also been introduced to reduce maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. Lastly, the primary health-care system had been reformed to ensure that workers were adequately equipped to help vulnerable groups, including women.

48. **A representative of Georgia** said that, in 2022, the Government had adopted a national health strategy that guaranteed access to tailored health-care services for women with disabilities. The strategy provided for the development of primary health-care programmes and specific programmes targeted at women with disabilities, including psychosocial disabilities.

49. Women carrying surrogate pregnancies had the same access to State-funded prenatal health care as other pregnant women. When minors became pregnant, the health system referred the case to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to be acted on, and the State Care Agency ensured that they received the appropriate individual support from social workers. In such cases, decisions relating to abortion were taken jointly by the minors themselves and their social workers and health-care professionals.

50. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that she wished to know whether the Government had conducted an assessment of the various measures taken to promote and protect the rights of rural women and, if so, what impact those measures had had on women's ability to register their ownership of land and obtain loans. The delegation might describe any programmes being implemented to reduce the burden of unpaid work on women, including care and domestic work, and any measures being taken to enhance their participation in decision-making mechanisms.

51. She would welcome information on the effectiveness of any campaigns conducted in rural areas to raise awareness of trafficking in persons. She wondered what measures were being taken to guarantee rural women's access to sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion services, and to prevent early marriage and child pregnancy.

52. The delegation might describe any plans in place to address the multiple forms of discrimination directed at women from disadvantaged groups and to ensure their access to primary health-care services, sexual and reproductive health services, education and employment. The Committee would be interested to know what specific strategies were in place to effectively enforce anti-discrimination laws. It was also curious to learn whether institutional protocols had been established to assist women from disadvantaged groups who were victims of violence and, if so, whether such protocols were effective.

53. **A representative of Georgia** said that the Government had conducted an assessment of women's participation in agriculture programmes. A stand-alone women's empowerment programme had been piloted in two municipalities, one of which had a high proportion of inhabitants from ethnic minority backgrounds. In cooperation with local authorities and UN-Women, the Government had conducted training sessions for women in 10 municipalities. Gender equality councils had been established to facilitate communication with rural women at the local level.

54. **A representative of Georgia** said that programmes were being developed to reduce the burden of care on women, including rural women. Under those programmes, personal assistance would be provided to women with disabilities and home care would be made available to older women. The Government was considering the possibility of ratifying ILO Convention No. 189, which was relevant to rural women, as many domestic workers were from rural areas. Capacity-building for rural doctors was being prioritized in order to improve the quality of primary health care available to rural women. Efforts were being made to enhance the accessibility of maternal and child health-care services in rural areas. Rural women were covered by the Universal Health-Care Programme and by specific programmes related to prenatal, maternal and child health. Health-care professionals were required to inform a law enforcement agency, as well as the State Care Agency, if a child in their care became pregnant. The State Employment Support Agency was the body responsible for promoting access to employment for rural women, including women with disabilities. In 2021, mobile employment officers had been introduced to expand access to the Agency's services.

55. **A representative of Georgia** said that the Government was implementing an information-sharing campaign and a strategy to combat trafficking in persons. Government representatives visited all regions of the country to inform women and girls about the risks of trafficking, the regulations and mechanisms in place to prevent it and the support services available to victims or potential victims.

56. Since August 2016, the National Agency of Public Registry had been implementing a reform to facilitate the free registration of land. The process of registering land had been further streamlined by a law adopted in December 2019. Thanks to the various legal measures taken, women and men were now able to register as co-owners of a plot of land. In January 2022, the Agency had launched a national programme to register all relevant plots of land by the end of 2024. As a result of the measures taken, the number of women landowners had doubled between 2014 and 2022.

57. To further promote women's land ownership, a public outreach campaign had been conducted to raise rural women's awareness of land registration procedures, including in areas with high proportions of women from ethnic minority backgrounds. The Government had started working on legal amendments to further enhance married women's property

rights. The amendments were undergoing a gender impact assessment that would be completed within the next few weeks.

58. **Mr. Tatulashvili** (Georgia) said that the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency had been taking steps to strengthen women's participation in agricultural cooperatives. The Government had been working closely with the United Nations Development Programme to promote women's entrepreneurship and inclusion in the formal economy.

Articles 15 and 16

59. **Ms. Leinarte** said that, despite the law prohibiting marriage for persons under 18 years of age, Georgia had one of the highest rates of early marriage in Europe and Central Asia. The rate was particularly high among girls with low levels of education and girls of Azerbaijani ethnicity. The fertility rate among adolescents was also higher than the regional average. In view of that situation, she asked what measures were being taken to enforce the law prohibiting marriage for persons under 18 years of age and whether any specific body was responsible for combating early and forced marriages at the local level. It would be interesting to learn how the Child Rights Code contributed to the elimination of early marriage.

60. The Committee welcomed the fact that spouses enjoyed equal personal and property rights under the Civil Code and that the regime of community property had been established for married couples. However, it wished to know whether any plans were in place to establish the regime of separate property with a view to ensuring women's independence within marriage. The delegation might state whether any measures would be taken to promote and protect the right to parenthood of women with disabilities and women living in institutions.

61. **The Chair**, noting that there was insufficient time for the delegation to provide oral responses to the Committee's questions on articles 15 and 16, invited the delegation to provide written responses within 24 hours of the closing of the meeting.

62. **Mr. Tatulashvili** (Georgia) said that it had been an honour for his delegation to have participated in the constructive dialogue with the Committee. In order to achieve gender equality, it was not sufficient to adopt or implement laws; it was also necessary to bring about a revolution in attitudes. The Government was making every effort to establish strategies for promoting gender equality at the central and local levels and mechanisms for enforcing those strategies.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.