



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

Distr.: General  
11 February 2002

Original: English

---

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

**Summary record of the 422nd meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 3 February 1999, at 10.30 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. González

**Contents**

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

*Fourth periodic report of Colombia*

---

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They 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 this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.



*The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.*

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

*Fourth periodic report of Colombia*  
(CEDAW/C/COL/4;  
CEDAW/C/1999/I/CRP.1/Add.2)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Valdivieso, Ms. Cifuentes, Mr. Bonilla and Ms. Montaña (Colombia), took places at the Committee table.*

2. *A video showing the activities of the National Office for Equality for Women was shown.*

3. **Ms. Cifuentes** (Colombia), reporting on new developments in Colombia since the fourth periodic report had been completed in August 1997, said that peace-building, decentralization, political participation, State reorganization, universal coverage in education and health care and gender equality were the priorities of the current Government in order to restore the fabric of society and build a democratic and peaceful future of sustainable economic development. The Government had demonstrated its commitment to the women of Colombia through the implementation of an Equal Opportunity Plan.

4. Turning to developments in the normative framework governing women's rights, she said that the Constitution of 1991 enshrined equality of men and women as a fundamental right. In the past eight years, the Constitutional Court had established an important body of doctrine on the protection of women's rights. One of the most important recent advances had been the adoption of Law 360, increasing the penalties for some sexual crimes and introducing major changes in language. Actions of *tutela* had become the main judicial mechanism for the protection of human rights in Colombia, and information on that mechanism had been widely disseminated. The recent rulings of the Constitutional Court had made use of actions of *tutela* to change the jurisprudence protecting pregnant women, by a decision that women could have recourse to such actions, in addition to the Labour courts, when filing complaints against their employers regarding dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy.

5. The National Office for Equality for Women had undertaken a number of activities to inform women of

their rights through publications and the mass media. The Presidential Council for Human Rights had also included women's rights in its programme to promote sexual and reproductive rights and prevent violence against women.

6. Since its establishment in 1995, the National Office for Equality for Women had taken responsibility for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, whose commitments had been incorporated into its policy guidelines. It also worked with international cooperation agencies, with the concrete result that the International Development Bank had provided a \$6.5 million grant to support, for the first time in the history of Latin America, the integration of women into highly competitive sectors and to lower the barriers they encountered. The Government had also recently approved the counterpart funds for that project.

7. The National Office maintained relationships with non-governmental organizations, and in fact its establishment had been largely a result of pressure from the women's social movement. With its limited budget for project support, it had worked with women's groups and organizations to promote training in political participation and the electoral process and to organize networks. Other institutional mechanisms for women included the National Council for Women, made up of local women's councils, the Office of Rural Women of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Gender Office of the National Planning Department. Finally, the Office of the People's Advocate had a Division for the Rights of Children, Women and Senior Citizens, which had played an important role in the dissemination and protection of the human rights of women.

8. The new National Development Plan "Change to Build Peace", which would be debated in Congress in February, contained a proposal for a plan for equal opportunity for men and women which would be submitted for approval to the National Economic and Social Policy Council, which defined sectoral policy.

9. Among special temporary measures under article 4 taken since the report was written, changes in the Labour Code had made a three-month paid maternity leave mandatory for all pregnant employees in the public sector as well as the private sector.

10. In eliminating stereotypes (article 5), the Government had placed priority on interventions in the education sector. In 1996, the Committee for Non-

Sexist Education had been established to promote the removal of sexist content from textbooks. During 1997, a consciousness-raising and training campaign had been conducted with the major publishing companies, which had resulted in a guide for the drafting of non-sexist textbooks.

11. According to updated statistics on violence against women, complaints of domestic violence had risen during 1997, and 81 per cent of the victims of violence within the family were women, most of whom were in the 25-to-34 age group. The increase in complaints of domestic violence did not necessarily reflect an increase in its incidence, but was a likely result of the publication of Law 294, which established penalties for such conduct and a jurisdiction for complaints. It could also be a result of the campaigns to raise awareness of domestic violence as a crime and a violation of women's human rights. The most important change brought about by the new law was the recognition of marital rape. The new Government's four-year development plan also contained a National Plan for the Prevention of Family Violence.

12. The prolonged and complex situation of political violence in Colombia had been particularly serious and difficult for the civilian population in the areas of armed conflict, especially during the past decade. The civilian population had become a military target, and the violence had led to massive population movement from such areas. Most of the displaced persons were living in sub-human conditions on the outskirts of the capital or other large cities, and their basic needs were not being met. The Government was making efforts to register the displaced population, which had risen to a total of 367,059, or approximately 75,601 families, according to the latest statistics.

13. In the context of political violence and forced displacement, women had suffered greatly from the loss of spouses or family members and represented the largest proportion of those forced out of their homes. Among displaced families, almost 36 per cent were headed by women. Very few of the displaced women had citizenship or identity cards, a situation which further limited their ability to exercise their basic rights. In response, the Government had taken legislative action to provide displaced persons with a legal and political framework and was giving special attention to displaced women, especially heads of households. Women heads of household were given preference in land distribution programmes. The Rural

Women's Office of the Ministry of Agriculture had also been providing assistance to women displaced by violence.

14. With regard to women in armed conflict, she said that there were no official figures on the number of female combatants in the irregular forces, but it was known that both guerrilla groups and paramilitaries recruited girls and women. In the regular army, women were in the minority and mostly did lower-level administrative work. There were currently 204 women officers, 881 non-commissioned officers and 50 soldiers. There were 3,441 women working as civilians for the army, including 200 in specialized jobs and 250 university graduates. The highest-ranked female was a colonel. In the air force, women made up 22 per cent of the workforce. There were 30 women in senior posts and 6 were colonels, the highest rank achieved by women in the air force. The corresponding figures for men were 1,181 officers, 2,260 non-commissioned officers and 1,621 public employees.

15. In relation to enforced disappearances, she said that two non-governmental organizations had reported 103 cases of political persecution of women between January and September 1997, amounting to 7.3 per cent of total human rights violations against women. Of those, 9 were cases of enforced disappearance, 51 of extrajudicial execution, 5 of abuse of authority and 2 of social intolerance.

16. The National Prisons Institute (INPEC) had suggested to the National Office for Equality for Women a plan to introduce a gender strategy in women's prisons. The plan, which would involve setting up a women and children's section within INPEC, was under consideration.

17. Social violence was unfortunately still very prevalent, one of the worst manifestations being the "social cleansing" directed against street children. Although there was no specific gender-based activity aimed at dealing with that situation, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute provided such children with temporary accommodation and was working to introduce a gender perspective, as was the Foundation for Higher Education. The 1997 and 1998 homeless people's programmes, attended by 11,295 and 6,503 people, respectively, had provided the statistics to show that 31 per cent of adults living on the streets were women.

18. On prostitution, there had been an important development since the submission of the report. Prostitution itself was still permitted, but the punishment for procuring or forcing into prostitution had been increased. Also, the heading of the relevant chapter of the Criminal Code had been changed from “Crimes against freedom and sexual decency” to “Crimes against sexual freedom and human dignity”. The change better reflected the violation of autonomy and personal integrity involved in such activities. Special Prosecution Units had been set up to help implement the law. They advised officials, interviewed victims and reported to the prosecutor.

19. The national police had introduced a programme for the gradual elimination of child prostitution through educational activities within the family and the community, setting in motion a process of human and social development for child prostitutes and their families. The Bogotá Metropolitan Police had also, since 1995, run a programme to improve the quality of life for prostitutes and improve relations with the police. Police officers received training in tolerance, while the prostitutes were helped with development programmes and access to public services, counselling, social workers and legal advisers. Out of the 4,247 known prostitutes in Bogotá, 360 were currently taking part in the programme.

20. In relation to article 5, she said that the municipal elections had seen more women elected to municipal councils but fewer to the post of mayor. Out of 932 mayors elected, 50 — or 5.4 per cent — were women. Of the 10,397 councillors, 1,149 — or 11.05 per cent — were women. All in all, women had not yet crossed the 15 per cent barrier. The strong voting for Noemí Sanín in the first round of presidential elections, the increase in the number of women senators and the large number of votes for Senator Ingrid Betancur were all encouraging signs.

21. In 1997, the number of women in the judiciary was roughly the same as that of men, except in the higher courts. Of the total number of judges and magistrates, 1,733 were men and 1,584 were women. In the municipal courts, 1,003 were women and 893 were men; of circuit judges 577 were women and 785 men; but in the three highest courts there were only the four women in the Council of State and none in the Supreme Court of Justice or the Constitutional Court.

22. With regard to women in the trade unions, she said that of 150,000 members of the Colombian Workers’ Confederation, 57,000 were women and 103,000 men, although the proportion varied area by area: in towns men outnumbered women three to one, while in rural areas there were 22,000 women to 28,000 men. The percentage of men in the United Federation of Workers — the biggest trade union association in Colombia — was even greater. There were 669,004 men and 349,739 women members. As in the Workers’ Confederation, there were few women at the top. The Executive Committee had 18 men and 3 women, while the National Board had only 5 women to 69 men. Trade union structure was not conducive to women becoming leaders.

23. With regard to article 8, she said that as of January 1999, of 773 posts in the diplomatic service, 444 — or 58 per cent — were occupied by women. Of ambassadors or consuls, 39 — or 28 per cent — were women, as against 99 men (72 per cent). There were 124 women, or 38 per cent, in diplomatic posts. Not all, of course, were career diplomats; those that were had competed on an equal footing with men, by examination.

24. With regard to article 10, she said that, despite considerable progress, the general educational level of females remained lower than that of males. The drop-out rate among girls was, however, lower and their enrolment rate in primary education was higher. Significant recent data showed that between 1980 and 1997 boys’ marks in the school-leaving exam for higher education were, on average, 12 percentage points higher than girls’. Given that the difference could be related to the sexist content of education, new programmes to help girls and young women had been developed, including a programme for displaced girls, a project to improve educational conditions for rural children, with special emphasis on the education of girls, an educational curriculum which incorporated gender equality, as suggested at international conferences, and projects to teach methodologies to examine the presence of sexist stereotypes in school and draw up co-educational programmes.

25. With regard to article 11, she said that the female participation rate in the labour market in the seven metropolitan areas as of December 1997 had reached 51 per cent, one of the highest in Latin America. The rate had grown at every educational level; and the higher the educational level the higher the participation

rate. In June 1998, an unprecedented 89.1 per cent of women who had completed higher education had been participating in the labour market. There were some positive trends for women in the labour market: their share of total employment had risen rapidly, particularly since 1990. Out of every 100 new jobs created in the urban areas between 1990 and 1992, 55 had gone to women. The figures for the period from 1991 to 1997 indicated that 57 per cent of new urban jobs had been taken up by women.

26. It was clear that both the employment rate and the participation rate increased with the level of education. In June 1998 the employment rate had ranged from 25.5 per cent for women with no education to 78.2 per cent for women who had completed higher education. The female labour force in industry had risen from 35 per cent in 1982 to 43 per cent in June 1998. It was an encouraging development, since it reflected an important change in hiring policy. A similar improvement had occurred in the financial, trade and service sectors. In sectors traditionally dominated by men, such as construction, agriculture, mining and transport, women's participation had increased but was still below 15 per cent. The rate of informal employment among women had dropped since 1988 and had been at the same level as that of men since 1996.

27. On article 12, she said that the latest figures on life expectancy showed a slight change: it stood at 64.3 years for men and 73.24 years for women, with a national average of 68.77 years. It was a significant improvement over the 1985 figures, which were 64.19 years for men and 71.06 years for women, on a national average of 67.62 years.

28. There were unfortunately no data to show changes in the maternal mortality rate over the past three years. Considerable progress had, however, undoubtedly been achieved towards reducing such mortality through the adoption of a number of measures: the Basic Care Plan, which regulated State activity in promoting sexual and reproductive health; the Compulsory Health Plan, which regulated individual treatment for sexual and reproductive health; Agreement 77 of the National Social Security Council, which gave priority to including in the system the poorest people, those displaced by violence, indigenous people, women heads of household, teenagers, children under five and marginalized rural and urban populations; and Agreement 117, which defined

compulsory activities and procedures in dealing with illnesses in the interests of public safety, including sexual and reproductive health.

29. The coverage of prenatal care and hospital childbirth had reached almost 80 per cent. In addition, a model had been established over 20 per cent of the country for reducing maternal and perinatal mortality, with the result that the quality of prenatal care had improved dramatically, and maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality had dropped. A system to keep track of maternal and perinatal mortality was also in operation in 80 per cent of the country. Lastly, information, education and awareness-raising campaigns had been launched in the mass media and elsewhere to draw attention to the control of risk factors in maternal and perinatal health, the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, the promotion of good health care for women and children and the prevention of violence on the basis of mutual respect and negotiated solutions to problems.

30. Turning to article 13, she said that statistics from the National Training Service for the period from 1994 to 1997 showed that women's access to training courses had improved — women accounted for half the enrolment — but the choice of courses was still restricted, with the highest female participation in jobs traditionally considered female: 69 per cent in services, 57 per cent in commerce, 65 per cent in agricultural jobs and 68 per cent in industrial employment. Among recent employment programmes, one of the most significant was that organized by the Social Support Network, which had generated 8.5 million days' work, 40 per cent of which had gone to women. The same office was continuing its student subsidy programme, which helped the dependent children of women heads of household in the poorest sectors.

31. In relation to article 14, among recent activities intended to give women access to resources, 25,000 identity documents for rural women and children had been issued; agreements had been reached with the Ministry of Education to carry out literacy projects for rural women; disease-prevention and information campaigns aimed at women had been launched; workshops had been held for rural leaders, both men and women, to train them in planning with a gender perspective; and workshops had been held to train women in preparing production projects and in business and technical management.

32. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Bonilla (Colombia) took a place at the Committee table.*

33. **Mr. Bonilla** (Colombia), turning to the questions contained in the report of the pre-session working group (CEDAW/C/1999/I/CRP.1/Add.2), said, in connection with question 2, that the second and third reports to the Committee had been published, but that the fourth report had only been circulated informally to some non-governmental organizations. A number of expert consultants had been contracted to prepare the fourth report using data from various sources, including such organizations.

34. With regard to question 3, one of the functions of the National Office for Equality for Women was to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. The Beijing commitments had been transmitted to the ministries, which had developed action plans for their implementation.

35. With regard to question 4, the policies contained in the new National Development Plan "Change to Build Peace" were designed to reduce poverty. The plan was still being negotiated, and input had been received from the National Planning Council, which represented a broad spectrum of civil society. The final version of the plan would be submitted to the Congress for debate and approval. In its current form, the plan envisaged policies to benefit women through the provision of universal basic education, subsidies to regional entities, universal health care subsidized by social security, housing (with women heads of household receiving a double housing subsidy) and job training specially targeted to women. In addition, the Social Support Network, a presidential programme, channelled assistance to the poorest sectors of the population. It was not yet known, however, what impact the recent earthquake in the Coffee Belt would have on the Government's proposals.

36. As to question 5, the 1994-1998 National Development Plan: the Social Leap Forward had benefited women through the establishment of the National Office for Equality for Women as the agency responsible for guiding public policy on equality; the establishment and strengthening of regional offices responsible for integrating a gender perspective into planning processes; support for and coordination of actions carried out by and with women's organizations and non-governmental organizations; implementation of a strategy for integrating a gender perspective into

the activities of the National Planning Department, as a result of a technical cooperation agreement signed with the German Government; and the inclusion of gender-equality indicators in the guidelines for the formulation, follow-up and evaluation of international cooperation projects.

37. Replying to question 6, he said that the National Office for Equality for Women had disseminated a number of publications on the law and jurisprudence protecting women's rights and on his Government's international commitments in that area. The text of Law 294 of 1996 on sexual abuse and violence in the family had been given mass distribution. Special efforts had been made to sensitize the mass media to the need to change the way issues relating to women were dealt with. A culture of equality between women and men had been promoted through radio, television and printed media campaigns.

38. In cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Office had undertaken a campaign to issue identity documents to women and children in a number of rural departments so as to enable them to exercise their citizenship rights.

39. During the period from 1996 to 1998, the Presidential Council for Human Rights had, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), carried out a project to promote human and reproductive rights and prevent violence against women. The first phase of that effort had involved the formulation of proposals on sexual and reproductive rights based on the proposals put forward at the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo. Secondly, Law 360 of 1997 on sexual offences and institutional responses to sexual violence had been promulgated. At the same time, forums and seminars had been held to increase institutional and public awareness of the need to provide humane treatment to victims of sexual violence.

40. Lastly, the Ombudsman's Office had held workshops for civil servants to publicize the Convention and the steps taken to implement it.

41. With regard to question 7, a proposal had been developed for a law-school curriculum focusing on the legal, educational and philosophical aspects of the human rights of women and their equality before the law.

42. Referring to question 8, he said that no specific mechanisms had been proposed to enforce the laws concerning women. Nevertheless, the Ombudsman's Office had a complaints bureau which received complaints from women whose rights were in jeopardy. In the most serious cases, the complaints were forwarded to the unit for the rights of children, women and the elderly in the Ombudsman's Office. In accordance with Law 24 of 1992 establishing the Ombudsman's Office, the Ombudsman was empowered to make recommendations to the authorities and to private citizens in order to promote and protect the exercise of human rights. The law required all public and private authorities to reply within five days to requests for information from the Ombudsman and prohibited them from invoking claims of confidentiality.

43. The procedure for invoking actions of *tutela*, as referred to in question 9, was available free of charge and did not require the services of a lawyer. A study conducted by the National University had shown that of 38 claims filed by women, 18 had been successful. Of those claims, 10 had invoked protection of the right to equality and non-discrimination; three of the claims had been granted and seven had been rejected.

44. As to question 10, the Ombudsman focused primarily on the rights of the most vulnerable groups of women, including women in prison, women victims of armed conflict, domestic violence, sexual violence and sexual exploitation, rural women and female heads of household. The Ombudsman's Office was part of the network of Ombudsman's Offices for Women, which in turn belonged to the Ibero-American Ombudsman Federation. The Federation received technical and financial support from the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, whose objective was to strengthen the protection of women's human rights. A major aspect of that effort was the training of public officials as described above.

45. Turning to question 11, he said that the National Office for Equality for Women had been established specifically to guide public policy, not to execute programmes. The only way to convert the National Office into an executing agency would be to amend the law. While the President of the Republic could use his emergency powers to reform State agencies, to grant such functions to the National Office would run counter to current fiscal adjustment and austerity policies.

46. The National Office currently had a full-time staff of 33, with 17 consultants. Its annual budget was \$1.2 million. The two substantive areas, planning and follow-up, and the operations area depended on support from advisers contracted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The contract with UNDP would expire in June 1999.

47. While there was no hierarchical relationship between the National Office and other bodies which promoted women's rights at different levels, the National Office provided advice to those bodies, coordinated national campaigns in which they participated and drew up proposals to be incorporated into their action plans.

48. The National Office maintained ongoing relations with non-governmental women's organizations; it had, in fact, been established at the initiative of such groups. The National Office had a small budget with which to support projects submitted by non-governmental organizations. Together with another government agency, the National Office had supported the initiatives of such organizations aimed at promoting political and civic participation by women. While there were no statistics showing whether women's civic participation had increased, workshops and seminars on the subject had been well attended.

49. In 1998 the National Office had invited women's organizations to submit proposals for incorporating a gender perspective into the new National Development Plan.

50. With regard to question 12, strategies had been worked out in consultation with a number of ministries, and focal points had been established to promote the policies. Since 1997, with the support of the German Government, a pilot programme had been carried out to incorporate a focus on women's equality into development and investment plans in rural and urban areas. As part of that effort, training had been conducted within the National Planning Department, the National Planning Council and the Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen their capacity in the areas of gender analysis and participatory planning. Similar training had been provided at the regional and local levels. In 1997 the National Office for Equality for Women had provided technical assistance and funds to women's units in 20 departments and 12 municipalities.

51. Replying to the questions posed under article 4, he said, in connection with question 13, that a number

of bills on affirmative action had been debated by Congress, but had failed to be adopted. It was possible that new legislation might be drafted and approved in the future.

52. With regard to question 14, he said Colombia's labour legislation stipulated that pregnant women, whether employed in the public or private sector, were entitled to three months' paid maternity leave. They could opt to transfer one week of that entitlement to their child's father to enable him to take paternity leave. The dismissal of women employees on grounds of pregnancy was prohibited. The Constitutional Court had recently reversed its ruling that pregnant women could not bring actions of *tutela* in case of violations of their rights because of the existence of alternative remedies under the labour legislation.

53. Turning to the questions posed under article 5, he said, in response to question 15, that, in 1997 and 1998, his Government had focused on combating gender stereotypes in education. The Committee for Non-Sexist Education, established in 1996, was providing technical advice to the Ministry of National Education regarding the implementation of a project aimed at eliminating sexism in education, and training had been organized to raise awareness in Colombia's major publishing houses of the problem of gender stereotypes in textbooks.

54. A project was being developed with the assistance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and funding from the World Bank to integrate the gender perspective into education in rural areas. The purpose of the project was to provide programmes adapted to the needs of rural women, many of whom were illiterate, so as to enable them to participate on an equal footing with men in the production systems in their areas, and thus to contribute to the well-being of their families and the development of their communities.

55. With regard to question 16, he said that, within the framework of the women, children and communication programme, Colombia's radio and television networks and printed media had disseminated information on children's rights and on the State's services for children. Efforts had been made to present boys and girls as important figures in Colombia's history. Research had been conducted into the portrayal of violence in the media.

56. In reply to question 17, he said that his Government had passed a series of decrees and published various social policy documents, which, together, formed a comprehensive legal and political framework for measures to address the needs of displaced persons. It recognized the importance, when developing such measures, of involving women in the decision-making process in order to ensure that their specific requirements were met. While the National Integrated Programme for the Population Displaced by the Violence was not targeted specifically at women, it did make special provision for widows and women heads of households. Also, the programmes of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute were focused on the needs of displaced females under 18 years of age, pregnant women and nursing mothers, while the National Training Service gave priority to displaced women seeking employment in the cities. All displaced persons had access to basic health care. The Rural Women's Office of the Ministry of Agriculture had drawn up a framework for action directed specifically at women, and was coordinating initiatives at the national, regional and municipal levels to facilitate the economic, social and cultural reintegration of displaced rural women. The Office was making an important contribution to peace-building.

57. Turning to question 18, he said that, according to information provided by non-governmental organizations, between January and September 1997 there had been 9 enforced disappearances of women and 51 extrajudicial executions.

58. With regard to question 19, he said that a national plan for the prevention of domestic violence had been drawn up within the context of measures to build peace and promote reconciliation, the family being regarded as the basic unit of coexistence. The plan was aimed at reducing the incidence of domestic violence by forging links between families, communities and institutions and encouraging families in difficulty to seek the assistance of the appropriate support services.

59. **Ms. Montaña** (Colombia) said, in connection with question 20, that no specific measures had been taken to eliminate discrimination against female prisoners. However, some had used the recourse of *tutela* to ensure that their rights were upheld. The Constitutional Court had ruled that it was unconstitutional to make the use of contraception a precondition for receiving conjugal visits. It had been proposed that an office should be established within the



prison authority to take responsibility for eliminating discrimination against women prisoners.

60. In reply to question 21, she said that there were approximately 58,880 street children in Colombia, of whom more than 3,300 were being provided with integrated services at facilities of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute and a further 5,000 were receiving care in the open. No gender-disaggregated statistics were available. A plan of action for the care of street children had been drawn up. Its objectives included raising awareness of the problem among institutions and the public with a view to increasing their involvement in seeking solutions. Also, a project aimed at analysing and improving the living conditions of street children was being developed based on a model devised by the World Health Organization. The Ombudsman's Office served as a focal point for consultation between the various local authorities and government agencies concerned. With respect to community mothers, 85.7 per cent had received initial training, and 57 per cent of those continued to receive in-service training. The training covered a wide range of subjects, including health and nutrition, food storage, child development and creative expression.

61. With regard to question 22, she said that, while no statistics were available, it appeared that in 1994 and 1995 only a handful of homicides had been attributable to so-called "social cleansing" operations. Efforts by the national police to encourage officers to increase protection of street people had contributed to the reduction of such homicides. Also, in various municipalities, the local authorities were implementing programmes to facilitate the reintegration of those persons into society.

62. In response to question 23, she said that there were no specific programmes to raise women's awareness of the consequences of drug trafficking. Young women addicts were rehabilitated in drug treatment centres, although there were no special facilities for them.

63. Turning to the questions posed under article 6, she said, in connection with question 24, that an Interinstitutional Committee had been established to combat the traffic in women and children. It was raising awareness of the problem of trafficking and publicizing the new tougher penalties imposed for that offence. It was also seeking to expedite the ratification of such instruments as the Convention for the

Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others and to promote international cooperation among police forces. It had taken a number of measures to enhance the care of victims of trafficking.

64. With regard to question 25, she said that, while prostitution was not criminalized, procuring and forced prostitution were prohibited by law. Prostitution was regulated by the local authorities, and thus the provisions on vice establishments varied according to the municipality or department. The police had received training on the laws protecting women, and thus, indirectly, on the Convention.

65. In reply to question 26, she said that the Colombian Family Welfare Institute had developed an integrated programme for the care of child prostitutes, which was being implemented with the participation of non-governmental organizations. The purpose of the programme was to introduce prevention, training, assistance and care activities at the national level.

66. In response to question 27, she said that there were a number of programmes aimed at facilitating access by prostitutes to State services, which included counselling and legal guidance. In Bogotá, of some 4,250 women identified as prostitutes, 360 were benefiting from such programmes. In addition, the Bogotá Metropolitan Police was encouraging tolerance on the part of its officers with a view to bringing about better relations with prostitutes.

67. Turning to question 28 (article 7), she said that there had been a gradual improvement in women's participation in public life. They were under-represented in politics because they lacked self-confidence. Another factor was their failure to show solidarity. With respect to economic life, there were a large number of women in the banking sector, where they accounted for more than half of all managers.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*